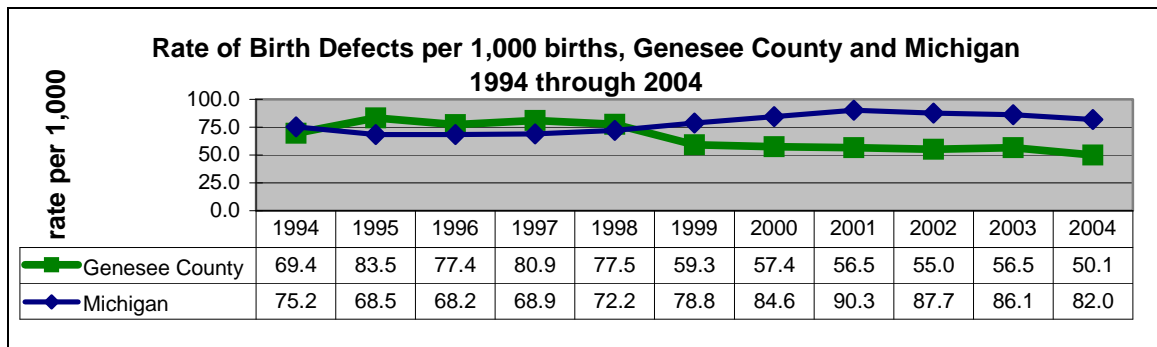


Fact Sheet 2.1 Birth Defects

Children born with birth defects require more intensive and specialized educational and health support services than unaffected children. The needs of these children also pose economic and emotional challenges to their families. Reducing preventable birth defects provides an important marker of a community's commitment to the health and well-being of children and families.



- The rate of birth defects in Michigan declined from a rate of 75.2 per 1,000 in 1994 to a rate of 68.9 in 1997; then increased to rate of 90.3 per 1,000 in 2001 before declining slightly in the past two reporting periods.
- The rate of birth defects in Genesee County peaked in 1997 and declined since.
- In contrast to some other indicators of child well-being, in recent years the rate of birth defects among Genesee County newborns has been lower than in the state as a whole.

BEYOND THE NUMBERS

Such a steady and significant decline in the incidence of a county's birth defects does not happen by accident, especially in comparison to the state of Michigan. The public's awareness of the problem and of available solutions has been heightened to the point of making a positive difference for children!

EXAMPLES OF INTERVENTION EFFORTS

- **Children's Specialized Health Care Services (CSHCS)** - CSHCS provides family-centered, community-based services, such as equipment and supplies for children with long-term health conditions and diagnostic evaluations for chronic illnesses or disabilities. Case management is available, including services, advocacy, assessment, and identification of family needs.
- **Newborn Screening (NBS)** -NBS tests infants for twenty-nine disorders, as recommended by the American College of Medical Genetics. Information is available through the March of Dimes.
- **Neo-natal Intensive Care Unit Family Support (NICU Family Support)** - NICU Family Support will be introduced in fifty locations by the year 2007. Information is available through the March of Dimes.
- **Early On** - Genesee Intermediate School District provides services to children with special needs, from birth through 3 years of age.

Definitions: Births Defects is defined broadly as any anomaly, functional or structural, that presents in infancy or later in life and is caused by events preceding birth, whether inherited or acquired.

Data Source: Michigan Department of Community Health, Birth Defects Cases by Time to Diagnosis and Birth Year Michigan Resident Cases <http://www.mdch.state.mi.us/pha/osr/chi/BirthDefects/frame.html>

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