

NATION GETS A “D”; IDAHO RECEIVES A “C”

MARCH OF DIMES PREMATURE BIRTH REPORT CARD

November is Prematurity Awareness Month

(Boise, Idaho, November 17, 2009) **IDAHO** is one of only seven states that received a better grade on the second annual March of Dimes Premature Report Card, earning a “C” grade.

The March of Dimes released its second annual report card today, the 7th Annual Prematurity Awareness Day, a day when the March of Dimes focuses the nation’s attention on the growing problem of premature birth (birth before 37 weeks gestation). For the second consecutive year, the United States earned only a “D” on the report card, demonstrating that more than a half million of our nation’s newborns didn’t get the healthy start they deserved. As in 2008, no state earned an “A” and only Vermont received a “B.”

“Here in Idaho, we are pleased to see that our hard work may be beginning to pay off,” said Karen Hodge, RN, Chairperson of the Idaho March of Dimes Board of Directors. “But we have a long way to go before all babies in the United States of America get a healthy start in life and we are committed to working with state officials, hospitals and health care providers to continue to fight for preemies.”

Two of the three criteria affecting preterm birth improved in Idaho. It earned a star for:

- ***Reducing the percentage of women of childbearing age who smoke;***
- ***Lowering the late preterm birth rate.***

The third criterion known to affect preterm birth rates where Idaho did not show improvement is;

- ***Reducing the percent of uninsured women of child bearing age.***

The Idaho percentage of women of childbearing age who smoke is 17.0% (reduced from 19.4% in the last period)

The Idaho rate of late preterm births is 7.9%; (reduced from 8.6% in last period)

The Idaho percentage of women of childbearing age without health insurance is 20.7%, (increased from 19.8%)

In the US, more than 540,000 babies are born too early each year. Preterm birth is a serious health problem that is estimated to cost approximately \$26 billion each year, according to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. Premature birth is the leading cause of newborn death. Babies who survive premature birth often face the risk of a lifetime of health challenges, such as respiratory illnesses, mental retardation and others. A March of Dimes report released in October, 2009, found that 13 million babies worldwide were born preterm and more than one million of that number die each year.

Quality improvement programs addressing preterm birth are a key to lowering preterm birth rates, according to the March of Dimes.

In Idaho, the March of Dimes is working with the Family Medicine Residency of Idaho to train physicians and other health professionals in a prenatal care program called CenteringPregnancy. This model of care treats the prenatal care needs of women in a group setting. This model of care has proven to be especially helpful for women at high risk for an early birth.

The Idaho March of Dimes is also actively supporting a model of care called Family Centered Care. Family Centered Care is, as the name suggests, a collaboration between the identified patient, that person's family and health care providers . This model recognizes and supports the importance of involving the entire family in the care of the patient.

The Idaho March of Dimes is also actively supporting efforts to reduce Cesarean sections (C-sections) and inductions prior to 39 weeks that have not been determined by a physician to be medically necessary.

The March of Dimes is the leading organization for pregnancy and baby health. With chapters nationwide, the March of Dimes works to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. For the latest resources and information, visit marchofdimes.com or nacersano.org.