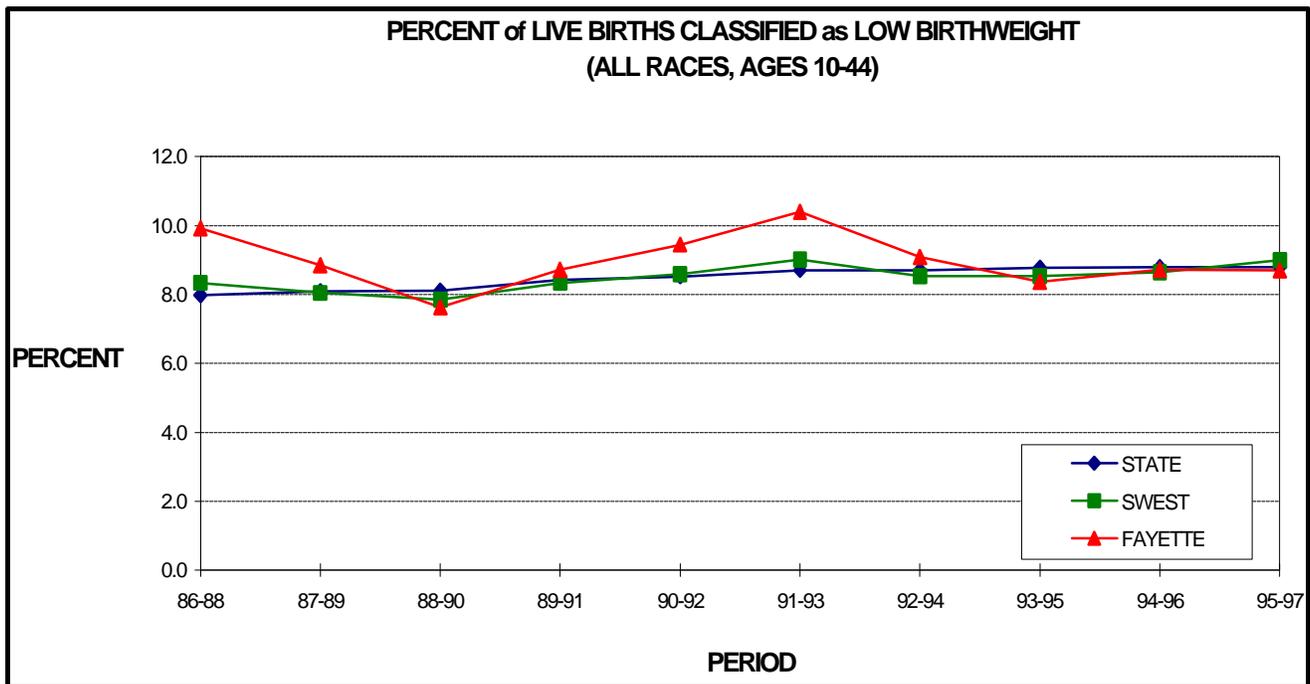


ACCESS TO OB/PRENATAL CARE

Fayette County has not been successful in recruiting and retaining the services of an obstetrician. High levels of poverty and TennCare enrollment have discouraged obstetrical providers from locating in the county. A local midwifery program has provided the only prenatal care for a number of women in the county. The Health Council believes this history of limited access to prenatal and obstetrical care has contributed to higher percentages of births classified as low birth weight and higher rates of infant mortality for county residents.



Disabilities and health problems associated with low birth weight babies include chronic asthma, epilepsy, cerebral palsy and mental retardation. Babies who are low birth weight tend to have developmental difficulties, learning disabilities and high levels of distractibility as they age. Socioeconomic conditions linked to low birth weights include inadequate prenatal care, teen pregnancy, poor nutrition and smoking.

Infant mortality is defined as the number of deaths per 1,000 live births. Infant mortality is often used to assess the overall health of a community. A distinct disparity exists between