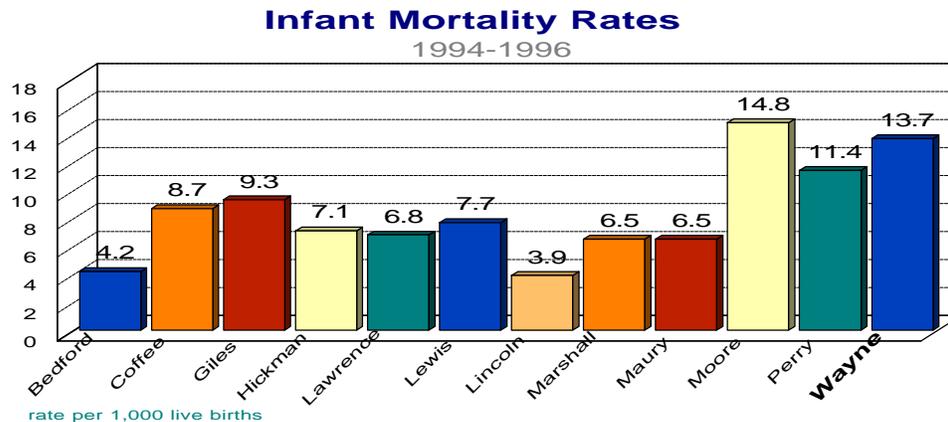


Birth Data

Infant mortality (deaths within the first year following birth) and births of infants that are low-weight are important indicators of a community's health status. Infant mortality is reported as a rate of every one infant death per 1,000 live births.

Through presentations by the Community Development staff, the Health Council learned that Wayne County had an infant mortality rate of 6.3 in 1997 (1 infant death per 1,000 live births). The state had a rate of 8.5 and the regional rate was 6.6. Infant mortality rates measure the effect of major health threats to newborn babies. Early comprehensive care plays a major part in reducing the rate of infant deaths. Fewer babies are dying in Tennessee. The state infant mortality rate has declined 56% since 1973. Wayne County's average infant mortality rate for the years 1994-1996 was 13.7 per 1,000 live births.

Both low birth weight and prematurity are among the leading causes of infant mortality. Low birth weight, a baby born weighing less than 5.9 pounds, is a major determinant of infant deaths. Low birth weight babies are 40 times more likely to die during the first month of life than normal weight infants. If the infant survives, it is much more likely to suffer from multiple health and developmental problems. The three-year average from 1994-1996 for Wayne County was 8.0; Wayne County's low birth weight rate for 1997 was 6.3, decreasing from 7.9 in 1996. The South Central Regional rate was 8.6 and the state rate was 8.8 for this same time period.



Data shows that more than half of the deaths that occurred, many due to low birth weight, was preventable with adequate prenatal care.

