



## Calling for #BlanketChange!

More than 7 million women of childbearing age live in U.S. counties without access or with limited access to maternity care. This lack of access to quality care combines with other racial and ethnic health disparities to create dangerous conditions, especially for families of color. **These disparities and widening gaps account for the increase in the overall U.S. preterm birth rate despite success in many states — and point to the critical need to address these disparities to have a meaningful impact on national rates.**

**It's time to make #BlanketChange for prevention, access, and equity.**

**Read our full commitments to the #BlanketChange themes of Equity, Access, and Prevention [here](#).**

**NICHQ is partnering with more than 100 organizations to boost this critical message of urgency and to voice our support to save the lives of moms and babies.**

Share your #BlanketChange story on social media and join the movement.



## **NICHQ Webinar: Reducing Preterm Birth: States Share Interventions, Policy, and Emerging Issues**

This webinar will dive into targeted interventions, policy efforts, and emerging issues that promoted or hindered improvements in reducing preterm birth rates in each of the four states represented in these case studies: Kansas, Massachusetts, Mississippi, and Oklahoma.

**View the recording of the live event [here](#).**

# Efforts to Address Preterm Birth Rates

*Introduction and Methodology*



## Case Study Background

From 2014 to 2018, with funding from Health Resources & Service Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau (HRSA MCHB), the National Institute for Children's Health Quality (NICHQ) led the Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network to Reduce Infant Mortality (IM CoIIN), a national initiative to improve birth outcomes and decrease infant mortality rates. NICHQ was the backbone organization of IM CoIIN, engaging 51 states and jurisdictions and more than 2,800 federal, state, and local leaders, public and private agencies, professionals, and communities to use quality improvement, innovation, and collaborative learning to address this significant public health issue.

As part of this work, many states in the IM CoIIN focused their efforts on strategies that were intended to reduce early and preterm births (less than 37 weeks gestation, PTB), a leading cause of infant mortality and morbidity. While preterm birth rates did decline nationwide and in many states between 2006 and 2014, rates in the U.S. increased throughout the span of the project (2014-2017), from 9.67% of live births in 2014 to 9.85 in 2016, and have continued to rise to 10.0% in 2018. Additionally, significant disparities persisted in the preterm birth rate, with the gaps steadily widening. These disparities and widening gaps account for the increase in the overall U.S. preterm birth rate despite success in many states — and point to the critical need to address these disparities to have a meaningful impact on national rates.

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## PREVENTION: Addressing preventable health conditions

Following NICHQ's work leading the [Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network to Reduce Infant Mortality \(IM CoIIN\)](#), a national initiative to improve birth outcomes and decrease infant mortality rates, we've produced a series of case studies examining disparities, targeted interventions to support pregnant mothers, policy efforts, and emerging issues in four states — Kansas, Massachusetts, Mississippi, and Oklahoma. [View the case studies here.](#)



## **ACCESS: Improving access to care**

We can improve access to care through expanding critical health programs and closing gaps in coverage. NICHQ conducts specific projects focusing on access to care and will continue to work toward ensuring all children can achieve their optimal health.

- Our [New York State Perinatal Quality Collaborative](#) (NYSPQC) is an initiative led by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) Division of Family Health (DFH) in partnership with NICHQ. This project includes the New York State Birth Equity Initiative, which will help birthing hospitals and centers identify how individual and systemic racism impacts birth outcomes at their facility and take actions to improve both the experience of care and perinatal outcomes of Black birthing people in the communities they serve.



## **EQUITY: Driving economic, social, and health equity**

Racism is a public health crisis, and inequalities in social determinants of health disproportionately hinder Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous children from reaching their optimal health. As there is complicity in silence, our equity voice at NICHQ has only grown. Though at times, it can feel uncomfortable to work through and unclear how to make a difference, the upside is that when our voices join together to speak out against racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression, the opportunity [to seek an improved approach to public health for the new decade](#) reveals itself. But words aren't enough – it takes intentional action to make real progress.

- NICHQ joins more than 100 other child health organizations in calling for the establishment of a White House Office on Children and Youth and a White House Conference on Children and Youth to elevate the needs of children, youth, and their families.

## **Become a #BlanketChange Agent**

As an advocate for children's health, you can join the Action Network, post a #BlanketChange message, and join their virtual town hall events. Take your support public by [customizing your](#)



[Facebook profile photo](#) or [downloading a new Zoom background](#).

As an organization or policymaker, you can [sign up to commit as a #BlanketChange supporter](#) and use their [social media toolkit](#) to call on stakeholders to participate.

Like you, we at NICHQ have a shared passion for improving the health of every child. Join us in our mission to take action for children now and in the decades to come. You can take action by:

- **[Joining our network](#)**. Sign up for timely, relevant maternal and child health equity resources, learning opportunities, and meaningful insights and family stories that inspire systems-level change.
- **Share our message!** Make sure you stay connected on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#) to spread the word about children's health initiatives, advocacy, and professional opportunities.

[Sign up](#)