

STATE OF DELAWARE



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT DOVER

EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER FIFTY-SIX

RE: Establishing The Infant Mortality Task Force

WHEREAS, the State of Delaware has undertaken a number of important and substantial initiatives to improve the health of pregnant women and their babies, including, but not limited to: substantially increasing Medicaid coverage for pregnant women and infants; initiating the Home Visiting program for first-time mothers and other programs such as Smart Start, Genetic Services, the Child Development Watch program, and expanding the Women, Infants and Children ("WIC") program; establishing the Ecumenical Council on Maternal and Infant Health; and forming the Child Death and Stillbirth Review Commission; and

WHEREAS, since its formation in 1995, the Delaware Perinatal Board has coordinated initiatives to address infant mortality in the State; and

WHEREAS, despite the State's aggressive efforts, and notwithstanding the fact that Delaware ranks well in the percentage of expectant mothers receiving prenatal care, Delaware's infant mortality rate has remained persistently high; and

WHEREAS, although the Delaware Perinatal Board has diligently and commendably fulfilled its purposes, the State's continuing struggle with infant mortality issues demonstrates the need for a single purpose task force to comprehensively assess the current status of the infant

mortality problem in the State, and to develop strategies for improving Delaware's infant mortality initiatives and raise awareness concerning continued infant mortality problems in the State,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RUTH ANN MINNER, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Delaware, do hereby declare and order the following:

1. The Delaware Infant Mortality Task Force is established. It shall consist of members, appointed by the Governor, who shall be broadly representative of the population of the State and of organizations in the state that address or are impacted by the issue of infant mortality, including the Perinatal Board. Two-Co-Chairpersons, one a representative of the Division of Public Health, and one from the private or non-profit sector, shall be appointed by the Governor. The members of the Infant Mortality Task Force shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor, and the terms of all members shall terminate at the time the Task Force tenders its "Recommendations for Reduction of Infant Mortality Rates in Delaware" to the Governor.
2. The Infant Mortality Task Force shall advise the Governor through the Division of Public Health and the Department of Health and Social Services of strategies to reduce infant mortality in Delaware. The Task Force shall develop broad-based recommendations for the reduction of infant mortality in Delaware, which are based upon scientific evidence, defined partnerships, expected contributions, timelines, review and evaluation. These recommendations should encompass but not be limited to charges to business, community, education, communities of faith, providers, hospitals, insurers and government.

3. The Task Force shall issue its progress report, “Recommendations for Reduction of Infant Mortality Rates in Delaware”, within six months of the date of this Order. Its final report shall be submitted within nine months of the date of this order.
4. The goals of the Infant Mortality Task Force shall include, but shall not be limited to:
 - a. Defining the infant mortality status of Delaware as compared to the nation and the region.
 - b. Defining the disparities among races related to infant mortality and determining the reasons for the increasing disparity gaps.
 - c. Identifying risk factors and underlying etiologies when possible.
 - d. Reviewing scientific literature for the purpose of determining risk factors for infant mortality and best practices for prevention and intervention.
 - e. Determining and assessing the impact of relevant risk factors.
 - f. Increasing awareness of the scope of the problem among government officials, medical professionals and the public.
 - g. Improving coordination between and among public and private sector agencies.
 - h. Recommending critical changes to the profile of, operations of, and support of the Perinatal Board.
 - i. Identifying areas requiring additional research and education.
5. The Infant Mortality Task Force shall establish sub-committees under the leadership of Task Force members to conduct the activities of the Task Force.

Each Task Force member is expected to be involved in the Task Force's activities and to serve on one subcommittee.

6. The Division of Public Health shall utilize the final recommendations to develop a comprehensive multidisciplinary Infant Mortality reduction plan for the State of Delaware.

Approved this 2nd day of June, 2004.



Ruth Ann Minner
Governor

ATTEST:

Harriet N. Smith Windsor
Secretary of State