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# E-NEWS

November 2015

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**Moving the Needle: Addressing Preterm Births in Georgia**

Seema Csukas, MD, PhD  
Medical Director, Maternal & Child Programs  
Georgia Department of Public Health

On November 5, 2015, the March of Dimes released the 2015 Premature Birth Report Card. Overall, the United States earned a "C" with a preterm birth rate of 9.6% in 2014; however, as a state, Georgia received a "D" with a preterm birth rate of 10.8%. It is important to note that, due to the change in methodology from last normal menstrual period (LMP) to obstetric estimate of gestation (OE), the 2014 preterm birth rates and state rates cannot be measured against previous years. Nevertheless, we have some work to do to achieve the Healthy People 2020 goal of 8.1%.

In 2014, there were more than 130,000 births in Georgia and of those, more than 14,000 were preterm, which is not only a regional issue but a statewide problem. Preterm birth is the #1 cause of infant death. Furthermore, there is the potential for long-term morbidity for preterm babies, not to mention the emotional and economic toll on the child, family, and entire community.

So what are some of the initiatives currently taking place to address preterm

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