

# DATA MATTERS

October 2014

## CHICAGO'S BABIES

By Katherine Stuehrk

### RESOURCES ON THIS TOPIC

Take a look at these resources to learn more about maternal and infant health in Chicago:

Read the [Healthy Chicago 2020 agenda](#)

Learn about [maternal and infant health issues](#)

Explore data on [Chicago Community Areas](#)

Check out the [data set](#) we put together on this topic to see what interests you

### DATA SOURCES

City of Chicago Data Portal, Selected Public Health Indicators by Chicago Community Area, last updated in 2013.

City of Chicago Data Portal, Low birth weight in Chicago, by year, 1999–2009.

The Chicago Department of Public Health. (2011). *Healthy Chicago 2020*.

Illinois Department of Public Health Statistics, Infant Mortality Numbers by County, 2008-2010, last updated in 2014.

Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-year estimates program.

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October is National Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month. Among the most pressing health concerns related to babies are infant mortality (death before age 1) and low birth weight (born less than 5 lbs., 8 oz.). While it's obvious why infant mortality is such a concern, low birth weight is associated with newborn health and survival and with higher risk of infant and childhood mortality. Here in Chicago, the Department of Public Health's *Healthy Chicago 2020* agenda provides a vision for improved public health in our city, including for infant mortality and low birth weight. We decided to take a look at city public health records to learn more about how Chicago babies are faring on these crucial indicators.

**Over half of all Chicago Community Areas have not met the *Healthy Chicago 2020* targets for low birth weight and infant mortality, which are 8.6% and 7.0 per 1,000 live births, respectively. There is a large gap to fill over the next five years if the city is to reach these goals.**

- 9.7% of Chicago babies are born at a **low birth weight**, over 1 percentage point higher than the target rate of 8.6%.
- In 39 of the 77 Chicago community areas, over 8.6% of all babies born have **low birth weight**, meaning these communities are not yet meeting the *Healthy Chicago 2020* target.
- Avalon Park (19.7%), Washington Heights (19.6%), and Washington Park (17.7%) have the worst **low birth weight** rates in the city.
- Chicago's **infant mortality** rate is 7.4 for every 1,000 live births, above the *Healthy Chicago 2020* target rate of 7.0.
- 42 of the 77 Chicago Community Areas have **infant mortality** rates higher than the target rate of 7.0.
- Fuller Park (22.6), Washington Park (19.3), and West Garfield Park (19.0) have the worst **infant mortality** rates in the city.

**Where children are born in Chicago has a significant impact on their life chances from the beginning. Communities with higher poverty rates and communities of color tend to have worse infant health outcomes.**

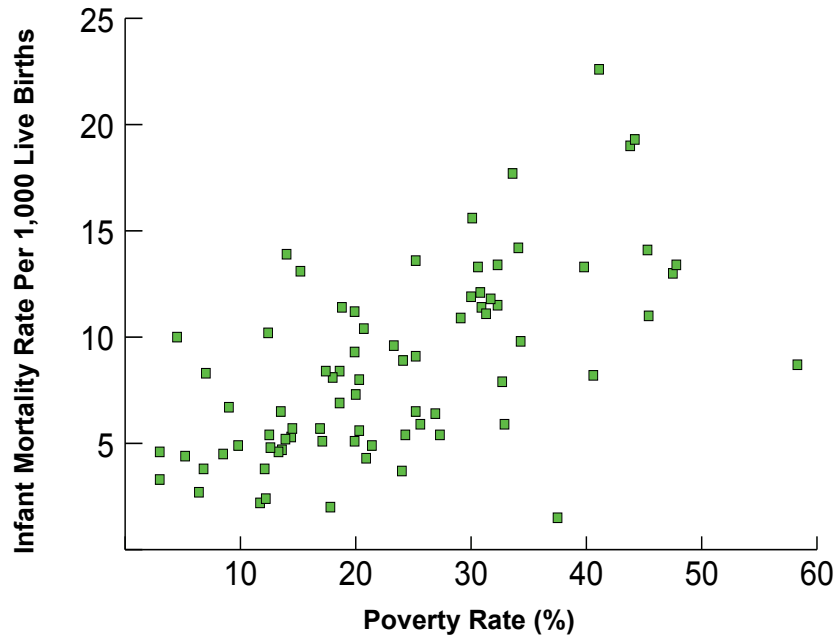
- 84% of high-poverty Chicago Community Areas (poverty rate of 25% or above) have **low birth weight** rates higher than the *Healthy Chicago 2020* target of 8.6%.
- The **low birth weight** rate in Chicago is over twice as high for babies born to black mothers (14.5%) as it is for babies born to white (7.0%) and Latino (6.9%) mothers.
- 81% of high-poverty Chicago Community Areas (poverty rate of 25% or above) have **infant mortality** rates higher than the *Healthy Chicago 2020* target of 7.0 per 1,000 live births.
- The **mortality** rate among black infants is nearly three times as high as that among white infants in Chicago.

Check out the graphs on the following pages to explore these data further.

# INFANT MORTALITY

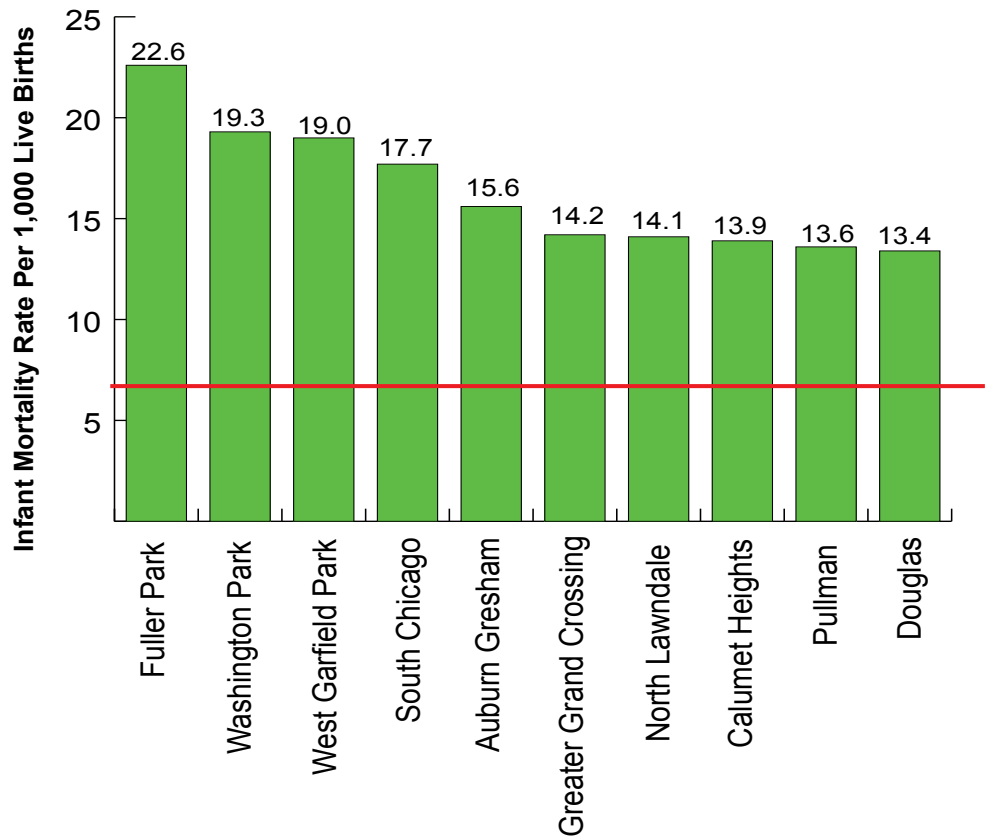
On the scatterplot to the right, each dot represents a Chicago Community Area. There is a positive relationship between the poverty rate and the infant mortality rate: communities with high rates of poverty tend to have higher rates of infant mortality and vice versa.

### Chicago Community Areas and Infant Mortality



### Ten Worst Infant Mortality Rates by Chicago Community Area

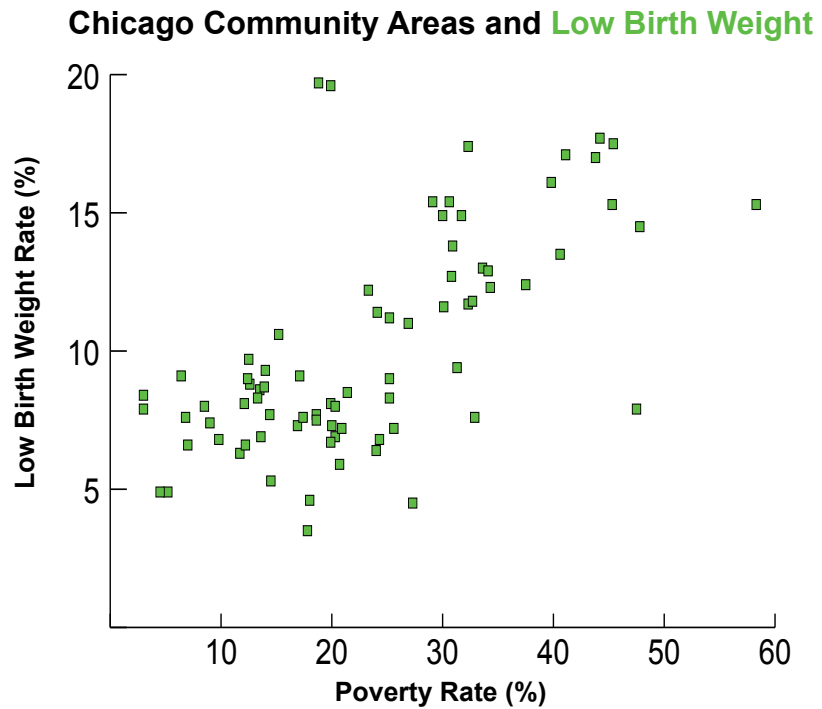
The red line in the chart to the right indicates the *Healthy Chicago 2020* target infant mortality rate of 7.0 per 1,000 live births.



Sources: City of Chicago Data Portal, *Selected Public Health Indicators by Chicago Community Area*, last updated in 2013 (most recent data available by Chicago Community Area are from 2005-2009). Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2008-2012 American Community Survey.

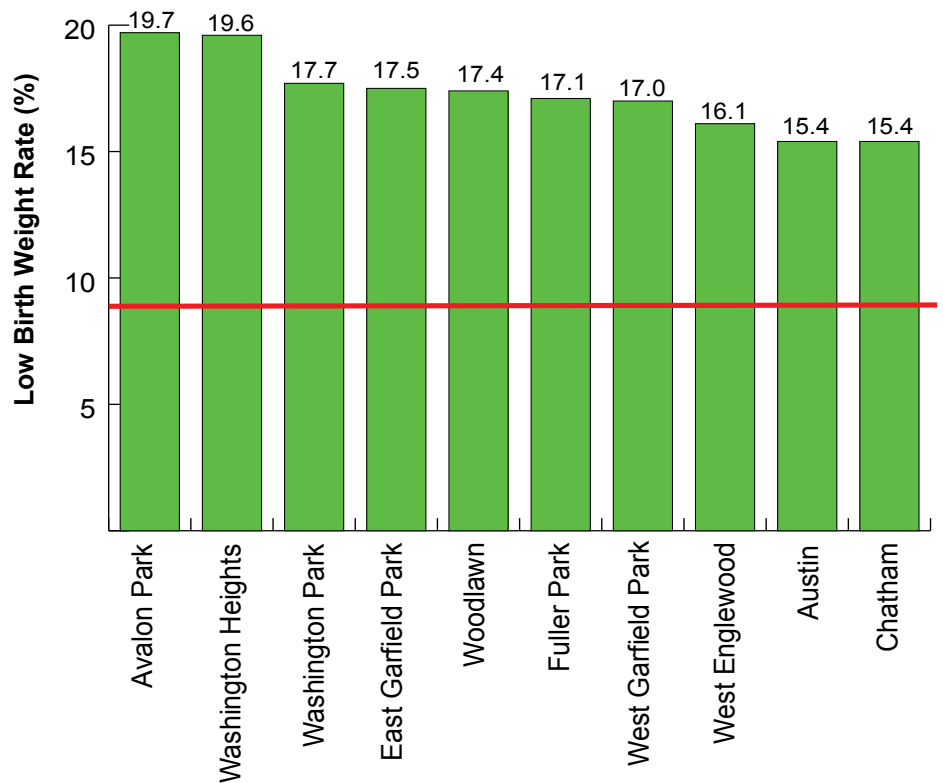
# LOW BIRTH WEIGHT

On the scatterplot to the right, each dot represents a Chicago Community Area. There is a positive relationship between poverty rate and low birth weight rate: communities with high rates of poverty tend to have higher low birth weight rates and vice versa.



## Ten Worst Low Birth Weight Rates by Chicago Community Area

The red line in the chart to the right indicates the *Healthy Chicago 2020* target low birth weight rate of 8.6%.



Sources: City of Chicago Data Portal, Selected Public Health Indicators by Chicago Community Area, last updated in 2013 (most recent data available by Chicago Community Area are from 2009). Social IMPACT Research Center's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2008-2012 American Community Survey.

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