

Countywide Services Agency

Department of
Health and Human Services

Division of Public Health
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For Immediate Release

Sacramento County Public Health's "Perinatal Disparities" Conference February 26th to Tackle Issue of High Death Rate Among African-American Infants in Sacramento

(Sacramento, CA) – The death rate for African-American babies is high – more than twice that of any other ethnicity.

This Thursday, February 26th, 2009 from 8:00AM to 4:00PM, Sacramento County Public Health, Sutter Medical Center, March of Dimes and other community partners are sponsoring a day-long Perinatal Disparities conference to explore the issues surrounding these troubling statistics and try to find solutions.

Glennah Trochet, M.D., Sacramento County's Health Officer, says that African-American infants suffer an unusually high death rate. "In 2006 in Sacramento County, the death rate for African-American infants was 14 out of 1,000 live births, compared to 5 deaths out of 1,000 live births for other ethnicities. That's nearly three times the death rate, and it's very troubling."

Dr. Olivia Kasirye, Medical Director for Sacramento County maternal and child health programs, says that Thursday's day-long conference will feature top health and medical experts working to find solutions. "Because there is not one single factor causing the high death rate among African-American infants, we need to look at multiple causes, including socioeconomic status, premature birth and even stress."

Dr. Kasirye says conference speakers will describe the disparities in birth outcomes in Sacramento County, discuss the status of premature birth in California and the nation, define the factors that contribute to early infant death in the black community, and identify strategies to address the problem.

The Perinatal Disparities conference is just about full, but there are still a few seats left for anyone interested in attending. Registration is \$40 and the conference will be held this Thursday, February 26, at Sutter Health University, 2700 Gateway Oaks Drive Suite 2600, in Sacramento. For registration information, call 916-875-5471.

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