



## FACT SHEET: Fetal and Infant Deaths and Perinatal Periods of Risk Among American Indians and Alaska Natives in Washington

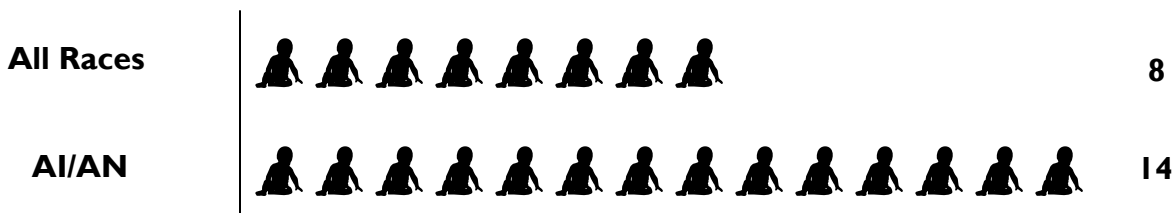
**“When a baby dies, a part of the community’s future dies”**

American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) experience **1.6 times** the rate of fetal-infant deaths compared to the Washington State average\*



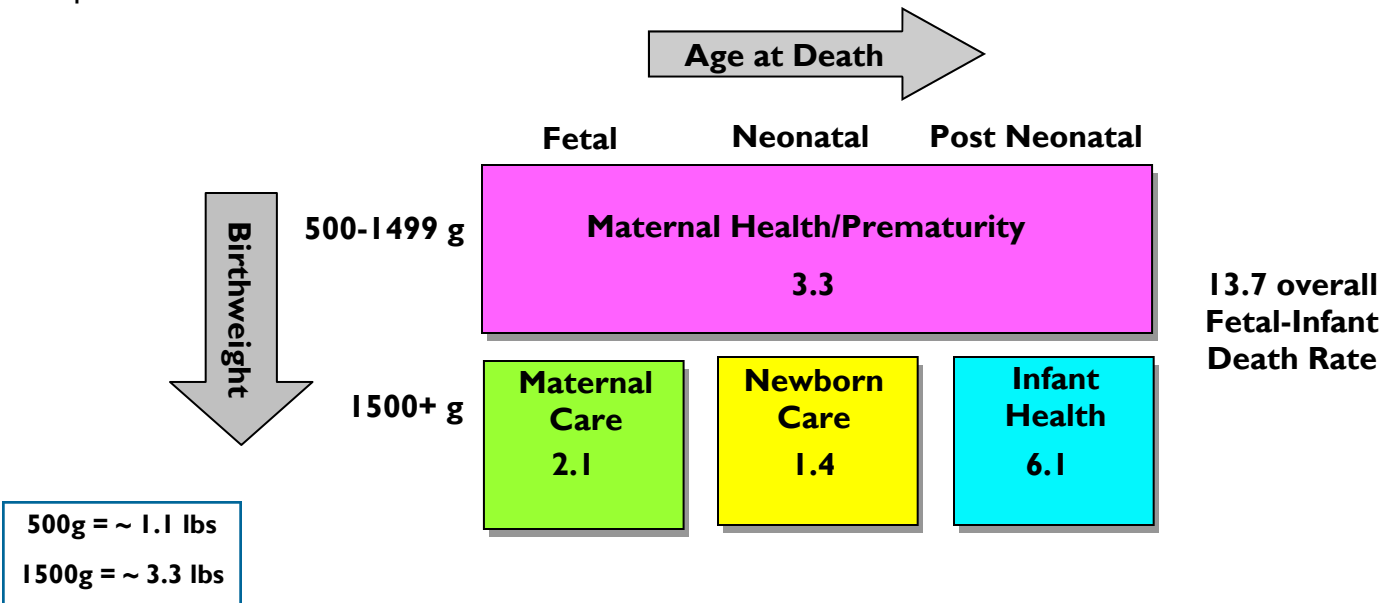
- In Washington State between 2000-2004, there were 3,414 fetal and infant deaths and 119 of them were AI/AN
- While AI/AN make up only 2.7% of the WA population, AI/AN account for 3.4% of fetal-infant deaths (Source: U.S. Census, 2000)

### Number of babies that die before their first birthday for every 1,000 babies born in Washington State, 2000-2004



### About The Perinatal Periods of Risk (PPOR) Project

To better understand reasons for the high rates of fetal and infant death among AI/AN, researchers looked at birth and death certificates of all the babies born in Washington who died before their first birthday between 2000 and 2004. The Perinatal Periods of Risk (PPOR) approach maps these deaths by birth weight and age at death. Below are the four periods of risk and the rates of AI/AN fetal and infant death in Washington State in each period and overall.

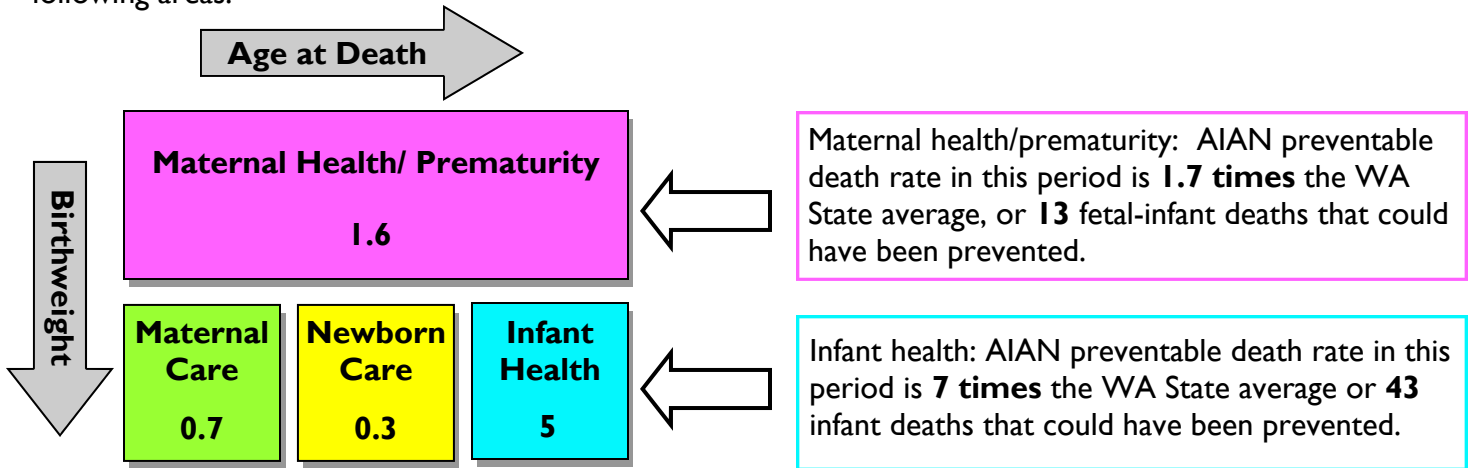


\* Data source: Washington State birth, fetal death and linked birth-infant death files (2000-2004). Note: Problems with data accuracy such as racial misclassification and incomplete vital records likely underestimate the disparity in fetal and infant mortality.

## Preventable Fetal and Infant Deaths

The PPOR method uses rates of fetal and infant death among the group with the best outcomes as a comparison to learn about preventable fetal-infant deaths and focus areas for further examination and action. The comparison group used is white women over 20 years old with 13 or more years of education.

Preventable fetal and infant death rates shown below are calculated by subtracting the death rates of this comparison group from that of AI/AN. Among AI/AN in Washington State between 2000-2004 there were **70** preventable fetal and infant deaths. High **rates of preventable fetal-infant deaths** are seen in the following areas:



- Very low birth weight infants account for most of the increased death rate among AI/AN in the Maternal Health/Prematurity period
- Infection, injury, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) account for much of the increased death rate among AI/AN in the Infant Health period

## Opportunities for Change

PPOR data show that the areas of infant health, maternal health and prematurity are the greatest contributors to preventable fetal and infant death for American Indians/Alaska Natives in Washington State. By focusing on suggested interventions, we can reduce fetal and infant mortality rates for AI/AN.

