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Health and Human
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**Texas Department of State
Health Services**

Infant Mortality Prevention

Presentation to the House Committee on Public Health

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August 2026

Overview

- Infant Health Data
 - Infant Mortality
 - Preterm Birth and Very Low Birth Weight
 - Perinatal Periods of Risk
- Strategies to Reduce Preventable Infant Deaths

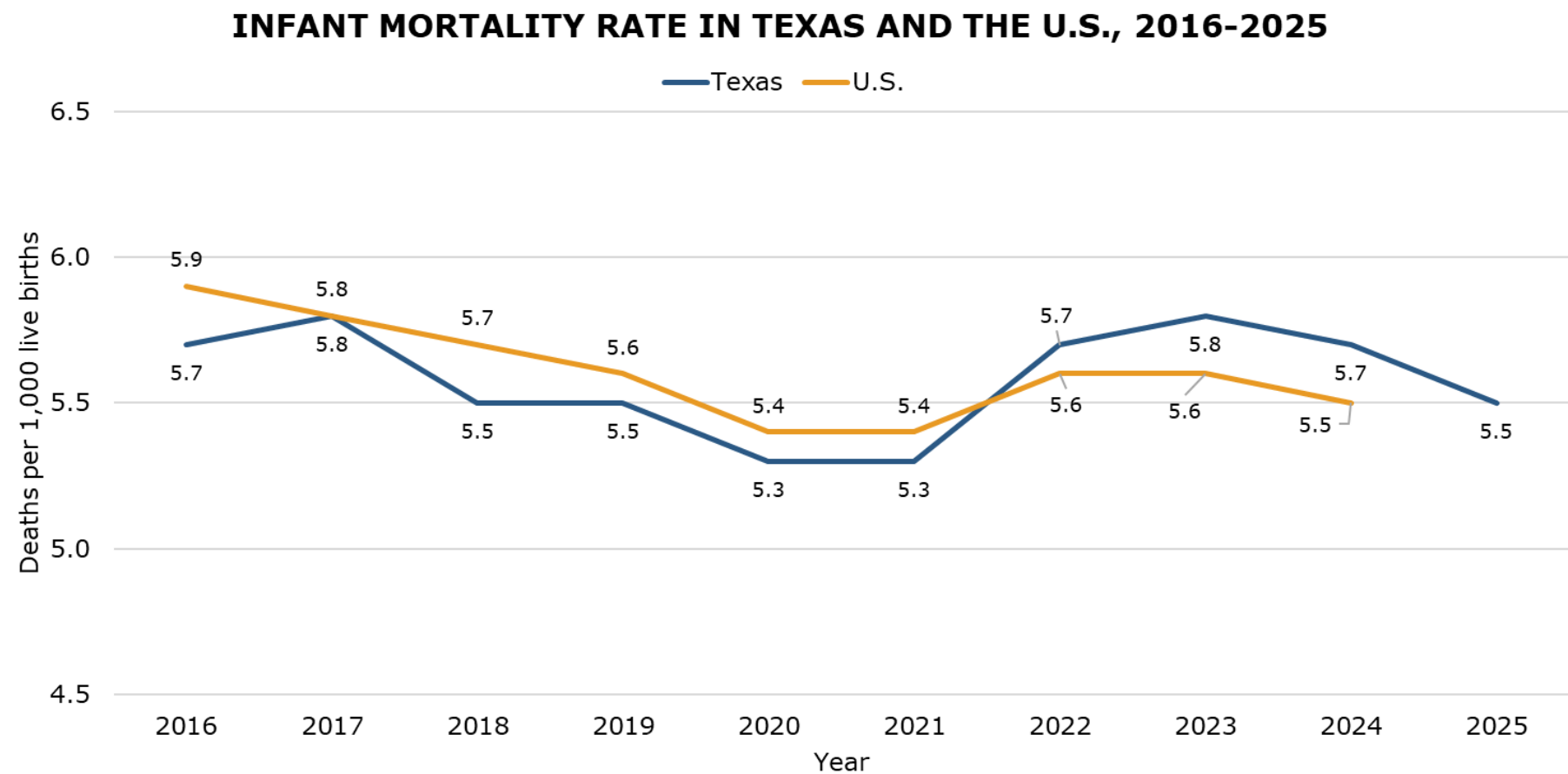
Infant Mortality in Texas



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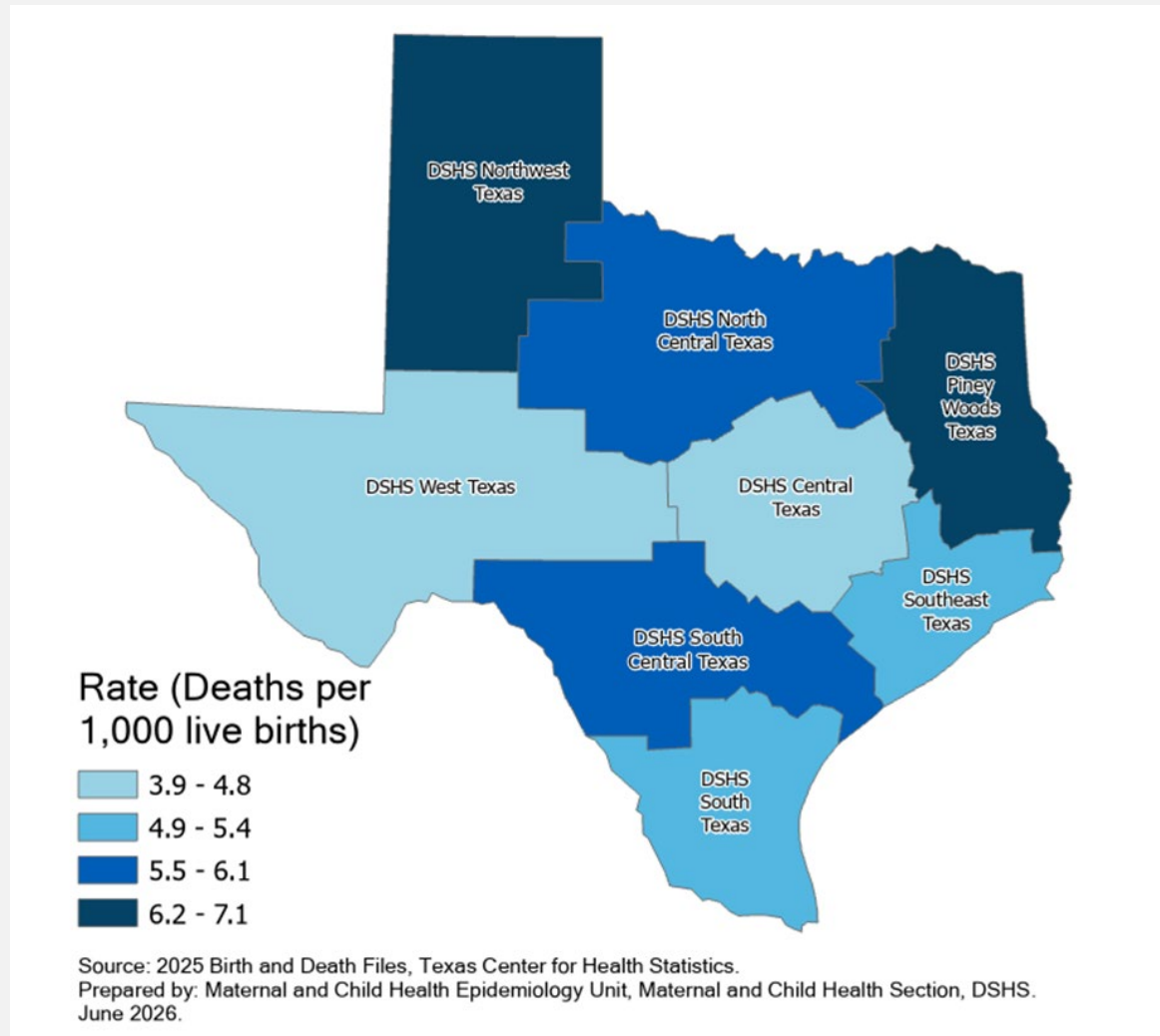
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Texas Infant Mortality Rate, 2016–2025

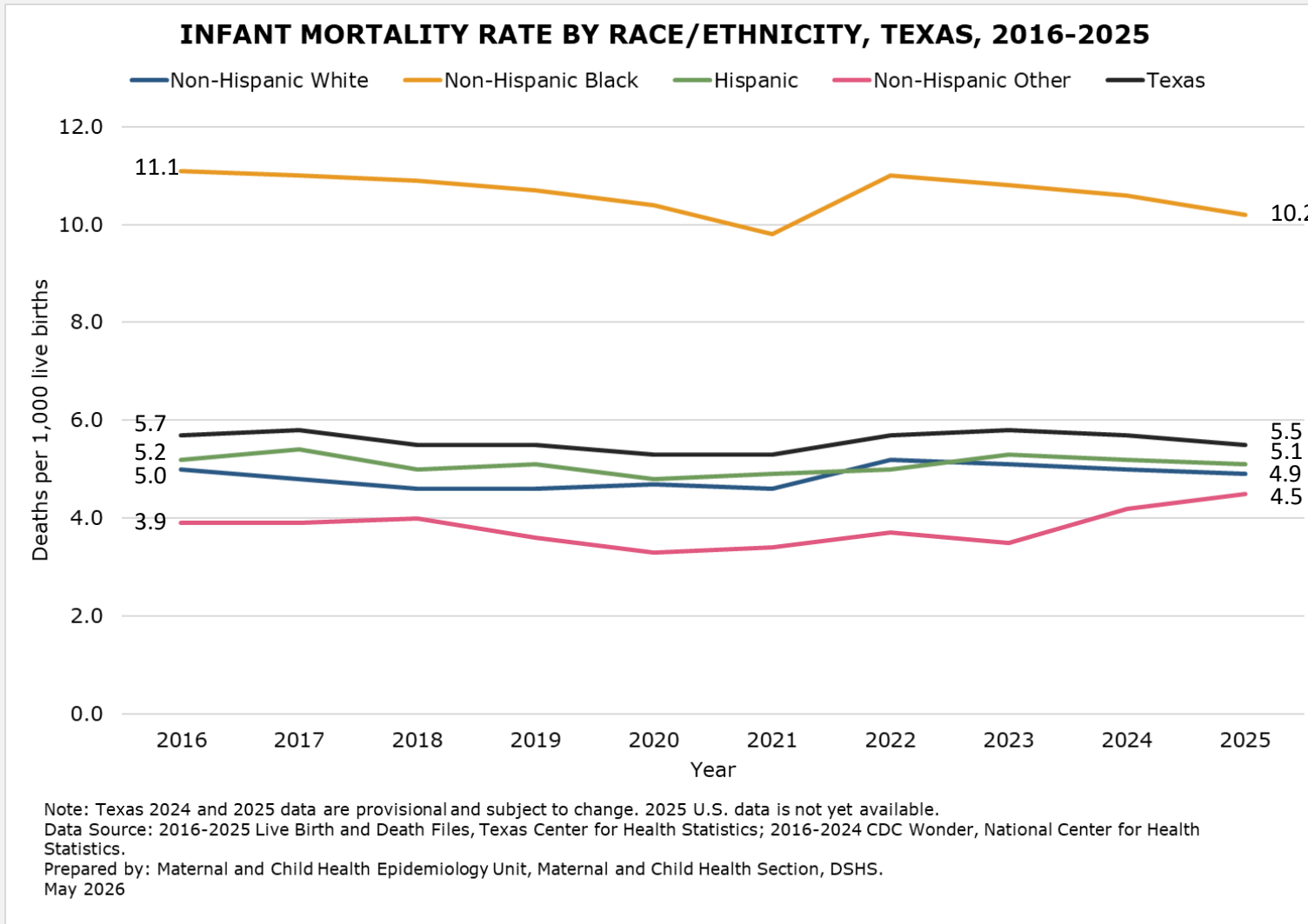


Note: Texas 2024 and 2025 data are provisional and subject to change. 2025 U.S. data is not yet available.
Data Source: 2016-2025 Live Birth and Death Files, Texas Center for Health Statistics; 2016-2024 CDC Wonder, National Center for Health Statistics.
Prepared by: Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology Unit, Maternal and Child Health Section, DSHS.
May 2026

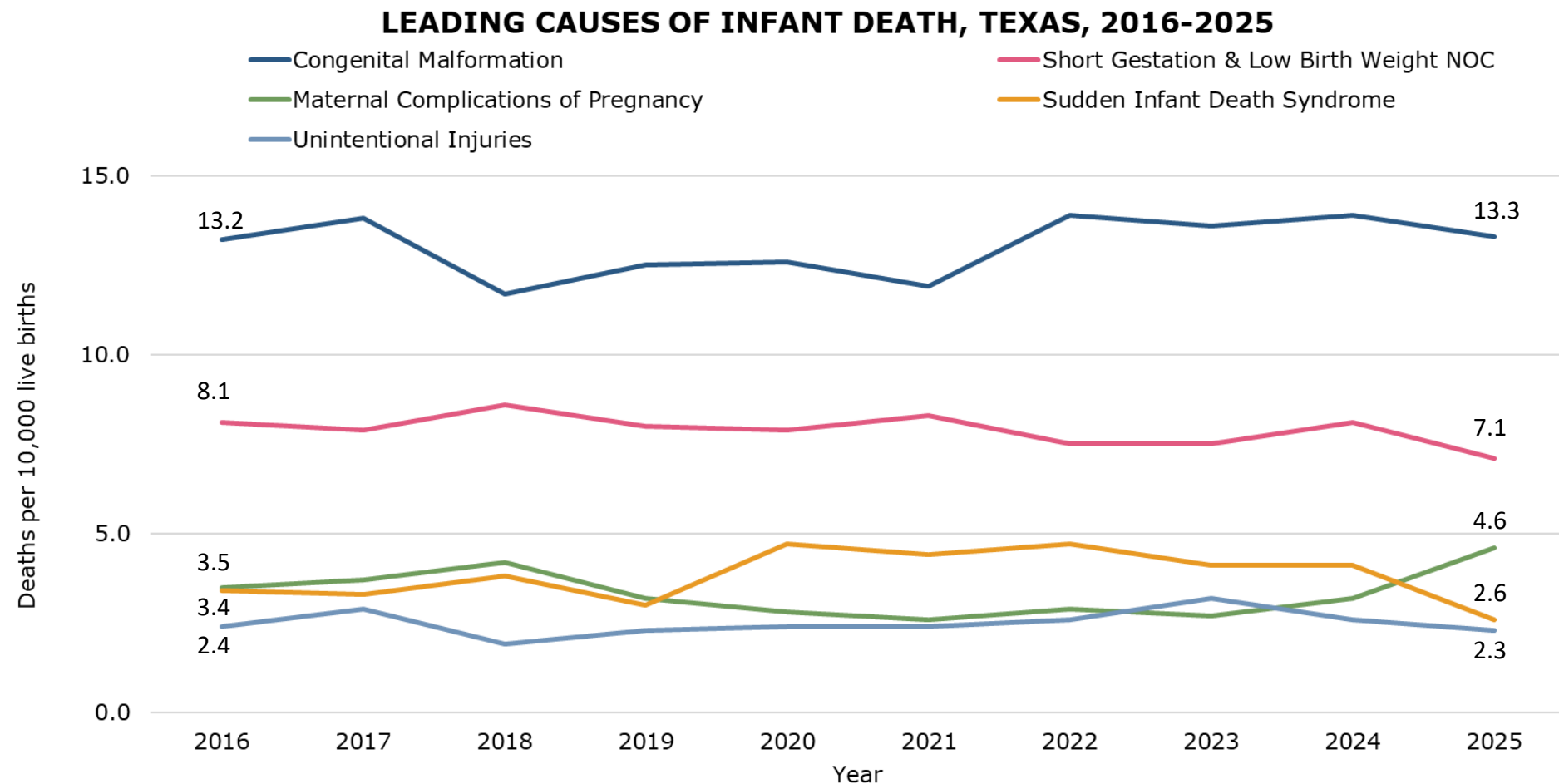
Infant Mortality Rates by Public Health Region, 2025



Infant Mortality Rate by Race and Ethnicity, 2016-2025



Leading Cause of Infant Death in Texas, 2016–2025



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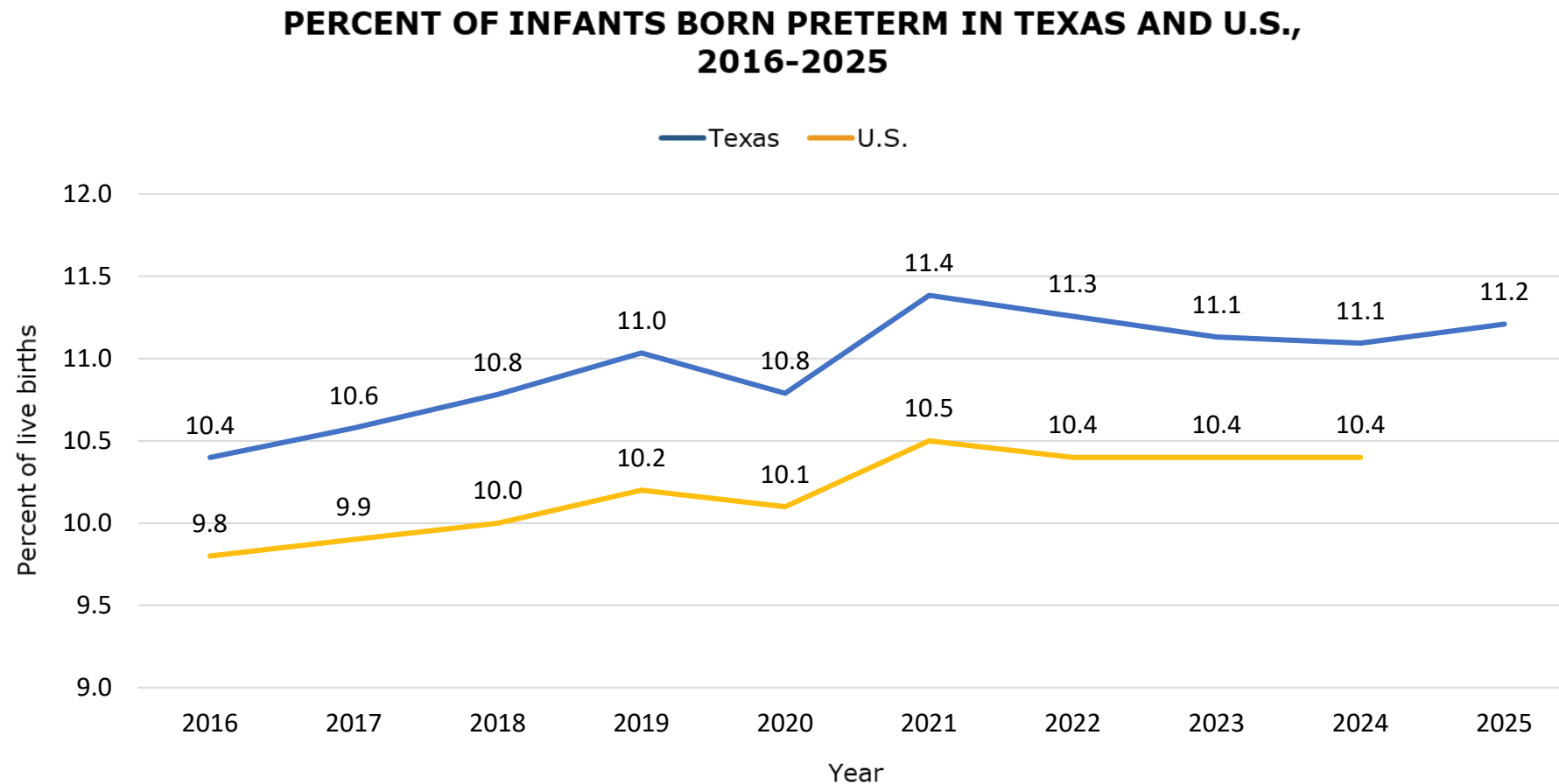
Preterm Births and Low Birth Weight in Texas



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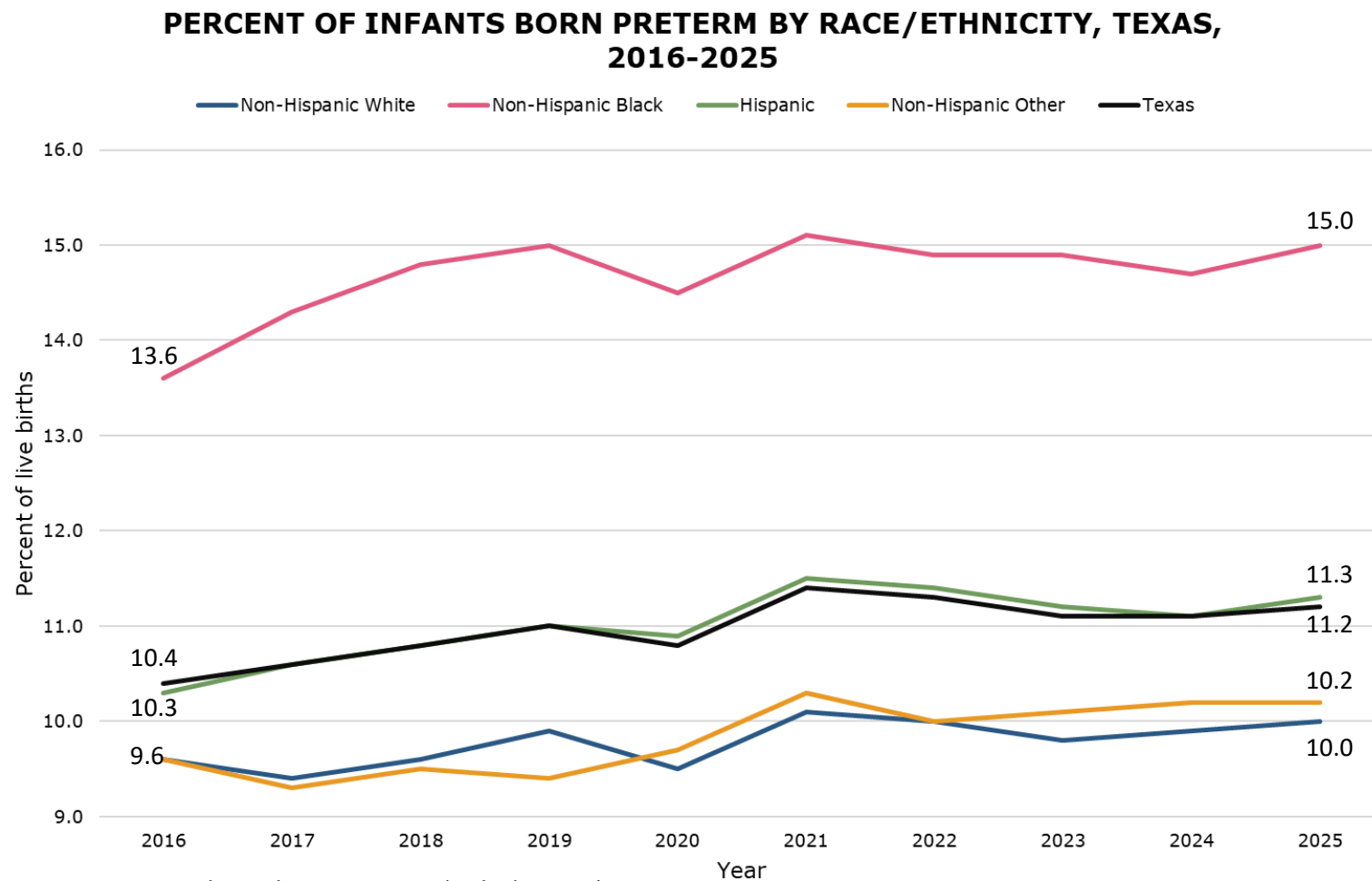
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Preterm Births in Texas and the U.S., 2016–2025



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Preterm Birth Rates by Race and Ethnicity, Texas 2016-2025



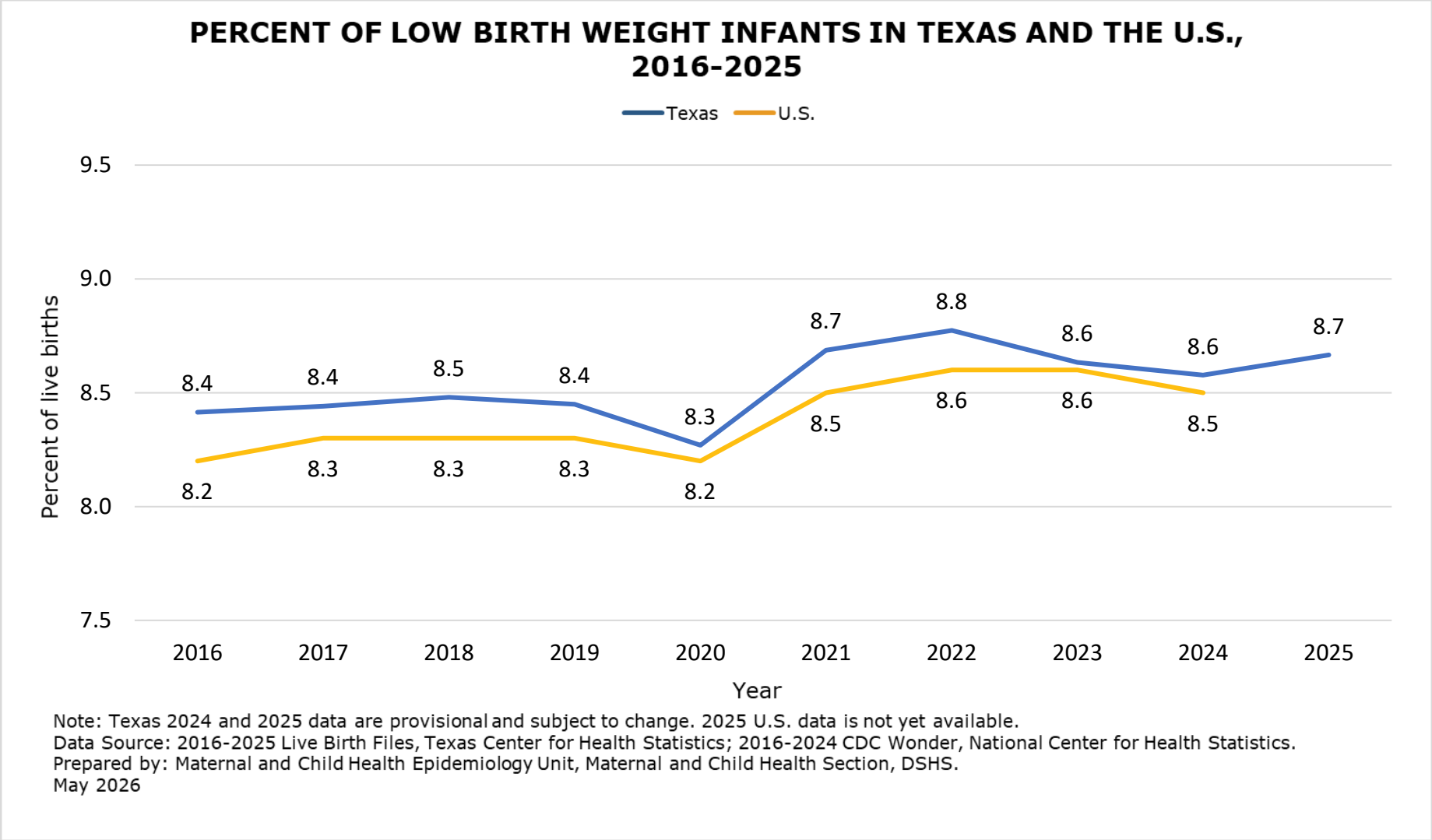
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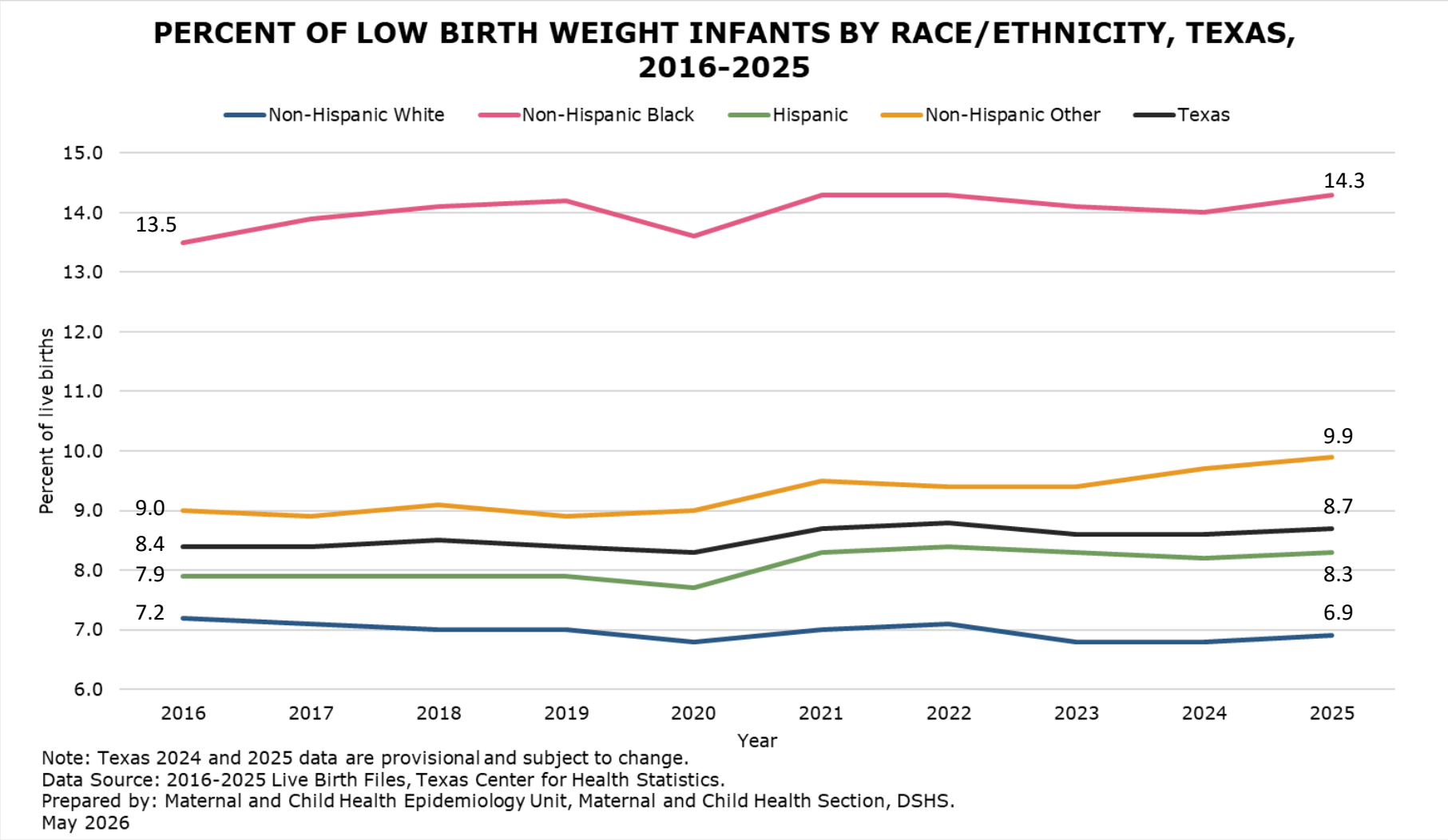
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Low Birth Weight in Texas and the U.S., 2016–2025



Low Birth Weight by Race and Ethnicity, Texas, 2016-2025



Texas Perinatal Periods of Risk (PPOR) Analysis, 2020–2022



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PPOR Analysis

- Classifies fetal and infant deaths by birthweight and age at death
- Compares Texas feto-infant mortality rate to a reference population
- Shows which of the four periods below are contributing the most to feto-infant mortality and drivers

Maternal Health and Prematurity

- *Prevention Areas*
 - Preconception Health
 - Health Behaviors
 - Early Prenatal Care

Maternal Care

- *Prevention Areas*
 - Prenatal Care
 - High Risk Referral
 - Obstetric Care

Newborn Care

- *Prevention Areas*
 - Perinatal Management
 - Neonatal Care
 - Pediatric Surgery

Infant Health

- *Prevention Areas*
 - Sleep Position
 - Smoking
 - Breastfeeding

PPOR Results

Highest Period of Risk:

Maternal Health and Prematurity Period

- Deaths related to:
 - Very low birthweight births
- Risk factors:
 - Multiple gestation pregnancies
 - Low weight gain during pregnancy

2nd Highest Period of Risk:

Infant Health Period

- Deaths related to:
 - Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
 - Birth defects
- Risk factors:
 - Maternal education level
 - No prenatal care in the first trimester

Strategies to Reduce Preventable Infant Deaths



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Potential Very Low Birth Weight (VLBW) Interventions

Preconception Health

- Early, consistent education and support for women and families
- Plain-language guidance
- Family-centered support

Health Behaviors

- Healthy nutrition + appropriate weight gain
- Smoking and substance use prevention
- Infection prevention
- Birth spacing
- Warning signs of preterm labor

Prenatal Care

- Group prenatal education for shared learning and peer support
- One-on-one counseling to provide tailored risk reduction plans.
- Medical + social referrals that connect families to needed services
- Timely prenatal care for early connection and follow-up.

Reducing SIDS and Birth Defects Interventions

Reducing SIDS Risk

- Breastfeeding
- Safe sleep positions

Reducing Birth Defects Risks

- Healthy weight gain during pregnancy
- Chronic disease management before and during pregnancy
- Smoking and substance use disorder
- Early and regular prenatal care

Healthy Texas Mothers and Babies

Maternal and Child Health Knowledge, Leadership, and Partners

Individual and Public Awareness and Knowledge

Increase Knowledge to Change Attitudes and Behaviors for Improved Maternal and Infant Health Outcomes

- *Hear Her Texas Maternal Health & Safety Campaign*
- *Infant Health & Safety Campaign*
- *Statewide Lactation Support Hotline - After-hours Services*
- *Right from the Start Campaign*
- *Information for Parents of Newborn Children Pamphlet*
- *Maternal & Infant Dashboards*

Professional Education

Strengthen Competencies and Prepare Professionals to Transmit Knowledge, Skills, and Motivation to Patients, Clients, and Colleagues

- *TCHMB and TexasAIM Summits*
- *DSHS Grand Rounds*
- *DSHS Perinatal Academy*
- *On-demand Provider Education*
- *Webinars, Workshops, Seminars, and Technical Trainings*
- *Train the Trainer Courses*
- *Perinatal Bereavement Care Initiative*

Community Empowerment

Engage Community Partners to Strengthen Networks for Collaboration, Innovation, and Collective Impact

- *HTMB Community Coalitions*
- *State and National Networks*
- *Community Forums and Listening Sessions*

Community Improvement

Foster Development of Policy, Systems and Environments to Reduce Barriers, Promote Healthy Lifestyle Choices, and Optimize Health Outcomes

- *High-Risk Maternal Care Coordination Services Program*
- *Texas Mother-Friendly Worksite Program*
- *Infant Sleep Safety Promotion*
- *Smoke Free Environments*

Perinatal Quality Improvement Network

Drive System Changes to Support Adoption and Diffusion of Quality Improvements for Maternal and Infant Health and Safety

- *Maternal Mortality & Morbidity Review Committee*
- *TexasAIM Initiative*
- *Texas Collaborative for Healthy Mothers and Babies*
- *Congenital Syphilis Prevention*
- *Texas Violent Pregnancy Death Prevention Program*
- *Support Levels of Care*

Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology, Surveillance, Research, and Analytics



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Our mission is to improve maternal and infant health and safety by advancing quality care, implementing evidence-based prevention, and addressing health disparities for all Texas mothers and babies.

DSHS Maternal Health Activities

Maternal Health and Prematurity Period

- TexasAIM Program
- High-Risk Maternal Care Coordination Services
- Hear Her Texas Maternal Health and Safety Campaign
- Texas Tobacco Quitline
- Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee
- Maternal Levels of Care

DSHS Breastfeeding Support Activities

Infant Health Period

- Texas Mother-Friendly Worksite Program
- Right from the Start Campaign
- Lactation and Safe Sleep Opportunities in Texas (LASSO-TX)
- Texas Lactation Support Hotline
- Healthy Texas Mothers and Babies Community Coalitions
- Neonatal and Maternal Levels of Care

DSHS SIDS Prevention Activities

Infant Health Period

- Infant Safe Sleep Promotion
 - Community Trainings
 - Safe Infant Sleep Campaign
- Healthy Texas Mothers and Babies Community Coalitions
- Information for Parents of Newborn Children Pamphlet
- Texas Tobacco Quitline and Smoke Free Environments

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