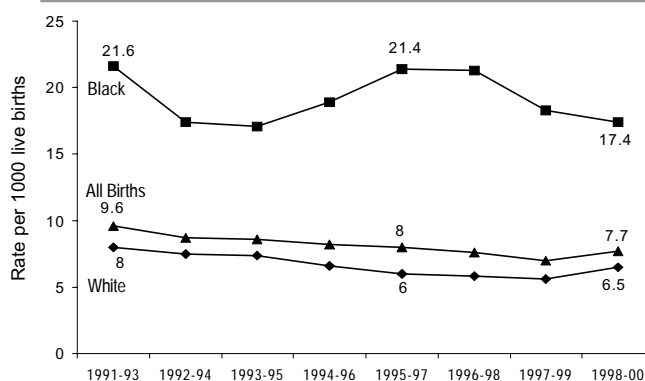


Focus on Infant Health

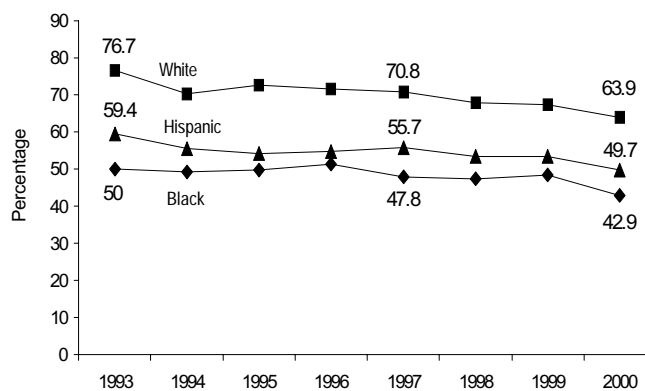
The Community HealthWatch report cards are developed by the Kent County Health Department to report on the status of health priorities being monitored in the Kent County community by Healthy Kent 2010. This report card focuses on infant health, an area of significant racial disparities. In Kent County, data show that black women are less likely to receive adequate prenatal care and are more likely to have babies with low birthweight than white or Hispanic women. Low birthweight is a known risk factor for infant death. The Healthy Kent Infant Health Team continues to assess prenatal care services in Kent County, and has developed a prenatal assessment tool to assure a community-wide standard of prenatal care. In addition, Kent County's Fetal Infant Mortality Review Team continues to examine medical, social, environmental and other factors that can impact pregnancy and birth outcomes.

Infant Mortality Rate



The **infant mortality rate** is widely recognized as an indicator of the current health status and social well being of a population. It is also a predictor of the health status of the next generation. The black infant mortality rate declined for the third three-year period in a row in 1998-2000. Despite this positive trend, the overall infant death rate did not decline because an increase was seen in the white infant death rate during the last three years.

Adequacy of Prenatal Care



Adequate prenatal care is measured by the month of pregnancy in which prenatal care began and the number of prenatal visits. While the percentage of all women receiving adequate prenatal care in Kent County declined between 1993 and 2000, white women were still more likely to receive adequate prenatal care than either black or Hispanic women. However, prenatal care appears to be only one of several factors that can affect birth outcome, specifically **birthweight**. In 2000 in Kent County, black infants had the highest percentages of low birthweight (≤ 5.5 lbs.) at each level of prenatal care. This is of particular concern because low birthweight is a leading risk factor for infant death (prematurity -- defined as gestation less than 37 weeks -- is the leading cause of low birthweight). Black infants continue to be more likely to have shorter gestational periods than white infants.

Birthweight by Level of Prenatal Care

