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HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
NEWS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Health Department Interconception Care Program  
Recognized Nationally as Model Practice**

**GRAND RAPIDS** – Expectant mothers have a variety of different experiences. Some women can follow all of the guidelines set by their health care provider, and still have complications. The Kent County Health Department (KCHD) is tackling disparities in infant mortality through the Kent County Infant Health Initiative - Interconception Care (IC) Program. This month, the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) announced the IC Program is a “Model Practice.” Practices designated as a model are shared with other health departments, so others can benefit from them. Of 71 applications, only 22 were declared a “Model Practice” in 2014.

The IC Program is an enhanced case management program through the KCHD. Women who live in Kent County, have experienced an adverse pregnancy outcome in the past year, and who are not currently pregnant can enroll in the program. The IC Program is evidence-based, designed to reach women as early as two weeks after the birth of one child, and before the conception of the next child. The interconception period is used to provide help and educate high-risk women who have had a previous pregnancy that ended in an adverse outcome.

Adverse pregnancy outcomes are defined as:

- Premature delivery (before 37 weeks gestation)
- Low birth-weight (under 2,500 gm or 5 lbs. 8 oz)
- Infant death
- Fetal demise or stillbirth after 20 weeks gestation (in the fourth month of pregnancy)

Women enrolled in the program are carrying their babies more than five weeks longer and those babies are weighing about 2.5 pounds more at birth. The core components of interconception care consist of enhanced nurse case management, assessment of pre-pregnancy index risk factors, education and counseling related to risks, individualized reproductive life plans, comprehensive support services including access to dental services and family planning, referrals/follow-up, and tracking subsequent birth outcomes.

NACCHO's Model Practices Program “honors and recognizes outstanding local health practices from across the nation and shares and promotes these practices among local health departments. Model and promising practices cut across all areas of local public health, including, but not limited to, community health, environmental health, emergency preparedness, infrastructure, governmental public health, and chronic disease.”

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit [www.accesskent.com/health](http://www.accesskent.com/health).

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