Low Birth Weight for Singleton Births

Key Findings:

- Low birth weight (LBW) is a major contributor to infant mortality and morbidity, and care of the LBW infant is costly. These data are limited to singleton births in order to explore factors other than plurality (multiple births) which may influence LBW trends.

- In 2012, the LBW rate for singletons was 4.6 percent, representing 3,904 births in Washington State, compared to a national rate of 6.3 percent. The total Washington LBW rate (which includes multiple births) was 6.1 percent or 5,342 births in 2012, compared to a national rate of 8.0 percent.\(^1\)^\(^2\)

- Both total and singleton LBW increased from 1990-2006 and since have decreased slightly through 2012.\(^2\)

- Singleton LBW births were higher among younger women ages 15-19 and older women 40-44 compared to other age groups. Rates were higher among black women compared to women of other races and ethnicities.\(^2\)

- Singleton LBW births generally increased with lower income. Rates were highest among women on welfare receiving TANF, 6.5 percent, compared to women receiving Medicaid’s Pregnancy Medical coverage, 4.9 percent, and non-Medicaid women, 3.9 percent.\(^3\)^\(^a\) Undocumented women, who are predominantly Hispanic, often have incomes lower than women receiving TANF, but their rate was lower at 4.5%.

Definition: Low birth weight is a newborn birth weight less than 2,500 grams (5 lbs. 8 oz). The analysis in this chapter is limited to singleton (one baby) births.

- The National Healthy People 2020 objective is to reduce the total LBW rate to no more than 7.8%. At a 6.1% total LBW rate, Washington is presently meeting this objective.\(^3\)

County\(^2\)

![Low Birth Weight for Singleton Births by County](WA_Birth_Certificate_2010-2012)

County rate not calculated for Columbia, Ferry, Garfield, San Juan and Wahkiakum counties. These counties had less than 5 infants born with low birth weight, or the relative standard error of the rate was ≥ 30%
**Time Trend**

Total and Singleton Low Birthweight

**Age**

Singleton Low Birthweight
Maternal Age
WA Birth Certificate Data, 2010-2012

**Maternal Race and Ethnicity**

Singleton Low Birthweight
Maternal Race and Ethnicity
WA Birth Certificate Data, 2010-2012

**Infant Gender**

Singleton Low Birthweight
Infant Gender
WA Birth Certificate Data, 2010-2012

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*Non-Hispanic

**Singleton**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maternal Age</th>
<th>40+</th>
<th>35-39</th>
<th>30-34</th>
<th>25-29</th>
<th>20-24</th>
<th>15-19</th>
<th>&lt;15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Singleton**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maternal Race and Ethnicity</th>
<th>Am Indian/Alaska Native*</th>
<th>Asian*</th>
<th>Black*</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Pacific Islander*</th>
<th>White*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*Non-Hispanic

**Singleton**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infant Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Medicaid Status**

Data Sources


Endnotes

a. Medicaid women received maternity care paid for by Medicaid. Medicaid recipients were divided into three major subgroups (from highest to lowest socioeconomic status) based on program eligibility. **Pregnancy Medical** were women eligible for the pregnancy medical assistance program. These women were U.S. citizens or legal US residents, and were eligible to receive Medicaid because they were pregnant and had incomes at or below 185% the federal poverty line; **TANF** were women enrolled in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. These women were very low income (generally < 50% the federal poverty level) and received cash assistance (TANF) in addition to Medicaid. **Undocumented** were women who were not legally admitted for permanent residence, lack temporary residence status, or were not lawfully present in the U.S. They were eligible to receive Medicaid because they were pregnant and had incomes at or below 185% the federal poverty level. Undocumented women were not eligible for TANF although their incomes were often lower than women on TANF. All three Medicaid groups had incomes below most non-Medicaid women. Note that Medicaid eligibility status for pregnant legal residents who were not US Citizens changed in Spring 2009. Prior to Spring 2009, legal residents who were not US Citizens were grouped with Undocumented women (and called Non-Citizens).

For persons with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats. To submit a request, please call 1-800-525-0127 (TDD/TTY call 711).