

## **In this Issue: Maternal and Child Health**

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The process of childbirth has become safer as science and medicine have evolved, but it remains one of the most dangerous things a woman can do. Access to prenatal care, to surgical delivery when necessary, to antibiotics, tocolytics, uterine stimulants and vaccines, have all helped keep both mother and baby as healthy as possible for as long as possible. Despite all this, thousands of women around the world die every year from preventable pregnancy related causes. Infant and maternal health is connected, and a healthy mother will usually give birth to a healthy baby.

Unfortunately, racial and ethnic health disparities, chronic disease, social factors, and access can all affect a mother's health. Newborns are additionally susceptible to any number of diseases and health conditions. Statistically, we track the result of all of these impacts with the infant mortality rate (IMR). In the United States – one of the largest countries of the developed world – the IMR is 5.9 infant deaths per 1,000 live births. In Delaware, that number is higher. Just as no two mothers will have the same birth experiences, the suite of services and preventive health packages necessary for safe childbirth is likely unique to individual mothers. This issue focuses on some of the many efforts researchers are taking to support pregnant women in the State of Delaware, and how our public health programs, health care providers, and medical facilities can keep our mothers and babies as safe and as healthy as possible during pregnancy, birth, and all that happens after.

We are delighted to have David A. Paul, M.D., chair of the Department of Pediatrics at Christiana Care Health System and clinical leader of the Women and Children's Service Line as guest editor for this edition on Maternal and Child Health. Dr. Paul has led initiatives to decrease infant mortality and premature birth for over 10 years. During those years, he has acted as chair of the Delaware Healthy Mother and Infant Consortium, has authored many publications, and has presented on countless occasions to professional and lay groups.

We hope that you enjoy this edition of the Journal, learn new information, and make new connections. As always, we welcome your feedback and engagement as we work together to improve the health and well-being of all Delawareans. It is particularly appropriate that this issue is released around Mother's Day 2018. We take this opportunity to thank our mothers, and all those who support maternal & child health in the First State.

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