



Why Prematurity?

- Premature birth is the leading cause of newborn deaths.
- Every year in the United States more than 467,000 babies are born prematurely.
- African Americans are 2 times more likely to have a baby born prematurely. The rate of preterm birth in California is highest for African Americans (15.1%), followed by Native Americans (11.5%), Whites (9.9%), and Asians (9.7%).
- One of ten babies in California is born prematurely, comprising 50,295 babies in 2000.
- Premature babies are more likely to suffer lifelong consequences.
- Premature births drive \$1 billion in health care costs.
Lifelong health care costs average half a million dollars for a person born preterm.

Goals of the Prematurity Campaign

- To increase public awareness of the problems of prematurity to 60 percent.
- To reduce the incidence of preterm births by 15 percent by 2007.

Prematurity Campaign Aims

- Assist health practitioners to improve preterm birth risk detection and address risk-associated factors.
- Increase public awareness of the problem of prematurity.
- Educate women to recognize the signs of preterm labor and support parents of NICU infants.
- Increase public and private investments to identify causes of preterm labor and birth and identify promising interventions.
- Expand access to health insurance to improve prenatal and infant care outcomes.
- Partnerships with the American College of Gynecologists (ACOG), the American Association of Pediatricians (AAP) and the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN).

Prematurity Fund Program Initiatives

Gifts to the Prematurity State Fund will support:

- Chapter Grants and Chapter-managed health education initiatives focused on prematurity.
- National Research Grants focused on prematurity – to understand the biological mechanism of prematurity and the factors associated with increased risk of prematurity.
- Professional Education to improve professionals' knowledge of detection and reduction of risk factors of premature birth through grand rounds for healthcare professionals, especially Obstetricians, Family Practice Physicians, Nurse Mid-wives, and Clinic Staff.

No other National organization has taken the lead, or is even concentrating on the problem of prematurity. Together, let us focus our efforts and educate our community on ways to prevent prematurity.

The extraordinary dedication of our donors and volunteers has always been the source of the March of Dimes' strength and success. We enter our Prematurity Campaign with optimism based on realistic goals, sound planning to achieve them, and a 64-year track record of success.