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### Kansas Infant Deaths Declined In 2008

The infant death rate in Kansas fell slightly in 2008 but is still viewed as too high.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment said Thursday there were 7.2 infant deaths per 1,000 live births last year, compared with 7.9 deaths per 1,000 births in 2007. Overall, 303 infants died statewide last year, 30 fewer than the year before.

Health Director Jason Eberhart-Phillips said he welcomed the decline but said the mortality rate was still higher than in other countries and disproportionately higher for some minority groups.

Mortality rates last year were 6.2 deaths per 1,000 live births for non-Hispanic whites, 13.3 per 1,000 live births for non-Hispanic blacks and 8.4 deaths per 1,000 live births for Hispanics.

A state panel investigating child mortality is to hold its first meeting Friday in Topeka.

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