

MEASURE

The proportion (percentage) of live births in which infant weighs less than 2,500 grams or 5lbs. 8oz. (“low birth weight” - LBW) or less than 1,500 grams or 3lbs. 5oz. (“very low birth weight” - VLBW).

WHY IS THIS INDICATOR IMPORTANT?

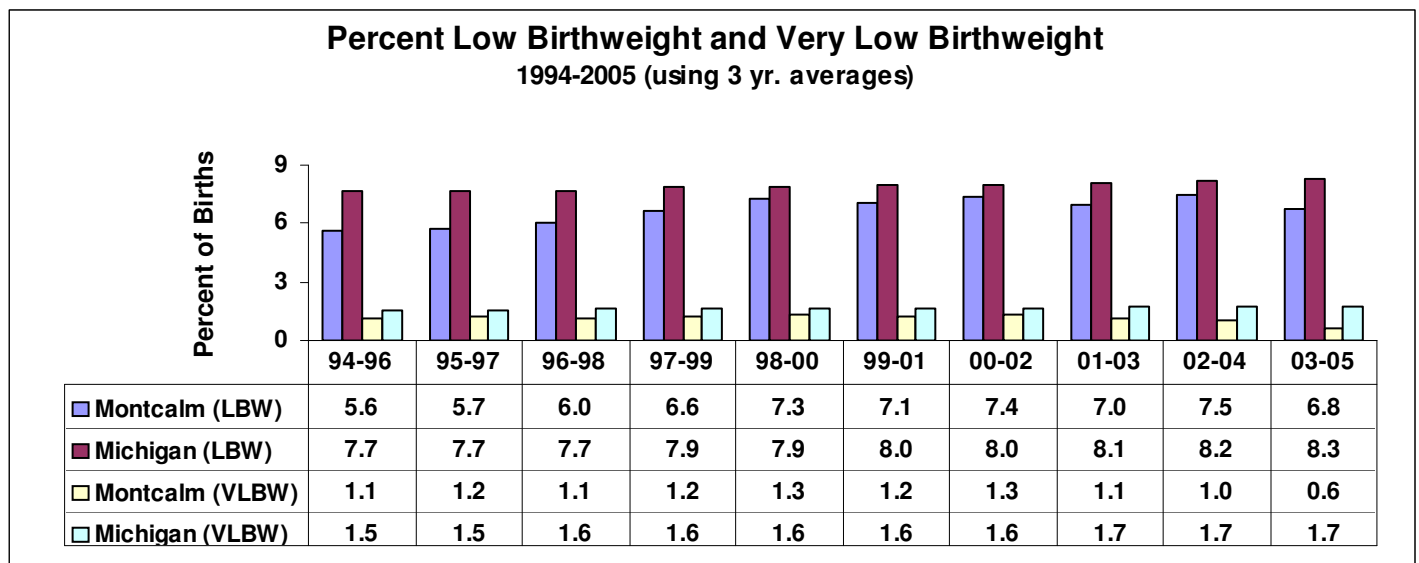
Birth weight is the best population-based predictor of infant mortality and childhood morbidity (Healthy Michigan 2010). Low birth weight can be a result of poor fetal growth during pregnancy or a pregnancy lasting less than 37 completed weeks. Despite medical and technological advances, low weight births continue to be a public health problem at tremendous individual and societal cost. More than 90% of all neonatal deaths are to infants who weigh less than 2,500 grams at birth. About 40% of all very low birth weight infants that survive experience long-term health problems. The most important factors associated with low weight are race, maternal age, delivery history, marital status, socioeconomic factors, level of prenatal care, smoking and drinking alcohol. Multiple births are also more likely to produce low birth weight infants, and newer fertility procedures are producing more frequent multiple birth pregnancies.

HOW WELL IS THE MONTCALM COMMUNITY DOING?

Reducing the prevalence of low birth weight (LBW) has been difficult in Michigan and the nation. The prevalence generally declined until 1985 (a low of 6.8%), but has been on the increase since 1989. Low birth weight rates have continued to increase over the last decade (see figure below). As this figure shows, the percent of live births reported as low birth weight (LBW) in Michigan has surpassed 8.0%, while in Montcalm County the rate has remained lower. The Michigan VLBW rates have experienced a similar relative increase over this period, although the magnitude is much smaller — currently about 1.7% of all live births. Montcalm County VLBW has remained lower during this time.

GOAL FOR MONTCALM COUNTY

To decrease the proportion of women who deliver a low birth weight baby. *HP2010* has set two goals for reducing the prevalence of low birth weight: reduce LBW to 5.0% and VLBW to 0.9% of live births, to be achieved by the end of this decade.



NOTE: Low Birth weight (LBW) is less than 2,500 grams; Very Low Birth weight (VLBW) less than 1,500 grams. Percentage is based on all live births for given period of time. SOURCE: Michigan Resident Birth Files. Vital Records & Health Data Development Section, MDCH, 2007.