Premature Birth

According to the latest information from the March of Dimes, the U.S. preterm birth rate improved to the lowest rate in 15 years, but the change wasn’t enough to meet the 9.6% goal set by the March of Dimes. The U.S. preterm birth rate dropped for the sixth consecutive year in 2012 to 11.5%. The March of Dimes estimated that, since 2006, about 176,000 fewer babies have been born too soon because of improvement in the preterm birth rate, potentially saving about $9 billion in health and societal costs.

The March of Dimes also gauges states’ progress toward lowering their preterm rates by tracking contributing factors. According to March of Dimes:

- 37 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico reduced the percentage of uninsured women of childbearing age;
- 35 states and the District of Columbia reduced the percentage of women of childbearing age who smoke;
- 28 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico lowered the late preterm birth rate, infants born between 34 and 36 weeks gestation
- 31 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico saw improvement in their preterm birth rates between 2011 and 2012
- Seven – Alaska, California, District of Columbia, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky and New Jersey – earned better grades
- Nineteen states earned a “B”
- 17 states and the District of Columbia received a “C”
- Five states got a “D”
Three states and Puerto Rico received an “F”

The March of Dimes 2013 Premature Birth Report Card information for the U.S. and states are available online at: http://www.marchofdimes.com/reportcard

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