



# Perinatal e-News

**LA BEST BABIES NETWORK**  
Healthy Babies. Our Future.  
Presented by First 5 LA



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[www.LABestBabies.org](http://www.LABestBabies.org)

## Issue #31

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- California's Uninsured
- Language Barriers in Health Care
- Mexico's Prenatal Health Insurance Program

## Educational Events

- Planned Parenthood Los Angeles Workshop Series

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**September is National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month**

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## Substance Abuse and Pregnancy

Pregnant women who receive early treatment for substance use may improve their birth outcomes, according to a study published in the June 2008 issue of the *Journal of Perinatology*.

Women who received treatment, upon adjusting for maternal age, ethnicity and prenatal care, had a reduced risk for the following adverse birth outcomes:

- stillbirth by 94%
- placental abruption by 85%
- neonatal ventilation by 55%
- preterm delivery by 52%
- low birthweight by 44%.

According to the report, the risk for these conditions in women who received early treatment was similar to that of women with no history of substance use.

On another positive note, substance use among youth and young adults declined significantly from 2002 to 2007, according to a report released by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). An increase was noted, however, in the abuse of prescription drugs.

"These results confirm that progress has been made regarding substance abuse," says Mike Leavitt, secretary for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "The report also reminds us of the importance of our efforts to provide substance abuse treatment to those in need and to encourage healthcare professionals to identify people who are at risk for developing substance abuse problems and intervene early."

View the SAMHSA report, "[Results from the 2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings.](#)"

Given that nearly half of pregnancies are unintended, directing substance use interventions to women of childbearing age can optimize the health and well-being of both mother and child. LA Best Babies Network promotes early intervention of substance use and abuse as part of planning for pregnancy, and early identification and intervention for those who have unplanned pregnancies.

The Network recommends that healthcare providers routinely screen for substance use in each trimester of prenatal care, intervene for women who are at risk and suggest a referral to the [L.A. County Community Assessment Center](#) ([view contact list](#)).

Learn more:

View the Network's brief "[Substance Abuse Screening](#)."

View SAMHSA's report "[Results from the 2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings](#)."

View the National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month [toolkit](#).

### California's Uninsured Face Poor Outcomes

More than 3,000 Californians between the ages of 25 and 64 died in 2006 from lack of insurance, according to a report released by Families USA.

The report showed that the uninsured:

- are 30% less likely to obtain screenings and treatment
- are three times more likely to delay or forgo care
- pay 2.5 times more than the insured
- are 25% more likely to die prematurely than their insured counterparts.

According to the report, lack of insurance causes many to often forgo care, resulting in late diagnosis of diseases such as cancer. Lack of insurance is the third leading contributor of death in adults between 55 and 64 years of age.

Learn more:

View the report "[Dying for Coverage in California](#)."

### Language Barriers Jeopardize Access to Health Care

Nearly one in three L.A. County residents face a language barrier when accessing health care, according to a report released by the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California.

Fifty-four percent of residents speak a language other than English and 29% report speaking limited English. Language barriers result in:

- delays in treatment
- misdiagnoses
- unnecessary procedures.

The most frequently spoken languages in L.A. County are Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Korean, Armenian, Vietnamese, Persian, Japanese and Russian.

To promote effective communications between healthcare providers and their patients, providing culturally and linguistically competent care is a key strategy of LA Best Babies Network's Healthy Births Care Quality Collaborative.

For more information about the Healthy Births Care Quality Collaborative, visit [www.labestbabies.org/cqi/cqi.htm](http://www.labestbabies.org/cqi/cqi.htm)

View the report "[L.A. Speaks: Language Diversity and English Proficiency by Los Angeles County Service Planning Area.](#)"

### **Mexico Offers Free Health Insurance to Low-Income Pregnant Women**

All uninsured low-income pregnant women are entitled to free prenatal care in Mexico through "Seguro Popular" (Mexico's health insurance).

"We do not want their economic status to be a barrier for pregnant women to obtain quality health care in Mexico," says President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa. The new program, called Healthy Pregnancy, aims to achieve healthy pregnancies and birth outcomes through prenatal care.

All pregnant women enrolled in Healthy Pregnancy are entitled to the following benefits:

- free prenatal care
- medicine subsidence
- postpartum stay coverage

In addition to providing free health insurance throughout their pregnancy, expectant women are automatically guaranteed lifetime coverage for themselves and their families, through "Seguro Popular."

In California, all women, regardless of citizenship status, are

eligible to apply for pregnancy-related Medi-Cal (California's Medicaid program). Access to prenatal care through Medi-Cal, has improved the health of newborns and mothers. Currently in L.A. County, 90 percent of women receive prenatal care.

LA Best Babies Network is working to:

- assure every eligible newborn is enrolled in Medi-Cal before leaving the hospital
- galvanize support for extending Medi-Cal coverage to two years postpartum.

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### **Educational Event**

#### **Planned Parenthood Los Angeles Workshop Series, September 17, 2008**

September 17, 2008

"Everything Teens Always Want to Know About Sex (and You're Afraid They'll Ask!)"

Workshop address will be sent upon receipt of registration

9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Registration fee: \$75.

For more information, view [flyer](#).

#### **Planned Parenthood Los Angeles Workshop Series, September 24, 2008**

September 24, 2008

"Teen Success: A Success Story for Pregnant and Parenting Teen Mothers"

Workshop address will be sent upon receipt of registration

10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Registration fee: \$40.

For more information, view [flyer](#).

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Visit our Web [News & Events](#) section.

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**We invite you to contribute story ideas and event listings for our consideration in *Perinatal e-News*. To submit items please e-mail [contact@labestbabies.org](mailto:contact@labestbabies.org).**

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