Premature birth is the number one killer of American newborns, according to the March of Dimes. Between 1981 and 2003, the rate of premature births rose from 9.4 percent to 12.3, an increase of almost 31 percent. Every year nearly 500,000 infants are born prematurely. That’s roughly comparable to the population of Cleveland.

March of Dimes has named November as Prematurity Awareness Month and to draw attention to this increasingly common, costly and serious public health problem.

The latest health policy Facts & Figures from CSG goes one step further in its analysis and looks at the disparities in premature births for African-American and Hispanic women compared to white women. African-American women are half again as likely to have pre-term babies as white mothers and they are more than twice as likely to have their babies die before their first birthday.


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