

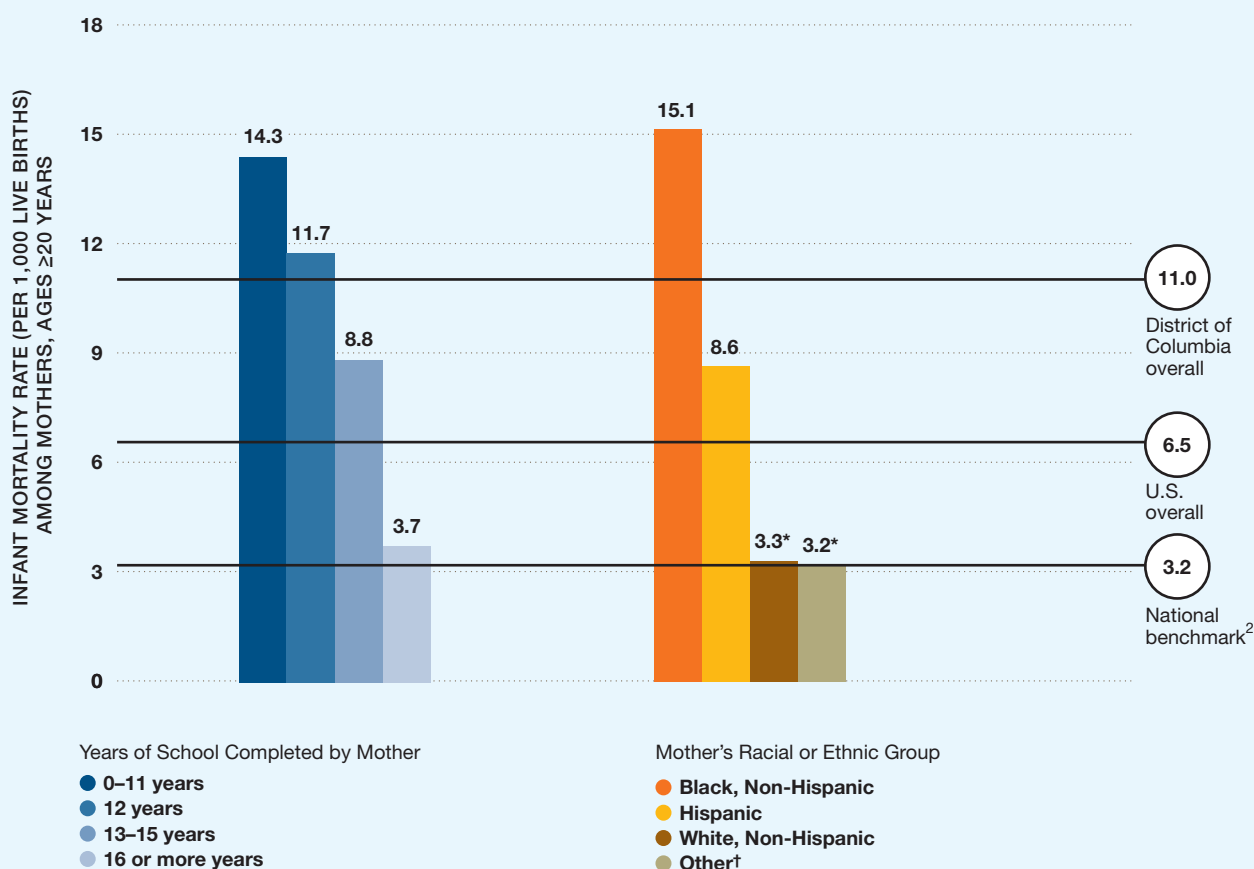
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: Gaps in Infant Mortality

Infant mortality rates¹—a key indicator of overall health—vary by mother’s education and racial or ethnic group in the District of Columbia.

- Compared with babies born to the most-educated mothers, babies born to mothers with less education appear more likely to die before reaching their first birthdays. The infant mortality rate among babies born to mothers with less than 12 years of education is nearly four times the rate for babies born to mothers with 16 or more years of schooling.

- The infant mortality rate among babies born to non-Hispanic black mothers is 4.6 times that for babies born to non-Hispanic white mothers. Although the infant mortality rate appears higher in babies born to Hispanic mothers compared with babies born to non-Hispanic white mothers, this difference is not statistically significant.

Comparing the District of Columbia’s experience against the national benchmark² for infant mortality reveals unrealized health potential among District of Columbia babies. Infants in many groups could do better.



Prepared for the RWJF Commission to Build a Healthier America by the Center on Social Disparities in Health at the University of California, San Francisco.
Source: 2000-2002 Period Linked Birth/Infant Death Data Set.

1 The number of deaths in the first year of life per 1,000 live births.

2 The national benchmark for infant mortality represents the level of mortality that should be attainable for all infants in every state. The benchmark used here—3.2 deaths per 1,000 live births, seen in New Jersey and Washington state—is the lowest statistically-reliable rate among babies born to the most-educated mothers in any state.

* Rate based on fewer than 20 infant deaths and considered statistically unreliable.

† Defined as any other or unknown racial or ethnic group, including any group representing fewer than 3 percent of all infants born in the state during 2000-2002.