

## UNITED STATES: Gaps in Infant Mortality

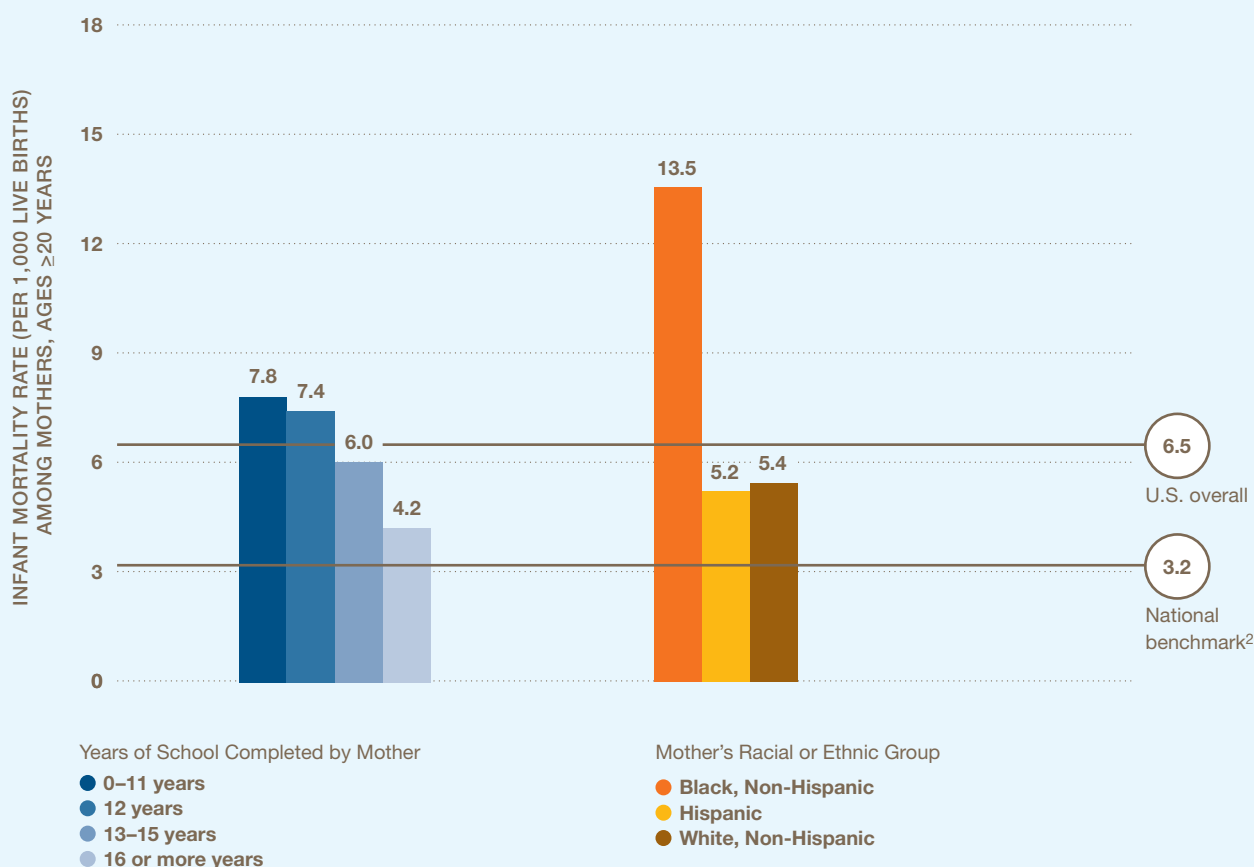
Infant mortality rates<sup>1</sup>—a key indicator of overall health—vary by mother’s education and racial or ethnic group nationally.

- Compared with babies born to the most-educated mothers, babies born to mothers with less education are more likely to die before reaching their first birthdays. While infant mortality rates are highest among babies born to mothers with 12 or fewer years of education, the rate for babies born to mothers with 13–15 years of schooling is approximately

40 percent higher than that 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 2.5 times the rates seen among babies of non-Hispanic white or Hispanic mothers.

Comparing these rates against the national benchmark<sup>2</sup> for infant mortality reveals unrealized health potential among babies across maternal education and racial or ethnic groups. Infants in every group 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. Rates for groups including at least 20 infant deaths were considered to be statistically reliable.