



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 16, 2013

Contact: Stephanie Monahan, Executive Director, All Alaska Pediatric Partnership,  
907-903-6770, [stephanie@a2p2.com](mailto:stephanie@a2p2.com)  
Greg Wilkinson, DHSS, 907-269-7285, 907-382-7032 (cell),  
[gregory.wilkinson@alaska.gov](mailto:gregory.wilkinson@alaska.gov)

## **Alaska first in nation for neonatal and infant survival rates**

*Statewide combined effort contributes to success*

ANCHORAGE —Alaska's neonatal (0 to 28 days old) mortality rate has further decreased to an all-time low of 1.92 deaths per 1,000 live births, the best in the nation for the second time, according to an annual summary of vital statistics published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Alaska's infant (less than 1 year old) mortality rate is also the lowest in the nation at 3.75 deaths per 1,000 live births. These two percentages are final for 2010, the most recent data available. Alaska's rates were as high as 8.3 deaths per 1,000 live births in the early 1980s.

"This data is for all babies born in Alaska, and is quite an achievement given the logistical issues to providing care in our state," said Matt Hirschfeld, Medical Director for Maternal Child Health Services at the Alaska Native Medical Center and co-chair of the All Alaska Pediatric Partnership.

Results are attributed to the work of many people across the state. Hospitals, tribal community health aides, pediatricians, neonatologists, perinatologists, nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and numerous others have dedicated countless hours to creating a system of care that serves Alaskans in the best possible way. The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services and the All Alaska Pediatric Partnership recognize the contributions of all of the state's birthing facilities and health care personnel on achieving these outcomes.

"Alaska families are living happier, healthier lives with their babies," said Stephanie Birch, section chief for the Alaska Section of Women's, Children's and Family Health, and co-chair of the All Alaska Pediatric Partnership. According to Birch, Alaska has come a long way in the growth and development of its health care system for infants across the state. "In the past, barriers such as poor access, the lack of a transport system for mothers and sick or premature newborns, and difficult logistics contributed to mortality rates for newborns and infants higher than every other state in the U.S. Over the past 30 years, the Alaskan health care community has worked together to overcome these unique challenges and their efforts have paid off," she said.

The full report is available at: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/131/3/548.full.html>.

###