



10 Strategies for Illinois to Have Healthy Babies

- 1) Increase access to comprehensive sex education including family planning
 - a. Mothers and babies have healthier outcomes when pregnancies are planned and mothers choose to have babies when they want
 - b. Educating individuals and providing them the appropriate resources and tools will help them to make informed choices about their overall bodies, their health, and their reproduction, as well as increase the number of planned and healthy pregnancies
- 2) Access to affordable health care for all across the lifespan
 - a. Children do not exist outside of the context of their family
 - b. To build healthy families we need to create a system of care that is affordable and accessible to ALL members of the family
 - c. Health is not only a state of being in one cross-section of time but rather is influenced by our experiences and exposures across the entire lifespan
- 3) Provide children's allowances i.e. universal income based supports similar to European countries
 - a. Children are healthiest when they have their basic necessities met
 - b. The family is the fundamental unit of a society
 - c. Government has a responsibility to foster healthy families and a child allowance is one way for the government to demonstrate its commitment to family
 - d. This allowance must be universal – higher income families would be taxed on the additional income
- 4) Provide maternity/paternity paid leave
 - a. The first weeks/months of life are critical in the development of children
 - b. Both parents should be able to be with their infant and each other during this critical period without losing their job or threatening their economic situation
 - c. To alleviate the financial burden posed on employers the government and employers should pay into a fund to be used to pay employees on maternity/paternity leave
- 5) Ensure the quality of prenatal and general healthcare in all communities
 - a. Care is not delivered uniformly across communities and is often determined along lines of income, insurance status, and race/ethnicity
 - b. ALL people have the right to receive high-quality care
 - c. A standard set of indicators need to be in place to monitor quality and institute provider training

- 6) Integration of case management systems and provide local resources for communities to develop systems of care
 - a. Case management is an important resource for improving birth outcomes
 - b. Current systems of case management MUST be integrated to avoid competition and ensure a unified commitment to healthy birth outcomes
 - c. Case management systems are currently overloaded and underfunded and need appropriate resources to make a significant impact on improving birth outcomes

- 7) End racially discriminative policies and practices in public institutions-such as education and housing
 - a. Racism is real and is a primary cause of stress for families
 - b. Racism is unacceptable especially in institutions charged with serving families
 - c. In an attempt to fight racism we must work to eliminate policies/practices that are discriminative in nature and/or that are not mutually beneficial to all involved

- 8) Maintain effective and efficient health data systems that provide timely health information that can be used to generate action.
 - a. Data and surveillance are critical to identifying trends, disparities, outcomes, improvements, etc.
 - b. The current data system in this state is fragmented and not timely
 - c. In order to improve health outcomes we must have relevant data that is useful, meaningful, accessible, and up-to-date

- 9) Institute a public campaign to improve community mores in support of pregnant women
 - a. Support and nurturing throughout pregnancy can improve birth outcomes
 - b. We believe in creating a society that is mom, baby, and family-friendly
 - c. Education focused on the community role in healthy pregnancies will help in creating beliefs that are more friendly

- 10) Advocate for community economic development in areas of employment, housing, and education in a manner that engages and empowers communities.
 - a. Healthy communities foster healthy people
 - b. Communities that are healthy have jobs, opportunities, and good housing for all residents
 - c. To improve health we must address the other priority areas that affect people's lives