



Statement on Progesterone Treatment of Women at High Risk of Premature Delivery

April 16, 2012

The Ohio Collaborative to Prevent Infant Mortality is a statewide body representing the medical and public health communities, advocacy groups, government, and a wide range of individuals and organizations committed to addressing infant mortality and disparities in Ohio.

Background

Prematurity is a leading cause of infant mortality and illness which costs Ohioans nearly a billion dollars a year, not including the costs associated with maternal hospitalization or long-term health problems and disabilities. It increases health care costs to employers, employees, and taxpayers. Prematurity also costs employers thousands of dollars in increased absenteeism and loss of productivity and causes incalculable hardship and stress to families.

Preventive Screening and Treatment

The Collaborative strongly supports the prevention of prematurity with early identification of women at high risk of premature delivery and their subsequent treatment with progesterone. This best-practice screening/treatment modality has proven itself to be an effective way of extending the gestation period for many women with previous preterm deliveries and/or short cervix, both strong indicators of preterm delivery. This extension of gestation leads to larger, better-developed, and healthier babies who are less likely to have short and/or long-term medical problems. These babies are more likely to live past infancy and grow into healthy children and adults.

A Plan for Ohio

Ohio needs to move forward now to reduce prematurity and infant mortality. Jay D. Iams, MD, a professor at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center is a maternal fetal medicine specialist whose expertise in prematurity is internationally recognized. Dr. Iams has worked with colleagues around the state to create a proposal for statewide screening and progesterone treatment of high-risk pregnant women. The Collaborative wholeheartedly supports this proposal and urges its partners, member organizations, and all entities interested in preventing prematurity, improving birth outcomes, and reducing infant deaths to join us in endorsing this proposal and looking for ways to support it with funding. For detailed information, please contact Dr. Iams at jay.iams@osumc.edu or Hetty Walker at 614-293-8949. For more information on the Collaborative, please visit <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/cfhs/OCTPIM/infantmortality.aspx>.

The Ohio Collaborative to Prevent Infant Mortality works to address the challenges of infant death and disparities in Ohio and to improve opportunities for women to live healthy lives before and throughout their reproductive years.