

Highlights of the 2008 Annual Vital Statistics Report

Heart disease and cancer remained the most frequent causes of death in 2008.

Unintentional poisoning deaths accounted for 1 in 3 unintentional injury deaths in 2008.

Between 1990 and 2008, Delaware's total population increased 20.8 percent. Sussex County had the largest increase (65 percent), followed by Kent (39 percent) and New Castle (19 percent) counties.

Increases were apparent in nearly all age groups, though the largest increase occurred in the 85 and older age group, whose population has grown by 147 percent since 1990.

- The life expectancy gap between black and white Delawareans has narrowed since 1998. A Delaware resident born in 2008 could expect to live an average of 78.3 years; 75.7 and 78.9 years for black and white residents respectively.
- Disparities between black and white mortality rates were greatest for HIV and homicide mortality; diabetes, kidney disease, and hypertension mortality rates for blacks were more than twice that of whites, while black suicide and accident mortality rates were markedly lower than those of whites.
- Unintentional injuries and homicide were the first and second leading causes of death for children and youth ages 1-19; they accounted for 57 percent of all deaths to children and adolescents in 2004-2008.
- In 2008, nearly half of all births were to unmarried women; 41 percent of white mothers and 73 percent of black mothers were unmarried.
- First trimester prenatal care (PNC) attainment continued its decline; in 2004-2008 the percent of women obtaining first trimester PNC ranged from 24 percent of Hispanic women in Sussex County to 83 percent of white women in New Castle County.
- Though premature (<37 weeks gestation) infants made up 14 percent of all live births in 2003-2007, they accounted for 76 percent of infant deaths in the same live birth cohort.
- Deliveries by cesarean section rose again in 2008; 33 of every 100 live births were delivered by cesarean section.
- Though teen (15-19) live birth rates changed little between 2003-2007 and 2004-2008, they demonstrated an overall decline of 19 percent since 1994-1998; white rates dropped 9.3 percent and black rates dropped 36.2 percent.
 - Examining the change by detailed teen age category showed that birth rates for teens 15-17 dropped 41 percent, while rates for teens 18-19 remained stable.
- The 2004-2008 infant mortality rate was 8.4 infant deaths per 1000 live births, which is lower, though not significantly, than the 2003-2007 rate. Non-Hispanic black infants continued to have much higher rates than non-Hispanic white and Hispanic infants. New Castle County had the highest infant mortality rates. Disorders related to prematurity and low birthweight accounted for the greatest number of infant deaths, followed by birth defects and SIDS (43 percent of SIDS deaths were associated with co-sleeping with adults and/or sleeping on soft surfaces, such as couches and adult beds).