



Elgin Area

What?

The Circle of Wise Women is a group of concerned community women committed to acting together to reduce the number of African American babies that die before they celebrate their first birthdays.

The mission of the Circle of Wise Women is:

Improve infant wellness and survival through education and prevention by increasing health awareness within the community; create a circle of change by promoting healthy behavior and increase the circle of life by surrounding parents and infants with strong, loving community bonds.

The Elgin
Circle of Wise Women
meets the third Tuesday
of the month at 1:30 pm
Kane County Health Dept.
113 S. Grove, Elgin



More Info?

For additional information about the Circle of Wise Women, contact the Kane County Health Department at (630)232-5926 or visit:
kanehealth.com/circle.htm

*Circle of Wise Women:
Working to improve
the health and survival
of African American babies!*



Why?

Infant mortality is an important indicator of the overall health of a community. Infant mortality refers to the number of infant deaths per 1000 live births before age 1. The infant mortality rate for Kane County for the most recent year available, 2007, is 4.4.

However, the mortality rate for African American infants in Kane County remains higher than this 4.4 rate for all babies in the county. The gap/disparity in infant mortality among races/ethnicities is usually reported in five year periods. For 1997-2001, African American infant mortality (20.1) was **three** times higher than infant mortality for all Kane County babies (6.9). This mortality gap decreased by the 2003-2007 period : **twice** as many African American babies died before their first birthday (12.2) compared to all babies in Kane County (5.7). This gap, though it has narrowed, is still an unacceptable disparity. The Aurora Circle of Wise Women is working to assure that the infant mortality gap between African American and other infants is **completely eliminated!**

In 2006, the Kane County Health Department, together with many community members and leaders, completed a county-wide needs assessment called the **IPLAN**—short for Illinois Plan for Local Assessment of Need. Disparities in maternal and child health emerged as one of the top five priorities of the **IPLAN**. Infant mortality among African American babies proved to be the highest concern.

Issues?

Among the specific issues affecting African American health and survival are low birth weight, preterm labor (before 37 weeks), prematurity, small size for gestational age, infection, stress, and poor prenatal weight gain. Higher rates of infant mortality persist across all ages, income levels, and educational levels of African American women.

Actions?

The Circles of Wise Women took the time to study the data and the issues that surround infant mortality and illness. They also spent time reviewing actions other communities have taken to improve health and wellness for African American infants. Now the Circles are taking action that helps other women learn about the issue and take whatever preventive measures are possible. The very first action of the Circles was a poster campaign to help prevent premature births—the leading cause of infant deaths.



Where?

There are two circles in Kane County: the Aurora Circle of Wise Women and the Elgin Circle of Wise Women. They meet monthly.

For times and locations of the Circle meetings, please see the back of this brochure or call: **(630)232-5926**.

Who?

The Circles of Wise Women are open to any women of the community who want to help end the disparities in health and survival for African American women and infants. The Circles plan to call on other community partners to assist them in carrying out plans that are tailored to meet the needs of African American women of childbearing age.

Cost?

Many of the action plans will cost money and the Circles of Wise Women plan to seek support through community partners, grant funds, and sponsorships for various health events and messages.