



MEDIA RELEASE

KNOX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Partners plan observation of Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day

Knoxville, Tenn. – The Knox County Health Department (KCHD) and community partners are holding their third annual observation of Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day on **Tuesday, Oct. 15 at 6 p.m. at Hunter Valley Farm, 9133 Hunter Valley Ln.** A national observation, this day was created to provide support to and awareness of those who have lost an infant or pregnancy.

“In our work to prevent infant loss and promote healthy pregnancies and babies, we’ve seen a need for more community support for the families who have experienced this tragic loss,” said KCHD Program Manager Katie Larsen. “Our hope is to provide a time for these families to honor and remember their babies, however short their lives may have been, in an environment where they are surrounded by love and understanding.”

All those who have been touched by this heartbreaking loss are encouraged to attend. Event participants will have the opportunity to write their baby’s name or date of loss on a luminary candle. Several parents who have experienced this loss will address the crowd in addition to Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs, University of Tennessee Medical Center Chaplain Brad Hood, UT Medical Center Neonatologist Dr. Keri Lattimore, and Lauren and Tommy Morgan, co-founders of Project Gabriel. Information about community resources will be available at the event. Registration is free and is available online at utmedicalcenter.org/events.

In 2017, the infant mortality rate in Tennessee was 7.4 per thousand, which is higher than the 2017 national infant mortality rate of 5.8. In Knox County, 9.2 percent of births were premature in 2017. Prematurity is the leading cause of infant death. While some causes of infant loss and prematurity are preventable, others are not or the cause is unknown.

Improving the well-being of mothers, infants and children is an important community health goal for KCHD, as reflected in the organization’s [Community Health Assessment](#). The Oct. 15 event is made possible by support from Project Gabriel, the University of Tennessee Medical Center, East Tennessee Children’s Hospital, March of Dimes and the East Tennessee Regional Health Office. The event is an outcome of KCHD’s Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) program, which is funded by a grant from the Tennessee Department of Health. FIMR is an action-oriented community process that continually assesses, monitors and works to improve service systems and community resources for women, infants and families.

About Knox County Health Department

The first health department in Tennessee to achieve national voluntary accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board, the Knox County Health Department (KCHD) is dedicated to ensuring the conditions in which every resident can be healthy. As a chief health strategist for the community and with more than 260 employees, KCHD’s broad scope of work includes convening partners to improve community health, identifying community health threats, investigating disease outbreaks, conducting extensive outreach and education, preparing for public health emergencies, providing and connecting the public with medical care, enforcing food safety and air quality laws, and more. For more information, visit www.knoxcounty.org/health.

