Suggested Citation

The first edition of the *Alaska Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Data Book* brings together comprehensive information on the health status of Alaskan mothers, infants, children and families. The Data Book synthesizes information from statewide surveillance systems, surveys, vital records and program services to provide policy makers, public health professionals and health care providers with critical data on leading health status indicators and emerging issues in Maternal and Child Health. We hope that this format will serve as an easy-to-use reference guide for people seeking statistics and epidemiological information for use in program planning and decision making.

The *Alaska MCH Data Book* includes information through 2000, the most recent year of complete data as of January 2003. Unless otherwise noted, we provide data that is representative of a given population at the state level. In this edition, we generally do not provide information on specific geographic areas of the state, nor do we include data on small sub-populations. Because of Alaska’s small population size, we employ moving averages over three or five years to express rates for conditions with small numerators. We provide race-specific information only when there are sufficient numbers to express a statistically reliable rate or trend. In keeping with the Nation’s 2010 Objective of eliminating disparities in leading health indicators, the *Data Book* uses rate ratios to emphasize significant racial disparities for leading MCH indicators. The MCH Epidemiology Unit performed all data analysis and interpretation. Data sources are provided.

Reliable data is frequently not available on important and emerging issues in Maternal and Child Health. Throughout the *Data Book*, we list health issues of increasing national and local significance. These issues often speak to unmet needs for public health surveillance.

The *Alaska MCH Data Book* is produced by the Section of Maternal Child and Family Health, MCH Epidemiology Unit. Our mission is to provide the most reliable and statistically accurate information for MCH program planning and evaluation. We believe that programs and policy should be founded and guided by reliable epidemiologic data. We trust the *Data Book* will be helpful to all who work toward improving the health and well being of Alaskan families.

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In an average year in Alaska…

9,954 babies are born

61 babies die before their first birthday

573 babies are born with low or very low birth weight

1028 babies are born preterm

500 babies are born with at least one major congenital anomaly

15 infants are born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

20 teens ages 15 - 19 years die from suicide

35 children ages 1 - 14 years, 24 teenagers age 15 - 19 years and 37 women ages 15 - 44 years die from unintentional injury

Note: Based on data from 1998-2000 with the exception of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome which was based on 1995-1999.