

## GLOBAL PREMATURITY FACTS

### A Quick Look at the Numbers

- More than **1 million** die from prematurity in the first month of life. Many who survive suffer serious health problems.
- Prematurity is the leading cause (**28%**) of all deaths in the first month of life.
- U.S. costs related to prematurity exceed **\$26 billion**.

### What is Prematurity?

According to the World Health Organization, premature labor is indicated by the onset of labor before 37 completed weeks of gestation (full term is about 40 weeks). The U.S. Centers for Disease Control defines premature birth as a birth that is at least three weeks before a baby's due date. It is also known as preterm birth.

### What Happens if a Baby is Born too Early?

Without the full time to grow and develop, many babies who survive premature birth have increased risks for death, infections, cerebral palsy, brain injury, and respiratory, vision, hearing, learning and development problems.

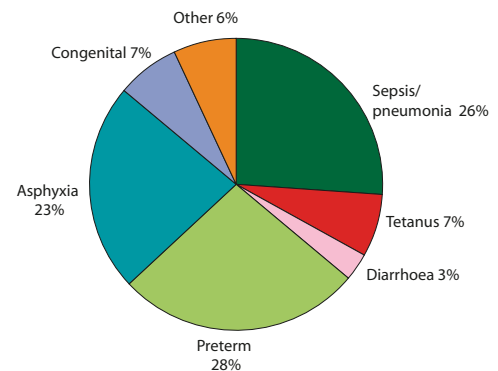
### What Areas of the World are Most Affected by Prematurity?

Rates continue to rise in low-, middle- and high-income countries. In the United States significant disparities persist. Rates among blacks and Native Americans rival those in low-income countries.

### How does Prematurity Compare with Other Causes of Neonatal Death?

The chart on the right shows the most common causes of neonatal mortality, which is a death that occurs in the first month after birth. Premature birth is a direct cause of 28% of all neonatal deaths. It is the largest contributor to global neonatal deaths.

### Common Causes of Neonatal Mortality



Source: The Series Team. The Executive Summary of the Lancet Neonatal Survival Series. *Lancet*. 2005; 1-8.