

Maternal death rates highest in New York

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Obesity and other health conditions may help explain why women in New York City are more than twice as likely to die in childbirth.

A study by a medical group detailed in an advance copy of Crain's New York Business says in 2002 New York City's maternal mortality rate of 22 deaths per 100,000 births was 2 1/2 times the national average, the New York Post reported Monday.

The figure was compiled by the state chapter of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists as part of an effort to lower maternal mortality rates to three deaths per 100,000.

"Eight-point-nine is still above where we want to go, so to be higher than that is not getting us in the right direction," said Dr. Howard Minkoff, a spokesman for the medical group.

He cited poverty, obesity and other health conditions as possible reasons for the higher death rate.

According to the Crain's report, more recent figures indicate the problem is equally serious statewide with a rate of 21.2 deaths per 100,000 births in 2004.

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