LOW BIRTH WEIGHT: Comparing Regional Differences in New York State with Income Inequality Measures

Low Birth Weight (<2500 grams / <5.5 lbs) is a major factor in infant mortality and has also been associated with life-long health problems. In 2010, urban counties saw a larger percentage of LBW, ranging from 8.3% in Queens and Staten Island to 9.7% in the Bronx.

The GINI Index

The GINI index is a measure of income distribution and helps define the potential gap between rich and poor. The number ranges between 0 and 1, with "0" representing perfect equality and "1" representing perfect inequality.

In New York state, there appears to be a correlation between birth weight and income in some counties. Comparing New York State Low Birth Weight measures with two measurements (GINI index and the percentage of people below poverty) shows a statewide reading of 0.2 - 0.3.

Sources: NY State Department of Health, 2010; U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2010 American Community Survey