



Western Australian Preterm Birth Prevention Initiative Statewide Outreach and Education Program

PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION – Support Opportunity

THE NEED

Being born too early is the single greatest cause of death and disability in children up to five years of age in the developed world.

In November 2014, WIRF launched the Western Australian Preterm Birth Prevention Initiative with the single aim of safely lowering the rate of early birth in our state. Findings from the first full year of the study have reported a reduction in the rate of preterm birth in WA by 8%.

Key to this outcome has been the state-wide outreach program ensuring the WA health care workforce and general public understand the new clinical guidelines that have been put in place. This outreach program has included print media and workshops conducted in hospitals and health care centres.

During 2015, the outreach team led by Professor John Newnham, travelled more than 13,000kms and provided in-service education to more than 500 health care workers in their own work environments.

SUPPORT OPPORTUNITY

What is most unique about the initiative is that it includes the whole population of WA.

Our outreach program targets the doctors, midwives and allied healthcare professionals throughout the state, and our public health program reaches out to the 33,000 pregnant women who give birth each year in WA, together with their families.

WA is the ideal place for an innovative healthcare program such as this. In medical terms, we are functionally an island, encircled by outback and ocean.

Discovering how to prevent this complication of pregnancy, and informing health professionals and families on latest interventions to reduce the chance of preterm birth, needs to be one of our highest priorities.

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES

- Worldwide, an estimated 15 million babies are born preterm each year
- In 2015, preterm birth was responsible for nearly 1 million deaths
- In WA alone, nearly 3000 babies are born preterm each year – approximately 1 in 12 pregnancies ends preterm
- Our Initiative has successfully lowered the rate of preterm birth across WA by 8%. That's almost 200 WA families prevented from having a pregnancy end too soon.

SUPPORT OPTIONS

Success from now on will not only require more research discoveries, but the expansion of the program that links science with our clinical community and the WA public. In 2018, our Statewide Outreach team will hit the road once again. We are seeking **\$70,000** which will go towards:

- Developing and implementing the 2018 Outreach educational program for preterm birth prevention
- Subsidising the cost of participating doctors, midwives and sonographer
- Print and e-based advertising promoting the outreach workshops.

CONTACT

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