



**Tom Barrett**  
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

For Immediate Release:  
July 30, 2012

Contact: Jodie Tabak  
(414) 286-8504

## City of Milwaukee Encourages Full-Term Births with Olympic Twist

**MILWAUKEE** - Today, the City of Milwaukee is joining the excitement of the 2012 Summer Olympics and will be promoting its own educational message. As part of the popular “Strong Baby” campaign, this latest installment aims to promote the benefits of full-term babies, and encourages expecting mothers to wait until at least 39 weeks pregnant before inducing labor. Babies born prematurely face a higher risk of health problems,



including breathing and feeding problems, as well as developmental delays. Complications caused by prematurity are the leading cause of infant deaths in Milwaukee and the United States.

“Every baby in Milwaukee deserves the best chance to blow out their first birthday candle,” said Mayor Tom Barrett. “We’ve set an aggressive goal to reduce infant mortality in the City and this is another way we’re working to ensure we’re successful. The City of Milwaukee Health Department is promoting full-term pregnancy through this public education campaign, as well as through direct service to at-risk clients.”

“Those babies who stay inside their mothers until 39 weeks of pregnancy are off to a better start in life than those who are born early. While we understand that sometimes there are unavoidable circumstances that lead to the early birth of a baby, we want to educate mothers on ways to protect and extend their pregnancies until at least 39 weeks,” stated Health Commissioner Bevan K. Baker.

The ads feature Giancarlo, one of five strong baby contest winners from last summer. Giancarlo will be featured on billboards and bus shelters across the city in an Iron Cross position on gymnastics rings. The ad reads, “A Full-term Baby is a Stronger Baby”. The ad also directs people to [IWantAStrongBaby.com](http://IWantAStrongBaby.com) to learn ways to increase the chances of having a full-term baby.

The on-going campaign is part of the city’s initiative to reduce the overall infant mortality rate (IMR) by at least 10% by 2017, while simultaneously reducing infant mortality among African-Americans by at least 15%. For every 1,000 births, more than 10 infants died before their first birthday. Within these statistics, there is also a startling racial disparity. African American infants are 2.6 times more likely to die than Caucasian infants.