

# National Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month 🧑

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October is **National Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month**, a time to remember babies lost too soon and to support families who carry them in their hearts forever. Across the nation and throughout Georgia, many communities or programs gather to share stories of love and loss, raise awareness about the realities of miscarriage, stillbirth, and infant death, and advocate for compassionate care and prevention.

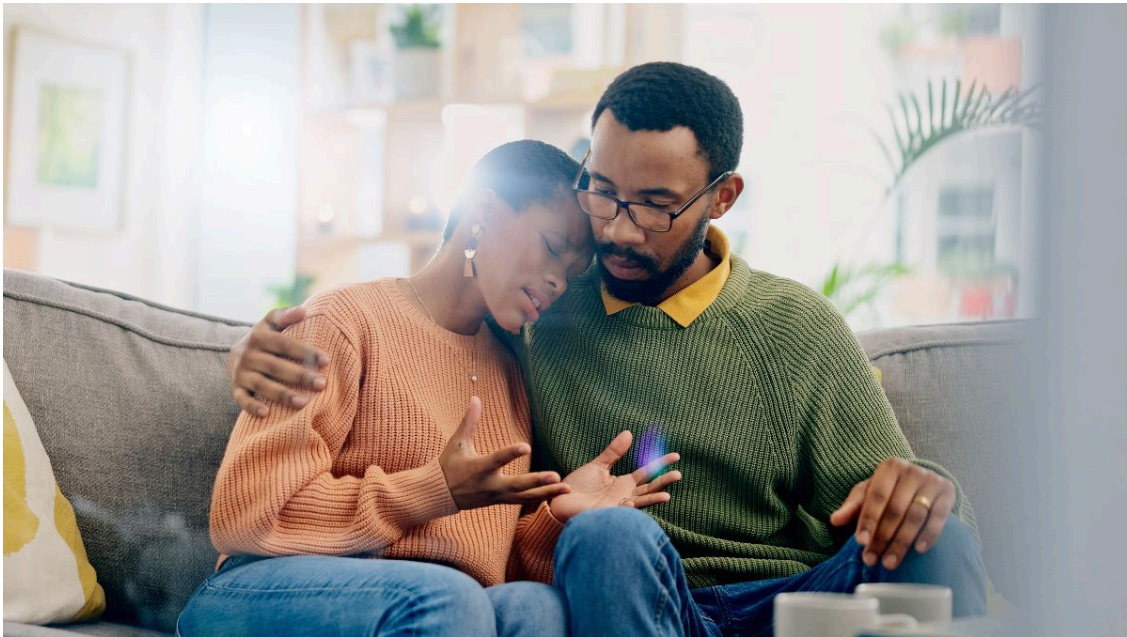
According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2023), the United States recorded approximately **20,000 fetal deaths at 20 weeks of gestation or more**, representing a national stillbirth rate of about **5.5 per 1,000 births**. Georgia's rate remains higher than the national average, with estimates ranging between **7.4 and 7.9 per 1,000 births**, equating to roughly **900 to 1,000 stillbirths each year** (Georgia Department of Public Health, 2023). These figures emphasize both a continuing public health concern and the profound emotional toll that pregnancy and infant loss have on families and healthcare professionals across the state.



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One bright light shining through this darkness is **Saylor's Light**, a nonprofit organization based in **Statesboro, Georgia**. Founded by **Matthew and Sonia Dismukes** in memory of their daughter, **Saylor Grace**, who was born on August 17, 2017, the organization was created to bring comfort and remembrance to families who experience pregnancy and infant loss (Saylor's Light, 2025). After walking through their own devastating loss, the Dismukes family felt called to help others by offering **keepsake memory boxes** filled with items that honor each baby's life. These bereavement boxes typically contain special mementos such as blankets, footprint kits, devotionals, ornaments, and other keepsakes that allow parents to cherish tangible memories of their child. Since its creation, Saylor's Light has expanded its reach, donating **hundreds of memory boxes** to more than **30 hospitals, clinics, and pregnancy centers across eight states (Saylor's Light, 2025)**. These boxes are distributed by nurses, physicians, and healthcare teams who recognize the healing power of remembrance. By providing these resources at the time of loss, healthcare providers ensure that families leave the hospital not empty-handed, but with a symbol of love and connection.

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Nurses and physicians play a vital role in caring for families during pregnancy and infant loss. Their compassionate presence, clear communication, and sensitivity can profoundly shape how parents experience this tragedy. Acknowledging the loss with empathy through words such as *“I’m so sorry for your loss,”* *“I wish you were not experiencing a miscarriage,”* or *“We are here to support you through this uncertain and difficult time,”* this helps to validate parents’ grief. Providing **privacy, consistent caregivers, memory-making keepsakes,** and **time with the baby** fosters an environment of dignity and respect.

Opportunities for **memory-making** are among the most healing aspects of bereavement care. Families should be gently encouraged to hold, see, and spend time with their baby if they wish. Through partnerships with organizations such as Saylor’s Light, clinicians can offer keepsakes that capture handprints, footprints, or photographs as precious reminders of their child’s meaningful life. Nurses and physicians should also provide **emotional, spiritual, and cultural support** by connecting families with chaplains, counselors, and local or online grief resources such as **SHARE Pregnancy & Infant Loss Support** or the **Star Legacy Foundation**. Healthcare providers themselves may also feel the emotional weight of these losses. Participating in **team debriefings**, practicing self-care, and seeking training in **perinatal bereavement** and **trauma-informed communication** can help sustain their compassion and prevent burnout. Every act of empathy helps families begin the long process of healing, while also reaffirming the heart of nursing and medical care with human connection.



Each October, families and organizations across the world unite on **October 15** for the “**Wave of Light.**” At 7:00 p.m. local time, candles are lit for one hour in remembrance of babies lost through miscarriage, stillbirth, and infant death. The wave of light moves across the globe in a continuous chain of love and memory, illuminating windows, hospitals, parks, and community spaces. Families in Georgia participate from their homes, churches, and hospitals, joining a worldwide tribute that reminds grieving parents they are not alone.

In addition to this global event, the Savannah area gathers for a remembrance event hosted by **Memorial Health University Medical Center.** The annual **Walk to Remember** invites families from **Chatham County and surrounding counties** to honor babies lost through miscarriage, stillbirth, and early infant death. This year’s event will be held on **Sunday, October 19, 2025, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at Tom Triplett Park in Pooler, Georgia.** The evening includes a remembrance ceremony, memory wall, family craft, and a community walk illuminated by candles, offering families time to reflect, connect, and remember.

Pregnancy and infant loss can never be measured only in statistics; it is felt most deeply in the quiet moments of remembrance. Yet, through community awareness, nonprofit advocacy, and compassionate healthcare, families in Georgia and beyond can find comfort and connection. Organizations like Saylor’s Light, remembrance events such as the Walk to Remember, and the tender presence of nurses and physicians together illuminate a path forward as one defined by love, remembrance, and hope.



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## References

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