

# Infant mortality still enemy of black babies in Forsyth

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

In 2007, Forsyth County had the highest infant mortality rate of any major North Carolina county.

The county's 2007 annual infant mortality rate (IMR) was 11.1 infant deaths per 1,000 live births, as compared to 11.4 for 2006. The data was released last week by the North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics.



Dr. Monroe

The 2007 county rate represents 57 actual infant deaths, the same number as occurred in 2006. The Forsyth County IMR is the highest this year of the five largest counties in the state. The IMR for the state increased slightly from 8.1 in 2006, to 8.5 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 2007.

Non-white babies continue to be the greatest victims of infant mortality. In 2007, the county's non-white IMR was 19.2, while the white rate was 7.9 infant deaths per 1,000 live births. This ratio (2.43 for 2007) is consistently higher than the same ratio for the state and shows little evidence of improvement year after year.

"This means, that an African-American infant in Forsyth County is far more likely to die before his/her first birthday than a white infant," said Dr. Tim Monroe, Forsyth County Health Director.

The non-white population includes all racial groups other than whites. In regard to Forsyth County and North Carolina, African-Americans make up 80 percent of the non-white population.

Monroe says an unjust and unequal health and socio-economic system is largely to blame for the disparity.

"This is just one example of many inequalities in health and welfare that we can measure in our, as well as most other, communities. Infant mortality has and continues to be a sensitive barometer of the general welfare of a population," Monroe said. "It is consistently worse where poverty is worse and where the wealth disparity is greatest between the wealthy and those in poverty. The racial disparity in the IMR is due to a consistent and disproportionate prevalence of poverty among people of color. We are developing a better understanding of how the stresses of poverty and the stresses of dealing daily with institutional racism can increase the risks that a pregnant woman will go into premature labor. Premature labor (and delivery) is by far the most common cause of infant death."



## Grandparents

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four. She has raised 24-year-old Danzy, who has cerebral palsy, since he was an infant. Though she concedes that taking care of a disabled grandson has been challenging, she would have had it no other way.

Lenora Campbell, director of Winston-Salem State University's Grandparenting Program, spoke at the event. The program, which held its own National Grandparents Day program on Monday, provides resources and support for grandparents and relative caregivers raising children.



Thomas

Society would be in trouble without grandparents and relative caregivers, Campbell said. She talked about a recent trip she took to Cape Town, South Africa, where she encountered many abandoned children. Campbell said she's thankful that so many in this country are willing to step up and raise their relatives.

"I understand the power of that type of work, when you have people who are willing to step up to the plate, who are willing to sacrifice all that they thought that they might do so they could take care of the next generation of children," she said.



"And I, quite frankly, think there's no better thing *Bertha Parks with her grandsons, Dwayne and Jalen, who is sitting in his grandma's lap.*

in life you can do."

Campbell said no job, including that of the president and vice president of the United States, is more important than the task of raising a child. Every day, she concluded, should be Grandparents Day.

## Life after Menopause

A Message for Women



For many women, menopause is just the beginning of the aging process. In fact, up to 40% of post-menopausal women experience uncomfortable, and often painful feminine dryness, burning, irritation, and pain and/or bleeding with intimate activity. Local physicians are testing an investigational oral drug to determine if it safely and effectively treats these symptoms.

If you are between the ages of 40 and 80, are post-menopausal, have had a hysterectomy, and are experiencing any of these symptoms, you may be eligible to participate in this research study. Qualified participants will receive all study-related care and study drug at no charge.

To find out more about how you may be able to participate in this research study, please call PMR at 336-714-7672 or visit us online at [www.piedmontmedical.com](http://www.piedmontmedical.com).



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