Forsyth County
Infant Mortality Reduction Coalition

December 23, 2009

Dear Colleagues,

Enclosed you will find the 2009 *Infant Death Report*, to be used as a complement to the *2009 Infant Mortality Fact Sheet* released in September 2009. Our report contains the latest Infant Mortality data for Forsyth County, with U.S. and international rates for comparison.

During 2008 and 2009, the Forsyth County (FC) Infant Mortality Reduction Coalition partnered with Northwest Community Care Network, Wake Forest University, The UNC Center for Maternal & Infant Health, and Triad Baby Love Plus to increase physician use of 17P, a medicine shown by local researcher Paul Meis, M.D., to reduce repeat preterm birth by up to one-third. Prematurity is one of the leading causes of infant death in Forsyth County.

Some important accomplishments of the FC Infant Mortality Reduction Coalition and partners this year include:

- 17P in-service sessions held for 96 providers at nine maternity centers, with 49 toolkits disseminated.
- Development of *Footprints of Hope*, an educational DVD with mom-to-mom 17P success stories, widely distributed within Forsyth County and North Carolina.
- *Hope for the Future: Building Community Support for Families Who Have Lost an Infant.* 150 attendees from medical, social, and faith communities developed culturally competent grief counseling skills and learned more about 17P.
- *17P Community Workshop* for 40 targeted providers working with women who may be candidates for 17P each obtained a Community 17P Toolkit

Thank you for your continued interest in moms and babies in our community. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide further assistance. Hard copies of this report will be available soon.

Sincerely,

Debbie Mason

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INFANT DEATH IN OUR COMMUNITY

Forsyth County Report

Forsyth County
Infant Mortality Reduction Coalition

www.HelpOurBabies.org

Statistical information provided by the Forsyth County Department of Public Health & North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics

December 2009

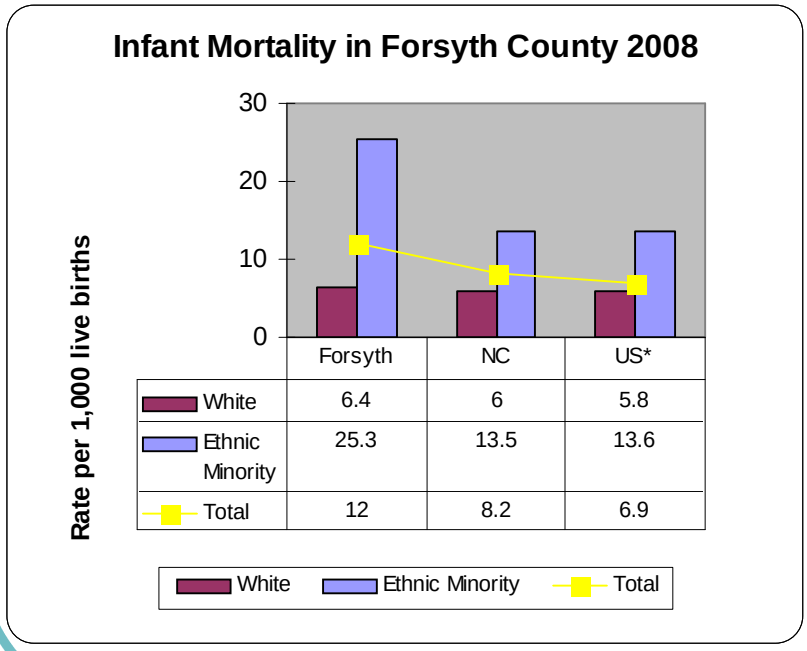
What is Infant Mortality?

- Infants who are born alive, and die before their first birthday, are counted as infant deaths.
- Stillborn babies are fetal deaths, and are not counted among infant deaths.

"Nothing really affects you unless it knocks on your door, and I don't want this to knock on anyone else's door."

—Local mother of an infant who died.

Is This a Problem in Our Community?



	Forsyth	NC	US*
White	6.4	6	5.8
Ethnic Minority	25.3	13.5	13.6
Total	12	8.2	6.9

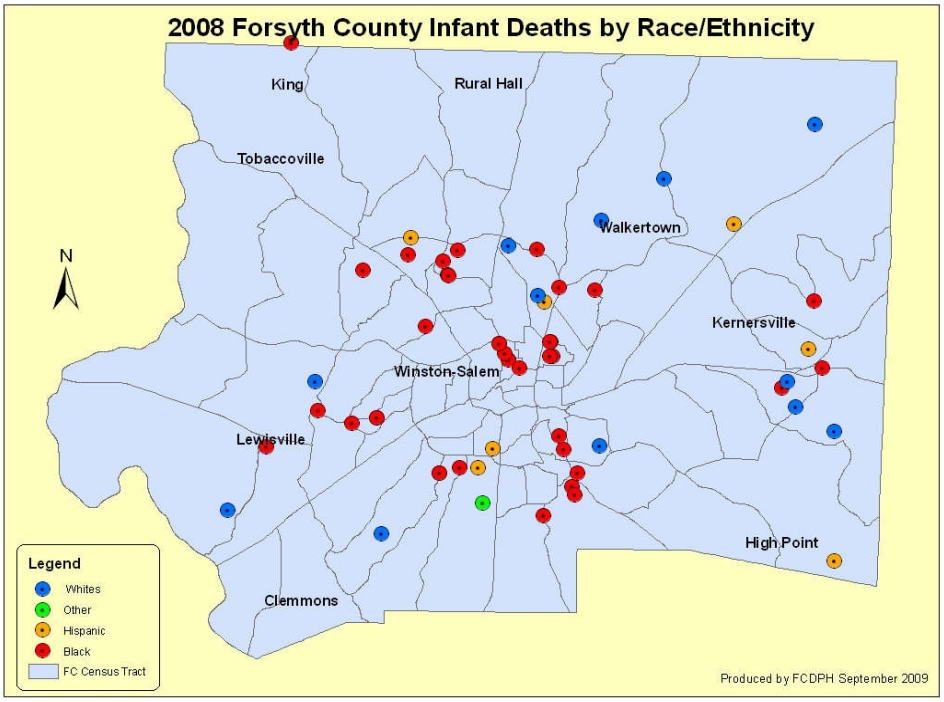
- Each infant death is a tragedy in the life of a family.
- North Carolina ranks 44th in the nation for infant deaths (CDC)
- The U.S. ranks 29th among industrial nations for infant mortality, tying with Poland and Slovakia (CDC, 2004 data)

Why Are Our Babies Dying?

- **Premature birth (<37 weeks gestation) and health problems related to prematurity** continues to be the leading cause of death for infants under one month of age.
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the leading cause of death for postneonatal infants (1 month to 1 year).
- 3 out of 4 infants (70%) who died in Forsyth County during 2008 were born premature. (NC-SCHS query of infant deaths in Forsyth County 2008)
- Other causes of death include birth defects, respiratory problems, other medical conditions, infections, injury, and homicide.

Who is Affected?

- Infant mortality affects families in all racial and ethnic groups.
- Babies are dying in all parts of town, not just in one neighborhood or one area of the county.
- The map to the right shows each of the infant deaths in Forsyth County in 2008.



17 Alpha-hydroxyprogesterone (17P)

- 17P is a medicine that may reduce repeat preterm birth by up to one-third (33%) in some women.
- 17P is a weekly shot of progesterone given between 16 and 36 weeks of pregnancy, and has been proven safe for mothers and babies.
- 17P is not effective for women who are pregnant with multiple babies such as twins or triplets.

Candis, from Winston-Salem, lost several premature infants before hearing about 17P from her doctor and friend during her last pregnancy. 17P extended her pregnancy to 34 weeks gestation, resulting in the birth of a healthy baby girl !

"I would absolutely recommend 17P to other women. It really worked for me!"
~Candis Boykins

Candis with baby Deztini —now 9 months old.

Preconception Health—Grow a Healthy Baby !

- **Stop Smoking:** Smoking , including secondhand smoke, reduces oxygen to the baby, prevents adequate growth, and can cause preterm labor.
- **Avoid Drugs and Alcohol:** Alcohol and drug use increases a woman's risk having a miscarriage or stillborn baby.
- **Eat Well:** Eating habits before and during pregnancy have a huge impact upon the health of women and their babies. Daily folic acid 400 mcg should be taken daily prior to pregnancy.
- **Establish a Medical Home:** Pre-existing medical conditions like uncontrolled diabetes can cause preterm labor, stillbirth, miscarriage, or serious birth defects.
- **Reduce Stress:** Pregnant women under stress may have higher levels of hormones that trigger preterm labor. Events such as the loss of a job, death of a family member, divorce, or racial discrimination can significantly increase stress hormones.
- **Plan Your Pregnancy:** All couples need a reproductive life plan. Pregnancies should be at least two years apart to improve birth outcomes.

Women can take the preconception health assessment quiz at:
www.MomBaby.org

This report is available online at:
www.HelpOurBabies.org