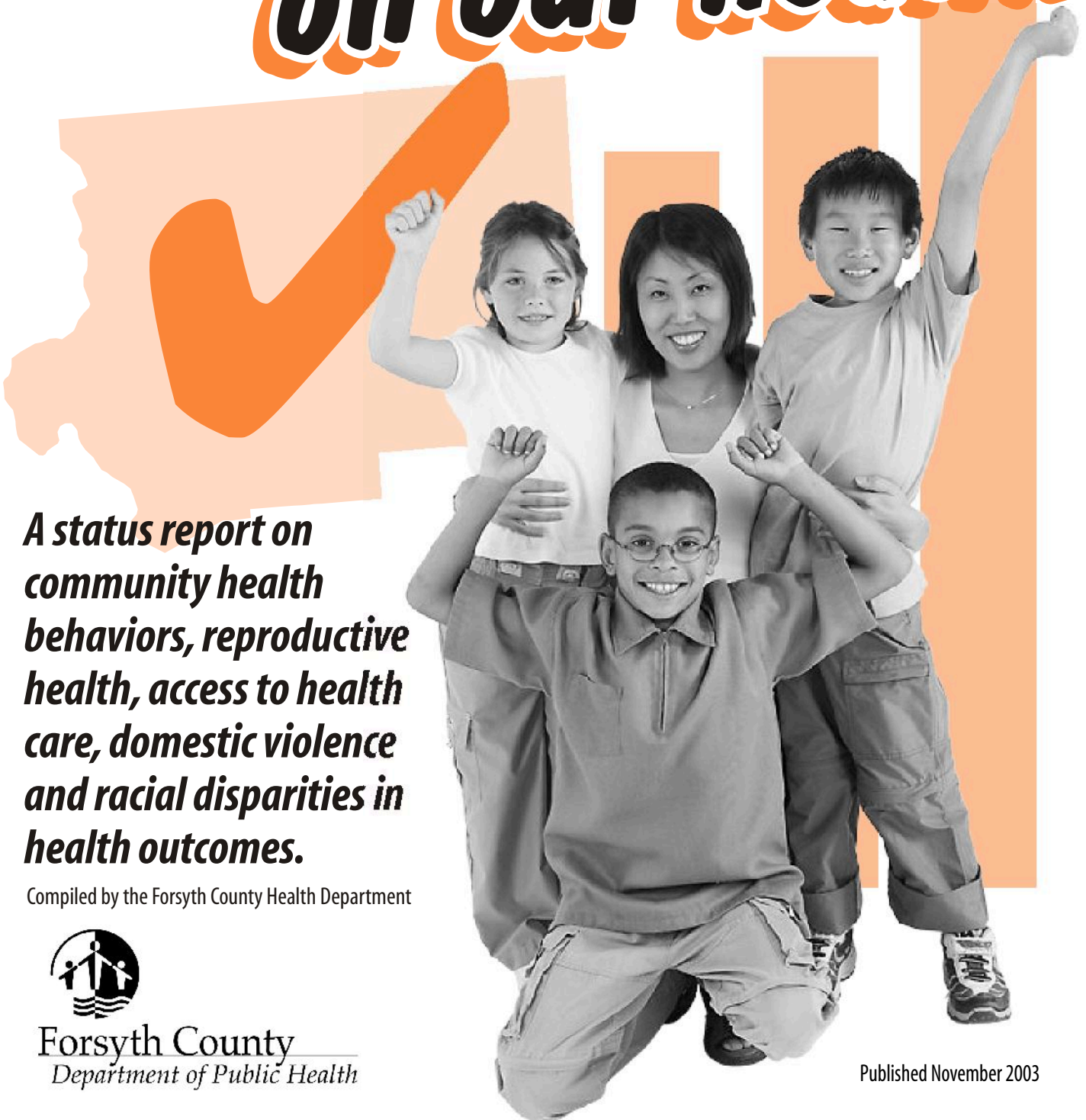


Forsyth County, N.C.

Checking up on our health



***A status report on
community health
behaviors, reproductive
health, access to health
care, domestic violence
and racial disparities in
health outcomes.***

Compiled by the Forsyth County Health Department



Forsyth County
Department of Public Health

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Domestic Violence

Domestic violence includes physical, emotional or sexual abuse of a spouse, child or partner

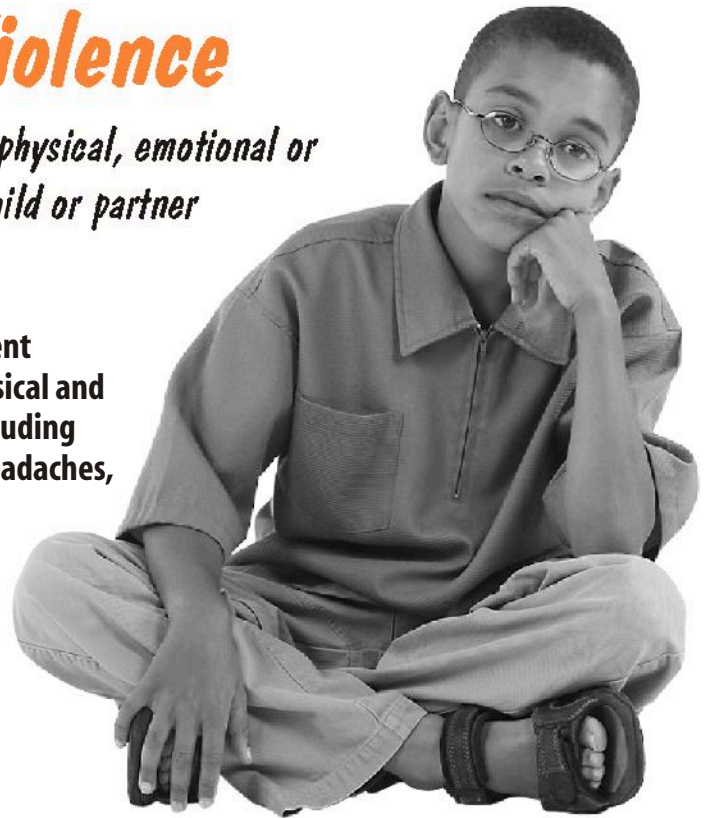
Identification, early intervention and prevention of domestic violence are essential to address this issue.

- ✓ Can we develop routine health-care screening for domestic violence?
- ✓ Can we implement school-based prevention programs?
- ✓ Do we need stricter enforcement of existing laws and penalties against domestic violence?

How much violence is acceptable?

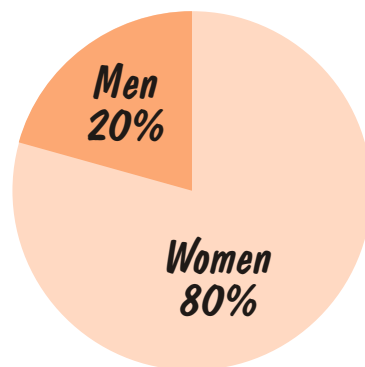
- ✓ Should we challenge our health-care system to make domestic violence a recognized and reportable health condition?
- ✓ Should domestic violence be addressed through the work-place?
- ✓ Should we strengthen penalties for domestic violence?
- ✓ What level of accountability should we demand?

Children raised in violent households suffer physical and mental symptoms, including digestive problems, headaches, and anxiety.



Domestic violence has been linked with higher rates of obesity, tobacco and substance abuse, mental health problems, late access to prenatal care and risky sexual behavior.

In 2002, law enforcement filed more than 4,400 reports of domestic violence in Forsyth County



Most, but not all, victims of domestic violence are women.



One in three American women will be abused at some point in their life.



Health Behaviors

Healthy lifestyles, and healthy values affect the health of our community. Every year, many Forsyth County residents lose years off their lives because of early deaths.

To fight premature deaths we can:

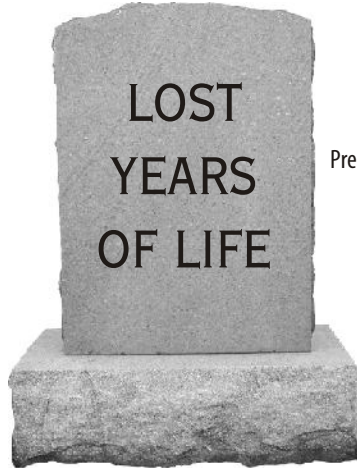
- Stop smoking
- Eat healthier food
- Get more exercise
- Get routine vaccines for pneumonia and the flu
- Have regular check-ups for breast, prostate, cervical, skin and colorectal cancer

What do we value?

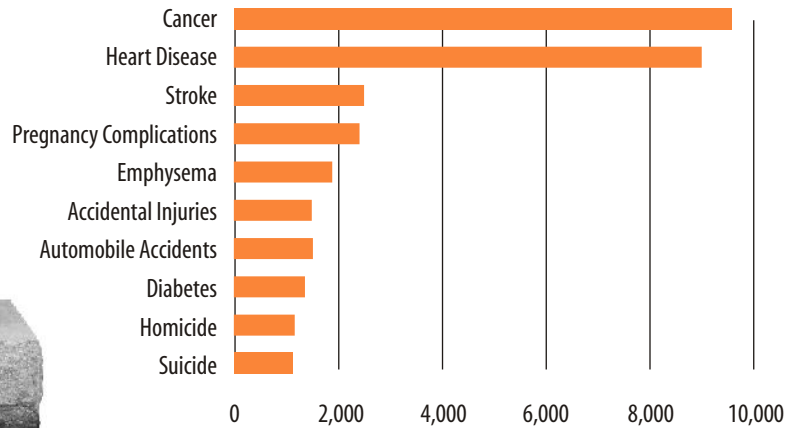
- If we choose to do so, how convenient would it be to walk in our neighborhood each day or ride a bicycle to work or school instead of driving?
- What are the smoking policies in our work-places, government buildings, public schools and other public places?
- Do we practice and promote good nutrition in our homes, our restaurants and our schools?

Premature Deaths

Source: North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics, 2000



Tens of thousands of years of life are lost every year



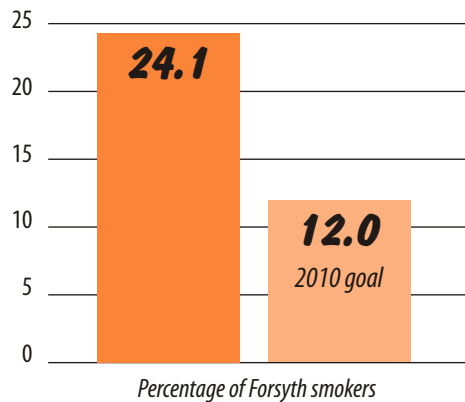
Total years of life lost by all Forsyth County residents due to the top ten causes of premature death.

Smoking

Source: Forsyth County Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2001

Almost one out of four Forsyth residents is a smoker

Tobacco use is a factor in most deaths due to cancer, emphysema, heart disease and stroke.



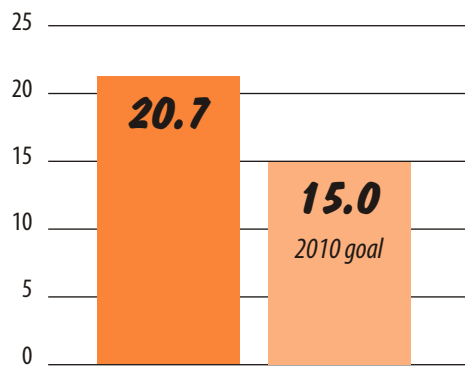
Percentage of Forsyth smokers

Obesity

Source: Forsyth County Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2001

One out of five Forsyth County residents is obese

Obesity can lead to heart disease, stroke and diabetes.



Percentage of obesity





Reproductive Health

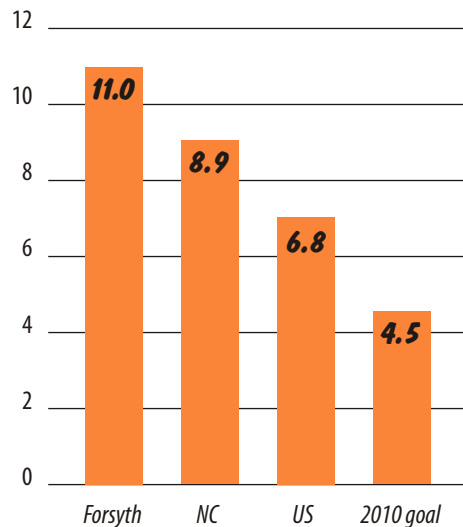
Healthy mothers and healthy babies help make healthy communities. We lag behind the state and other large counties in improving the health of our babies.

- ✓ Measures of reproductive health, such as the Infant Mortality (Death) Rate, have long been a valuable way for communities to evaluate their overall health status.
- ✓ Although our community has excellent hospitals, our infant death rate remains high.
- ✓ Most infant deaths are caused by premature labor and delivery of small (low weight) babies.
- ✓ Complications of pregnancy, such as premature delivery, are not readily prevented by hospitals or health care services.
- ✓ Women who live in poverty are more likely to experience complications of pregnancy
- ✓ In order to improve Reproductive Health, we must look for solutions in the way we care for and empower low-income women.

Infant Mortality

Source: North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics

Eleven out of every 1,000 babies born in Forsyth County do not live to see their first birthday

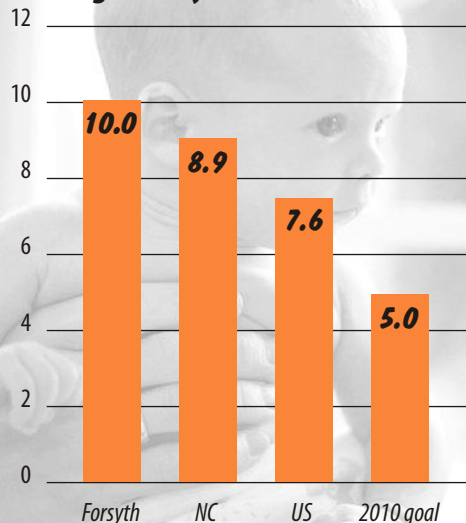


The Infant Mortality Rate is the number of babies who die each year before their first birthday out of every 1000 babies born alive. (All NC figures for 1997 to 2001; U.S rate for 2001).

Birth Weight

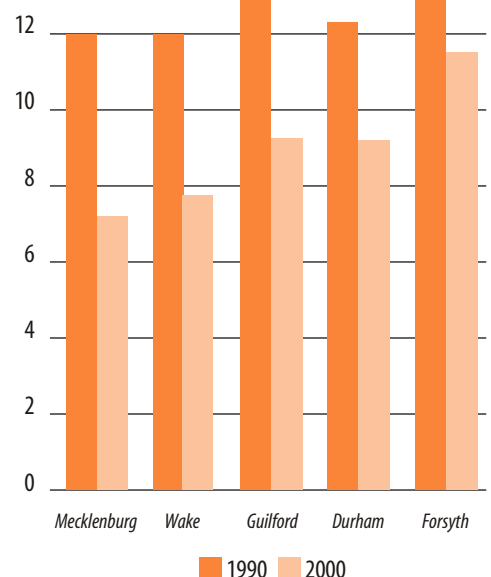
Source: North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics

Ten out of every 100 deliveries in Forsyth County is a low birth weight baby



The Low Birth Weight Rate is the percentage of babies that weigh less than 5 1/2 pounds at birth. (All NC figures for 1997 to 2001; U.S rate for 2001).

Forsyth County is not improving as fast as other counties



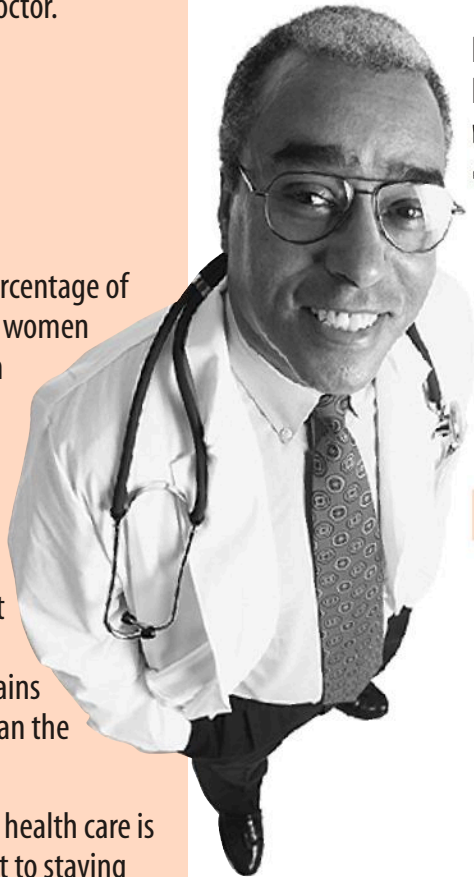
Improvement (lowering) in the Infant Mortality Rate during the ten-year period from 1990 to 2000



Access to Health Care

Forsyth County residents are more likely to have access to health care than other North Carolinians

- ✓ Having health insurance usually depends upon being employed full time with benefits, or having the financial resources to pay directly for insurance.
- ✓ Many unemployed or low-income working families, including a growing Latino population, are more likely not to have health insurance or a regular doctor.
- ✓ A high percentage of pregnant women in Forsyth County receive early prenatal care, but our Infant Mortality Rate remains higher than the State's.
- ✓ Although health care is important to staying healthy, hospitals and clinic services alone cannot solve many of our health problems.

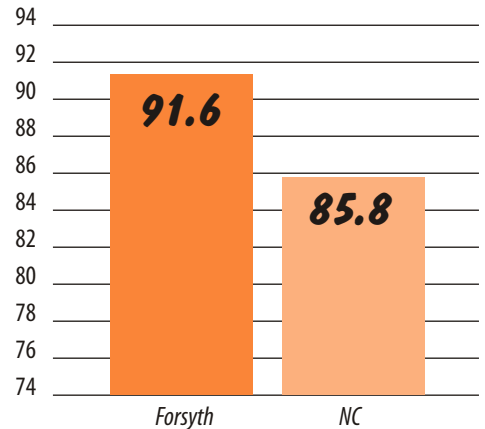


Health Insurance

Source: Forsyth County Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2001

More than nine out of ten Forsyth County residents have health insurance

The percentage of residents with insurance, including Medicare and Medicaid.

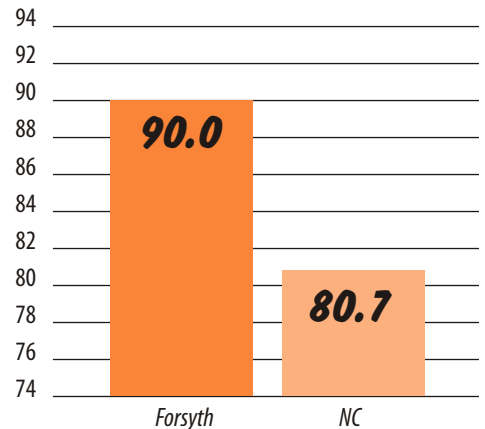


A Regular Doctor

Source: Forsyth County Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2001

Nine out of ten Forsyth County residents have a doctor

The percentage of residents with a regular doctor.

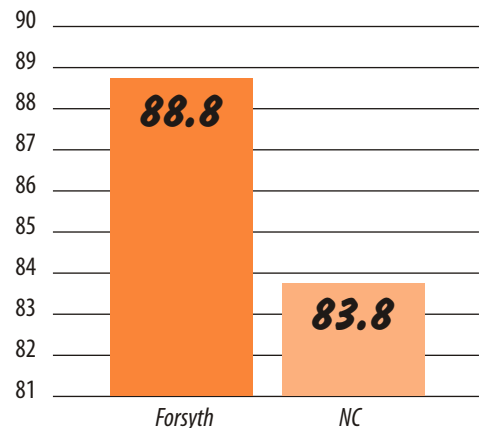


Early Prenatal Care

Source: North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics, 1996-2000

More women in Forsyth County receive early prenatal care

Public health, social-service and health-care agencies have worked successfully to assure that pregnant women in Forsyth County receive early prenatal care.





- ✓ How does the stress and uncertainty of poverty and prejudice contribute to poor health?
- ✓ Are low-income residents more vulnerable to unhealthy forces in our culture, such as marketing of alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, firearms and unhealthy nutrition?
- ✓ Can racial disparities in health be addressed through health care, or must they involve societal and economic change as well.



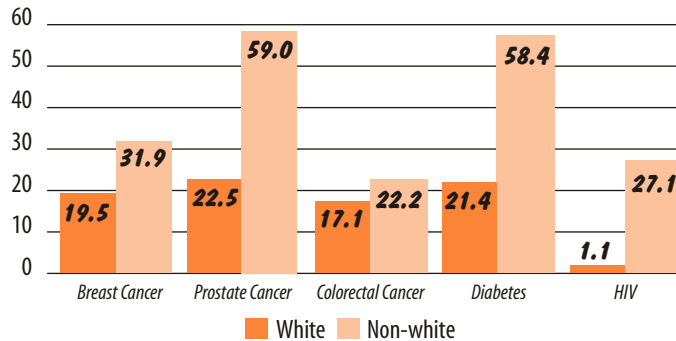
Racial Inequities in Health

African-Americans* are more likely to experience poor health and premature death than whites.



Death Rates Source: North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics, 1999-2000

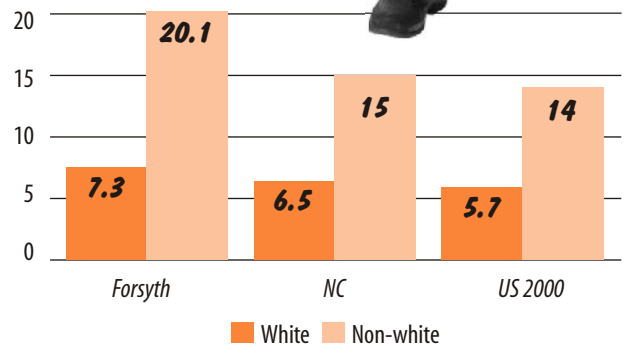
Non-whites* experience higher death rates than whites



Age-adjusted death rates (per 100,000) by cause and race

Infant Mortality Rates Source: North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics, 1997-2001

The infant mortality rate for non-whites in Forsyth County is almost three times higher than whites



(*In Forsyth County, more than 80 percent of "Non-whites" are African-American.)

Reorganization of Mental Health Services

In the wake of legislation passed in 2001, North Carolina is undergoing the most significant reorganization of its public Behavioral Health Services System since 1974. Four major initiatives will be unfolding over the next 3 years:

- Public funds will be used to serve only individuals with the most severe disabilities
- All resources will be focused on achieving outcomes through best practices
- The network of private providers in our community will be expanded
- More people will be served in their home communities instead of institutions

CenterPoint Human Services will lead these initiatives in Forsyth County. Although there is a risk of disruption while these improvements are implemented, CenterPoint is committed to stability during the transition. Through its Consumer and Family Advisory Committee, CenterPoint will monitor several indicators of system performance, including number of people served, volume of service provided, access time, waiting lists, and number of complaints