



What Will Be Your Legacy?

"Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhuman"

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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At the core of this philosophy is the fact that inequality and injustice affect all facets of public life.

On January 21, 2013, many across our nation and beyond will be honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This holiday is a celebration of Dr. King's immeasurable contribution to the United States, and to humankind and was signed into law in January 1983 by President Ronald Reagan. Celebrated on the third Monday of January, the King Holiday is a time when the nation pauses to remember Dr. King's life and work, but also to honor his legacy by making the holiday a day of community service, often looked upon as "a day on, not a day off."

Dr. King had a lot to say about inequalities and injustices. "Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhuman" (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.). At the core of this philosophy



is the fact that inequality and injustice affect all facets of public life". Minority Infant mortality is a health inequity.

Infant mortality among minority populations is a complex issue and there are a lot of factors that contribute to it and not all of them are medical, some of them are social. Factors inclusive of but not limited to financial, educational and logistical barriers to prenatal, neonatal and post-natal care.

Infant mortality is an important measure of health and an indicator of health status. Although infant mortality has declined over the past several years, the gap between minorities and whites has not narrowed. Buncombe County's infant mortality rate was 6.2 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2011 (2011 NC SCHS). However there is a dramatic disparity in infant mortality by race. An African American baby was three

and a half times more likely than a white infant to die prior to his or her first birthday. The African American infant mortality rate was 14.0 deaths per 1,000 live births (NC rate for minorities was 13.5 deaths per 1,000) while the white rate was 4.5.

Two leading indicators of infant health are birth weight and maternal weight gain during pregnancy. The percent of very low and low birth weight (7.8% for white and 9.3% for AA) infants in Buncombe County for African American infants is 1.3 times that of white women. There were 2,568 live births in Buncombe County in 2010; 234 (9.1%) of these infants weighed less than 2,500 grams. There were 156 live births to African American women in the same

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is: 'What are you doing for others?'" Do you have a sister, daughter, niece, wife, girlfriend, friend or neighbor that is pregnant? Please make a referral to the Project NAF Program

time period; 20 (12.8%) weighed less than 2,500 grams (Buncombe County 2010 Baby Book, NC SCHS).

The specific goals of Project NAF are to: Reduce the incidence of infant mortality and low birth weight among Buncombe County African American pregnant and post-partum women.

Project NAF's Scope of Work is inclusive of but not limited to the following activities:

- Case Coordination, Advocacy & Support
- Breastfeeding initiation and maintenance up to at least 6 weeks
- Eliminating use and exposure to tobacco
- Safe sleep
- Folic acid consumption
- Reproductive life planning
- Healthy Weight & Exercise



Belinda Grant, Executive Director of NAF.
Photo: Urban News

Project EMPOWER Services

Cultural Enrichment Activities; College Tours; Goal Setting; Teen Talk Radio (Wres 100.7).



After-school curriculum sessions are held from 3:45-5:30 p.m. on Tuesdays,

Wednesdays, and Thursdays, at Asheville Middle school in collaboration with the *In Real Life Community Learning Center*.

In-school curriculum sessions are held twice a week, from 2:45-3:30 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday for a one month period, at William Randolph School.

In celebrating the life, legacy and accomplishments of Dr. Martin



Luther King Jr. we are often inspired to answer what he called life's most persistent question: "What are you doing for others?"

Health inequity maybe viewed as a problem "too big" for us to handle; but having an impact on Minority Infant Mortality or Teen Pregnancy can be as simple as picking up your phone and making a referral to Project NAF or the Project EMPOWER Program.

Don't Forget!

With your busy schedules and holiday demands don't forget:



Lay Your Baby **On Back to Sleep** and **Stomach to Play**