A Demographic Exploration of Frederick County Birth Statistics

Welcome to the March, 2007 edition of "A Demographic Exploration of Frederick County." This month, in the spirit of spring, the focus will be on birth statistics. The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has just released its "Maryland Vital Statistics Annual Report 2005." The birth statistics focused on this month will be directly from this and previous years reports. For further information on the demographics and other statistics of Frederick County, please visit http://www.co.frederick.md.us/planning

Vital Statistics can be defined as the enumeration of data that concerns important events in human life. This month's article will focus on the human event of birth. In 2005, Frederick County residents experienced 3,030 births. In 2005, Frederick County had the 6th highest number of births in Maryland. In 2003, Frederick County had the highest number of births since 1960 (Figure 1). In 2005, Frederick County experienced 180 more births than the 10-year average annual number of 2,850.

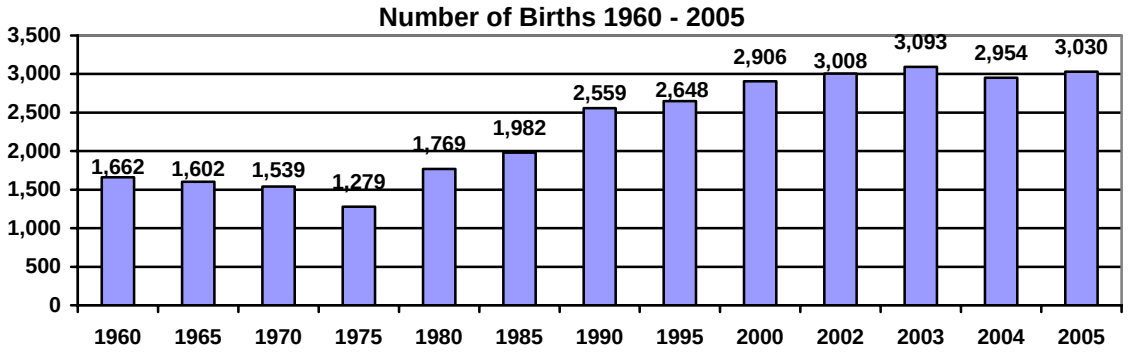

Figure 1.

Even though the County has experienced an increase in the number of births, the birth rate has been steadily declining since 1960. The birth rate is a statistic that measures the number of live births per 1,000 population. In 1960, the birth rate for Frederick County was 23.0, meaning for every 1,000 people there were 23 births. Throughout the decades the birth rate of Frederick County has significantly decreased. In 1999 the birth rate was only 13.6 and in 2005 we were just slightly higher than that at 13.7.

From 2000 to 2005, Frederick County residents experienced 17,888 births. 1 in every 12 births during this period were to Black mothers, 1 in every 16 births were to Hispanic mothers, and 1 in every 26 births were to Asian or American Indian mothers. The White Non-Hispanic population accounted for 14,525 births in the County. Since 2000, the percentage of the total number of births has been declining in the White Non-Hispanic population. While the percentage of births in the minority sectors of the population have been increasing. The greatest jump in the number of births is in the Hispanic population. In 2000, only 4% of the total births were to Hispanic mothers, in 2005, 11% of the births were to Hispanic mothers (Figure 2).

Number and Percentage of Births by Race 2000 - 2005						
	2000	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**
All Races	2,906 (100%)	2,897 (100%)	3,008 (100%)	3,093 (100%)	2,954 (100%)	3,030 (100%)
White Total	2,610 (90%)	2,574 (89%)	2,641 (88%)	2,690 (87%)	2,535 (86%)	2,573 (85%)
White Non-Hispanic	2,499 (86%)	2,471 (85%)	2,474 (82%)	2,503 (81%)	2,318 (78%)	2,260 (75%)
Black	209 (7%)	231 (8%)	250 (8%)	247 (8%)	251 (8%)	282 (9%)
American Indian and Asian or Pacific Islander	73 (3%)	66 (2%)	94 (3%)	139 (4%)	158 (5%)	169 (6%)
Hispanic	115 (4%)	106 (4%)	171 (6%)	199 (6%)	229 (8%)	321 (11%)

Figure 2.

The average birth rate for all races, from 2000 to 2005, was 14.1. The Hispanic population's birth rate was more than double this at 31.9. The Hispanic and Black population have consistently had higher birth rates in Frederick County than the White population. In 2005, the Hispanic population had the highest birth rate at 32 births per 1,000 people. The Black population came in second with 16 births per 1,000 people. The White population experienced the lowest birth rate at only 14, in 2005.

The general fertility rate in Frederick County increased to 63.2 in 2005 from 61.7 in 2004. The general fertility rate is a statistic that measures the number of births per 1,000 to mothers between the ages of 15 and 44 years old. The highest general fertility rate is found amongst the Hispanic population, where there are 126.9 births per 1,000 people between the ages of 15 and 44. This is significantly higher then the White population's general fertility rate of only 62.0.

The majority of births in Frederick County occur to mothers between the ages of 30 to 34. From 2000 to 2004, mothers between the ages of 30 to 34 averaged 932 births every year. The second age cohorts for number of births are mothers between the ages of 25 to 29. On average, 1 in every 6 births in Frederick County is to women between the ages of 25 to 29. In 2005, Frederick County ranked 6th highest in number of births to mothers under 18 years old. In the past 6 years, there were only 10 births to mothers under the age of 15. Mothers between the ages of 15 to17 averaged 54 births every year between 2000 and 2005 (Figure 3).

Number of Births by Age of Mother 2000 - 2005						
	2000	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**
All Ages	2,906	2,897	3,008	3,093	2,954	3,030
Under 15	2	3	1	1	2	1
15 to 17	51	44	58	52	55	62
18 to 19	131	127	127	137	126	114
20-24	450	518	514	504	519	548
25-29	789	717	786	795	761	818
30-34	937	919	958	977	919	884
35-39	450	473	460	512	475	484
Over 40	96	96	102	115	97	118

Figure 3.

The Black population of Frederick County had the highest percentage, 12%, of teenage mothers in 2005. However, this was lower than 2004, when 18% of the births within the Black community were to teenage mothers. Within most racial/origin categories, in 2005, Frederick County had the lowest percentage of teenage births since 2000. The only community that had an increase in teenage mothers was the Hispanic community. 12% of the births within the Hispanic community were to teenage mothers, significantly higher than 2000, where only 4% were. In 2000, 1 in every 23 Hispanic births were to teenage mothers, in 2005, 1 in every 8 births were (Figure 4).

Number and Percentage* of Births to Teenage Mothers by Race/Origin 2000 – 2005						
	2000	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**
All Races	184 (6.3%)	174 (6.0%)	186 (6.2%)	190 (6.1%)	183 (6.2%)	177 (5.8%)
White Total	144 (5.5%)	142 (5.5%)	143 (5.4%)	157 (5.8%)	137 (5.4%)	138 (5.4%)
White Non-Hispanic	140 (5.6%)	131 (5.3%)	121 (4.9%)	138 (5.5%)	114 (4.9%)	102 (4.5%)
Black	35 (16.7%)	31 (13.4%)	33 (13.2%)	31 (12.6%)	45 (17.9%)	34 (12.1%)
Hispanic	5 (4.3%)	11 (10.4%)	23 (13.5%)	20 (10.1%)	26 (11.4%)	38 (11.8%)
* Percentage is based on total births in the specified racial or origin group.						

Figure 4.

In 2005, Frederick County saw the greatest percentage, 25%, of unmarried mothers giving birth within the past 6 years. Since 2000, on average 1 in every 4 births is to an unmarried woman. In 2005, for the first time the highest percentage of unwed mothers was in the Hispanic population. In previous years the highest percentage of unwed mothers was within the Black community. In 2005, 1 in every 5 unwed mothers was Hispanic this is a significant rise. The 6 years average of unwed Hispanic mothers is 1 in every 9. Even though the percentage of unwed mothers is high in the Hispanic and Black communities the highest number of unwed mothers are still within the White Non-Hispanic community. 456 births in 2005 were to unwed non-Hispanic white mothers. (Figure 5).

Number and Percentage* of Births to Unmarried Mothers by Race/Origin 2000 - 2005						
	2000	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**
All Races	615 (21.2%)	666 (23.0%)	698 (23.2%)	687 (22.2%)	694 (23.5%)	751 (24.8%)
White Total	483 (18.5%)	518 (20.1%)	530 (20.1%)	538 (20.0%)	547 (21.6%)	605 (23.5%)
White Non-Hispanic	451 (18.0%)	484 (19.6%)	462 (18.7%)	462 (18.5%)	450 (19.4%)	456 (20.2%)
Black	120 (57.4%)	135 (58.4%)	143 (57.2%)	132 (53.4%)	131 (52.2%)	133 (47.2%)
Hispanic	34 (29.6%)	34 (32.1%)	70 (40.9%)	81 (40.7%)	105 (45.9%)	152 (47.4%)
* Percentage is based on total births in the specified racial or origin group.						

Figure 5.

In essence, Frederick County has been experiencing more births; however the birth rate of the County has been decreasing. This is due to the balance of population increase and birth. Most of the births in Frederick County occur to mothers that are between the ages of 30-34. The highest concentration of teenage mothers is found in the Black communities of Frederick County. The highest concentration of unwed mothers is found within the Hispanic community. Within the last couple of years the Hispanic community has started to have higher concentrations of births, teenage pregnancies, and unwed mothers.