A Demographic Exploration of Frederick County Birth Statistics

Welcome to the April, 2005 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 2003." 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/Demographics/myweb/DemoHome.htm

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 2003, Frederick County residents experienced 3,093 births. Starting in 2002, Frederick County began to surpass Harford County in the number of births, making it number 7 in the state of Maryland. In 2003, Frederick County had the highest number of births since 1960 (Figure 1). The 10-year average annual number of births, from 1994 to 2003, was 2,781. Hence, in 2003, Frederick County experienced 312 more births then the 10-year average.

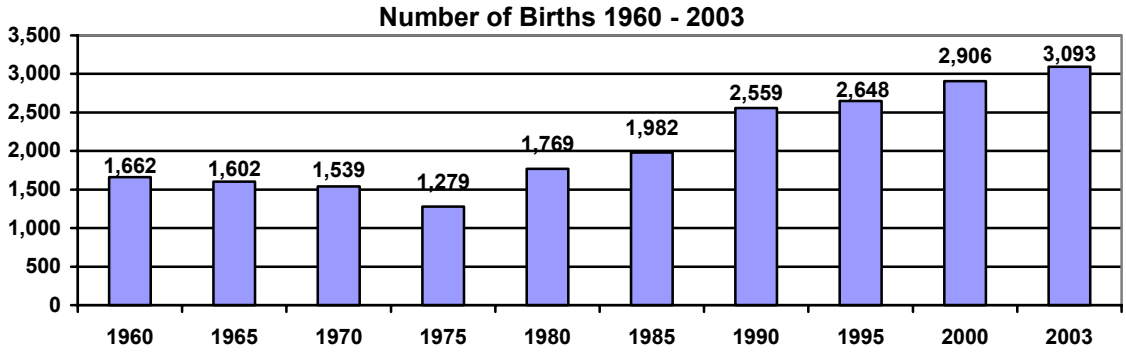

Figure 1.

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; in 2003, the birth rate was only 14.5. This means that in 1960, for every 1,000 people there were 23 births, in 2003, there were 14.5 births for every 1,000 people. The lowest birth rate within the past 15 years occurred in 1999, when for every 1,000 people there were only 13.6 births.

From 2000 to 2003, Frederick County residents experienced 11,904 births. 1 in every 13 births during this period were to Black parents, 1 in every 20 births were to Hispanic parents, and 1 in every 32 births were to Asian or American Indian parents. The White Non-Hispanic population accounted for 9,947 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 parents, in 2003, 6% of the births were to Hispanic parents (Figure 2).

Number and Percentage of Births by Race 2000 - 2003				
	2000	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**
All Races	2,906 (100%)	2,897 (100%)	3,008 (100%)	3,093 (100%)
White Total	2,610 (90%)	2,574 (89%)	2,641 (88%)	2,690 (87%)
White Non-Hispanic	2,499 (86%)	2,471 (85%)	2,474 (82%)	2,503 (81%)
Black	209 (7%)	231 (8%)	250 (8%)	247 (8%)
American Indian and Asian or Pacific Islander	73 (3%)	66 (2%)	94 (3%)	139 (4%)
Hispanic	115 (4%)	106 (4%)	171 (6%)	199 (6%)

Figure 2.

The average birth rate for all races, from 2000 to 2003, was 14.5. The Hispanic population's birth rate was almost double this average at 27.3. The Hispanic and Black population have consistently had higher birth rates in Frederick County than the White population. In 2003, the Hispanic population had the highest birth rate at 32.3 births per 1,000 people. The Black population came in second with 17.2 births per 1,000 people. The White population experienced the lowest birth rate at only 13.9, in 2003.

The general fertility rate in Frederick County during 2003 was the highest it has been in 3 years, 65.0. 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 126.8 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 62.9.

The majority of births in Frederick County occur to mothers between the ages of 30-34. From 1999 to 2003, mothers between the ages of 30-34 averaged 918 births every year. The second age cohorts for number of births are mothers between the ages of 25-29. On average, 1 in every 4 births in Frederick County is to women between the ages of 25-29. Mothers between the ages of 20-24 and 35-39 flip flop between third place throughout 1999 to 2003. In 2003, Frederick County ranked 8th highest in number of births to mothers under 18 years old. In the past 5 years, 1999 – 2003, there were only 9 births to mothers under the age of 15. Mothers between the ages of 15-17 averaged 52 births every year between 1999 and 2003 (Figure 3).

Number of Births by Age of Mother 1999 - 2003					
	1999	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**
All Ages	2,595	2,906	2,897	3,008	3,093
Under 15	2	2	3	1	1
15 to 17	54	51	44	58	52
18 to 19	123	131	127	127	137
20-24	428	450	518	514	504
25-29	688	789	717	786	795

30-34	801	937	919	958	977
35-39	425	450	473	460	512
Over 40	74	96	96	102	115

Figure 3.

The Black population of Frederick County had the highest percentage, 13%, of teenage mothers in 2003. The second highest percentage of teenage births was recorded in the Hispanic community, where 10% of the births were to teenage mothers. Even though the highest recorded percentage of teenage births is found in the Black community this is significantly lower than pervious years. In 2000, 17% of the births in the Black community were to teenage mothers. Since 2000, the percentage of teenage Black mothers has declined; in 2001, 13.4% were teenagers, 2002 13.2% were teenagers, and 2003 only 12.6% were teenagers. The Hispanic community was witnessed a significant jump in the births to teenage mothers since 2000. In 2000, only 4.3% (1 in every 23) of the Hispanic births were to teenage mothers, in 2001 10.4% were teenagers, in 2002 13.5% were teenage mothers, and in 2003 10.1% (1 in every 10) were teenagers (Figure 4).

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

Figure 4.

In 2002, Frederick County saw the greatest percentage, 23%, of unmarried mothers giving birth within the past 5 years. Since 2000, on average 1 in every 18 births is to an unmarried women. Black unmarried women have the highest rate of births than any other race/origin category in Frederick County. On average, 1 in every 5 unmarried mothers giving birth are Black. The second highest unmarried mother group is Hispanics. They have continued to increase their percentage to 29.6% in 2000 to 40.7% in 2003 (Figure 5).

Number and Percentage* of Births to Unmarried Mothers by Race/Origin 2000 - 2003				
	2000	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**
All Races	615 (621.2%)	666 (23.0%)	698 (23.2%)	687 (22.2%)
White Total	483 (18.5%)	518 (20.1%)	530 (20.1%)	538 (20.0%)
White Non-Hispanic	451 (18.0%)	484 (19.6%)	462 (18.7%)	462 (18.5%)

Black	120 (57.4%)	135 (58.4%)	143 (57.2%)	132 (53.4%)
Hispanic	34 (29.6%)	34 (32.1%)	70 (40.9%)	81 (40.7%)
* 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 unmarried and teenage mothers is found in the Black communities of Frederick County. Even though the trends are declining the numbers are very significant. The Hispanic population is also raising its trend toward more teenage and unmarried mothers. These high minority trends may be due to less White Non-Hispanic births and more minority births taking place in the County.