NC Department of Health and Human Services Eugenics Efforts
2003-2009

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Governor's Task Force To Determine The Method of Compensation For Victims of North Carolina's Eugenics Board

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An Apology From Governor Mike Easley

"To the victims and families of this regrettable episode in North Carolina's past, I extend my sincere apologies and want to assure them that we will not forget what they have endured."
(December 2002)

Two Key Follow Up Actions in 2003

- Repeal of the Eugenics' Law
- Eugenics Study Committee
North Carolina 2003 General Assembly's Response

- Involuntary sterilization law repealed by the NC General Assembly - 2003 session.
- Rep. Larry Womble (Forsyth County), led the legislative efforts to
  - Repeal Eugenics (involuntary sterilization) law
  - Introduce House Bill 1236 to create Legislative Study Commission (financial compensation)

Governor Mike Easley's Response

- Established Eugenics Study Committee 2003
- Appointed Co-Chairs - Larry Womble, NC House of Representatives and Carene Hooker Odum, Secretary North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
- Charged to committee:
  - Explore the history of the program,
  - Ensure that the Eugenics Program is never repeated in NC, and
  - Make recommendations on how to assist the survivors of the state's involuntary sterilization program

Eugenics Study Committee Membership

- North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
  - Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities (DMHHD)
  - Council on Developmental Disabilities
  - Division of Mental Health/Development Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services
  - General Counsel
- North Carolina Department of Cultural Resource
  - Arts and Libraries
  - Office of Archives and History
- Duke University Ethicist
- North Carolina General Assembly

Eugenics Study Committee Recommendations (Support for Survivors)

- Nonprofit foundation/support group
- Finding the survivors (DHHS lead role)
- Determining Validity of Claims (DHHS lead role)
- Health Care (DHHS lead role)
- Education Benefits
Eugenics Study Committee Recommendations
(System Changes)

- North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction should include information about the eugenics program in its curriculum, on North Carolina history.
- The Department of Cultural Resources should investigate the creation of a memorial to ensure that no one forgets what the State of North Carolina once perpetrated against its own citizens. This memorial needs to be tangible—something that provides constant witness to this program long after survivors are gone.
- The North Carolina University and Community College systems should explore the creation of endowed chairs or special scholarships that will memorialize the program.

Eugenics Study Committee Recommendations
(System Changes)
Specific to Department of Health and Human Services

- The Department of Health and Human Service will create an ethics program, which includes information on the Eugenics Board. DHHS professionals will be required to take this course.
- A seminar will be organized to talk about the program, hear from survivors and discuss its implications in today’s world. The seminar should include presentations from experts, including Dr. Johanna Schoen.

DHHS' Response 2004-2008

- Secretary Appointed OMHHHD to lead Department’s Follow-up Efforts
- Per Secretary’s request- Office of Citizen Services Database (Self-identified Eugenics Victims)
- OMHHHD consulted with Department of Cultural Resources
  - Referrals (verification of victims)
  - Memorandum of Agreement (records access)

DHHS' Response 2004-2008

- OMHHHD Consulted with Eugenics Researcher (Dr. Johanna Schoen)
  - Estimated number of survivors
  - Outreach strategy to find survivors (Eugenics Exhibit)
  - Strategy to Educate DHHS professionals
DHHS' Response 2004-2008

- Eugenics Traveling Exhibit
  - Developed in partnership with Researcher, Eugenics Victims, Artifacts Curator
- Launched in June, 2007 at NC Museum of History
- Eugenics Seminar
  - Developed and first presented 2007
  - DHHS professionals, policy makers, medical care providers, community members and Eugenics victims

Eugenics Traveling Exhibit

2008 House Select Committee on Compensation for Victims of the Eugenics Sterilization Program

Co-Chairs: Representatives Larry Womble and Ronnie Sutton
Recommendations:
- Mental Health Counseling Benefits
- Database on Eugenics Program Records
- Verify Status of Self-Identified Survivors
- Historical Marker
- Educational Materials
- Interview and Document Survivors
- Ethics Training Module
- Preserve and allow appropriate access to program records
- Media Campaign
- Compensation for Victims ($50,000)

Transfer of Responsibilities

- DHHS negotiated with Cultural Resources to house the Eugenics Exhibit and manage Victims Database (2008)
- Presentation to House Select Committee on Compensation For Victims of the Eugenics Sterilization Program (2008)
- OMHHD Oriented Executive Director, NC Justice For Sterilization Victims Foundation (2009)
Thank you!

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