DEATH RATES ARE INCREASING FOR MIDLIFE WHITES IN NORTH CAROLINA... BUT DEATH RATES ARE DECREASING FOR NONWHITES... THIS ACCORDING TO A NEW STUDY OUT OF EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY'S DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH. RESEARCHERS ARE NOW TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHY.

PKG

SUPERS

Dr. Chris Mansfield – ECU Dept. of Public Health

Dr. Mansfield- That’s not what we wanted to see, but remarkably we saw a substantial improvement for nonwhites in the middle-age group in this time period.

AND THAT’S A PARADOX. PROFESSOR EMERITUS... DR. CHRIS MANSFIELD AND HIS COLLEAGUES, SATOMI IMAI AND KATHERINE JONES... AUTHORED THE STUDY THAT LOOKED AT NORTH CAROLINA DATA FROM THE YEARS 2000 THROUGH 2013. THEY SAY THE RACIAL DISPARITY BETWEEN NONWHITES AND WHITES IS LESSENING – WHICH IS A GOOD THING.

THE DATA SHOWS THAT THE DEATH RATE OF NONWHITES AGED 45 TO 54... DECREASED 30-PERCENT. HOWEVER... FOR WHITES... THE DEATH RATE INCREASED BY 6-PERCENT ACROSS THE STATE... AND BY 17-PERCENT IN THE POOREST COUNTIES, INDICATING ECONOMICS AS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR.

THE MAIN CAUSES OF THE INCREASE IN DEATH FOR MIDLIFE WHITES... SUICIDE AND LIVER DISEASES. 23:50 – Dr. Mansfield -- Some people have described these diseases of despair. Perhaps the burden of the Great Recession that started in 2008.

DR. MANSFIELD CITED A STUDY THAT SHOWS CONTINUAL DECLINE OF DEATH RATES IN EUROPE AND CANADA... ... HE NOTES THAT THE BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES IN THESE STUDIES... IS UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE.

We need to do something about it. It ought to be improving for everybody. HE SUGGESTS THINGS LIKE STRENGTHENING THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT... EXPANDING MEDICAID IN NORTH CAROLINA... AND IMPROVING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES... COULD HELP DECREASE THESE DEATH RATES.

BUT THERE COULD BE MORE TO IT.

One has to wonder if there’s a factor involved here in terms of hope – resilience of that people have a more positive attitude about their life chances.

FOR DR. MANSFIELD... ONE THING IS FOR SURE... OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM AND SOCIETY SHOULD BE WORKING BETTER FOR EVERYONE.

Giving everybody the chance to enjoy long healthy lives.