

Apr 2012														Upcoming Events	
S	M	T	W	T	F	S								12:00 PM	Reading at
1	2	3	4	5	6	7								Umlinal: Exchange 81 -	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14								Roadways	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21								6:00 PM	Education -
22	23	24	25	26	27	28								Digital Photography-Get	
29	30													to know Your Settings	
														more events >>	



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2012.04.24

Roanoke Valley's declining birth rate



Fewer babies are being born in the Roanoke Valley.

The birth rate in the Roanoke Valley dropped 15.3 percent from 2007 to 2010, according to data from [Virginia Health Information](#).

It's not a trend unique to our region. Nationally the birth rate has also been declining.

But, as Dr. Alice Ackerman, the chairwoman of pediatrics at Carilion Clinic, points out, "The region's birth rate is significantly lower than the U.S. rate."

Ackerman addressed the declining rate in a letter to the Virginia Department of Health detailing her reasons for opposing LewisGale Regional Medical Center's application for a neonatal intensive care unit.

"Due to the decreased birth rate in the region as well as our continuous commitment to quality improvement, Carilion Roanoke Memorial has experienced a steady decline since 2009 in NICU average daily census, occupancy rate and average length of stay," Ackerman wrote in the letter, which I received through a Virginia Freedom of Information Act request.

You can read the latest in that [ongoing fight here](#), but I wanted use this blog entry to draw attention to the downward birth rate trend.

Below I've included some data on the number of births at area hospitals. The information comes from Thomas Reuters and was provided by Carilion as part of the public record in the NICU fight.

Hospital	2007	2008	2009	2010
ALLEGHANY REGIONAL HOSPITAL				1
CARILION FRANKLIN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL	267	252	268	230
CARILION MEDICAL CENTER	3,438	3,495	3,438	3,063
CARILION NEW RIVER VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER	1,180	1,188	1,065	1,007
CLINCH VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER	490	480	473	515
LEWIS-GALE MEDICAL CENTER	587	521	477	721
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL OF MARTINSVILLE AND HENRY COUNTY	542	557	495	493
MONTGOMERY REGIONAL HOSPITAL	527	488	494	552
NORTON COMMUNITY HOSPITAL	481	380	384	373
PULASKI COMMUNITY HOSPITAL	60			
SMYTH COUNTY COMMUNITY HOSPITAL	299	283	242	177
TWIN COUNTY REGIONAL HOSPITAL	391	355	365	318
WELLMONT LONESOME PINE HOSPITAL	256	281	264	235
WYTHE COUNTY COMMUNITY HOSPITAL	241	235	242	273
Grand Total	8,759	8,515	8,207	7,958

About this blog

Med Beat covers medical issues, research and the business side of the health care industry, as reported by Sarah Bruyn Jones, who covers the business of medicine in Southwest Virginia for The Roanoke Times.

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