

# NAACP

**"Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in healthcare is the most shocking and inhumane." Dr. Martin Luther King jr.**

## Maternal Mortality event to be rescheduled

The event scheduled for February 10th at the Springfield Art Museum was canceled due to icy conditions. It will be rescheduled as soon as possible.

## The Importance of Infants' Exposure to Micro-Organisms

Studies are concluding that the trillions of organisms that inhabit the human body can influence our current and future health.

Americans are frequently born by non-emergent C-section and are less likely to EXCLUSIVELY breast feed for the first six months. These trends can reduce and distort the population of micro-organisms possibility explaining rising rates of asthma, allergies and auto-immune diseases.

A Danish study involving 2 million babies born between 1977 and 2012 (cont p 2)

## Helen Oke-Thomas; Nurse Practitioner

*Tell us about your background.* I grew up in Parkin Arkansas, a town of less than 3,000 people. I graduated from Earle Arkansas High School, which was nearby and slightly larger. All together I have 7 brothers and 6 sisters. We all have at least a high school diploma. My mom (my hero) either worked in factory or janitorial jobs and always encouraged us to pursue our dreams despite financial or emotional hardships. *Can you tell us about your motivation to become a nurse?* We were poverty stricken as children. I wanted to pursue a career that was financially stable and lucrative.



*Where did you get your education?* I attended the St. John's school of nursing and became a diploma-trained nurse, then continued on to SMSU to earn my BSN and then on to UMKC to graduate with my Masters of Nursing Science (MSN) in 1997. I have practiced as a nurse practitioner since.

*What types of nursing have you done?* I worked in cardiac step down for six years, then on to the Department of Mental Health where I worked with clients with mental disabilities. I then worked at the Federal Medical Center for two years, Greene County Health Department, the LINK clinic (a school based program) and family medicine at a clinic on East Sunshine, the Aids Project of the Ozarks and currently operate the Panther Clinic on the

found babies born by C-section were significantly more likely than vaginally born babies to develop asthma, connective tissue disorders, juvenile arthritis, immune deficiencies and leukemia.

## 2018 Flu Season on Track to be one of the Worst in Years

The 2018 flu season is taking a toll on young and old alike. Currently 7.7% of American's going to doctors appointments are experiencing flu-like symptoms. The current vaccination is calculated to be about 30% effective where it is usually twice this effective.

A normal flu season claims about 12,000 lives, bad seasons about 56,000. Higher rates of hospitalization so far this year point toward a bad year. At this time the rates of infection are stable in the Midwest but still expanding in the South and along the Atlantic Coast.

If you haven't gotten your flu shot yet, please do.

Drury Campus caring for students and faculty.

*Have you ever had to deal with racism in your career?* Definitely, there have been times when patients said they wanted a different nurse because of the color of my skin. I was hurt and humiliated. My goal was to provide the best care possible but instead I was judged only by my skin.

*On what basis were you chosen to be one of the 20 Most Influential Women in 2014 by the Springfield Business Journal?* This question was answered by her husband, John, of 27 years. She was chosen due to her calm manner of leadership, her ability to focus on and solve problems as well as her ability to be a consensus builder.

*What is your advice for young people?* Follow your dreams. Don't let anyone or anything get in your way. I was close to quitting several times but didn't. Despite setbacks (like having to take the second semester of nursing school again) I persevered. Sometimes you may have to work harder or study longer.

*What are your goals for the future?* I am thinking about adding Health Coaching to what I do. I am also thinking about some type of business venture perhaps adding on to what I already do.

## Call Your Elected Officials:

US Senators: Claire McCaskill (202)224-6154,

Roy Blunt (202)224-5721

Representative Billy Long (202)225-6536.

