

# NEGATIVE POPULATION GROWTH

## Press Release

*For immediate release*

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## **New NPG Forum Paper Explores Doctors' Stance and Obstacles Faced When Confronting Overpopulation** **Doctors Acknowledge Their Hand in Overpopulation but Is It Enough?**

Alexandria, VA, (February 23, 2021): In 1972, an organization of doctors tackled overpopulation in their mission statement, saying, in part: "It is right that we as doctors should be especially concerned about the world population crisis." Since that time, doctors have generally taken a more passive stance on overpopulation. Rarely quick to highlight the dangers of overpopulation or the connection between overpopulation and access to healthcare, female education, and environmental degradation, doctors are typically in the hot seat with population activists to do more. Countering the prevailing narrative, a cohort of medical professionals recently co-authored a new commentary dissecting population growth under a new light. A new Forum paper, published by Negative Population Growth, Inc. serves to highlight this new statement and delves deeper into the divisive mindsets that continue to suppress the overpopulation conversation. Titled [\*Doctors Take Responsibility for Overpopulation, Again\*](#) and written by Edwin S. Rubenstein, this work covers the recent doctors' statement as well as revisits the archaic narratives that keep overpopulation under the rug.

Rubenstein immediately leads readers to the popular theory that overpopulation will likely self-correct. Known as the Demographic Transition Theory (DTT) by professional demographers, Rubenstein describes DTT as the general idea that "as high mortality rates fell, birth rates were expected to follow suit, as couples realize large families are no longer needed to replicate themselves." Rubenstein further describes DTT, saying: "There are several variants, but the classic theory invokes the notion of couples opting for smaller families, young women putting education and jobs before motherhood, modern contraceptives becoming increasingly available, and poverty rates declining in developing countries."

Last October, the new statement, *Doctors and Overpopulation 48 Years Later: A Second Notice*, details the phenomenon of a 'population bulge,' i.e., when the population does not grow because people are reproducing more, but because more people are present to reproduce. There are other reasons to doubt DTT's stance on population growth. Rubenstein includes reasons such as: the suggestion that fertility rates may be inherited (large families beget large families) and the complete omission of immigration as it relates to population growth. However, those that support DTT are undeterred and remain steadfast in their belief that overpopulation will fix itself.

DTT is far from the only thing that stands in contrast with understanding overpopulation. Rubenstein also discusses unwanted pregnancies and the science behind accessible contraceptives around the world and end of life care. Noting that contraceptives to curb unwanted pregnancies may not be popular, Rubenstein urges

consideration by quoting economist Kenneth Boulding (on the topic of mandatory contraceptive care), when he said: “The fact that it seems absurd, however, is merely a reflection of the total unwillingness of mankind to face up to what is perhaps its most serious long-run problem.”

Adding another voice to the conversation, Rubenstein quotes Dr. Ross Walker, an expert in preventive cardiology, on the topic of doctors and end of life treatment. Dr. Walker said, “It is my very strong opinion that doctors should be prolonging everyone’s life, but no one’s death...When a person has entered the death phase, I believe it is the responsibility of the medical profession to ensure that person’s death occurs as quickly, painlessly, and with as much dignity as possible. Unfortunately, many relatives and members of the medical profession believe it is their responsibility to pull out all the stops and do everything possible to maintain someone’s existence, regardless of the quality of that existence...Unless someone with a public profile is brave enough to make these comments, we will continue to see an exponential rise in the population, wars fought over food and water and a continually rising divide between the haves and have nots.”

In this paper, Rubenstein tackles the complicated foundations of the medical field’s professional stance on overpopulation. After stating the need for medical guidance Rubenstein ends on a hopeful note: “There are millions of women who want to control their fertility but do not have access to reliable contraception. Even more live in societies where men are the sole deciders of family size, and even gender. Women are forced to become mothers because that is the only role open to them...Physicians have been slow to recognize the dangers of overpopulation, and the relationship between medical care, women’s education, and environmental degradation. The 2020 Doctors and Overpopulation notice could change that.”

Founded in 1972, NPG is a national nonprofit membership organization dedicated to educating the American public and political leaders regarding the damaging effects of population growth. We believe that our nation is already vastly overpopulated in terms of the long-range carrying capacity of its resources and environment. NPG advocates the adoption of its [Proposed National Population Policy](#), with the goal of eventually stabilizing U.S. population at a sustainable level – far lower than today’s. We do not simply identify the problems – we propose solutions. For more information, visit our website at [NPG.org](http://NPG.org), follow us on Facebook [@NegativePopulationGrowth](#) or follow us on Twitter [@npg\\_org](#).