

Payout deadline approaches for North Carolina forced sterilization victims

In 1948, as Naomi Schenck was rushed into a North Carolina operating room because she was having a miscarriage, the then-17-year-old newlywed heard a doctor say: “Cut her.”

“I didn’t know what ‘cut her’ meant,” said Schenck, now 83. She soon found out: Schenck said she was given a spinal tap and then sterilized against her will. Some 7,600 others were sterilized from 1929 to 1974 under the state’s eugenics program. Most were either forced or coerced into the procedure, though a small number of people chose to be sterilized.

Now, Schenck is among 520 sterilization victims and family members waiting to be paid a portion of the \$10 million fund established by North Carolina to compensate victims. The Office for Justice of Sterilization Victims estimates about 1,800 victims are still alive. Their deadline to file claims is Monday.

Eugenics programs in the U.S. were widely perceived as a legitimate effort to improve society by sterilizing people the state deemed inferior citizens incapable of caring for children. Victims were disproportionately poor, mentally disabled or African-American. Eugenics fell out of favor in most states when it became associated with Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler’s ideas of racial purity during World War II, though North Carolina’s continued for some time after.

Read the full, original story: [Deadline Looms for NC Eugenics Victims Payment](#)