

# State of the County Health Report

## Cleveland County, North Carolina



From the Director's Chair—

2016 was an important year in the history of the Cleveland County Health Department as we moved into our new 110,000 square foot facility on South Post Road to better serve the residents of Cleveland County! The new facility was designed to improve and enhance patient flow with a central laboratory, clinics located on the first floor, expanded space for our pharmacy and ample waiting areas for our patients. In addition, we have an enlarged health education area including office space, a classroom, a small conference room and a Teaching Kitchen also located on the first floor. Our new facility boasts three conference rooms that can be combined into one as well as an enlarged Employee Health and Wellness office and an easily accessible environmental health unit. The second floor houses administrative and financial offices, a library, space for the Nurse Family Partnership and School Health staff and offices for the Carolinas Community Health Partnership. The building was formally opened during National Public Health Week in April when we hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony, the Paul Sarazen Forum on Child Health Issues and a community open house. This new building helps us to carry out our mission: to assure, enhance and protect the health of Cleveland County citizens through education and prevention!



*Dorothea Wyant, Health Director*

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**CLEVELAND COUNTY**

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**PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER**

## Substance Abuse

Substance abuse was the top health priority identified in the 2015 Community Health Assessment. This issue was also a priority in the 2011 assessment and potentially will continue to be a health issue in Cleveland County as long as substances are available to abuse and misuse. The Healthy NC 2020 objectives that most closely align with this focus include (1) reduce the percentage of high school students who had alcohol on one or more of the past 30 days, (2) reduce the percentage of individuals aged 12 years and older reporting any illicit drug use in the past 30 days and (3) reduce the unintentional poisoning mortality rate per 100,000 population.

Work in this focus area has been led by several community partners and grant-funded initiatives. The Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition serves as the community advisory council for the federal Drug Free Communities grant which has focused on underage drinking and abuse of prescription medications. Grant activities include the development of a communication campaign using print and electronic media as well as the implementation of a youth council with students from the four county high schools to obtain insight into youth perceptions of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use. The Coalition joined with the Cleveland County Public Health Center, the Carolina Community Health Partnership, Charlotte AHEC and Partners Behavioral Health MCO to present a forum on “Rx Abuse in Cleveland County: How to be a Part of the Solution to a Community Problem”.

In October 2016 the grant focus shifted to include an initiative on reducing youth use of electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS). Data from the 2015 PRIDE student drug use survey indicated that more Cleveland County students were experimenting with these products. ENDS was the featured topic at the Paul Sarazen Forum on Child Health Issues in April, 2016 with a comprehensive presentation from Sally Herndon, head of the NC Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch, NC DHHS. A second community forum on ENDS was presented in October 2016 for community agency staff by Ann Staples, Director of Public Education and Communication for the NC Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch, NC DHHS.

The Overdose Prevention Task Force provides oversight for the Strategic Prevention Framework-Partnerships for Success grant initiative which focuses on the abuse and misuse of prescription medications among youth ages 12-15. This task force also works with law enforcement to sponsor three medication take-back events held in March, April and September annually as well as maintaining a network of 18 take-back boxes at sites throughout the county. Combined these efforts collected **4,181,627 dosage units** of prescription and over-the-counter medications in 2016. The SPF grant funds the delivery of the *All Stars* substance abuse prevention curriculum for 7th grade students in the county, a ten day evidence-based program delivered at the middle schools during health and physical education classes. **680** 7th grade students participated in the *All Stars* curriculum in 2016. The SPF grant coordinator is responsible for the delivery of this curriculum.

CODAP Services included in the Health Promotion/Health Education unit of the Cleveland County Public Health Center is funded through the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant administered by Partners Behavioral Health MCO as well as contributions

**Substance Abuse (continued)**

from United Way of Cleveland County, program fees and governmental contributions (Shelby and Kings Mountain ABC boards). Two programs focus on serving students in Cleveland County. First, a five day sequence of substance abuse prevention education is provided to 8th grade students in all middle schools and at Turning Point Academy. During the 15-16 academic year, the curriculum was *Northland Powerlines*; a change was made to *Health Smart: Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs* for the 16-17 year. Both programs met the core curriculum standards for 8th grade health required by the NC Department of Public Instruction. A total of **1350** students were served during 2016.

Second, CODAP staff members provide an education/early intervention program called SOBIR (Student Options Begin with Intervention and Recovery) for students who have violated the substance abuse policies of Cleveland County Schools and for youth who have violated NC statutes regarding underage drinking and possession of alcoholic beverages. The program consists of four sessions—two with both parent/guardian and student and two with students only. Students receive the SASSI (Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory) assessment to measure the potential for chemical dependency and their educational materials are based on the *Teen Intervene* evidence-based curriculum. In 2016, **49** middle and high school students participated in the SOBIR program.

Additional work on substance abuse issues during 2016 included:

- Training two CCPHC staff members to become Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialists to interact with patients who continue to smoke and to support their efforts to stop smoking;
- Provision of four, four-session Fresh Start classes for county employees who indicated an interest in smoking cessation;
- Adoption of a tobacco-free policy for buildings and grounds for the new Cleveland County Public Health Center; development of campus-free tobacco policies for faith communities with three churches adopting the policy and two additional churches considering doing so;
- Planning for implementation of the PRIDE Student Drug Use Survey projected for March 2017 for 6th, 9th and 12th grade students in Cleveland County;
- Development of a “Don’t Rush to Flush” campaign to stimulate proper disposal of prescription and over-the-counter medications; and
- Implementation of the “Lock Your Meds” campaign aimed at proper storage of prescription medications including print media, billboards and social media as well as the distribution of prescription medication disposal kits and lock boxes for medications.



## Physical Activity and Nutrition

Physical activity and nutrition was identified as the second health priority to be addressed in the 2015 Community Health Assessment. Again, this issue was also named the third top priority in the 2011 assessment. Being named a top priority in two consecutive assessments indicates that while county residents understand the importance of physical activity and good nutrition, their actions do not often correspond to their ideas. Poor nutrition and physical inactivity are underlying factors in chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes, both of which appear consistently in mortality data for the county.

The Community Health Action Plan for Physical Activity and Nutrition 2016-18 includes the following Healthy NC 2020 objectives: (1) increase the percentage of high school students who are neither overweight nor obese, (2) increase the percentage of adults getting the recommended amount of physical activity and (3) increase the percentage of adults who consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Data to support changes in the first objective is derived from the CHAMPS survey. Data for objectives 2 and 3 are self-reported by adults either in the CHA survey or drawn from the Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance Study.

Interventions selected to address this priority focus on target populations where a critical mass of individuals may be impacted. The first intervention is the Healthy Child Care Facility Recognition Program, a collaboration between the Cleveland County Public Health Center and Child Care Connections (resource and referral agency for the county). The goal of this intervention is to train child care center and family child care home staff members in developing and implementing policies around healthy food choices and enhancement of physical activity interactions. A health educator from CCPHC and a technical assistance specialist from Child Care Connections work together to develop policies and implement best practices in the facility. In addition, each participating facility receives training in the *Color Me Healthy* and *Be Active!* curricula. Each facility is offered the opportunity to receive a raised garden bed on-site to encourage children to grow and consume healthy vegetables. In 2016 **four** family child care homes and **three** child care centers enrolled in this recognition program; **ten** child care facilities who participated in 2014 and 2015 continued participation in the program.

A second intervention focused on providing school-community gardens on school campuses throughout the county. These gardens, originally funded by an Eat Smart Move More state grant, utilize raised beds and environmentally friendly practices at **thirteen** schools and **seven** child care facilities across the county. The gardens are planted with seasonal vegetables three times annually; produce from the gardens is distributed to students at the school sites to take home or contributed to local agencies for their feeding programs.

Schools with these gardens are also provided the *Got Veggies!* curriculum for use in the classroom as well as the opportunity to learn about bee keeping from community volunteers. Master Gardeners trained by the NC Cooperative Extension Service collaborate in building and maintaining these gardens. An average of 2000 pounds of food is generated by these gardens annually. **Three** additional gardens were added in 2016 with requests from two additional sites for building gardens in 2017.

### Physical Activity and Nutrition (continued)

A third intervention encourages physical activity through the Step One Challenge, a six-week walking contest for teams of 3 to 6 individuals, to encourage county residents to become more physically active. Churches, schools and businesses form teams as do agencies and families to challenge each other to walk 10,000 steps a day. In 2016 from August through early October **455** individuals on **82** teams participated in this challenge.

The fourth intervention in this focus area began in 2016 with the introduction of monthly cooking classes at the Cleveland County Public Health Center. A “Teaching Kitchen” in the new facility was outfitted through a generous contribution from the Alliance for Health in Cleveland County—appliances, tables, chairs, and small kitchen equipment. A health educator and a nutritionist from the WIC program began teaching classes in October 2016 using recipes that are easily replicable under most kitchen conditions and involving food items on the approved WIC list. Participants are recruited from the clinic patients at the CCPHC; to date classes have featured salads, vegetable dishes, healthy desserts and even turkey at the November class. An average of six to ten participants attend each class. Participants also receive a bag of small kitchen gadgets from the Alliance for Health to use in their home preparation of food.

Finally, health educators began the implementation of using the CDC Worksite Health Score Card in 2016 to offer businesses and agencies the opportunity to assess/improve their worksite wellness programs. In 2016, Cleveland County government, the City of Shelby and the City of Kings Mountain participated in these assessments identifying 13 factors for consideration. Each participating entity received an analysis of their results, a comparison to comparably sized entities across the county and a list of recommendations to strengthen their wellness programming. Approximately **1150** employees from these entities were touched by the assessments completed to date.

Activities under the Community Health Action Plan for Physical Activity and Nutrition are supported by members of the Eat Smart Move More Coalition of Cleveland County. These individuals meet bi-monthly to serve as a community forum supporting healthy eating and physical activity initiatives. Through their efforts, an on-site Farmers’ Market is held each Tuesday morning June through September at the Cleveland County Public Health Center to offer patients, family members and employees of CCPHC the opportunity to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables. This on-site market operates as a satellite of the Foothills Farmers’ Market and serves employees of the Department of Social Services as well as faculty and students at Cleveland Community College. A health educator serves as the on-site manager of this market. Members of the coalition also worked with administrators of Cleveland County Schools to post signage at the outdoor facilities of school sites to open walking trails and playgrounds to the public when schools are not operating in an effort to encourage increased physical activity.



## Sexually Transmitted Disease and Unintended Pregnancy

Sexually transmitted disease and unintended pregnancy is the third identified health priority from the 2015 Community Health Assessment. This issue ranked second in the priorities in the 2011 assessment; a strong collaboration among community agencies has worked since that time to provide a comprehensive initiative addressing this issue. The Healthy NC 2020 objectives aligning with this focus area are (1) decrease the percentage of pregnancies that are unintended and (2) reduce the percentage of positive results among individuals aged 15-24 tested for Chlamydia. The target population for work on unintended pregnancies in the county has been on the 15-19 year old age group.

Three factors have contributed to the reduction in teen pregnancies and in the rates of sexually transmitted disease (primarily Chlamydia and Gonorrhea) in the county. First, the Family Planning Clinic at the Cleveland County Public Health Center has been proactive in offering long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCS—implants and IUDs). Second, the Nurse Family Partnership Program, targeting high risk, low-income first time mothers, works extensively with their participants to educate them about sexually transmitted diseases and appropriate spacing of pregnancies.

Finally, with the passage of the Healthy Youth Act, health educators have worked with administrators of Cleveland County Schools since 2009 to ensure that comprehensive reproductive health and safety education is offered to students in the 8th and 9th grades in the county. Initially health and physical education teachers were trained in the delivery of the Making Proud Choices curriculum to be delivered through 9th grade health classes. Health educators provided instruction on sexually transmitted diseases and FDA-approved contraceptives, always stressing that abstinence is the only way to guarantee prevention against pregnancy and/or STDs. While this initiative provided information to students, the delivery in the classroom was not always consistent and sometimes affected by personal and/or community norms. During this time, the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coalition was re-energized by the need to address both teen pregnancy and the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases among the youth of the county. Consequently, the coalition assisted the Cleveland County Public Health Center to apply for funding through the state's Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative for a grant to expand consistent reproductive health and safety education in the schools. This broad-based coalition targeted 8th grade female students and 9th grade male students as the appropriate populations for two selected curricula—*Smart Girls* and *Wise Guys*. *Smart Girls* is a ten-unit program taught once a week during 8th grade health classes and focuses on life skills, refusal skills and pregnancy prevention information. *Wise Guys* has a male responsibility focus as well as providing information on delaying sexual activity and preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Working with school administrators, Shelby Middle School and Burns Middle School were selected as pilot implementation sites for the 2015-16 academic year for *Smart Girls*. Shelby High School and Burns High School were selected as pilot sites for the *Wise Guys* program. During this initial year, **98** girls registered for the Smart Girls program with **68 or 69%** of the meeting the program threshold requirement to attend 75% of the sessions. **86** males regis-

### Sexually Transmitted Disease and Unintended Pregnancy (continued)

tered for the *Wise Guys* classes with **64 or 74%** of them meeting the required threshold for the program. Both programs were expanded to all four middle and four high schools for the 2016-17 academic year. During the first semester of this time period there were **367** girls enrolled in *Smart Girls* classes with **325 or 88%** of them meeting the program threshold. Additionally **175** males were enrolled in *Wise Guys* with **152 or 86%** meeting the program threshold. Health educators also provided hour-long puberty education classes to **590** 5th grade students during 2016.

Data documenting changes in both the teen pregnancy rate and the incidence of the two most common sexually transmitted diseases are presented in the tables below. Data for both tables is drawn from the NC State Center for Health Statistics—the county data book for Cleveland County. The data is presented with specific attention paid to the incidence and rates among the African-American population in the county. This is done at the request of members of the Minority Health Council who have been working on this issue for the past several years. In 2016 they moved ahead with the publication of a rack card highlighting STD facts specific to the African-American population. Over 1500 of these cards were distributed to minority churches, civic groups, neighborhood associations, hairdressers and barber shops, laundromats and convenience stores serving the minority community by members of the council. They have continued this initiative with a new publication for 2017 and plan to distribute updated information through these same channels.

#### Teen Pregnancies in Cleveland County Ages 15-19

CATEGORY	2007		2009		2011		2013		2015	
	#	Rate/ 1000	#	Rate/ 1000	#	Rate/ 1000	#	Rate/ 1000	#	Rate/ 1000
NC Total Pregnancies	19,615	63.0	18,142	56.0	13,909	43.8	11,178	35.2	9,802	30.2
White	11,070	52.3	9,941	45.4	5,719	30.8	4,549	24.7	3,982	21.3
African-American	7,548	87.1	7,156	80.2	5,399	61.6	4,172	49.2	3,500	41.1
Hispanic	3,166	167.4	2,865	118.4	2,241	71.1	2,005	57.9	1,868	49.1
Other Non-Hispanic Pregnancies							411	31.0	174	17.5
Cleveland County Total	263	71.8	245	63.8	191	56.4	127	38.6	105	32.5
White	157	59.0	149	52.8	102	43.4	72	31.5	67	30.0
African-American	103	108.9	89	97.4	79	89.8	49	59.1	30	37.3
Hispanic	8	*	17	*	8	*	6	*	8	*
Other Non-Hispanic Pregnancies					0		0	0	0	0

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, County Health Data Books, various years

## Sexually Transmitted Disease and Unintended Pregnancy (continued)

## Cleveland County STD Cases by Age Groups

DIAGNOSIS	2011 TOTAL CASES		2011 AFRICAN- AMERICAN		2015 TOTAL CASES		2015 AFRICAN- AMERICAN	
	Cases	%	Cases	%	Cases	%	Cases	%
<b>CHLAMYDIA</b>								
10-14	11	2%	9	3%				
15-19	207	42%	126	47%	159	32%	84	37%
20-24	193	39%	103	38%				
25-29	43	9%	20	7%	292	60%	128	58%
30-34	19	4%	6	2%				
35-39	8	2%	<5	-	25	5%	10	4%
40-44	7	1%	<5	-				
45-49	<5	-	<5	-	8	2%	3	1%
50-54	<5	-	0	0%				
55-59	<5	-	<5	-	4	1%	0	
60-64	0	0%	0	0%				
65+	0	0%	0	0%	0		0	
Unknown	0	0%	0	0%	0		0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	495	100%	269	100%	488	100%	225	100%
			<b>54.3% of total</b>				<b>46% of total</b>	
<b>GONORRHEA</b>								
10-14	<5	-	<5	-				
15-19	58	34%	38	29%	36	24%	24	25%
20-24	68	39%	54	42%				
25-29	18	10%	16	12%	91	60%	59	62%
30-34	12	7%	10	8%				
35-39	5	3%	<5	-	18	12%	9	9%
40-44	5	3%	<5	-				
45-49	0	0%	0	0%	5	3%	3	3%
50-54	<5	-	<5	-				
55-59	<5	-	0	0%	2	1%	1	1%
60-64	0	0%	0	0%				
65+	0	0%	0	0%				
Unknown	0	0%	0	0%				
<b>TOTAL</b>	173	100%	130	100%	152	100%	96	100%
			<b>75.1% of total</b>				<b>63% of total</b>	

Source: Communicable Disease Report to Cleveland County Board of Health 2012 and 2016

## Major Morbidity Data for Cleveland County

A review of the leading causes of death in Cleveland County reported for two five-year periods indicates a rise in the total death rate per 100,000 population. In 2010-14 the leading cause of death was diseases of the heart but in the 2011-15 time frame cancer (all sites) had moved to the leading cause of death. Chronic diseases impacted by diet, physical activity, life-style choices such as smoking and drinking and access to care continue to impact morbidity in the county. County residents may know WHAT to do to positively impact their health status but choosing to change risky behaviors may be another matter.



### Leading Causes of Death in Cleveland County 2010-2014 and 2011-2015

2010-2014				2011-2015			
Rank	Cause of Death	Number of Deaths	Rate per 100,000	Rank	Cause of Death	Number of Deaths	Rate per 100,000
1	Diseases of the heart	1,236	253.6	1	Cancer – all sites	1,243	255.8
2	Cancer – all sites	1,188	243.8	2	Diseases of the heart	1,240	255.2
3	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	322	66.1	3	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	355	73.1
4	Cerebrovascular disease	321	65.9	4	Cerebrovascular diseases	325	66.9
5	Alzheimer's disease	239	49.0	5	Alzheimer's disease	247	50.8
6	Other unintentional injuries	222	45.6	6	Other unintentional injuries	218	44.9
7	Septicemia	180	36.9	7	Diabetes mellitus	193	39.7
8	Diabetes mellitus	172	35.3	8	Septicemia	189	38.9
9	Pneumonia & influenza	159	32.6	9	Pneumonia & influenza	162	33.3
10	Nephritis, nephritic syndrome & nephrosis	139	28.5	10	Nephritis, nephritic syndrome and nephrosis	121	24.9
	Total all deaths	5,620	1153.2		Total all deaths	5,767	1186.9

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, County Health Data Book, 2016 and 2017

#### Emerging Issues and New Initiatives

Key stakeholders in the county have begun a concerted effort to more closely examine the social determinants of health that apply to Cleveland County. After reviewing the 2016 County Health Rankings which were included in the 2015 Community Health Assessment, leadership has focused on four key areas: poverty, education, housing and transportation. Two major initiatives are underway to communicate information about these areas and to lay the groundwork for collaborative community responses. First, a group led by Partners Behavioral Health LME-MCO and Cleveland County Schools with the help of out-of-county consultants has mapped indicators such as poverty rates, unemployment rates, crime rates and educational levels in neighborhoods across the county. This particular group has selected the catchment area around Graham Elementary School as a pilot site for addressing these issues and has assembled a broad-based steering committee to develop strategies for improving the community's health. Graham Elementary School students are impacted by the social determinants but are blessed to have a caring faculty and community volunteers who are a part of this initiative. Cleveland County Schools employed a community coordinator to oversee the activities at this school site. This individual is currently conducting focus groups with parents from the school to determine how they perceive their needs and what responses they need from community agencies and programs to improve their overall quality of life.

Second, a Community Health Improvement Process led by representatives of Carolinas HealthCare System has begun in the county. Using the 2015 Community Health Assessment as a starting point, this work group has mapped community indicators such as poverty, food deserts, recreational opportunities and employment so that clear pictures emerge of the twelve indicators of the social determinants of health they are choosing to examine. In the coming months, the work group will publish their findings to the community and begin to explore ways in which the resources of the Carolinas HealthCare System can be deployed to positively impact community health.

Finally, the staff of the Cleveland County Public Health Center continues to explore options to enhance patient care and communicate service potential to the community at large. CCPHC is currently working through a new strategic plan for 2016-18 and will focus on ensuring that CCPHC is a safe and welcoming facility providing quality services for Cleveland County residents. A comprehensive marketing plan for CCPHC has been developed with implementation beginning in January 2017. Completion of a new PRIDE Student Drug Use Survey is planned for March 2017 with plans to use the data compiled from that survey to continue educating students, families and school faculty members about substance abuse issues in the county.

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This State of the County Health Report is produced collaboratively by the Cleveland County Public Health Center and the Alliance for Health in Cleveland County, Inc. to relate current information on health issues in Cleveland County. The report is distributed in hard copy format to the following entities:

- Cleveland County Board of Health
- Cleveland County Board of Commissioners
- Alliance for Health Board of Directors
- Cleveland County Legislative Delegation to the North Carolina General Assembly
- Cleveland County Memorial Library and Mauney Memorial Library
- Gardner-Webb University Library and Cleveland Community College Library

This report is also posted on the web site of the Cleveland County Public Health Center at [www.clevelandcounty.com/cchd](http://www.clevelandcounty.com/cchd).

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