

State of The County Health Report (SOTCH)

Davie County Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health (DCHHS, DPH) - 2021

Progress on Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIP)

The three public health priorities from our 2017 Community Health Assessment have been addressed, in a variety of ways, over the past four years. Those priority areas include drug misuse and abuse prevention, chronic disease management, and access to affordable care. Since our last Community Health Assessment (CHA) was in 2017, our most recent CHIP is also from 2017. From the 2017 CHA we developed two Action Plans, which made up our CHIP. One action plan centered on Substance Abuse and the other on Physical Activity and Nutrition.

The Substance Abuse Action Plan relied on the partnership of Project Lazarus. Project Lazarus is a state-wide program, which began in Wilkes County. The program addresses drug overdose deaths, with a focus on prescription drug overdoses. Through many efforts, we worked to reduce and prevent the drug overdose deaths in Davie County. Through Project Lazarus and the Sheriff's Department, there have been several Medication Drop Boxes placed throughout the County at Foster Drug drugstore, Davie Discount Drugs drugstore, the Sheriff's Department, and the Government Center - the facility that houses Davie County Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health (DCHHS, DPH) and the Division of Social Services. Through marketing of these Drop Boxes, we are encouraging community members to dispose of medication that is no longer needed, but poses a risk for drug misuse, overdose, and poisoning. Additionally, with funding provided through Project Lazarus, an incinerator was purchased for the Davie County Sheriff's office for the purpose of destroying medication collected through the Drop Boxes. The Sheriff's Department has since upgraded their incinerator. In April of 2019, in partnership with Davie County Schools, and the Poe Center, a Drugs Uncovered Workshop and exhibit was hosted for parents and all adults to interact with Youth. This event taught current drug trends, ways to talk to kids about substance use, and how to identify signs of substance use. The exhibit showed a "teenagers' bedroom" in which adults could see how tobacco, alcohol, and drugs, can be concealed. Within the Substance Abuse Action Plan, we presented a plan to begin the Too Good for Drugs initiative. Unfortunately, this initiative did not make it past the planning stages. Due in part to lack of funds, Project Lazarus was halted in Davie County around 2019.

Luckily, there has been much progress in the realm of substance abuse since 2017, through other programs. Thanks to the Community Linkages to Care grant award from NCDHHS, NC

Injury and Violence Prevention Branch, Davie County Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health began funding a coordinated opioid response in partnership with the Detention Center and EMS that includes our Community Response Team, Community Paramedic Program, Jail Diversion Program, Naloxone distribution, and Child Welfare services for substance-involved families. The Community Response Team includes the efforts of the Division of Public Health, the Division of Social Services, law enforcement, EMS, and the detention center. Through this team, those who use drugs, and family and loved ones to those who use drugs, can receive the support they need, from any agency that can help. Through the Division of Public Health, Naloxone is given to persons who voluntarily request Naloxone and are at risk of experiencing an opiate-related overdose, are the family member or friend of a person at risk of experiencing an opiate-related overdose, or are in the position to assist a person at risk of experiencing an opiate-related overdose. Naloxone is a medication that rapidly and effectively reverses opioid overdose. Every person provided with Naloxone receives education regarding the risk factors of overdose, signs of an overdose, overdose response steps, and the use of Naloxone. At this time, the majority of Naloxone provided is given to the Community Paramedic Team, EMS, and the Sheriff's Department.

Particularly in 2021 we made great strides to address access to affordable care by partnering with Kintegra Family Medicine, a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) to provide in-house adult primary care and adult and pediatric behavioral health care, at our new Government Center facility. Having adult care and behavioral health care located within our facility has been a great stride towards reducing barriers to care. In addition to bringing Kintegra into our facility, we have scaled up our clinic offerings and managed to serve significantly more patients than in previous years. Providing Medication Assisted Treatment to pregnant women is a priority for this year.

Our second public health priority set in the 2017 Community Health Assessment was chronic disease management, which yielded our Physical Activity and Nutrition Action Plan. This Action Plan relied on the partnership with Healthy Davie of the Davie Community Foundation. The Healthy Davie initiative was comprised of thirty-nine organizations and agencies working collaboratively to improve the lives of all Davie County citizens. This action plan included two initiatives, one of them being the School Walking Program. A goal was set for 300 1st, 3rd, and 5th graders in Davie County Schools to participate in energizers and/or a walking program by June of 2019, to increase their daily physical activity. An energizer is a brief activity that is intended to increase energy in a group by engaging them in physical activity. The other initiative under this Action Plan was the Local Body Mass Index Study. A goal was set for 50 percent of students will maintain or/or improve their BMI rate, by June of 2019. This goal was set to be accomplished through the increased use of walking programs and energizers. There was a walking event held for Davie County teachers, and materials put together to promote energizers in the classroom. The combined effort of many organizations and agencies led to

increased conversation and energy around physical activity for school-age children. After a short while, the Healthy Davie group dissolved, which halted the Division's action plan. Luckily, many teachers adopted the use of energizers in the classroom. Additionally, this effort led to the ongoing practice of having middle school students walk in the gym when they first arrive at school in the morning.

Although some of the work started in 2017 came to an early end, the work to manage chronic disease in Davie County was done through other initiatives and programs. Some of our larger efforts to combat chronic disease include our tobacco cessation media campaign, Reach out and Read program, Senior Services education program, and COVID-19 prevention efforts. In Summer of 2021 we worked with iHeartMedia to run a Smoking Cessation Campaign called Every Try Counts. The campaign was a targeted digital media campaign. These smoking cessation ads were seen by individuals while browsing the internet on PC, mobile phones, and tablets. Every Try Counts is an evidence-based outreach program designed by the U.S. Health and Human Services agency. The campaign was viewed by those located within Davie County, during the Summer of 2021. The majority of the digital media ads were seen in Mocksville, but many were seen in Advance as well. Every Try Counts tobacco cessation ads were seen 1,503,758 times. There were 1,513 clicks on these ads. "Clicks" take the viewer to the Every Try Counts webpage which has a wide variety of effective tools for aiding in tobacco cessation. iHeartMedia reported that the campaign performed well, with a higher-than-average engagement rate.

As a part of our efforts to prevent chronic disease, in collaboration with Reach and Read 501(c)3 and Smart Start of Davie County, we provide books to children as part of a big-picture effort to promote daily reading and family bonding. Each patient of our Child Health Clinic receives a reading-level-appropriate book with each visit to the clinic. This effort combats developmental delays, including speech and reading delays. The importance of reading together as a family is discussed in each visit. Early reading and family bonding are incredibly important factors for the healthy growth and development of children. The books are available in English and Spanish, and additional books can be requested for those who speak other languages.

Every quarter, a health educator from the Division of Public Health, visits Davie County Senior Services to do an education session or presentation on an important public health topic. Recent presentations in 2021 and 2022 covered the topics of Vaccines, Heart Health, and Nutrition. The presentation finishes up just before the participants enjoy a nutritionally balanced meal provided by Senior Services.

In our managing of the COVID-19 pandemic in Davie County, we have implemented many initiatives and programs. For one year, we operated and ran a 24/7 COVID Call Center. We ran on-site testing for COVID-19 for several months before OptumServe, contracted through NC

Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), took over testing. In December of 2020, after dedicated planning, we began drive-through mass vaccination clinics. These clinics started at our old facility and quickly escalated to the large Davie County Community Park. These clinics required the vast and committed effort of so many agencies and organizations, as well as community volunteers. In just 4 months, from the end of December of 2020 to April of 2021, 63,307 vaccines were administered at our clinics.

We worked with the local nonprofit transportation agency to secure no-cost transportation to vaccination sites and have marketed this service. We have done outreach to churches, media companies, neighborhood groups, and other faith-based groups to educate about the COVID-19 vaccination. Our communicable disease nurse and health director have done on-sight education at manufacturing facilities, and has spent many hours working with businesses and organizations managing COVID-19 clusters and outbreaks. We have also provided COVID-19 education to the Chamber of Commerce, local schools, and the local detention center.

Now, mass vaccine clinics are no longer necessary, and we have re-located to the new Government Center. Here, COVID-19 vaccines are given every day by our committed team of staff contracted through NCDHHS. In an attempt to make COVID-19 vaccination more accessible, we continue to run two vaccination clinics every week in underserved areas. We continue to provide answers to the many questions we still receive related to COVID-19. We also provide free home test kits to community members to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Since the very early days of the pandemic, we kept the community up-to-date on the state of COVID-19 in Davie County. Until July of 2022 we shared weekly or twice weekly reports through Newsflash, Facebook, and our website, with data including total cases, active cases, active cases by age, and vaccination percentages, among other data. In July of 2022 we launched our COVID-19 Data webpage which includes imbedded dashboards from NCDHHS as well as the CDC. Additionally, we have run magazine ads, done presentations, and developed and shared social media content promoting preventative health measures as it relates to COVID-19.

Although there was not an Action Plan for the third priority of access to affordable care, there was much progress to address this concern. Through collaboration with Davie County Government/Health and Human Services, Kintegra Health opened the doors at its newest practice location, Kintegra Family Medicine – Mocksville on September 20, 2021. The practice is located within our facility, The Government Center, at 154 Government Center Dr., Mocksville. Services include adult well/sick care, chronic disease management, preventative care and behavioral health counseling to adults in Davie County. The co-location of Kintegra Family Medicine within the DCDHHS building brings increased access and continuity of care for the residents of Davie County. DCDHHS currently operates a pediatric medical clinic in the

building, and the addition of Kintegra’s Family Medicine practice provides a full complement of medical and behavioral health care to families in need of these services.

Morbidity and Mortality Changes Since Last CHA

Since our most recent Community Health Assessment in 2017, we have seen the emergence and spread of COVID-19. At the end of 2021, in Davie County residents, there had been 7,666 lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 106 deaths due to COVID-19. Although we don’t yet have local data on mortality in Davie County in 2021, the CDC has reported that in both 2020 and 2021, COVID-19 was the third leading cause of death in the U.S., following heart disease and cancer.

At the end of 2021, 58% of Davie County residents had received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine and 55% of Davie County residents were up-to-date on COVID-19 vaccines.

At the time of this report, we don’t yet have local data pertaining to morbidity and mortality for 2021. Using data from the NC State Center for Health Statistics, there are some trends over time that can be observed. Although there is some overlap in the data sets, we will compare data from 2013-2017 and data from 2016 – 2020. Please note that “rates presented here utilize the National Center for Health Statistics Bridged population estimates. Population estimates are periodically modified based on the best available information. Therefore, rates presented in this report may vary over time as revised population estimates become available.” (NC State Center for Health Statistics)

In 2013 – 2017 the leading causes of death were as follows:

Cause of Death ranking	Cause of death	Rate	Number
1	Cancer	173.7	535
2	Diseases of the heart	140.4	441
3	Chronic lower respiratory disease	49.0	115
4	Cerebrovascular disease	45.2	136
5	Unintentional injuries (Excluding motor vehicle injuries)	40.4	104

In 2016 – 2020, the leading causes of death were as follows:

Cause of Death ranking	Cause of death	Rate	Number
1	Cancer	164.7	541
2	Diseases of the heart	143.4	483
3	Unintentional injuries (Excluding motor vehicle injuries)	55.8	139
4	Chronic lower respiratory disease	50.3	171
5	Cerebrovascular disease	42.4	143

In both sets of data, Cancer and Diseases of the heart were the leading causes of death by a significant margin. In the more recent data, we see unintentional injury (not including motor vehicle injuries) climb from the 5th most common cause of death to the 3rd most common. Notably, we saw a significant decrease in deaths due to cancer, but a slight increase in deaths due to heart diseases.

Most notably in regards to racial and ethnic discrepancies, in 2013 – 2017 African Americans saw heart disease and Cancer death rates of 207.5 and 210.4 respectively, compared to the rates of 137.5 and 173.8 for non-Hispanic Whites. For all causes, African Americans had a death rate of 909.3 compared to the all causes death rate of 781.8 for Whites.

In 2016-2020, these disparities worsened dramatically. African Americans saw heart disease and Cancer death rates of 228.8 and 257.8 respectively, compared to the rates of 141.6 and 162.4 for non-Hispanic Whites. For all causes, African Americans had a death rate of 1,002.7 compared to the all causes death rate of 764.7 for Whites. Unfortunately, these data sets do not provide rates for Hispanic residents, or any other racial or ethnic groups.

Emerging Issues Since Last CHA

Since our last Community Health Assessment (CHA) in 2017, we have seen new Public Health concerns emerge. In March of 2020, we saw our first case of COVID-19. Cases grew slowly at first, but suddenly there was need for testing and a call center to answer the community’s questions, as best we could. Much of the important daily work of the Public Health Division shifted to accommodate the concerns of the community surrounding the emerging virus. Thus far in the pandemic, we have seen two spikes in cases, one peaking in January of 2021 and the other peaking in September of 2021. Much of the COVID-19 related work has been the handling of outbreaks and clusters in daycares, schools, and skilled nursing facilities.

COVID-19 has had a broad impact on the community at large. Many of the programs and organizations that support the low-income population or other historically marginalized populations (HMPs) have struggled to serve their clients in the county through the COVID-19 pandemic. Food pantries, low-income medical clinics including the Health Department clinic, pharmacies, dental clinics, faith-based organizations, transportation services, benefit services such as the WIC department and many other programs providing basic services were forced to close or limit hours due to the pandemic. Many individuals lost their jobs or had their work hours limited, resulting in economic challenges. When daycares closed or limited hours, this resulted in parents needing to stay home from work due to limited child care. Working and receiving healthcare and other basic needs also became a challenge due to transportation services being limited. Those with substance use issues had a hard time accessing treatment during the pandemic. While telehealth visits were beneficial to many, they presented as a road block to many others without computers or reliable wi-fi and those experiencing homelessness. Additional strain was felt by low-income individuals, particularly those working for hourly wages. Those without paid sick time, who work in close quarters with others, experienced additional challenges due to COVID-19. With increased social isolation there has been an increase in mental health challenges as well as an increase in domestic violence cases. The impact on mental health has been far reaching, but school age children in particular continue to experience worsened mental illness due to factors created by the pandemic.

In late December of 2020, the first COVID-19 vaccines were provided to residents of Davie County through drive-thru clinics at the Division of Public Health. The operations of the Division shifted to accommodate the vaccine clinics which were held two times a week. At some clinics, nearly 2,000 vaccines were given. After demand decreased, we used additional contracted staff from the state to shift to vaccinating in-house.

We are beginning to see how COVID-19 will be managed over the long-term. But, many of the negative effects seem to be long-term as well. Many have lost loved ones to the virus and an estimated 1 in 5 people have “long COVID” symptoms. Additionally, cases continue and new variants continue to emerge.

The social and economic impacts of COVID-19 have been felt by the community. Concerns about poor mental health, access to healthcare, and transportation, have all been worsened by the pandemic. Mental health in particular was worsened due to social isolation, uncertainty, and economic challenges, among other factors.

New/Paused/Discontinued Initiatives Since Last CHA

Since our last Community Health Assessment in 2017, we have worked on substance use issues, cancer awareness, and COVID mitigation and education. There have been opioid education brochures created and shared with partners to share with their clients, a skin cancer presentation at the senior center and a substance presentation at a school. Presentations on vaccines, nutrition, and heart health have been conducted at the Senior Center. We have done opioid media messaging, including the development of high-quality videos which have been shown in detention centers. Opioid education cards have been developed and disseminated. We have assembled the Community Response Team (CRT) in partnership with the detention center, social services, and EMS. The CRT works to support substance involved individuals and their families with challenges they may be facing. Their services are broad and range from Narcan dissemination and education to helping an individual to obtain a form of identification. We have developed bike/pedestrian plan with Davie Recreation and Parks to meet active transport goals. In 2021, we worked with iHeartMedia to launch a Every Try Counts tobacco cessation campaign, in which ads were seen 1.5 million times by residents of the county, encouraging them to quit smoking. We held an over-the-counter (OTC) medication giveaway and provided flyers and in-person education to drive-thru participants. We have done COVID-19 media messaging and COVID-19 education to Chamber of Commerce, manufacturing facilities, local schools, and the local detention center. For one year, we operated a 24/7 COVID Call Center, staffed by nurses and public health professionals. In the call center we conducted and later managed case investigation and contact tracing, answered questions about the virus, gave information about testing, quarantine guidance, travel guidance, and did data analysis, among several other tasks. After business hours, the line rolled over to a cell phone which an on-call nurse answered. We worked with the local nonprofit transportation agency to secure no-cost transportation to vaccination sites and have marketed this service. We have done outreach to churches, media companies, neighborhood groups, and other faith-based groups to educate about the COVID-19 vaccination. Specifically, nurses from the Division of Public Health have provided COVID-19 vaccinations every week at TheBridge in Cooleemee as well as at the Storehouse for Jesus. The Division of Public Health has also begun a program, guided by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, called 'Advancing Equity' in which disparities due to racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic factors, will be addressed over the coming years.