2018 State of the County Health Report
Robeson County Department of Public Health

Purpose of SOTCH and Methods of Public Dissemination

The Robeson County Health Department, in collaboration with Southeastern Health and the Healthy Robeson Task Force, conducted the most recent Community Health Assessment (CHA) in 2017. The three priority areas identified in our last CHA included: (1) Obesity, (2) Substance Misuse/Mental Health, and (3) Social Determinants of Health. This State of County Health (SOTCH) report is intended to update our residents and stakeholders on the progress made towards strategies specified in our Action Plans that were developed in response to the 3 aforementioned priorities. A SOTCH will be prepared and presented again next year (2019). Our next CHA will be conducted in 2020. At this time, new (and perhaps recurring) health priorities will be identified based upon CHA surveys completed by our county’s residents. Our Health Department and Southeastern Health have traditionally served as co-leads when conducting the CHA. Beginning in 2020, the University of NC at Pembroke will also play a vital role in developing and administering surveys, as well as disseminating the final report to our community and stakeholders. Our current CHA is located on our Health Department’s website (www.robesoncountyhealthdepartment.com), as well as Southeastern Health’s website (http://www.srmc.org). The most recent SOTCH reports are also located on our Health Department’s website, and available for public access via Southeastern Health’s Community Health Education Center (CHEC) located in Biggs Park Mall, Lumberton. Persons interested in obtaining hard copies of these documents may request assistance through the Health Department’s Health Education Division.

Table of Contents

Morbidity & Mortality Data..............2
Health Rankings..................................3
Brief Overview of 2017 CHA Priorities And Action Plans.................................3
CHA Priority #1 Obesity Prevention Action Plan Progress Notes........................................4
CHA Priority #2 Substance Misuse/Mental Health Action Plan Progress Notes........5
CHA Priority #3 Social Determinants Of Health Action Plan Progress Notes..........6
New Initiatives and Emerging Issues.................................................................7-8
Morbidity & Mortality Data

Leading Causes of Death from 2013-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes of Death</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of Deaths</td>
<td>Death Rates</td>
<td>Death Rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diseases of the heart</td>
<td>1,482</td>
<td>220.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer - All Sites</td>
<td>1,392</td>
<td>207.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>49.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alzheimer Disease</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes Mellitus</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>44.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cerebrovascular Disease</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>44.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Unintentional</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics
The County Health Rankings report measures the health of nearly every county in the nation. Published online at www.countyhealthrankings.org, the rankings help counties understand what influences how healthy residents are and how long they will live. Counties receive two rankings: Health Outcomes & Health Factors. Health Outcomes rankings are based on an equal weighting of mortality and morbidity measures. Health Factors rankings are based on weighted scores of four types of factors: behavioral, clinical, social and economic, and environmental.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Health Factor Ranking</th>
<th>Health Outcome Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based upon the 2017 CHA results, Robeson agreed to work on the following three priority areas for the next three years: (1) Obesity, (2) Substance Misuse/Mental Health, and (3) Social Determinants of Health. These priority areas were selected because obesity contributes to chronic diseases among Robeson County residents, substance misuse continues to be one of the self-identified highest needs in the county, and focusing on social determinants of health is a way of addressing underlying causes of poor health. Progress towards our three priorities/action plans is highlighted on the following pages.

Focus: Chronic Disease Management & Prevention

Priority 1: Obesity

Priority 2: Substance Misuse/Mental Health

Priority 3: Social Determinants of Health

Nutrition, Physical Activity, Tobacco, Prescription Drugs, Alcohol, Education
Priority #1: Obesity Prevention

County health rankings data for years 2015-2018 indicates that 39.5% of Robeson County’s adults are obese. Additionally, the statistics for the same four-year time frame show that 34% are physically inactive. In order to address these factors which directly correlate with chronic disease, our obesity prevention action plan includes the following interventions: **Chronic Disease Self-Management** (using the Stanford University curriculum), **Faithful Families**, **CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health)**, and the **5, 4, 3, 2, 1 Go! Curriculum**, which promotes healthy eating habits and physical activity among school age children. In 2018, the following progress was reported towards these action items/interventions:

- **Chronic Disease Self-Management** – Provided a 6 week curriculum in a faith based/Lumbee Tribe Elder Group targeting nutrition and physical activity, with 34 congregation members completing the entire program.

- **Faithful Families** - Trained 2 lay leaders; and 32 congregation members from St. Joseph Miracle Revival Center completed the program.

**Other Relevant Obesity Prevention Activities in the Faith-Based Setting**

- **Compassion 4 U Network and Healthy Communities** collaborated to provide wellness screenings and nutrition-based education to (8) new community and church partnerships, including the Lumberton Christian Care Center.

- **CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health)** - Is an after-school program that focuses on nutrition education and the importance of physical activity. This evidence based intervention was conducted in 6 schools during the 2017-2018 school year, with 770 students participating.

- **5, 4, 3, 2, 1 Go!** - Consists of a quick lesson on nutrition and ends with a fun activity that includes learning all about healthy, active lifestyles. This evidence based intervention was conducted in 7 schools with 2,128 students receiving education.

**Other Relevant Obesity Prevention Activities**

- **Healthy Communities A-Z**, is conducted by Southeastern Health and the project strives to educate and bring awareness to various health topics using the 26 letters of the alphabet. During the 2018 calendar year, 60 educational presentations were conducted.
In 2018, Robeson County’s EMS Director trained over 200 law enforcement officers on how to administer naloxone. Law enforcement officers from Maxton, Pembroke and St. Pauls also received naloxone training and kits.

In 2018, there were 123 ED visits in Robeson County due to opioid overdose; 67 of which were due to heroin, 47 were due to commonly prescribed opioids, and the remaining were attributed to synthetic narcotics.

In January 2018, there were 14 opioid ED visits, compared to 7 in January 2019.
Priority #3: Social Determinants of Health

Social Determinants of Health are structural conditions that influence the health of a population. These determinants include physical environment, housing, education and racism.

Based on our 2017 CHA results, Robeson decided to add social determinants as a new focus area. We have never attempted to tackle social determinants in our community health action plans; but this time our CHA work group decided to take a closer look at two evidence-based strategies including Why Try and JAG (Jobs for America’s Graduates). Why Try is a resilience education curriculum that provides simple, hands-on solutions for dropout prevention, violence prevention, truancy reduction, and increased academic success. Studies have shown that students who score higher on resilience measures have improved social skills, higher grades, a greater love for learning, and better decision-making skills. Accomplishments for the 2017-2018 academic year are as follows:

- 575 students participated in Why Try
- 89% had fewer than 10 unexcused absences
- 14 schools participated in the BakPak Pals program, with a total of 384 students receiving nutritious foods. The BakPak Pals program is a component of the Why Try intervention that provides nutritious foods to children in need; and quantities are sufficient to meet the child’s needs outside of school hours, including weekends.
- 16 Purnell Swett High school students participated in JAG during the fall semester.

The Health Department partnered with Robeson Community College to initiate “Single Stop” for student health education. All students can discuss issues of concern in a confidential manner with representatives of our Health Education Department who visit the school every other week. Students are also provided education regarding services available through their local health department.
New Initiatives and Emerging Issues


- **Color Me Healthy** – More than 150 day care children have participated in the Color Me Healthy Program, which teaches 4 and 5 year olds about healthy eating and exercise. Color Me Healthy is funded by local Smart Start dollars by way of the Robeson County Partnership for Children.

- **Project PHOTO** - RCHD was awarded an $8,000 grant through the NC Public Health Association to implement a nutrition education and childhood obesity prevention initiative called “Project PHOTO”. PHOTO stands for “Promoting Healthier Outcomes Through Observation. Funding has been used to purchase age progression software that depicts an overweight/obese child as he/she matures into adulthood. This allows parents and caregivers to observe an image of their child’s poor health outcomes over the course of his/her lifespan -- if changes are not made early on in their child’s eating and physical activity habits.

- The Obesity, Diabetes, Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention (ODHDSP) Region 8 grant staff collaborated with the City of Lumberton to complete a Wayfinding Project. This project is one small component of the City of Lumberton’s five-year plan focused on revitalizing historic downtown Lumberton, while also creating a safe place to enjoy physical activity.

- NC Public Health Regions 6 and 8 (18 counties combined) developed a tobacco free media campaign targeting the Lumbee, Coharie, and Waccamaw Siouan tribes. The regional campaign resulted in 978,135 impressions over a period of 6 weeks.

- **Public Health Actions Taken during Hurricane Florence** – 6 shelters were opened, with approximately 1,700 county residents housed in shelters during the storm. Public Health staff worked over 1,846 hours in shelters, the Emergency Operations Center, and the Animal Shelter. School nurses provided assistance in shelters, as well as nurses from other counties and states (including Alabama and North Dakota). Environmental Health staff went out after the storm to provide inspections. Lumberton and Pembroke Walmart Pharmacies worked with shelters to assist residents who had depleted their supply of medications. Pharmacies also provided assistance with delivering medications to the shelters as needed. Emergency Medical Services placed oxygen in the shelters for those in need and SEATS transported persons as needed. The ASPCA assisted the County Animal Shelter in maintaining consistent care for rescued animals. Additionally, the ASPCA adopted all available animals at the shelter prior to the storm in order create additional space for the animals that would be rescued after the storm.

More than 120 Sam’s Club employees lost their jobs in January 2018. The year 2019 has started off with good news in terms of employment opportunities. Hobby Lobby and Planet Fitness are two companies scheduled to locate in Robeson County. New businesses create job opportunities for our county’s residents to secure insurance benefits and much needed health care. Lack of insurance is consistently cited by our residents as a barrier to health care access. Health Education staff partnered with NC Career Works to participate in “Rapid Response Sessions” for Sam’s Club employees who were losing employment due to the company’s closure. “Rapid Response Sessions” involved representatives from various community agencies who presented overviews of services available.
RCHD has worked with local and state public health officials regarding funding and coordination of **mosquito spraying** locally. Additionally, mosquito dunks were provided for homeowners on a first-come, first-served basis. Mosquito dunks are placed in standing water; and they offer some relief from the problem.

Robeson County’s Board of Commissioners approved an increase in **rabies vaccination fee** from $8.00 to $10.00. The Board of Commissioners has appointed a study committee to further consider our Board of Health’s recommendation for an animal privilege license.

In 2018, RCHD applied for grant funding to continue the **Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program**, as well as the **Innovative Approaches** (focuses on children and youth with special health care needs—funds Robeson, Bladen, and Columbus— with Robeson serving as the lead county). Both grants have been re-funded. Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention funding is $75,000 annually; and Innovative Approaches is funded at $132,400 annually.

A **Community Health Center Grant** proposal was submitted to the NC Office of Rural Health and Community Care. Funding in the amount of $150,000 annually was announced in May 2018. Funds are being utilized to assist prenatal patients with dental care (via ECU School of Dental Medicine), as well as assist our prenatal patients with meeting behavioral health needs when applicable, as well as to provide assistance with transportation by way of SEATS (Southeast Area Transit System). Funding will be awarded for three years contingent upon performance. At the end of the three year cycle, RCHD will enter the competitive cycle again.

In 2018, RCHD Environmental Health Staff collected water samples from private wells, as well as surface water samples from private ponds, to test for the presence of **Gen-X** and other related compounds. This effort focused on homes in the St. Pauls area in close proximity to the Chemours Facility.