



# Health of Chatham

# 2013

## Chatham County Public Health Department

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### Mission

To protect and promote the health and safety of Chatham County residents.

### Vision

All residents of Chatham County have achieved and sustain optimal physical, mental, and emotional health. They consistently practice healthy lifestyles and place high value on prevention.

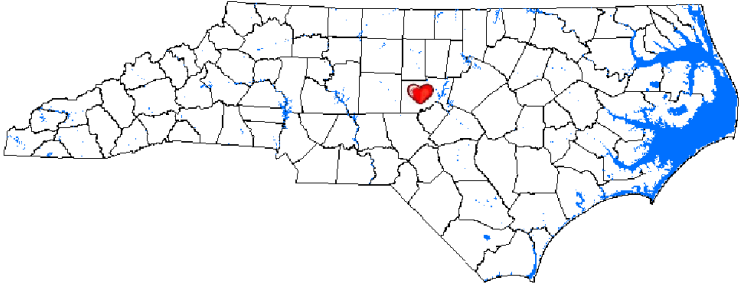


*Health of Chatham* is an annual report that summarizes the combined efforts of the health department, its partners, and the community to address the four priorities identified in the *2010 Community Health Assessment*. This report also highlights progress made on these health priorities.

The full *2010 Community Health Assessment* can be viewed at: [www.chathamnc.org/publichealth](http://www.chathamnc.org/publichealth)

# Chatham County Snapshot

Population (2012 est.)	65,976
Per Capita Income	\$31,465
Median Household Income	\$56,935
Individuals Below Poverty Level (2007-2011)	11.4%
Language other than English at Home	13.2%
High School Graduation Rate	85%
<i>Sources: American Community Survey</i>	



## Addressing Health Priorities Takes a Community

# IT TAKES A COMMUNITY

Healthy Community, Healthy People  
Healthy Chatham

### What if a town...

**Full of unhealthy options**

**Poor healthcare**

**And no places to walk or be active**

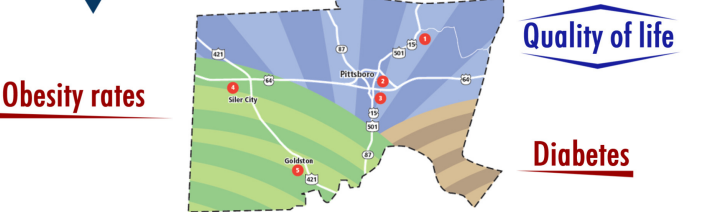
### Transformed into a community

**WITH SIDEWALKS AND GREENWAYS**

**AND SAFE PLACES TO BIKE**

**THAT CONNECT PEOPLE TO FRESH FOODS**

### How would that impact health?



Looking at the four prioritized health issues in Chatham County, highlighted in the table on the next page, it is important to consider just how connected they are. For instance, those who are overweight or obese are more likely to suffer from diabetes, and those who do not have adequate health insurance will face challenges getting the care they need to treat conditions like diabetes. Furthermore, when left untreated, obesity and diabetes can result in diseases like heart disease and cancer, which are the leading causes of death in the county.

Given how connected these issues are, it is necessary to take a step back and consider their underlying causes and what can be done to prevent them. Certainly, personal choice plays a role. However, individuals' behaviors are also influenced by their surroundings, and there are a number of factors within the community that influence the health decisions that people make. For example, people are less likely to walk in areas without sidewalks. Even in neighborhoods with sidewalks, those who do not feel safe walking or biking will be less likely to do so. Therefore, while both personal choice and external factors impact health, efforts to improve health that extend beyond the individual level are often most effective.

This report highlights the important efforts going on across the county to address the underlying factors of the four prioritized health issues. While this work can be challenging, it offers great potential for large improvements in health. These health benefits can lead to improvements in other areas as well, from better quality of life to economic savings. While reading each section, think about how this collaborative work addresses these health priorities and the many other health issues faced by Chatham residents.

## Chatham County Health Overview

### Leading Causes of Death Chatham County 2012

1. Cancer
2. Heart Disease
3. Cerebrovascular Diseases (Stroke)
4. Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease
5. Diabetes Mellitus

These were the leading causes of death in 2011 as well.

Source: <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/data/lcd/lcd.cfm>

### Priority Health Issues Chatham County

1. Obesity
2. Physical Inactivity/Safe Places to Walk or Bike
3. Diabetes
4. Access to adequate/affordable health insurance

Source: 2010 Community Health Assessment

## 1. Obesity

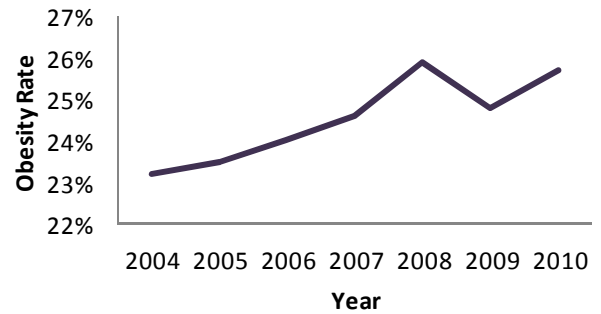
**Chatham Objective:** Decrease the number of Chatham County adults and children who are overweight or obese by 5% by 2016.

**Description:** Obesity can lead to a number of health issues and is a contributing factor to four of Chatham County's five leading causes of death: cancer, heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. These diseases are often preventable through behavior changes, such as being more active, eating healthier, and getting regular health screenings. However, these behavior changes can be difficult to make due to environmental factors like limited access to fresh foods and local parks, as well as poor neighborhood safety. Creating an environment that encourages healthy eating and active lifestyles is one of the most important things that can be done to combat obesity.

The *Chatham County Public Health Department* and its partners have worked hard in 2013 to increase healthy eating and active living choices in Chatham County for all residents.

### 2013 Progress:

- The *Chatham County Public Health Department*, through the *Community Transformation Grant Project*, worked with five of Chatham County's farmers' markets to increase fruit and vegetable consumption across Chatham through increased awareness of local farmers' markets.
- The *Chatham County Public Health Department*, *Chatham County Cooperative Extension*, *Chatham County Partnership for Children*, *Central Carolina Community Natural Chef Program*, and the *Pittsboro Farmers' Market*, joined forces for the 4<sup>th</sup> annual *Eat a Rainbow Week* in September. *Eat a Rainbow Week* promoted the importance of eating a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables across the community with the help of schools, restaurants, and farmers' markets.
- The *Chatham County School's* Board of Education approved the Student Wellness Regulations. These regulations align with the statewide Healthy Active Children Policy and the *Chatham County School's* Wellness Policy to provide guidance to create a healthy school environment.
- The *Chatham County Partnership for Children* continued their Shape NC program and successfully piloted a project to encourage healthy eating in young children and their families at *Chatham County Head Start*. They also completed the *Model Early Learning Center* at *Robyn's Nest Creative Learning Center*.
- *Chatham County Cooperative Extension* conducted the Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less Program, Eat Smart Move More Take Control Program, and Better Food/Better Health Program, as well as hosted the Junior Chefs Day Camp.
- *Hispanic Liaison* partnered with *Interfaith Food Shuttle* to distribute fresh and boxed goods to families in need and has recently expanded this service to include fresh produce from local farms.



Obesity rates have climbed steadily. As of 2010, nearly 26% of Chatham County adults are obese. Source: CDC

## 2. Physical Inactivity/Safe Areas to Walk or Bike

**Chatham Objective:** Increase the percentage of Chatham County adults, youth, and children age 2 and up who participate in the recommended amounts of physical activity by 5% by 2016.

**Description:** The *2010 Community Health Assessment* identified a need for more areas in Chatham County where residents can walk, bike, and play safely. As of 2010, only 4% of Chatham residents lived within a half mile of a park and 21.2% of adults reported no leisure time activity. Lack of physical activity contributes to high obesity rates, diabetes, and poor health status. There are many factors that help people to be more active, such as access to safe places to be active and knowing where you can walk, bike, or play.

### 2013 Progress:

- The *Chatham County Physical Activity Resource Guide* was updated in May 2013. This guide includes a detailed map of places in Chatham County to walk, run, bike, and play as well as each location's amenities.
- The *Town of Siler City* developed a Pedestrian Master Plan. This plan recommends and prioritizes future projects, such as sidewalks and safer crosswalks, based on neighborhood factors like safety, connectivity, and access to parks and stores with healthy food options. The plan will serve as a guide for the town, NC Department of Transportation, and other local and regional partners to improve pedestrian infrastructure in Siler City.



## 3. Lack of Adequate/Affordable Health Insurance

**Chatham Objective:** Increase the number of women, men, and children served through *Chatham County Public Health Department* services by 5% by 2016.

**Description:** Lack of affordable health insurance remains an urgent issue. In the *2010 Community Health Assessment*, 48% of Chatham County residents identified lack of adequate health insurance as a “big problem.” As of 2011, roughly 10,000 residents under the age of 65, or 19%, did not have health insurance. Lack of access to health care is a major factor in the progression of a disease.

### 2013 Progress:

- Local organizations, including the *Chatham County Public Health Department*, *Piedmont Health Services*, and *Hispanic Liaison/Vidas de Esperanza*, operate free or sliding scale medical clinics.
- Due to staffing issues, the *Chatham County Public Health Department* saw a 26% decrease in patient visits during fiscal year 2012-13 compared to the previous fiscal year. However, staff positions have been filled and numbers are expected to increase in fiscal year 2013-2014.
- Several organizations are working to enroll residents in insurance plans through the *Health Insurance Marketplace*, including *Legal Aid of NC*, *Piedmont Health Services*, *Hispanic Liaison*, *Chatham Department of Social Services (DSS)*, and *Chatham Hospital*.
- Even with the *Health Insurance Marketplace*, some North Carolina residents will fall through the cracks. Those earning less than 100% of the federal poverty line (\$11,490) who do not qualify for Medicaid will also not be able to receive subsidies, or tax credits, to purchase health insurance. Undocumented immigrants will not be able to purchase health insurance through the *Marketplace*, even at full cost. These residents will likely seek medical care from the free or reduced cost clinics mentioned above.

### Affordable Care Act Highlights

The Health Insurance Marketplace opened in October 2013. While enrollment numbers were low due to problems with the website, the Marketplace and other provisions of the law are expected to reduce the number of uninsured in the county. For more information, visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov).



## 4. Diabetes

**Chatham Objective:** Reduce Chatham County's diabetes mortality rate by 5% by 2016.

**Description:** Diabetes prevention and management are directly related to the other prioritized health issues, as lack of physical activity and being overweight/obese are two risk factors for developing diabetes. In addition, physical activity and healthy eating are vital components of diabetes management. For this reason, many programs that target obesity and physical activity also target diabetes prevention and management.

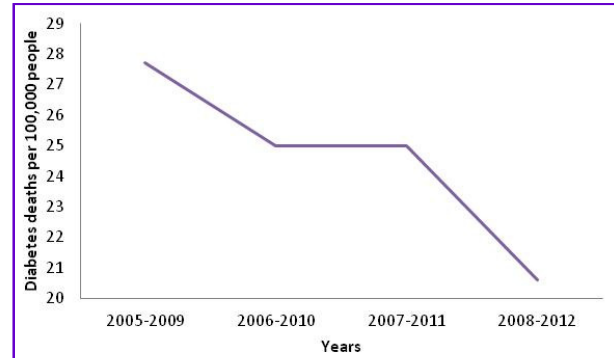
**2013 Progress:** Below are a few prevention programs that focus on diabetes.

Prevention:

- The *Chatham County Public Health Department* finished the two year diabetes prevention program 'Healthy Living Partnership to Prevent Diabetes' (HELP-PD) in partnership with the *NC Diabetes Prevention and Control Branch* and the *Wake Forest School of Medicine*. Chatham County's Team MOOD had the highest weight loss total and weight loss percentage out of all five participating sites.

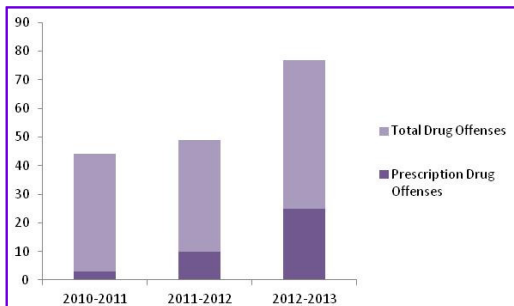
Management:

- The *Chatham County Public Health Department* offers a monthly diabetes support group in Siler City as well as Diabetes Self-Management Training program in both Siler City and Pittsboro.
- *Chatham County Cooperative Extension* partnered with the *Chatham County Council on Aging* and conducted monthly programs for the *Council on Aging* diabetes management group.
- The *Chatham County Public Health Department*, *Chatham County Hospital*, and *Piedmont Health Services* offer nutritional counseling and medical nutrition therapy.



The diabetes mortality rate has declined in recent years to its most recent rate of 20.6 deaths per 100,000 people, possibly due to better diagnosis and management. Nearly 10% of Chatham residents have been diagnosed with diabetes, up from just 7.6% in 2004. Source: CDC

## Emerging Health Issue: Prescription Drug Misuse and Abuse



One concerning measure in Chatham County is the increase in disciplinary cases related to prescription drugs in the schools.

In 2011, 1,140 North Carolinians died from unintentional poisonings. Approximately 80% of those deaths were related to prescription drugs, predominantly painkillers. If current trends continue, prescription drug poisoning will overtake motor vehicle accidents as the leading cause of accidental death by 2017. Chatham County has a number of efforts underway to prevent and reduce prescription drug misuse and abuse.

**Education:** The *Chatham Drug Free Safe Homes* initiative educates parents on how to create safe home environments by locking away prescription drugs and other substances, as well as talking to their children about the consequences of drug abuse. *Chatham Drug Free* also partnered with the *UNC School of Nursing* to educate all Chatham County high school students and selected eighth graders

about the consequences of prescription drug abuse.

**Monitoring:** In partnership with the *UNC School of Nursing*, *Chatham Drug Free* worked to encourage medical providers and pharmacists in Chatham County to register for the *NC Controlled Substance Reporting System*, which enables members to see if patients have filled an excessive number of controlled substances, and if so, to help them access treatment resources.

**Proper Medication Disposal:** Proper disposal is important to decrease the available supply of unused prescription drugs. Chatham County has two permanent and one mobile drop-off or take-back programs for prescription drugs. Permanent drop boxes are located at the *Pittsboro Police Department* and *Siler City Police Department*. The mobile unit is located at the *Chatham County Sheriff's* office and is brought to select community events. At one event, the mobile unit collected 3.5 pounds of medication, the equivalent of 1,750 doses of prescription medicine.

## Emerging Health Issue: Planning, Development, and Public Health

Chatham County is growing, and planned development projects will accelerate this growth in the coming years. From 2000 to 2012, Chatham County's population grew from 49,329 to 65,976 people. One proposed development on the east side of Pittsboro, *Chatham Park*, could add over 50,000 residents in the next 30 years. This project and others across the county offer many potential benefits, from economic opportunity to increased access to services. These developments will also increase the demand on existing services and infrastructure, from clinics and healthcare facilities to emergency response, police, and even opportunities to be active, like parks and greenways. As new residents move to Chatham County and the population expands, it will be important to plan for the many ways in which development can affect the health of all Chatham residents.

## New Initiative: Programs to Increase Access to Healthy Foods

Healthy eating goes hand in hand with physical activity in the prevention of obesity and type-2 diabetes. While projects focused on increasing safe places to walk and bike have been highlighted in previous sections, there are many programs in the county that seek to make healthier food options more accessible to Chatham residents.

In 2013, two community garden initiatives began. In April, over 20 county employees from eight departments joined forces to start the *Chatham County Community Garden* in Pittsboro. In addition to benefiting the employees who volunteer, the project helps those in need, with donations to the CORA food bank totaling over 200 pounds. In Siler City, *Chatham County Together/Communities in Schools* started a youth garden. The garden serves as an outdoor classroom and worksite for youth engaged in community service and self-reliance skills training.

Additionally, two UNC students mapped all food vendors in the county and highlighted those with healthy options. This work guided a new initiative promoting these healthy options in corner stores.

These efforts complement numerous projects at farmers' markets to get fresh produce in the hands of lower income families. The *Chatham County Partnership for Children* distributed vouchers to *Head Start* families and staff to purchase produce at the Siler City Farmers' Market. The redemption rate of the vouchers in 2013 was twice what it was in 2012, and the program will continue in 2014. Additionally, *Farmer Foodshare* works to connect low income families to local produce through donation stations and Pennies on the Pound (POP) Food Markets that provide affordable foods to local organizations.

## Get Involved!

**Active Chatham Coalition:** Active Chatham is a community-based coalition that advocates for health through physical activity and fitness. This group works in schools, worksites, and communities. Active Chatham plans the 5K Reindeer Run and Rudolph's Family Fun Run that has grown to over 300 participants to promote physical activity in Chatham County. **Contact Person:** Jennifer Park, [jennifer.park@chathamnc.org](mailto:jennifer.park@chathamnc.org), (919) 545-8444

**Obesity Prevention Network:** Quarterly Obesity Prevention Network meetings provide an opportunity for community organizations and community members to connect on obesity strategies, programs, and initiatives. **Contact Person:** Jennifer Park, [jennifer.park@chathamnc.org](mailto:jennifer.park@chathamnc.org), (919) 545-8444

**Board of Health:** The Board of Health makes and adopts policies and rules for the county health department, provides guidance on health issues in the county, and appoints the Health Director. The Board of Health meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month. Community members are welcome to attend meetings and apply for board appointments. **Contact Person:** Vicky Guetgemann, [vicky.guetgemann@chathamnc.org](mailto:vicky.guetgemann@chathamnc.org), (919) 545-8391

If you would like more information about the Chatham County Public Health Department's programs and services, health related data, or community resources, please call (919) 542-8220 or visit [www.chathamnc.org/publichealth](http://www.chathamnc.org/publichealth).

Please complete our Community Survey at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CommunitySurvey2013CCPHD>.

As well as our Customer Satisfaction Survey: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5ZNB2LZ>



**Chatham County Public Health Department**

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