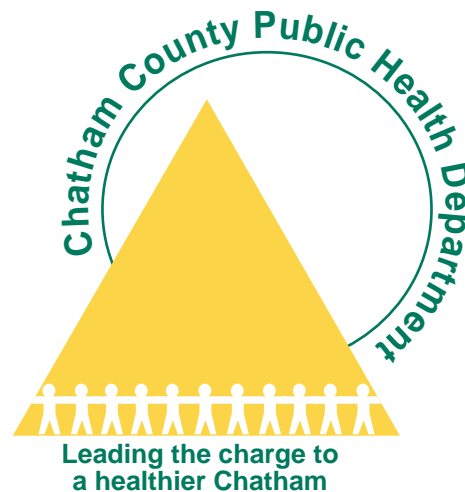
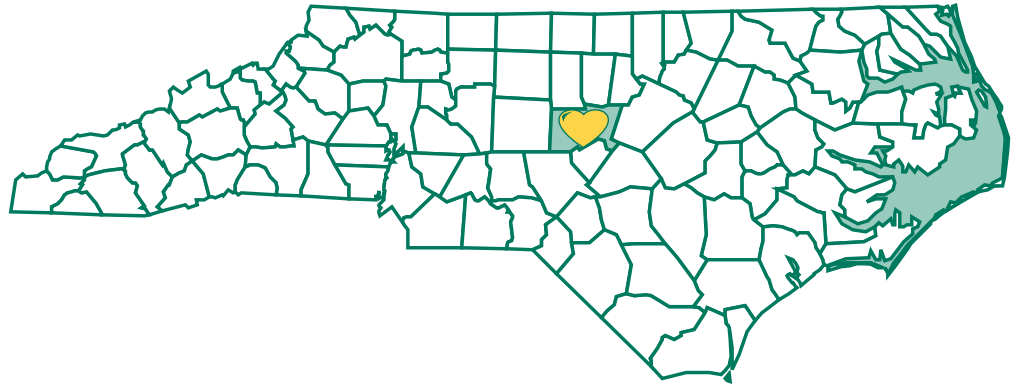


Health of Chatham

Chatham County Board of Health Members

- Don Roscoe, Jr., OD
Chair
- Jane K. Miller, R.Ph
Vice Chair
- Patrick Barnes
County Commissioner
- William Browder, Jr.
Public Member
- Jane Hollingsworth, MD
- Mary Jackson
Public Member
- Gregory King
Professional Engineer
- Paul Mitchum, DDS
- Kevin Monce, DVM
Veterinarian
- Jacqueline Tatum, RN
- Danny Wimberly
Public Member

2006



Chatham County Public Health Department

www.chathampublichealth.org



Message from the Chair of the Board of Health: Don Roscoe, Jr. OD

A core responsibility of a local public health department is to assess the health and safety issues of the county in order to help the community make improvements in the health and well being of the people. This annual report is part of that assessment process. It is a way to update the community on achievements, strengths and challenges by offering a glimpse into what the health priorities are and where we need to go from here.

As a member of the Board of Health and long-time resident, I have learned much about this growing, vibrant community and its many unique locations, businesses and people. I have been impressed with the history of community members and groups working independently and cooperatively to make Chatham a healthy and safe place to live and work. This past year was no exception. A new public park opened in Bear Creek; health and safety fairs were held in workplaces such as Townsends; a new group of concerned individuals formed, called Growing Healthy Communities, to work with youth; and people are getting immunized against childhood illnesses and influenza.

These are just some of the many examples of how the Chatham community is helping itself. The health department is proud to say that we played a supporting role in these efforts and have taken a lead with other projects.

There is still more work for all of us to do. Unfortunately, many individuals are still not living a healthy life. While some problems cannot be avoided, many can be prevented by choosing healthier options and changing the environment in which we live so that it is easier to make the healthiest decisions, avoid potential hazards and care for those who need additional support.

It is everyone's responsibility to do their part for the public's health. The health department has already begun the next step of the ongoing assessment process with the creation of the 2006 Community Health Assessment Team that will help determine the health priorities for the next four or more years. We will also continue to develop policies and implement strategies to assure that a healthy and safe life is available to all. I hope you will join us, your neighbors and others to make Chatham a healthy and safe place to be. Thank you for your help and support.

1. Physical Inactivity

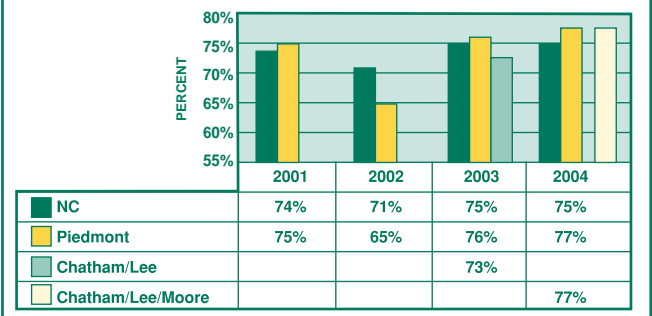
Chatham Objective: Increase the proportion of adults who engage in physical activity.

Description: In 2002, a lack of recreational facilities and programs ranked as the number one challenge or need for Chatham County. Also, obesity ranked high as a concern and this is very closely tied to the amount of physical activity a person gets. In 2005, a new public park in the Bear Creek area opened and the YMCA opened a facility in Pittsboro.

Future: There is still more needed to get people to use available resources and create additional safe places for people to use.

Participated in Physical Activities or Exercises in Past Month

(NC Center for Health Statistics Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey)



2. Unintended Injury

Chatham Objective: 1) Reduce deaths caused by motor vehicle crashes. 2) Increase the use of safety belts to 92 percent.

Description: In 2002, motor vehicle crashes were the number one cause of death to children and other unintentional injuries, such as drowning or fire, ranked as number two. Half of the community members interviewed in the 2002 Community Health Assessment said that a key health concern was drinking and driving.

The Safe Communities Coalition began in October 2002 with support from a three-year grant. The Coalition and its partners held clinics to check child passenger safety seat usage and provided seats when necessary, participated in mock crash scenarios at high schools, checked safety belt usage at high school homecoming games and provided safety information at numerous fairs and festivals throughout the county. As of October 2005, the grant support ended and the Coalition has stopped most of its functions to evaluate its future.

The Fire Marshall and collaborators received a grant for fire prevention education and began the program this past year.

Future: There is a continuing need to find new, effective ways to stop preventable deaths and injuries and to more effectively use the methods currently available.

3. Contaminated Water

Chatham Objective: 1) Assure that subsurface onsite wastewater treatment systems are installed and operated according to statutes and regulation to reduce and/or eliminate groundwater contamination. 2) Increase use of best practices in drilling of wells and assessment of well water quality.

Description: In the 2002 Community Health Assessment, two out of three people said they were concerned about clean water in their communities. In 2004, two of three districts voted to join the county water system. In January 2005, the Onsite Wastewater Monitoring Program within the Environmental Health Division of the County Health Department began inspecting onsite septic systems according to state mandates. Classes were given to septic contractors and to homeowners of septic systems to educate them about the proper installation and use of septic systems and additional classes are planned for February 2006. Additionally, the Health Department has purchased a well camera to aid in diagnosing problems with private drinking wells and will begin a soil and erosion program in January 2006 to help prevent contamination of surface waters.

Future: The Chatham County Water Department hopes to have the infrastructure in place to allow all Chatham County residents to have access to public water within 15 years. While working toward that goal, it is important that private drinking water wells continue to be protected. This will require proper construction of the wells and preventing sewage systems from contaminating ground and surface waters through proper monitoring and maintenance.

Onsite Wastewater Monitoring Program January 1 - December 1, 2005 (Chatham County Public Health Department Division of Environmental Health)				
Number of Onsite Wastewater Systems Inspected	Number of Systems Failing	Number of Systems No Longer Failing	Number of Systems with Repair Permits	% of Monitored Systems Failing
274	31	25	5	11%

4. Obesity/Nutrition

Chatham Objective: Reduce the percent of children and adolescents who are overweight or obese.

Description: In the 2002 health assessment, 30 percent of key informants said that obesity was a major health concern and 75% of focus group members said nutrition, particularly fast food, and diabetes were health concerns. Some Chatham County Schools have begun using the Chatham on the Move incentive program to get children to exercise. One school had a new milk vending machine installed and another school started a rowing machine program. Churches have also become involved in physical activity and nutrition issues. Some churches have joined health programs such as LIGHT Way (Living in God's Holy Temple) which works with predominantly African-American churches to use faith-based strategies for better nutrition and physical activity opportunities in their community.

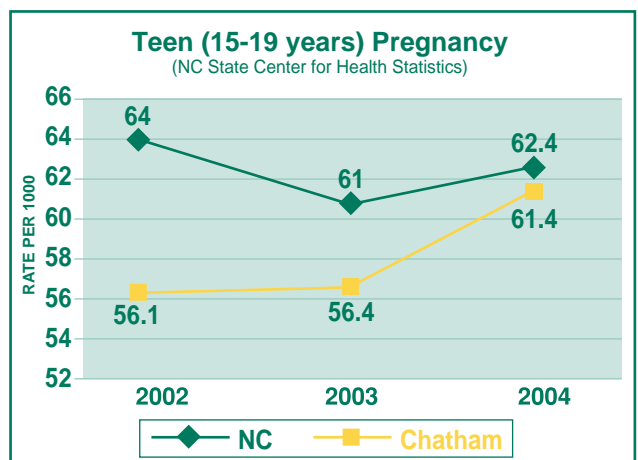
Future: We have a lot of work to do against the national trend of increasing waist lines. It will be important to focus on parents as healthy role models for their children and to continue to make choosing healthier options the easiest option.

5. Adolescent Pregnancy

Chatham Objective: Reduce the incidence of unintended pregnancy among adolescents and adult women.

Description: Unsafe sex and teen pregnancy was a serious health concern of one out of every two community members and for one-third of residents interviewed in the 2002 Community Health Assessment. Youth who are informed and are involved in activities are less likely to become pregnant or engage in other risk behaviors. The number of peer counseling programs at schools and after-school programs throughout the county are growing.

Future: It will be important to provide strong, positive alternatives to sex and pregnancy by implementing a comprehensive countywide plan that supports creation and maintenance of activities for youth that is flexible to adjust it in a timely fashion to identified needs.



3. Contaminated Water

Chatham Objective: 1) Assure that subsurface onsite wastewater treatment systems are installed and operated according to statutes and regulation to reduce and/or eliminate groundwater contamination. 2) Increase use of best practices in drilling of wells and assessment of well water quality.

Description: In the 2002 Community Health Assessment, two out of three people said they were concerned about clean water in their communities. In 2004, two of three districts voted to join the county water system. In January 2005, the Onsite Wastewater Monitoring Program within the Environmental Health Division of the County Health Department began inspecting onsite septic systems according to state mandates. Classes were given to septic contractors and to homeowners of septic systems to educate them about the proper installation and use of septic systems and additional classes are planned for February 2006. Additionally, the Health Department has purchased a well camera to aid in diagnosing problems with private drinking wells and will begin a soil and erosion program in January 2006 to help prevent contamination of surface waters.

Future: The Chatham County Water Department hopes to have the infrastructure in place to allow all Chatham County residents to have access to public water within 15 years. While working toward that goal, it is important that private drinking water wells continue to be protected. This will require proper construction of the wells and preventing sewage systems from contaminating ground and surface waters through proper monitoring and maintenance.

Onsite Wastewater Monitoring Program January 1 - December 1, 2005 (Chatham County Public Health Department Division of Environmental Health)				
Number of Onsite Wastewater Systems Inspected	Number of Systems Failing	Number of Systems No Longer Failing	Number of Systems with Repair Permits	% of Monitored Systems Failing
274	31	25	5	11%

4. Obesity/Nutrition

Chatham Objective: Reduce the percent of children and adolescents who are overweight or obese.

Description: In the 2002 health assessment, 30 percent of key informants said that obesity was a major health concern and 75% of focus group members said nutrition, particularly fast food, and diabetes were health concerns. Some Chatham County Schools have begun using the Chatham on the Move incentive program to get children to exercise. One school had a new milk vending machine installed and another school started a rowing machine program. Churches have also become involved in physical activity and nutrition issues. Some churches have joined health programs such as LIGHT Way (Living in God's Holy Temple) which works with predominantly African-American churches to use faith-based strategies for better nutrition and physical activity opportunities in their community.

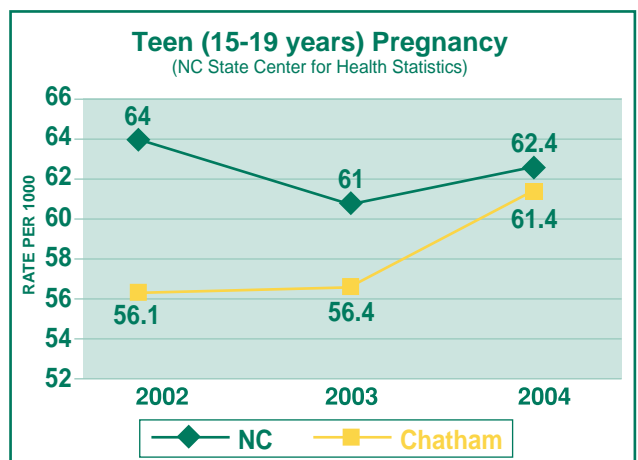
Future: We have a lot of work to do against the national trend of increasing waist lines. It will be important to focus on parents as healthy role models for their children and to continue to make choosing healthier options the easiest option.

5. Adolescent Pregnancy

Chatham Objective: Reduce the incidence of unintended pregnancy among adolescents and adult women.

Description: Unsafe sex and teen pregnancy was a serious health concern of one out of every two community members and for one-third of residents interviewed in the 2002 Community Health Assessment. Youth who are informed and are involved in activities are less likely to become pregnant or engage in other risk behaviors. The number of peer counseling programs at schools and after-school programs throughout the county are growing.

Future: It will be important to provide strong, positive alternatives to sex and pregnancy by implementing a comprehensive countywide plan that supports creation and maintenance of activities for youth that is flexible to adjust it in a timely fashion to identified needs.



6. Family Violence

Chatham Objective: 1) Increase the number of victims of intimate partner violence seeking and receiving services. 2) Reduce number of children permanently taken away from their parents.

Description: In 2001, 619 individuals sought assistance from the Family Violence and Rape Crisis Services (FVRC) and the Coalition for Family Peace. It was estimated that at any given time 100 children were in the Department of Social Services custody, either in foster care, institutions or a relative's care.

In 2004-05, 731 victims of domestic violence and sexual assault sought services. The FVRC and Coalition for Family Peace in collaboration with other individuals and agencies have implemented numerous outreach projects to increase awareness of domestic violence and use of their services. Child Abuse Prevention month in April has been used to help highlight the issues. Trainings have been provided to child care providers so they can better identify children in need. Trainings have also been done in congregations, schools and other community events to reach both English and Spanish speaking populations.

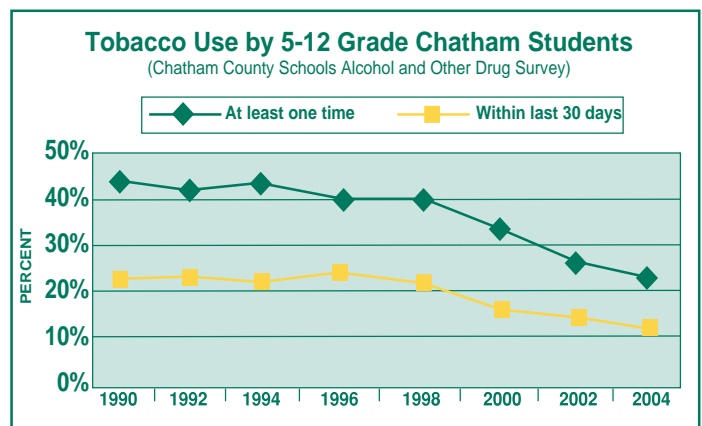
Future: Work must continue to focus on prevention and building healthy relationships from the start by working with children, men and the faith community. This should include implementation of recommendations from the court assessment to build more effective response to child abuse and neglect.

7. Tobacco Use

Chatham Objective: To reduce tobacco use by adolescents

Description: In 2002, 51% of those surveyed indicated that the most serious health concern was cigarette smoking by youth under 18, 49% indicated concern about smoking by adults. Smoking has been linked to lower grades in school and increased rates of asthma. The Alcohol and Other Drug Survey conducted by Chatham County Schools shows an improving trend with fewer students trying or using cigarettes.

Future: Programs that encourage youth advocacy and peer education, smoke-free restaurants, training for merchants on reducing sales of tobacco products to minors and enforcement of the smoke-free schools policy to further reduce tobacco use.

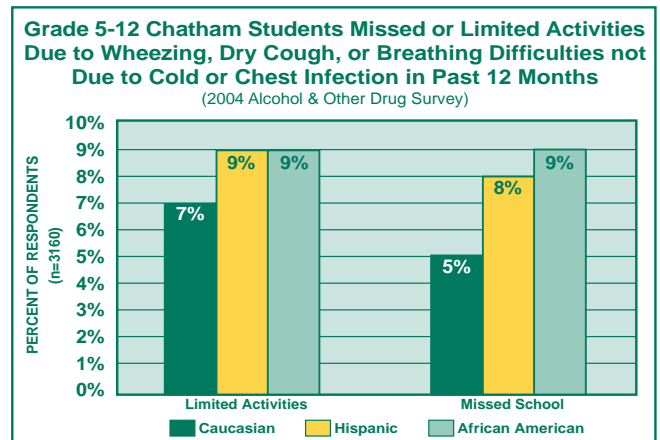


8. Indoor Air Quality - Asthma

Chatham Objective: Reduce the percent of children in county schools reporting wheezing or breathing problems.

Description: A Chatham County Schools asthma survey in 2000 indicated that 5 of 9 schools had high self-reported wheezing or asthma rates in children. In 2004 and 2005, the Breathe Easy Coalition and Health Department worked with 6 elementary schools to promote Tools for Schools program that helps manage environmental triggers that may cause breathing problems. Some recommendations have been implemented such as air conditioning upgrades and replacing carpets with tile. Additionally, the schools have adopted a no bus idling policy that will help to limit children's exposure to fumes from buses.

Future: Schools should continue their good work of improving the school environment by instituting integrated pest management strategies to further reduce children's exposure to asthma triggers such as pesticides. Also, continuing to monitor student breathing difficulties through the Alcohol & Other Drug Survey can locally track the issue and correlate asthma rates with student smoking.



Health Priorities

What are health priorities used for?

Health priorities help guide the planning of public health programs and activities in Chatham County. Programs and activities are done by many individuals and organizations. This document provides an update of progress made over the past four years in addressing priority issues.

How were these priorities created?

The current health priorities were created at the end of the community health assessment process in 2002. A group of individuals interested in improving the health of the people in Chatham County gathered data and the opinions of community members. They reviewed the information and created a long list of the most common concerns.

The group took each concern and assigned it a point value on a scale from 1-10 for each of three questions. The three questions were:

- 1) How many persons does the problem affect, either actually or potentially?
- 2) What are the consequences of this concern continuing?
- 3) Is improvement within the span of control/influence of public health groups?

Public Health - The Big Picture:

True or False? Your health is completely in your control.

True and False. There are many things that you can do to keep yourself, your family and your community healthy. Without you, it would be impossible. It is also impossible for one person or one organization to carry all the burden, to know everything that is happening and to be able to act on it. Instead, a public health structure has been developed to support individuals. This structure tries to assess what is happening, develop policies to support improvements and assure that necessary services are being provided.

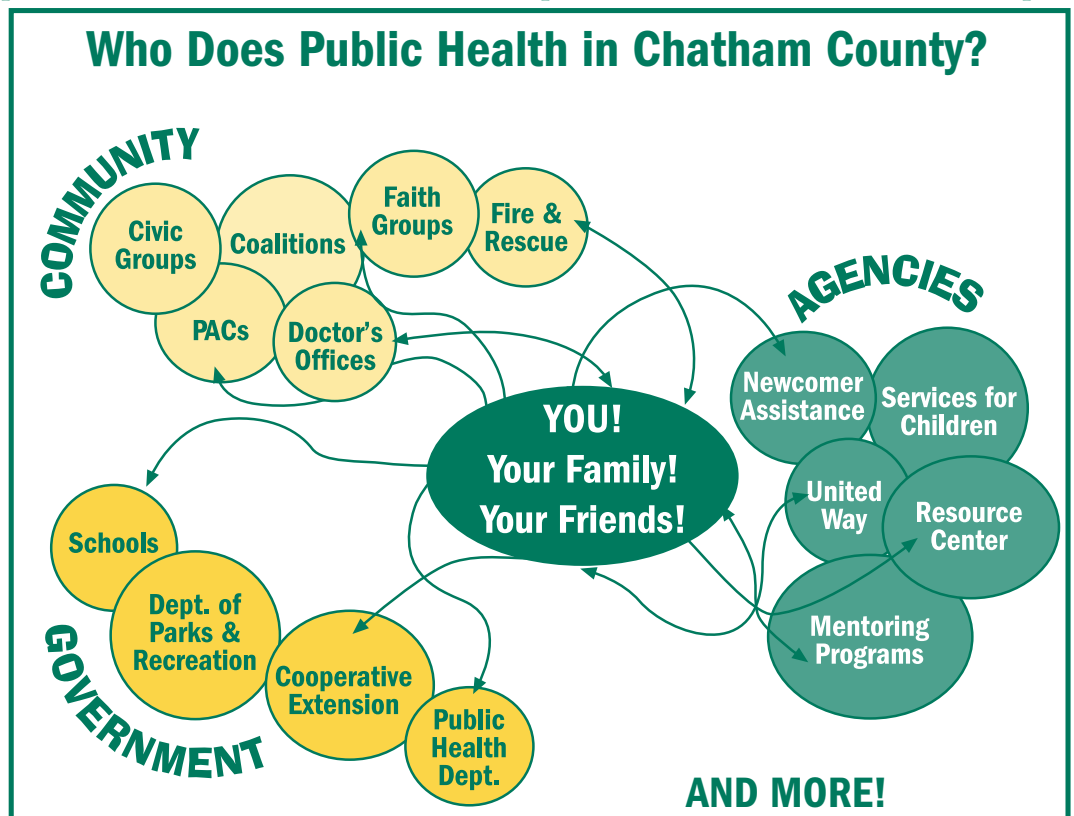
The Federal government developed an assessment tool called Healthy People and the State of North Carolina followed with Healthy Carolinians. This tool assesses different health issues, provides goals to strive for and gets different agencies working on the issues. It encourages all communities to do the same in the hope of improving the health of all people.

Current Health Priorities

(In order of importance)

1. Physical Inactivity
2. Unintended Injury
3. Water Quality
4. Nutrition
5. Adolescent Pregnancy
6. Family Violence
7. Tobacco Use
8. Indoor Air Quality - Asthma
9. Affordable and Available Childcare
10. Alcohol and Other Drug Use
11. Infant Mortality

Who Does Public Health in Chatham County?



9. Child Care

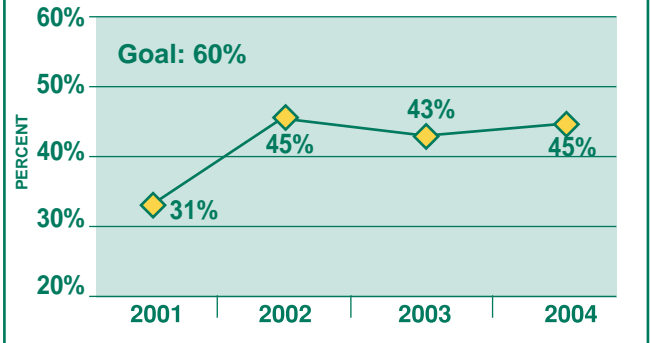
Chatham Objective: To increase the number of child care programs that are nationally accredited or have a four or five star NC State rating.

Description: Early childhood experiences, whether at home or at a child care center, provide children with essential building blocks for becoming healthy, thriving adults. For many families in Chatham County, child care is essential so that parents can work; but it is often difficult to find affordable, quality child care. This is especially true for low income families whose children need the best quality child care possible. Programs offered by agencies such as Chatham County Partnership for Children and the work of child care providers are helping to increase the number of child care facilities with high ratings.

Future: We are still far from our goal. To get a more complete picture of the child care needs in the county to develop program improvements, facilities that serve special needs children could also be more closely evaluated.

Subsidized Children in 4 or 5 Star Rated Facilities

(Chatham County Partnership for Children)



10. Alcohol and Other Drug Use

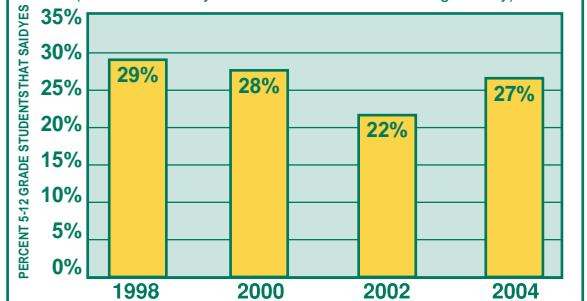
Chatham Objective: 1) Increase the percent of students who report that parents have talked to them about the dangers of drug use. 2) Increase the percent of students who report that their parents disapprove of alcohol use. 3) Establish a recovery house in Chatham County to assist recovering substance abusers.

Description: In 2002, alcohol and drug use was the leading most serious problem in Chatham County by those surveyed (n=300). Resources for both prevention and treatment measures are limited with some prevention programs and no local recovery services available. In February 2005, the ad hoc committee convened by the Chatham County Board of Commissioners presented their recommendations which included a recovery house and a prevention specialist. No action has yet been taken by either the Board or the local mental health agency.

Future: Coordinated advocacy and resource development for implementation of the recommendations prepared by the ad hoc committee is needed.

Parents Talk About the Dangers of Drugs Often

(Chatham County Schools Alcohol & Other Drug Survey)



11. Infant Mortality

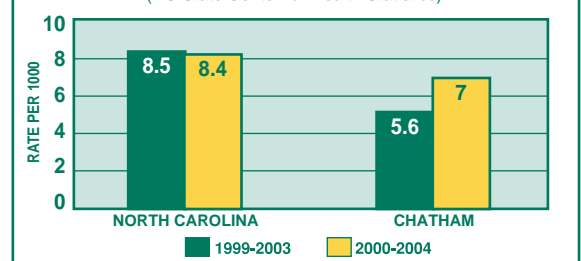
Chatham Objective: 1) Increase early prenatal care. 2) Reduce cigarette smoking among pregnant women.

Description: Infant mortality was chosen as a priority in Chatham County in 2002 because disparities between racial/ethnic groups indicated that minorities had higher rates than the state and Chatham County. Smoking during pregnancy is known to be associated with low birth weight babies and low birth weight is a major contributing factor to infant death. In 2005, new efforts began to train local physicians working with pregnant women on tobacco cessation methods.

Future: Efforts need to continue in the areas of tobacco use prevention. Additionally, methods to increase the use of early prenatal care, particularly by those most at risk, need to be found and implemented.

Infant Death Rate Per 1000 Live Births

(NC State Center for Health Statistics)



How Can You Get Involved?

- **Become** a member of an advocacy or action group.
- **Encourage** your church, civic club, or other organization to become involved in addressing these issues.
- **Contact** the Health Department at 919.542.8220 or on the web at www.chathampublichealth.org.