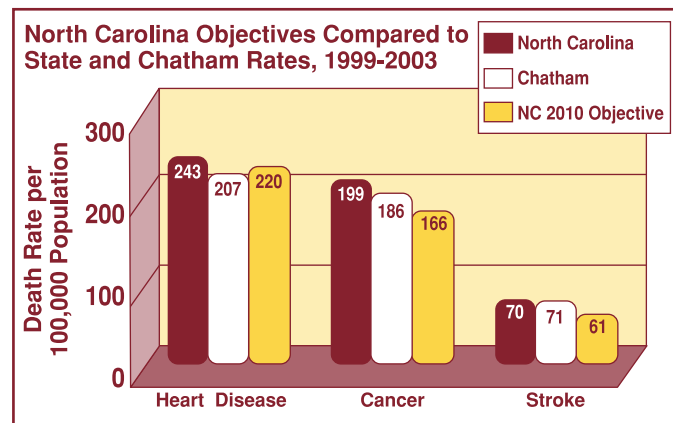


## Health of Chatham 2005

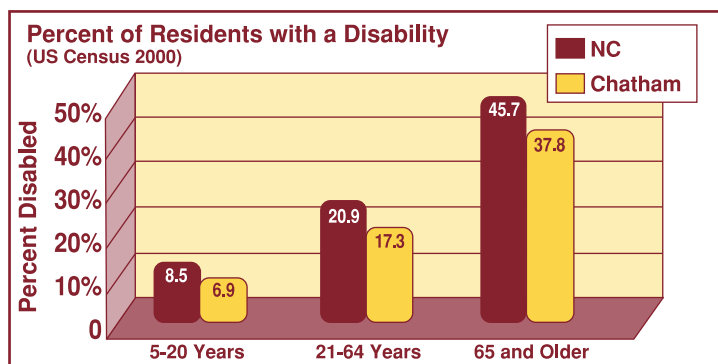
### Leading Causes of Death

The leading causes of death in Chatham County and in North Carolina continue to be heart disease, cancer and cerebrovascular diseases, predominately strokes. Risk factors are those conditions that increase the chance of getting a disease. Cancer and heart disease risk factors include age, family history and gender. There are also several risk factors that a person can control to reduce their risks including not using tobacco, having good nutrition, and being physically active.



### Disabilities

Almost 2 out of 10 people in Chatham County have a disability. A disability can impact an individual in different ways depending on type and severity but it is generally considered long-term or permanent. Eight percent use special equipment. Seven percent have trouble learning, remembering, or concentrating. Over 87% feel they are not limited in any way because of their disability. (BRFSS 2003)



People with disabilities are active members of society through work, school and any number of leisure time activities. However, they also face unique barriers whether they are mentally, physically or developmentally disabled. A remarkably higher percentage of disabled adults believe their health to be poor or fair compared to those without a disability (48% vs. 6%). Contributing factors in Chatham County include less informal social support, the need for a better continuum of care for all ages and types of services, and lack of empowerment to contribute to positive change.

### Dental Care

Children from low socio-economic backgrounds are five times more likely to have untreated tooth decay and less likely to have ever seen a dentist for preventive care. In 2001, 23% of kindergartners and 3% of 5th graders had untreated tooth decay in Chatham. The North Carolina Medicaid program provides coverage for dental care but there are still many children in Chatham County who are not receiving appropriate care. There is a national shortage of dentists and this affects access to dental care in Chatham. Private providers treat Medicaid clients but often do not have the capacity to serve any new clients. There are only two primarily public dental facilities available to the over 4000 Chatham County children with Medicaid: Lee-Chatham Dental Clinic and Piedmont's Moncure Clinic.

**The Costs:** The discomfort from tooth decay or other oral diseases can lead to poor concentration, irritability, problems with sleep and other problems. This can and does affect a child's performance in school and at home. These children have a threefold increase in adult periodontal disease and caries.

**The Opportunities:** Chatham County Partnership for Children has recently included improved dental health for children as a goal for its 2005-2008 activities. Piedmont Health Services is expected to open dental services in Siler City in the fall of 2005.

## Priorities and Emerging Issues

The Current and Emerging Health Priorities listed below were created at the completion of the community health assessment in 2002. Continued monitoring of these and other health issues has resulted in only minimal changes to the priorities. These priorities help guide the planning of public health programs and activities in Chatham County.

### Current Health Priorities

1. Physical Inactivity
2. Unintended Injury
3. Contaminated Water
4. Nutrition
5. Unsafe Sex/Unintended Pregnancy
6. Family Violence (Domestic Violence/Child Abuse)
7. Tobacco Control
8. Indoor Air Quality
9. Affordable and Available Childcare
10. Alcohol and Other Drug Use
11. Infant Mortality

### Emerging Health Priorities

- Bioterrorism
- Growth
- Health Insurance Coverage
- Affordable Health Care
- Job Opportunities



## Healthy Chatham "Collaborating for Healthier Communities"

In 1996, Healthy Chatham was created to provide a foundation for healthy living and improved health, and to ultimately enhance the quality of life for all Chatham County residents. A community level approach with involvement of the entire community is needed to improve health status for Chatham County residents. The vision of Healthy Chatham is a collaborative community involved in creating and nurturing optimal health and well being in Chatham County.

### Healthy Chatham Partners

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Active Chatham Coalition                | Chatham County Safe Communities           |
| Breath Easy Coalition                   | Chatham County Schools                    |
| Chatham Coalition for Adolescent Health | Chatham Hospital                          |
| Chatham Communities in Action           | Chatham Social Health Council             |
| Chatham Counseling Center               | Coalition for Family Peace                |
| Chatham County Parks and Recreation     | Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition |
| Chatham County Partnership for Children | United Way of Chatham County              |

### How Can You Get Involved?

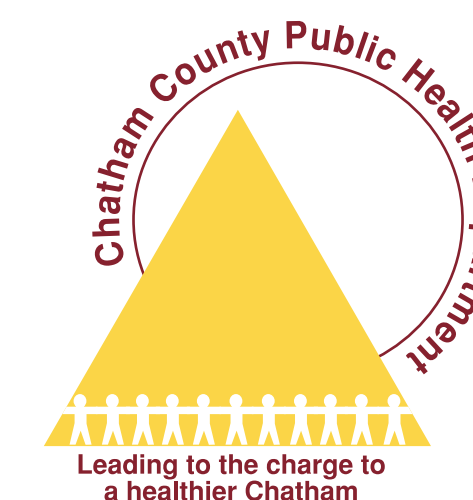
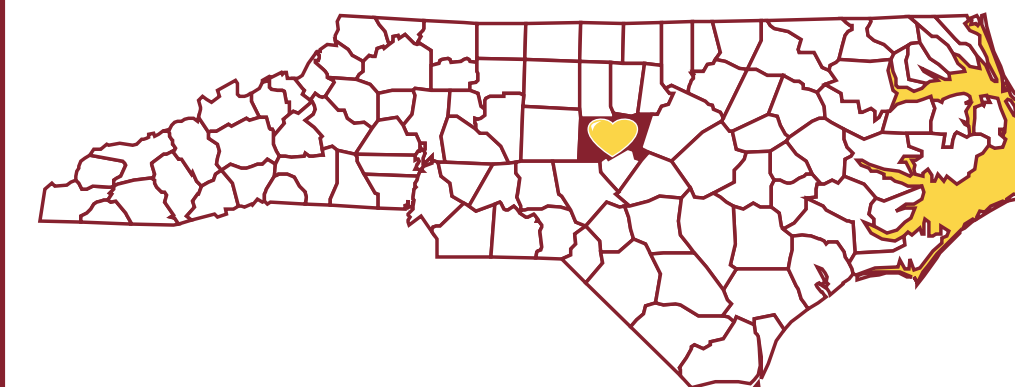
- **Become** a member of one of the Healthy Chatham partnership agencies.
- **Encourage** your church, civic club, or other organization to host a presentation by Healthy Chatham.
- **Call** Healthy Chatham at 919-545-8344 for more information or to get involved.

**Chatham County Public Health Department**  
**"Leading the Charge to a Healthier Chatham"**  
 Post Office Box 130/80 East Street  
 Pittsboro, NC 27312  
 919-542-8220 [www.chathampublichealth.org](http://www.chathampublichealth.org)

# Health of Chatham

## Chatham County Board of Health Members

- Don Roscoe, Jr., OD  
Chair
- Jacqueline Tatum, RN  
Vice Chair
- Russell Underwood, PE
- Rachel Stevens,  
Public Member
- Carl Outz,  
County Commissioner
- Tommy Glosson,  
Public Member
- Jane Miller, R.Ph.
- Paul Mitchum, DDS
- Jane Hollingsworth, MD
- Danny Wimberly,  
Public Member
- Bonnie Teril, DVM



**Chatham County Public Health Department**

[www.chathampublichealth.org](http://www.chathampublichealth.org)



**Important Message from Dorothy Cilenti,  
Chatham County's Health Director**

I am pleased to provide you with the second annual Health of Chatham report. We continue to see progress and challenges as we address the major health priorities identified through the community health assessment done in 2002.

We achieved great things in 2004. At the top of my list are:

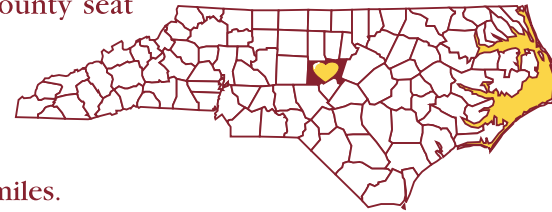
- **Public Health Preparedness!** As a result of planning, training, and volunteer resources, we are more prepared to respond to a public health crisis.
- **Active Chatham!** Our community-wide physical activity coalition has worked with over 900 youth and adults to be more active and take more steps.
- **Water Quality!** We've added an onsite wastewater monitoring program to better protect the water you drink.
- **Smoke-Free Environments!** In collaboration with county youth, the Chatham County School system, and local establishments, we're working hard to ensure that indoor air is smoke-free.
- **Safe Communities!** Many county leaders and residents have committed their time and resources to make communities safer for children and adults by preventing unintended injuries and motor vehicle crashes.
- **Access to Quality Health Care!** The growing uninsured population now have more services provided by local medical providers, the health department, Chatham Hospital, and a new community health center in the Western part of the county.
- **Healthy Families, Healthy Babies!** The network of services available to pregnant women, young children and families living in Chatham County continues to ensure that babies are born healthy and safe and have parents and caretakers who help them achieve a high quality of life.
- **Men's Health!** We are part of a new initiative to identify health issues of concern to men to better serve their needs in the future.

I'm sure there are many other accomplishments that have helped make Chatham County a healthier, safer place to live. There is still much more to be done, though, as you will see in this report. Many residents are sick or dying too young from illnesses that are preventable.

We need to continue to work together to make Chatham County the healthiest place to live. In 2005, let's all develop good health habits in our personal lives, create healthy environments in our homes and workplaces, and find opportunities in the community to promote prevention and early detection of diseases.

**GEOGRAPHY**

Chatham County, a scenic and rural area located in the Heart of North Carolina, is a vast county between the Triangle and the Piedmont Triad. The town of Pittsboro is the county seat for this county of 707 square miles.



**HISTORY**

Records show settlers of European origin coming to the county as early as the mid 1700's, including a Quaker settlement in 1751. It is believed that early settlers came into the county from the north through a trading route to the Catawba Indians and from the south through the Cape Fear River Valley.

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

One-fifth of the county's approximately 54,645 (July 2004 projection) residents live within the county's municipalities. The population continues to grow at a healthy rate (26.6 percent from 1990 to 2000). The state estimates that the population will continue to grow making the total population of the county 60,955 by April 2010 and 71,903 by April 2020.

**COMMUNITY ASSETS**

Farms, scenic byways, rivers, lakes, bridges and lush greenery are just a few of the enhancing facets of the area that add to its quality of life. Home to NC's ONLY five-star, five-diamond inn, and NC's largest fruitcake producer, Chatham County is continuously recognized for its quality of life factors. It is also home to Jordan Lake, voted the Best Place to Hike, Bike, and Best Family Day Trip. A well-rounded offering of sights, shops, and eateries makes it a great place to live, work, and play. For more information, browse [www.visitathamcounty.com](http://www.visitathamcounty.com).

**Youth Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Use**

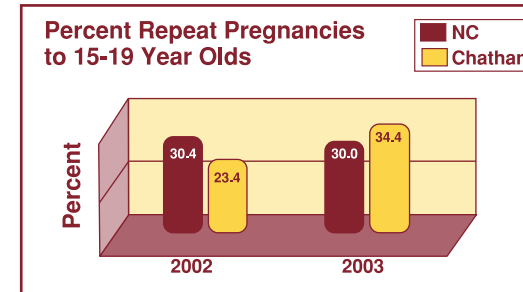
Alcohol and tobacco use in youth are at their lowest level since 1990 and marijuana use is continuing a downward trend according to the 2004 Youth Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Survey. The survey, conducted every two years in Chatham County Schools, surveyed over 3,800 students in grades 5-12. The results are mixed but similar to national trends. Findings show that the use of inhalants has slightly increased. Also, older students are more likely to use other drugs such as hallucinogens and prescription medicines. Alcohol and tobacco are the most commonly tried drugs regardless of age.

**The Costs:** A student who uses tobacco products is more likely to try marijuana, inhalants or alcohol and more likely to get lower grades in school compared to non-tobacco users. Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable illness and death in the United States. Eighty percent of adult smokers began before they were 18. (CDC, 1999)

**The Opportunities:** The Breathe Easy Coalition, a community group, works with youth on tobacco use prevention activities. Additionally, a substance abuse committee began work in the fall of 2004 and developed county-wide recommendations for treatment and prevention activities for youth and adults. Other community resources include Chatham Counseling Center and support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous.

**Adolescent Pregnancy**

The teen pregnancy rate in Chatham County remained stable from 2002 to 2003 with 71 other counties having worse rates. However, there are areas for concern. Racial and ethnic disparities continue to exist. Hispanic and African American girls are more than twice as likely to get pregnant than the county average. The number of teens who have been pregnant before but went on to become pregnant again rose in Chatham County but remained stable in the State. (NC State Center for Health Statistics)



**The Costs:** According to the NC Budget and Tax Center, teen pregnancy cost North Carolina \$1,039,390,739 in fiscal year 2001-2002 (WIC, Medicaid, TANF, and food stamps). Teen mothers are more likely to have babies who are premature and low birth weight. Teen parents and their children are more likely to suffer long-term problems including failure in school, poverty, physical or mental illness. (American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry)

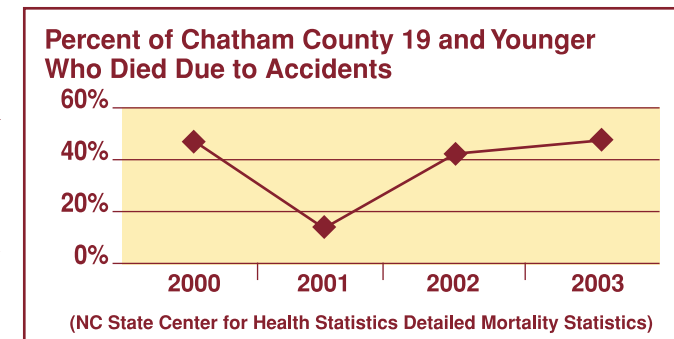
**The Opportunities:** The Chatham Coalition for Adolescent Health and Chatham County Schools are agencies working on educating youth and the community about the benefits of positive health behaviors for adolescents and young adults.

**Unintentional Injuries**

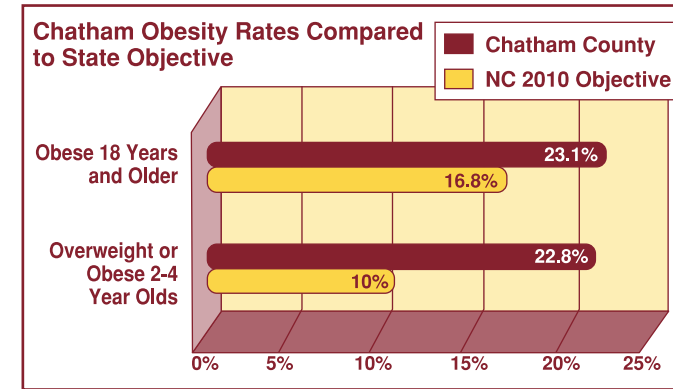
Death due to motor vehicle crashes is the single leading cause of preventable death to our youth in the State and in Chatham County. Second are other unintentional accidents such as drowning or fire. For all ages, there was an average of 16 fatalities, 690 injuries and 1358 reportable motor vehicle crashes per year from 1999-2003 in Chatham County. (NC 2003 Traffic Crash Facts)

**The Costs:** The average annual cost to Chatham County and its residents is more than \$74 million (2001 dollars).

**The Opportunities:** In Chatham County, two community groups are working specifically on this issue. The Child Prevention Fatality Team investigates each instance of a child's death and provides county agencies recommendations for future prevention. The State and local Safe KIDS/Safe Communities Coalition provides car seats and educational activities to the public to help prevent unintentional injuries.



**Overweight and Obesity**



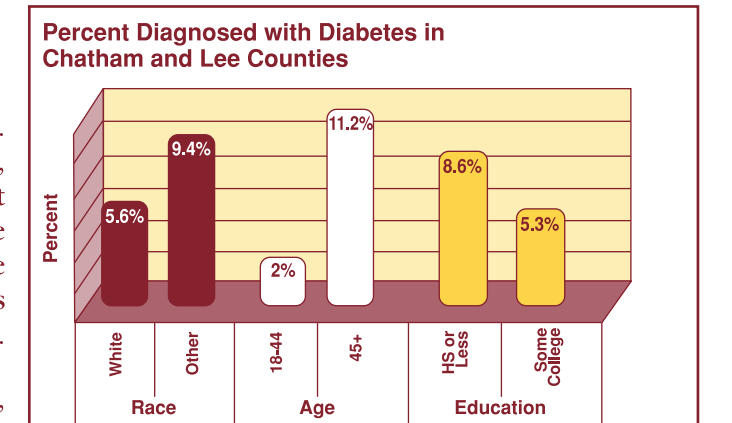
Chatham County has not been spared from the national trend of increasing waist lines. More than one out of two adults are either overweight or obese. (2003 BRFSS) Young children are also more overweight than ever before. (2002 NC-NPASS) Being overweight contributes to several other health problems including diabetes, heart disease and stroke, osteoarthritis, sleep apnea and some types of cancer.

**The Costs:** The estimated costs for overweight and obese adults in Chatham County is \$31.8 million per year in medical expenditures and lost productivity. (2003 NC Dept. of Health)

**The Opportunities:** Chatham County offers several programs and activities to improve the two key factors that cause overweight - lack of physical activity and poor nutrition. Jordan Lake, parks and recreation facilities offer inexpensive places to exercise. Chatham County Parks and Recreation will complete the new Southwest Park in 2005. Education programs on fitness and nutrition are offered by a variety of groups within the community including the Health Department, Chatham Hospital, Family Resource Center, Central Carolina Community College, Chatham County Cooperative Extension and others.

**Diabetes**

Diabetes is a major health concern for Chatham County. In the 2003 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey, 6.9% of Chatham and Lee County residents indicated that they had been told by a doctor that they have diabetes. The State estimates that 50% of Type II Diabetes cases are undiagnosed. There are potentially more than 7000 residents in Chatham with diabetes, most not receiving any treatment.



**The Costs:** Uncontrolled diabetes can lead to poor eye sight, problems with the feet, cardiovascular disease and even death. In 2003, 16 Chatham residents died from diabetes. Three out of four people with diabetes die from some form of cardiovascular disease according to the American Heart Association.

**The Opportunities:** Fifty-eight percent of Type II Diabetes could be prevented by losing weight with daily physical activity and good nutrition practices. Two new programs began in 2004 to add to existing Diabetes related services. Chatham Hospital now offers educational classes and the Health Department is leading a community coalition to help promote prevention. The Diabetes Advocates program trains people in the community to educate their family members and neighbors about diabetes and how to support those who have the disease.

**Physical Activity**

Being physically active has many benefits. It improves overall health, helps control weight, provides energy and strength, improves mental health, helps you sleep and the list goes on. The CDC recommends 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week to reduce risk of disease. According to the CDC's 2003 BRFSS in Chatham and Lee counties, only 26.7% of residents do 30 minutes or more of moderate or vigorous activity 5 or more days a week. Of those who did at least 10 minutes, only 45% exercised 5 or more days in the week.