

Health of Chatham

New Initiatives

Annual Report 2017

Chatham County Comprehensive Plan Approved

On November 27th, the Board of Commissioners approved the Chatham County Comprehensive Plan, a guiding document which sets forth goals and implementation steps for the next 25 years. The plan features an innovative Health Element with recommendations and policies to advance health and equity. The Health Element includes ten recommendations, ranging from expanding access to healthcare and mental health services to supporting the Chatham Health Alliance, each of which is supported by specific strategies. The process to incorporate health into the plan was realized through a partnership between the Public Health Department, Chatham Health Alliance, and Planning Department, and was supported by funding from the American Public Health Association/Aetna Foundation's Healthiest Cities and Counties Challenge, The Duke Endowment's Healthy People Healthy Carolinas Program, and the Healthy Communities Program. Because of the success of Comprehensive Plan process, Chatham County was recently recognized again by the Healthiest Cities and Counties Challenge as one of ten communities nationwide chosen as Interim Award winners, and will receive a \$25,000 award to further Chatham's work to build a healthy and more equitable community.

County Forms Opioid Task Force

Throughout 2017, community partners including the Public Health Department, Chatham Health Alliance, the Chatham County Sheriff's Office, and Chatham Drug Free have been meeting to review information on the opioid epidemic and its impact on Chatham County. On December 4th, this culminated in the Chatham Opioid Prevention Leadership Summit, where more than 75 leaders from across the county discussed strategies to combat substance abuse. Participants and speakers represented a broad spectrum of organizations and individuals, including local elected officials, law enforcement, court system, school system, advocacy groups, nonprofits, parent groups, social services, public health, emergency responders, Chatham Hospital, state agencies, treatment and recovery services, and many others.

As a compliment to this work, a UNC student team developed educational materials for parents on how to protect teens from opioid misuse. These materials included information on warning signs of opioid misuse, tips for safe storage of medications, and proper disposal of unused medications, as well as North Carolina laws and protections.

Addressing Health Priorities: A snapshot of progress



Since its inception in March 2015, the Chatham Health Alliance has played an active role in improving health in Chatham and is leading many of the efforts discussed below to address the health priorities identified in the 2014 Community Health Assessment.

OBESITY

Obesity was identified as the number one health priority in the 2014 Community Health, and the Obesity Subcommittee of the Chatham Health Alliance continues to drive a number of initiatives aimed at reducing obesity rates in Chatham County. This includes several new efforts started in 2017, such as a focus on Childcare Food Environments, partnership with Safe Routes to Schools, and working with Chatham Hospital to bring healthier food options to their cafeteria. More information on the work of the Obesity Subcommittee can be found at www.ChathamHealthAllianceNC.org.

ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

In July 2017, Daymark Recovery Services opened a new comprehensive community mental health clinic in Siler City. Daymark offers a range of mental health and substance use services for ages three through adult. The clinic is located at 1105 E. Cardinal Street and hours are Monday-Friday, 8 am to 5 pm. The Access to Mental Health Services Subcommittee has worked hard to raise awareness of mental health needs and services in the county through advertisements and online directories. To learn more about these resources, visit www.chathamnc.org/mentalhealth and www.chathamnc.org/recovery. The subcommittee has also been a driver for opioid overdose prevention efforts, including those mentioned in the new initiatives section above.

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

The Chatham County Public Health Department (CCPHD) completed the transition of adult health services to Piedmont Health Services in June 2017; these services include physical examinations, chronic disease management, and acute (sick) visits for people 21 years or older. This shift will allow health department staff to focus on developing and expanding existing population health initiatives to better serve the residents of Chatham. A UNC master's student conducted a network analysis of social service agencies in Chatham to identify gaps in services. The subcommittee also hosted an interagency fair in June 2017 aimed at building and strengthening existing connections between social service organizations in the county.

Emerging Issue: Medicaid Transformation

County prepares for major Medicaid overhaul

In 2015, the North Carolina legislature passed House Bill 372, which set in motion a transformation of the state's Medicaid system and left a degree of uncertainty among medical providers, especially safety net providers. Since Medicaid, along with the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), provides healthcare coverage to over two million low-income children, pregnant women, adults, seniors, and people with disabilities in North Carolina, these changes will affect the entire healthcare system in the state.

A main component of the new system, referred to as Medicaid managed care, is that Medicaid enrollees will choose from an offering of prepaid health plans. These plans will be offered by Provider Led Entities/Managed Care Organizations (PLE/MCOs), which will be responsible for working with local medical providers to ensure healthcare services are available.

In August 2017, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) released a preliminary program design for transforming Medicaid in the state. The program design includes a focus on addressing unmet social needs, such as food and housing, which have a substantial impact on health. The public health community has long understood the important role these factors play in improving health outcomes, and will continue work with community partners to target them in the years to come.

For more information about Medicaid transformation in North Carolina, visit www.ncdhhs.gov/nc-medicaid-transformation.

By the Numbers

72,243 2016 population of Chatham¹

25.7% 2016 percent of Chatham residents 65+
Up from 18.3% in 2010¹

3.8% Unemployment rate in Nov 2017
Down from 4.3% in Nov 2016²

43.6% Percent of 2016 deaths due to cancer or heart disease
Up from 40.5% in 2015³

82.6 years Life expectancy at birth in Chatham
Highest in the state (2014-16)³

5.8 years Difference in life expectancy between whites and African Americans (2014-16)³

2017 Timeline



JAN

FEB

The Chatham Health Alliance and coordinator Sarah Weller Pegna were recognized with the Health Transformation Award at the Communities Joined in Action conference in Texas.

MAR

Environmental Health Onsite wastewater staff conducted a Homeowners of Wells and Septic Systems workshop and a Septic Installers workshop.

APR

CCPHD hosted the 2017 Tick Forum to discuss issues around ticks and tick-borne illness in North Carolina, with a focus on Chatham County.

MAY

JUN

The Chatham Health Alliance held the first Interagency Fair, with the goal of connecting agencies from across the county.

JUL

CCPHD completed the transition of adult health clinical services to Piedmont Health Services.

Daymark Recovery Services opened a new comprehensive community mental health clinic in Siler City.

AUG

SEP

Environmental Health staff partnered with the Water Department, Jordan Lake Staff, and Clean Jordan Lake to conduct water testing of Jordan Lake beaches this summer to identify variables that impact bacterial loads to help develop health risk recommendations for bathers.

OCT

CCPHD and Piedmont Health Services collaborated on a shared registered dietitian position that will provide services at both sites.

NOV

The Chatham Health Alliance held the first in a series of Community Conversations to better understand the issues and opportunities in different communities across Chatham.

The Chatham County Board of Commissioners approved the Chatham County Comprehensive Plan.

DEC

The Chatham Opioid Prevention Leadership Summit convened leaders from across the county to discuss strategies to combat substance abuse.

The Environmental Health Retail Food Program conducted a risk factor survey of permitted food establishments in Chatham County to identify food establishment operator gaps in knowledge of food borne illness prevention. Over the next couple of years, program staff will develop intervention strategies to help food handlers/food operators address these gaps.

Sources

1: 2016 ACS Survey, 2: NC Dept of Commerce, 3: NC SCHS