



State of the County Health Report 2021

The State of the County Health Report is an annual report required of each local public health department in North Carolina in the years where there is not a Community Health Assessment. This report covers work done in the year 2021 and provides a bridge to the Chatham County Community Assessment, scheduled for release in the summer of 2022.

This report contains updates on the Chatham Health Alliance and the Alliance's Community Health Impact Priorities from the 2018 Community Assessment, new initiatives enacted by the Chatham County Public Health Department, and an emerging issue, COVID-19 vaccination. Staff members for the Chatham County Public Health Department and Chatham Health Alliance worked collaboratively to compile this report. The Chatham Health Alliance is a collaborative of local professionals and community members working together to improve health and well-being in Chatham County.

Chatham Health Alliance

Leadership Team

Julie Wilkerson, Executive Director

Lara Kehle, Chair & Access Subcommittee Co-Chair

Sara Martin, Vice-Chair

Eric Wolak, Chatham Hospital Representative

Michael Zelek, Chatham County Public Health Representative

Brad Wilson, Access Subcommittee Co-Chair

Karinda Roebuck, Equity Subcommittee Chair

Tara Gregory, H.E.A.L. Subcommittee Chair

Travis Patterson, Resilience Subcommittee Co-Chair

Donna Smith, Resilience Subcommittee Co-Chair

www.chathamhealthalliancenc.org

Chatham County Public Health Department

Leadership Team

Michael Zelek, Public Health Director

Anne Lowry, Environmental Health Director

Dorothy Rawleigh, Health Promotion & Policy Director

Zach Deaton, Clinical & Community Services Director

Casey Hilliard, Strategic Planning and Development Officer

Beth Dickens, QA/QI/Compliance Officer

Gary Thomas, Finance Officer

Vicky Guetgemann, Administrative Assistant to the Health Director

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Community Health Impact Priorities Data

Chatham County Population

63,505

2010 Census

76,285

2020 Census

Approximately
20% Increase



Population Age 65+

25%

Chatham County

17%

North Carolina

17%

United States

Source: 2020 U.S. Census

Population in Poverty

14.2%

2010



9.6%

2020

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Access to Health Care

Chatham population under 65 without health insurance
20% 2010 ↓ 14% 2019

Source: U.S. Census (Small Area Health Insurance Estimates)

75.6%

of Chatham County adults had a routine visit with a doctor in the past year

Source: NC Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2019

Leading Causes of Death in Chatham County

2004-2008

Rank	Cause of Death
1	Heart diseases
2	Cancer - all sites
3	Cerebrovascular disease
4	Chronic lower respiratory disease
5	Diabetes mellitus

2015-2019

Rank	Cause of Death
1	Cancer - all sites
2	Heart diseases
3	Cerebrovascular disease
4	Alzheimer's disease
5	Chronic lower respiratory disease

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, County Data Book

31.4%

of Chatham County adults are obese

22.4%

of Chatham County adults report no leisure time physical activity

Source: NC Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2019

The above data covers the three Community Health Impact Priorities as chosen in the 2018 Chatham County Community Assessment: Access to Comprehensive Health Services, Poverty and Healthy Eating & Active Living. The upcoming 2021 Chatham County Community Assessment will include a deeper dive into the data, including exploring inequities in health and social outcomes. The Spotlight on Health Disparities in Chatham County (Fall 2020) covers some of these inequities and can be found at www.chathamcountync.gov/healthreports.



Chatham Health Alliance in 2021

2021 By the Numbers

- 6 CHA At-large meetings
- 24 CHA subcommittee meetings
- 175 Individual Alliance members
- 75 Chatham member agencies and organizations

Alliance Transition

Due to the growth of Chatham Health Alliance membership and community programs since its formation, the Alliance began researching and evaluating various options for organizational structure to ensure sustainability. In the fall of 2021, using that information, the Alliance membership voted to transition the Alliance to a standalone organization in Chatham County with a nonprofit fiscal sponsor. The Alliance and the Chatham County Public Health Department will continue to work closely together to advance health and equity in Chatham County. The transition is anticipated to take place in the Spring of 2022.

Access to Comprehensive Health Services Subcommittee

- Began planning a pilot project for NCCARE360 in Chatham County with the Resilience Subcommittee.
- Created a real time calendar to track events, trainings, and other important news in Chatham County.
- Collaborated with the Chatham County Public Health Department, Chatham Organizing for Racial Equity, and many other Chatham partners on the EMBRACe project to promote equitable birth outcomes.

Equity Subcommittee

- Worked on a community engagement plan for the Community Assessment including the formation of a Community Action Team (CAT).
- Developed a demographic survey for the Chatham Health Alliance membership that will be sent out in early 2022.
- Began plans to make Alliance meetings more accessible with interpretation, translation, and closed captioning.
- Developed task forces to prioritize strategic plan goals.

Healthy Eating, Active Living (HEAL) Subcommittee:

- Partnered with the Chatham County Cooperative Extension and Pittsboro Farmers Market to plan for SNAP/EBT at the Farmer's Market with implementation of the project planned for 2022.
- Implemented the TrackTrails program at Southwest District Park – installation of TrackTrails is planned for Spring 2022.

Economic Stability and Resilience Subcommittee:

- Developed a Chatham youth advisory council, Youth Voices of Chatham, which has met multiple times and begun the strategic planning process.
- Developed a tracking and reporting system for workforce development trainings and job opportunities in Chatham County.
- Worked on the evaluation and growth of the Chatham Resource Hub.

New Initiative: Free Meals in Chatham County



In partnership with Chatham Drug Free, Cardinal Innovations/Vaya Health, the Interfaith Food Shuttle, and Mountaire, the Chatham Health Alliance and Community Resource Hubs have been providing free, hot meals across Chatham County. Resource Hubs are a mobile, colocation of local nonprofits, restaurants, and other organizations to provide needed resources and food to Chatham residents. Neighborhoods in Pittsboro and Siler City have had events with free meals, and more are planned for 2022. So far, more than 800 free, hot meals have been given away at Hub events across the County.



Chatham County Public Health Department

New Initiatives in 2021

Clinical & Community Health Services

Nutrition Services



CCPHD Registered Dietitians Laura Hearn, left, and Ann Clark present to a class of students at SAGE Academy in Siler City.

Long a staple of local public health, nutrition services exist in Chatham County and beyond to help community members achieve a healthy lifestyle supported by nutritious eating choices. The Chatham County Public Health Department's nutrition services are led by registered dietitians Laura Hearn and Ann Clark, who focus on diabetes prevention and management and nutrition counseling/classes, respectively. Nutrition work is best done in-person, which restricted much of CCPHD's nutrition operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Starting in the summer of 2021, Hearn and Clark began in earnest by focusing primarily on community partnerships, including work with Chatham County Schools, the Chatham County YMCA and Chatham Council on Aging, along with individual counseling and group classes. Like

most of CCPHD's primarily in-person programming, Nutrition Services took a necessary step back in the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, but as more people became vaccinated, those in-person gatherings that are so crucial to nutrition education became more possible. With a specific focus on under-served populations, the nutrition team went to work, aligning with community needs and the focus of public health in general.

Environmental Health

Well and Municipal Water Quality

PFAS – The Chatham County Public Health Department is partnering with NC State University on the GenX Exposure Study designed to assess PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances) exposures throughout the Cape Fear River Basin and to identify potential health effects associated with exposure. The first community meeting for the study occurred in Pittsboro on November 13, 2021. Data from the study will be shared with the community as it becomes available.

1,4 Dioxane – The Town of Pittsboro has responded to repeated releases of 1,4 Dioxane from the Greensboro Wastewater Treatment plant over the last 6 months. CCPHD continues to partner with the NC Department of Health & Human Services to update 1,4 Dioxane health information for the community.

Well Water Strategic Plan – The Environmental Health Division continues to address goals and priorities in its strategic plan. All tax bills mailed in August included information about the importance of routine well water testing. The Division is also developing partnerships with other organizations and agencies to inventory resources and funding to address the concerns of well owners.

Health Promotion & Policy

Farm to Early Child Care (F2ECE)

In 2021 the Child Care Health Consultation program expanded its evidence-based Farm to Early Care and Education program to include two child care centers and three family child care homes. The Farm to Early Child Care (F2ECE) program enhances the health and education of young children by developing systems and experiential learning that connect children and their families with local food and farms. The program promotes healthy eating for children in child care settings through targeted and comprehensive consultation, group trainings on gardening and cooking and resource sharing, along with connecting those facilities to local farms. Since 2019, six licensed child care facilities in Chatham county have participated in the program. Past participants continue to implement F2ECE best practices and have served as mentors to newly participating child care programs. On average, participating programs have increased their nutrition best practice assessment scores by 41% within the first eight months of participation. In 2021, 275 children benefited from the program through improved nutrition and gardening activities. The F2ECE program is facilitated by Chatham County's Child Care Health Consultant, Miranda Lanning, and is funded by the Chatham County Partnership for Children.

Emerging Issue

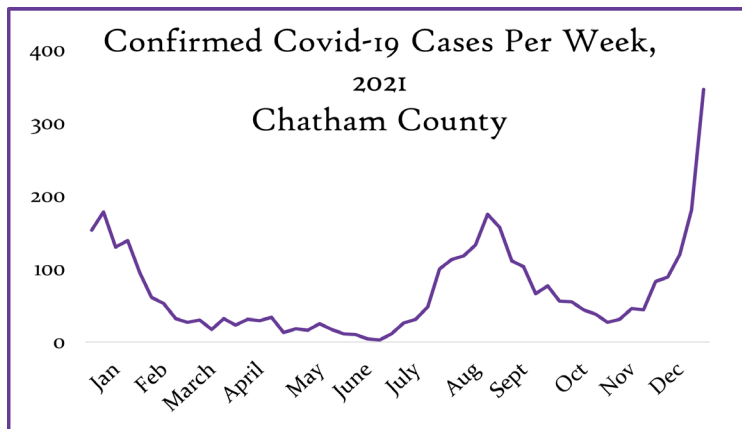
COVID-19 Vaccination



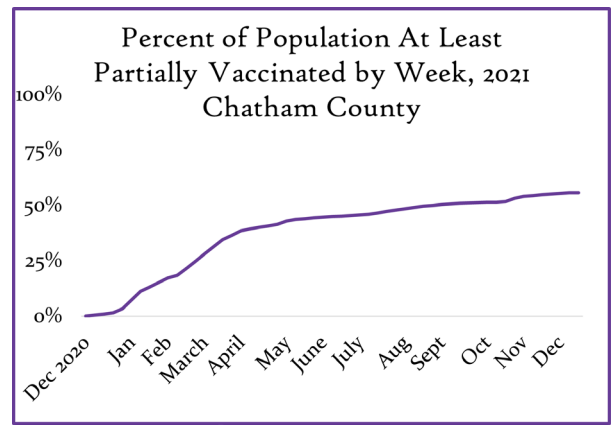
From left: CCPHD clinic staff pose ahead of the first mass vaccination clinic on January 18, 2021, in Pittsboro; Rev. Dr. Joshua T. Jones Jr., pastor of Roberts Chapel Missionary Baptist Church in Goldston, receives his first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine from CCPHD nurse Laura Parks at a mass vaccination clinic in Goldston on February 5, 2021; CCPHD nurse Jessy Alvarado-Ramos, left, and medical lab technician Cynthia Lambert prepare to administer a COVID-19 vaccine during a mass vaccination clinic on January 25, 2021, in Pittsboro.

On December 11th, 2020, the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) gave its first Emergency Use Authorization for a vaccine to protect against the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes COVID-19. Since then, two more vaccines have been authorized, and that first vaccine, from Pfizer and BioNTech, has been given full FDA approval. All have been recommended for use by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and have been proven to be safe and effective. During 2021, the vaccines were authorized to be used as booster shots.

Throughout 2021, the COVID-19 vaccine became more widely available at pharmacies, primary care providers and one-time events throughout the county. The CCPHD and other partners increased communications efforts throughout the year to improve vaccination rates, including press releases, social media campaigns, newspaper ads and direct information sharing through community outreach events, talks at community group meetings and media interviews. The COVID-19 vaccination effort continues into 2022, as the CCPHD and Chatham Health Alliance leverage partnerships with multiple community organizations and agencies like schools, nonprofits and medical providers so the community can be best protected against COVID-19.



Chatham County's COVID-19 case numbers, like the rest of North Carolina and the country, saw a sharp increase as 2020 turned into 2021. Cases peaked again in late summer 2021 with the spread of the Delta variant and once more as 2021 came to a close as the Omicron variant was discovered and started leading to infections. The rising trend continued into 2022.



The first COVID-19 vaccine was authorized in mid-December 2020, kickstarting the percentage of individuals who had received at least one dose. The rate rose steadily until mid-April 2021, when the upward trend leveled off. Work continued into 2022 to improve the vaccination rate in Chatham County.

Source: NC Department of Health and Human Services. Data for the final weeks of 2021 was incomplete as of the creation of this document.