

# Health of Chatham

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2008



Chatham County Public Health Department

[www.chathamnc.org/publichealth](http://www.chathamnc.org/publichealth)



# Health Priorities

## Purpose

This Health of Chatham 2008 report is used to update the community on the progress of the health priorities from the 2006 Community Health Assessment. This issue also includes an update on environmental health, social, and economic issues. The Health of Chatham report is published each year except in the year a Community Health Assessment is conducted. The last Community Health Assessment was completed in 2006.

## Health priorities

Defining the community's health priorities is what drives the planning of Chatham County public health programs and activities. This year's Health of Chatham report is an update of progress made since the Health of Chatham 2007 report.

The nine current health priorities (seen at right) were identified during the 2006 Community Health Assessment process. A group of agencies, organizations, and community members worked together to review and analyze health data, surveys, focus groups, community interviews, and community forums to establish the top priorities.

The priority list included 15 quality of life issues. From this list, nine health priorities emerged. The full 2006 Community Health Assessment can be viewed at [www.chathamnc.org/publichealth](http://www.chathamnc.org/publichealth).

The health department in collaboration with Healthy Chatham, a county-wide coalition of human service organizations and community members working together to improve the health and quality of life of Chatham County residents, has prioritized three areas with potential for the greatest impact given the resources available.. These priority areas are: **affordable health care, diabetes, and obesity.**

## Current Health Priorities

(In order of importance)

1. Alcohol and Other Drug Use
2. Lack of Affordable Health Insurance
3. Obesity
4. Water Quality
5. Unsafe Sex/Unintended Pregnancy
6. Family Violence
7. Affordable Health Care
8. Recreation
9. Diabetes

## Healthy People 2010 and Health Disparities

Healthy People is a set of national goals developed by the national government for health improvement and reduction of health threats. The two overarching goals of Healthy People 2010 are: 1) Increase quality and years of life and 2) Eliminate health disparities. Many factors affect a person's health such as access to healthcare, employment and education. (See page 8 for more details.) Healthy People 2010 defines health disparity as differences in health that occur by gender, race or ethnicity, education or income, disability, living in rural localities, or sexual orientation.

The state of North Carolina followed the federal initiative with Healthy Carolinians. Healthy Carolinians assesses different health issues, provides goals to strive for, and gets different agencies working on the issues. Healthy Carolinians states that the "failure to focus on health disparities and determinants of health places serious limitations on the effectiveness of preventative health care and health promotion programs." Unless public health does its part to improve the health of everyone, everyone's health will suffer.

For example, in Chatham County:

- The infant mortality rate is almost four times greater for (34.9 for every 1000) minority births compared to (9.3 for every 1000) white births. (2007 NC Infant Mortality Report)
- The death rate for diabetes is almost three times greater for minorities (53.1) compared to whites (18.8). (State Center for Health Statistics)

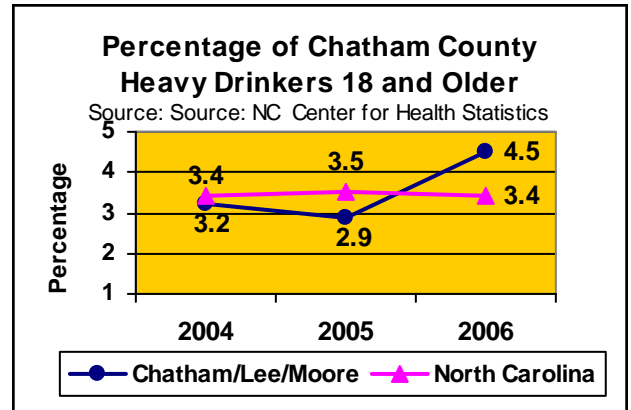
The Chatham County Public Health Department has been proactive in its work to eliminate health disparities by establishing a Dismantling Racism process and Change Team in 2001. The Institute of Medicine states that, "Racial and ethnic minorities tend to receive a lower quality of healthcare than non-minorities, even when access-related factors such as patient's insurance status and income are controlled." One finding of the study found that, "Bias, stereotyping, prejudice, and clinical uncertainty on the part of healthcare providers may contribute to racial and ethnic disparities in health care." The focus of the Dismantling Racism process is to create an antiracist organization which will lead to elimination of health disparities. The Chatham County Public Health Department works with the community to address the needs and issues the community faces. One example of directed efforts to address health issues in priority communities, is LIGHT Way (Living in God's Holy Temple) which works with African American churches to develop health programs for the congregation.



## Health of Chatham 2008

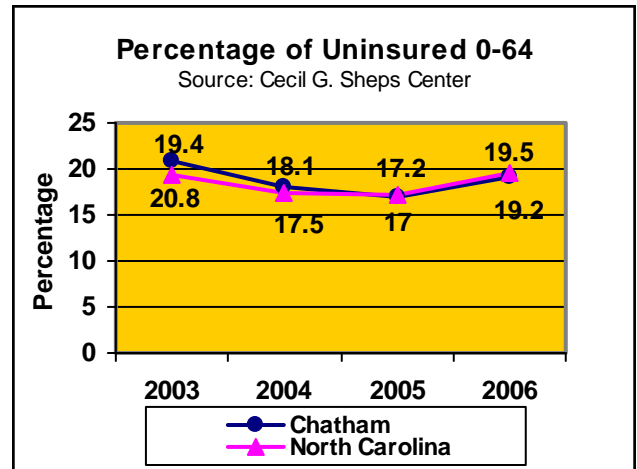
### 1. Alcohol and Other Drug Use

**Description:** In 2006, alcohol and drug use was the top health priority of those surveyed for the Community Health Assessment in Chatham County. About 50% of survey takers checked the “big problem” category for alcohol and drug use. Current resources in Chatham County are limited to prevention programs for youth and counseling and residential facilities for pregnant women. In 2006, 4.5% of adults in the Chatham/Lee/Moore region were heavy drinkers. The percentage of heavy drinkers, which is defined as men who have more than two drinks per day and women who consume more than one drink per day, continued to rise each year between 2004 and 2006. About 20% of adults in the Chatham/Lee/Moore region are current smokers. This percentage has risen slightly over 1% since 2004, but remains below the state average of 22.5%.



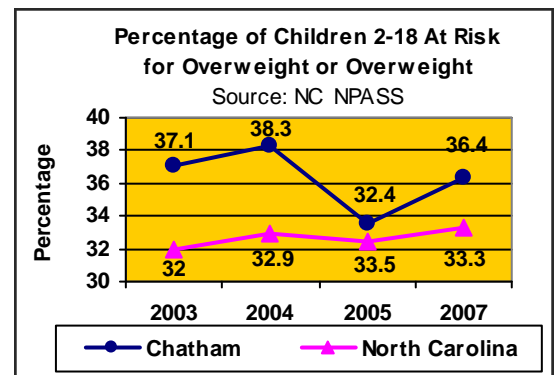
### 2. Lack of Affordable Health Insurance

**Description:** According to the National Coalition on Health Care, “The average annual increase in inflation has been 2.5 percent while health insurance premiums for small firms have escalated an average of 12 percent annually.” A growing number of employers can no longer afford to offer health insurance coverage due to rising costs. The percent of uninsured Chatham County and North Carolina residents rose to 19.2% in 2006 after declining for two straight years. In 2006, an estimated 10,000 Chatham County residents between the ages of 0-64 did not have health insurance.



### 3. Obesity

**Description:** Obesity is seen as a “big problem” by approximately 46% of people surveyed for the Community Health Assessment in 2006. Many programs exist in the county to keep adult and youth residents active. Fit Together continues programming around physical activity and nutrition. Two congregations involved in LIGHT (Living in God’s Holy Temple) Way, a gospel-based physical activity and nutrition program, adopted healthy food policies. Almost 100 pounds have been lost by LIGHT Way members throughout 2008. Active Chatham hosted its 4th Annual Reindeer Run in December 2008 to promote the importance of physical activity. Funds will be used to improve physical activity facilities in Chatham County.



\*2006 data was not comparable

**2008:** The Healthy Chatham Obesity Task Force- Team FIT (Families Interacting Together) worked with Silk Hope School during the 2007-2008 school year to promote physical activity and good nutrition. Team FIT painted an ACC mascots mural doing healthy activities such as playing baseball and eating healthy foods in the school cafeteria. The mural reinforces healthy eating and physical activity messages, and supports a healthy school environment.

**Chatham Objectives:** 1) Decrease the number of adults who are overweight or obese by 10%. 2) Decrease the number of children that are overweight or at risk for becoming overweight by 10%.

## Health of Chatham 2008

### 4. Water Quality

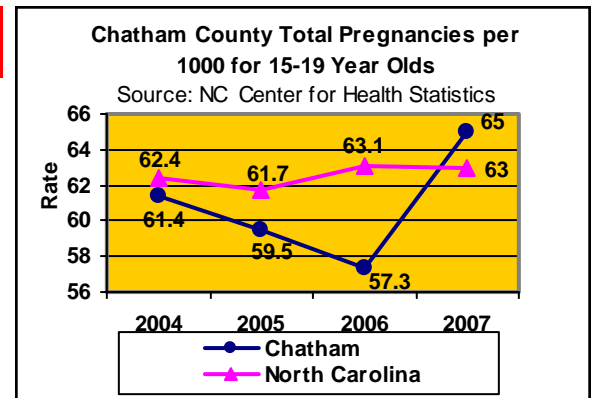


**Description:** Nearly one out of every three residents surveyed in 2006 felt that water quality was a “big problem”. Between the Chatham County, Siler City, and Pittsboro water departments in 2007, there were five contaminants in the drinking water that exceeded the maximum levels of allowance set by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The state is also concerned about the water quality of private drinking water wells. Mandatory water testing of all new wells went into effect July 1, 2008. Wells are now tested for nitrates, inorganics (minerals) and bacteria within 30 days of completion. In response to the new State requirements, the Chatham County Board of Health passed new rules for the construction, repair and abandonment of wells. Links to the new rules can be found on the Chatham County Environmental Health web site at <http://www.chathamnc.org/Index.aspx?page=613>. In January 2008, the Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Program received the Local Small Program Award of Excellence. The program helps control sedimentation pollution to North Carolina’s waters.

### 5. Unsafe Sex/Unintended Pregnancy



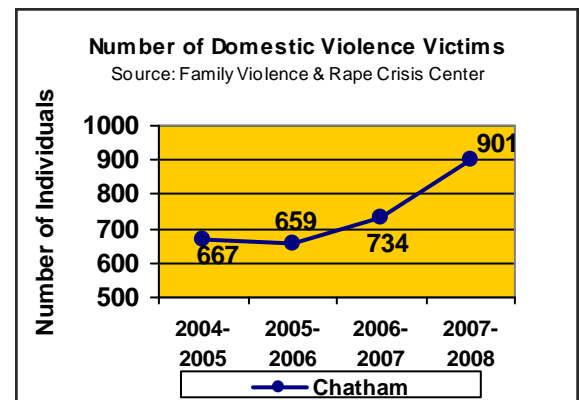
**Description:** In 2006, two of every five people in Chatham County surveyed ranked unsafe sex/unintended pregnancy a “big problem.” Teen pregnancy rates for 15-19 year olds rose by over 10%, while the North Carolina rate remained the same in 2007. This was the first increase in teen pregnancy rates in Chatham County since 2004. Chatham County rates for HIV, syphilis, and gonorrhea remain below the state average. The Chatham Coalition for Adolescent Health is a non-profit organization focused on supporting and advocating for adolescent health. The coalition provides support and oversight for the Adolescent Parenting Program and the TeenWorks Teen Center after school program. The TeenWorks Teen Center continues to provide after school care and enrichment activities in the western part of the county for 40 students in kindergarten through eighth grades. A group of community residents is working to open a Boys and Girls Club in the western part of Chatham County to increase the options and capacity for youth in the after school hours.



### 6. Family Violence



**Description:** Slightly over a third (35.7%) of 2006 Community Health Assessment survey respondents felt that family violence was a “big problem” in the community. During the 2007/2008 time period, Family Violence and Rape Crisis Services (FVRC) helped 901 domestic violence victims through counseling, advocacy, outreach, and interpreting. More than 100 members of enforcement, the justice system, health care, social services, churches, schools, businesses and community members work together to coordinate community response to domestic violence and sexual assault. Between 2007 and 2008, the Coalition for Family Peace trained over 650 community members on preventing domestic violence. Counselors and educators held educational sessions with all Chatham County public school students in 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grades. Age-appropriate information about recognizing and preventing child abuse, sexual assault, peer sexual harassment, dating violence and date and acquaintance rape was provided. Students are learning to prevent domestic violence from their peers through the Teens for Family Peace program.



## 7. Affordable Health Care

**Description:** In 2006, nearly half of those surveyed for the Community Health Assessment felt that affordable health care was a “big problem.” The North Carolina Institute of Medicine reports that health care costs have been rising steadily for the past several years due to factors such as an increases in health insurance premiums; rise in hospital costs; and an increase in use and price of prescription drugs.

**2008:** The Healthy Chatham Affordable Health Care Task Force surveyed all health care providers in the county about services provided, languages spoken, and discount programs for the uninsured and underinsured. A resource guide has been completed and will be distributed to service providers, non-profit organizations, and churches in Chatham County. Copies of the guide will also be available in local libraries and on the health department website.

**Chatham Objective:** Increase awareness of health care services for the uninsured.

## 8. Recreation

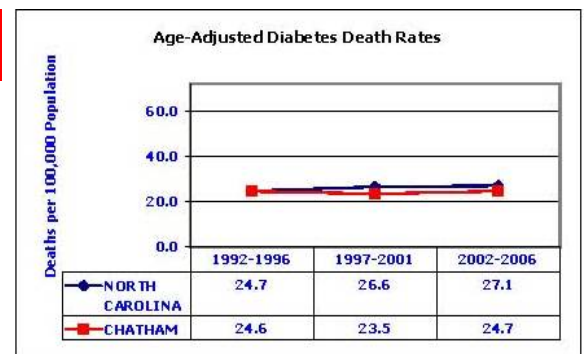
**Description:** Lack of recreational facilities and opportunities were cited by many as a problem in Chatham County during 2006. Participants in focus groups did not feel there were enough activities to keep adolescents occupied. There was also a desire from Chatham County residents for more parks and recreational spaces. Since last year’s Health of Chatham report, many Chatham County facilities have been updated and improved. **County Parks-** Chatham County received a \$500,000 Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) grant for Big Woods Park in northeast Chatham. Phase One at Big Woods Park will include sports fields, concession center with restrooms, walking trail, picnic shelter, and a playground. Camp Maranatha Springs is now in use. Over the past year, it hosted canoe classes and a fall festival with a movie in the park. Safety lighting was installed at Southwest Park in Bear Creek. **Local Parks-** Kiwanis Park in Pittsboro had new musical playground equipment installed and shade trees planted. A new park at Powell Place in Pittsboro is currently under construction. The park will include a tot playground, sports fields, and walking trails. A park at 3M is in the discussion phase. It would be located near the 3M plant and include an amphitheater and walking trails. Goldston Municipal Park will build a 0-5 playground in early 2009 funded by a health department grant from Eat Smart, Move More North Carolina. Boling Lane Park in Siler City will have new playground equipment installed. The American Tobacco Trail (ATT) is undergoing resurfacing on the Chatham County portion.

## 9. Diabetes

**Description:** According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), diabetes currently affects nearly 8% of all Americans. Nearly one quarter of people with diabetes go undiagnosed. Type II diabetes is on the increase nationally and in Chatham County. Once diagnosed with type II diabetes, management is important to reduce complications, including heart disease, nerve and kidney damage.

**2008:** The Healthy Chatham Diabetes Task Force is focusing on prevention efforts and increasing awareness of diabetes. A health department sponsored monthly diabetes support group in Siler City will continue to meet. There is also an ongoing monthly support group based in the Eastern Chatham Senior Center in Pittsboro. A second annual Diabetes Walk and Health Fair was held in November 2008. The health department has been chosen to be one of eight new counties to offer North Carolina American Diabetes Association self-management classes. The Chatham Hospital diabetes program continues to offer ADA certified self-management classes at its new office in Siler Business Park.

**Chatham Objective:** Reduce the number of Chatham County adults diagnosed with type II diabetes through awareness efforts and emotional and medical support.

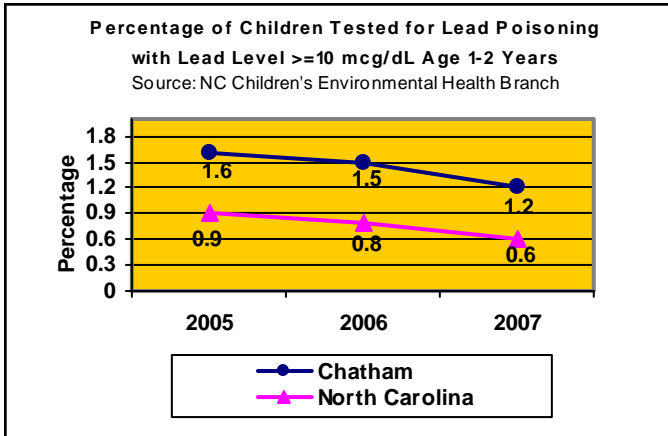


Source: NC Center for State Statistics

## Environmental Health Update

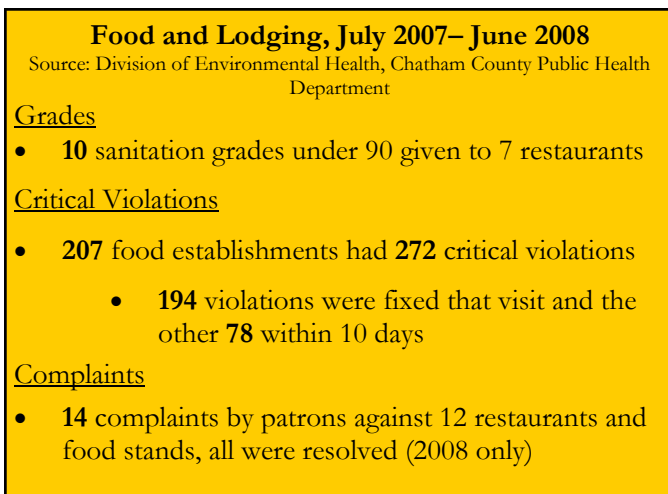
Health involves more than personal risk factors and health behaviors. The environment also contributes to the overall health of an individual. Below is information on three Chatham County environmental health related areas.

### Lead Poisoning



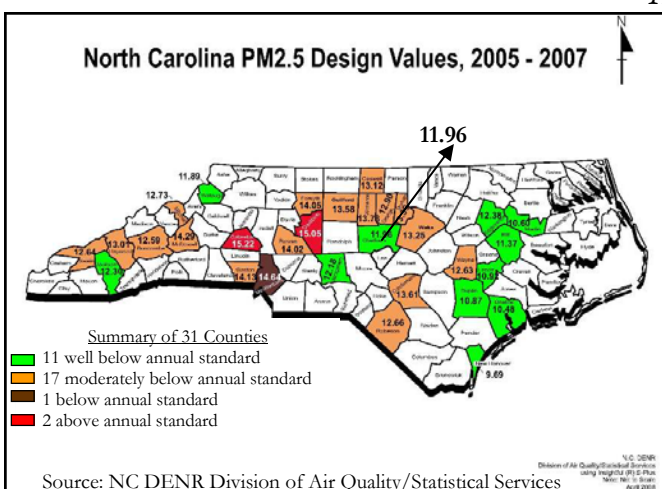
Over one percent of children tested for lead poisoning in each of the past three years in Chatham County had levels at or above 10 micrograms per deciliter. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), lead at these levels can cause health problems in children such as learning disabilities and behavioral problems, and even death. The percentage of Chatham County children testing positive for lead has been dropping each of the past three years. Despite this, the percentage of Chatham County children testing positive is still twice as high as the percentage for North Carolina children. One issue related to lead testing is that not all 1-2 year old children are tested. On average for the past three years, approximately 37% of Chatham County children in that age group were checked. The percentage tested is starting to rise.

### Food Safety



From 2007-2008, Chatham County food safety statistics reported only 7 food service establishments receiving a sanitation grade of 90 or lower. Of the 207 establishments inspected, there were 272 critical violations. Critical violations are risk factors that can contribute to food borne illness. According to the new risk based inspection system, implemented in July 2008, all critical violations must be corrected onsite or within 10 days. Using the new risk based inspection system; Environmental Health Specialists prioritize their time, focusing on higher risk food service establishments. In addition to inspections, staff perform complaint investigations. In 2007-2008, 14 foodservice complaints were reported and resolved. All complaints are investigated by EHS within 48 hours of receipt of a report.

### Air Quality

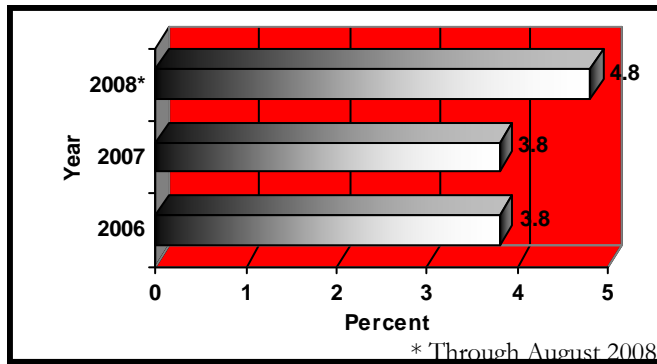


Chatham County was within safe level of ozone on all of the 213 days it was measured in 2007 and all of the 214 days measured in 2006. In fact, the Chatham County 2005-2007 average .0074 parts per million (ppm) fell below the state average of .0076 (ppm). Air pollution is a term for several different types of substances in the air. Particulate matter (PM) and ozone are measured at local monitoring stations in Chatham County. PM is a mix of tiny solids and liquid drops in the air. Particles 2.5 micrometers and smaller can be inhaled deeply into the lungs. The map shows that the 2005-2007 PM average in Chatham County was well below North Carolina's annual standard. Ozone air pollution causes the most concern in North Carolina. Ground level ozone can irritate the lungs.

## Chatham County Snapshot

### Chatham County Unemployment Rate Yearly Average 2006-2008

Source: Employment Security Commission of North Carolina



### 2008 Chatham County Jobs Lost

Source: Employment Security Commission of North Carolina

| Month        | Company                    | Number      |
|--------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| January      | CellzDirect                | 40          |
| March        | Trusty Building Components | 100         |
| May          | Pilgrim's Pride            | 836         |
| October      | Performance Fibers         | 132         |
| <b>Total</b> |                            | <b>1108</b> |

## Major Concerns and Social Determinants of Health

Social determinants of health are factors that affects a person's health outcome. The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified social determinants such as: income and social status, education, physical environment, social support networks, genetics, access and use of health care, and gender. The stronger and better the above factors are, (with the exception of gender) the individual is usually healthier.

WHO states that, "The context of people's lives determine their health." A person's state of health isn't entirely decided by their behaviors but also by the world around them. Low income status can have a significant affect on health.

Chatham County has seen over 1100 jobs eliminated and the unemployment rate rise 1% throughout 2008. The state of the economy and health care are major concerns nationwide and among Chatham residents.

Being laid off is one of the most stressful events that can happen in a person's lifetime. Research has shown that getting fired can lead to clinical depression, violence, alcohol abuse, as well as strokes and heart attacks. Layoffs also create a sense of hopelessness.

Even the fear of losing one's job can affect health negatively. Mental health worsens and visits to the doctor increase.

Another effect of being laid off is the loss of employer based health coverage. Loss of health insurance often means the loss of access to healthcare.

This in turn shapes how a person responds when they are ill.

A report from the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and Uninsured found that, "Not having health insurance makes a difference in people's access to needed medical care and their financial security."

The uninsured are:

- Less likely to get preventive care such as screenings and check-ups,
- Less likely to follow through with recommended treatment such as drug prescriptions
- More likely to be hospitalized for illness that could have been prevented,
- More likely to put off necessary health care due to inability to pay, and are
- More likely to die in the hospital than those who do have health insurance.

That report also states that, "Families without health insurance struggle to meet basic needs. Medical bills for even minor problems can quickly lead to medical debt."

Employer sponsored health insurance is often a medical lifeline for families. Losing coverage can have devastating health and financial effects, as shown above.

The Chatham County Economic Development Corporation has designed a long term plan to attract jobs and economic growth to the area.

Communities healthy in all areas often mean healthy individuals.

## Chatham County Snapshot

### Demographics

Source: North Carolina Department of Commerce

| <u>Chatham County</u>  | <u>County Rank</u> |
|--|--------------------|
| <b>2005 Median Household Income</b><br>\$48, 946                                     | 5                  |
| <b>2005 Per Capita Personal Income</b><br>\$38, 426                                  | 3                  |
| <b>2005 Percent in Poverty</b><br>11.3%  | 91                 |
| <b>2007 Population Estimate</b><br>59,168<br>(Office of State Budget and Management) |                    |

### Chatham County Leading Causes of Death 2002-2006

Source: North Carolina Center for Health Statistics

1. Heart Disease
2. Cancer
3. Cerebrovascular Disease
4. Unintentional Motor Vehicle Injuries
5. Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease
6. Diabetes Mellitus
7. All Other Unintentional Injuries
8. Alzheimer's Disease
9. Pneumonia and Influenza
10. Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome, and Nephrosis

### Healthy Chatham "Collaborating for Healthier Communities"

#### What is Healthy Chatham?

Healthy Chatham is a county-wide coalition of the community, agencies, and organizations working together to improve health and quality of life for Chatham.

#### What does Healthy Chatham do?

Healthy Chatham is currently focusing on three priority areas of *obesity, diabetes, and affordable health care*. This will be done by carrying out programs and implementing long-term solutions and policies.

#### How can I get involved?

You can join one of the Healthy Chatham task forces to address the priorities of affordable health care, diabetes, or obesity. You can also serve on the steering committee. Contact Marissa Jelks at 919-545-8517 or [marissa.jelks@chathamnc.org](mailto:marissa.jelks@chathamnc.org) to learn more.

### Major Healthy Chatham Accomplishments

- Facilitated Siler City and Pittsboro mayors signing a proclamation declaring November National Diabetes Month.
- Celebrated National Nutrition Month at Silk Hope School by talking to students about physical activity and nutrition during their lunch hour.
- Surveyed local health care providers to identify health resources in Chatham County.
- Drafted health care guide that will have information on healthcare for the uninsured and underinsured.
- Completed a mural of local ACC mascots doing health activities such as playing baseball and eating healthy foods at Silk Hope School.
- Supported the NACo Prescription Drug Discount Card Program.
- Attended outreach events across Chatham County to spread the word on healthy lifestyles and Healthy Chatham.

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