

# State of the County Health Report 2010



Issued by  
Cleveland County Health Department

*The mission of the Cleveland County Health Department is to assure, enhance, and protect the health of Cleveland county citizens through education and prevention.*

## **2010—A Year of Change and Challenges**

2010 proved to be a year of challenges and changes at the Cleveland County Health Department. Denese Stallings, the veteran Health Director, retired officially in April of 2010. With the unanimous support of the Board of Health, Dorothea Wyant, the Director of Nursing, was named to succeed her and was formally sworn in in May, 2010, providing a smooth and effective transition of administration for the Health Department staff and the citizens of Cleveland County. As Health Director, Ms. Wyant brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to Cleveland County and has moved to maintain the high quality of services that the Health Department is known for.

Ms. Wyant named Amanda Bouttamy, formerly the Nurse Supervisor of the Nurse Family Partnership Program, as Director of Nursing and Anne Short, formerly the Executive Director of the Alliance for Health, as the Director of Community Health Services. With the addition of Kelly Morris as the new Nurse Supervisor for the Nurse-Family Partnership, the management team moved ahead with programs and services to benefit the health of residents of the county. Among the accomplishments for the year are:

- Implementation of an electronics recycling program with trailers for used electronics posted at all of the county recycling stations;
- Implementation of a diabetes screening program targeting the minority communities of Cleveland County through grant funding from the Office of Minority Health;
- Participation in the Smoke Free NC program through CCHD's Environmental Health Unit to support implementation of NC's Smoke Free Restaurant legislation;
- Implementation of the Enhancing Local Asthma Efforts grant to launch an anti-idling campaign in the county to reduce pollution from vehicle use;
- Successful recertification of the Alliance for Health as the county's recognized Healthy Carolinians partnership;
- Technical assistance and training provided to the Cleveland County Schools as the implementation of House Bill 88, the Healthy Youth Act, moved forward with a target date for implementation in fall, 2010; and
- A community awareness campaign to highlight the abuse and misuse of prescription and over-the-counter medications.

### Community Health Priorities

**Six health concerns were identified in the 2007 Community Health Assessment as priorities for attention. Five issues were continuing concerns: cardiovascular disease, asthma, teen pregnancy, overweight/obesity and substance abuse prevention. The sixth issue, diabetes, was identified as a new concern in 2007.**

#### Cardiovascular Disease

Work on cardiovascular disease, diabetes and overweight/obesity resulted in blending goals and objectives of several programs. Three new congregations joined 36 Search Your Heart churches to implement educational modules focusing on heart disease, stroke, diabetes, physical activity and nutrition and to sponsor specific activities to support these modules such as blood pressure screens for their members and provision of healthy food choices at church-sponsored events. In addition, these churches participated in two national events, sponsoring Go Red Sundays during February and Power to End Stroke events during May 2010. A total of 83 events or activities were sponsored in the Search Your Heart congregations touching 7,361 individuals in the county resulting in 26 referrals for additional services.

Trend data from the State Center for Health Statistics reveals the following changes:

Cause of Death Cleveland County	White Male Rate	White Female Rate	Minority Male Rate	Minority Female Rate	Overall Rate
Diseases of the Heart 2003-07	317.9	195.6	330.2	216.6	251.6
- Acute Myocardial Infarction	102.7	60.3	85.2	62.8	77.7
- Other Ischemic Heart Disease	150.7	77.9	136.0	78.7	108.0
- Cerebrovascular Disease	47.9	55.3	82.7	63.4	57.0
Diseases of the Heart 2004-08	302.4	187.8	290.8	212.8	240.2
- Acute Myocardial Infarction	93.8	55.6	80.4	58.6	71.8
- Other Ischemic Heart Disease	133.3	71.7	107.0	72.3	97.3
- Cerebrovascular Disease	57.2	57.7	91.9	70.5	62.6
Diseases of the Heart 2005-09	284.4	164.0	289.9	202.8	219.7
- Acute Myocardial Infarction	82.9	47.9	70.7	48.0	62.5
- Other Ischemic Heart Disease	120.9	60.3	116.4	66.4	86.3
- Cerebrovascular Disease	48.7	48.1	81.0	74.9	54.9

*Rates per 100,000 population*

Work continues to further reduce the death rates from cardiovascular disease through emphasis on screening for hypertension and hyperlipidemia.



## Diabetes

Efforts continue to address the increase in residents identified with diabetes in Cleveland County. Diabetes is the 8th leading cause of death in the county. A review of the race and sex-specific age-adjusted death rates per 100,000 individuals for diabetes in the county compared to NC overall reveal the following:

Category	1999-2003	2000-2004	2001-2005	2002-2006	2003-2007	2004-2008	2005-2009
CC White Male	29.0	31.7	29.8	28.7	32.7	26.6	21.9
NC White Male	24.4	24.9	25.3	25.2	25.0	24.1	22.6
CC Minority Male	66.4	72.8	71.8	58.5	75.0	84.0	80.2
NC Minority Male	53.3	54.6	55.3	54.4	53.8	51.3	53.3
CC White Female	24.5	25.5	24.6	21.1	20.7	22.1	18.2
NC White Female	19.4	19.0	19.0	18.3	17.3	16.2	15.1
CC Minority Female	53.5	53.8	55.5	62.0	52.1	44.2	37.9
NC Minority Female	51.8	51.3	51.9	50.7	49.4	46.9	45.5

Source: NC Center for Health Statistics

Death rates for minorities in Cleveland County have dropped in the last five-year period for reporting data but continue to be significantly higher for minority males and white females than figures reported for the state as a whole.

The award of a Closing the Gap II grant titled locally “Action for Diabetes” meant that a focused effort to penetrate minority communities with screening and education services got underway in the county in June 2010. Two staff members, a registered dietitian/diabetes educator and a nurse, support the implementation of this grant in the county. They offer regular educational programs to groups in churches and communities and have targeted community events to offer screening services for blood glucose, hypertension and hyperlipidemia. To date, they have screened 102 individuals at 4 events across the county.

The Diabetes Clinic located in the Cleveland County Health Department continues to serve individuals diagnosed with diabetes and averages seeing 24 clinic visits per week. The majority of the patients seen in this clinic have no payee source. In fiscal year 2009-2010, the clinic serve 54 black females, 20 black males, 81 white females, 41 white males, 6 females presenting as “other” and 2 males as “other” for a total of 204 individuals. 90% of these patients were classified as indigent. Grant proposals have been submitted to the Office of Rural and Community Health and to the Kate B. Reynolds Health Care Trust for funding to double the capacity of the clinic to serve an additional 225 patients annually. As of November 2010, clinic staff members were scheduling appointments for February 2011.

Additional emphasis on the diabetes educational module included in the Search Your Heart curriculum has been offered to participating churches and to members of the Minority Health Council to address this chronic health issue.

Trends in treating child and adolescent diabetes was also the topic for the eighth annual “Paul Sarazen Forum on Child Health Issues”. Dr. Mark Parker, a pediatric endocrinologist, presented current information to over 100 health care professionals in Cleveland County in October 2010.

## **Overweight/Obesity**

The Eat Smart Move More Coalition of Cleveland County continued to serve as the primary channel for developing, implementing and evaluating programs to reduce overweight and obesity in Cleveland County. The Coalition continued its affiliation with the ACHIEVE initiative funded by the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors and the YMCA of the USA and received an additional \$5,000 in funding to support its efforts to bring environmental and policy changes addressing physical activity and nutrition to Cleveland County.

As a recipient of a 2009 Eat Smart Move More North Carolina community grant, health educators from the Cleveland County Health Department supported a student walking club at West Elementary School in Kings Mountain and initiated a walking program for faculty, staff and parents at that site. Additionally, three walking routes (one-mile, two-miles, and three-miles in length) were identified and marked for residents in the City of Kings Mountain and were publicized through a brochure available at multiple sites in the downtown area. The routes were chosen for walkability and safety; all the routes originate at Patriots Park in the downtown area and are marked with Eat Smart Move More/Active Healthy Historic Kings Mountain signs.

Cleveland County Health Department also received funding through the 2010 ESMM community grant program to implement walking clubs for students and staff members at eight Communities in Schools program sites across the county. Health educators will also work to implement physical activity and nutrition education for pregnant and parenting teens enrolled in the CIS Teen Parent program. As a part of this grant initiative, approximately 120 students completed a survey on physical activity and nutrition habits in October 2010 to gather baseline data to measure the effectiveness of the community grant program; eighty students were selected at random to wear accelerometers for one week to measure physical activity levels as part of this baseline data collection. Grant funds of \$13,000 will support the implementation of the walking activities as well as educational programming on nutrition for students, staff and parents.

The fifth annual Step One Challenge was conducted in late April through early June with 1207 individuals registering initially as participants. A total of 150 teams representing 810 individuals reported on their results. A total of 270,307,951 steps were walked in the contest for an average of 340,868 steps per participant.

The first place team was the Lights Out team from the City of Shelby captained by Joshua Bowen. With four members, they walked an average of 1,653,066 steps per person.

The second place team was the Lilly Nannies, also from the City of Shelby, captained by Karen Wilkins. With six members, they walked an average of 1,326,177 steps per person. This team won third place in 2009.

The third place team was the Gold Team representing the Cleveland County Health Department. This team of four individuals was captained by Elsa Nieto and walked an average of 1,295,170 steps per person.

Finally, a long-awaited goal was achieved this year with the approval of an application to implement the Girls on the Run program for Cleveland County. The Cleveland County Family YMCA led the initiative to obtain this character-building program for elementary and middle school girls and will serve as the sponsor for the local council. The Cleveland County Health Department, the Alliance for Health and the Eat Smart Move More Coalition collaborated to bring this outstanding program to the county.



**Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention**

The Board of Health for Cleveland County, alarmed by the teen pregnancy rate and especially by the rate for second pregnancies among 15 to 19 year olds, authorized the formation of the Cleveland County Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Task Force in April 2009 and charged the Task Force with developing recommendations to address teen pregnancy in the county. Members for the Task Force were recruited from across the county and represented a diverse group of agencies, programs and community volunteers. The Task Force held its first meeting in May 2009 and completed its work in June 2010.

Task Force members completed a variety of exercises and activities designed to inform them about current data regarding teen pregnancies on a national, state and local level, evidence-based programs which have produced positive results in teen pregnancy prevention, and surveys to identify community perceptions about teen pregnancies and potential recommendations for programming. A special benefit for the Task Force was data collected from the 2009 Minority Health Conference which focused on teen pregnancy prevention and produced specific recommendations for the minority communities in the county.

Data from the North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics revealed the following information:

Rates per 1000 Ages 15-19	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
NC Total Pregnancies	61.7	63.1	63.0	58.6	56.0
NC White Pregnancies	50.9	52.9	52.3	47.8	45.4
NC Minority Pregnancies	82.3	82.1	82.5	77.7	74.3
CC Total Pregnancies	65.7	63.8	71.8	64.6	63.8
CC White Pregnancies	52.3	51.3	59.0	51.0	52.8
CC Minority Pregnancies	102.8	96.9	104.6	100.7	90.6

After compiling the results of surveys administered to health professionals at the Paul Sarazen Child Health Forum, to members of the minority communities at the Minority Health Conference, to teens in specific focus groups and to community members at large recruited by Task Force participants, the following recommendations were developed for consideration by the Cleveland County Board of Health. While the five program areas are not presented in priority order, the recommendations in each program area are prioritized based on results from the various survey groups. Task Force members believe that a comprehensive, community focus involving recommendations from each program area is required to effectively address the issue of teen pregnancy in Cleveland County and recommend that careful consideration be given to developing such a multi-level approach.

The recommendations are presented on the following page.

**Task Force Priority Recommendations**

Program Area	Recommendations
Community-Based Programs	1 <sup>st</sup> - Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs in after-school programs on school sites 2 <sup>nd</sup> - Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs at faith-based organizations 3 <sup>rd</sup> - Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs at youth development and community organizations
School-Based Programs	1 <sup>st</sup> - 6-8 Comprehensive Sex Education Program with classroom teach and health partner 2 <sup>nd</sup> - 9-12 Comprehensive Sex Education program with full-time school-based health educator 3 <sup>rd</sup> - K-12 Comprehensive Sex Education Program with classroom teacher
Adolescent Reproductive Health Services	1 <sup>st</sup> - School-based adolescent reproductive health services, i.e., contraceptives 2 <sup>nd</sup> - After-hours Health Department Adolescent Reproductive Health Clinic 3 <sup>rd</sup> - Satellite Adolescent Reproductive Health Clinic provided by CCHD
Parent Programs	1 <sup>st</sup> - Partner with worksites to provide parenting classes 2 <sup>nd</sup> - Partner with faith-based organizations to provide sex education training for parents 3 <sup>rd</sup> - Mentoring programs
Awareness/Marketing Campaigns	1 <sup>st</sup> - Internet-based Teen Pregnancy Prevention campaign 2 <sup>nd</sup> - Television-based Teen Pregnancy Prevention campaign 3 <sup>rd</sup> - Develop a faith-based Teen Pregnancy Prevention campaign

The Alliance for Health Board of Directors has authorized the establishment of a coalition to address teen pregnancy issues in Cleveland County with the first meeting set for January 2011. This coalition will be composed of community volunteers, health professionals, parents and teens in order to implement and evaluate the strategies recommended above. One strategy under parent programs is already in place—the implementation of a faith-based reproductive health and safety curriculum for use on faith communities. At the 2009 Minority Health Conference, 28 individuals representing 13 minority faith communities were trained in the use of the selected curriculum with an additional training scheduled for January 2011.

A grant has been submitted to the Women and Children’s Health Section of the Division of Public Health under the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Initiative to re-establish the Wise Guys program for athletes in the four high schools as a deterrent for teen pregnancy.

Health educators from the Cleveland County Health Department provided technical assistance to administrators from Cleveland County Schools in selecting comprehensive reproductive health and safety programs to deliver in the 7th, 8th and 9th grades for students in the county. “Draw the Line, Respect the Line” was selected for the 7th and 8th grade program while “Making Proud Choices” was selected for 9th grade classes. Health educators trained the middle and high school health and physical education teachers in the delivery of this curriculum and teach the class session on sexually transmitted infections and FDA-approved contraceptives as well. This brings the school system into compliance with House Bill 88, the Healthy Youth Act.

### ***Substance Abuse Prevention***

Substance abuse prevention efforts in 2010 focused on continuing a community education campaign about alcopops (flavored malt beverages), the misuse and abuse of prescription and over-the-counter medications, energy drinks containing alcohol and the emerging use of synthetic marijuana.

Coalition members endorsed and carried out "Project Sticker Shot" in May 2010 to educate those persons 21 years of age or older who might illegally purchase alcohol and provide it to minors. Stickers displaying a warning message about the penalties for furnishing alcohol to minors were placed on all multi-packs of beer, wine coolers, and other alcohol products appealing to underage drinkers at participating retail sites across the county. Posters were also distributed to retail sites for permanent placement in their facilities. The project was a partnership between youth, licensees, community members, prevention professionals and law enforcement.

A task force organized by Community Care of North Carolina spent a year studying abuse and misuse of prescription drugs in the county and in September 2010 provided an in-service training opportunity for health care professionals on this issue. The Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition expanded this effort to include over-the counter medications, especially cough syrups containing DXM. The coalition has developed posters, rack cards and fact sheets as well as a presentation for community education on this emerging trend.

Finally, the coalition has presented information to the community on synthetic marijuana, most commonly marketed as "K2" or "Spice". This product is easily available in convenience stores and other retail outlets in the county and produces effects much like those of marijuana: rapidly increased heart rates, loss of consciousness, paranoia and even psychotic episodes. From January-October 2010 the Carolinas Poison Center reported 88 calls concerning this product, up from only 2 calls in 2009. In late November the Drug Enforcement Administration acted on this product by classifying five chemicals commonly found in synthetic marijuana as illegal substances in the same classification as cocaine and heroin.

CODAP (Community Organization for Drug Abuse Prevention) services provided through the health education unit of the Health Department provided SOBIR assessments to students in Cleveland County Schools. SOBIR (Student Options Begin with Intervention and Recovery) assessments involve a four-session program of services involving trained educators, students and parents. This program was first developed as a way to reduce out-of-school suspensions for violation of school substance abuse policies; the suspension can be reduced from ten to five days if the student successfully completes the program. Staff members assigned to CODAP services also teach evidence-based programs in the 8th grade as part of substance abuse prevention education. CODAP services are supported in part by grant funds from United Way of Cleveland County, Inc.

Future plans in the substance abuse area include applying for grant funding through the Safe and Drug-Free Communities Initiative to expand and support ongoing activities.

## ***Asthma***

Community education and asthma awareness in Cleveland County was supported once again by an “Enhancing Local Asthma Efforts” initiative grant funded by the North Carolina Asthma Program. This grant supported the development of materials for an anti-idling campaign in Cleveland County to reduce pollution from motor vehicles. School nurses distributed anti-idling signs, new sets of air quality flags, and brochures about local asthma services and anti-idling measures in August 2010 to 29 schools in Cleveland County. Signs, flags and brochures were also distributed to child care facilities whose staff members completed training in the North Carolina Asthma Curriculum for Child Care Providers. Eighteen children participated in the No-Wheeze Asthma Day Camp held at the Dover Foundation YMCA in July 2010.

## ***School Health Services***

8,243 students of the 15,968 enrolled in Cleveland County Schools received services from the school health section of the Cleveland County Health Department in the 2009-10 school year. They made 34,740 visits to staff members during this time period with 2,351 students referred for additional care. A total of 3,690 students with chronic health conditions were served through school health services utilizing care from 18 school nurses, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants. The school health unit also employs one nurse supervisor and a clerical assistant to track the information from the 29 school sites.

## ***Communicable Disease Program***

The Cleveland County Health Department’s Communicable Disease Program strives to control communicable disease outbreaks through contact investigation, control measures and education. The Communicable Disease Program is staff by a Program Coordinator, a public health nurse II and a nursing supervisor, all of whom have completed the communicable disease training provided by the North Carolina Division of Public Health. The sexually transmitted disease program is staffed by 2 STD clinicians who have received expanded role training and a physician extender with enhanced knowledge. Chlamydia and gonorrhea continue to be the most reported diseases under this program.

This program is also responsible for immunizations. According to the Immunization Assessment at the end of October 2010, the compliance rate in Cleveland County was 76.8%. This indicates that while progress in delivering child immunizations according to the recommended schedule is being made, there is much more work to do. This unit also works with community partners to provide influenza vaccine to county residents. From January 2010 through October of the same year, 4,536 individuals had received influenza vaccine.

## ***Alliance for Health***

The Alliance for Health in Cleveland County, Inc. received its third recertification as a Healthy Carolinians partnership from the Governor’s Task Force on Healthy Carolinians in September 2010. The certification process includes submission of a lengthy application to the Office of Healthy Carolinians, a staff and peer review process, and a meeting with the regional consultant to verify the results of the review. Certification is often required to apply for both state and private foundation funding to support Alliance activities. The current Chair of the Board of Directors for the Alliance is Dotty Leatherwood representing the Cleveland County HealthCare System.

### Leading Causes of Death in Cleveland County

#### 2004-2008

#### 2005-2009

Rank	Cause of Death	# of Deaths	Death Rate	Rank	Cause of Death	# of Death	Death Rate
1	Diseases of the heart	1,292	265.7	1	Diseases of the heart	1,277	262.0
2	Cancer – all sites	1,076	221.3	2	Cancer – all sites	1,093	224.2
3	Cerebrovascular disease	331	68.1	3	Cerebrovascular disease	314	64.4
4	Chronic lower respiratory disease	262	53.9	4	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	289	59.3
5	Other unintentional injuries	200	41.1	5	Other unintentional injuries	204	41.8
6	Alzheimer's disease	199	40.9	6	Alzheimer's disease	199	40.8
7	Diabetes mellitus	164	32.1	7	Pneumonia & influenza	144	29.5
8	Pneumonia & influenza	126	25.9	8	Diabetes mellitus	143	29.3
9	Motor vehicle injuries	99	20.4	9	Motor vehicle injuries	103	21.1
10	Nephritis, nephritic syndrome, & nephrosis	93	19.1	10	Septicemia	102	20.9
	<b>TOTAL ALL DEATHS</b>	<b>5,185</b>	<b>1066.3</b>		<b>TOTAL ALL DEATHS</b>	<b>5,259</b>	<b>1078.8</b>

A review of the leading causes of death by ranking, number of deaths and unadjusted death rates per 100,000 population provided by the North Carolina Center for Health Statistics reveals a decrease in the rates for diseases of the heart, cerebrovascular disease, pneumonia and influenza and diabetes. Increases in cancer (all sites), chronic lower respiratory disease, pneumonia & influenza and other unintentional injuries reflect a concern for the aging population of the county and will require a re-positioning of health initiatives to counteract this increase.

#### ***Emerging Issues and New Initiatives***

Several factors in the county are likely to have a major impact on the health status of county residents in the next twelve months. According to the 2009 American Community Survey published by the US Census Bureau, there are 99,274 residents of the county. 46.9% of county residents are male and 53.1% are female. 26.3% of the county residents are 19 years old or under; 58.5% are 20 to 65 years of age and 15.2% are 65 years of age or older. 78.1% of the residents are Caucasian, 21.9% are African-American, 0.5% are American Indian, and 0.2% are Asian. 2.4% of the population identify themselves as Hispanic-Latino.

There are 38,804 households in the county with 13.7% of those households headed by a female householder with no husband present. 8.5% of households are headed by an individual 65 years of age and over and 24.2% of households are headed by a householder living alone.

Unemployment continues to be an economic issue in Cleveland County. The North Carolina Employment Security Commission released the following data for 2010:

January 2010	15.5%
April 2010	13.2%
July 2010	12.8%
September 2010	11.6%
October 2010	11.3%

While county leaders work diligently to recruit business and industry to the county, the process has been slow. Many of those employed are in lower paying jobs without benefits, especially health insurance. Between 10% and 13.9% of children in the county continue to have no health insurance according to the 2009 NC Children’s Index.

American Community Survey data indicates that 83% of people 25 years and over had at least graduated from high school and 17% held a bachelor’s degree or higher. 17% were dropouts—they were not enrolled in school and had not graduated from high school.

According to the 2009 American Community Survey, the median household income for the county was \$37,707. 75% of households in the county received earnings and 18% received retirement income other than Social Security. 35% of households received Social Security with an average annual income of \$15,837.00. 2009 data reveals that 16% of people in the county were in poverty. 24% of related children under 18 were below the poverty level compared with 10% of individuals 65 and older. 13% of all families and 33% of families with a female householder and no husband present had incomes below the poverty level.

It is apparent that the combination of economic and educational factors will continue to have a major impact on the health status of Cleveland County residents in 2011. The Health Department anticipates a higher demand for all services and a shrinking pool of resources to provide these services. The Health Department has taken a proactive stand by researching and applying for myriad grant opportunities to support and enhance existing services.

### Cleveland County Board of Health

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This “State of the County” Health Report is produced collaboratively by the Cleveland County Health Department and the Alliance for Health in Cleveland County, Inc. to relate current information on health issues in the county. The report is produced in the years that Cleveland County does not conduct a community assessment and serves as an update on health concerns.

This report is distributed in hard copy format to the following entities:

- Cleveland County Board of Health
- Cleveland County Board of Commissioners
- Alliance for Health Board of Directors
- Cleveland County Legislative Delegation to the North Carolina General Assembly
- Cleveland County Memorial Library—Shelby and Spangler/Lawndale branches
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This report is also posted on the web site of the Cleveland County Health Department found at

[www.clevelandcounty.com/cchd](http://www.clevelandcounty.com/cchd)

