



## Message from the President

– Rod Jenkins, MHA



It appears that Spring has sprung, and the warm weather is finally upon us. What a fast and furious year this has been thus far. We seem to be getting a better grip on COVID-19 with most of the state looking as green as the weeds in my front lawn (per the CDC's COVID Tracker). Our Public Health Workforce is stronger than ever having regained its footing after going twelve rounds with a raging pandemic. For all who have been in the arena...doing real battle in the trenches...I SALUTE YOU! We are eternally grateful for your sacrifices. We will remain committed to the principles of public health through our strong bond of resilience.

Collaborations and partnerships are what makes the work of public health so enjoyable. Many hands truly make for light work. I want to lift our partnership with NC Department of Public Health and all our united efforts to curb gun violence. This epidemic is raging, and young Americans are losing their lives over senseless tragedies involving guns. I am delighted to partner with the Injury and Violence Prevention Branch on what is shaping up to be a phenomenal pre-Fall Educational Conference experience that aims to celebrate and illuminate 20 years of service to North Carolina. Please stay tuned for more information when it is made available. This promises to be a powerful, can't miss gathering.

March is National Social Work Month, and our Public Health Social Workers are the absolute best! I have been personally and professionally connected with Social Work for over 20 years and I can attest to the dedication, love of craft and devotion to improving mankind. Be sure to spread the love to our Public Health Social Workers as they deserve all the praise. The Public Health Leaders Conference is set for March 16-17, 2023. This conference and many other opportunities are available for attendance using ARPA funds so please take advantage to network and show your spirit for public health.

I want to conclude with a sincere "atta-boy" to our new Executive Director Patrick Brown. Patrick has hit the ground hard, fast and has not stopped. It almost feels as if he is omnipresent and is knowledgeable about all our happenings. We are fortunate to have Patrick and our AMAZING team that works behind the scenes to make NCPHA the success that it is. We are grateful! To all of you...I say to keep moving onward. You are the reason why we are the best public health association in the nation. Thank you for being a faithful member and spread the word that NCPHA is stronger than ever!

Rod Jenkins, MHA  
2022-2023 NCPHA President



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# NCPHA and NCALHD Advocacy Priorities Aim to Improve Public Health



## Legislative Priorities for NCALHD

With the North Carolina General Assembly currently in “long session” much of the time and energy on the North Carolina Association of Local Health Directors (NCALHD) staff time and energy is focused on legislative advocacy. Our advocacy agenda, linked in detail [here](#), can be summarized as having three major areas of focus: funding, workforce, and health protection.

We have come out of the gate strong on our top legislative priority for the session, LHD Communicable Disease **Funding**, via [House Bill 108](#). Introduced on 2/13/23, HB108 would provide \$25M per year in annual funding for local public health communicable disease services. On 2/21/23 the bill received a unanimous favorable report

from the House Health Committee. The likely next step is for this bill language and the associated funding amount to be folded into the next legislative budget.

Additionally on the **workforce** front, we are exploring some legislative reforms to the Registered Environmental Health Specialist education and training requirements that will open up the pipeline into this critical workforce, and stand ready to support resource requests for the local government hiring team at the Office of State Human Resources. In regards to **health improvement**, we are supporting and pursuing efforts to curtail the youth vaping epidemic, bolster LHD primary care services for the uninsured and perhaps most importantly are proud to join the chorus of support for closing the healthcare coverage gap via Medicaid Expansion.





Now we all know the quote about the best laid plans. While the above are the priorities we laid out in advance of the long session, we also are expecting the unexpected. Dozens, if not hundreds, of bills will be filed during this session, many of which we will need to monitor and possibly oppose. As the session progresses, we will continue to strike a balance between offense and defense, always with the goal of advancing and protecting public health in North Carolina.

### NCPHA policy priorities

NCPHA is working in collaboration with our partners in the NC Association of Local Health Directors on a variety of public health issues. NCPHA's policy priorities can be found here [Advocacy \(ncpha.memberclicks.net\)](https://ncpha.memberclicks.net). In addition to supporting communicable disease funding for local public health and reform of training requirements for Environmental Health Specialists, NCPHA is also leading on a variety of issues of importance to public health professionals.

This big news this month is the NC House of Representative passage of HB 76, An Act to Provide North Carolina Citizens with Greater Access to Health Care Options [www.ncleg.gov/Sessions/2023/Bills/House/PDF/H76v2.pdf](https://www.ncleg.gov/Sessions/2023/Bills/House/PDF/H76v2.pdf) also known as **MEDICAID EXPANSION!** This is the first time that a bill to close the coverage gap has ever come to the floor of the House and due to much good advocacy work on the part of NCPHA and its many partners at Care4Carolina, the vote for the bill (on second reading) was very strong—96 YAYS and 23 NAYS. HB 76 is a fairly straight forward expansion of Medicaid to the 600,000 North Carolinians who make too little to qualify for a subsidy on the Federal marketplace. For the first time, single adults, without dependent minors, would also be eligible for coverage under Medicaid. The bill also contains language that would authorize the Secretary

of Health and Human Service to request HASP funding for the State's Hospitals, establish a rural health grant program and set up a voluntary workforce development program in collaboration with the Department of Commerce and the Department of Labor.

The bill has now moved to the Senate and is waiting for consideration by that body. The Senate passed a Medicaid Expansion bill in 2022, so advocates are hopeful that the two chambers will be able to come to agreement on a Medicaid Expansion bill before the redetermination process begins at the county level. By some estimates, up to 200,000 people who became eligible for Medicaid during the pandemic public health emergency, could lose coverage during redetermination.

NCPHA's policy priorities also include opposing any legislation that would discriminate against people based on gender, gender identification or sexual preference. The Advocacy Committee, in collaboration with the leaders of NCPHA's Nursing Section, is creating a position statement on this issue in response to a pair of bills recently introduced that would impact LGBTQ youth: [Senate Bill 49 \(2023-2024 Session\) - North Carolina General Assembly](#) and [House Bill 43 \(2023-2024 Session\) - North Carolina General Assembly](#).

Senate Bill 49, entitled The Parent's Bill of Rights bans curriculum addressing gender identity, sexual activity or sexuality in kindergarten through fourth grade. The bill also requires teachers to tell parents if students change their pronouns—potentially outing the child. This bill was passed by the Senate earlier in February and is now sitting in the House Rules Committee. House Bill 43, introduced on February 1, would restrict gender-affirming treatment for minors, has been referred to the House Health Committee but, so far, no other legislative action has been taken.

Also, as part of the 2023/24 Advocacy Agenda is the resolution adopted by NCPHA's Governing Council declaring firearm violence a public health crisis. The resolution sets out the alarming statistics on the increasing rate of firearm deaths and injuries in North Carolina. This resolution will set the stage for the development of an NCPHA-wide initiative to draw attention to the impact of firearm and gun violence on the health of the public. This issue will be the subject of strategic planning efforts by association leadership at the end of February and will also be featured in a "preconference" before the Fall Educational Conference in Concord.

# Childhood Lead Poisoning



Childhood lead poisoning affects millions of children around the world and is a preventable environmental disease. Lead occurs naturally in the earth's crust and has been used for a wide range of materials including plumbing pipes, paints, ceramics, gasoline, batteries, and ammunition (USEPA, 2022). Children may be exposed to lead by ingesting contaminated paint chips, food, or water and by breathing or touching lead dust (CDC, n.d.). Individuals under the age of 6 are especially vulnerable to lead effects due to their developing nervous system. Exposure to lead can cause severe health effects such as damage to neurodevelopment, seizures, coma, and possibly even death (Meyer et al., 2003). For many years, the federal and local government have been working to reduce childhood lead poisoning.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) enacted the "Childhood Lead Poisoning Program (CLPPP) under the Lead Contamination Control Act of 1988, with the goal of preventing childhood lead poisoning before harm could occur (CDC). North Carolina, twenty years ago, established the lead hazard threshold for drinking water at 15 parts per billion (ppb) in the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Statute (HB 272). October 1, 2019, the NC Commission for Public Health adopted a sanitation rule that requires all licensed childcare centers to test all drinking water faucets and food preparation sinks for lead contamination every three years. On July 2nd, 2021, the North Carolina General Assembly enacted House Bill 272 which lowered the drinking water standard from 15 ppb to 10 ppb. The HB 272 went into effect on December 1, 2021, and states that this decrease

would "extend lead exposure protection to 30,000 young children in childcare settings, resulting in measurable benefits to children and society in the form of reduced crime, health care cost savings, special education cost savings, and avoided losses in lifetime earnings" (HB 272). The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) plan *Closer to Zero* has been working on creating action levels to reduce the exposure to arsenic, lead, cadmium, and mercury in baby food. These action plans outline a science-based, iterative approach for achieving continual improvements over time (Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, 2023).

Unfortunately, it is impossible to remove lead entirely from the environment or the food supply, but it is possible to lower the lead levels in foods (FDA, 2023). On January 24, 2023, the FDA issued for public comment "[Action Levels for Lead in Food Intended for Babies and Young Children: Draft Guidance for Industry](#)" (FDA, 2023). Outlined in the FDA's *Closer to Zero* plan, this guidance will provide information to industry on the action levels for lead in food and will result in the industry progressively reducing these lead levels (FDA, 2023). The FDA's guidance for lead in processed food intended for babies and young children, set action levels for fruits, vegetables, yogurts, custards/puddings, and single-ingredient meats to 10 parts per billion. For single ingredient root vegetables and dry infant cereals the action level is 20 parts per billion (FDA, 2023). The guidance has been issued for public comment through March 27th 2023.

#### Citations:

Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition. (2023, January 12). *Closer to Zero: Action Plan for Baby Foods*. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. [www.fda.gov/food/environmental-contaminants-food/closer-zero-action-plan-baby-foods](https://www.fda.gov/food/environmental-contaminants-food/closer-zero-action-plan-baby-foods)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (n.d.). *Overview of Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention* | Lead. [www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/overview.html](https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/overview.html)

Meyer, P. A., McGeehan, M. A., & Falk, H. (2003). A global approach to childhood lead poisoning prevention. *International Journal of Hygiene and Environmental Health*, 206(4–5), 363–369. doi.org/10.1078/1438-4639-00232

United States Environmental Protection Agency. (US EPA). (2022, September 8). *Learn about Lead*. [www.epa.gov/lead/learn-about-lead](https://www.epa.gov/lead/learn-about-lead)

U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (2023, January 24). *FDA Issues Guidance for Industry on Action Levels for Lead in Baby Foods*. [www.fda.gov/food/cfsan-constituent-updates/fda-issues-guidance-industry-action-levels-lead-baby-foods](https://www.fda.gov/food/cfsan-constituent-updates/fda-issues-guidance-industry-action-levels-lead-baby-foods)



# In Memoriam of Bill Smith



William John Smith, IV — “Bill” — passed away December 27, 2022, at his home in Lumberton, North Carolina. Bill had served as the health director for Robeson County, NC, for nearly 35 years and was a much beloved public health colleague and friend across the state.

Melissa Packer, Robeson County’s Assistant Health Director, spoke at his service about the impact Bill had for both the community as well Robeson County Health Department staff: *“Mr. Smith was definitely one of a kind – an original, a masterpiece, and at times “a real piece of work”. He challenged us and he was confident in our capabilities, even when we lacked such confidence. Mr. Smith also had many hidden talents – one of which was his ability to provide clarification and confusion...all in the same sentence. It was his special blend of sincerity and sarcasm that kept us coming back for more! He was different. Different was good; because it made us look at things differently. He approached situations from all angles. He encouraged us to do the same. It is because of OUR FEARLESS LEADER that I can stand before today, and relay a collective “THANK YOU MR. SMITH”. We are forever grateful that you gave each one of us a chance. A chance to learn, a chance to grow; but, above all, a chance to improve the health and wellbeing of our county. The days, weeks, months, and years ahead will not be easy. But we will carry on as best we can – with hopes that we can make you, OUR FEARLESS LEADER, as proud of us...as we have always been of you.”*

One of Bill’s contributions to North Carolina public health was serving on early NC Local Health Department

Accreditation taskforces as well as continuing with the program as a lead site visitor. “Bill was a respected site visitor with us for 20 years. He made health department staff feel more at ease during a sometimes stressful process, and he also served as an excellent mentor for new site visitors,” said Amy Belflower Thomas, MHA, MSPH, CPH, NC Local Health Department Accreditation Administrator at the Gillings School’s North Carolina Institute for Public Health. “He had such a passion for public health and was an important and revered public health servant for our state.”

Though many of us knew Bill as a colleague and friend, he was also a great father who mentored his daughter, Caroline Eure with Albemarle Regional Health Services, into and within the public health profession. According to Caroline, *“Growing up we were immersed in the throes of public health – whether it was attending public service meetings due to an E. coli outbreak at one of the local schools, waiting in the hall patiently during Board of Health meetings, attending the Health Dept clinic for physicals, immunizations and everything in between, or bopping through the hallways saying hello to the familiar faces. My dad was a Father first and a true Public Health Warrior second. He could always see the bigger picture and then he would want to make even that look better. Unless you work in Public Health you very rarely think about it until you need it; I was always so thankful I knew who was silently (or not so silently in dad’s case) fighting the big public health picture in Robeson County because they really had one of the very best.”*

# SAVE DATE

## 2023 NC Public Health Data Summit

**May 15th & 16th, 2023**

**Winston-Salem, NC @ the Benton Convention Center**

**Day 1** – Practice-Based Learning, Sharing, & Connection

**Day 2** – Data (no code) Hack-a-Thon & Partner Co-design Sessions

This event is supported by the NC Division of Public Health, NC Association of Local Health Directors, & the NC Public Health Association, and was endorsed as the NCPHA Spring Conference.

Registration will begin in mid-March @NCPHA

## NCPHA Pre-Conference

*The Future of Violence Prevention in NC: The Next 20 Years*

**September 26, 2023**

**Embassy Suites, Concord**

Registration will begin June 1<sup>st</sup>

## 2023 NCPHA Fall Educational Conference

*Remodeling Public Health: Tearing Down Stigma and Building Resilience for a Healthy NC*

**September 27-29, 2023**

**Embassy Suites, Concord, NC**

Registration will begin June 1<sup>st</sup>



# NCPHA

# *Member Introductions*

This issue we meet **Lindsay Dozier**, Health Promotions Coordinator, Rockingham County Department of Health and Human Services, **Priscilla Guild**, Co-Chair of the Legislative Committee and Chair of the Nominating Committee at the North Carolina Citizens for Public Health, and **Courtney Moore, MPH, CHES**, Coordinator, Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network-NC (FRSAN-NC) at the North Carolina Agromedicine Institute.



# NCPHA Member Introductions



## Lindsay Dozier

*Health Promotions Coordinator*

Rockingham County Department of  
Health and Human Services

**Hometown:** Charlotte, NC

**Education:**

- East Carolina University (ECU) - Bachelor's Degree in Public Health with a concentration in Community Health
- University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) - Master of Public Health (MPH)

**How long have you worked in public health:**

Almost 2 years in this role but about 6 years in Public Health. My good friend and I created a non-profit organization called In Her Strength that focuses on providing financial and emotional support to women and families affected by breast cancer.

**What do you like most about your job:**

I enjoy motivating people to make behavioral changes in a safe and welcoming environment and the opportunity to improve the lives of those in the community I serve. It is a fulfilling and rewarding experience.

**If you could have dinner with three people, who would they be:**

Michelle Obama, Haben Girma, and Nedra Glover Tawwab

**If you could change one thing about public health, what would it be? (money is no object)**

To ensure that all spaces are inclusive for every individual

**FAVORITES:**

**Hobby:** Traveling, reading, going on walks with my dog, Theo, and exploring new things!

**Food:** Popcorn

**Movie:** Comedy, action, thriller

**Song/Artist:** Hip-Hop, R&B, Jazz

**Sport/Team:** Any NC-based team

**Color:** Blue

**Book:** I am big a big reader, so anything that is a thriller , romance, fiction, and memoirs



# NCPHA Member Introductions



## Priscilla Guild

*Co-Chair of the Legislative Committee*

*Chair of the Nominating Committee*

North Carolina Citizens for Public Health

Retired Deputy Director for Administrative Operations and Senior Research Fellow at the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research

Retired Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Maternal and Child Health at the Gillings School of Global Public Health

**Hometown:** Born in Baltimore, Maryland and lived there until 1970 when I moved to Chapel Hill.

### **Education:**

- BA in Chemistry from Wilson College in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania
- MSPH in Biostatistics from the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Public Health (now known as the Gillings School of Global Public Health)

### **How long have you worked in public health:**

45 years and counting. I started working in the health care delivery field as a laboratory assistant in the Chemistry Lab at University Hospital in Baltimore during the summers when I was an undergraduate. After graduation I took a job there working for one of the first federally-funded pediatric health centers in country, where I ran the lab for the clinic and did nutritional biochemistry research. During this time, I decided I like analyzing the data better than doing the lab work, so I decided to get a degree in biostatistics and came to the School of Public Health at UNC-Chapel and never left. As soon as I graduated in 1971, I took a position at UNC-Chapel Hill in one of the first five federally funded Health Services Research Centers and retired from there in 2008. Counting the four years in Baltimore, a total of 45 years. In retirement, I am still working in public health with the North Carolina Citizens for Public Health (NCCPH), I just do not get paid for it.

### **What do you like most about your job:**

The two things I liked most about working in public health were the feeling that the work I was doing was helping to make life better for others and working with wonderful co-workers and others we were working with primarily in NC and the other DHHS Region IV states, many of whom I consider life-long friends.

### **If you could have dinner with three people, who would they be:**

For me now the people I love to be around and have dinner with are my family and friends. If they don't live here, these are the most special moments.

### **If you could change one thing about public health, what would it be? (money is no object)**

Working with the NCCPH since I retired, I see public health's role to be securing strong public health policies that have a direct impact on protecting the health of the public of our state. Given this, I feel we have two major problems, the: 1) public's lack of understanding all that public health does and 2) funding that is received categorically which discourages coordination of services. I would be thrilled if I heard the school systems were going to work this terminology into the health-related information that students receive starting in elementary school and saw some news releases that highlight some of the problems that public health is trying to address.



# NCPHA Member Introductions



## Courtney Moore, MPH, CHES

*Coordinator, Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network-NC (FRSAN-NC)*

North Carolina Agromedicine Institute

**Hometown:** Greenville, NC

### **Education:**

- Bachelor of Science in Public Health from East Carolina University 2018
- Master of Public Health from UNC- Gillings School of Global Public Health 2020

### **How long have you worked in public health:**

1 year.

### **What do you like most about your job:**

The ability to work in an interprofessional capacity to serve farmers/ranchers, their families, and their workers. In my job, I have the opportunity to talk with farmers and other members of the agriculture community to determine what stress management resources would be most useful. I to work with Cooperative Extension, Faith Health, and other community partners to develop a network of resources specific to farm stress. With the goal that at least one individual in each farmer's "circle" will be aware of resources and able to refer farmers/ranchers, their families, and their workers for services to improve upon quality of life.

### **If you could have dinner with three people, who would they be:**

Dolly Parton, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Hoda Kotb.

### **If you could change one thing about public health, what would it be? (money is no object)**

Access to quality and convenient physical and behavioral healthcare for rural populations

### **FAVORITES:**

**Hobby:** Reading, exercising, sailing

**Food:** Cheeseburger

**Movie:** The Blindside

**Song/Artist:** This One's for the Girls – Martina McBride

**Sport/Team:** ECU Pirates

**Color:** Pink

**Book:** I have read too many to pick one but most recently, *The Midnight Library*



# Memorial Giving at NCPHA

Unfortunately, we've lost some extremely dedicated public health professionals in recent years. Many were not only dedicated to public health in North Carolina but also to NCPHA through important leadership roles, attendance at many conferences through the years, and just over-all enthusiastic members. A gift to NCPHA is an excellent way to remember that individual and play forward their enthusiasm and dedication to NCPHA.

There are four NCPHA endowments that are managed by the NC Community Foundation where a memorial donation may be made. A direct link to each fund is included. They are:

**Dr. Ann Wolfe Endowment** - funds the annual mini-grants of \$8,000 that are given to four health departments to combat infant mortality.

**Donate:** [nccf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit\\_id=16577](https://nccf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit_id=16577)

**NCPHA Scholarship Endowment** – funds the Child of Member, Graduate/Undergraduate, Associate, and Robert Parker Leadership scholarships that are given annually at the Fall Educational Conference.

**Donate:** [nccf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit\\_id=16115](https://nccf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit_id=16115)

**NCPHA Foundation for a Healthy Future** – funds are used to secure the financial stability of NCPHA.

**Donate:** [nccf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit\\_id=16613](https://nccf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit_id=16613)

**Wood Endowment** – funds the Wood Lecture that is given annually on the final day of the Fall Educational Conference.

**Donate:** [nccf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit\\_id=15895](https://nccf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit_id=15895)

Please consider supporting one of the above endowments in memory (or even in honor) or a public health co-worker, friend, or family member. Any questions, please contact Kim Dittmann at [kdittmann@ncapha.org](mailto:kdittmann@ncapha.org).

Thank you!



# Environmental Health Section



## Upcoming 1st Quarter Meetings for Environmental Health Districts

- 1. North Central District**  
Location: Virtual  
Date: Thursday March 16th
- 2. West Piedmont District**  
Location: West End Plaza, 1935 Jake Alexander Blvd. W, Salisbury, NC 28147  
Date: March 3, 2023
- 3. Mountain District**  
Location: Gaston County Health Department Community Classroom, 991 W Hudson Blvd, Gastonia, NC 28052  
Date: March 20, 2023
- 4. Southeastern District**  
Location: Virtual  
Date: March 28, 2023
- 5. Northeastern District**  
Location: Pitt County Ag Center Conference Room, Greenville, NC 27834  
Date: April 14, 2023
- 6. Central District**  
Location: Guilford County Cooperative Extension Building, 3309 Burling Road, Greensboro, NC  
Date: March 9, 2023

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## Upcoming Conferences

- 1. 63rd Annual Eastern District Education Conference**  
April 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> at the Ramada Plaza in Kill Devil Hills  
"Public Health: Advancing Equity and Inclusion in North Carolina"
- 2. 6th Annual Environmental Health Symposium and 2023 FDA Retail Food Protection Seminar**  
July 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> at the Crowne Plaza in Asheville
- 3. NCPHA Fall Conference**  
September 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> in Concord  
"Remodeling Public Health: Tearing Down Stigma and Building Resilience for a Healthy NC"
- 4. NC Mosquito and Vector Control Association Annual Conference**  
November 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>



# SOCIAL WORK BREAKS BARRIERS

**Happy Social Work Month.** Social Workers empower individuals and communities, helping them to fulfill their potential. Social Workers make out society a better place to live. In celebration of Social Work Month, we invite you to spread out into your local community and make a difference! Grab a friend, co-workers or teammates and serve your North Carolina community. Volunteering connects you with others, is good for your mind and body, can advance your career and brings fun and fulfillment into your life!

[Please click link for the March 2023 Social Work Month of Service Flyer](#)

### Awards:

The Social Work Section will be presenting the following 3 awards at the Fall Educational Conference:

- Outstanding Achievements in Public Health Social Work for a person who is a Section Member.
- Outstanding Contributions in Public Health Social Work for a person who is not a Section member.
- Chairperson Award for the current Chair.

In addition, we are proud to announce the creation of the **Kelly Spangler "Bulldog" Advocacy Award**. The Kelly Spangler "Bulldog" Advocacy Award was created to honor the life and legacy of Kelly Spangler. Kelly was a dedicated North Carolina public health social worker for over 24 years. She was also an active member of the

North Carolina Public Health Association and the Social Work Section. Kelly invested her professional career as a fierce advocate for public health. More specifically, she was a champion for Women's and Children's Health, as well as public health social work. This advocacy is how she was dubbed a "bulldog." She was not willing to back down on issues that she felt were important and would bring positive changes to the lives of North Carolinians.

### Scholarship:

The Social Work Section offers the **Michael Clement Annual Education Conference Scholarship**. This scholarship is open to any Social Work student. The scholarship will sponsor the student's attendance to the 2023 Fall Educational Conference in Concord, NC as well as a 1-year membership to NCPHA and the Social Work Section.

If you have any questions, please contact Tia Foula, Social Work Section Chair at [Tia.Foula@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Tia.Foula@dhhs.nc.gov)



# Women and Children Section

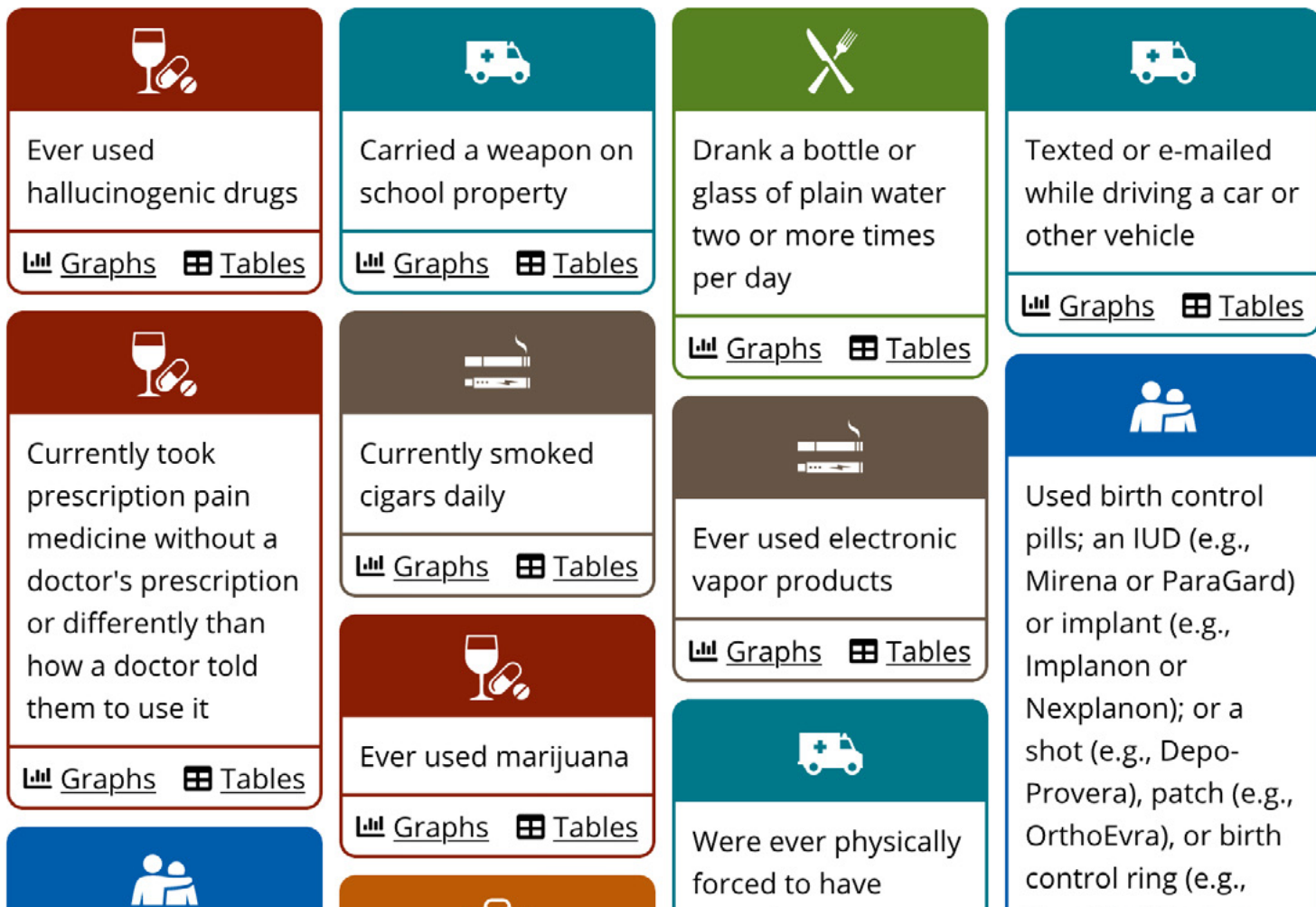


Image from the CDC Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) [website](https://www.cdc.gov/yrbss/)

The [Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)](#) was created in 1990 to monitor health behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems among youth and adults in the United States. In the spring of every odd numbered year, [NC Healthy Schools](#) implements a statewide Youth Risk Behavior Survey. The NC YRBS helps assess behaviors in youth that impact their health now and in the future. Topics include violence, personal safety, physical activity, nutrition, mental health, tobacco, drugs and alcohol, protective factors, and sexual behavior questions. The last YRBS was conducted in 2021, while still amid the COVID Pandemic.

As many public health professionals could have predicted, North Carolina saw a vast increase in the assessment of mental health behaviors. From 2019 to 2020 NC saw an increase by almost 20% of high school students which reported they felt sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 or more weeks in a row during the 12 months before the survey. The amount of NC High school students that considered attempting suicide increased from 18.9% in

2019 to 22.3% in 2021, there was over a 16% increase in high school students that said they had made a plan to commit suicide, and 10.1% of NC High School students reported they had attempted suicide one or more times in the year leading up to the survey. These statistics were even greater for youth who identified as Lesbian, Gay, or Bisexual. For LGBT students, over 70% reported they have felt sad or hopeless, almost 60% have seriously considered suicide, and over 48% have attempted suicide.

The results from NC Youth highlight the importance of public health prioritizing mental health especially for the youth they serve. From building partnerships with mental health providers, working with schools to provide mental health services, or having in house mental health services, public health practitioners must work to screen and connect all youth patients to these needed services.

For more information on NC YRBS, visit [drive.google.com/file/d/1L\\_vSmExrU8\\_w78kgu94zGVLLoC2uM2U/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1L_vSmExrU8_w78kgu94zGVLLoC2uM2U/view)





*See you soon!*

2023 NCPHA Fall Educational Conference

September 27-29, 2023

Embassy Suites, Concord, NC



## Contact Us

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