

# NCPHA e-newsletter

E-Letter from the NC Public Health Association and the NCPHA Public Awareness Committee

May 2014

## President's Comments

– Joanne Rinker, President



Greetings NCPHA Members,

I hope that everyone is enjoying the fact that winter is over and spring is here! I always feel encouraged by the spring weather. As a dietitian and someone who is always trying to promote health improvement, spring always seems to be a time when people are trying new health behaviors, being more active, choosing local produce and experimenting with new healthy recipes. This spring, at NCPHA, we are proud that our local

health departments are finding success in selecting, adapting, implementing and evaluating evidence-based strategies and interventions. As you read this newsletter, take the time to see who is providing a service or intervention that might be a good fit in your community. Additionally, check out our current Advocacy Agenda. Leaders from around NC met on March 5th to share priorities so that we can work together as a common voice. If any of the items on our advocacy agenda interest you and you would like to become more involved in advocacy, please contact our chair Peg O'Connell [poconnell@fuquaysolutions.com](mailto:poconnell@fuquaysolutions.com) to become part of the advocacy committee.

Lastly, I encourage you to check out the GSK Child Health Awards. The deadline for submission is May 30th and we want this to be the most competitive year yet. Nominate a colleague who you feel is deserving and then cheer him or her on in September in Wilmington if they end up on stage with the award!

There are so many exciting things happening at NCPHA. If you are interested in taking a more active position in your association, please contact me and we'll find you the perfect fit!

Joanne Rinker  
President

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# UPCOMING EVENTS

## May Public Health Events:

Check out the latest events at: [ncpha.memberclicks.net/events](http://ncpha.memberclicks.net/events)

## June Public Health Events:

**June 10** – NCPHA Governing Council Meeting, Burlington, NC

To submit an event to the NCPHA website, please contact Kim Dittmann at [kdittmann@ncpha.org](mailto:kdittmann@ncpha.org).

## 2014 Spring Conference

If you have not done so, there is still time to register for the 2014 NCPHA Spring Educational Conference to be held on **Tuesday, May 13** at the NCSU McKimmon Center in Raleigh. The theme for the conference is "Funding of Population-Health and Wellness Programs: What are the Fiscal Relationships among Health Providers?"

Several local and national leaders will speak on the topic including Trinity Tomsic, Deputy Executive Director of Federal Funds Information for States, Jean Wilkerson, Lead Coordinator, Region 10 CTG Pitt County Health Department, Jan O'Neill, Community Coach from the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Program and Brad Wilson, CEO, Blue Cross/Blue Shield of North Carolina.

The registration fee is \$50/person which includes both lunch and a late afternoon reception. You do not need to be a member to attend. Register at: [www.ncpha.com](http://www.ncpha.com). Registration will end on Thursday, May 8.

## NC GSK Foundation Child Health Recognition Awards

Does your health department have an innovative program addressing health outcomes for children? In particular, partnerships that focus on the following health problems: asthma, dental health, environmental health (healthy homes), immunizations, low-birth weight, mental health, nutrition, and substance abuse? If so, you may be one of three lucky health departments chosen to win a monetary grant of up to \$5,000 to be used for activities such as special projects, staff development or educational materials.

The NC GlaxoSmithKline Foundation recognizes three local health departments with the Local Health Department Recognition Award. In addition, one person will win the Individual Recognition Award, another the Public Health Staff Recognition Award, and one the Lifetime Achievement Award. The awards are given at the Fall Educational Conference which will be held this year September 17-19 in Wilmington. To learn more about the NC GSK Child Health Recognition Awards go to GSK Foundation Award.

ALL NOMINATIONS ARE DUE BY **FRIDAY, MAY 30**. No nominations will be accepted after this date. The nominees do not have to be a member of NCPHA. [www.ncgskfoundation.org/child-awards.html](http://www.ncgskfoundation.org/child-awards.html)

## Southern Health Association Summary

The Southern Health Association held its annual meeting in conjunction with the Alabama Public Health Association (ALPHA), the University of Alabama Birmingham, and the Alabama Environmental Health Association on April 9-11, 2014. During the business session of SHA's meeting, many states reported on the state of public health affairs in their locations. Kentucky is still moving forward with its efforts to make their restaurants and bars "smoke free" after several failed attempts at passage by their state legislature. Alabama has seen major cuts in Public Health to include the elimination of home health care services statewide (now contracted to private vendors) along with major reduction in their Social Workers. It was also noteworthy that merit increases and COLAs have been frozen for the last five years in Alabama. They are in the pre-application phase for national accreditation and their quality improvement efforts are strong throughout the state of Alabama.

Arkansas had a bipartisan effort to expand Medicaid. This state is preparing to host SHA's annual meeting in 2016.

South Carolina is struggling with economic issues that are causing public health to take a huge hit. South Carolina has refused to expand Medicaid. It was mentioned that there was a medical marijuana bill in the SC House of Representatives that was gaining traction. Georgia will host the 2015 SHA Annual Meeting. Details of the meeting are being finalized but it will probably be in Atlanta, Georgia. Florida most recently celebrated 125 years of Public Health!

There is a huge push to increase awareness and membership in SHA. North Carolina currently has 12 active members in SHA. Our recruiting efforts proved to be very successful in Birmingham.

Finally, our very own Tom Bridges (Retired Health Director from Henderson County) began his term as President of SHA on Friday, April 11, 2014. He intends to have a great partnership with APHA.

--Rod Jenkins, SHA Representative for NCPHA

# Best Practices in Public Health

## Caldwell County: Positive Pulse

With the rises in insurance costs and healthcare costs, many employees are looking for ways to encourage their employees to make healthier choices and lifestyle changes to become healthier. The Community Guide provided us with a number of evidence-based and/or promising practice programs that have been shown to provide results by offering incentives to individuals for having a behavior change or participating in a program.

With the Community Guide's findings in mind, this past January, Caldwell County Health Department, along with Caldwell County Government, implemented a new employee wellness program. Positive Pulse was implemented by Health Education staff and the Employee Wellness Committee, as an incentive program to encourage all county employees to participate in activities to improve their health. Health Education staff members develop a wellness calendar that lists events going on throughout the quarter. Some of these events include lunch and learns, education classes, heart health week, blood pressure checks, blood drive, awareness events related to topics such as, mental health, alcohol jeopardy, and stroke. At these specific events, employees have the opportunity to earn "Pulse Bucks". All events have different Pulse Buck values; the more intense the event, the more bucks are distributed. Employees also receive Pulse Bucks if they submit a wellness and exercise log at the end of the month. This incentive program is based quarterly and em-

ployees must cash their bucks in by the end of the quarter. Some of the prizes they receive are water bottles, shirts, stress balls, pens, picture frames, sports gear, and other items. The grand prize, which most employees strive for, is 2 hours off from their regular work schedule. The employees have requirements for reaching the grand prize. They must earn a required amount of pulse bucks, determined per quarter based on how many bucks could be earned, have at least one blood pressure check and participate in a minimum of two sponsored events. The sponsored events are anything the health education staff conducts to earn pulse bucks.

Since implementing this program, the wellness committee and health education staff members have seen great improvement in the health and well-being of other staff at the agency, as well as a higher morale in staff members that long for wellness activities. Some obstacles to this initiative have occurred; however, the staff members have made unique provisions for each department, allowing every employee to participate in this program regardless of work schedule or office location. Staff is very proud of this program and its success. In the first quarter, over 100 employees participated in at least one *Positive Pulse* activity. In the coming quarter, it is expected that more than 150 employees will participate.

--Brittany Crump, Health Education Supervisor, Caldwell County Public Health

# Best Practices in Public Health

## Catawba County: Healthy Schools Recognition Program

The Healthy Schools Recognition Program (HSRP) debuted in 2010-2011 as an annual initiative designed to promote healthy, sustainable policies that improve physical activity and nutrition in the three public health school systems in Catawba County. The program was created and implemented by Catawba County Public Health's school health nurses and Eat Smart Move More Catawba County (ESMM), a volunteer community coalition aimed at preventing childhood obesity in Catawba County. ESMM is part of Catawba County Health Partners, a nonprofit entity managed by Catawba County Public Health that fosters community coalitions to improve the County's health priorities.

Childhood obesity is a health priority in Catawba County, where 38.1% of children ages 2-18 are overweight or obese. Among school-age children, this includes 30.5% of children ages 5-11 and nearly half (49.5%) of children ages 12-18. Because of this, HSRP is designed to impact a majority of the county's children through the county's three public school systems (Catawba County Schools, Hickory Public Schools, and Newton-Conover City Schools). The ultimate goal of the program is to create a healthier school environment that can support effective learning for all children.

The strategy behind HSRP is to utilize evidence-based practices to help prevent overweight and obesity among large numbers of children in the most sustainable way possible. Because of this, the program facilitates policy and environmental changes that:

- affect a broad population (every student in every participating school);
- are long-term (not just one-time events or individual/classroom learning opportunities);
- are sustainable (no cost to participating schools and easy to maintain);
- create an environment where healthy choices are easier to make; and
- will ultimately help improve childhood obesity statistics in Catawba County.

With this in mind, HSRP encourages schools to meet the following seven criteria in order to attain "Healthy Schools" recognition status:

- Have a school Wellness Council in place that is committed to the health and well-being of the school population. This council should meet monthly and consist of school personnel and parents who act as positive role models.
- Offer fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables at least three times per week at lunch.
- Offer plain bottled water at lunch (or make available a water fountain or container of water).

- 100% of classrooms comply with North Carolina's "Healthy Active Children" statute requiring 30 minutes of physical activity per day in K-8.
- Have in place and comply with a school policy for healthy fundraisers.
- Have in place and comply with a healthy school store policy.
- Have in place and enforce a school policy for healthy concessions.

In HSRP's first year (2011), 16 of 44 public schools participated and 10 achieved "Healthy Schools" recognition, impacting 5,987 students. In 2012, 27 public schools participated and 25 achieved "Healthy Schools" status. In 2013, 40 schools participated and 36 were named "Healthy Schools." Over three years, this program has helped create healthier school environments for more than 20,600 students.

The initial concept for HSRP was created by Catawba County Public Health's school nurse supervisor, a Catawba County Public Health health educator, and the nutrition coordinator for Catawba County Schools for implementation by ESMM. Since its inception, the program has been implemented by 23 Catawba County Public Health school nurses and 21 ESMM volunteers representing two hospitals, three public school systems, local nonprofits, a local university, two childhood obesity treatment centers, and government agencies. This interdisciplinary, collaborative team helps facilitate all aspects of the program, including school recruitment, evaluations, technical assistance, and year-end presentations.

The success of HSRP has inspired ESMM to create two spin-off programs. The first is the Healthy Childcare Centers Recognition Program, which is another collaborative effort that encourages centers to adopt wellness policies supporting healthy nutrition and physical activity. Criteria specific to childcare centers were developed by Catawba County Public Health's health educator in partnership with representatives of the Healthy House and Catawba County Public Health's Child Care Health Consultants. Implementation of this program is also facilitated by ESMM volunteers and has resulted in 20 centers being named "Healthy Childcare Centers" as of 2013.

Plans to expand HSRP in future years include the recruitment of more schools, the addition of new criteria to raise the bar for previously recognized schools, a contest to encourage middle school achievement through improved compliance with physical activity criteria, and the inclusion of local schools outside the public school systems (such as private and charter schools).

--Jennifer McCracken, Health Services Manager, Catawba County Public Health

# Best Practices in Public Health

## Guilford County: A Fresh Approach to Alleviate Food Deserts

The Guilford County Department of Public Health has been very busy over the last three years working on a fresh, integrated approach to alleviating the county's twenty four food desert areas and the subsequent health disparities that occur within them. Public health approaches that can reach large numbers of people in multiple settings are needed to help people make better choices. Policy and environmental approaches that make healthy choices available, affordable, and easy can extend the reach of strategies to raise awareness and support people who would like to make healthy lifestyle changes.

**What is a food desert?** A food desert is a census tract where at least thirty three percent of residents live more than one mile from a full-service grocery store and more than twenty percent of residents live below the poverty line.

As a pilot project in 2011, the Warnersville neighborhood of Greensboro was identified as a suitable community to conduct an in-depth assessment and action plan for promoting healthy food access and increasing physical activity for its residents. In conjunction, a coalition of partners has been formed to support and develop the project. They are the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG), North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, City of Greensboro's Park and Recreation Department, Guilford County Cooperative Extension, the newly formed non-profit organization Vision Tree, and the Warnersville Historical and Beautification Society.

The plan includes several evidence-based strategies:

- 1) Development of a community garden or urban farm that would grow produce to be consumed by residents.
- 2) Creation of a sustainable farmers market that would operate from spring through fall each year until a mobile market could be established to deliver fresh items to community housing sites and local churches.
- 3) Making healthier foods, such as fresh produce, whole grain products and low fat dairy items, available in the neighborhood's corner or convenience stores.

The strategies were derived from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) best practices guide entitled, "The CDC Guide to Strategies to Increase the Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables."

To find out more information, email Janet Mayer at [jmayer@co.guilford.nc.us](mailto:jmayer@co.guilford.nc.us).

## Mitchell & Yancey Counties – Toe River District: Healthy Families Program

Healthy Families America (HFA) is a nationally recognized evidence-based home visiting program model designed to work with overburdened families who are at-risk for adverse childhood experiences, including child maltreatment. It is the primary home-visiting model best equipped to work with families who may have histories of trauma, intimate partner violence, mental health and/or substance abuse issues. HFA services begin prenatally or right after the birth of a baby and are offered voluntarily, intensively and over the long term (three to five years after the birth of the baby).

HFA has a strong research base, which includes randomized control trials and well-designed quasi-experimental research. To date, research and evaluation indicate impressive outcomes. Reviews of more than 15 evaluation studies of HFA programs in 12 states produced the following outcomes:

- Reduced child maltreatment;
- Increased utilization of prenatal care and decreased pre-term, low-weight babies;
- Improved parent/child interaction and school readiness;
- Decreased dependency on welfare, or TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) and other social services;
- Increased access to primary care medical services; and
- Increased immunization rates.

Toe River District has been providing these quality services to families in the Mitchell and Yancey Communities since May of 2012. The agencies' home visitors use two evidence-based curricula (Partners for a Healthy Baby and Nurturing Parenting) in addition to numerous supplemental curricula. A wide range of resources on specific parenting topics is offered and staff is intensively trained in a variety of social and developmental areas (including but not limited to: Maternal Depression, Substance Abuse, Infant and Toddler Development, and Car Seat Safety).

A collaborative Leadership Board is comprised of: Graham Children's Health Services ~ Toe River Health District ~ Mitchell County Department of Social Services ~ Yancey County Department of Social Services ~ Intermountain Children's Services ~ Pastor Tommy James ~ Mitchell County Schools ~ Mitchell-Yancey Partnership for Children.

--Lynda Kinnane, Health Director, Toe River Health District

# Best Practices in Public Health

## Montgomery County: Community Collaboration

In a collaborative effort, the Montgomery County Health Department and community partners are working on the following three health priorities: Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Substance Abuse Prevention, and Obesity Prevention and Reduction in Children and Adults.

Teen pregnancy has been an issue for a long while in Montgomery County. We have currently partnered with the county school system and are working on offering prevention programs 4th grade ages and up, and are targeting both children and adults. Children are being reached with educational curricula mandated by the State in all schools in the county. The County has also applied for funding to implement an afterschool program for middle school youth called *Draw the Line/Respect the Line*. Additionally, Health Educators and representatives from Communities in Schools have partnered to implement *Parents Matter!* - an evidence-based program targeting parents of children aged nine-13 to teach them communication skills to enhance positive parenting and healthy decision making.

Substance Abuse Prevention and Reduction is a new topic for our county, and our current focus is on prescription drug abuse. We have cooperated with the Sheriff's Department to offer *Operation Medicine Drop* events where community members are encouraged to dispose of medications safely by dropping them off in secure locations to prevent accessibility by teenagers or others who might misuse/abuse them. We have applied for funding from Project Lazarus and are planning to install permanent drop locations in various towns across the county to enable community members to drop off medicine any time instead of during specific days. We also are working with the schools, our local hospitals, and other partnering agencies to conduct a media campaign educating the public about the risk of prescription drug misuse. We are supporting our local hospital's emergency room policy which greatly reduces the amount of narcotic drugs

that are prescribed. Future plans including working with private practices to ensure that they are regularly checking the controlled substance data base and prescribing medicines in as appropriate manners as possible.

We are pleased to work with the First-in-Health 2020 Vision Task Force to implement a variety of evidence based obesity interventions in schools, church groups, community groups and businesses. We have conducted a workday walking challenge, constructing a walking trail, conducting a series of *Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less* afterschool programs targeting at risk populations, *Color Me Healthy*, and a variety of awareness campaigns. We have also partnered with the Community Transformation Grant to help make fresh fruits and vegetables more accessible to our population by enhancing local farmers' markets.

### In the clinical area –

Montgomery County Health Department recently began using a FDA approved noninvasive hemoglobin spot check device for monitoring the hemoglobin of our adolescent and adult clients. This device is an alternative to painful venipuncture or finger stick blood sampling, which until now has been the only way to measure hemoglobin. Our clients appreciate our ability to “screen without stick”. Hemoglobin is one of the most commonly ordered lab tests in our facility. Utilizing the device has contributed to a decrease in painful needle sticks and exposure to blood-borne pathogens, a decrease in the amount of time needed for a blood draw by our lab tech, more timely client assessment and a reduction in the wait time for lab results. Besides being easy to use, the procedure requires no lab consumables or waste disposal.

--Mary Perez, Health Director, Montgomery County

TimeToTalk™



# Best Practices in Public Health

## Orange County: Board of Health Strategic Plan

As the field of public health shifts from a focus on health education and individual clinical care to evidence-based policies and population-level interventions, it is imperative that local health departments and their staff adapt to these changes. Current economic conditions require health departments to creatively design policies and programs to meet growing demands in an environment of shrinking financial support and increasing client need. Additionally, public health practitioners are stretching beyond their traditional scope of influence, past clinic walls and into diverse local agencies such as planning departments and the chamber of commerce.

In North Carolina, the Orange County Health Department and its Board of Health prioritized meeting the challenges of this shift through the creation and implementation of a prevention-focused Board of Health Strategic Plan aligned with the priorities of the latest Community Health Assessment. Focusing on the same priorities as those from the CHA allowed a more collaborative, multi-level partnership between the community-focused activities of Healthy Carolinians of Orange County and the policy-focused activities of the Board of Health than traditional health department strategic plans.

To maximize the impact of the plan, the Board emphasized transparency, using evidence of what works, and supporting the plan through structure. First, in order to support this new strategic planning process and implementation, the Board restructured its' subcommittees to reflect the three priority areas of the plan. Subcommittees meet 3-4 times per

year to review activities and provide feedback. Additionally, the creation of a position focused on the Board of Health Strategic Plan and health policy was created to support implementation. Second, the plan itself was designed to include concrete action steps and specific timelines for each priority and its' focus areas. The plan was posted on the Health Department website, along with a timeline of activities and related documents, videos, or other implementation items as the actions were completed. Finally, as the foundation of the planning process for the plan's action steps the Board requested and reviewed evidence-based and evidence-informed interventions compiled by Health Department staff. This emphasis on evidence was key to ensuring the best use of time, funds, and of the potential for success.

The results of this strategic planning process have been profound. In less than two years, the Board of Health and the Orange County Health Department have succeeded in implementing:

- 1) A formal policy and process to encourage innovation within the health department and staff, including an Innovations Grant program
- 2) One of the most comprehensive county-wide smoke-free public places rules in the United States.
- 3) The first Health Department naloxone distribution program in North Carolina.

– Colleen Bridger, Health Director, Orange County Department of Public Health.

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