

Cherokee County

2014

State of the County Health Report

TO ASSESS, ADDRESS AND ASSURE THE HEALTH AND
ENVIRONMENTAL NEEDS OF CHEROKEE COUNTY.

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The Cherokee County Health Department is pleased to present the 2014 State of the County Health Report (SOTCH), with the focus on Cherokee County's top health issues. Cherokee County completed their most recent Community Health Assessment (CHA) in 2012. Physical Activity and Nutrition was determined to be the first priority because they work together for better health. In Cherokee County obesity and disease rates are on the rise with inadequate nutrition and physical activity practices being two of the most common contributing factors. Tobacco use was the second priority and Chronic Disease was chosen to be the third. This SOTCH report will give and update on how we are working to address these issues, and will also serve to educate Cherokee County residents about the health issues in their community. There have been no new emerging issues affecting the communities health since the 2012 CHA was completed in December 2012.

Top Health Concerns Based on Primary and Secondary Data

► PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & NUTRITION

► TOBACCO USE

► CHRONIC DISEASE

**Unless otherwise, all data is from the State Center for Health Statistics*

Physical Activity & Nutrition

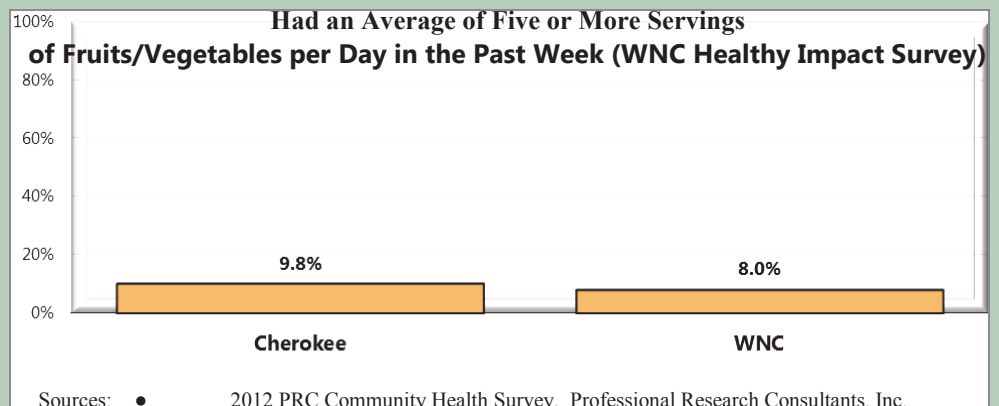
As a community it is crucial that we commit to creating environments that make the healthy choice the easy choice. Creating such environments allowing residents to take responsibility for their own decisions to support good health in their homes, neighborhoods, schools and workplaces. One of the ways we have continued to do this over the past year has been promoting and supporting local farmers markets as well as roadside produce stands. Through partnerships with local farmers markets and promoting local produce with education outreach and articles we are working to promote access and utilization of existing fresh health food options.



In 2014 our region began to lay the foundation for beginning a Healthy Corner Stores initiative with a local convenience store and work will be continuing to move forward in the coming year by starting a pilot project in one store and hopefully moving to 2-3 within the next year with demonstrated success. Healthy Corner Stores are a great way to increase the availability and sales of healthy, affordable foods through small locally owned stores in communities.

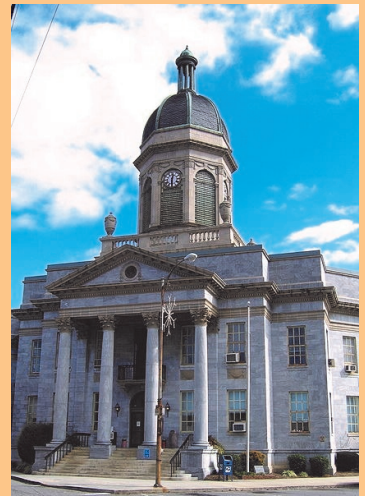
Promoting healthy life-style behaviors among children has also become a strategy for our Physical Activity and Nutrition Priority. Here in Cherokee County we are beginning to promote the 5-2-1–

Almost None messaging. This program is a consistent way to talk about healthy habits and healthy places that support healthy weight children and families. Kids and Families are challenged to practice 4 healthy habits in this message, Eat 5 servings of fruits and Vegetables a day, Limit screen time to two hours or less a day, get moving for at least 1 hour a day, and avoid sugary drinks to choose water instead. We have been working with the medical community, schools, and child care facilities to promote the message and materials.

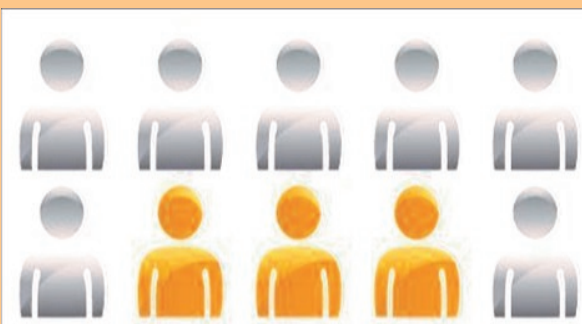


Tobacco Use

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable deaths in North Carolina. In Cherokee County approximately 30% of all cancer deaths and nearly 90% of all lung cancer deaths are caused by smoking. The harmful effects of smoking do not end with the smoker. An estimated 88 million nonsmoking Americans, including 54% of children aged 3–11 years, are exposed to secondhand smoke. Addressing tobacco use is complex and will require the collaborative planning, action and coordination of multiple partners in our community. Over the past year Cherokee County Health Department worked with local County Commissioners to pass a tobacco free ordinance on the County Courthouse Steps. Currently, Cherokee County Health Department is working with County Commissioners for moving forward with a county ordinance to limit or restrict the use of tobacco products on other county property. The goal is to have an ordinance in place by July 2015. Tobacco-free environments will promote healthy social norm as well as keep employees and visitors away from the dangers of second hand smoke.



Cherokee County Health Department is also working with our case management staff in both maternal and post partum programs to encourage mothers to take advantage of the NC Quitline and other Smoking Cessation resources. Our department is also promoting tobacco education along with the 5A's cessation counseling method through our daily clinic.

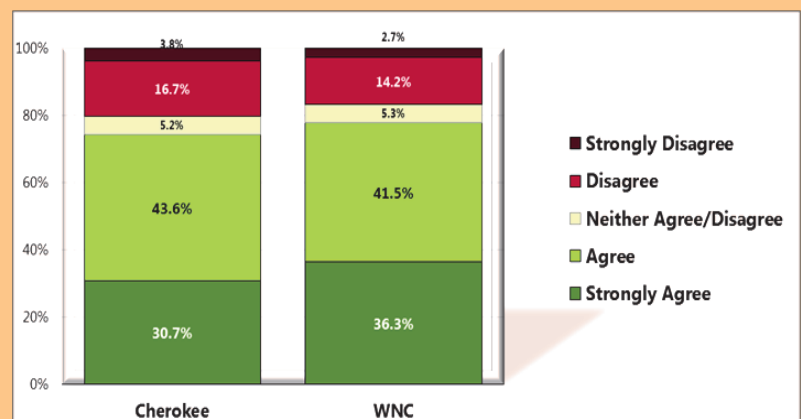


3 in 10

Mother's who gave birth in Cherokee County reported they had smoked during their pregnancy

5 - Selected Vital Statistics, Volume 1 - 2012 and 2008-2012. Retrieved January 27, 2014, from North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics (NC SCHS), North Carolina Vital Statistics Volume 1 - 2012, December 2013 website: <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/schs/vitalstats/volume1/2012/>

"I believe it is important for government buildings and grounds to be 100% tobacco-free"
(WNC Healthy Impact Survey)



The WNC Healthy Impact Survey showed that residents of Cherokee County strongly support the desire for more tobacco free environments.

Chronic Disease

Over the next 20 years Cherokee County is expected to go through a big shift in population age. The percentage of adults here in our county will rise by a noteworthy 33%. This projection translates into an estimated 9,386 residents of Cherokee being age 65 and older. According to state projected population growth this will mean that about 3 out of 10 people in Cherokee County will be age 65 or older. With this projected growth Cherokee County needs to be prepared for an aging population. Many changes and considerations will need to be made across all sectors of the county along with public health.

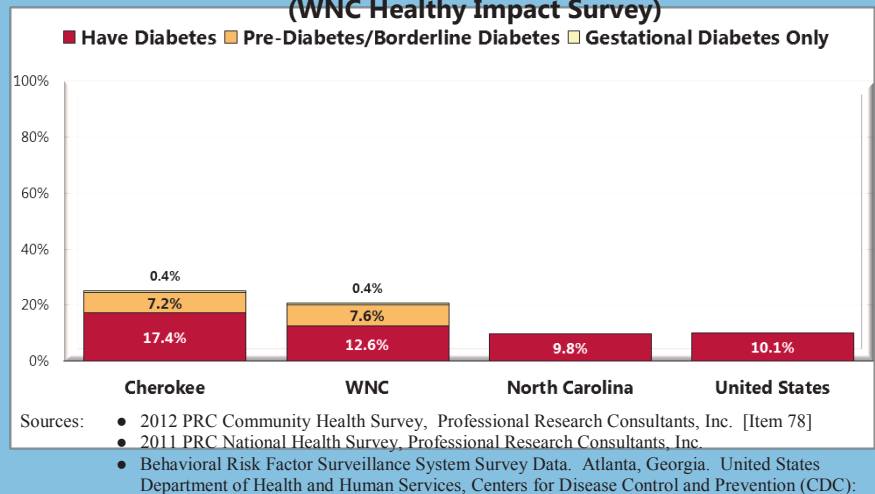
Public health efforts to promote health and functional independence are critical strategies in helping older adults stay healthy. Research has shown that poor health does not have to be an inevitable consequence of aging. Older adults who practice healthy behaviors, take advantage of clinical preventive services, and continue to engage with family and friends are more likely to remain healthy, live independently, and incur fewer health-related costs. An essential component to keeping older adults healthy is preventing chronic diseases and reducing associated complications. About 80% of older adults have one chronic condition, and 50% have at least two.

Chronic diseases are the most common and costly of all the health problems, roughly costing our state \$6 Billion annually to manage chronic diseases. Four common, health-damaging, but modifiable behaviors—tobacco use, insufficient physical activity, poor eating habits, and excessive alcohol use are responsible for much of the illness, disability, and premature death related to chronic diseases. Currently, Cherokee County Health Department is working to reduce the heart disease mortality rate from 220 per 100,000 to 154 per 100,000 people by December 2015 through increasing access to lifestyle change programs, healthy food options and early disease detection

In 2014, there were roughly 4,000 people living with Diabetes in Cherokee County which is about 17% of the population. Through a state partnership and ADA certification we are offering Diabetes Self Management education once a month through the Health Department. Patients are taught about their disease, how to monitor blood glucose, diet modifications and nutrition information all in an effort to enable them to be able to manage their disease better. We have had 35 participants this past year and are looking to increase that number in the coming year with increased awareness and referrals through local physicians.



**Prevalence of Diabetes (Ever Diagnosed)
(WNC Healthy Impact Survey)**



- Sources:
- 2012 PRC Community Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. [Item 85]
 - 2011 PRC National Health Survey, Professional Research Consultants, Inc.
 - Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia. United States Department of
- Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): 2010 North Carolina data.
- Notes:
- Based on reported heights and weights, asked of all respondents.

Low Birth Weight

Even though there is not a specific action plan for addressing low birth weight, the Cherokee County Health Department and community partners are continuing to monitor this issue. Low birth weight is slightly decreasing here in Cherokee County but the average is still higher than regional totals. We are working with community partners through education and prevention. One of the big risk factors we have observed that is on the rise here in Cherokee County is smoking during pregnancy. Prenatal programs within the health department are working to promote healthy choices during pregnancy in order to prevent such complications. We have also seen a decrease in mothers who said that they had received prenatal care during their first trimester which could also be a contributing cause.

Low-Weight Births (Five-Year Aggregates, 2004-2008 through 2008-2012)

Geography	2004-2008		2005-2009		2006-2010		2007-2011		2008-2012	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Cherokee County	138	10.5	129	9.8	130	10.3	116	9.6	111	9.3
Regional Total	3,467	8.3	3,434	8.2	3,373	8.2	3,194	8.1	3,133	n/a
State Total	57,823	9.1	58,461	9.1	58,260	9.1	57,604	9.1	56,086	n/a

7 - 2008-2012 North Carolina Resident Live Births by County of Residence: Number and Percent of Low (≤ 2500 grams) and Very Low (≤ 1500 grams) Weight Births by Race and Ethnicity. Retrieved December 7, 2013, from North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics (NC SCHS), 2014 County Health Data Book website: <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/schs/data/databook/>

Morbidity & Mortality

In 2012 the leading causes of death in Cherokee County were heart disease, cancer, chronic lower respiratory disease. These three conditions made up almost 56% of all county deaths. They were also the leading causes of death in 2010 and 2011.

Rank of Cause-Specific Mortality Rates for the Fifteen Leading Causes of Death (Five-Year Aggregate, 2008-2012)

Leading Cause of Death	Rank	Deaths
Heart Disease	1	427
Total Cancer	2	410
Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	3	111
All Other Unintentional Injuries	4	85
Cerebrovascular Disease	5	78

1 - 2008-2012 Race-Specific and Sex-Specific Age-Adjusted Death Rates by County (CD21B). Retrieved on December 8, 2013, from North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics (NC SCHS), 2014 County Health Data Book website: <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/schs/data/databook/>

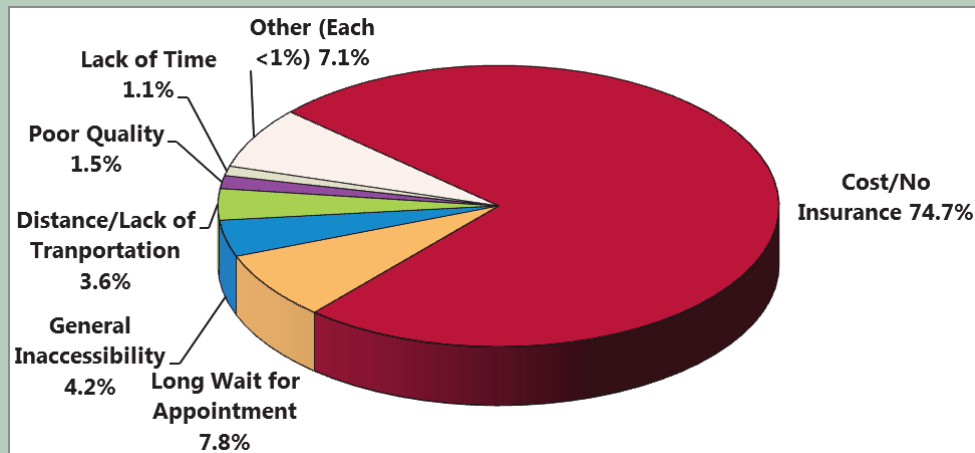
New and Immerging Issues

Access to comprehensive, quality health care services is important for the achievement of health equity and for increasing the quality of a healthy life for everyone. It impacts: overall physical, social, and mental health status; prevention of disease and disability; detection and treatment of health conditions; quality of life; preventable death; and life expectancy. Access to health services means the timely use of personal health services to achieve the best health outcomes. It requires three distinct steps: 1) gaining entry into the health care system; 2) accessing a health care location where needed services are provided; and 3) finding a health care provider with whom the patient can communicate and trust (DHHS, 2010). When conducting the survey for the 2012 CHA we found that the reason most people are not receiving medical care was due to cost/no insurance. Within the past year we have seen a continued increase in the need for free and reduced cost Primary Care here in Cherokee County and throughout the western region. There is a huge need for regular, continuous primary and preventative care.

Primary Reason for Inability to Get Needed Medical Care (WNC Healthy Impact)

(Adults Unable to Get Needed Medical Care at Some Point in the Past Year)

(Western North Carolina, 2012)



This past year the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians broke ground on Harrah's Cherokee Valley River Casino & Hotel, a \$110 million project. This establishment is estimated to produce 900 jobs in the county. Along with this casino will also come thousands of tourists throughout the year. We do not know yet of all the positive and negative impact on our county but what is for sure is that it will change many aspects of our community and those aspects will include health.

This SOTCH report will be available to the community partners and the general population of the Cherokee County website, at the Nantahala Regional Library and Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce. The Cherokee County Board of Health will be presented with this information and the Cherokee County Commissioners will also receive this report through direct mailing.

To help us work toward a healthier Cherokee County or for more information on projects mentioned in this document please contact 828-837-1212

February 4, 2015