

## Introduction

The purpose of the SOTCH report is to provide the most current information on the health status of the county, as well as the progress made during the last year in regards to the priority health issues identified during the 2012 Community Health Assessment (CHA). Since the 2012 CHA, the Graham County Department of Public Health (GCDPH), along with other community partners, has worked diligently to address the priority health concerns. This document will serve as a synopsis of their combined efforts.

This report reviews local demographics, health indicators including morbidity and mortality data, and priority issues affecting our community. Significant and emerging issues are highlighted along with new initiatives that address important public health concerns. All data included in this report, unless otherwise stated is taken from the *WNC Health Impact Secondary Data Workbook, 2014 Update (November)*.

## Local Demographics

Demographics: Graham County, Western North Carolina, and the State of North Carolina			
	Graham County	Western North Carolina	North Carolina
Population (2010)	8,861	759,727	9,535,483
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	50.7%	51.5%	51.3%
Male	49.3%	48.5%	48.7%
<b>Age</b>			
Persons under 5 years (2010)	5.7%	5.4%	6.6%
Persons 5-19 years (2010)	18.2%	17.4%	20.2%
Persons 65 years and older (2010)	19.7%	19.0%	12.9%
<b>Race</b>			
White	90.3%	89.3%	68.5%
African American	0.2%	4.2%	21.5%
American Indian, Alaskan Native	6.4%	1.5%	1.3%
Asian	0.3%	0.7%	2.2%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Other	1.0%	2.5%	4.3%
Two or More Races	1.7%	1.8%	2.2%
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
Hispanic or Latino	2.2%	5.4%	8.4%
<b>Other Indicators</b>			
High School graduates, age 25+ (2006-2010)	34.6%	n/a	28.2%
Median Household Income (2006-2010)	\$28,447	\$37,815	\$45,570
Population below poverty line (2006-2010)	21.3%	14.9%	15.1%
Unemployment (2011)	17.0%	11.5%	10.5%

**Review of Major Morbidity and Mortality Data**

**Morbidity**

Inpatient Hospital Utilization by Principal Diagnosis 2012	Graham County		WNC		NC	
	Rank	Total Cases	Rank	Total Cases	Rank	Total Cases
Respiratory Diseases	1	183	2	9,235	3	96,814
Cardiovascular and Cerebrovascular Diseases	2	141	1	12,656	1	158,196
Injuries and Poisonings	3	101	6	7,291	6	78,529
Digestive System Diseases	4	94	4	7,885	4	90,595
Pregnancy and Childbirth	5	88	5	7,849	2	121,227

Emergency Department Visits 2010	Graham County		WNC	
	Rank	%	Rank	%
Chest Pain/Ischemic Heart Disease	1	10.93	1	11.83
Diabetes	2	9.64	4	8.80
Lower Respiratory Disorders	3	9.29	3	9.48
Psychiatric Disorders	4	7.67	2	10.98
Substance Abuse	5	3.12	5	2.99

**Mortality**

Leading Cause of Death (2006-2010)	Graham County		WNC		NC	
	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate
Heart Disease	1	215.1	1	194.4	1	185.9
Total Cancer	2	180.5	2	180.3	2	183.1
All Other Unintentional Injuries	3	50.9	5	42.9	5	28.6
Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	4	50	3	51.1	4	46.4
Cerebrovascular Disease	5	n/a	4	44	3	47.8

Leading Cause of Death (2008-2012)	Graham County		WNC		NC	
	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate
Heart Disease	1	215.9	n/a	n/a	2	174.4
Total Cancer	2	169.9	n/a	n/a	1	175.9
Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	3	64.8	n/a	n/a	5	29.4
All Other Unintentional Injuries	4	55.9	n/a	n/a	3	46.6
Cerebrovascular Disease	5	31.9	n/a	n/a	4	45.1

- The leading causes of death in Graham County from 2008-2012 were heart disease, cancer (all types), chronic lower respiratory disease, unintentional injuries, and cerebrovascular. These are the same leading cause of death as 2006-2010.

- There was an increase in prevalence of deaths from heart disease, chronic lower respiratory disease, other unintentional injuries, and cerebrovascular disease
- A decrease is noted in total cancer deaths.
- Graham County has mortality rates for heart disease, chronic lower respiratory disease, and all other unintentional injuries that exceed comparable rates for North Carolina.

## Tracking of priority issues identified in Community Health Assessment

### Obesity and Diabetes

**Goal:** Graham County will be an *Active Living* community where healthy choices are easier to make. This will be accomplished by establishing policies, programs and built environments that support physical activity and healthy eating.

#### Progress towards the goal in 2014

- March 2014 – Pedestrian Connectivity Plan adopted by Town of Robbinsville.
- Santeetlah Lake Trail opened to the public April 12, 2014.
- July 2014 – began work on Graham County Schools greenway expansion project. Received \$10,000 from Alcoa Foundation for project. Phase IV of Marshall University grant \$40,000
- Stanley Furniture Recreation Park grant funding received from the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund.
- Stecoah Play park opened to public
- Mountain Market established at Wolf Creek Grocery

#### Data Review:

Adult Diagnosed Diabetes Prevalence Estimate 2007-2011	2007		2008		2009		2010		2011	
	Est #	Age-Adjusted %	Est #	Age-Adjusted %	Est #	Age-Adjusted %	Est #	Age-Adjusted %	Est #	Age-Adjusted %
Graham County	637	9.1	631	9.1	759	10.1	826	9.9	812	9.8
WNC	3448	8.9	3465	8.8	3649	9.0	3948	9.4	4158	9.7

Adult Obesity Prevalence Estimate 2007-2011	2007		2008		2009		2010		2011	
	Est #	Age-Adjusted %	Est #	Age-Adjusted %	Est #	Age-Adjusted %	Est #	Age-Adjusted %	Est #	Age-Adjusted %
Graham County	1,715	28.9	1,702	29.0	1,686	28.2	1,996	30.0	1,975	29.8
WNC	8,695	26.7	8,980	27.4	9,275	28.0	9,558	28.2	9,423	27.7



**Data Review:**

Active Health Professionals per 10,000 population	2009		2010		2011		2012	
	Physicians	Dentists	Physicians	Dentists	Physicians	Dentists	Physicians	Dentists
Graham County	4.8	1.2	3.4	2.3	3.4	2.2	4.52	2.26
WNC	15.1	3.4	14.8	3.4	14.7	3.5	14.29	3.61
NC	21.2	4.4	21.7	4.4	22.1	4.4	22.31	4.51

- There are currently 4 primary providers, 2 Medical Doctors, a nurse practitioner, and a physician's assistant providing primary care to the general population in Graham County. The health department provides well-child exams, family planning services, wellness physicals, and BCCCP services. The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians has a primary care clinic located on the Snowbird reservation serving enrolled tribal members only. According to the data 2010 demographic data, that is a provider ratio of 1:2073 for the general population and 1:567 for the EBCI Snowbird population.
- The US Department of Health and Human Services does not take into account nurse practitioners and physician assistants when designating Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs). "Primary Care HPSAs are based on a physician to population ratio of 1:3,500. In other words, when there are 3,500 or more people per primary care physician, an area is eligible to be designated as a primary care HPSA" ([www.hrsa.gov/shortage](http://www.hrsa.gov/shortage)). In Graham County, that ratio is 1:4,430, making Graham County a HPSA.



**Substance Abuse/Tobacco Free Parks and Recreation**

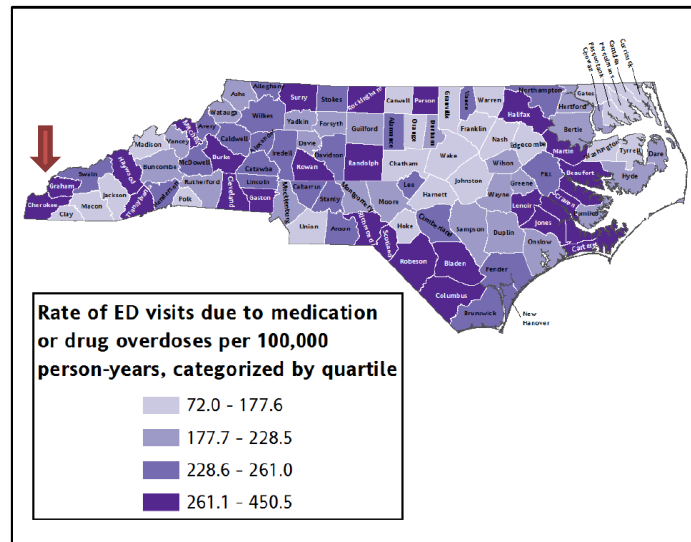
**Goal:** Reduce substance abuse in order to improve the health and safety of our youth and families by providing education, raising awareness, encouraging positive choices, and building cooperative links within our community.

**Progress towards the goal in 2014:**

- Twice yearly medicine drops
  - Fall 2013: 30,290 doses of medication collected
  - Spring 2014: 25,753 doses collected
  - Fall 2014: 8,910 doses collected
- Tobacco Free parks advocacy
- Lock boxes distributed to Medicine Drop participants
- Safe disposal campaign
- Above the Influence
  - Graham County students entered and won the WNC *Above the Influence* video contest sponsored by Mountain Projects, telling what kept the above the influence of drugs.
- Mendez Curriculum continuation in Robbinsville Elementary School.

**Data Review:**

- Graham County had the 12<sup>th</sup> highest rate of ED visit due to medication or drug overdoses in North Carolina. Graham County had 78 ED visits for this reason from 2008-2010, a rate of 296.1 per 100,000. The NC rate was 221.1 per 100,000.



**Emerging Issues**

**New and Emerging Issues**

- Stanley Furniture, Graham County’s top employer, closed its local plant, costing 400 jobs in an area that already suffers from some of the state’s highest unemployment. Economic health is directly related to physical and mental health. Government, private, and non-profit organizations are working together to address this issue.
- The November, 2014 election brought 2 new County Commissioners and a new Sheriff on board, resulting in a need to reiterate to elected officials the importance of public health and education about what public health is and does.
- Hilltop Healthcare, the local free clinic providing medical services to low-income uninsured lost its Nurse Practitioner in August, 2014. Hilltop clients are continuing to receive nursing care, but no medical visits are being completed due to the loss of the provider. Recruitment efforts continue but, as has been proven in the past, it is very difficult to recruit providers to this rural area.

**Conclusion**

We will continue to work with a wide range of community partners to address the health issues facing Graham County. This SOTCH will be used by partner organizations to complete agency specific reporting of roles and responsibilities (e.g., our health department and local hospitals), as well as informing agency strategic plans across the county where appropriate. Dissemination of

this SOTCH will include the Board of Health, the GREAT organization and other partner organizations. It will also be publicly available on the [Graham County Department of Public Health](#) website, the [WNC Healthy Impact](#) website and at the local public library. Moving forward, the SOTCH report will be used to inform and direct the 2015 Community Health Assessment, which will be submitted and made publicly available in December 2015.