



The 2015 Community Health Assessment priority areas are:

- Tobacco
- Healthy Eating and Active Living
- Mental Health

The following SOTCH Scorecard was created and submitted **March 5, 2018** in order to meet the requirements for the **Polk County** annual State of the County's Health (SOTCH) Report.

Clear Impact Scorecard™ is a strategy and performance management software that is accessible through a web browser and designed to support collaboration both inside and outside organizations. WNC Healthy Impact is using Clear Impact Scorecard™ to support the development of electronic CHIPs, SOTCH Reports and Hospital Implementation Strategy scorecards in communities across the region.

Scorecard helps communities organize their community health improvement efforts:

- Develop and communicate shared vision
- Define clear measures of progress
- Share data internally or with partners
- Simplify the way you collect, monitor and report data on your results

The following resources were used/reviewed in order to complete the SOTCH:

- [WNC Healthy Impact](#)
- [2017 County Health Data Book](#)
 - The data in the **2017 County Health Data Book** are considered current for Community Health Assessments and State of the County's Health Reports due the first Monday of March, 2018.
- WNC Healthy Impact Secondary Data Workbook Update (Update available in June 2017)
- State Center for Health Statistics
- Healthy North Carolina 2020
- Healthy People 2020
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
- County Health Rankings & Roadmaps
- Tryon Daily Bulletin, Local Newspaper

R

P

Tobacco

Time Period

Actual Value

Target Value

Current Trend

Baseline % Change

Why It Matters?

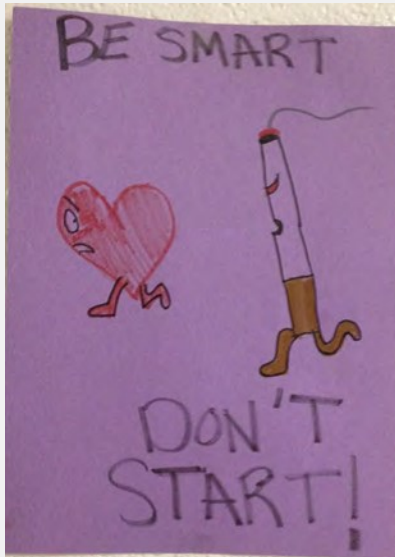
Tobacco is the single most preventable cause of death and disease in the United States. Each year, approximately 443,000 Americans die from tobacco-related illnesses. For every person who dies from tobacco use, 20 more people suffer with at least one serious tobacco-related illness. In addition, tobacco use costs the US \$193 billion annually in direct medical expenses and lost productivity. Preventing tobacco use and helping tobacco users quit can improve the health and quality of life for Americans of all ages. People who stop smoking greatly reduce their risk of disease and premature death. Benefits are greater for people who stop at earlier ages, but quitting tobacco use is beneficial at any age.

Significant disparities in tobacco use exist geographically; such disparities typically result from difference among state in smoke-free protections, tobacco prices and program funding for tobacco prevention (DHHS 2010). The rates of using vapor products and smoking during pregnancy have been trending upward in Polk in recent years as well.

More Polk County workers report exposure to secondhand smoke at the worksite in recent years.

Individuals with less education and those with lower incomes are more likely to smoke. The poverty rates in Polk County have been steadily rising due to decreased economic opportunities. The median family income in Polk County is \$3019 below the NC state average. People with less than a high school education are three times as likely to smoke as college graduates and those with higher incomes are less likely to smoke. Compared to WNC, Polk County has 1% lower overall High School graduation rate. (2009-2013 NC State Center for Health Statistics).

Individuals with certain lifetime mental illnesses and those with serious psychological distress are more likely to use tobacco. According to the 2015 PRC Healthy Communities Survey, 16% of Polk County adults experienced more than 7 days of poor mental health during the past month. This rate is higher than the WNC comparable rate of 13%. The suicide rate in Polk County has risen significantly in recent years.



Specific Populations At-Risk

Smoking During Pregnancy

Maternal health is an important predictor of newborn health and wellbeing, and addressing women's health is essential to improving birth outcomes. Many factors affect women's health, including individual health behaviors such as smoking during pregnancy. Women who smoke during pregnancy are more likely to have a baby who is pre-mature or has a low birth weight.

The percentage of women who smoked during pregnancy in all three jurisdictions did not improve significantly between 2008 and 2013. The 2013 figure for Polk County was 15.9 which is higher than the 2008 figure.

The Healthy NC 2020 Focus Area to which this priority and related result are aligned is Tobacco.

Progress Made in 2017

The following progress was made in 2017 on our action plan interventions for Tobacco in Rutherford County.

- **Tobacco-Free College Campuses**

- Rutherford-Polk-McDowell Health District employee met with a team of Polk County leaders to discuss increasing the number of smoke-free/tobacco free policies at the Polk Tobacco Policy Meeting on November 8, 2017. The meeting goal was to examine the current status of smoke-free/tobacco-free policies in Polk, explore the opportunities for improvements, and plan next steps. An action plan was developed to move forward with contacting mayors, police chiefs, and City Managers and municipalities in Saluda, Tryon and Columbus.
- Conversations continue to take place with Isothermal Community College administrators to help this institution become tobacco free.

- **Implementation of the 5As Counseling Method for Tobacco Cessation**

- On June 16, 2017, the Rutherford-Polk-McDowell health District hosted a training geared toward Maternal and Infant Health. The training event incorporated information about You Quit Two Quit Smoking Cessation Training 5As, and Quit Line. Health Professionals, WIC staff and community partners from the district were invited to attend. Health care professionals play an important role in the success of pregnant and postpartum women to quit smoking. Studies show that a brief counseling interventions of 5-15 minutes, when delivered by a trained health care professional and augmented with pregnancy-and/or parent-specific self-help materials, can double or, in some case, triple tobacco cessation.
- Smoking cessation classes were offered to all pregnant women who received prenatal services at the Rutherford-Polk-McDowell Health District and admitted to smoking during their pregnancy. These classes were scheduled to coincide with the patient's scheduled prenatal appointment so that it would not require an additional trip to the Health Department. Food and other incentives were provided to the patient to encourage participation and stimulate engagement.

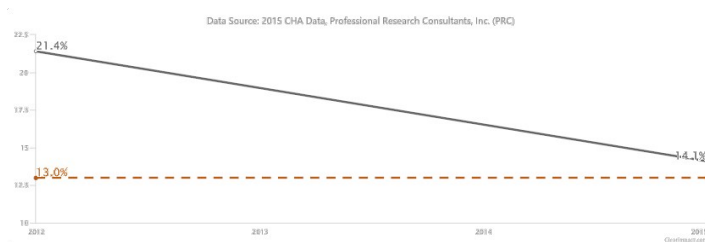
Additionally, the following progress was made in 2017 on Tobacco in Polk County.

- St. Luke's continues to provide weekly tobacco cessation classes on Thursdays, 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.
- Delivery of a tobacco prevention class was provided by RHA to all 6th, 7th, and 8th graders at Polk County Middle School.
- There is continued promotion of the Quit Line (1-800-QuitNow), tobacco cessation and harmful effects of e-cigarette use.
- Many local organizations including the Emergency Department, primary care offices, the Health Department, and others continue to provide and refer their patients to local tobacco cessation classes and resources at point-of-contact. Some other forms of promotional activities include social media posts as well as participation in community health fairs.
- The Rutherford-Polk-McDowell Health District's Health Educator attended the freedom from smoking facilitator training conducted by the American Lung Association. Smoking cessation classes using the Freedom From Smoking curriculum can be provided to the community.



Percentage of Current Adult Smokers

2015	14.1%	13.0%	↘ 1	-34% ↓
2012	21.4%	13.0%	→ 0	0% →



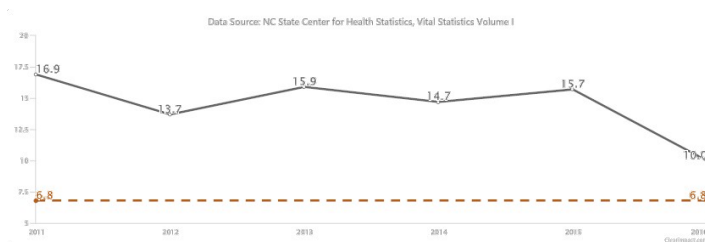
Narrative

The Healthy NC 2020 target is 13.0% for the objective of decreasing the percentage of adults who are current smokers.



Percentage of Births to Mothers Who Smoked While Pregnant

2016	10.0	6.8	↘ 1	-41% ↓
2015	15.7	—	↗ 1	-7% ↓
2014	14.7	—	↘ 1	-13% ↓
2013	15.9	—	↗ 1	-6% ↓
2012	13.7	—	↘ 1	-19% ↓
2011	16.9	6.8	→ 0	0% →



Narrative

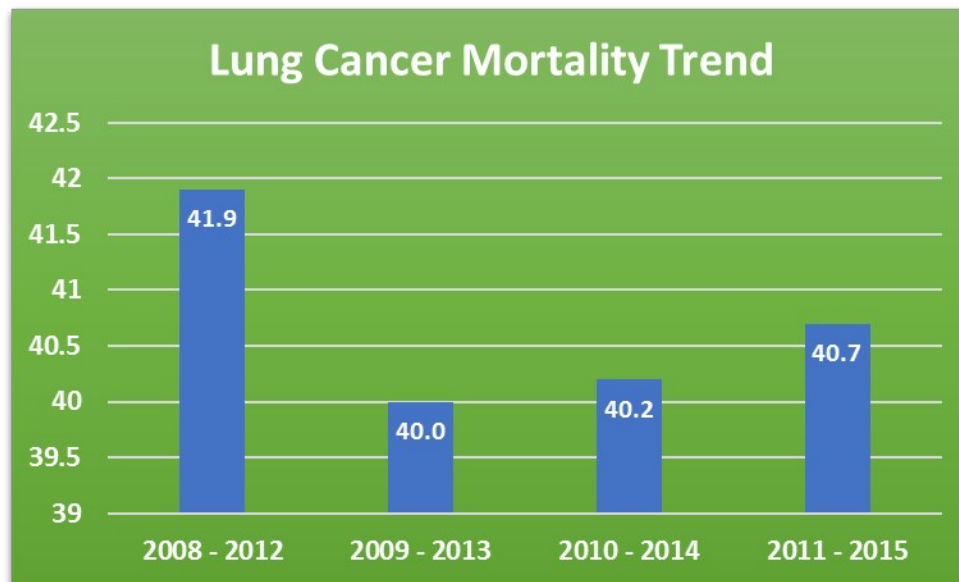
The Healthy NC 2020 Target = 6.8%



Lung Cancer Mortality Trend

— — — — —

Narrative



Source: WNC HEALTHY IMPACT - SECONDARY DATA WORKBOOK; Retrieved on June 26, 2017, from North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics (NC SCHS), 2017 County Health Data Book website: <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/da...>

Why It Matters?

The Rutherford Polk McDowell Health Department and the Polk Fit, Fresh and Friendly Health Coalition have been working to expand opportunities to increase physical activity through the built environment. These efforts include healthy food access, community gardens, "walkability" and bikability", new playgrounds and community plans to improve recreation areas.

An increased level of physical activity among children and adults reduces the risk of many chronic diseases including diabetes, heart disease, stroke and obesity. Strategies and improvements are focused on increasing physical activity among low-income families and children especially those living in rural areas that are currently "activity deserts".

Specific Populations At-Risk:

Low-income adults and children are at greater risk for poor nutrition and transportation barriers to physical activity. According to data from the 2010 US Census, the total population of Polk County is 20,520. Males are more likely than females to get the recommended amount of physical activity (51.1% versus 41.9% 2009). Our target audience is low-income adults with an emphasis on females. Income and education are related to physical activity levels. For example individuals with the least income are the least likely to get the recommended level. The recommended level is achieved by 33.9% among people making \$15,000 or less and by 54% among those making \$75,000 or more (2009). In Polk, 16.7% of adults live below 100% of poverty in the aggregate period of 2009-2013 according to the US Census Bureau.

The Healthy NC 2020 Focus Area to which this priority and related result are aligned is Physical Activity and Nutrition.

Progress Made in 2017

The following progress was made in 2017 on our action plan interventions for Healthy Eating and Active Living in Polk County.

• Healthy Foods and Community Gardens

- Growing Rural Opportunities (GRO) received a great grant to run the Mobile Market in 2018 & 2019.
- The mobile farmers market was on in the town twice in 2017. Once at the Tryon Christmas Stroll another at the Tryon Halloween Stroll. At the Tryon Christmas Stroll, there were over 200 visitors. Meanwhile, 6 bushels of apples were given away at the Tryon Halloween Stroll.
- The Mill Spring Ag Center helped set up the community gardens at Ashley Meadows apartments, which served 12 families. They also spent two work days cleaning up the gardens in the spring, but not much else has been done there due to funding and staffing.
- The Polk County Cooperative Extension held many different cooking classes that were made available to the general public. Some of these were: the Men's Cooking Class, a 10 week series with 10 participants; the Cookbook Club with 12 participants and who learned about the Mediterranean Diet; the 4-H Cooking Classes in which 25 total youth participants engaged; Food with a twist cooking class - 15 participants; Pickles Class - 7 participants; and Food Preservation Classes with a total of 13 participants. This organization also had Jams and Jellies preservation class in June 2017 and had 8 participants and a similar demonstration at the Farmers Market with 50 people there.

• Build Active Living Communities

- Polk Recreation Department and Polk County Government continue to work on the Polk County Recreation Plan (master plan). This includes the following priorities: Priority #1 - Develop Joint Use Agreements with the school system and develop and enforce use agreements with youth sports leagues; Priority #2 - Maintain/improve existing facilities & programs; Priority #3 - Develop current job descriptions for existing and potential staff; Priority #4 - Focus most major upgrades/additions at Polk County Recreation Complex in Mill Spring and tie together with Ag Center, Searcy Field and Middle School; Priority #5 - Facilitate trail development (trails should be seen as a core recreation asset, just like playgrounds, ball fields and swimming pools); Priority #6 - Enhance current marketing; Priority #7 - Develop fund raising and volunteer recruitment plan; And Priority #8 - Develop alternatives and maintain communication regarding the YMCA.
- Many Polk County Middle School students have had the opportunity to explore the trails and learn about them through the Nature Navigators program, a Polk Middle Hiking Club.



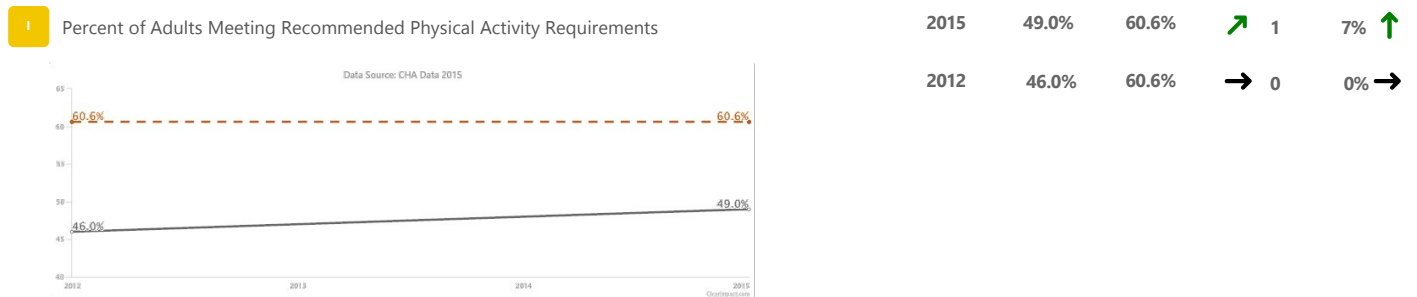


- In February 2017, a new trail began construction on Little White Oak Mountain. Acquisition of a portion of the Little White Oak Mountain property by Polk County Parks and Recreation was made possible by the County's pursuit of a grant from the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF). The recently awarded PARTF grant will allow Polk County to purchase 300 acres of the eastern portion of the Little White Oak Mountain tract from Conserving Carolina. This purchase will allow for the expansion of the existing trail system at the Recreation Complex, and once developed into trails, the land will be open to hiking and running and serve as Polk County's only trails system designed to accommodate mountain bikes. The trailhead for the system will be at the current Polk County Recreation Complex. Polk County Parks and Recreation will work with partners to develop a 7-10 mile natural surface multi-use trail system on the 300 acres. In addition to public recreation, the trails and land will be used for education and exploration by Polk County Schools students, particularly those at Polk County Middle School which borders the land. This area was formerly known as Foster Creek Preserve and had been approved for the development of nearly 700 upper-income residential units; development that would have altered the rural character at the heart of Polk County. Purchase of this large, intact mountain property not only provides the long-term protection of 21 rare and uncommon species (including the state and federal endangered White Irisette (*Sisyrinchium dichotomum*)), more than 13 miles of streams, and the magnificent view of the unspoiled mountain, but it will also provide much needed workforce housing and recreational opportunities for public enjoyment, by the expansion of trails by the Polk County Parks and Recreation purchase and by the procurement of approximately 600 acres of the property by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.
- Isothermal Regional Bicycle Plan
 - **The Draft Isothermal Regional Bicycle Plan IS Available for Review and Comment**
 The Isothermal Planning & Development Commission was awarded a planning grant from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to develop a regional comprehensive bicycle transportation plan. The purpose of this plan is to identify opportunities and constraints for bicycling in the Isothermal region, and to establish recommendations for improvement. The Isothermal Regional Bicycle Plan covers Polk, Rutherford, McDowell, and Cleveland Counties. After a year-long planning process, with input from a steering committee and more than 400 residents, a full draft of the Isothermal Regional Bicycle Plan is now available for public download, review, and comment on the project website: <http://www.isothermalbikeplan.com/>. The project website includes basic information about the plan, ways to participate, links to the full draft plan, links to online maps, and instructions for leaving comments. Community members were also given the opportunity to provide input in-person during outreach sessions throughout January.
- The N.C. Department of Transportation (DOT) approved funding for a bicycle and pedestrian comprehensive plan for the Towns of Columbus and Tryon. As part of the grant, Tryon and Columbus councils both had to approve a resolution to participate in the study. Tryon Town Council approved the resolution during its May 16, 2017 meeting and Columbus Town Council approved the resolution during its May 18, 2017 meeting. The cost of the project is estimated at \$40,000 for each town, with the towns contributing 10 percent of the total costs, and DOT funding 90 percent of the total cost.

Additionally, the following progress was made in 2017 on Healthy Eating and Active Living in Polk County.

- The Diabetes Prevention Program began to form in October 2016, when a Diabetes Prevention Program Coordinator was hired. After being hired she was trained as a CDC Lifestyles Coach and the first class (cohort) was offered in February 2017. The program is a year long commitment. There are a total of 25 sessions that are offered, the first 16 sessions are on a weekly basis. During the second six months of the program, the sessions are held bi-weekly or monthly. The program has been well received by the community and physicians. There has been a lot of interest in the program, but at the same time interest sometimes decrease when folks realize that it is a year long commitment. The program was developed as a lifestyle and behavior change program. The curriculum focus on nutrition, physical activity, stress, sleep, triggers, etc. It is a very integrative approach to weight loss and behavior change. The first cohort had 20 participants and the second cohort started in July 2017 with 10 participants. Each participant is encouraged to lose 5-7% of their weight.
- Diabetes Self-Management Education: St. Luke's Hospital has an AADE certified program, staffed by a Certified Diabetes Educator. Patients may be identified through any provider for referral to the program. This program works in collaboration with Area Agency on Aging and Polk County Extension Services and their program, Living Healthy With Diabetes, as well as with Alliant Quality who presents the DEEP program (Diabetes Empowerment Education Program). Ideally, when a diabetic patient is identified, there is a physician referral to the DSME program, followed by encouragement in participating in Living Healthy and/or DEEP. Foothills Health Network was successful in helping these otherwise competitive agencies work together on a shared calendar of offerings and a shared, all programs included, brochure for patients.

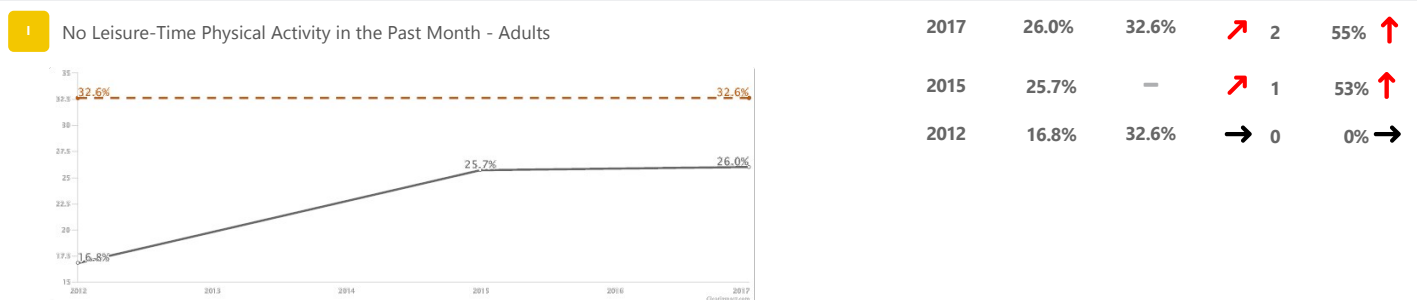
- Polk Fit hosted a Polk Fit Challenge. Many community members and community organizations engaged in different forms of activity including walking, running, hiking, cycling, dancing, Zumba®, playing team sports, swimming and more. Participants were asked to track their activity through Challenge Runner, which could be accessed as an app or a website. The challenge included over 330 participants and over 50 teams. The generous support of the Polk County Community Foundation and area business sponsors, there was absolutely no cost to the participants for the Polk Fit Challenge or Polk Fit activities.
- The Polk Cooperative Extension held a Diabetes Support Group and had a total of 41 attendees. They also provided Living with Diabetes classes and had a total participation of 9 adults. Meanwhile, the Highwood Apartments Nutrition Program resulted in 4 participants for the healthy eating class and 5 participants for the healthy salads class.
- In May 2017, 111 Polk County students, staff and parents participated in Bike and Walk to School Day, while there were 625 participants in October 2017.
- 12 Students participated in the Polk Middle School after-school Bicycle Club in the spring 2017.



Narrative

Source: 2015 CHA, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. (PRC)

The Healthy NC 2020 target is 60.6% for adults getting the recommended amount of physical activity.



Narrative

Healthy People 2020 Target = 32.6% or Lower

Source: 2015 CHA, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. (PRC);

2017 County Health Rankings and Roadmaps



Narrative

Adults are those who are 20 years of age or older. An adult who has a body mass index of 30 or higher is considered obese.

Data updated in July 2017.

Why It Matters?

Mental health, an integral component of individual health, is important throughout the lifespan. People with poor mental health may have more difficulty with relationships, succeeding in school or work. Overall well-being is tied to mental health. Depression is linked to lower productivity in the workplace, is a leading cause of suicide, and has been associated with increased use of health care services.

Mental health was selected as a priority because data shows that inpatient hospital utilization for mental disorders is relatively high. 16% of Polk adults reported experiencing more than 7 poor mental health days during the past month. Poor mental health includes stress, depression and other emotional problems. Coupled with the lack of mental health providers, and several cases of suicide locally, mental health is perceived as a "major problem" by the majority of active partners in the community.

Specific Populations At-Risk:

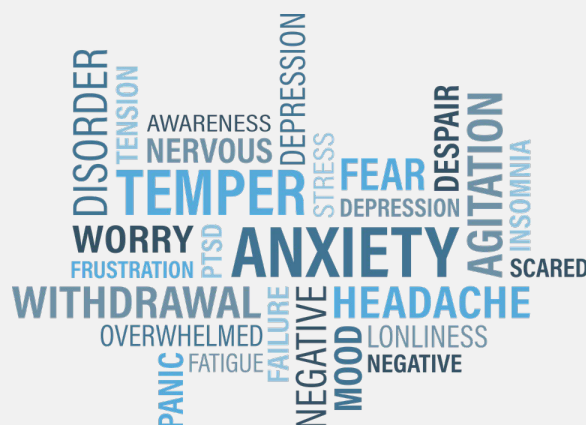
Men are almost four times as likely to commit suicide as women. Whites have higher suicide rates than African Americans and individuals of other racial/ethnic groups. Suicide rates in the western part of the state are higher than in the Piedmont or eastern parts of the state.

Females report more poor mental health days in the previous 30 days than men.

Progress Made in 2017

Additionally, the following progress was made in 2017 on Mental Health in Polk County.

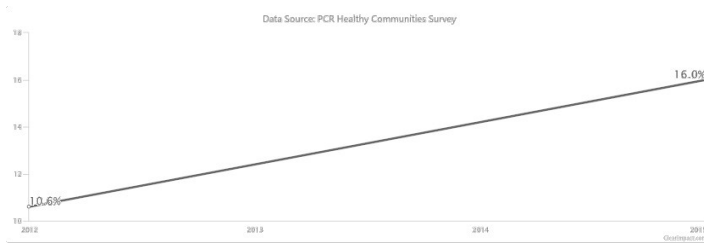
- Foothills Health Network (FHN) works with Polk Health Center (PHC), St. Luke's Hospital (SLH), and The Free Clinics (TFC) to provide integrated care at the Polk Health Center location of Blue Ridge Community Health Services (BRCHS). Screening for behavioral health issues for primary care patients and screening for chronic disease in the behavioral health setting allows the network to identify and provide earlier intervention for previously unidentified concerns. This integrated approach has been very successful at PHC. The network plans to help other primary care practices in the county use the integrated approach.
- The Foothills Health Network (FHN) sponsored a 1-hour workshop on social-emotional learning (SEL) in May 2017 and a full-day training in June 2017 for Polk County Schools. RHA staff prepared these professional developments in conjunction with Ronette Dill, Curriculum Director at Polk County Schools (PCS), for Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers in all four elementary schools in the district. Sustainability for this initiative is reflected in the scheduling by PCS for two additional professional development sessions to build on the effort catalyzed by the FHN grant. One of these sessions was scheduled for August 2017 (full day) to finalize new lesson plans for the school year. The other professional development was scheduled for January 2018 (2 hours) to (a) debrief on SEL activities up to that point; (b) identify mechanisms for extending SEL approaches to other school teachers/staff; and (c) develop strategies to implement SEL in 1st grade in the following school year. Demographic Impact of these workshops: Teachers/Staff - 9 Pre-K and 9 Kindergarten teachers and 3 assistant teachers and 2 support staff from Central Office. Those in attendance at trainings were all Caucasian females. One person was Hispanic. Eleven participants were aged between 25 and 44 and ten participants were aged between 45 and 65. Students anticipated to be reached by these teachers during the 17-18 school year — 140 Pre-K and 142 Kindergarten students.
- A partnership with RHA allowed for 6th and 7th grade students to participate in a class lecture about mental/emotional health and healthy relationships.
- Efforts continue to raise awareness about mental illness, available services and resources, and support for inter-agency communications.
- The Mental Health Task Force continues to collaborate on current issues and are working on increasing awareness about Mobile Crisis Management services, which provides intensive, on-site intervention to people of all ages who are experiencing a crisis due to mental health disturbances, developmental disabilities, or addiction. The team of behavioral health professionals, through Mobile Crisis Management, is available 24/7/365 to safely stabilize the person at home, work, school or wherever in the community the crisis occurs.





Percent of People Who Had > 7 Days of Poor Mental Health in the Past Month

2015	16.0%	—	↗ 1	51% ↗
2012	10.6%	—	→ 0	0% →



Narrative

Healthy NC 2020 Target = 2.8 days

Source: 2015 CHA Data, Professional Research Consultants, Inc. (PRC)

New and Emerging Issues & Initiatives



SOTCH Monitor New and Emerging Issues

Time Period	Actual Value	Target Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
-------------	--------------	--------------	---------------	-------------------

Customer

These are the new or emerging issues in our community in 2017 that were not identified as priorities in our CHA.

- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment annual average for Polk County has decreased from 5.1% in 2015 to 4.7% in 2016.
- There is greater community recognition that the health and wellness of children is a concern. There are comparatively high rates of childhood poverty and uninsured children in the county.
- Community key leaders feels that the schools need mental health services to take care of the many issues faced by youth in their daily lives. For youth, like for adults, the need for services far exceeds the availability of affordable services.
- Childcare, not only availability but the adequacy of, has been identified as an emerging issue. The community has experienced a rise in child neglect and child fatality, which a contributing factor can be the lack of available and adequate childcare. Child care has been documented as a national need, which is said to attributed to the dramatic increase in the numbers of working parents (particularly mothers) of very young children and the numbers of school age children who are without parent/adult supervision during after school hours.
- The only privately run daycare in the county closed.
- Access to health care and health resources continues to be an issue due to a lack of transportation which prevents the mobility of individuals especially in rural areas.
- There is heightened awareness that it is necessary to address the issue of living wage, which differs greatly when compared to minimum wage in the state of North Carolina. Adequate income is necessary for individuals to obtain necessary resources. Inadequate income causes a trickle effect to where folks are then unable to secure basic necessities, such as food, housing, medical care, post-secondary education, etc.

Polk Leading Causes of Death

Rank	Cause of Death	Polk	
		# Deaths	Death Rate
1	Cancer	287	149.3
2	Diseases of Heart	260	122.0
3	Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	85	39.4
4	Cerebrovascular Disease	80	36.3
5	All Other Unintentional Injuries	46	33.3
6	Alzheimer's disease	72	27.6
7	Suicide	20	16.9
8	Pneumonia and Influenza	36	15.4
9	Diabetes Mellitus	29	13.0
10	Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome, and Nephrosis	25	12.7
11	Unintentional Motor Vehicle Injuries	12	12.6
12	Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis	12	9.0
13	Septicemia	15	7.2
14	Homicide	1	1.8
15	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome	0	0.0
All Causes (some not listed)		1,368	675.0

Source for unstable rates: 2015 North Carolina Vital Statistics, Volume 2: Leading Causes of Death. Retrieved June 21, 2017 from North Carolina Center for Health Statistics Vital Statistics website: <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/da...>

Fifteen Leading Causes of Death

Age-Adjusted Death Rates per 100,000 Population

Standard Year = Year 2000 U.S. Population

Single 5-Year Aggregate, 2011-2015

R **SOCH** Keep Track of New Initiatives & Community Changes

Time Period Actual Value Target Value Current Trend Baseline % Change

Customer

The following are new initiatives or changes in our community in 2017:

- Through a grant from Polk County Community Foundation, Polk County Parks & Recreation was able to secure a Trails Coordinator position. This person is responsible for managing trail work days, continuing to develop partnerships, and other trail related initiatives in the county.
- Foothills Health Network now provides a case manager in Polk County to directly serve low-income, uninsured residents. The case manager is employed by The Free Clinics (TFC), but is housed in a satellite office at Polk Health Center (PHC). This arrangement allows patients who are identified for services to be referred to the network, where they often receive same day eligibility assessment. Once a patient becomes eligible for services from the network, the case manager can refer them for specialty care, diagnostic services, and/ or free or low-cost prescriptions.
- The newly developed Hear2Help program is a collaborative effort between Polk Fit, Fresh and Friendly and Foothills Health Network (FHN) to provide and disseminate information on community health and wellness resources, as well as how residents can access health and wellness resources in Polk County. Successful implementation of the Hear2Help program will provide a benefit not only to the members and partners of FHN, but to all organizations and residents of Polk County. Addressing social determinants of health can be a daunting task for any community, especially in areas with significant pockets of poverty. FHN and Polk Fit, Fresh and Friendly (PF3) believe that by starting with a better functioning system for two-way communication of needs and resources in the community, they will be better placed and better informed in creating positive solutions.
- Cost of Poverty Experience (COPE) is a poverty simulation exercise that Polk Fit, Fresh and Friendly (PF3) and Foothills Health Network (FHN) are partnering to provide to community leaders, agencies, and volunteers that regularly interact with residents living in poverty. This simulation allows for participants to walk in the shoes of a family in poverty for a simulated one month experience during a two (2)

hour exercise. It helps to highlight more of the true causes, effects, and consequences of poverty and creates personal awareness for participants. PF3 and FHN began offering the COPE poverty simulation in November, 2016. This initial offering has created at least four opportunities to provide the program to other Polk County organizations in 2017.

- Construction on Polk County's new law enforcement center in Columbus, which had a projected completion date for December 2017, is almost finished. The Polk County facility includes both a jail and a sheriff's office with a training facility, crime lab and administration offices. The 38,000-square-foot project includes brick and concrete masonry construction with steel framing. The 60-bed detention portion of the facility includes prefabricated modular steel cells sized for double occupancy in indirect podular supervision dayrooms with recreation yards. Jail operations are single-level, with no mezzanine housing floors, according to the architect. The law enforcement portion contains an evidence-processing lab and storage, vehicular evidence-processing bay, training room, locker rooms, records storage and administrative offices for the sheriff, investigations, patrol and narcotics. In addition to the jail and sheriff's office portions, the facility includes a kitchen and laundry area, enclosed vehicle sallyport, intake and booking area, medical suite, video visitation room and magistrate's offices. The jail is being built on a 22-acre site that was also master planned for a future courthouse and other county buildings.

- Tryon International Equestrian Center is on a fast track to complete several construction projects ahead of the 2018 FEI World Equestrian Games.

The games are expected to draw 500,000 visitors when the games are held from Sept. 11 through Sept. 23, combining eight World Championships at one event. According to TIEC chief operating officer, they are doing in two years what is four years worth of work, on an accelerated schedule. TIEC's budget for the games is about \$50 million. Work continues on designing competition courses and building new hotels on the site. A large stadium with 20,000 seats will also be under construction in the coming months. Construction workers began installing steel beams for a new three-story building that will house media and guests during the games and can be used as a conference center for meetings after the event. TIEC is also working with a transportation company to help identify shuttle bus service parking sites near the games. Sites in Spartanburg, S.C. are also being considered for shuttle parking as they are looking for places that can host 500 to 600 cars. TIEC is currently securing housing for all 900 athletes competing in September. Up to date, rooms have been secured in Spartanburg, S.C., Greenville, S.C. and Shelby, N.C., and it is also expected that residents in nearby towns will rent space in their homes to visitors who attend. Three new hotels - Tryon Lodge, White Horse Inn and a microtel - are expected to begin construction at the site in the spring. TIEC's hotels will have more than 1,500 rooms combined once finished. Several towns in Polk County, N.C. are preparing for the crowds. Some residents have been selected to serve as ambassadors helping direct visitors on what attractions are available in the area. TIEC, created by Mark Bellissimo in Mill Spring, N.C. is situated on a 1,600 acre site. The games are held every four years and are one of the biggest events, combining jumping, dressage and para-equestrian dressage, eventing, driving, endurance, vaulting and reining. The games in Mill Spring will be broadcast on NBC Sports. Event officials expect between 30,000 to 40,000 visitors per day at the games. Brian Griffin, Polk County business development director, believes the games will provide an economic boost for the region as the economic impact could be up to \$400 million due to people spending money on hotels, travel and restaurants. The games will also feature a vendor village located between the two entry and exit points to the World Equestrian Games venue. More than 50,000-square-feet of vendor space will be available inside the 100,000-square-foot enclosed village. In April, TIEC will host test events for the games. Decker said the test events will allow TIEC to showcase what spectators will experience in September and allow organizers to continue their preparation.