

2017 State of the County's Health Report Scorecard - Rutherford



RUTHERFORD POLK MCDOWELL HEALTH DISTRICT

The 2015 Community Health Assessment priority areas are:

- **Chronic Disease and Healthy Living**
- **Tobacco Use**
- **Substance Abuse**

The following SOTCH Scorecard was created and submitted by **March 5, 2018** in order to meet the requirements for the **Rutherford 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
- Rutherford County Weekly Reports
- The Daily Courier, Local Newspaper

R **R** Chronic Disease and Healthy Living

Time Period	Actual Value	Target Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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Why It Matters?

Chronic Disease & Healthy Living was selected because diabetes rates are above 10% and overweight and obesity rates are high. Rutherford County has high rates of heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, obesity and tobacco related illnesses. Healthy lifestyles include physical activity and good nutrition and are encouraged to reduce the risk of chronic disease.

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".

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

Through the efforts of the Outdoor Coalition and Rutherford Recreation Department, there are now more places to be active in Rutherford County and more awareness of how to access those places. Improvements to local food systems and markets continue to take place, making fresh local produce more available and more affordable.

This priority and result aligns with the Physical Activity and Nutrition focus area of the Healthy NC 2020.

The following progress was made in 2017 on our action plan interventions for Chronic Disease and Healthy Living in Rutherford County.

- **Build Active Living Communities**

- 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.

- Spindale Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

- **Bike Ride & Walkabout**

On Saturday, November 18, we had the Community Walkabout and Bike Ride. The walkabout started at 10am and the group toured the northern section of town, assessing sidewalk conditions and connectivity. We had 13 people and one dog, as well as our lovely Spindale police department's bicycle escort. At 2pm, we gathered for the bike ride around town – 12 people, ages ranging from 10-65! We rode along the rail trail and down to Isothermal Community College for an 8-mile trip. The weather was good and everyone enjoyed being out in Spindale on their bikes. We noted concerns about access to the trail, topography challenges, and lack of bicycle parking, but ultimately had a good ride, taking advantage of a substantial existing network of trails and comfortable roadways.

- **Public Workshop**

The *BikeWalk Spindale* public workshop was held at Barley's Taproom on Tuesday, November 28 from 6:30 until 8:30pm. Approximately 20 people came to hear about the comprehensive bicyclist and pedestrian plan, providing valuable input about walking and riding a bike in Spindale. After a brief background of the planning process from Scott Webber, the Town Manager, and an explanation of the format of the meeting from J.M. Teague Engineering & Planning, everyone gathered around maps of the town to comment on the current conditions and offer suggestions for improvements. The focus of the meeting was to gather ideas about infrastructure that would make Spindale a better place to walk and bike for transportation and recreation. The comments and suggestions indicate consistent support for prioritizing safety improvements along Main Street, Oak Street, and Oakland Street. Several key intersections were flagged as hazardous for people walking and on bike – Charlotte Road/W Main Street/Alt-74/Railroad Avenue, Ledbetter Road/E Main Street, and the Rail Trail crossing at Main Street. Additionally, residents at the meeting voiced the desire to make sure there are bicycle and pedestrian connections to parks, schools, and existing trails. It is important to extend the greenway system so that Spindale is connected to Rutherfordton and Forest City and generally to make sure that people can safely reach their destination. Access to the Thermal Belt Rail Trail was expressed as important to the success of capturing both the economic benefits of the trail system and its transportation benefits to Spindale residents. Suggestions from workshop attendees included additional trailheads with bicycle parking and maps, short spurs that would directly link the trail to residential communities nearby or commercial businesses, and improved signage and road crossings.

- **Next Steps for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan**

Based on survey responses, two steering committee meetings, field work/data collection, collaboration with concurrent transportation planning projects (like the *Isothermal Regional Bike Plan*, led by Alta Planning), and input from the bike ride, walkabout, and public workshop, the project team is now ready to begin building a list of project recommendations and policy ideas for the Town of Spindale. This list will go before the steering committee and we will prioritize 10-20 key projects to present to the public at another open house event. We'll be cataloging these projects on a GIS map that will eventually get incorporated in NCDOT's statewide system so they will know that Spindale has specified improvements. All of this will end up as a physical planning document, with history, context, design standards, project details (estimated cost, length, benefits, challenges), and implementation/funding strategies.





- **Expand the Thermal Belt Rail Trail into Forest City**

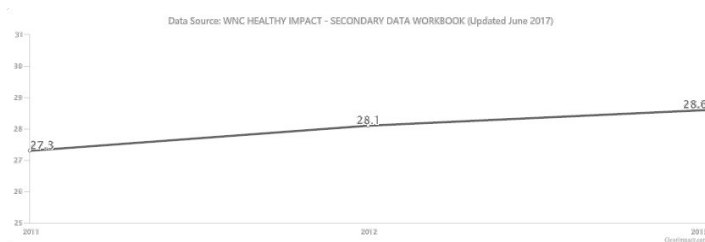
- Construction to Start Soon
 - Funding for 13.58 miles of green-way from Forrest Hunt Elementary School to Gilkey has been secured with the implementation of the \$4.25 million grant from RHI Legacy Foundation, Inc. Construction could start by March with an anticipated nine-month construction schedule. Assuming the proposed schedule is met, the trail would be completed by the end of 2018. An interlocal agreement, formed between the four individual towns of Rutherfordton, Ruth, Spindale and Forest City, as well as Rutherford County, all located within the Thermal Belt Rail Trail corridor, has been signed to manage the rail trail development and maintenance of the trail after construction. Serving as the backbone of the county, the 13.58 mile, and 12 feet wide, paved greenway will cross four Main Streets, a section of the Overmountain Victory Trail, and the Bechtler Mint Site Historic Park. Along the pathway visitors will find greenspace, exercise stations, playgrounds, and several trailheads providing a solution to the challenges to improve Rutherford County's health and prosperity. The goal behind the development of the Thermal Belt Rail Trail project is to bring communities together for the purpose of promoting an active lifestyle in adults and youth, plus support economic development for the county. This creation directly supports the mission set forth by the RHI Legacy Foundation meeting their strong beliefs in funding projects aligned with their three health focus areas of chronic disease, healthy eating and active living.

Additionally, the following progress was made in 2017 on Chronic Disease and Healthy Living in Rutherford County:

- The Health Educator with the Rutherford-Polk-McDowell Health District was trained as a lay leader for self management programs including Living Healthy with Chronic Disease, Living Healthy with Chronic Pain, and Living Healthy with Diabetes.
- Involving many partner agencies, at least 5 health fairs took place in 2017 including:
 - "Cancer Awareness Night," which was held during a Forest City Owls game at McNair Field on June 17, 2017. Many providers who play a part in treating or preventing cancer participated in this health fair. A lot of health information was also distributed to community members including information about tobacco cessation, healthy eating and active living, cancer support groups, bone marrow donations, etc.
 - Several health fairs took place at the Neighbors Pantry, a food distribution site in Gilkey. Providers were present to distribute health information and education, provide health screenings such as blood pressure checks, blood sugar checks, vision screenings, dental screenings, and much more.
 - On May 20, 2017 a health fair took place at the Rutherford County Farmers Market in Forest City. Providers once again provided health information and education, and health screenings such as blood pressure checks, blood sugar checks, vision screenings, dental screenings, and more.
- Rutherford Life Services started a "fruit of the month club". This included a taste testing for participants where they were able to experience different flavors by trying non-typical fruits.
- Tracy Davis with the Rutherford County Cooperative Extension provided 9 different cooking sessions under the Med Instead of Meds program (Mediterranean-style of eating) and had participation of 46 adults. The Cooperative Extension also provided the following programs with participation numbers attached: Color Me Healthy for Head Start preschoolers - 9 sessions - 58 students; CATCH nutrition & physical activity program for K-5 at Forest City Dunbar Elementary School - 8 sessions - 150 students; Kids & Chefs summer day camp - 12 youth; Take Control - chronic disease reduction series - 6 sessions - 8 adults; Cook Smart classes - 10 sessions - 43 adults; Cooking With Herbs - 1 session - 40 adults; Food Preservation - 6 workshops - 14 adults; Living Healthy with Chronic Pain - 6 sessions - 7 adults; Living Healthy with Diabetes - 6 sessions - 7 adults.
- The Rutherford County Senior Center provided a diabetes support group through a partnership with Rutherford Regional Health System and utilized their diabetes educator.
- In May 2017, 462 Rutherford County students, staff and parents participated in Bike and Walk to School Day, while there were 490 participants in October 2017.
- In partnership with Rutherford County Schools, the Rutherford Cooperative Extension will continue to coordinate a Speedway to Healthy Exhibit for all 4th grade students. The exhibit will allow for students to make "pit stops" at different parts of the human body including the brain, stomach, heart, lungs, kidneys, etc. There they will participate in a short 4 minute presentation to learn how the foods they eat affect their bodies and their health and about making healthier lifestyle choices. The Speedway to Healthy project was created as a resource to fight childhood obesity and poor health among children in North Carolina.



Prevalence of Adult Obesity - Rutherford County



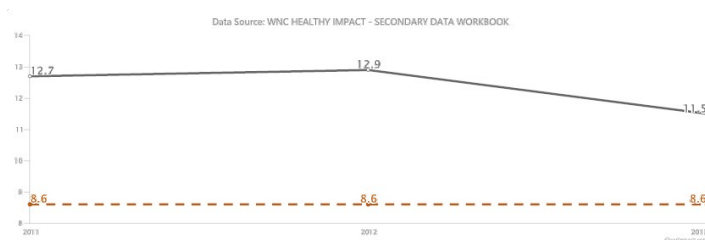
2013	28.6	—	↗ 2	5% ↗
2012	28.1	—	↗ 1	3% ↗
2011	27.3	—	→ 0	0% →

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.



Prevalence of Adult Diabetes - Rutherford County



2013	11.5	8.6	↘ 1	-9% ↘
2012	12.9	8.6	↗ 1	2% ↗
2011	12.7	8.6	→ 0	0% →

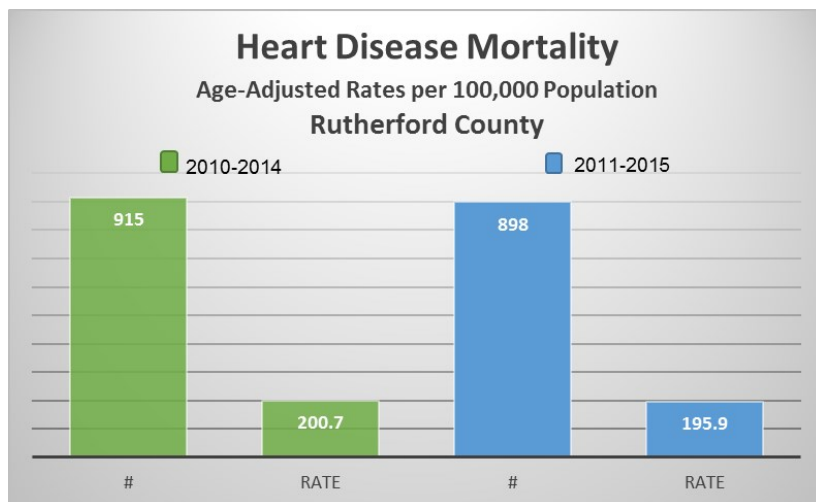
Narrative

A Healthy NC 2020 objective is to decrease the percentage of adults with diabetes to a target percentage of 8.6%.



Heart Disease Mortality - Rutherford County

Narrative



*2010-2014 Race-Specific and Sex-Specific Age-Adjusted Death Rates by County (CD21B). Retrieved on April 1, 2016, from North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics (NC SCHS), 2016 County Health Data Book website: <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/da...>

*2011-2015 Race-Specific and Sex-Specific Age-Adjusted Death Rates by County (CD21B). 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...>

*Age-Adjusted Rates per 100,000 Population

The risk for heart disease increases as a person ages. In addition to behavioral risk factors, obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes are other known risk factors. The Healthy NC 2020 Target rate is 161.5.

Why It Matters?

Tobacco Use was selected because of high rates of lung cancer incidence and prevalence, high current smoking rates, high asthma rates and rising e-cigarette use among youth. Rates of pregnant women that smoke have increased and is strongly related to low and very low birth rates. Smoking in general is associated with adverse health risks.

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.

Risk Factors:

Individuals with less education and those with lower incomes are more likely to smoke. The poverty rates in Rutherford County have been steadily rising due to decreased economic opportunities. The median household income in Rutherford County is \$10,000 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, Rutherford County has a 7% lower high school graduation rate (US Census and Public Schools of NC 2009-2013 estimate). Individuals with certain lifetime mental illnesses and those with serious psychological distress are more like to use tobacco. The suicide rate in Rutherford County is 23% higher than the NC state rate (2009-2013 NC State Center for Health Statistics). Smoking during pregnancy is an unhealthy behavior that may have negative effects on both the mother and the fetus. Smoking can lead to fetal and newborn death, and contributes to low birth weight and pre-term delivery. The Western NC region has very high percentages of women who smoke during pregnancy and Rutherford County's rates are similar to many WNC counties.

Focus Areas:

Healthy NC 2020 focus areas for this priority include Tobacco and Maternal and Child Health.

Progress Made in 2017

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

• Implementation of the 5As Brief Cessation Counseling through the Maternal Child Health Initiative

- 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.
- 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 and proven role in the success of pregnant and postpartum women to quit smoking. Studies show that a brief counseling intervention 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 cases, triple tobacco cessation.
- Training on the 5As Brief Cessation Counseling was provided to Rutherford County Department of Social Services staff.
- In partnership with RHI Legacy Foundation, Rutherford Regional hosted their annual camp, Camp Wheezknot, in August 2017, which has expanded to include parent education about asthma, and asthma triggers including tobacco use and second hand smoke exposure.

• 100% Tobacco Free Schools

- Sixth graders at Chase Middle School, as well as other students at Forrest Hunt Elementary School and Cliffside Elementary School, were taught a six-lesson program that covered topics such as tobacco use, stress, and physical activity and healthy eating. The I CAN program is designed to help youth encourage their friends and families and communities to live healthier lives. These lessons were delivered by Tiffany Crank of Levine Cancer Institute.
- Conversations are still taking place with Isothermal Community College administrators to help this institution become tobacco free.

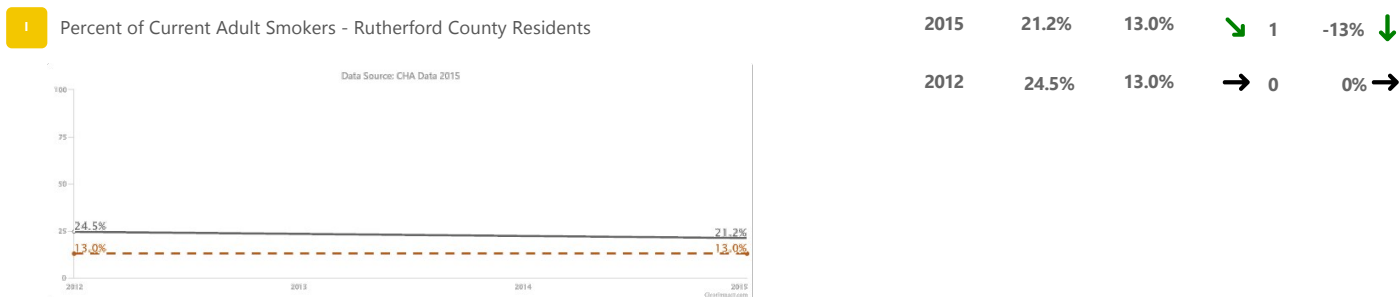
Additionally, the following progress was made in 2017 on tobacco use in Rutherford County.

- The majority of our health promotion work is done at health fairs, food distribution sites, workplaces, schools and other venues where there is contact with the public. Brochures, posters and health literature are distributed. In 2017 the Rutherford Health Dept. attended 5 different health fairs.



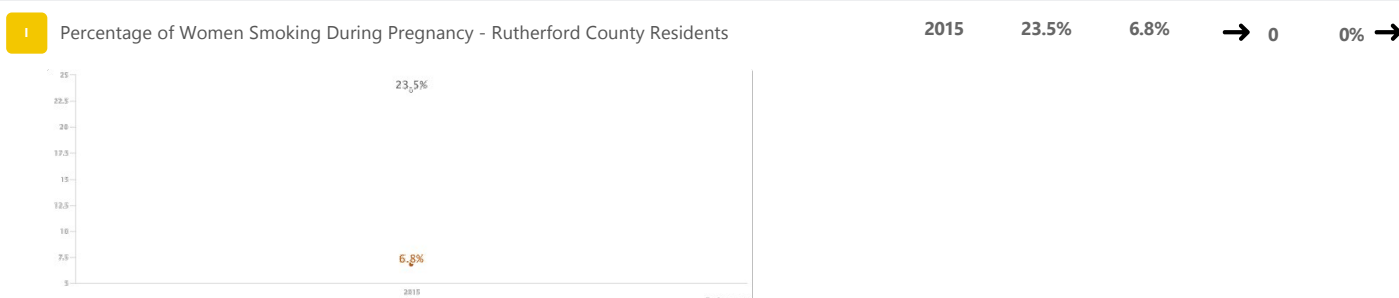
RPMHD participates in MayFest 2017 and talks to the public about asthma, asthma triggers, tobacco cessation, healthy eating, active living and much more!

- Promotion of Quit Line (1-800-QuitNow), tobacco cessation and harmful effects of e-cigarette use.
- In April 2017 Two Rutherford County Clinicians successfully completed the Duke Tobacco Treatment Specialist Training program to deliver one on one tobacco interventions in clinics serving uninsured and under-served populations.
- Low dose CT scanning for lung cancer became available to uninsured Rutherford County residents in May 2017 through Levine Cancer Institute's Lung Bus program. These screenings continue to be offered to individuals who are between the ages of 55-77, have a 30 pack year smoking history, still smoke or have quit within the last 15 years and are uninsured or have Medicaid only. Providing access to these scans will allow this at-risk population the opportunity for early detection.
- Rutherford regional is now offering Low Dose Lung Screening CTs, to detect lung cancer, to patients with health insurance.
- The NC Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch and the Rutherford-Polk-McDowell Health District offered technical support to Rutherford Life Services to help with new tobacco free policies for their three facilities. The Learning Tree Child Care Center went tobacco free on January 1, 2017 and everyone seemed very pleased. The Adult Day Care Center went tobacco free on July 1, 2017, and Rutherford Life Services, main campus, became tobacco free in January of 2018.
- 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.



Narrative

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



Narrative

Source: CHA Data 2015

R Substance Abuse

Time Period	Actual Value	Target Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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Why It Matters?

Substance Abuse continues to be a problem in Rutherford County. There is strong leadership through the United Way and a Drug Free Communities Program to continue to work through community collaborative partnerships to reduce the burden of substance abuse.

Specific populations that are at risk include children and youth. Adults aged 20-39 are at a higher risk for opioid overdose death.

Progress Made in 2017

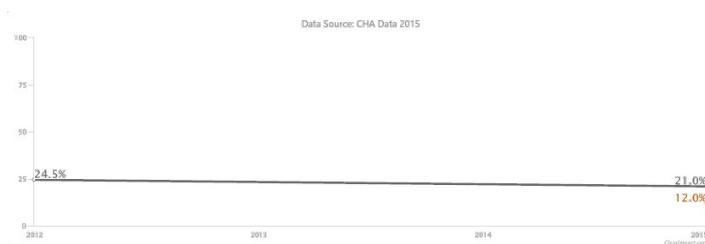
The following progress was made in 2017 on our action plan interventions for substance abuse in Rutherford County.

- In March/April 2017 the Substance Abuse sub-committee worked with Safe Kids to promote underage drinking prevention during prom season. They connected with a local McDonald's and had 8,000 tray liners printed with consequences on social hosting information with a prom tie-in printed on them.
- On April 12, 2017 a Pre-Spring Break alcohol prevention event was held in partnership with Isothermal Community College. 79 students completed the impaired driving course using the impaired vision goggles. They also took risk assessment survey and had the opportunity to speak with a counselor.
- A Developmental Assets workshop was provided in June 2017 to the general public. During this workshop, attendees learned about how adults can play a role in being an asset and help to protect our youth from risky behaviors. Dr. Basil Savitsky of RHA Health Services taught the group how to use the evidence-backed "Developmental Assets Framework" and place an emphasis on the positive.
- Tools for successful interactions with adolescents and teen was provided at Zones Training in June 2017. This lunch and learn workshop taught participants how to use the "Zones" model of emotional regulation when working with youth. This is also the same program being used in Rutherford County elementary schools in the day treatment program and has very positive results. This training can also help adults with anger management issues. The lunch and learn was taught by Samantha Morrison, Clinical Director of Child Services at Family Preservation Services.
- In August 2017 a free training, "Using Motivational Interviewing to Address Opioid Misuse," was offered to medical and behavioral health providers. This training was provided through a partnership between the Substance Abuse sub-committee and CCNC.
- Community Resource cards have been developed and distributed. These cards contain contact information for mental and behavioral health treatment providers in the county as well as information for Mobile Crisis Management Services.
- In August of 2017 a Medication Assisted Treatment program was launched in the Rutherford County Jail to help those addicted to opioids. This program will provide Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), behavioral therapy, and wraparound services for Rutherford County jail inmates, who are also in a setting where traditionally they would be ineligible for funding to receive these types of services. The program features a one year continuum of care that utilizes MAT and individual or group therapy during the incarceration period. Upon reentry to the community, participants will receive MAT, Substance Abuse Intensive Outpatient treatment, peer support services, and linkages to medical care as well as job skills and education support services. This program utilizes Vivitrol (naltrexone), a medication that blocks opiate cravings, in conjunction with behavioral therapy. While in jail, the cost of the medication is covered by grant funding provided by RHI Legacy Foundation and the participants do not pay any out of pocket costs for MAT. Medicaid or other state funds will be accessible to participants to cover the cost upon reentry to the community setting. This program is possible because of a partnership between the Rutherford County Sheriff's Office, Family Preservation Services, United Way of Rutherford County, RHI Legacy Foundation and District Attorney, Ted Bell.
- In October 2017 a Rutherford County Leadership Forum on Opioid and Substance Abuse took place at the Foundation at Isothermal Community College. Local elected officials and representatives from key organizations and community partners were invited to learn about the effect of the opioid crisis on the county's citizens and the resources available to help local families. Participants were also asked to help determine what gaps in services currently exist and to help develop collaborative strategies and effective education, prevention, and treatment that can and will make a difference in Rutherford county.
- Operation Medicine Drop take back events have been held throughout the year in March and October 2017 at the locations of Ingles in Forest City and Lake Lure, Ellenboro Fire Department and Food Lion in Rutherfordton.



United Way of Rutherford County was part of the NC Lock Your Meds campaign. This is one of the billboards utilized during the campaign.

I	Percent of Residents Who Have Consumed Alcohol in the Past Month - Rutherford County Residents	2015	21.0%	12.0%	↓ 1	-14%	↓
		2012	24.5%	—	→ 0	0%	→

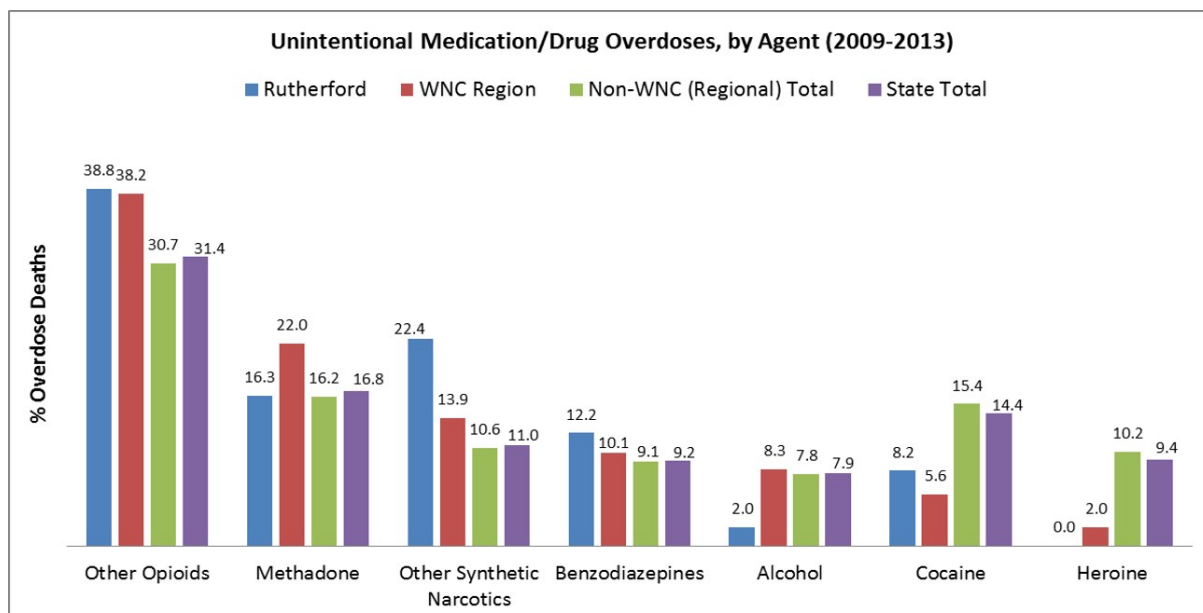


Narrative

Healthy People 2020 Target is 12.0%

I	Unintentional Medication/Drug Overdoses	—	—	—	—	—
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Narrative



Source: NC DPH, Chronic Disease and Injury Section, Injury and Violence Prevention Branch

“Other Opioids” caused the highest proportion of drug overdose deaths (38.8%) in Rutherford County in the period 2009-2013.

Narrative

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 Rutherford County has decreased from 7.8% in 2015 to 6.7% in 2016.
- The need for access to healthier and affordable foods for Rutherford County residents has been identified.
- Rutherford County residents along with first responders and Rutherford County law enforcement began encountering a new drug that was taking the lives of many. It took the name of "gray death" and contains a new and dangerous opioid combination. The substance is blamed for thousands of fatal overdoses nationally as it contains a mixture of heroin, other opioids and fentanyl, which is sometimes used to tranquilize large animals like elephants. And because it can be absorbed through the skin, simply touching the powder puts users at risk.
- The opioid crisis afflicting the entire nation has lead Rutherford County EMS to receive a fairly large quantity of Naloxone to be deliberately distributed to Rutherford County residents who are at risk for an overdose.
- The population of Rutherford County is expected to increase by only 0.3% between 2020 - 2030 (Source: WNC Healthy Impact - Secondary Data Workbook, updated in June 2017).
- Youth education and engagement became more of a focus area in Rutherford County due to the idea of changing health behaviors and teaching healthier lifestyle choices at a more receptive age.
- Due to 40 plus children having been placed in foster homes in the last year, the need for more qualified foster parents have been identified as well as better local resources to help families with the reunification process.
- 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.

Rutherford Leading Causes of Death

Rank	Cause of Death	Rutherford	
		# Deaths	Death Rate
1	Diseases of Heart	898	195.9
2	Cancer	819	172.0
3	Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	333	69.9
4	Cerebrovascular Disease	273	58.8
5	All Other Unintentional Injuries	150	39.7
6	Diabetes Mellitus	128	27.3
7	Alzheimer's disease	114	25.0
8	Suicide	70	19.7
9	Pneumonia and Influenza	74	17.0
10	Unintentional Motor Vehicle Injuries	58	17.0
11	Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome, and Nephrosis	69	14.7
12	Septicemia	63	13.8
13	Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis	59	13.1
14	Homicide	17	5.6
15	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome	2	0.6
All Causes (some not listed)		4,207	934.4

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

Narrative

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

- The need for access to healthier and affordable foods for Rutherford County residents sparked the creation of a "Healthy Foods" sub-committee to the Rutherford County Community Health Council and the development of a Rutherford Food Network. The Rutherford Food Network, specifically, will be tasked with improving the food system in the county as well as increasing food resources for the food insecure population.
 - Rutherford Outdoor Coalition implemented many new programs to offer community members the opportunity to be physically active. These included the Rutherford Fit challenge, Couch to 5K, a Walking Club, and a biking club. Folks participating in the Walking Club can enjoy a walk two times per week, at Summey Park on Tuesdays and Purple Martin Track on Thursdays.
 - Blue Ridge Health Rutherford began offering dental services at their Spindale, NC location. They will be expanding from 3 chairs to 9 chairs.
 - Rutherford County Transit began offering free employment rides, within the county, to help folks get to and from work.
 - The groundbreaking for the park at Florence Mill took place in August 2017. With a completion date set for spring 2018, the park is expected to become a major focal point for downtown Forest City featuring an amphitheater for outdoor concerts and special events, and an interactive, pop-jet style splash pad.
 - The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) plans to widen to multiple lanes, a 5.2-mile stretch of U.S. 221, from just north of Thunder Road to just south of Roper Loop Road in Rutherford County. Additionally, the intersection of U.S. 74 with U.S. 64 will be redesigned to accommodate the new stretch of U.S. 221 in that area. This project is part of a larger overall plan to widen 18.2 miles of U.S. 221 from the South Carolina State Line to just south of Roper Loop Road. It is estimated that more than 250 parcels of land will be impacted by this project. The NCDOT has set aside \$22,900,000 for right-of-way takings and the total cost for the project is estimated to be \$76,200,000.00. The right-of-way acquisition was set to take place in 2017.
 - A new hotel, Hampton Inn and Suites, was built in Forest City and opened in December 2017.
 - In December 2017 Rutherford County Transit launched the availability of Wi-Fi on their fleet of 26 buses. The free wireless internet service provides riders the ability to stay connected on the move. They are able to check social media, listen to music, play games, or catch up on the news.
-