

2020

**Polk County
State of the County
Health (SOTCH) Report**



2019 State of the County Health Report - Polk County



The 2018 Community Health Assessment priority areas are:

- **Mental Health**
- **Healthy Eating, Active Living**

The following CHIP Scorecard was created and submitted on **March 2nd, 2020** in order to meet the requirements for the Polk County State of the County Health 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](#)
- [WNC Healthy Impact Data Workbook](#)
- [NC DHHS CHA Tools](#)
- [NC DHHS County Health Data Book](#)
- [NC DHHS/ DPH CHA Data Tools](#)

Mental Health - Long Term CHIP

R **CHIP** Our desired result is for all Polk County residents to have access to mental health resources in a timely and effective manner.

Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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Alignment

Mental Health and the related result are aligned with the following [Healthy NC 2020 Focus Areas/ Objectives](#).

- Mental Health

Experience and Importance

How would we experience access to mental health resources in a timely and effective manner in our community?

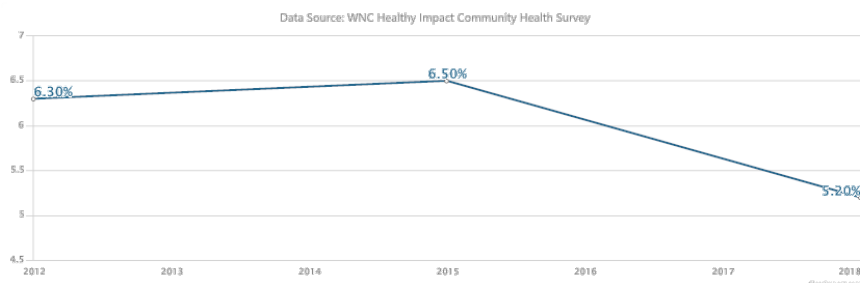
Polk County's desire is to improve mental health within it's community. Mental health is not solely how a person thinks, feels, or behaves. A person's mental health can affect many aspects of their life including their ability to deal with stress, resiliency levels, and their ability to build sustaining relationships. The desire for Polk County is to have a community full of members who have a zest for living, self-confident, a sense of contentment, and the ability to bounce back from adversity. We hope for a community with readily available resources available that anyone can access stigma free.

What information led to the selection of this health issue and related result?

Mental Health was selected because it affects many different areas of an individual's wellbeing including their physical health. A healthy community encompasses all aspects of health and although much progress has been made in this area, many local leaders agree that much is still to be done. Supporting data of this health priority includes the percentage of adults reporting more than 7 days of poor mental health, dissatisfaction with life, opiate use and suicide rates. As part of the Healthy North Carolina 2020 focus area for Mental Health, we will be using the objective to "Decrease the average number of poor mental health days among adults in the past 30 days" as an indicator for this priority area.

I Percent of Polk County residents who did not get mental health care or counseling that was needed in the past year.

2018	5.20%	↓	1	-17%	↓
2015	6.50%	↑	1	3%	↑
2012	6.30%	→	0	0%	→



Story Behind the Indicator

The "Story Behind the Curve" helps us understand why the data on the amount of residents not receiving mental health services is the way that it is in our community. When we understand the root causes of our community problems, we have a better chance of finding the right solutions, together.

What's Helping? *These are the positive forces at work in our community and beyond that influence this issue in our community.*

- Mobile Crisis services
- Trained law enforcement officers able to respond to a mental health crisis
- Improved awareness of the issue
- Availability of walk-in crisis options
- "Polk County is strengthened by the collaborative efforts of many agencies working together toward a common goal"

What's Hurting? *These are the negative forces at work in our community and beyond that influence this issue in our community.*

- "lack of appropriate prevention and mental health treatment resources"
- "lack of local service providers, lack of sufficient funding for treatment"
- "social stigma around mental health issues"
- Number of Polk County adults indicating they are dissatisfied with life
- Percentage of Polk County residents indicating that their life has been negatively affected by substance abuse (by self or someone else)
- Percentage of Polk County residents who have experienced household substance abuse prior to age 18, an Adverse Childhood Experience
- Percentage of Polk County adults who have self-reported that they have used opiates/opioids in the past year, with or without a prescription.

Mental Health has been chosen as our long-term CHIP because we believe long-term strategies are needed to move the needle. According to NC State Center for Health Statistics, suicide was the 7th leading cause of death for the period of 2012-2016 for Polk County. Suicide is the 4th leading cause of death for the age group 20-39 years in Polk County (NC State Center for Health Statistics, 2018). These alarming statistics illustrate the importance of both short-term and long-term interventions to improve population health indicators. By ensuring every Polk County resident is able to receive mental health care or counseling when needed, we hope this will have a positive impact on our self-harm rates.

The Healthy North Carolina 2020 lists mental health as a focus area with an objective of decreasing the average number of poor mental health days among adults in the past 30 days to the 2020 target of 2.8. We will focus on evidence-based strategies and practices such as Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training to help reach this Healthy NC 2020 objective.

Partners With A Role To Play

Partners in our Community Health Improvement Process:

- Polk County Wellness Coalition
- Polk County Health and Human Services Agency
- St. Luke's Hospital
- WNC Healthy Impact

Partners with a Role in Helping Our Community Do Better on This Issue:

- Polk County Library
- Thermal Belt Outreach
- NC Cooperative Extension
- Polk County Parks and Recreation
- Blue Ridge Health Center- Polk
- Senior Life Solutions
- VAYA Health
- NC Courts System
- CooperRiis
- Family Preservation Services
- Isothermal Planning and Development Commission
- United Methodist Church- Columbus and Saluda
- Polk County Wellness Coalition
- Polk County Health and Human Services Agency
- St. Luke's Hospital
- RHA Health Services

Strategies Considered & Process

The following actions have been identified by our Wellness Coalition, community partners, and community members as ideas for what can work for our community to make a difference on mental health.

Actions and Approaches Identified by Our Partners *These are actions and approaches that our partners think can make a difference on mental health.*

- Increased gatekeeper trainings sessions for suicide prevention using ASIST; QPR; CALM or Mental Health First Aid Training
- Increased use of depression screening tools for organizations serving at-risk groups such as Meals on Wheels
- Assist in the creation of suicide prevention policies for community organizations
- Increase in events to raise awareness for topics surrounding mental health and available resources

- Improve mental health resources available in schools

What is Currently Working in Our Community *These are actions and approaches that are currently in place in our community to make a difference on mental health.*

- A Mental Health Advisory Committee diligently working to find solutions to the mental health issues that Polk County residents are facing
- Walk-in Crisis Center available through Family Preservation Services
- RHA- Mobile Crisis Management is also available to anyone seeking assistance
- The Polk County Substance Abuse Committee (PSAC), is actively seeking strategies that can be implemented in the community that addresses youth and adult substance abuse
- Resources provided by Blue Ridge Health Center- Polk

Evidence-Based Strategies *These are actions and approaches that have been shown to make a difference on Mental Health.*

Name of Strategy Reviewed	Level of Intervention
Collaborative Care for the Management of Depressive Disorders	Organizational
Music Therapy	Individual
After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools, Second Edition	Policy and Interpersonal
Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Evidence -Based Practices (EBP) Kit	Organizational

What Community Members Most Affected by Mental Health Say *These are the actions and approaches recommended by members of our community who are most affected by mental health*

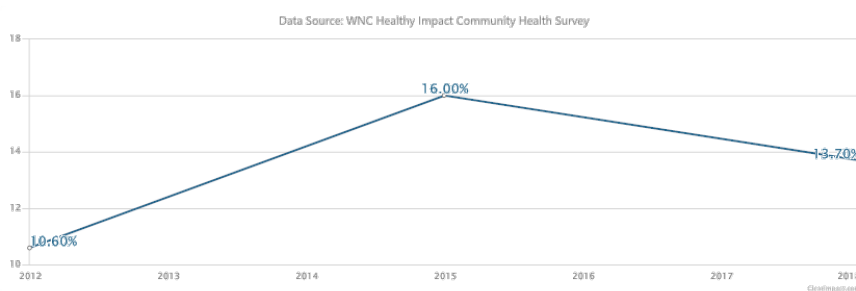
- Improved access to mental health resources
- destigmatize the use of mental health services
- Community knowledge regarding signs of crisis forming

Process for Selecting Priority Strategies

After reviewing various strategies to focus on for mental health, Polk County Wellness Coalition and other partners decided to focus on those strategies that were most feasible with the largest impact. Priority strategies were chosen based on their alignment with community values, feasibility, ability to address more than one root cause, and if the strategy had the potential to be high-leverage. This process occurred over the course of several committee meetings and community forums.

I Percent of Polk County residents who have experienced more than 7 days of poor mental health in the past month

2018	13.70%	↓	1	29%	↑
2015	16.00%	↑	1	51%	↑
2012	10.60%	→	0	0%	→



Story Behind the Indicator

The "Story Behind the Curve" helps us understand why the data on the amount of residents who have experienced more than 7 days of poor mental health in the past month, is the way that it is in our community. When we understand the root causes of our community problems, we have a better chance of finding the right solutions, together.

What's Helping? *These are the positive forces at work in our community and beyond that influence this issue in our community.*

- Mobile Crisis services
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- Percentage of Polk County residents indicating that their life has been negatively affected by substance abuse (by self or someone else)
- Percentage of Polk County residents who have experienced household substance abuse prior to age 18, an Adverse Childhood Experience
- Percentage of Polk County adults who have self-reported that they have used opiates/opioids in the past year, with or without a prescription.

Mental Health has been chosen as our long-term CHIP because we believe long-term strategies are needed to move the needle. According to NC State Center for Health Statistics, self-harm was the 7th leading cause of death for the period of 2012-2016 for Polk County. Self-harm is the 4th leading cause of death for the age group 20-39 years in Polk County (NC State Center for Health Statistics, 2018). These alarming statistics illustrate the importance of both short-term and long-term interventions to improve population health indicators. By ensuring every Polk County resident is able to receive mental health care or counseling when needed, we hope this will have a positive impact on our self-harm rates.

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- Increased use of depression screening tools for organizations serving at-risk groups such as Meals on Wheels
- Assist in the creation of suicide prevention policies for community organizations
- Increase in events to raise awareness for topics surrounding mental health and available resources
- Improve mental health resources available in schools

What is Currently Working in Our Community *These are actions and approaches that are currently in place in our community to make a difference on mental health.*

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- Improved access to mental health resources
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After reviewing various strategies to focus on for mental health, Polk County Wellness Coalition and other partners decided to focus on those strategies that were most feasible with the largest impact. Priority strategies were chosen based on their alignment with community values, feasibility, ability to address more than one root cause, and if the strategy had the potential to be high-leverage. This process occurred over the course of several committee meetings and community forums.

P	Expand access to evidence-based Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training for suicide prevention in the community.	Time	Current Actual	Current	Baseline
		Period	Value	Trend	% Change

What Is It?

Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training was identified by the community as an action, that when combined with other actions in our community, has a reasonable chance of making a difference in the number of residents who report they did not receive mental health care or counseling that was needed in the past year in our community. This is a new strategy in our community. Examples of gatekeeper trainings include QPR (Question, Persuade, and Refer), and ASIST.

The priority population for this strategy is low-income and/or geriatric populations, and the strategy aims to make a difference at the community, organizational, and individual levels. Implementation will take place within the community at various organizations who will benefit the most such as our first responders, Health and Human Service departments, homeless shelters, senior centers, and safety net organizations.

One of the main focuses for this strategy is to eliminate the obstacles to optimal health that our priority populations may experience. By ensuring staff on the first line are adequately equipped to handle crisis, we are ensuring all community members are provided with the resources they need.

Partners

The partners for this strategy include:

Agency	Person	Role
Polk County Health and Human Services Agency- Public Health Division	Haley Suskauer	Lead
Polk County Wellness Coalition	Jessica Raines	Collaborate
Thermal Belt Outreach	George Alley	Support
St. Luke's Hospital	Michelle Fortune	Collaborate
Polk County Health and Human Services Agency	Joshua Kennedy	Collaborate
Polk County Health and Human Services Agency- Social Services Division	Kim Wilson	Support
Polk County Health and Human Services Agency- Senior Services Division	Donna Carson	Support

Work Plan

Activity	Resources Needed	Agency/Person Responsible	Target Completion Date
Host an annual community discussion/event focused on suicide prevention and resources available.	Event space, flyers, vendors	Polk County Wellness Coalition- Haley Suskauer	November 15th, 2019, ongoing
Research and decide on type of gatekeeper training most organizations are interested in.	Computer, Telephone	Polk County Health and Human Services Agency/ Haley Suskauer	January 15th, 2019
Gather an initial list of 5 organizations willing to send at least one staff member to a gatekeeper training.	Computer, telephone	Polk County Wellness Coalition- Behavioral Health POD Leader or Polk County HHS Agency	March 15th, 2020
Decide if trainings will be held locally or if attendees will need to go outside of the county.	Computer, telephone	Polk County Health and Human Services Agency/ Josh Kennedy	April 30th, 2020
Send schedules out for trainings to committed organizations	Computer, telephone	Polk County Health and Human Services Agency/ Haley Suskauer	June 15th, 2020
Follow up with initial 5 organizations to evaluate their experience at training and using their gatekeeper training	Computer, phone	Polk County Wellness Coalition/ Behavioral Health POD Leader	August 15th, 2020
Send event info for gatekeeper trainings to Wellness Coalition listserv to increase awareness and access	Computer	Polk County Wellness Coalition	Ongoing

For future years, we will focus on expanding these training offerings to other organizations that can benefit.

Evaluation & Sustainability

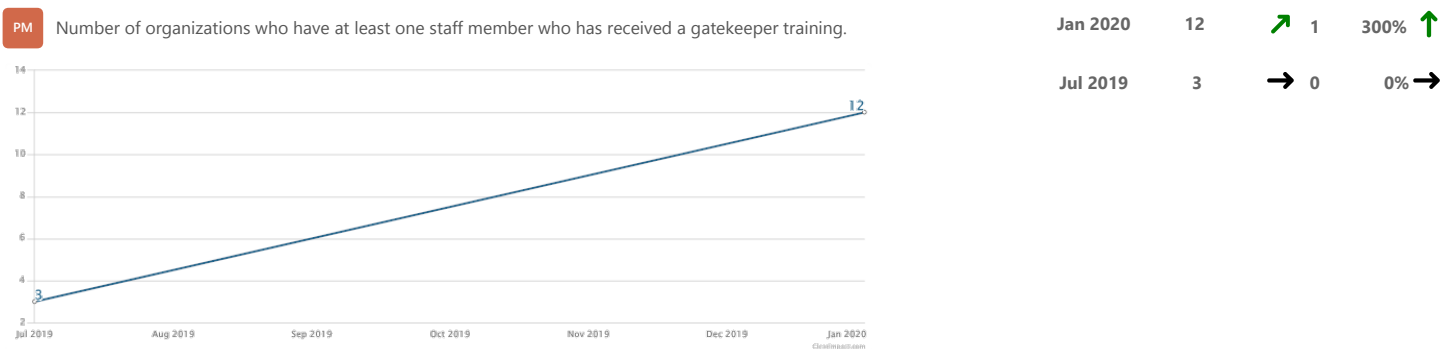
Evaluation Plan:

We plan to evaluate the impact of this strategy through the use of Results-Based Accountability™ to monitor specific performance measures. We will be monitoring How Much, How Well and/or Better Off Performance Measures. Our evaluation activities will be tracked in the Work Plan table, above. Impacts will be presented to key partners to discuss what is working and what is not working.

Sustainability Plan:

The following is our sustainability plan for this strategy:

- Sustainability Component 1: Use program measures to ensure ongoing effectiveness and demonstrate success to key community stakeholders.
 - We will provide quarterly reports to key stakeholders to ensure successes are known.
- Sustainability Component 2: Identify champions who strongly support our strategy.
 - As successes arise, we will use these as avenues to identify champions of our strategies to help build support among our community members and organizations.



Story Behind the Curve

The "Story Behind the Curve" helps us understand the causes and forces at that work that explain the data behind the number of organizations who have at least one staff member who has received a gatekeeper training and the resources the Polk County Public Health Division and community partners plan to commit to addressing the health issue.

What's Helping What We Do? *These are the positive forces at work in our community that influence how much we do or how well we do it.*

- Improved partnerships with community agencies to increase awareness of benefits to gatekeeper training
- Access to funding to provide scholarships for gatekeeper training
- Increased support from community leadership

What's Hurting What We Do? *These are the negative forces at work in our community that influences how much we do or how well we do it.*

- Limited amount of facilitators to provide training
- The ability to secure a minimum amount of attendees to hold training

What's Helping Communities Served/Customer Change? *These are the positive forces at work in our community that influences customer change.*

- Increased awareness of mental health services through resources such as 211 and Hear2Help
- Decreased stigma due to events such as Polk County's annual Suicide/Remembrance Walk

What's Hurting Communities Served/Customer Change? *These are the negative forces at work in our community that influences customer change.*

- While issues around stigma have improved, it still exists in many communities
- Lack of resources for those who are uninsured
- The complexity surrounding gaining access to services and training

Customers

Customers:

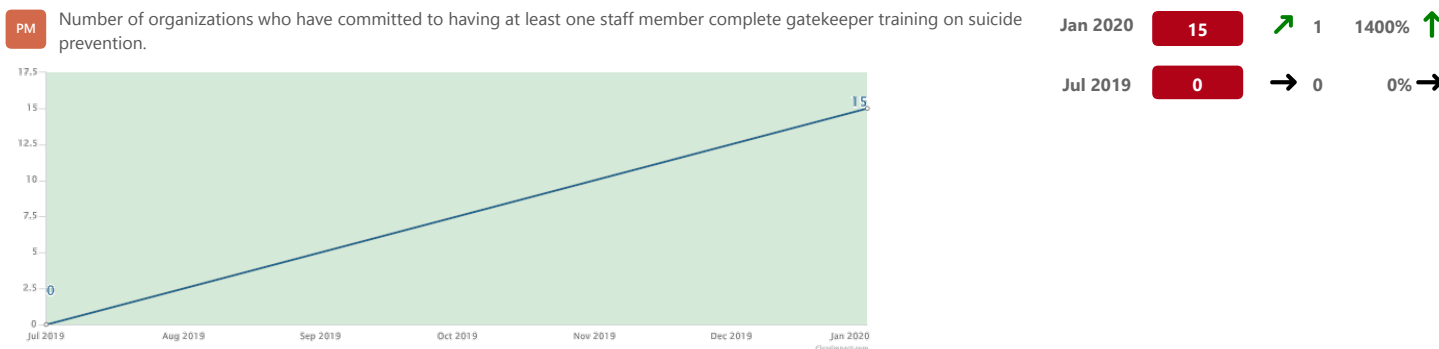
- Employers
- Community leaders
- Police Officers
- Hospital Staff
- First responders
- Faith leaders
- Community members
- Caring individuals

Our customers will also include our underserved, at-risk/or vulnerable populations who need these services the most. Our customers will include seniors, those who serve seniors, uninsured, and other vulnerable populations.

Partners

The partners for this Gatekeeper Training Program include:

Agency	Person	Role
PCHD	Haley Suskauer	Lead
PC Health & Wellness Coalition	Designated Person	Collaborate and Represent Target Population
Mental Health Advisory Committee	Chair	Collaborate



Community Crisis Services Plan was identified by community leaders and members as an action, that when combined with other actions in our community, that has a reasonable chance of making a difference in mental health in our community. This is an ongoing program in our community.

Polk County feels it's necessary to review the current Community Crisis Services Plans in relation to involuntary commitments to ensure the community is making the biggest impact. Necessary improvements have been identified and will be the main objectives over the course of the next several years. Priority will focus on course of action when a patient in crisis is identified.

The priority population for this strategy are those who are struggling with mental health challenges at the highest rates including geriatric and low income populations, and this strategy aims to make a difference at the organizational/policy level. Implementation will take place in the community and at organizations that may experience a community crisis.

This strategy will also focus on mental health disparities. It is our goal for the new plan to help increase access for all Polk County residents.

Partners

The partners for this strategy include:

Agency	Person	Role
Polk County Health and Human Services Agency- Public Health, Transportation, Social Services, Senior Services, and Vetaran Services divisions.	Joshua Kennedy	Lead
St. Luke's Hospital	Michelle Fortune	Collaborate
St. Luke's Hospital	Kathy Hefner	Collaborate
VAYA Health	Angela Garner	Collaborate
Polk County Health and Human Services- Public Health Division	Haley Suskauer	Support
NC Courts System/County Magistrate Office	Mark West	Support
Polk County Sheriff's Department	Tim Wright	Support
Polk County Health and Human Services- Social Services Division	Kim Wilson	Support
Blue Ridge Health- Polk	Sandra McGriff	Support

Work Plan

Activity	Resources Needed	Agency/Person Responsible	Target Completion Date
Complete ongoing meetings to discuss policy implementation	Meeting space	Polk County Health and Human Services/ Josh Kennedy	Ongoing/ No completion date
Update <i>Polk County Board of Health</i> and Commissionners on progress and recommendations	Meeting space	Polk County Health and Human Services and VAYA	January 2019
Increase awareness of Mobile Crisis Services by providing at least 3 resource presentations to organizations through the Hear2Help program.	Meeting space	Polk County Wellness Coalition/ Buffy Ashmore	June 2nd, 2020
Create a written plan for distribution to leaders	Paper, Computer	Polk County Wellness Coalition	August, 2020
Increase awareness of plan within county departments by providing a written plan for department leaders	Meeting space	Polk County Health and Human Services Agency	December 15th, 2020
Complete an annual meeting with county officials to re-evaluate and edit Community Crisis Services Plan.	Meeting space	Polk County Health and Human Services Agency	January 15th, 2021, ongoing annually
Please note this is a proposed workplan that will be presented to the group. This is a long-term project that may require edits to the above workplan depending on input from the groups involved.			

Activity	Resources Needed	Agency/Person Responsible	Target Completion Date
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Evaluation & Sustainability

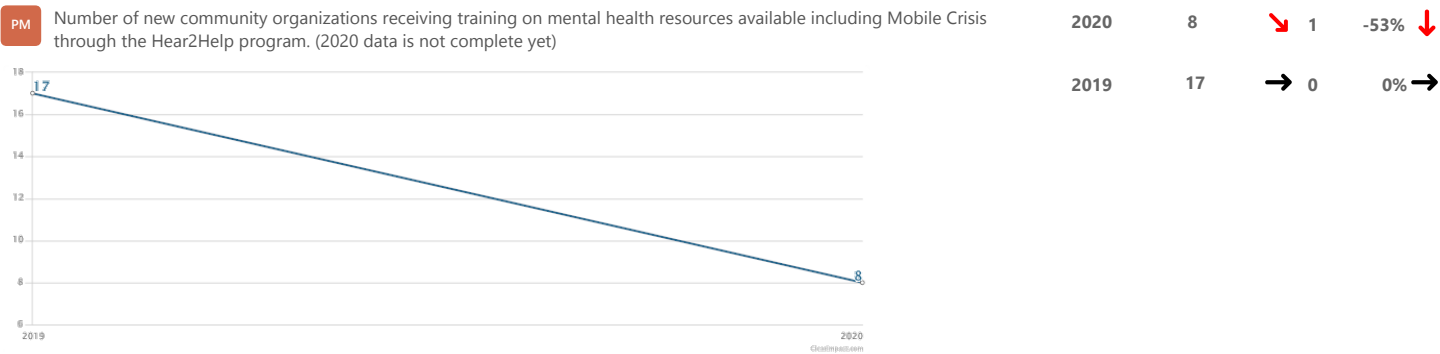
Evaluation Plan:

We plan to evaluate the impact of this strategy through the use of Results-Based Accountability™ to monitor specific performance measures. We will be monitoring How Much, How Well and/or Better Off Performance Measures. Our evaluation activities will be tracked in the Work Plan table, above.

Sustainability Plan:

The following is our sustainability plan for this strategy:

- Sustainability Component 1: Use performance measures to ensure ongoing effectiveness and demonstrate success to local government officials and other key stakeholders.
 - By tracking our progress through our performance measures, we will be able to provide evidence for sustaining our efforts to local government officials. We can provide evidence of our successes at County Commissioner Meetings and local forums.
- Sustainability Component 2: Communicate and engage diverse community leaders and organizations.
 - By engaging diverse community leaders such as our church leaders, we will be able increase community awareness and support for our efforts to identify champions to help sustain our efforts.



Story Behind the Curve

The "Story Behind the Curve" helps us understand the causes and forces at that work that explain the data behind the number of new community organizations receiving training on mental health resources available and the resources Community organizations plan to commit to addressing the health issue.

What's Helping What We Do? These are the positive forces at work in our program that influences how much we do or how well we do it.

- Monthly Polk County Health and Wellness Coalition Board Meetings that promote resource sharing
- NCCare360 Program

What's Hurting What We Do? These are the negative forces at work in our program that influences how much we do or how well we do it.

- Reduced funding for Hear2Help
- Reduced staffing for Hear2Help

P High Utilizer Community Group

Time Period Current Actual Value Current Trend Baseline % Change

What Is It?

High Utilizer Community Group was identified by healthcare leaders and the Polk County Mental Health Advisory Committee as an action, that when combined with other actions in our community, that has a reasonable chance of making a difference in mental health in our community. This is a new program in our community.

The priority populations for this program are high utilizers of the current healthcare system, uninsured or under-insured, and low-income, and the program aims to make a difference at the individual, interpersonal, organizational, and policy level. Implementation will take place in local healthcare facilities. High utilizers are identified as those who need mental health services, but conditions may be hindered by complex physical, behavioral, and social needs which may not be served through the current fragmented healthcare system. By identifying this population, we will be able to engage them more effectively to meet their needs. Our community realizes that improving health requires more than clinical care, and successful interventions depend heavily on incorporation of social services and educational programs alongside of clinical care.

This strategy will focus on ensuring all community members have access to mental health resources. It will identify those who may not be receiving the adequate services needed and provide an avenue to ensure they begin receiving those services. This is a long-term program with planning for 5-10 years. By sustaining this community group, we will be able to continually evaluate the resource needs of our highest utilizers.

Partners

The partners for this program include:

Agency	Person	Role
St. Lukes Hospital	Kathy Hefner	Lead
Thermal Belt Outreach	Michelle Reedy	Support
Polk County Health and Human Services Agency	Joshua Kennedy	Collaborative
Polk County Wellness Coalition	Haley Suskauer	Support
VAYA Health	Angie Gardner	Support
RHA	Don Killian	Support
Family Preservation Services	Joe Youchak	Support
The Free Clinics	Judy Long	Support

Work Plan

Activity	Resources Needed	Agency/Person Responsible	Target Completion Date
Suggest strategy to Polk County Wellness Coalition-Behavioral Health POD	Meeting space	Polk County	October, 2019
Brainstorm agencies who need to have a presence at the High Utilizer Group meetings	Organization Input	Collaboration	December, 2019
Gather input from other regional meeting conveners to ensure meetings are	Sample BAAs, organizational input	VAYA Health, St. Lukes Hospital	March, 2020

Activity	Resources Needed	Agency/Person Responsible	Target Completion Date
HIPAA compliant			
Reach out to agencies to discuss what they would like to see accomplished at these meetings.	Organization Input	Polk County Health and Human Services Agency/ St Lukes Hospital	May, 2020
Work through a process flow for meetings	Resources from similar groups who are already meeting regionally	St. Lukes Hospital	June, 2020
* Please note this is a proposed workplan that will be presented to the group. This is a long-term project that may require edits to the above workplan depending on input from the groups involved.			

Evaluation & Sustainability

Evaluation Plan:

We plan to evaluate the impact of the High Utilizer Group through the use of Results-Based Accountability™ to monitor specific performance measures. We will be monitoring How Much, How Well and/or Better Off Performance Measures. Our evaluation activities will be tracked in the Work Plan table, above.

Sustainability Plan:

The following is our sustainability plan for the High Utilizer Group:

- Sustainability Component: Use program performance measures to ensure ongoing effectiveness and demonstrate successes to key stakeholders.
 - Regular data reports to the High Utilizer Group will allow us to strengthen our support for involvement from key organizations.

PM Number of patient referrals receiving appropriate mental health treatment (No data yet) — — — —

PM Number of High Utilizer Community Group meetings completed (No data yet) — — — —

Healthy Eating, Active Living - Short Term CHIP

R **CHIP** All those who live, work, and play in Polk County have access to healthy foods and the opportunity to be active to better manage chronic diseases.

Most Recent Period Current Actual Value Current Trend Baseline % Change

Why Is This Important?

Much work has already been done to improve this priority including healthy food access, community gardens, "walkability" and "bikeability", and community plans to improve recreation areas. Regular physical activity among children and adults reduces the risk of many health issues including chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke and obesity. Consistent exercise and the consumption of a healthy diet can lead to a host of benefits including better sleep, decreased depression risk, increased energy, happiness, health, and even a longer life. In order for us to make a dramatic difference in the way Polk County community members' look and feel, we believe it's crucial to have access to exercise and nutritional foods.

Alignment

Healthy Eating and Active Living and the related result are aligned with the following Healthy NC 2020 Focus Areas/ Objectives.

- Physical Activity and Nutrition

Experience and Importance

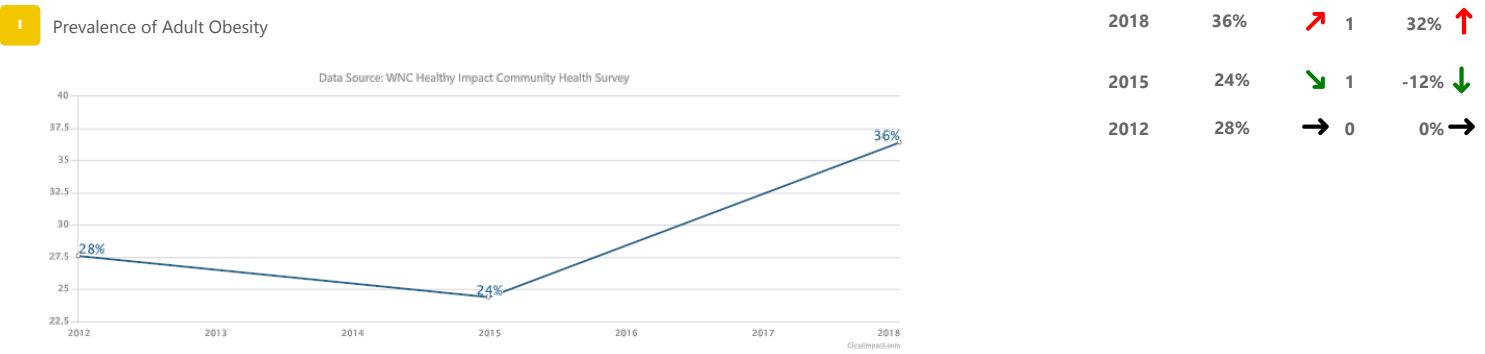
How would we experience increased access to healthy foods and exercise in our community?

Polk County's desire is to increase access to healthy foods and encourage more community members to lead active lifestyles. With this desired result, community members would experience better health outcomes allowing them to enjoy life to the fullest. All community members would have access to healthy, local foods provided by farmers markets and/or community gardens.

What information led to the selection of this health issue and related result?

Every three years, our community reflects on the current status of the community's health. This is a moment for key stakeholders to join forces and evaluate what is working and what areas need improvement. In September 2018, the community spent time understanding the data and uncovering what issues were most important to tackle. After presenting a list of key issues to tackle, our partners voted on which issues were their top areas of concern. This process, often called health issue prioritization, is an opportunity for various community stakeholders to agree on which health issues we can all tackle and make the most impact on our community's health. Nearly one-fifth (19.4%) of Polk County residents state they have experienced food insecurity and only 4.3% indication they are consuming five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Only 30% of Polk County residents meet recommended physical activity guidelines (WNC Healthy Impact Community Health Survey, 2018).

Healthy Eating and Active Living also closely aligns with the Healthy NC 2020 focus area for Physical Activity and Nutrition. With our proposed strategies, we hope to help move the needle on the objective to increase the percentage of adults meeting CDC aerobic recommendations to the 2020 target of 60.6% (Healthy NC 2020, 2019).



Story Behind the Indicator

The "Story Behind the Curve" helps us understand why the data on Polk County adults who are obese is the way that it is in our community. When we understand the root causes of our community problems, we have a better chance of finding the right solutions, together.

What's Helping? *These are the positive forces at work in our community and beyond that influence this issue in our community.*

- Polk County FIT Challenge
- Availability of playgrounds and other recreation fields
- Healthy school lunches
- Church Meal Program
- Thermal Belt Backpack Program provides weekend meals to disadvantaged children
- Access to two local Farmer's Markets
- Trail Map
- NC Cooperative Extension Cooking Classes

What's Hurting? *These are the negative forces at work in our community and beyond that influence this issue in our community.*

- " sometimes people just cannot afford to buy the food they need to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The healthy foods are the most expensive."
- "Lack of teaching individuals how to plan healthier meals for their families"
- People are limited in activities in some way due to physical, mental, or emotional problems
- Food insecurity
- Low percent of the community consume five or more servings of fruits/vegetables per day.

Partners With A Role To Play

Partners in our Community Health Improvement Process:

- Polk County Wellness Coalition
- Polk County Health and Human Services Agency
- St. Luke's Hospital
- WNC Healthy Impact

Partners with a Role in Helping Our Community Do Better on This Issue:

- Polk County Library
- Thermal Belt Outreach
- NC Cooperative Extension
- Polk County Parks and Recreation
- Blue Ridge Health Center- Polk
- Senior Life Solutions
- VAYA Health
- NC Courts System
- Isothermal Planning and Development Commission
- United Methodist Church- Columbus and Saluda
- Polk County Wellness Coalition
- Polk County Health and Human Services Agency
- St. Luke's Hospital
- RHA Health Services

Strategies Considered & Process

The following actions have been identified by our partners and community members as ideas for what can work for our community to make a difference on improving healthy eating and active living.

Actions and Approaches Identified by Our Partners *These are actions and approaches that our partners think can make a difference on healthy eating and active living.*

- Increase in cooking demonstration classes
- Improved access to Farmer's Markets
- More local gardens
- Insurance discounts at local gyms
- A local YMCA
- Gleaning Programs
- Rails to Trails
- Polk County Senior Games

What is Currently Working in Our Community *These are actions and approaches that are currently in place in our community to make a difference on healthy eating and active living.*

- Polk FIT Challenge
- Farmer's Markets
- Local Walking Groups
- Cooking demonstrations for seniors
- Healthy Eating education provided in school

Evidence-Based Strategies *These are actions and approaches that have been shown to make a difference on healthy eating and active living.*

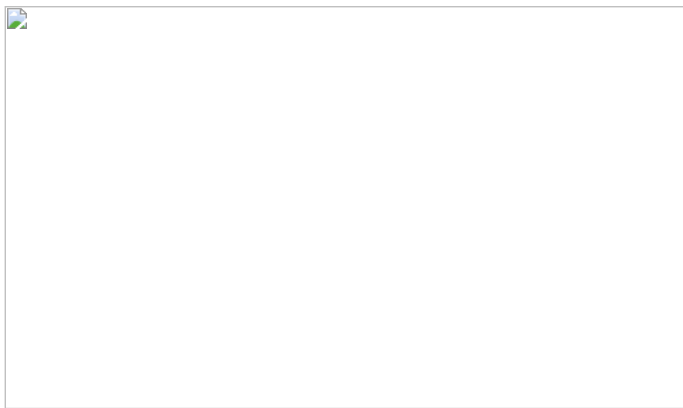
Name of Strategy Reviewed	Level of Intervention
Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool	Organizational, Policy
Tai Chi for Arthritis	Individual
Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL)	Individual
Building Better Caregivers	Interpersonal

What Community Members Most Affected by Lack of Healthy Eating and Active Living Say *These are the actions and approaches recommended by members of our community who are most affected by healthy eating and active living*

- "We need more focus on youth strategies"
- "Influence is needed to at the legislation level to improve food quality"
- "More help with getting people to experience poverty, such as the Cost of Poverty experience simulations."

Process for Selecting Priority Strategies

Polk County is a small, rural county with limited resources to address health priorities. When selecting our priorities we focused on those that would allow us to establish collaborations that will be successful in achieving our goals and objectives. Our focus was to choose strategies that addressed adult obesity rates which can have a significant impact on chronic disease risks. We looked at feasibility and which strategies would have the most significant impact on community members.



What Is It?

Polk County FIT Challenge was identified by our Wellness Coalition as an action, that when combined with other actions in our community, that has a reasonable chance of making a difference in obesity levels in our community. This is an ongoing program in our community.

This is the third year that our community will focus on the Polk County FIT Challenge. This program has been extremely effective in encouraging community members to become active and live a healthy lifestyle. This year, we will focus on making the program simpler for community members to participate and propose strategies for them to stay active after the FIT Challenge is over. This program will also add nutritional education and guidance to accompany the active living component. The nutritional education and guidance will include a focus on raising awareness of local Farmers Markets' and the healthy options available. Increasing access and awareness to Farmers' Markets has been shown to have a positive impact on Physical Activity and Nutrition.

The priority populations for this program are seniors and youth, and the program aims to make a difference at the individual level. Implementation will take place in the community.

We hope this program will address the socioeconomic disparities associated with health. The FIT Challenge will provide free guidance for healthy eating and active living for all community members to address the poorer health outcomes that are often associated with lower socioeconomic population groups.

Partners

The partners for this program include:

Agency	Person	Role
Polk County Wellness Coalition- Active Living POD	Buffy Ashmore	Lead
Polk County Senior Services	Julie Jolley	Collaborate
Polk County Health and Human Services- Public Health Division	Haley Suskauer	Collaborative
Sunny View Clubhouse	Jessica Raines	Collaborative, Target Population Representative
Cooperative Extension	Jimmi Buell	Support, Target Population Representative
Polk County Parks and Recreation	Jerry Stansland	Support
Polk County Wellness Coalition	Meghan Young	Support
Blue Ridge Health- Polk	Sandra McGriff	Support
Tryon Town	Jaime Carpenter	Support
Polk County Health and Human Services Agency	Joshua Kennedy	Support

Work Plan

Activity	Resources Needed	Agency/Person Responsible	Target Completion Date
Schedule a FIT Challenge/ Active Living POD meeting	Meeting space, email	Polk County Wellness Coalition/ Buffy Ashmore	August 30th, 2019-ongoing
Schedule FIT Challenge kickoff event	Kickoff facility, funds for marketing, volunteers	Polk County Health and Human Services Agency- Public Health Division/ Haley Suskauer	September 6th, 2019
Start weekly leader announcements	email, challenge runner software	Polk County Wellness Coalition/ Buffy Ashmore	October 1st, 2019-ongoing
Send a weekly recipe to challenge participants	email, nutritionist guidance	Cooperative Extension/ Polk County Wellness Coalition	October 1st, 2019-ongoing
Schedule Closing/ Award event	email, funds, event space, awards	Polk County Wellness Coalition	October 1st, 2019

Activity	Resources Needed	Agency/Person Responsible	Target Completion Date
Begin sending monthly Farmers' Market awareness flyers with information about transportation options to improve access	Computer	Polk County Wellness Coalition	October, 2019
Email monthly reminders and tips for Healthy Eating and Active Living	Computer	Polk County Wellness Coalition	October, ongoing
Brainstorm locations to start community gardens for FIT Challenge participants	Meeting space	Polk County Wellness Coalition	December, ongoing
Connect with Cooperative Extension for guidance with community gardens	Meeting Space	Polk County Wellness Coalition	January, 2020

Evaluation & Sustainability

Evaluation Plan:

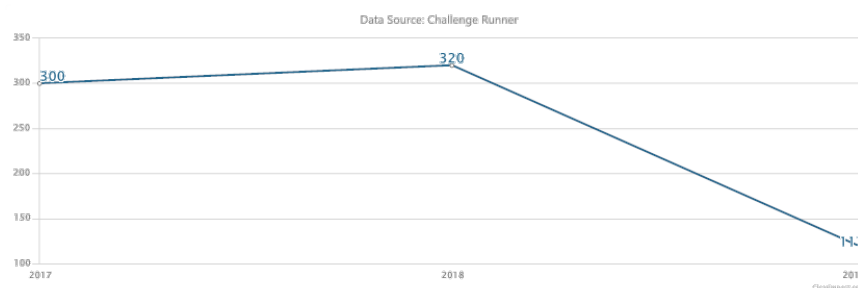
We plan to evaluate the impact of the FIT Challenge through the use of Results-Based Accountability™ to monitor specific performance measures. We will be monitoring How Much, How Well and/or Better Off Performance Measures. Our evaluation activities will be tracked in the Work Plan table, above.

Sustainability Plan:

The following is our sustainability plan for the FIT challenge:

- Sustainability Component 1: Increase community awareness of event
 - By increasing our marketing efforts, we hope to increase awareness of the FIT challenge in the community to gain support for continuing the program in future years.
- Sustainability Component 2: Communicate and engage diverse community organizations.
 - We hope to improve participation within faith-based communities and schools to develop additional champions for the FIT Challenge. These champions will be able to communicate the value of this program to community leaders and potential funders.

PM Number of challenge participants. (2020 Data not available yet)



2019	117	↓ 1	-61%	↓
2018	320	↑ 1	7%	↑
2017	300	→ 0	0%	→

Story Behind the Curve

The "Story Behind the Curve" helps us understand the causes and forces at that work that explain the data behind the number of participants and the resources the community plans to commit to addressing the health issue.

What's Helping What We Do? These are the positive forces at work in our community that influences how much we do or how well we do it.

- Community support
- Dedicated program lead

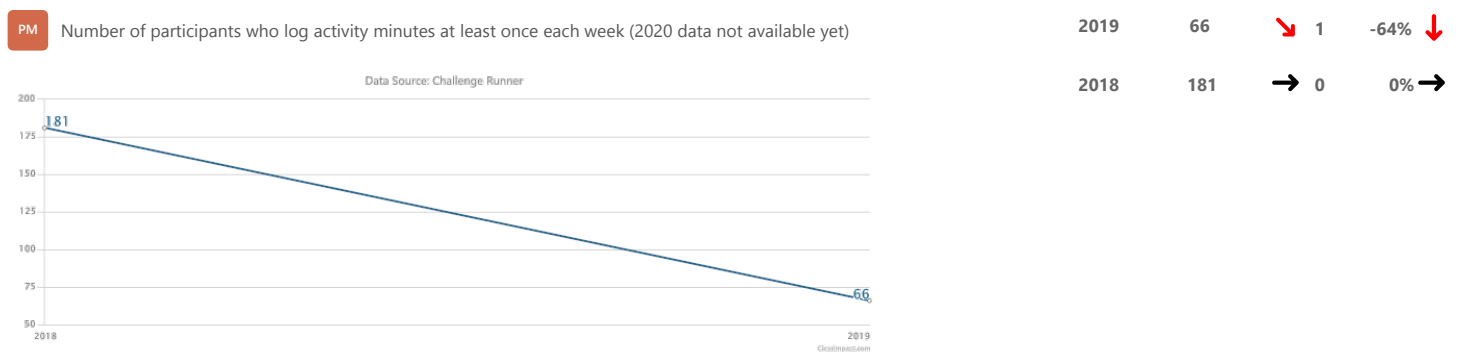
What's Hurting What We Do? These are the negative forces at work in our community that influences how much we do or how well we do it.

- A significant decrease in funding
- A decrease in staffing
- A decrease in facilitated community activities promoting the FIT Challenge
- New staff and transitions during the program duration

Customers

Customers:

- Community members
- Employees
- Seniors
- Youth



P Polk County Senior Games/Clinics

Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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What Is It?

Polk County Senior Games/Clinics was identified by community partners as an action, that when combined with other actions in our community, that has a reasonable chance of making a difference in obesity rates in our community. This is a new program in our community.

The priority population/customers for this program are our geriatric population, and the program aims to make a difference at the individual level. Implementation will take place within the community and at local organizations.

Polk County Senior Games/Clinics will provide a year-around health promotion and wellness education program that will be available to all seniors in Polk County. Polk County Senior Games/Clinics will include activities for both mental and physical health and promote physical activities within the workplace. Evidence shows that promoting the adoption of physical activity in worksites, we can have a significant impact on Physical Activity and Nutrition. Local organizations like St Luke's Hospital will be supporting our efforts by encouraging their employees and team members to become involved with this program.

Partners

The partners for this program include:

Agency	Person	Role
Polk County Health and Human Services Agency- Senior Services Division	Julie Jolley	Lead
Polk County Health and Human Services Agency- Public Health Division	Haley Suskauer	Support
Tryon Fine Arts Center	Michelle Fleming	Collaborate
Polk County Wellness Coalition	Buffy Ashmore	Collaborate
Polk County Library	Wanangwa Hartwell	Support
Polk County Parks and Recreation	Jerry Stansland	Support
Tryon Painters and Sculptors	Marilyn Doheny	Support
Area Agency on Aging	Laura Lynch	Support
Polk County Local Government- Maintenance Department	Jason Jolley	Support

Work Plan

Activity	Resources Needed	Agency/Person Responsible	Target Completion Date
Schedule Senior Games/Clinic Kickoff Event	Event space/ food/music/ laptops to complete sign ups	Polk County Health and Human Services Agency/ Julie Jolley and Haley Suskauer	September 10th, 2019
Begin marketing by providing flyers to at least 10 organizations who serve the geriatric population	Flyers, staff time for delivering, county vehicle	Senior Games Steering Committee	October 1st, 2019, ongoing
Schedule ongoing Senior Games/Clinics Committee Meetings	Meeting space	Julie Jolley	Ongoing
Develop year-long Senior Games Clinic schedule	Clinic facilities, volunteers, equipment	Senior Games Committee- Julie Jolley (lead)	January 15th, 2020
Schedule closing ceremonies.	Event space, funds, food, music, awards	Senior Games Committee- Julie Jolley (lead)	February 15th, 2020
Evaluate strengths and areas of improvements	Meeting Space	Senior Games Committee- Donna Carson (lead)	June 15th, 2020- continue for each consecutive year

Evaluation & Sustainability

Evaluation Plan:

We plan to evaluate the impact of Senior Games/Clinics through the use of Results-Based Accountability™ to monitor specific performance measures. We will be monitoring How Much, How Well and/or Better Off Performance Measures. Our evaluation activities will be tracked in the Work Plan table, above.

Sustainability Plan:

The following is our sustainability plan for this program:

- Sustainability Component 1: Establishing a consistent financial base for the program
 - We plan to use program performance measures to demonstrate success to local funders to ensure continued support.
- Sustainability Component 2: Increasing support within the senior population

- We plan to use our data to plan ongoing clinics to gain additional support within the geriatric community.

PM Number of Senior Games participants (No data yet)

PM Percent of participants who state they tried at least one new activity/game. (No data yet)

P Polk County Smart Options

Time Period Current Actual Value Current Trend Baseline % Change

What Is It?

Polk County Smart Options was identified by community leaders as an action, that when combined with other actions in our community, has a reasonable chance of making a difference in Healthy Eating and Active Living in our community. This is a new program in our community.

Polk County Smart Options will be a policy for local restaurants to follow in order to identify healthy menu options that can be considered *Polk County Smart Options*.

The priority population for this program is all Polk county residents, and the program aims to make a difference at the policy and environmental level. Implementation will take place in local restaurants and farmer's markets.

This program will increase access and knowledge around healthy food options available to community members. Increasing access to healthy food choices has shown to make significant impacts on the Physical Activity and Nutrition focus area.

Partners

The partners for this program include:

Agency	Person	Role
Polk County Wellness Coalition- Healthy Eating POD	Entire group	Lead
Polk County Health and Human Services Agency	Haley Suskauer	Collaborate
Polk County Health and Human Services Agency- Public Health Division	WIC Director	Support
Polk County Local Government	Polk County Senior Business Specialist	Support

Work Plan

Activity	Resources Needed	Agency/Person Responsible	Target Completion Date
Explore what possible policies look like.	Computer	Polk County Wellness Coalition, Polk County Health and Human Services Agency (WIC Director)	11/01/2019
Decide how restaurants can identify Polk County Smart Options on their menus	Meeting space	Polk County Wellness Coalition	12/01/2019
Create list of local restaurants to reach out for partnership	Meeting space	Polk County Wellness Coalition	12/15/2019

Activity	Resources Needed	Agency/Person Responsible	Target Completion Date
Create a proposal to present to local restaurants	Meeting space, computer	Polk County Wellness Coalition, Polk County Health and Human Services Agency	01/15/2020
Brainstorm how to incorporate local farmers markets	Meeting space	Polk County Wellness Coalition	01/15/2020

Evaluation & Sustainability

Evaluation Plan:

We plan to evaluate the impact of Polk County Smart Options program through the use of Results-Based Accountability™ to monitor specific performance measures. We will be monitoring How Much, How Well and/or Better Off Performance Measures. Our evaluation activities will be tracked in the Work Plan table, above.

Sustainability Plan:

The following is our sustainability plan for this program:

- Sustainability Component: Increase community awareness of program and demonstrate successes
 - In order to ensure this program is successful, we will communicate the need for the program to raise awareness. By raising awareness, we hope other restaurants will join as community supporters and adopt the program.

PM Number of restaurants who agree to partner with program. (No data yet) — — — —

New and Emerging Issues and Initiatives

R	Monitor New and Emerging Issues	Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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Notes

These are the new or emerging issues in our community in 2019 that were not identified as priorities in our CHA.

- A lack of affordable childcare in Polk County is having significant effects on employee absenteeism, employee productivity, and turnover.
- There is a rising concern over increased rates of social isolation and loneliness in adults 60 and over. As individuals age, they tend to lose social connections that enable them to thrive and survive. Evidence shows that social isolation and loneliness are often related to a series of health problems including cognitive decline, heart disease, and depression.
- Vaping has caused an alarming increase in nicotine use in teens. Vaping can pose serious and avoidable health risks including addictions and long-term harm to brain development. Vaping is also harmful to airways and can cause lung damage. With increasing numbers of teens vaping, the concern is growing around drug experimentation among this population as well.
- Due to Coronavirus-2019 travel has been limited to certain parts of the world where the infection has the highest rates. Preparations began in 2019 and continue in 2020 to ensure local agencies are equipped to handle the situation.

R	Keep Track of New Initiatives and Community Changes	Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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Notes

The following are new initiatives or changes in our community in 2019:

- Polk County received a Federal SAMHSA Drug-Free Communities Grant. The goal of this grant is to establish and strengthen collaboration between community partners, non-profit agencies, and government agencies. These strengthened partnerships will support the efforts of communities to prevent and reduce substance abuse among youth.
- Polk County Government separated from the Rutherford-Polk-McDowell Health District to form Polk County Consolidated Health and Human Services Agency. This transition has increased services and improved existing services being offered to

Health and Human Services Agency. This transition has increased services and improved existing services being offered to community members. Polk County Public Health Division now partners with Blue Ridge Health Community Health to provide public health clinical services to Polk County residents. This partnership provides additional opportunities for those seeking public health services to be connected to a primary care and behavioral health services.

- Polk County Recreation Department was awarded a \$20,000 grant from Polk County Community Foundation to build a mountain bike trail network to encourage and improve access to active living opportunities.
 - Polk County Recreation Department also secured a \$500 grant from Farm Bureau to assist with their school gardening program.
 - Saluda Living In Place (SLIP) started their own "Village" in Saluda by joining the Village to Village Network. The focus of their village is to provide resources and services to help older adults age in place, and prevent social isolation. SLIP also offers five working committees that provide a wide range of services to older adults living in Saluda including, neighbor visits, transportation, home safety assessments, and socialization opportunities.
 - Polk County Health and Wellness Coalition hosted a 2019 Remembrance Walk with over 400 attendees including several community organizations. This event is promoted to raise awareness and provide resources for mental health services available in the community.
 - Sunny View Clubhouse hosted multiple community events to provide food and socialization opportunities to those in need, including a Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner.
 - Polk County Senior Services started a Reassurance Program to provide socialization opportunities to homebound seniors. Staff and volunteers provide positive socialization to the frail population that often has little contact with the community. This program also connects seniors with resources they may need to improve their quality of life.
-