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**2012—2015
Priority Health
Concerns**

In 2011, the Pitt County Health Department conducted a community health assessment in partnership with Vidant Medical Center, East Carolina University and Pitt Partners for Health. The full assessment can be found at www.pittcountync.gov/depts/health/stats.

After reviewing the assessment, the Pitt County Board of Health identified the following health priorities for 2012 – 2015:

- ◊ Chronic disease with focus on high blood pressure and diabetes management

- ◊ Risk factor reduction with focus on nutrition, physical activity and tobacco

- ◊ Infant Mortality and Unintended Pregnancies

- ◊ Sexually Transmitted Disease with focus on Chlamydia

- ◊ Environmental Health with focus on foodborne illness

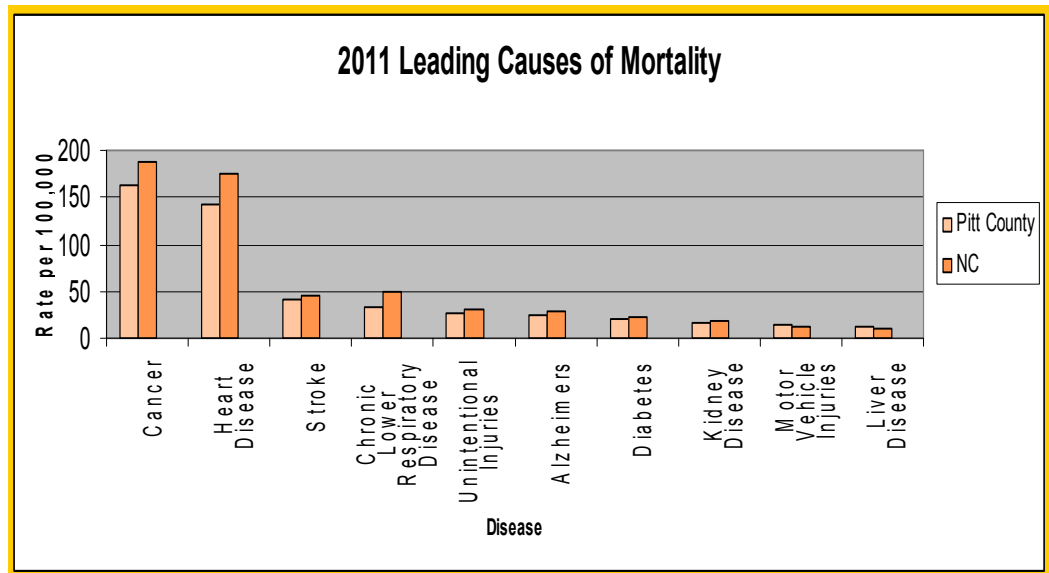
This report will provide an update on these priority health areas, as well as activities undertaken in 2012 to address these areas.

2012 State of the County Health Report

Pitt County, NC

Leading Causes of Death

Below are the ten leading causes of death for Pitt County compared to North Carolina for 2011. Data for 2012 will not be available until early fall of 2013. Cancer continues to be the leading cause of death in Pitt County followed by heart disease and stroke. Pitt County, when compared to NC, has lower mortality rates for eight of the ten leading causes of death. The exceptions are motor vehicle injuries and diseases of the liver.



Data available from the North Carolina Vital Statistics, Volume 2: Leading Causes of Death, 2011.

Overview of Select Risk Factors

While there are a number of risk factors that may place a person at increased risk for several of the leading causes of death, *high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, diabetes, smoking, overweight/obesity (i.e. BMI ≥ 25) and limited physical activity* are by far the most prevalent. See page two for a graph depicting Pitt County's statistics compared to eastern NC (ENC) and NC.

In 2011, nearly 30% of Pitt County adults reported they had been told they have high blood pressure and 33% or one in three reported they had elevated cholesterol.

About one in ten adults from Pitt, ENC and NC reported being told they have diabetes.

More than one in four adults in Pitt County reported they were current smokers.

Two-thirds of adults in Pitt and ENC reported they were overweight or obese compared to just under two-thirds of NC adults.

For these reasons, action plans to address these conditions have been developed by the health department and focus primarily on improving risk factors associated with chronic disease.

Strive For These Numbers*

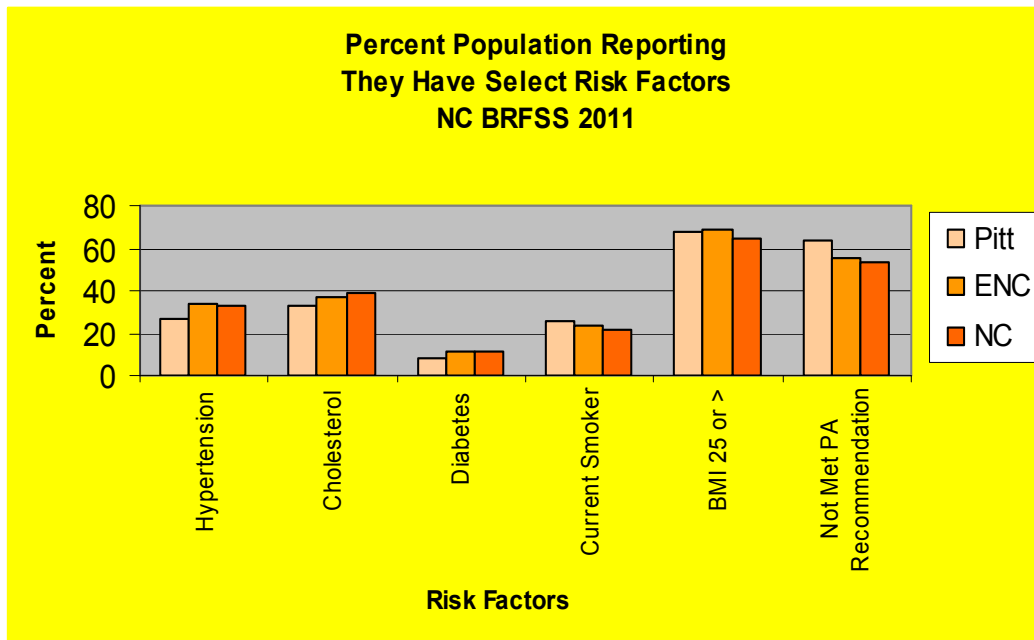
Blood Pressure
<120/80

Total Cholesterol
< 200

Blood Sugar
Fasting - 70-99

Body Mass Index (BMI)
< 25

*Note—Persons with a history of any of these problems should follow their doctor’s advice.



According to the Centers for Disease Control, more than half (53.5%) of people with high blood pressure do not have their blood pressure under control.

(MMWR, September 7, 2012 / 61(35);703-709)



Managing diabetes is a family affair.

Priority Area—High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure or hypertension is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Pitt County’s goal is to reduce by 5% the cardiovascular disease mortality rate in Pitt County by developing and implementing a hypertension self-management program.

In 2012 Pitt County Health Department developed a self-management program for county employees. The program was designed to teach people with hypertension how to take their blood pressure accurately, as well as how to manage their disease with medication, diet, activity and stress reduction tools. Central to the program is knowing and communicating blood pressure numbers with health care providers.

The health department also partnered with ECU Health Disparities Center to train lay health advisors regarding evidence-based blood pressure guidelines and how to accurately measure blood pressure.

Additionally, the health department partnered with researchers from UNC Chapel Hill and East Carolina University to screen nearly 500 family planning patients for high blood pressure, abnormal blood lipids, Hgb A1c, obesity, and smoking. Patients identified by the *InShape* study with an increased risk for cardiovascular disease were invited to participate in a lifestyle intervention program that focused on improving diet quality and increasing physical activity.

Priority Area—Diabetes

Pitt County’s goal is to increase by 10% (about 600) the number of adults with diabetes who have attended an education course/class on how to manage diabetes. Operated by the Pitt County Health Department, the Diabetes Self Management Program is supported by a grant from the Vidant Medical Center Foundation and the NC Division of Public Health. Pitt County’s program is award winning in that it was selected as an American Diabetes Association’s *Provider of the Year* in 2011. The program provides education and self-management skills to assist individuals and their families with managing diabetes.

In addition, the Health Department offers a Diabetes Support Group each month. This program offers tips and support to those living with diabetes. Public education opportunities are provided throughout the year.

Priority Area—Nutrition

Currently only about 10% of Pitt County adults report eating five or more fruits and vegetables per day. The goal is to increase the percentage of adults in Pitt County who consume five or more fruits or vegetables per day. Target strategies for this priority area include increasing access to fruits and vegetables.

With the support of the Communities Putting Prevention To Work (CPPW) grant, new farmers' markets were available in Grifton and Farmville in 2012 and improvements were made to the Pitt County Farmers' Market to accommodate its growth. A media/billboard campaign was launched to promote farmers markets throughout the area. A nutrition education program administered by the health department and supported by the Vidant Medical Center Foundation and local farmers continued to operate on Saturdays from May through August providing demonstrations on how to prepare fruits and vegetables in healthy ways. Pitt County's WIC Program is one of only a few WIC programs to offer vouchers to the Pitt County Farmers' Market. Vouchers were distributed to over 3,200 clients.

Three community gardens were established with support from the CPPW grant and technical assistance was offered to a number of neighborhood groups to support the development of neighborhood gardens. Pitt County's Making Pitt Fit Community Garden, started in 2011, with a grant from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of NC Foundation also received support from CPPW and a number of county government departments including public health, recreation, planning, soil and water and cooperative extension.

A Healthy Corner Store Initiative was launched in Pitt County. Again through support from CPPW, four stores began offering fruits and vegetables in their businesses as a means of increasing access to people in communities with no nearby grocery stores. Several promotions were held throughout the year to encourage fruit and vegetable consumption, including a monthly series on WITN TV and a nutrition series entitled *To Your Health* developed by local dietitians and aired on the ECU-TV cable channel 99 and the Pitt County Government cable channel 13.

Priority Area—Physical Activity

Of the Pitt County adults who reported engaging in physical activity outside of their job, only about 36% reported getting the recommended amount of physical activity which is defined as moderate (30 min/day x 5 days/week) or vigorous (20 min/day x 3 days/week). Pitt County's goal is to increase the percent of people who report meeting the physical activity recommendations to at least 50%.

Pitt County, the Town of Ayden and the Town of Winterville adopted comprehensive land use plans that now incorporate health. The Pitt County Board of Commissioners approved a proposed change to the zoning ordinance to allow for farmers markets in a residential area previously not allowed. The County of Pitt partnered with NC DOT, CPPW, Vidant Medical Center Foundation and Blue Cross, Blue Shield of NC Foundation to construct a crosswalk and trails connecting the farmers market, two elementary schools, community garden and recreation park. This was the number one priority for the county in the Greenville Urban Area Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan. The Town of Ayden completed a mobility study for the purpose of assessing ways to make the town more pedestrian and bike friendly. A bicycle map project completed for the Greenville Urban Area MPO highlights bicycle routes within the City and the neighboring towns, as well as highlights connectivity gaps. Pitt County Planning and Recreation and Parks developed a map of physical activity opportunities throughout Pitt County, Maps are currently being distributed to aid people in locating nearby, safe places to be active. A draft bike/pedestrian plan was completed in the Town of Farmville. These projects were supported with CPPW funds.

The Pitt County Community Schools and Recreation and the Boys and Girls Clubs of Pitt County adopted Move More After-School policies impacting a total of 18 after-school sites. CPPW funding provided staff development opportunities to ensure that active play was part of the program, as well as provided playground equipment for these two organizations.

**“People’s
access to
opportunities
for healthy
eating and
active lifestyles
are as
important as
their access to
health care.”**

Priority Area—Tobacco

The dangers of secondhand smoke are well documented. The health department's goal is to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke especially for children.

In 2012, the health department received a grant from the NC

Division of Public Health to work with youth to develop strategies for reducing exposure to tobacco smoke. The youth are exploring public spaces like parks where they feel policies limiting smoking and other uses

of tobacco products are beneficial.

The Board of Commissioners approved a policy in 2012 that prohibits smoking in county owned facilities and vehicles. This policy will protect visitors and employees from exposure to secondhand smoke.



Key Facts

Pitt County's infant mortality rate was 9.8/1000 live births in 2011 compared to 7.2/1000 live births for NC. The African American Non-Hispanic infant mortality rate is consistently two to three times higher than the white Non-Hispanic rate. (Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, Infant Mortality Statistics, 2011).



Child life students from ECU model positive learning activities with children in renovated health department lobby.

Key Facts

Chlamydia is the most frequently reported sexually transmitted infection in Pitt County and the US. Both men and women can get this infection.

(Source: NC Division of Public Health, 2011 and Centers for Disease Control, 2012.

Priority Area—Infant Mortality and Unintended Pregnancies

Working through the Pitt Infant Mortality Prevention Advisory Council (PIMPAC), Pitt County's goal is to reduce the infant mortality rate to at or below the State's rate with special emphasis on reducing the infant mortality rate among low-income African American women of childbearing age. This work is to be accomplished through education/outreach, pre-pregnancy planning, breastfeeding promotion and access to prenatal care.

The health department continued a preconception education campaign targeting employers and groups of women and men of childbearing age with messages about healthy lifestyles before conception. With more than 900 people attending, the 20th Annual *Making Pitt's Babies Fit Maternity Fair* was held with generous support from Vidant Medical Center, Walmart, Greater Greenville Community Foundation and Grady White Boats.

The Nurse Family Partnership, an evidenced-based nurse home visitation program that works with first-time, low-income parents and their children, served 100 women in the past year. The program is supported through a partnership between The Duke Endowment, the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, the NC Division of Public Health, the NC Partnership for Children, Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina and the Blue Cross/Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation.

Support services were provided to 40 high risk African American pregnant and postpartum mothers through the Healthy Beginnings Program. An additional 400 women were linked to health and social resources as part of outreach efforts supported by the Healthy Start Baby Love Plus initiative.

Opportunities to support the role of parenting were strengthened in 2012. A partnership with the Vidant Medical Center Children's Hospital helped secure funding from Children's Miracle Network to make the health department children's play area located in the patient waiting area more child friendly. Additionally through a partnership with ECU School of Human Ecology/Department of Child Development and Family Relations, child life students staffed the health department children's play area and implemented developmental games for children. The health department also launched the Positive Parenting Program or Triple P initiative in Pitt County. The project is being funded by the CDC and through a cooperative agreement with the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO). Triple P is a multi-faceted training program focused on improving parenting skills among people who work with children, including parents.

The Martin/Pitt Partnership for Children continued to support two Child Care Health Consultants. Consultants provided technical assistance and training to child care centers and homes. This program focuses on providing training on health issues to child care workers.

Breastfeeding continues to be the preferred method of feeding for newborns. The Health Department offered a number of education, promotion and personal services to pregnant and breastfeeding women throughout 2012. Vidant Medical Center again provided grant funds to support an in-home breastfeeding peer counselor. Peer support is available to both English and Spanish speaking families.

Communicable Disease

Pitt County's goal is to decrease Chlamydia rates by 10%. As reported in the 2011 Community Health Assessment for Pitt County, Pitt County's rate of reported Chlamydia cases per 100,000 population has doubled from 2007 to 2011. *Data for 2012 is not yet available.*

In an effort to explain this increase, a retrospective study was performed by an ECU Masters in Public Health student using secondary data from the NC Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NC EDSS). More than 5,000 positive Chlamydia cases for Pitt County were reviewed for 2009-2011. There was greater prevalence noted in the African American female population between the ages of 15-24. Pitt County rates for this population were six times greater than the rate of white females and eight times greater than the state level. Recommendations from this review are to work with health care partners to improve follow up of screened individuals, treat partners of diagnosed patients at the same time and educate individuals of the importance of screening.

The emergency department, through testing, identifies a number of Chlamydia cases annually. The health department and Vidant Health have begun discussing how to better identify and treat patients who test positive for Chlamydia.

Pitt County Health Department participated in a special project entitled PCSI, (Project Collaboration of Service Integration), an HIV testing program that offers urine based or vaginal swab Chlamydia testing. The PCSI testing program enabled the Health Department to screen asymptomatic males and females. More than one in 10 persons (12.3%) tested positive for Chlamydia in this clinic as compared to 8.5% of symptomatic females under age 25 years tested in our traditional health department clinic.

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A copy of this report is available on the health department's website listed below.

Visit us at

www.pittcountync.gov/depts/health

Future of Public Health

As state and federal governments make difficult decisions about health care, public health is currently facing challenges for how it will fund a number of its programs in the future. For example, several of the chronic disease prevention programs have been merged and dedicated funding for a number of programs is not clear. Additionally, the implementation of the Affordable Care Act may present challenges to public health. We must be creative and innovative moving forward.

Environmental Health—FDA Food Code

One of the main functions of the Environmental Health Division is to inspect local establishments that prepare and sell food for the purpose of preventing foodborne outbreaks. Statewide environmental health has embraced the adoption of the FDA Food Codes. Pitt County's goal is to fully implement the new FDA Food Codes with all food

establishments in order to ensure that the average number of critical violations are at or below the State average. Currently, environmental health staff is working with local restaurant managers and other establishments to explain the new criteria that is being used to evaluate the storage, handling and preparation of

food. As a result of implementation of the new criteria, establishments are averaging a two to three point lower inspection score. Staff are also educating the managers that food safety training is going to be required of all permitted facilities by January 1, 2014. In January of 2014, the facilities will also see a deduction of two points if they do not have food safety training.



Emerging Issue—How To Improve Health

Increasingly Americans are engaged in conversations about how to afford the high costs of health care. This should be an important discussion for us all. Before we engage in this conversation however, we must first define health. Is it merely the absence of a devastating disease or is it more?

Please consider this—Over half of the leading causes of death and disability today are directly related to our lifestyle. These behaviors are learned early in life and have a direct impact on our health outcomes. Experts now contend that if we don't reverse the rising tide of obesity, this is likely to be the first generation of children who have shorter life spans than their parents. We agree that affordable health care should be available for all, but we think that it will take more than health care to improve our population's health.

There is a direct correlation between our environment and our health. Where we live, play, learn, earn and pray have a direct impact on our ability to choose a healthy lifestyle. Access to healthy food choices, access to places to walk and bike and be physically active as part of our everyday life and smoke-free environments do matter! These environments support our decisions to make healthy choices.

For this reason, public health throughout the country, including Pitt County, is working with communities to design healthy places to live. The Community Transformation Grant recently awarded to North Carolina and a number of other states is our opportunity to redefine how we improve health. No longer can we rely on a "pill for every ill". We are working with land use planners, transportation officials, parks and recreation specialists, corner store owners, agriculture/farmers and concerned citizens to design communities that support healthy lifestyles. We hope you agree that health is easier to achieve when we have a supportive environment that **"makes the healthy choice, the easy choice"**.