Greetings Fellow Pitt County Residents,

It is hard for me to believe that July first 2021 was the start of my third year as the Pitt County Health Director. What an adventure the past two years have been. Little did I know, nor did I expect that what we now call COVID-19, would come to dominate our lives. I know this has been a long journey for our community and while many of us have lost family and friends, as I write this, nearly 97% of COVID-19 cases in Pitt County are recovered, and all of our COVID-19 metrics are moving in a favorable direction. Yes, we are on the far side of the Delta wave. I wish I could tell you this devilish virus was through with us, but that is not certain. It may be more of a question of how we co-exist with this virus, not how we get rid of it, since it is firmly part of the environment in which we live.

Emerging Issue: Herd Immunity? Some would argue this is an outdated concept. Others would argue at what level it starts. If herd immunity is attainable, it probably starts somewhere in the range of two thirds of the population or more being immune to the infection in question. At this point, it becomes more difficult for the infection to be transmitted from person to person. Others would argue the number is higher; in some cases, much higher. The question is how do we as a community attain heard immunity if it is attainable? We would likely need two thirds or more of us to have had COVID-19 or to be vaccinated for COVID-19 or both. As of this writing, 15.7% of our county residents are known to have had COVID-19 or to be vaccinated for COVID-19 or both. As of this writing, 15.7% of our county residents are known to have had COVID-19. If we adjust for cases we know have happened, but have not been counted, we get to about 39% of our county residents; far short of the estimated two thirds we need. Many of us have been vaccinated. As of this writing, 48% of Pitt County Residents are fully vaccinated. Great, 87% of us are immune! Well not so fast; unfortunately, these numbers are not directly additive. Many individuals have had mild or asymptomatic COVID-19 infections and do not know they were infected, so in reality the number is lower; by how much is hard to estimate. But do not be troubled by this; there are three safe and effective vaccines available from multiple providers in Pitt County, and if you would like to be vaccinated you can be vaccinated (age and medical contraindications notwithstanding). Together, we can make it harder for COVID-19 to circulate in Pitt County.

What have I done with my family? As a family, we have tried all three vaccines. My oldest son has received the Moderna vaccine, my youngest son chose to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, and my wife and I have received the Johnson and Johnson vaccine. All of us tolerated our vaccines well with typical post vaccination side effects. By the way, three of the four of us had COVID-19 last fall, before we got vaccinated.

What about you? I would encourage anyone who doesn’t have a sound reason not to be vaccinated for COVID-19 to get vaccinated for COVID-19. I know there has been a great deal of banter out there. The
COVID-19 vaccine has been portrayed as something that will save us all and end the pandemic to something that will make you sterile and allow the government to track you. Neither of these things are true. The vaccine does lower your risk of getting very sick with or dying from COVID-19. The vaccine does not guarantee that you can’t get COVID-19, nor can it guarantee that you won’t die of COVID-19. Does that mean you shouldn’t get vaccinated? No, is my opinion. Seatbelts and airbags reduce your risk of injury or death in a car accident but do not guarantee it, so would you remove them from your car? I think not. Many of the things we do to protect our health and safety may not seem important every day, but when you need them, you need them, and they can’t work, if they are not there. This is true of the COVID-19 vaccine as well. You may be lucky enough to never get COVID-19, but are you willing to take that chance? The behavior of this virus is unpredictable, and even individuals we think of as low risk for severe cases of COVID-19 can get very sick. Getting vaccinated for COVID-19 reduces your risk for a bad outcome from this infection; please consider it.

What if I choose not to get vaccinated for COVID-19? I can respect your choice, but I do ask that you make an informed choice. Don’t make a choice because of social media; look at reputable sources with which you feel comfortable before you decide not to get vaccinated. If you do not get vaccinated, and you get sick, seek evaluation and possible treatment early.

Emerging Issue: Mental Health: Given the amount of time we have been dealing with this, I think the mental health of many of us has been greatly affected. For some, it is the absolute fear of this infection and what it might do to them or their loved ones. For others, it is the social isolation and the disruption of their “normal” lives. For our children, it is the disruption of their education and the normal rites of passage for them that many of us have enjoyed long ago. The mental health impacts of COVID-19 on our community will soon outweigh the physical impacts of COVID-19, if they do not already. We must all try to combat this. Please go out and commit some random acts of kindness, check on your neighbors, visit an old friend. Most of all, be patient. All of us have been challenged by this pandemic, but we will get beyond COVID-19, and normality will eventually return to Pitt County, and the rest of our great country!

On a final note, COVID-19 has had a huge impact on Public Health’s normal workflow. Many of the Pitt County initiatives linked to our 2018-2019 Community Health Needs Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan have been put on hold, as all staff were needed in 2020 and beyond, to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic through the provision of COVID-19 testing, vaccinations, and community hotline guidance. However, we and many of our partners, were able to continue some of these initiatives, but with limited reach and outcomes. It is my pleasure to endorse the 2020 State of the County Health Report (SOTCH), which reflects our efforts to meet our Community Health Needs Assessment Improvement Plan goals, while simultaneously responding to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

John L. Silvernail, MD, MPH
Pitt County Health Director

Dr. Silvernail addressing the media and the community in one of many COVID-19 Press Conferences held in 2020.
SOTCH BACKGROUND

The State of the County Health (SOTCH) Report is comprised annually between Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNAs) to highlight activities that address selected health priorities. Every three to four years, local health departments within North Carolina conduct a CHNA as required by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and the North Carolina Local Health Department Accreditation Board. Not-for-profit hospitals are also required by the Internal Revenue Service to conduct a CHNA every three years. The purpose of the CHNA is to examine the health status of the community, and to determine health priorities for community health improvement over the three to four years following the assessment.

Pitt County’s 2018/2019 CHNA was completed by the Pitt County Health Department and Vidant Medical Center through a partnership with the Office of Health Access at the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University, and Health ENC (now a program of the Foundation for Health Leadership and Innovation), as part of a regional CHNA in 33 Eastern North Carolina counties. The Pitt County CHNA team was comprised of the Pitt County Health Department, Vidant Medical Center, and Pitt Partners for Health. The team collected community opinions related to health in Pitt County through community listening groups and an online community opinion survey. In addition, secondary data regarding leading causes of death and illness were collected, reviewed, and compared to data from other counties, North Carolina and the United States. Both secondary and primary data were analyzed and summarized by an outside vendor. The data were presented to Pitt Partners for Health whose members and community members reviewed the data regarding Pitt County’s significant health needs and voted on the top health priorities for Pitt County based upon North Carolina’s 2020 Health Objectives.

Pitt Partners for Health members voted to focus on three of the nine significant health needs identified during the CHNA process as follows: Chronic Disease Prevention; Access to Care and Social Determinants of Health; and Mental / Behavioral Health. The data and the top health priorities selected by Pitt Partners for Health and community members were presented to the Pitt County Board of Health and Vidant Medical Center Board of Trustees. The Board of Health voted to focus on four of the nine identified needs as follows: Chronic Disease Control; Infant Mortality Prevention; Risk Factor Reduction including Physical Activity, Nutrition; Tobacco and Substance Abuse; and Sexually Transmitted Diseases. The Vidant Medical Center Board of Trustees and Vidant Health adopted the same health priority areas as identified by Pitt Partners for Health.

Pitt County Health Department is pleased to present this 2020 SOTCH Report which was comprised in the summer of 2021 and reflects activities that were conducted in 2020 by Pitt County Health Department, Vidant Medical Center, Pitt Partners for Health and other community partners as a component of the 2018-2019 CHNA Community Health Improvement Plan.

COMMUNITY DISTRIBUTION

To access the 2020 SOTCH report or the entire 2018/2019 CHNA:
Visit the Health Statistics section of Pitt County Health Department’s website at www.PittCountyNC.gov/PCHD or contact Amy Hattem at Amy.hattem@pittcountync.gov or 252-902-2426. Copies of both documents can also be viewed at each of Pitt County’s public libraries. Presentations to community groups are available upon request.
According to the NC State Center for Health Statistics, Heart Disease has remained Pitt County’s leading cause of death for the past four consecutive years. Despite a decline in the rate in 2018 to 156.7 / 100,000 population, Pitt County’s Heart Disease rate increased to 172.1 / 100,000 population in 2019. Cancer continued as the second leading cause of death, climbing from 144.5 / 100,000 in 2018 to 157.1 / 100,000 in 2019. Stroke remained as the third leading cause of death, rising to a rate of 57.5 / 100,000 and demonstrating a steady increase in the rate over the past several years. All other Unintentional Injuries ranked fourth, rising from 37.2 / 100,000 in 2018 to 47.6 / 100,000 in 2019. Diabetes, which held the 7th ranking for Pitt County’s leading causes of death for the past few years, rose to the 5th ranking, reflecting a rate increase to 32.6 / 100,000 in 2019 as compared to 28.9 in 2018. Alzheimer’s Disease remained as the sixth leading cause of death, trending downward over the past four years, and decreasing very slightly from 31.1 / 100,000 population in 2018 to 31.0 / 100,000 in 2019. Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease moved from the fifth ranking in 2018 to the seventh leading cause of death in 2019, decreasing from 31.7 / 100,000 in 2018 to 30.4 / 100,000 in 2019. Septicemia remained as the 8th leading cause of death, despite rising from 12.8 / 100,000 in 2018 to 16.0 / 100,000 in 2019. Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis moved into the top ten leading causes of death reflecting a rate of 12.7 / 100,000 in 2019 as compared to a rate of 5.6 / 100,000 in 2018. Kidney Diseases (Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome and Nephrosis) also reflected a rate of 12.7 / 100,000 in 2019, an increase from 11.7 / 100,000 in 2018, an increase from years 2016 and 2017.
Although in 2019, Pitt County experienced increases in the rates for Heart Disease, Cancer, Stroke, All Other Unintentional Injuries, Diabetes, Septicemia, and other chronic diseases. Pitt County ranked lower than North Carolina for six of the leading causes of death. These include Heart Disease, Cancer, Alzheimer’s Disease, Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease, Chronic Liver Disease / Cirrhosis, and Kidney Diseases, and Disorders.

### 2019 Leading Causes of Death

[Graph showing leading causes of death in Pitt County compared to North Carolina]

### Morbidity and Mortality

**Heart Disease and Stroke (1st and 3rd Leading Causes of Death in Pitt County)**

**Contributing Factor: Blood Pressure**

High Blood Pressure, that is not treated, is often a contributing factor to heart attack and stroke. The American Heart Association defines high blood pressure as a consistently high force of blood flowing through one’s blood vessels. Although nearly half of American adults have high blood pressure, many do not know it. Individuals should have their blood pressure checked. If left untreated, high blood pressure can damage the circulatory system, contributing to heart attack and/or stroke.

*Heart Disease and Stroke are the 1st and 3rd leading causes of death in Pitt County.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female Breast</th>
<th>Prostate</th>
<th>Lung/ Bronchus</th>
<th>Colon / Rectum</th>
<th>Melanoma</th>
<th>Cervix / Uteri</th>
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<td>103.1</td>
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Projected New Cancer Cases and Deaths for Selected Sites by County 2021
Produced by the NC Central Cancer Registry
Source: NC DHHS State Center for Health Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cancer Type</th>
<th>Projected New Cases</th>
<th>Projected Deaths</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Colon / Rectum</td>
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**HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS**

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<tr>
<th>Top Diagnosis for Vidant Medical Center Emergency Department Visits Resulting in Admissions (Pitt County Residents Only) Year 2020 Source: Vidant Medical Center Emergency Department Visits Resulting in Admissions</th>
<th>Top Diagnosis for Vidant Medical Center Inpatient Admissions (Pitt County Residents Only) Year 2020 Source: Vidant Medical Center Emergency Department Visits Resulting in Admissions</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Kidney Disease and Disorders</td>
<td>Sepsis</td>
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<tr>
<td>COVID-19</td>
<td>Childbirth (Cesarean)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heart Disease</td>
<td>Kidney Disease / Disorders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)</td>
<td>COVID-19</td>
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</table>

**PITT COUNTY HEALTH PRIORITIES**

**Risk Factor Reduction: Tobacco and other Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (Board of Health Priority)**

**Goal:** Contribute to the reduction of teen tobacco use.

**Progress and Interventions**

Tobacco Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Grant: Pitt County Health Department continued to receive funding from a CDC Core grant from the NC DHHS to help prevent smoking and other tobacco use; eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke; help tobacco users quit and eliminate tobacco-related health disparities. This funding provided support for a Program Coordinator to serve 10 eastern NC counties, including Pitt County as the lead County. In December 20, 2019, President Donald Trump passed legislation banning the sale of tobacco products to people under the age of 21. The tobacco control manager worked with organizations to make sure that tobacco retail establishments knew about this law. In January 2020, the FDA banned flavored tobacco pods. This ban affected JUUL, the e-cigarette used the most by youth. The tobacco control manager educated community groups about this ban and helped them to understand what this means. Unfortunately, new tobacco products such as Puff Bar and other brands began to rise in popularity because of their availability to provide flavored nicotine. This led for additional education efforts to be given to community groups on emerging tobacco products. One education event was a multi-regional Tobacco Update.
Risk Factor Reduction: Tobacco and other Substance Abuse Prevention and Control *(Board of Health Priority)*

with the NCDHHS Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch and Eastern AHEC. This workshop educated community members on the evolution of tobacco, new tobacco products, the impact of media, how to leverage media, and how to assist users in quitting. During this time, COVID-19 also became a global pandemic. Tobacco use and exposure can be linked to impaired immune and respiratory system function, thus putting individuals at risk for serious COVID-19 complications. Pitt County Health Department worked with WITN-TV to create a television advertisement that educated the community on the dangers of tobacco exposure and COVID-19. It was from April to May 2020. Tobacco Free signage was also provided to the Oakwood School to help strengthen their Tobacco Free policy.

**Pitt County Health Department, ekiM Needle Exchange Program:** Pitt County Health Department continued to partner with the "ekiM for Change" to support a community syringe exchange program in an effort to reduce the transmission of diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis C. "ekiM (Mike spelled back-wards) for Change" is a limited liability corporation created by Dianne Carden-Glenn in memory of her son, Mike, who died tragically from an overdose. The program provides free, clean syringes as needed and accepts used ones for safe disposal. Wound care kits and hygiene supplies are provided. Program participants also receive Fentanyl test strips to test for toxic drugs as well as Naloxone kits for the reversal of drug overdoses. Testing is provided for HIV, and Hepatitis C. Bus passes, gas, and food cards have been provided to participants allowing them to follow-up with medical appointments when transportation is an issue. This initiative is supported by funding ($275,000) from the NC DHHS Injury and Violence Prevention Branch.

**Pitt County Health Department Naloxone Distribution:** Pitt County Health Department implemented a Narcan Distribution Program under the authority of the Pitt County Health Director’s Narcan Distribution Standing Order. Ten staff members completed Narcan Distribution training and the Narcan Distribution Program was launched on March 27, 2020. Under the authority of the Naloxone Access Law G.S. 90-12.7, an agent of “any governmental or nongovernmental organization that promotes scientifically proven ways of mitigating health risks associated with substance use disorders” can be authorized to distribute naloxone under a distribution standing order. In 2020, Pitt County Health Department staff dispensed 23 Narcan kits. Narcan kits were available to anyone upon request to help prevent opioid overdose.

**Additional Community Partner Progress:**

**Pitt County Sheriff’s Heroin Addiction Recovery Program (S.H.A.R.P.) and Women’s Empowerment and Recovery Program (W.E.A.R.):** The S.H.A.R.P. program offers comprehensive services to assist inmates struggling with addiction to successfully re-enter society upon release from jail. Services begin upon incarceration and follow through release. W.E.A.R. focuses on cognitive behavior and person-centered therapy helping participants become more self-aware. This program teaches vital life skills such as effective parenting, healthy and rational thinking, money management, and illicit substance prevention, to name a few. Both of these programs were founded by Sheriff Paula Dance.
Chronic Disease Prevention (Board of Health Priority)
Goal: Reduce Chronic Disease with special emphasis on Diabetes Prevention and Control.

**Progress and Interventions**

Pitt County Health Department Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP): In 2020, Pitt County Health Department completed two 12-month Diabetes Prevention Programs (DPP); one for community members, and one for county employees. Each class started meeting face to face but due to COVID-19, had to change to virtual sessions. The Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) class graduated 10 participants in June 2020, who lost a total of 122 pounds. This program was supported by funds provided by a Healthy People, Healthy Carolina Grant awarded to Vidant Medical Center’s Pitt Partners for Health. Each participant was encouraged to meet with a county Dietitian for additional assistance with healthy meal options. One participant lost a total of 43.2 pounds, made the lifestyle change a family journey, and encouraged other class participants to join them walking during breaks and lunch.

According to the CDC:

34.2 million United States adults have diabetes, and 1 in 5 of them don’t know they have it.

Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in the United States and the fifth in Pitt County.

Source: What is diabetes? | CDC

Pitt County Health Department, Diabetes Self-Management Education (DSME) Program: The overall objective of this ADA-recognized DSME program is to support informed decision-making and promote self-care behaviors to patients with diabetes, pre-diabetes, or gestational diabetes. The DSME program aims to primarily serve those who are uninsured or underinsured and who otherwise may not receive diabetes self-management education. In 2020, the DSMES Program’s mode of service delivery was greatly impacted by COVID-19. After March 2020, no in-person groups could be held. Telehealth services were incorporated into the program and these visits began in April 2020, while also continuing in-person individual visits. A total of 267 contacts were made during the year (some individuals came multiple times; each encounter was counted as a contact). In addition, a total of 160 provider referrals to the program were received from various community practices in 2020. The DSMES program is open to Pitt County Government employees and features a new component for employee wellness. Employees enrolling in the program are provided with a free blood glucose meter and free diabetes testing supplies. Blood sugar values are uploaded from these meters to an online portal which is viewable by both the employee and the diabetes educator. This allows the Certified Diabetes Educator to review employees’ blood sugars on a regular basis (average once a month) and help identify patterns and trends; and assist in problem solving any issues. Employees also earn wellness units for attending DSME upon completion of the program. Two (2) of the 6 total participants completing the full 10 hours of DSME in 2020, were Pitt County employees. The average A1C change of Pitt County employees was a decrease of 0.6 points. For every 1.0 point decrease in A1C, microvascular complications are reduced by 22%. Unfortunately, the average A1C change of all program completers in 2020 was an increase of 0.4 points. The cause was multifactorial but included a patient with type 2 diabetes for over 50 years who has had longstanding poor glucose control and a patient with an initial A1C of 12.9 and not progressed to additional medication as per the 2020 Standards of Medical Care in Diabetes. (VH-in part)

DSME Outreach: Outreach is provided to the community and to healthcare providers on an ongoing basis to increase awareness of diabetes and prediabetes, and the services available to help treat and manage these illnesses. Outreach activities for 2020 were extremely limited due to COVID-19 and the inability to do any in person outreach beyond March 2020. However, adopting a virtual platform allowed activities such as virtual grocery store tours, talks for church groups and other events, including...
In January 2020, in collaboration with Prevent Blindness North Carolina (PBNC), the diabetes education program at the health department hosted a free Retinal Screening for members of the community. The grant funding from PBNC allows for participants to get a free screen of the retina to check for eye damage such as diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, cataracts, and other problems. In addition, those without vision insurance coverage can apply for a voucher for a free eye exam and/or eyeglasses. A total of 38 participants received this important screening at this event. Of those, 47% did not pass the screening and required further evaluation of their eye health by an optometrist or ophthalmologist.

Participants were provided with applications for the free vision exams and eyeglasses, and this was processed through PBNC. Despite COVID-19 restrictions on in-person events for most of the year, the DSMES program’s outreach activities served over 250 individuals in the community. Additional outreach for which impact cannot be quantified was provided through radio, television, social media, and newspapers/magazine articles.

Pitt County Health Department Diabetes Support Group: The Pitt County Health Department’s Diabetes Support group assists persons with diabetes, pre-diabetes or those who support someone with these conditions to implement and sustain behaviors needed to manage the disease on an ongoing basis. The group meets once a month for an educational session and a cooking demo/healthy recipe to share. This group event was cancelled for April and May 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but resumed in June 2020 using a virtual platform. Some topics covered in 2020 were meal planning 101, diabetes and kidney disease, travel tips for diabetes, COVID-19 and diabetes, health insurance, and navigating holiday celebrations. Recipe demos were much more of a challenge this year due to the virtual platform. In November (National Diabetes Month), “The Right Prescription” event featuring Diabetologist Dr. Basem Mishriky was held virtually via Webex for community members and Pitt County Government employees. Dr. Mishriky discussed the benefits of lifestyle changes in preventing and managing type 2 diabetes and the role of medications in this challenging disease. Chef Laisha Ponder shared a featured recipe. Registered Dietitians, Nurses and Diabetes Educators were available to answer questions. There was a total of seventy-seven (77) participants in attendance. Despite switching to a virtual platform and having to cancel several months due to COVID-19, participants continued to attend the diabetes support group. A core group of 5-7 people attended monthly along with additional attendees on a fluctuating basis. A total of 129 contacts were made with support group attendees in 2020.

Pitt County Health Department: North Carolina Minority Diabetes Prevention Program (NC MDPP): NC MDPP is a regional evidence-based diabetes prevention program targeting African Americans, Hispanic/Latinos, and American Indians. NC MDPP currently serves individuals in Pitt, Craven, Beaufort, Lenoir, Wilson, Greene, Wayne, Carteret, Wayne, and Jones Counties. In Pitt County, due to COVID-19, classes are held virtually through ECU Family Medicine and Pitt County Health Department. The goal of the program is to provide a prediabetes and diabetes prevention awareness and marketing campaign in minority communities; provide community screenings for prediabetes and referrals to Diabetes Self-Management Programs and offer the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Lifestyle Classes “Prevent T2” and “Prevena el T2” to minority communities across North Carolina. Individuals, who enroll in NC MDPP, can make realistic and achievable
Chronic Disease Prevention (Board of Health Priority)

Lifestyle changes that can reduce their risk of type 2 diabetes by up to 58%. Participants of the program learn to incorporate healthier eating and moderate physical activity, as well as problem-solving, stress reduction, and coping strategies into their daily lives. During this reporting period, NC MDPP screened over 1,250 individuals for prediabetes and a total of 125 participants were enrolled in the program. In Pitt County, there are currently five NC MDPP classes being held virtually. The combined weight loss between the 5 classes has exceeded 185lbs. Fifteen Pitt County participants graduated in August 2020 and lost a total of 98.2 lbs. The majority of the participants reported a decrease in their cholesterol, blood pressure and A1C.

Pitt County Health Department Preventive Health Program Services: Pitt County Health Department added several preventive health services that helped our community members pursue higher education, employment, participate in sports or camps. The services include DOT (Department of Transportation) physical exams, pre-employment exams, sports physicals, firefighter exams, college entrance exams, and lab only services. Firefighter exams were performed; however, additional services were paused due to factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Pitt County Health Department projects to resume services in 2021.

Pitt County Health Department WISEWOMAN PROGRAM: In May 2020, Pitt County Health Department implemented the NC WISEWOMAN PROGRAM, which provides eligible underserved women access to cardiovascular screening and follow-up services to reduce the incidence of heart disease and stroke. The program provides services such as diabetes and cholesterol screening, risk reduction counseling and health coaching. Nine women enrolled in the program and six of them completed all components of the program. The program services were paused due to factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additional Community Partner Progress:

Mid-East Commission Area Agency on Aging: The Living Healthy With Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) assists participants in gaining self-management skills to handle symptoms of chronic conditions. Focus areas for the series include: handling fatigue; anxiety and depression; improving communication with family members and health care providers; commitment to an exercise plan and healthier diet; and gaining self-confidence. The program consists of six, 2 ½ hour sessions meeting one time per week. In 2020, programming was offered in-person and virtually. Five CDSMP participant workshops were offered. A total of 17 participants completed the series. This programming was provided in partnership with the Mid-East Commission Area Agency on Aging and the Pitt County Council on Aging.

Rebuilding Together Pitt County – Safe at Home: Volunteers worked to improve the home environments of low-income homeowners at risk for illness due to mold, moisture or other toxic hazards. Twenty-nine (29) low-income homeowners received services that created healthier home environments. (VH)

Transforming Christian Ministries, Healthy Lives Healthy Choices (HLHC): HLHC is a faith-based chronic disease screening, referral, and case management program in partnership with African American churches in Pitt County and coordinated by lay health advisors. The program conducted 26 screening events and provided services to 173 people. (VH)

Vidant Medical Center (VMC) Cancer Care: The VMC cancer outreach program meets the community needs...
Chronic Disease Prevention (Board of Health Priority)

where they are to spread awareness related to cancer prevention and early detection. With the arrival of COVID-19 came the recommendation to halt all non-essential medical care. Cancer screening took a major hit as rates dropped as much as 98%. Once facilities were able to reopen with COVID-19 safety protocols in place, an urgent focus was placed on getting the community to return to screening. A team was formed within Vidant Cancer Care to work on increasing cancer screening rates in the community. In 2020, a total of 21 cancer awareness events were held serving approximately 900 people. A free mammogram program continued for uninsured women of Pitt County and screened 103 women; 17 of them needing additional testing and one being diagnosed with breast cancer. In addition, 10 uninsured women were provided with free Pap smears and HPV testing. The Cancer Prevention clinic at VMC saw 84 patients in 2020. A variety of services are offered through the clinic including cancer risk assessment, personalized wellness plans, cancer screenings, genetic counseling and tobacco cessation. The clinic also offers high risk screening and surveillance to appropriate patients who may be at higher risk for cancer.

Vidant Medical Center (VMC) Chronic Disease Screenings: VMC provided health screenings for various community and church groups screening 297 individuals. Chronic Disease screenings were also provided to 147 Pitt County Schools faculty and staff. A Stroke Regional Resource guide was published.

Vidant Medical Center (VMC) / Pitt Partners for Health (PPH) Chronic Disease Initiative: Programs and services were implemented in the areas of stroke prevention (faith health screenings), cancer care, diabetes and Lifestyle is Medicine. Monthly newspaper articles featuring health topics were authored by PPH members and featured in The Daily Reflector Newspaper.

Additional Community Partner Progress:

A Time for Science: The SAGE Sisters program served middle school girls providing them with opportunities to learn about healthy lifestyles, and increased opportunities to participate in various types of physical activity. The program also helped to improve their social skills by interacting with their peers and program mentors. (VH)

Boys and Girls Club - Pitt County Sites, Triple Play Program: This program served over 1,500 youth among five club sites in various Pitt County townships. Youth learned about the importance of healthy living while participating in daily physical challenge games to increase their levels of physical activity and knowledge about nutrition. (VH)

Community Crossroads/ Greenville Community Shelter Nutritious Breakfast and Transportation Program: The Healthy Balance Nutrition Program provided 16,900 breakfast meals to 539 shelter residents. In addition, 11,400 bus tickets were provided for homeless shelter residents to attend medical, vocational and educational appointments. (VH)

Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina – Pitt County Branch: The Food Bank distributed more than 5 million lbs. of fresh produce to 873 food insecure households, helping to fight hunger among Pitt County and surrounding county residents. (VH)

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Vidant Medical Center’s Cancer Screening rates drastically dropped in 2020.
Hope of Glory Ministries, Community Food Co-Op: This program, which addressed food insecurity, served twenty-six (26) families resulting in $50,267 in grocery savings that participants were able to apply toward meeting their financial goals of paying off debts and/or establishing a savings account. Families received healthy foods, attended financial management classes, and were mentored by staff. (VH)

NC Cooperative Extension, Family and Consumer Sciences: A NC Cooperative Extension agent helped adults with culinary nutrition skills: 138 adults lowered their sodium intake; 113 adults increased their produce consumption; 107 youth increased knowledge of food safety and preparation skills and nutrition knowledge; 70 individuals participated in food preservation skills; 120 learned how to prepare local foods via demonstrations at the farmer’s market and health fair events. While COVID-19 had an effect on in-person meetings, Cooperative Extension offices in several counties collaborated to develop and implement a six-week “Med Instead of Meds” course that was delivered virtually. (VH)

NC Cooperative Extension Service, Healthy Communities Youth EF-NEP: Healthy Communities Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) provided lessons on nutrition, healthy food preparation, and food safety to low-income families and children. Over 700 students increased their physical activity and produce consumption after participating in the Youth EFNEP series. (VH)

NC Cooperative Extension, Making Pitt Fit Community Garden: A Community Gardening professional worked with kindergarten students and adults interested in starting/maintaining community gardens. She taught gardening skills to 65 community gardeners, supervised 96 volunteers that provided 733 hours of volunteer service and donated 850 lbs. of produce to area soup kitchens and to families in need. (VH)

NC Cooperative Extension, Pitt County Farm and Food Council: The Pitt County Farm and Food Council used the Pitt Food Finder App and website to help residents find food resources, farmers markets, or an agritourism experience in Pitt County. The Council was instrumental in establishing the weekly, seasonal G-Circle market where farm vendors sell at the Pitt County Health Department and Human Services campus as the COVID 19 pandemic restrictions allowed. Vendors accept SNAP payments. (VH)

Pitt County Community Schools and Recreation: This program served 3,802 youth. There was a decrease in participatory numbers due to the COVID – 19 safety measures that were implemented. Programs for youth were not available for the months of April-September of 2020. The After School Program served approximately 400 students in ten (10) schools between January and the middle of March. Approximately 160 students were served in nine (9) schools between August and December. Participation was limited to 50% due to COVID-19 guidelines. Students participated in nutrition lessons, engaged in 60 minutes of physical activity daily, and enjoyed healthy snacks. The Adult Program served 16,558 participants, a slight decrease due to the cancellation of both in-person programming and use of school facilities due to COVID-19. However, the Senior Adult Program numbers slightly increased during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the implementation of virtual programming for Senior Wellness as well as Greenville -Pitt County Senior Games, serving 19,568 individuals. Staff continued to be the Lead Agency for the Greenville-
Pitt County Senior Games Program and provided limited sports and recreation for people 50 years of age and older. The Pitt County District Park became a critical destination for physical activity, stress reduction, and time in nature during the COVID-19 pandemic. Use of the Park more than doubled in number with individuals and families of all ages. Staff kept in touch with Public Health Officials and used signage to help educate the community on COVID-19 safety protocols.

Pitt County Schools (PCS) – Eat Smart, Move More: The PCS Child Nutrition Program continued to meet the dietary needs of all students and provided accurate, easily accessible information that encouraged the community to eat smart. PCS is fortunate to employ qualified professionals to develop and analyze menus for a diverse population of students, develop accurate resources for caregivers and students with special dietary needs, and develop educational materials and provide training for staff and students. (VH)

Project Anna, Your Health Matters Nutrition and Wellness Program: This program distributed food to 4,100 households totaling more than 11,000 individuals. (VH)

The Little Willie Center – Healthy Meals Initiative: The Little Willie Center after school program provided tutoring and mentoring to latch-key children and served 1,500 nutritious meals to children. Supplemental food supplies were also distributed to 334 families. (VH)

Vidant Medical Center (VMC) Eastern Carolina Injury Prevention Program Physical Activity Events: The following activities promoted physical activity (numbers reached following each event): Bike and Pedestrian Safety (153 students); Sports Safety (1,029; 64% knowledge increased); and Swim Safety (310 second grade students).

Vidant Medical Center / Pitt Partners for Health, Healthy People Healthy Carolinas (HPHC) grant: This grant awarded to Vidant Medical Center / Pitt Partners for Health supported the following activities: CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health): 11 sites / 355 participants; Walk Wise NC: 2 sites / 55 participants; Kids in Parks Track Trails: 4 trails / 302 participants;

Track RX: 6 practice sites / 66 participants; Cooking Matters at the Store: 2 tours / 19 participants; Know It Control It blood pressure monitoring program: 2 sites / 10 policies.

West Greenville Health Council (WGHC): The WGHC supports the work of concerned West Greenville citizens to identify and prioritize local health issues and address health inequities. The Council has achieved 501c3 status and works as an independent, community-driven health group. The WGHC meets regularly and supports interventions such as Walk-Wise NC and the Minority Diabetes Prevention Program; participates in the City’s Adopt-a-Street program; annually hosts the West Greenville Juneteenth celebration; and community wellness programs. The Council also provided monthly health education sessions based on the National Health Observances in various venues throughout West Greenville.

The Pitt County District Park became a critical destination for physical activity, stress reduction, and time in nature during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Infant Mortality Pitt County’s total infant death rate increased dramatically to 11.5 / 1,000 live births in 2019. The previous year’s (2018) total infant mortality death rate was 6.7 / 1,000 live births compared to 8.8 / 1,000 live births in 2017. Pitt County’s 2019 total infant death rate was almost double that of North Carolina’s total infant death rate of 6.8 / 1,000 live births. There continues to be a significant disparity between White Non-Hispanic and African American Non-Hispanic infant deaths. Between 2015 – 2019, Pitt County’s disparity ratio between White Non-Hispanic and African American Non-Hispanic was 4.77 based on 5-year averages.

Premature births, low weight births and birth defects continue to be the leading causes of infant mortality in Pitt County. Numerous evidence-based programs designed to help improve birth outcomes and prevent infant mortality attempted to address the issue throughout 2020.

Pitt County Infant Mortality Rates 5-Year Averages
White Non-Hispanic and African American Non-Hispanic Comparison
Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics

Pitt County Infant Mortality Racial Disparities Ratio (5-year Averages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>White Non-Hispanic</th>
<th>African American Non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Disparity Ratio</th>
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<td>2015-2019</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>16.7</td>
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Maternal and Child Health (Board of Health Priority)

North Carolina Infant Mortality Racial Disparities Ratio (5-year Averages)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Years</th>
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<th>African American Non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Disparity Ratio</th>
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<tr>
<td>2015-2019</td>
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<td>12.6</td>
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</table>

African American Non-Hispanic Infant Mortality Rates 5-Year Averages
Pitt County and North Carolina Comparison
Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics
Maternal and Child Health (Board of Health Priority)

Progress and Interventions

Pitt County Health Department WIC Program: The Women, Infant and Children (WIC) Supplemental Nutrition Program encountered numerous changes during the COVID-19 pandemic. The implementation of State waivers allowed WIC to waive physical presence, issue services remotely by telephone, extend certifications, postpone vendor monitoring, and expand food choices. Breast pump issuance waivers were also implemented. State funding was awarded to help with WIC promotion through advertisements on the City GREAT Bus and in-house wall murals. In an effort to increase caseload, the Pitt County WIC Program started monthly “Caseload Challenges.”

In an effort to further reach children and their families, Pitt County’s Health Director, Dr. John Silvernail recorded a YouTube video of the reading of the Polar Express in December 2020. He was accompanied by WIC staff who constructed back drops and other visuals for this recording.

Pitt County Health Department WIC Outreach / Inreach: WIC staff displayed at several events and provided nutrition information and small incentive items, but activities were limited due to COVID-19. Events included displaying at the Purple Pantry Resource Fair; Grocery Store Displays at Food Lion stores; Give Kids a Smile; Collaboration Meeting with FNS/DSS; and Juneteenth Virtual Food Demo with the West Greenville Health Council. Much emphasis was placed on keeping the media and public abreast of the many WIC changes due to COVID-19.

Pitt County Health Department Better Beginnings Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program: This program is led by trained Peer Counselors with personal breastfeeding experience who provide support and encouragement to women enrolled in the Women, Infant and Children (WIC) Program. Peer Counselors establish a relationship with women during their pregnancy and provide intensive support in the first month after their baby is born. Women may continue to receive support for up to a year after having a baby. Breast pumps are available to assist women with maintaining their breastmilk supply. While home visits were minimal in 2020 due to COVID-19, peer counselors provided curbside services and door drop offs to our clients. The Breastfeeding team started offering Virtual Moms Support Groups in July 2020. The World Breastfeeding Celebration was held virtually on August 18, 2020. The theme was “Support Breastfeeding for A Healthier Planet.” Monthly Breastfeeding Classes were ceased due to the pandemic; however, prenatal patients were referred to the virtual Ready, Set, Baby classes taught in both English and Spanish by the Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute. (VH – in part)

Pitt County Health Department Child Care Health Consultant Program: Pitt County Health Department Child Care Health Consultants provided technical assistance and training to childcare staff remotely, during most of 2020 due to COVID-19. A total of 232 childcare workers received virtual training or in person on the topics of ITS-SIDS (Infant/ Toddler Safe Sleep and SIDS Risk Reduction), Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma, Triple P Positive Parenting, Emergency Planning and Response, Medication Administration in Child Care, COVID Vaccine 101 and Be Active Kids. Child Care Health Consultants provided 457 episodes of technical assistance related to COVID-19 to childcare programs. The Child Care Health Consultants provided much advice to childcare centers through the Health Department’s COVID-19 Hotline. Program staffing and activities were funded by a Martin / Pitt Partnership for Children, Smart Start grant.

Pitt County Health Department Child Fatality Prevention Team (CFPT): This Team is comprised of members from various agencies and disciplines who work collaboratively to reduce preventable child fatalities in Pitt County through systematic team reviews. In 2020, 34 child death cases were sent to Pitt County’s CFPT (the actual deaths occurred in 2019, but are reviewed the following year). None of the deaths were selected for a full review by the team. 2020 presented a challenge in the fact that all meetings after March were held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
Maternal and Child Health *(Board of Health Priority)*

**Pitt County Health Department Cribs for Kids:**
The Pitt County Health Department continued to offer the Cribs for Kids Safe Sleep Program in 2020 throughout the COVID-19 pandemic by following state mandated social distancing and group gathering guidelines. The program is designed to decrease the rates of accidental infant deaths due to unsafe, sleeping environments. Low-cost cribs, safe sleep kits and educational sessions were provided to parents. In 2020, 51 safe sleep educational sessions were offered and 229 cribs were distributed to families in need. Funding from NC DHHS supported the program and paid for television advertisements to promote the program to families.

**Pitt County Health Department Healthy Beginnings:** Pitt County Health Department received funding from the County to provide support services to pregnant and postpartum women who need extensive case management services. This program includes care coordination and home visiting services in the following areas: healthy weight and physical activity, daily folic acid/multivitamin consumption, early and continuous prenatal care, breastfeeding initiation and maintenance, postpartum care, reproductive life planning, safe sleep practices, tobacco use/smoking cessation and eliminating secondhand smoke exposure and well-child visits.

**Pitt County Health Department NC Baby Love Plus:** Pitt County Health Department continued to receive funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration’s (HRSA) Maternal and Child Health Bureau to support the NC Baby Love Plus program. The purpose is to improve birth outcomes and the health of women of childbearing age through strengthening the perinatal systems of care, building family resilience, promoting quality services, and increasing community capacity to address perinatal disparity. COVID-19 prevented outreach opportunities as much of the focus was on COVID-19 testing; however, outreach services were provided to 134 women of childbearing age and their families. Approximately 105 women were linked to health and social resources.

**Pitt County Health Department Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP):** The NFP is an evidence-based community health, nurse home visiting program for low-income first-time mothers that empowers them to transform their lives and create a better future for themselves and their babies. The NFP program has three goals: 1. Improve pregnancy outcomes by helping women engage in good preventive health practices, including thorough prenatal care from their healthcare providers, improving their diets and reduce their use of cigarettes, alcohol and illegal substances; 2. Improve child health and development by helping parents provide responsible and competent care; and 3. Improve the economic self-sufficiency of the family by helping parents develop a vision for their own future, plan future pregnancies, continue their education and find work. COVID-19 shifted the Program’s focus, as many staff were needed to assist with COVID-19 community testing. However, NFP served 117 families and provided 1,456 home visits in 2020. Funding for the program was provided by the NC DHHS, Vidant Health Foundation, Martin-Pitt Partnership for Children, Eddie and Jo Allison Smith Family Foundation, and United Way of Pitt County. *(VH – in part)*
Maternal and Child Health  
*(Board of Health Priority)*

**Pitt County Health Department PIMPAC:** The Pitt Infant Mortality Prevention Advisory Council (PIMPAC) continued to oversee programs and services aimed at improving Pitt County’s birth outcomes by implementing strategies to combat Pitt County’s leading causes of infant death (preterm birth, low weight births, and birth defects). However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic many of the standard events such as the annual “Making Pitt’s Babies Fit” Maternity Fair were not implemented. The Advisory Council also resorted to virtual meetings.

**Pitt County Health Department Telehealth Family Planning & Pregnancy Healthcare Programs:** On April 15, 2020 Pitt County Health Department implemented telehealth services. These services were to remove barriers that may prevent individuals from having access to family planning, pregnancy health care services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Services were offered through video chat, telephone interaction or a combination of telehealth and an in-person visit.

**Pitt County Health Department Triple P Positive Parenting Program:** Pitt County Health Department continued to receive funding from NC DHHS along with the added partnership of The Impact Center at Frank Porter Graham and Prevent Child Abuse NC. 2020 was a challenge for families, not only for the basic concern of the wellbeing and safety for their children, but for themselves and other family members. Due to limitations of seeing families face-to-face, information about parenting was shared through social media, emails, and connecting with families through zoom, facetime and phone call check-ins. Data was hard to track in 2020, but 666 caregivers and 965 children were directly impacted with Triple P services. Additionally, 14 Pitt County providers from various agencies were trained in Triple P Level 3 Primary Care along with an additional 2 trained to deliver Triple P Seminars or groups. These providers were trained virtually and quickly realized Triple P had to be delivered differently. To support this, Triple P America hosted multiple webinars in 2020 to make sure our local providers could teach parenting strategies with fidelity. 2020 was a different year, but through community partnerships, collaboration and state leadership, this evidence-based program continued to strengthen Pitt County families. Pitt County Triple P providers learned how to overcome obstacles and keep parenting support available as a service in our community.

**Pitt County Health Department Youth Development Program:** Pitt County Health Department’s Youth Development Program targets adolescent pregnancy prevention by collaborating with Pitt County middle and high schools, focusing on life skills development, goal setting and community service. In addition to group sessions, the middle school students participated in two volunteer projects. The high school, Peer Health Advocates group also participated in community service projects and implemented awareness activities for their peers. Pitt County Health Department received funding from Vidant Medical Center Community Health Programs for program support. The program served 70 students during the 2019-2020 school year. No pregnancies were reported.

**Additional Community Partner Progress:**

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (Board of Health Priority)

Goal: Reduce Pitt County’s rate of Sexually Transmitted Disease with emphasis on Chlamydia and HIV.

**Progress and Interventions**

**Chlamydia**

According to the 2019 NC HIV/STD/Hepatitis Surveillance Report, Chlamydia is the most frequently reported bacterial STD both nationally and in North Carolina. A higher number of cases are reported among women and most often among women between the ages of 20-24 years, followed by ages 15-19 years and ages 25-29 years. In 2019, Black / African women and men had the highest Chlamydia rates. North Carolina’s Chlamydia diagnoses increased by 20% in women and by 61% in men increased by 61% in 2019. The increase among men may be due to increased screenings among this population.

Although North Carolina experienced a 31% increase in the number of newly diagnosed Chlamydia cases between 2015-2019 (1,703 cases to 2,229 cases). Expressed in rates per 100,000 population, this represents a 27.5% increase in new case rates (967.2 / 100,000 in 2015 to 1233.2 / 100,000 in 2019).

Sexually Transmitted Diseases *(Board of Health Priority)*

**HIV**

HIV is caused by retrovirus and spread through certain body fluids such as blood, semen, rectal and vaginal fluids. It weakens a person’s immune system, making it difficult to fight off infections. Currently, there is no cure for HIV, although medical care, including antiretroviral treatment, can help control HIV. According to the 2019 NC HIV/STD/Hepatitis Surveillance Report, North Carolina’s newly diagnosed HIV annual rates decreased slightly from 15.9 / 100,000 population to 15.6 respectively, between 2015-2019. During this same reporting period, Pitt County’s newly diagnosed HIV annual rates increased from 22.3 / 100,000 population to 30.0 respectively. In 2019, Pitt County’s newly diagnosed HIV annual rate was 92% higher than North Carolina’s. Between 2017-2019, Pitt County was ranked as having the 4th highest newly diagnosed HIV rate among all 100 NC counties.


![Graph: Newly Diagnosed HIV Annual Rates Comparison of Pitt County and NC](chart)

**Progress and Interventions**

Pitt County Health Department Telehealth STD Services: On April 15, 2020 Pitt County Health Department implemented telehealth services. These services were to remove barriers that prevented individuals from having access to sexually transmitted disease health care services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Services were offered through video chat, telephone interaction, or a combination of telehealth and an in-person visit.

**Pitt County Health Department, Community Condom Distribution Sites:** Condom Distribution Sites have been proven to increase condom use and prevent HIV/STDs. In partnership with PiCASO (Pitt County AIDS Ser-vice Organization), additional Condom Distribution sites were established in the community.
Supplies of condoms were regularly stocked and placed on display at community locations and offered free of charge to the public. Condom Sites established in 2020 include the Intergenerational Community Center, AMEXCAN, Joy Soup Kitchen, The Village, Kearney Park Housing Complex, Community Crossroads, Port Methadone Clinic, Enams African American Spiritual Arts & Crafts, Ekim for Change, Greenville Recovery Center, Greene, Lenoir, Martin, Pitt (lead County), Pamlico, Washington, Wayne and Jones. The primary purpose of this Program is to improve access to Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) services for eligible persons at high risk for HIV with a primary focus on young, African American men who have sex with men (MSM). This Program enables local health departments to connect with and develop relationships with the MSM communities to identify those at most risk for HIV and link them to qualified providers for PrEP. The Program also works to provide capacity building and technical assistance to increase the ability of healthcare providers to provide high quality, accessible PrEP services, addressing the national HIV prevention goals of reducing new HIV infections, increasing access to care and reducing HIV-related disparities and health inequities. A new coordinator began in 2020 and met with the counties in the region to assess the capacity of each health department to offer PrEP services. Most counties were on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions so progress was slower than expected. Some of the counties with smaller populations and much smaller staff already refer clients to the ECU Adult Specialty Clinic and to Vidant Medical Center for PrEP services. Three counties are currently writing policies and procedures to begin offering services in 2021 (Lenoir, Wayne, Greene). A marketing campaign was designed and promotional items were distributed to the region to be used in educational outreach settings. The coordinator attended outreach and testing activities in the region to meet with potential clients who are interested in enrolling in PrEP services.

Additional Community Partner Progress:
PiCASO (Pitt County Aids Service Organization) HIV Testing: PiCASO provided educational sessions to populations considered high-risk for HIV and to organizations that work with these groups. PiCASO also tested individuals for HIV and referred individuals who tested positive for the virus to the Brody School of Medicine’s Infectious Disease Clinic for further treatment. (VH)
In addition to the Sexually Transmitted Diseases Priority Health Area, many other communicable disease and disaster preparedness interventions were implemented in 2020 to protect population health due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 Hotline: In March 2020, Pitt County Health Department activated the COVID-19 Hotline which served as a central hub to provide COVID-19 guidance to the community. The Hotline was manned by Health Department staff who answered thousands of phone calls. In addition, a dedicated COVID-19 email and webpage were implemented as a avenue to provide further guidance.

COVID-19 Testing: On July 9, 2020 Pitt County Health Department launched the COVID-19 Community Testing Project. Community Partners such as Pitt County EMS, Pitt County Sheriffs, Pitt County employees, nurse contractors, and Vidant School Nurses collaborated to perform COVID-19 testing at 8 sites across Pitt County. Over the course of 23 weeks, 9,593 tests were performed at Ayden Middle School, Bethel Elementary School, Farmville Community Center, GR Whitfield Middle School in Grimesland, Moywood Community Center in Greenville, JH Rose High School, Winterville Community Fire Department and the Winterville Town Fire Department. Vidant Medical Center, Lab Corp and NC State Laboratory of Public Health provided laboratory services for this project. In addition, Vidant Medical Center performed thousands of additional tests through their onsite testing center held at the Greenville Convention Center.

Immunization Program / COVID-19 Vaccinations: Pitt County Health Department began providing Moderna COVID-19 vaccine to eligible groups. A total of 172 people received the Moderna vaccine by December 31, 2020.

Immunization Program / Childhood Immunizations: In October 2020, Vidant School Health Program partnered with Pitt County Health Department to provide a drive through immunization clinic for Pitt County Middle and High School students. A total of 196 students were immunized through this initiative. The drive through clinics were offered with a total capacity of 405 appointment slots.

Immunization Program / Community Flu Campaign: Pitt County Health Department held Flu clinics at various community locations in Pitt County in November and December 2020. Flu clinics were held at the Bethel Youth Activity Center, eKim for Change (Greenville), Farmville Community Center, Cornerstone Missionary Baptist Church, and Sycamore Hill Missionary Baptist Church. Flu vaccines were administered to 128 individuals across the community sites.

Disaster Shelter Training: Vidant’s Center for Learning and Performance created an Emergency Disaster Training Program for Pitt County Health Department’s Public Health Nurses and Vidant School Health’s School nurses. The training was initially planned for a face-to-face training at Vidant Medical Center. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the training was converted to an e-training format. The training prepares nurses to staff and care for community members who may need to shelter at a Special Medical Needs Shelter during a natural disaster. The was initially provided in August 2020 training and is ongoing.
ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY PARTNER EFFORTS

The following updates reflect progress made towards addressing additional health priorities selected by community partners. In addition to the health priorities selected by the Board of Health, Pitt County Health Department worked collaboratively with the community to ensure that a broad range of priorities were addressed and without duplication of efforts.

Access to Care / Social Determinants of Health (Community Partner Priority)

Access East, Clinician for the James D. Bernstein Center: A Physician Extender position was supported at the James D. Bernstein clinic and served 2,051 uninsured new patients in need of primary care services. Follow-up services were also provided to 249 patients who had previously visited the hospital’s emergency department. (VH)

Access East, Colon Cancer Screening Project: Cancer screenings were provided for uninsured residents. Nine (9) individuals received services. (VH)

Access East, Prescription Medication Assistance: A total of 469 individuals received 2,425 prescription medications valued at $1,276,695. (VH)

Access East for Project MEND: A social worker connected patients from various free clinics (Greenville Community Shelter, Oakmont, and Pitt County Care) to HealthAssist, five (5) patients received health insurance enrollment assistance, 150 uninsured individuals were linked to primary and specialty care and 84 individuals were referred to free clinics by the Vidant Medical Center’s Emergency Department. (VH)

CareNet Counseling East, Behavioral Health Counseling: A total of 935 counseling sessions were provided to 317 uninsured/underinsured clients who otherwise would not have received behavioral health counseling. (VH)

ECU Physicians, Medication Assistance Program: Medications were provided to help patients manage chronic diseases. Patients obtained 881 prescription medications valued at $3,106,991. (VH)

Jarvis United Methodist Church, Shepherd’s Helpers: Reusable, portable aluminum ramps were provided to people with physical challenges. (VH)

Oakmont Baptist Church: The Oakmont Ramp Builders constructed wooden ramps for 50 disabled individuals enabling them to attend medical appointments. (VH)

Pitt County Care, Free Clinic for the Uninsured Population: Medical Students from the Brody School of Medicine volunteered their time on Sundays to operate this clinic held at Pitt County Health Department. Primary care services including medications and laboratory services were provided to 380 individuals which includes 170 new patients. (VH)

Pitt County Council on Aging, Medicare Options Counselor: A Medicare Options Counselor provided 1,530 one-on-one counseling sessions on Medicare insurance options, resulting in cost savings of $1.3 million for area seniors. (VH)

Real Crisis, Pitt Resource Connection (PRC): PRC promoted access to care through their 350-member network representing 124 agencies and through community events and a weekly TV show on GPAT. Community members’ needs including assistance with medical services/supplies, prescription medications, rent, utilities and furniture were identified and individuals were linked with resources. (VH)
Access to Care / Social Determinants of Health (Community Partner Priority)

**Vidant Medical Cancer Access to Care:** The patient navigation team provides personalized assistance to cancer patients and families. The team works to overcome barriers to care including financial concerns, practical problems, and emotional distress. In 2020, the team at VMC provided services to approximately 700 patients per month and delivered over 9,000 total encounters to coordinate care, provide education, and link patients with community resources.

**Vidant Medical Center (VMC) Pediatric Asthma Program:** This program received 208 referrals and provided case management services to 37 patients. Families were assisted with obtaining medications and supplies as needed. Asthma Day Camp was held at Aquaventure, benefiting 27 people. Asthma Blitz Days provided 1,185 elementary school age children with asthma education and assessment of asthma knowledge.

**Vidant Medical Center (VMC) / Pitt Partners for Health (PPH) Access to Care Initiative:** In 2020, PPH members continued to promote the NCCARE360 among agencies within Pitt County. NCCARE 360 electronically connects individuals to community resources (healthy food; safe and affordable housing; jobs, etc.) and provides feedback to referral sources reporting if the individual connected with the recommended service. Additional Access to Care initiatives include the Mend Free Clinic Navigation Services which linked individuals with prescription medications; the Faith Health Partnership which supported health screenings at local churches; the Senior Services Program which worked to improve the health and well being of older adults through health promotion and social support education and access to prescription medications. Initiatives such as the promotion of VidantNow and the implementation of E-visits were intended to improve use and access of the health care system during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Vidant Medical Center (VMC) / Pitt County Emergency Management Community Paramedic Program:** Pitt County Emergency Management operated a Community Paramedic (CP) Program in unison with VMC and with support from Vidant Health. Healthcare was provided to community members and decreased the number of unnecessary emergency department visits. In addition, counseling services were provided to seniors to assist them with Medicare Part D enrollment. Seniors were also assisted with applications to the Department of Social Services for the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program. The CP Program linked community members to services such as home health, Meals on Wheels, free clinics, food stamps, in-home COVID-19 vaccinations, and more. The CP was one of three programs submitted for the Pitt County All American Cities and Counties Award, which was awarded to Pitt County Government. (VH)

**Vidant Medical Center (VMC) School Nurse Program:** This program improved access to care including chronic disease and medication management for students enrolled in Pitt County Schools. Case Management services were provided for 1,802 students. The School Nurses also provided ongoing case management support related to COVID-19.

**Mental Health (Community Partner Priority)**

**Vidant Medical Center (VMC) Cancer Care Support and Survivorship Program:** Increased access to support services for community members who are cancer survivors. Support groups and various programs such as yoga, massages, Thai Chi, art classes, gardening, kayaking, and fishing were provided to group participants.

**Vidant Medical Center (VMC), Pitt County Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD):** Numerous initiatives were implemented in middle and high schools impacting destructive decision making. Surveys revealed an increase in knowledge regarding vaping, gangs, substance use and under age drinking anxiety, depression, and other mental health topics.

**Vidant Medical Center Hopeful Beginnings Program:** Support services were provided for mothers who experienced postpartum depression or

**Vidant Medical Center (VMC) / Pitt Partners for Health (PPH) Mental Health Initiative:** A workgroup meets monthly to focus on the Mental Health / Behavioral Health Initiative. Group members represent approximately 15 different stakeholders in the community and have been working collaboratively to develop a plan for community education. The VMC Safe Communities program partnered with BRACE (Bringing Resilience Courage to Excel) to train individuals as Mental Health First Aid Instructors in order to further offer training to school counselors, school nurses and other key school staff. The VMC Opioid Action Team completed a Substance Use and Mental Health resource guide for community partners.

**Vidant Medical Center Tender Hearts Program:** Support group services were provided for families that experiences a fetal loss.
How You Can Get Involved

All of the health priorities identified in this report are addressed by various committees and coalitions within Pitt County. Many of these committees are supported by Pitt Partners for Health, a community improvement partnership with representatives from local churches, businesses, communities, and local health and human service agencies, including Vidant Medical Center (Administrator) and Pitt County Health Department. Pitt Partners for Health meets the 2nd Thursday of each month except July. Meeting locations rotate each month and are held in all areas of Pitt County. In 2020, all meetings were held virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions.

For more information about Pitt Partners for Health, contact Catherine Nelson, Senior Administrator of Community Health Programs, Vidant Medical Center at: cnelson@vidanthealth.com or 252-847-6077.

Every attempt has been made to summarize the major activities occurring within Pitt County to address each of the priority health areas, but some programs may not be represented in this report.

Please contact: Amy Hattem, Deputy Health Director / Director of Health Education and Public Information, Pitt County Health Department at 252-902-2426 or amy.hattem@pittcountync.gov to ensure that information regarding your program as it relates to one of the outlined priority areas is included in future reports.

Visit our website at: www.PittCountyNC.gov/PCHD
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Alex Albright
Pitt County Commissioner

Dr. Mark Hayes
Veterinarian

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Dentist

Dr. Scott McIntosh
Optometrist

Tina Dixon, Vice Chair
At-Large Member

Nitish Patidar
Pharmacist

Martha Engelke
Nurse

Kelly Pack Smith
At-Large Member

Rex Fleming
At-Large Member

Lowell Speight
Engineer

Not Pictured
Dr. Herb Garrison
Physician