

2019 State of the County Health Report

Henderson County, North Carolina



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WHAT IS A SOTCH REPORT?

The state of North Carolina requires that local health departments conduct a Community Health Assessment (CHA) at least every four years. During the years between health assessments, health departments submit an abbreviated State of the County Health (SOTCH) report.

The most recent CHA, which identified Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Physical Activity and Nutrition as health priorities, was published in 2018. The 2018 CHA and related SOTCH reports can be viewed online at www.hendersoncountync.gov/health.

This report provides a brief overview of changes in trends related to our health priorities, updates on community initiatives and details behind emerging trends that may impact the health of Henderson County.

Data sources used to complete this SOTCH include:

- North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics (NC SCHS) <https://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/data/databook>
- 2015, 2018 Henderson County Youth Behavior Risk Survey
- 2018 Henderson County Community Health Assessment. <https://www.hendersoncountync.gov/health/page/community-health-assessment>
- 2018 WNC Healthy Impact Data Workbook. <https://www.wnchn.org/wnc-data/>
- County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2019. www.countyhealthrankings.org
- U.S. Census Bureau, American FactFinder. <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

DATA SNAPSHOT

Henderson County remains a relatively healthy place to live. In 2019, Henderson ranked 13th (out of 100 counties) in the state in health outcomes, which measures length and quality of life. The county ranked 5th in health factors including health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and physical environment.

Through the Community Health Assessment, several special populations were identified including:

Under-served:

- Persons with Limited English Proficiency (4.2% of population over 5 years of age speak English less than "very well")
- The uninsured or under-insured (15.8% are uninsured)

At-risk:

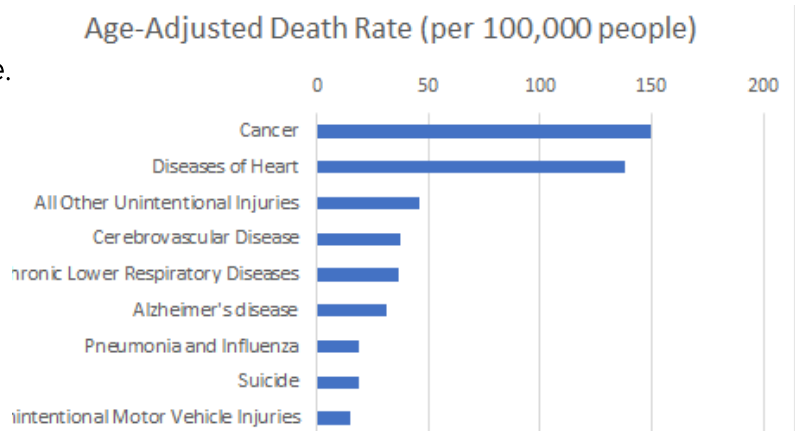
- Pregnant women who smoke (11% of births were to mothers who smoked during pregnancy in 2018)
- Persons with multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Persons who use intravenous drugs

Vulnerable:

- Seniors (24.7% of the population is 65 or older, compared to 14.9% state-wide)
- Children under 5
- Teens
- Persons living in poverty
- Persons of color
- Persons with physical and/or mental health care challenges

Adolescent pregnancy rates are at an all-time-low, at 23.2 out of 1,000 women ages 15-19 years. Infant mortality rates have changed little over the past ten years with the most recent rate estimate at 4.6 per 1,000 live births.

The most common cause of death is cancer followed closely by heart disease. Compared to the state, Henderson County has higher age-adjusted death rates of unintentional injuries including accidental overdoses (45.7 vs. 37), chronic liver disease and cirrhosis (11 vs. 10.4) and suicide (18.8 vs. 13.5). These statistics may indicate a trend of poor mental health.



PRIORITIES

Health priorities from the 2018 CHA include:

MENTAL HEALTH

pages 4 - 5



Behavioral Health Summit Planning Meeting

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

pages 6 - 7



Jeff Anderson
No changes were made. flickr.com

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION

pages 8 - 9

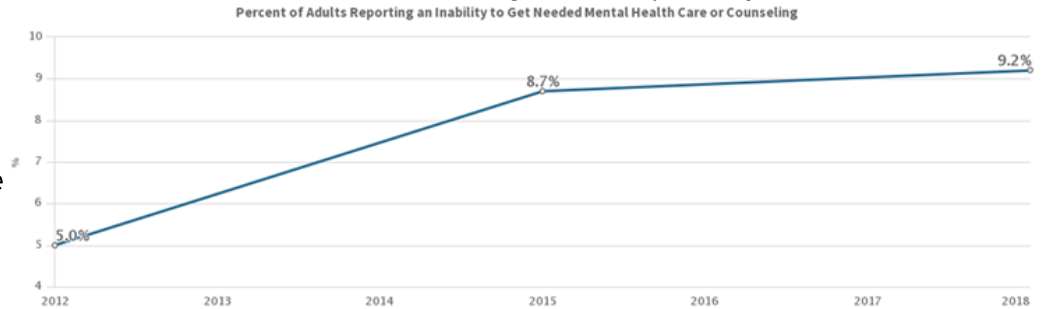


Henderson County Department of
Public Health Demonstration Garden

PRIORITY # 1: MENTAL HEALTH

After a complete reboot of the action plan, the Behavioral Health Summit worked diligently to accomplish many tasks in 2019. Data that we are following for this priority include:

Indicator # 1: Reduce the percentage of adults who report an inability to get needed mental health care or counseling in the past year.



Indicator # 2: Decrease the percentage of 9th graders reporting seriously considering suicide in the past year.

Seriously considered attempting suicide (during the 12 months before the survey)	2013	2013	2015	2015	2015	2017	2017	2017
	NC	USA	HEND.	NC	USA	HEND.	NC	USA
	19.7%	17.2%	19.7%	18.2%	18.2%	21.4%	17.4%	16.3%

Indicator # 3: Decrease the number of adults reporting having 4 or more adverse childhood experiences.

Focus Area # 1: Access to Care

Intervention 1: Expand Availability of Mental Health Services

In September of 2019, the Behavioral Health Summit was held with 29 community leaders representing 23 organizations. From these stem two action teams: the Living Road Map group (mentioned below) and the after-hours/crisis care action team which considers gaps, barriers, options, and solutions for care during the times that most resources are closed. The main barriers and gaps identified include transportation, wait lists, and limited availability of service hours.

With regard to substance abuse there are now two providers in the community that provide Medication-Assisted Therapy (MAT) with counseling: Blue Ridge Community Health Services (BRCHS) and Premier Treatment Specialists. While MAT has not begun in the jail, there is currently a Bridges to Health team that meets with inmates for assessment, treatment, and referral and has a 53% follow-up after release.

Intervention 2: Publicize Ways to Access Services

As mentioned above, the Behavioral Health Summit identified roadblocks and gaps in system navigation. A working group has completed the Living Road Map for children's services. The next phase is to develop a Road Map for families and caregivers and to design a user-friendly website for public navigation and self-referrals.

Focus Area # 2: Youth Considering Suicide

Intervention 1: Mental Health First Aid

During the 2018-2019 school year, 200 staff and 151 community members were trained in identifying stress and signs of mental illness in students. There are plans to expand the Mental Health First Aid trainings to any professional or caregiver who works with young people in Henderson County in 2020.

Intervention 2: Increase social work capacity

Henderson County Public Schools have hired nine new social workers in the last year and a half and four school-based therapists and one school-based crisis counselor.

Intervention 3: Increase cross-sector collaboration

One of the main roles of the Behavioral Health Systems Coordinator is to increase Henderson County's ability for cross-sector collaboration. In this role, she is able to work with several multi-disciplinary teams including the Partnership for Health, Hope Rx, and the Henderson County Crisis Collaborative. She is also able to expand her reach beyond Henderson County working with similar agencies in Transylvania and Buncombe County - which increases efficiency and bandwidth for all agencies

Focus Area # 3: Adult ACE Scores

Intervention 1: Expand Availability of Mental Health Services

As mentioned above, a Behavioral Health Navigator was hired and trained under the auspices of the Henderson County Department of Public Health. She is working to establish protocol for assessment, treatment, and referral, and establishing documentation of evaluative measures.

Intervention 2: Diversion Control

Over 1,700 pounds of drugs were collected during take-back events in 2019. Additional information may be found under Priority # 2: Substance Abuse.

Intervention 3: Impact Social Norms

A service-learning class through the University of North Carolina in Asheville and under the guidance of local law enforcement conducted surveillance to address alcohol and vapor sales to minors. Additional information may be found under Priority # 2: Substance Abuse.

PRIORITY # 2: SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Hope Rx continued to lead substance abuse and smoking prevention work through increased community collaboration, diversion control, education, and political advocacy. Data that we are following for this priority include:

Indicator # 1: Reduce the percentage of adults who report using opiates/opioids in the past year - with or without a prescription.

Indicator # 2: Decrease the percentage of 9th graders reporting that they have used and electronic vapor product.



Hope RX Prevention Coordinator Presentation

Focus Area # 1: Opioid Use

Intervention 1: Increase Community Collaboration

Hope Rx collaborated with a wide-range of approximately 20 different community partners which participated in 66 community events. Of note, Hope Rx partnered with Blue Ridge Community College in November to host a community engagement event with author and advocate, Ryan Hampton.

Intervention 2: Diversion Control

By partnering with Henderson County's Sheriff Department, Hope Rx was able to offer 13 drug take-back events at such diverse locations as the YMCA, Pardee Hospital, and Etowah First Citizen's Bank. Over 1,700 pounds of drugs were collected.

Intervention 3: Implement evidenced-based substance abuse prevention programs

In April, Hope Rx and Henderson County Public Schools again coordinated the annual "We Are Hope" campaign. All county middle and high schools participated in various events including speaker presentations, banner signings, and White Out Wednesday - wearing white to raise awareness. Notably, 100 student leaders were engaged in planning and implementation. Furthermore, prevention education programs were provided to middle and high school students, parents, and teachers.

Focus Area # 2: Electronic Vapor Use

Intervention 1: Increase Community Cross-sector Collaboration

Much of the work the Behavioral Health Summit action team overlaps with the Substance Abuse work. Please read Priority # 1: Mental Health for additional information.

Intervention 2: Impact Favorable Youth Attitudes

Peer support programs were offered on a regular basis at the Career Academy and Early College.

Intervention 3: Community Education

Henderson County Department of Public Health and Hope RX promoted NC Quitline Campaign material targeting electronic nicotine product users.

While not exclusively for youth, there were 3 (7-week long) tobacco cessation (including electronic vapor products) programs in 2019. There were 16 total participants of which 5 became smoke-free and most others cut back. Also, a You Quit, Two Quit training was held in December. A total of 13 individuals were trained in this evidence-based Brief Cessation Counseling method for tobacco and nicotine product which includes information about e-cigarettes.

Intervention 4: Expand/Enforce Tobacco-free Policies

Students, parents, school staff, the Board of Health, and County Commissioners were educated about electronic vapor products and the harms they cause. Hope RX also worked with the school system around developing an alternative to out-of-school suspension for using electronic vapor products in schools.

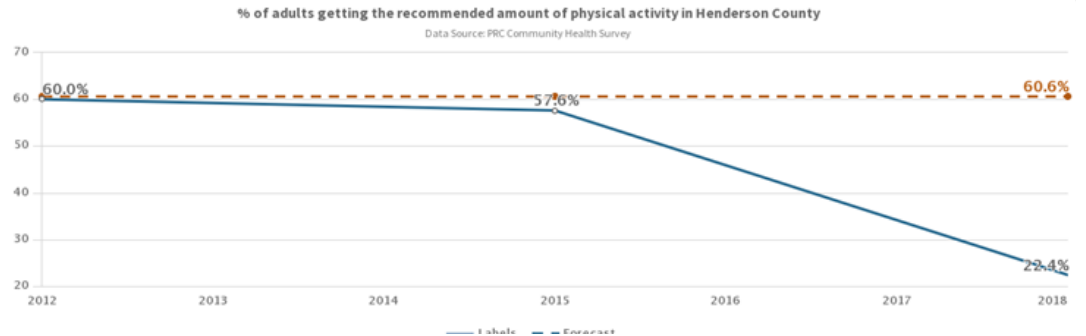
Intervention 5: Impact Social Norms

Henderson County, like the rest of the country, is experiencing increased vaping use, especially among resident youth. This is disconcerting as the long-term effects of vaping is unknown and there has been a sharp uptick in vaping related injury and illness. Accordingly, Public Health professionals have begun taking action to address vaping in our county. A service-learning class at the University of North Carolina in Asheville (UNCA) collected data and conducted surveys related to teen vaping and the accessibility of electronic cigarettes. Data will be presented to the Board of Health and the Student Health Advisory Council (SHAC). Data is intended to emphasize the use and accessibility of electronic cigarettes and further justify the need for education and policy.

PRIORITY #3: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION

The Henderson County Committee for Activity and Nutrition (HC CAN) reframed their focus away from “weight-based” health programs to a Health at Every Size (HAES) model. Using a HAES model, HC CAN has continued to focus on Physical Activity and Nutrition for all people and reduce emphasis on weight and weight-loss, decreasing risk of unintended harm to the target population. Data that we are following for this priority include:

Indicator # 1: Increase the percentage of adults getting the recommended amount of physical activity.



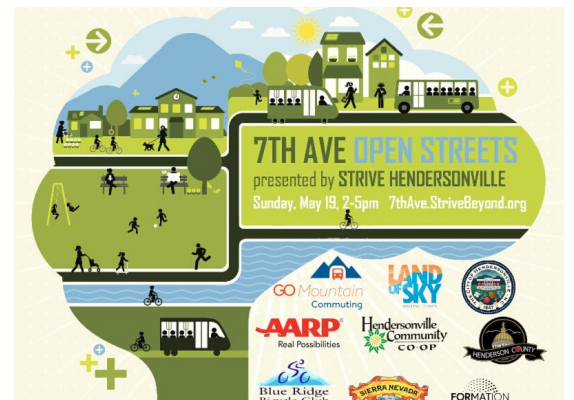
Indicator # 2: Decrease the number of adults reporting food insecurity in the last year.

Focus Area # 1: Physical Activity

Intervention 1: Active Transportation

HC CAN also supported efforts to increase active transportation such as walking and biking. Active transportation increases the amount of physical activity people get while having the dual benefit of decreasing traffic and pollution. In April, the County Commissioners and City Council adopted the Greenway Master Plan. This plan will be used as a roadmap for the next 30 years to increase opportunities for transportation, recreation, economic development and environmental stewardship.

Strive Beyond and the City of Hendersonville hosted an Open Streets event in May during Hendersonville’s Strive Beyond Drive week. This event is designed to “make the street a playground” for a day with activities, exercise, simple games, and room to move. Also during the Strive Beyond Drive week, Go Mountain Commuting, a program of Land of Sky Regional Council coordinated and reported on a walk audit of 3rd Avenue in downtown Hendersonville. The results and recommendations were presented to the City Planning Department in September.



Open Streets Event Flyer

Intervention 2: Kids in Parks

Track Trails offers kids incentives for registering their track trail adventures on the program's website. This is a great opportunity to get youth more engaged in the outdoors. The newest Track Trail launched in Mills River, making it the third of its kind in Henderson County.

Each year, the Henderson County Department of Public Health hosts Be Active Day at the Blue Ridge Mall. Held in January 2019, there were approximately 900 attendees, 17 organizations and community groups represented, and 40 volunteers.

For the first time ever, the Health Department also planned and implemented a Health at Every Size Flash mob for Public Health Week. During the YMCA's annual Healthy Kids Day, Health Department employees and county residents joined together to dance to celebrate healthy activities.



Mills River Farmers' Market Cooking Demo

Focus Area # 2: Food Insecurity

Intervention 1: SNAP/EBT access at farmers markets

HC CAN focused on increasing access to healthy food in Henderson County. The SNAP/EBT access at Farmers' Markets expanded to include Henderson County Tailgate Market and Mills River Farmers Market.

Intervention 2: Health Bucks

Both Farmer's Markets mentioned above offer Health Bucks or Double Dollars which offers EBT recipients twice the amount of produce per dollar they spend.

Intervention 3: NAPSACC

One of the newest initiatives is the Go NAPSACC Program, an online self-assessment tool that helps early childhood education (ECE) centers improve best practices around physical activity and nutrition. The Henderson County Go NAPSACC work group, a collaborative of approximately 15 community partners, provides technical assistance to four ECE centers, ensuring they have the resources needed to meet their goals.

NEW INITIATIVES

Breastfeeding Friendly Initiatives

There have been a number of initiatives related to increasing breastfeeding and normalizing the practice. In August, The Henderson County Breastfeeding Coalition initiated a Global Breastfeeding Day Celebration in East Flat Rock Park.

Henderson County Health Department and WIC received the Mother-Baby Friendly Clinic Award for outpatient healthcare.

There are efforts to increase the number of designated breastfeeding centers, improve best practices related to breastfeeding in early childhood education centers, receive a baby-friendly designation at AdventHealth Hospital, and make all of Henderson County Breastfeeding Friendly.

EMERGING ISSUES

Infectious Disease

This past year, Henderson County has worked to prevent and/or mitigate several major infectious disease outbreaks.

The first is the nation-wide measles outbreak, spurred in-part by low-vaccination rates in pocketed communities. In order to prevent an outbreak in Henderson County, the Epidemiology Team convened to discuss initiatives and interventions. As a result, new materials were created and disseminated especially targeting under-served populations such as those with Limited English Proficiency. To date, there have been no reported cases of measles in North Carolina.

Secondly, there was an outbreak of Legionnaires Disease following the Western North Carolina State Fair in September. Overall, there were 139 confirmed cases, 36 of which were in Henderson County. Four people total died.

Climate Change

There has been an increase in awareness around the realities of climate change and the impact on public health in the past year. Henderson County has begun recognizing this problem and implementing small-scale mitigation and adaptation initiatives.

In particular, there are many initiatives which provide "co-benefits", improving health and protecting against climate-related disaster. Active transportation initiatives such as the Complete Streets event and walk-ability assessment, improve health by increasing physical activity and reducing carbon emissions and pollution. Increasing access to local produce similarly helps improve diet, reduce non-communicable disease, and reduce carbon emissions by encouraging a plant-based diet and eating local.

Get Involved!

Each of the health priorities identified in this report is addressed by various committees and coalitions within Henderson County. Many of these committees are supported by the Henderson County Department of Public Health. For more information, please contact Sarah McDaniel at 828-694-6066.

Efforts have been made to summarize the major activities occurring within Henderson County to address each of the priority health areas but some programs may not be represented in this report. Please contact Stacy Taylor at the Henderson County Department of Public Health at staylor@hendersoncountync.gov to ensure information regarding your program, as it relates to one of the outlined priority areas for Henderson County, is included in future reports.

This report will be disseminated to key stakeholders and community partners through a variety of avenues including the Henderson County Board of Health, Henderson County Partnership for Health, Health Department website (www.hendersoncountync.gov/health) and Henderson County Public Library. In addition, this report is available as hard copy in limited quantities.

Please contact Sarah McDaniel at 828-694-6066.



Infectious Disease Presentation



Department of Public Health
Compost Program