

**2016 FOCUS ON HEALTH**

PRESENTED BY: COLUMBUS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
304 JEFFERSON STREET  
WHITEVILLE NC

STATE OF THE COUNTY /FOCUS ON  
HEALTH REPORT

2016




# STATE OF THE COUNTY /FOCUS ON HEALTH REPORT

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## STATE OF THE COUNTY HEALTH REPORT OVERVIEW

Our county completed the community health assessment in 2015, as required by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. During the years between the community health assessments, we complete a State of the County Health Report (locally we call this our “Focus on Health Report”) to give residents an update on public health interventions, health priorities and other emerging issues that are important to our county’s residents. This report is intended to provide a “snapshot” and we encourage residents to contact the health department if they have additional questions or need information that may not be contained in this *Focus on Health 2016* report.

*In this report, main ideas or points of interest will be represented by the  (lightbulb) and the word “takeaway” beside it. We anticipate that identifying these main points will make this report easier to navigate.*



### COMMUNITY HEALTH PRIORITIES

As part of our completion of the 2015 Community Health Assessment, community health priorities were identified using data collected from resident surveys and focus groups. The top 3 community health priorities identified were, in order: chronic disease prevention, obesity, and substance abuse prevention.



*Takeaway: Chronic disease prevention, obesity, and substance abuse prevention were all listed as major resident concerns in the 2012 assessment as well.*

### COLUMBUS COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS- AT A GLANCE (UNITED STATES CENSUS, 2010)

Population: 58,098

Poverty

Median Age, Columbus County: 40.9

Columbus County: 24%

Median Age, North Carolina: 36.2

North Carolina: 16.7%

Median Household Income

Unemployment (NC Department of Commerce May, 2016)

Columbus County: \$34,949.00

Columbus County: 5.9%

North Carolina: \$46,868.00

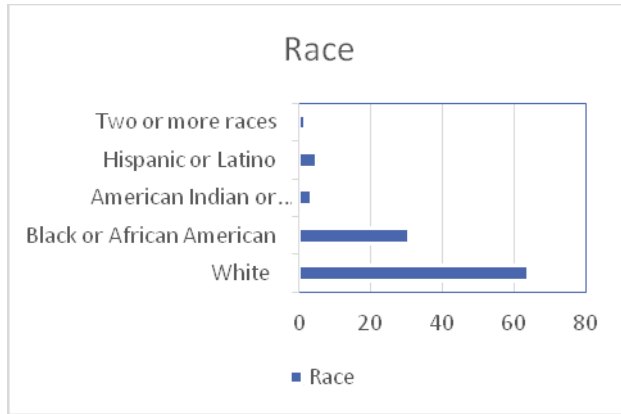
North Carolina: 5.1%



*Takeaway: The population in Columbus County is slightly older than that of the state. The percentage of people living in poverty is higher in Columbus County than that of the state.*

*Unemployment is higher than that of the state.*

**Columbus County Race/Ethnicity Attainment**



**Columbus County Educational**

	Columbus County	North Carolina
High School Diploma	79.6%	83.8%
Bachelor's Degree	12.1%	28.4%



*Takeaway: Columbus County census data indicates that 60% are white, 30% are black or African American, 4.6% are Hispanic or Latino and 3.5% are American Indian. Columbus County high school graduation rates are lower than that of the state and there are fewer residents that have obtained a bachelor's degree compared to the state.*

**Vulnerable Population Groups**

Vulnerable population groups are groups of people that may not be able to seek or acquire the healthcare that they need due to a number of factors. When faced with disasters, these groups may be at higher risk of suffering from a negative health outcome(s). Data is from the 2010 Census, unless otherwise noted.

**Columbus County Vulnerable Population Group Selected/Available Data**

Vulnerable Group	% of Population/or number
Limited English Proficiency	5.3%(estimate)
Children less than five years of age	5.5%
Persons over 65	17.3%
Persons living in poverty	24%
Persons diagnosed with HIV-North Carolina HIV/STD Branch	296** diagnosed cases(1983-2014, raw number, does not include AIDS)



*Takeaway: Columbus County has many vulnerable population groups and the graph above is not an extensive list. Almost ¼ of our county lives in poverty.*

*Health Priorities and Updates on Priorities*

**3 areas that we have developed action plans for to address in the next three years are chronic disease prevention, obesity, and substance abuse prevention.**

As we address these issues, we will be working to achieve the following North Carolina 2020 goals (North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services), as outlined below in **bold**:

**Chronic Disease 2020 goal:** *Increase the percentage of adults getting the recommended amount of physical activity; Increase the percentage of adults who report they consume fruits and vegetables five or more times per day; reduce the cardiovascular disease mortality; Increase the percentage of adults who are neither overweight nor obese rate (per 100,000 population); Decrease the percentage of adults with diabetes.*

- Chronic Diseases are still the number one concern of residents (this was number one in the 2012 Columbus County Health Assessment) and there has been substantial emphasis on this topic with our strong community allies. In 2016, the health department delivered a Chronic Disease Self-Management program at a local housing unit. Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church completed the yearlong Diabetes Prevention Program, and the health department is a CDC recognized programming site of this program.
- Obesity was a close second to substance abuse in the 2015 Community Health Assessment and since obesity is directly linked to chronic disease prevention, our implementation of Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, and the Diabetes Prevention Program both aim to reduce obesity by stressing the importance of physical activity and nutrition. In addition, the health department is working with local head starts to teach children about the importance of physical activity and nutrition.

**North Carolina Healthy 2020 Substance Abuse goal:** *Reduce the percentage of traffic crashes that are alcohol-related.*

- Substance Abuse was the third concern of the communities. Within the past two years, substance abuse has been and continues to be addressed through multiple agency efforts. We are working with healthcare organizations to focus on overprescribing and have provided Columbus County Emergency Management with Naloxone, through funding provided by Project Lazarus. In addition, we will address the number of alcohol related fatalities by coordinating educational efforts with local law enforcement.



*Takeaway: While multiple interventions exist to address Chronic Disease Prevention/obesity and substance abuse, we continue to work through Healthy Columbus, Columbus Youth and Families, Smart Start Health Task Force and other area coalitions to bring together residents to provide additional input and guidance on addressing these issues.*

### Environmental Issues

As we closed out 2016, there were still many displaced residents finding new housing as a result of Hurricane Matthew. The recovery is not over for our county, as we expect this to last many months. Since Columbus County has such a large majority of residents that are in poverty, the effects of the storm have caused additional negative health outcomes including mental health and economic needs. Fair Bluff was hit particularly hard, as much of the town's residents were flooded out of their homes and once clean-up efforts began, those that could return home faced the daunting task of removing mold and mildew.

We experienced firsthand the community spirit of our residents as many dedicated their time and material resources to help those that were in need. This spirit has helped us with not only hurricane recovery, but many other community efforts as well, ranging from substance abuse prevention to educating residents on physical activity and nutrition.

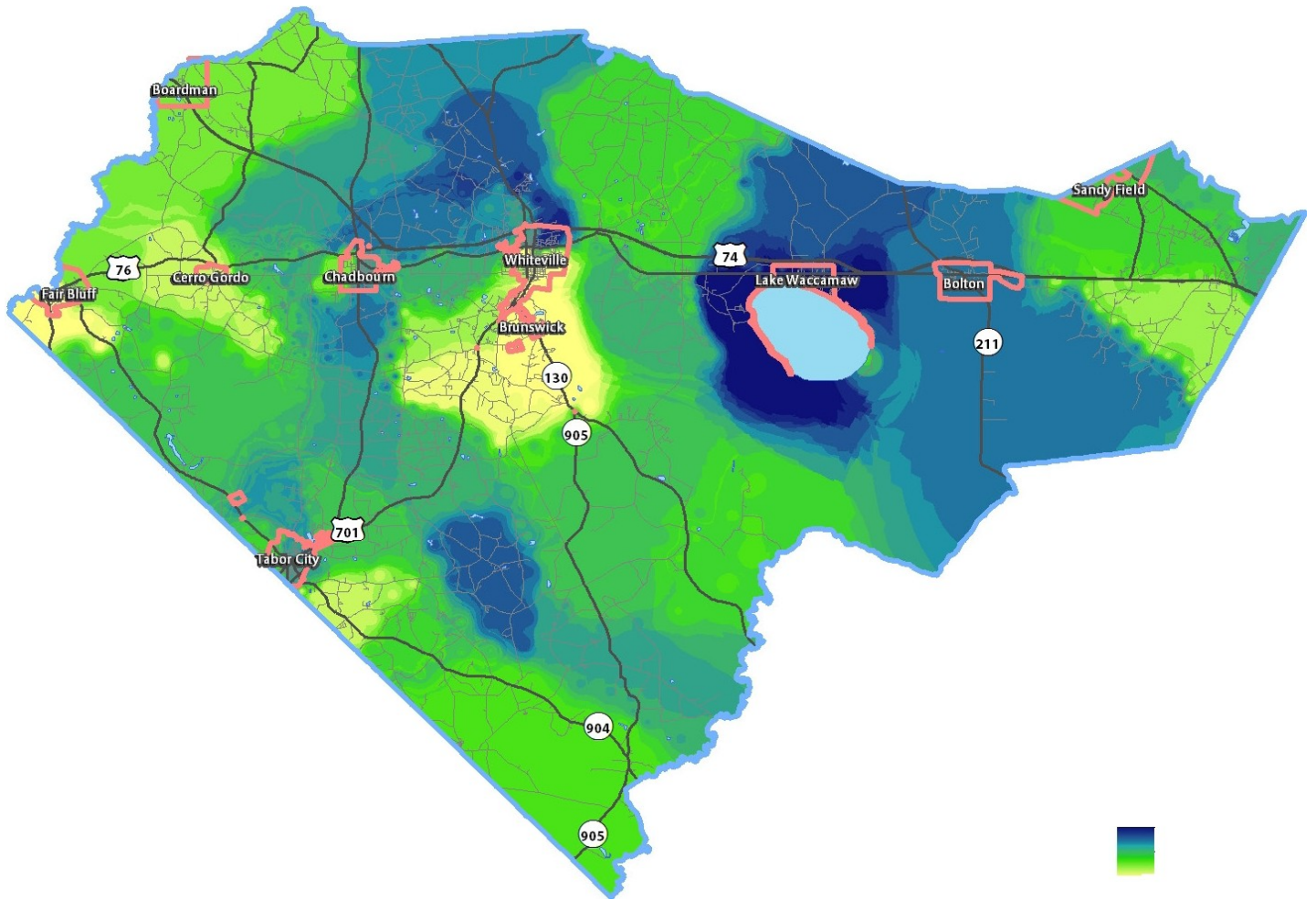


*Takeaway: Although Hurricane Matthew was devastating, Columbus residents have shown and continue to show how garnering residents will provide us with more opportunities to tackle the many health issues that our county faces. As one resident stated, "we may be down, but we aren't without hope."*



### Social Determinants of Health

Health is determined by a multiplicity of factors including economic and social. Social conditions such as the zip code in which one resides can affect a person's health; for example, when we reside in areas with a low concentration of economic prosperity and where educational obtainment is difficult, our health can be negatively impacted. In 2014, with the assistance of a group of residents and a consulting firm, we were able to identify areas in the county that experience lower socio economic status.



Areas in the blue regions have a higher socio economic status, while areas in the green and yellow have a lower socioeconomic status. Moving forward, this map will allow us to gauge community health interventions to see if they affect and will impact county residents that have lower socioeconomic status.



*Takeaway: Many areas of our county may be in need of additional or enhanced health services to assist residents in achieving optimal health.*

**Columbus County Additional Indicators of Health**

The chart below provides health information for our county and compares it to state rates. This allows residents and community partners to identify additional health factors that may need to be addressed.

Health Factor	County Rate	North Carolina Rate
Unintentional Poisoning Deaths	21.1	11.1
Homicides	11.7	6.0
Infant Mortality	11.0	7.5
New HIV Infection Diagnosis, 2007-2011	19.8	17.7
Suicide	13.1	12.2
Pneumonia and Influenza Deaths, 2007-2011	22.5	17.9
Percentage of Individuals living in poverty(2010)	26.9%	17.4%
Cardiovascular Disease Deaths	317.7	235.7
Teen Pregnancy	51.5	30.2



*Takeaway: Providing education and outreach to Columbus residents will be essential in addressing a number of health factors. Currently, the health department’s Teen Pregnancy Prevention efforts are funded through a grant provided by North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.*

*There are many health issues that affect our residents and it will take the community as a whole, working collectively to make a difference.*

**New and Emerging Issue**

Youth suicide prevention is a hot topic, and Eastpointe Mental Health Services has provided a “Youth Mental Health First Aid” certification course to school guidance counselors, local non-profits, and a health department representative to better understand the signs of suicide and provide tools to prevent suicide from occurring.

*Need more information? Please call the Columbus County Health Department at 910-640-6615 ext. 7026 or email [sarah.gray@columbusco.org](mailto:sarah.gray@columbusco.org)*