

2010 SOTCH

Polk State of the County Health Report

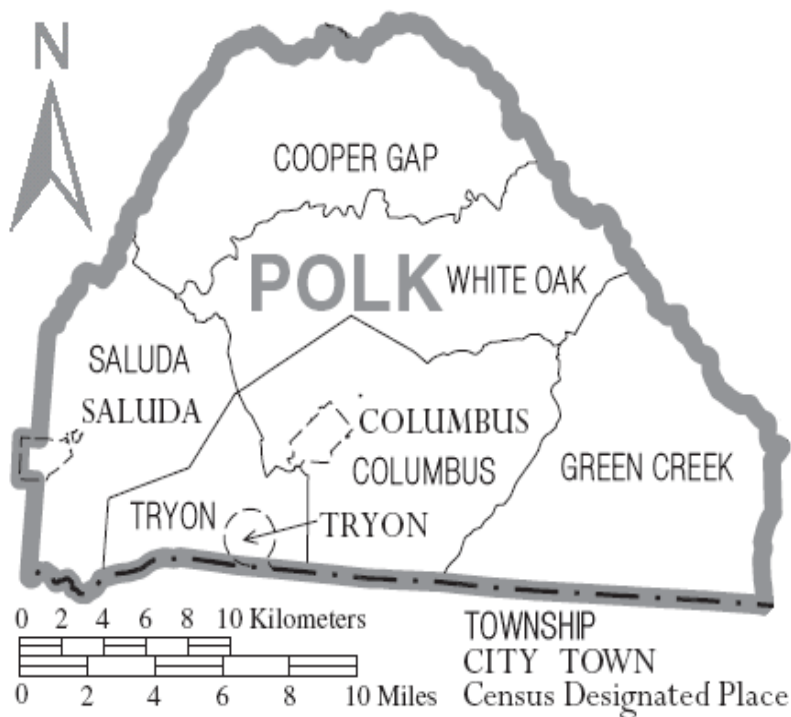


TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Overview | 2 |
| Data Review | 2 |
| Community Health Priorities | 5 |
| Obesity | 5 |
| Mental Health/ Substance Abuse | 12 |
| Access to Care | 17 |
| Prevention/Education | 19 |

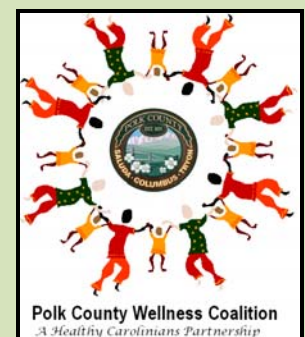
Submitted by:

Polk County Wellness Coalition

Rutherford-Polk-McDowell District
Health Department

This report may be viewed and downloaded online at:

[Http://www.rpmhd.org/new/sotch/reports/2010_polk_sotch.pdf](http://www.rpmhd.org/new/sotch/reports/2010_polk_sotch.pdf)



OVERVIEW

Every four years the State of North Carolina requires every local health department and North Carolina Healthy Carolinians Partnerships to conduct a community health assessment. A community health assessment is a process that allows the members of the community and stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the county's health needs and concerns.

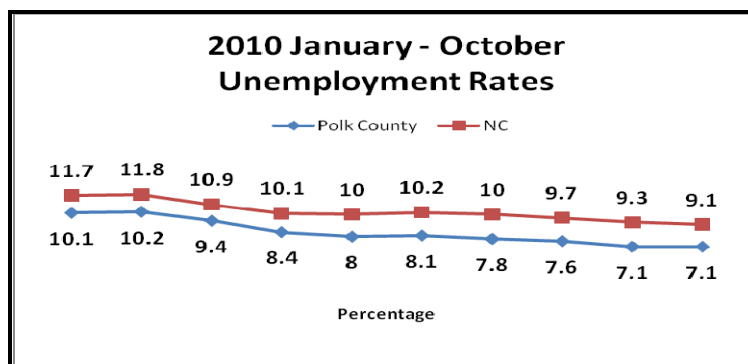
During the three interim years, the local health departments and Healthy Carolinian Partnerships are responsible for issuing the State of the County Health (SOTCH) report. The 2010 Polk County SOTCH report is an annual review of the priority health issues that were chosen in the 2008 Polk County Community Health Assessment. The report serves to inform the community and stakeholders about the health status of our residents and provide an update of the past year's progress in addressing the health issues identified in the 2008 Community Health Assessment.

Polk Demographics

US CENSUS 2009 POPULATION ESTIMATES

| | POLK | NC |
|--|--------|-------|
| Total Population | 19,255 | |
| White | 93.5% | 73.7% |
| Black | 5.3% | 21.6% |
| American Indian and Alaska Native | 0.2% | 1.3% |
| Asian | 0.2% | 2.0% |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander | Z | 0.1% |
| Persons reporting two or more races | 0.7% | 1.3% |
| Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin | 4.5% | 7.7% |
| White persons not Hispanic | 89.2% | 66.8% |

| | | |
|---|-------|-------|
| Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, percent, 2009 | 4.5% | 7.7% |
| White persons not Hispanic, percent, 2009 | 89.2% | 66.8% |



Polk County's unemployment rate is lower than North Carolina's.

2008 US Census estimates report 14.6% of Polk persons live below poverty level compared to 13.2% statewide.

Polk Morbidity/Mortality Rates

| 2004-2008 Age-Adjusted Death Rates | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/data/databook/2010/ | | | |
| ***NOTE: Shades Areas Represent Polk County Rates That Are Higher than NC Rates | | | |
| | NC | Polk | Polk |
| CAUSE OF DEATH: | Overall Rate | Overall Rate | Overall Deaths |
| All Causes | 861.4 | 821 | 1,426 |
| Diseases of Heart | 202.2 | 178.9 | 327 |
| Acute Myocardial Infarction | 44.5 | 44.8 | 77 |
| Other Ischemic Heart Disease | 86.7 | 75.9 | 134 |
| Cerebrovascular Disease | 54.4 | 50.5 | 105 |
| Cancer | 192.5 | 183.1 | 304 |
| Colon, Rectum, and Anus | 17.3 | 19.4 | 31 |
| Pancreas | 11.1 | 14.9 | 24 |
| Trachea, Bronchus, and Lung | 59.1 | 49.3 | 78 |
| Female Breast | 25 | 15.2 | 16 |
| Prostate | 27.3 | 11 | 9 |
| Diabetes Mellitus | 25.2 | 18.7 | 32 |
| Pneumonia and Influenza | 20.3 | 12.7 | 27 |
| Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases | 47.8 | 48.6 | 88 |
| Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis | 9.1 | 6 | 8 |
| Septicemia | 14.2 | 4.8 | 8 |
| Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome, and Nephrosis | 18.8 | 11.4 | 21 |
| Unintentional Motor Vehicle Injuries | 18.6 | 17.5 | 18 |
| All Other Unintentional Injuries | 28.4 | 39.9 | 48 |
| Suicide | 11.9 | 25.5 | 25 |
| Homicide | 7.2 | 6 | 5 |
| Alzheimer's disease | 28.7 | 41.5 | 91 |
| Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome | 4.4 | 2.3 | 2 |

Source: <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/data/databook/2010/> , 2004-2008 Race-Sex-Specific Age-Adjusted Death Rates by County

| Leading Causes of Death in North Carolina 2008 | | |
|--|---|-------|
| Rank | Cause | % |
| 1 | Diseases of heart | 22.6 |
| 2 | Cancer | 22.6 |
| 3 | Chronic lower respiratory diseases | 5.9 |
| 4 | Cerebrovascular diseases | 5.8 |
| 5 | All other unintentional injuries | 3.5 |
| 6 | Alzheimer's disease | 3.4 |
| 7 | Diabetes mellitus | 2.8 |
| 8 | Influenza and pneumonia | 2.3 |
| 9 | Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis | 2.2 |
| 10 | Motor vehicle injuries | 2.0 |
| | All other causes (Residual) | 26.9 |
| Total Deaths -- All Causes | | 100.0 |

| Leading Causes of Death in Polk County 2008 | | | |
|---|---|--------|-------|
| Rank | Cause | Number | % |
| 1 | Cancer | 72 | 23.6 |
| 2 | Diseases of heart | 68 | 22.3 |
| 3 | Cerebrovascular diseases | 19 | 6.2 |
| 4 | Chronic lower respiratory diseases | 16 | 5.2 |
| 5 | Alzheimer's disease | 13 | 4.3 |
| 6 | All other unintentional injuries | 8 | 2.6 |
| 7 | Diabetes mellitus | 8 | 2.6 |
| 8 | Motor vehicle injuries | 7 | 2.3 |
| 9 | Influenza and pneumonia | 4 | 1.3 |
| 10 | Intentional self-harm (suicide) | 4 | 1.3 |
| 11 | Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis | 4 | 1.3 |
| | All other causes (Residual) | 82 | 27.0 |
| Total Deaths -- All Causes | | 305 | 100.0 |

The majority of the leading causes of death are chronic diseases. Despite the preventable nature, chronic diseases account for more than 75% of the nation's \$2 trillion medical costs. In Polk County, the leading causes of death include heart disease, cancer, cerebrovascular disease and chronic lower respiratory disease. Most of these diseases can be prevented through behavioral changes, such as eating healthy, being physically active, and not using tobacco.

| 2005 – 2009 Ten Leading Causes of Death in Polk County Unadjusted Death Rates Per 100,000 Population | | | # OF DEATHS | DEATH RATE |
|---|------|--|-------------|------------|
| AGE GROUP: | RANK | CAUSE OF DEATH: | | |
| TOTAL - ALL AGES | 0 | TOTAL DEATHS --- ALL CAUSES | 1,425 | 1492.6 |
| | 1 | Diseases of the heart | 318 | 333.1 |
| | 2 | Cancer - All Sites | 311 | 325.7 |
| | 3 | Cerebrovascular disease | 93 | 97.4 |
| | 4 | Alzheimer's disease | 87 | 91.1 |
| | 5 | Chronic lower respiratory diseases | 85 | 89.0 |
| | 6 | Other Unintentional injuries | 54 | 56.6 |
| | 7 | Diabetes mellitus | 37 | 38.8 |
| | 8 | Pneumonia & influenza | 24 | 25.1 |
| | 9 | Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome, & nephrosis | 22 | 23.0 |
| | 10 | Parkinson's disease | 20 | 20.9 |

COMMUNITY HEALTH PRIORITIES

Polk County Wellness Coalition completed their most recent Community Health Assessment (CHA) in 2008. The top health priorities identified by the 2008 CHA were:

Obesity, Mental Health/Substance Abuse, Access to Care and Prevention/Education. The following is an update on how we are working to address these health issues.

The Polk Community Health Assessment may be viewed online at:

<http://www.rpmhd.org/new/cha/2008/index.htm>

OBESITY

Obesity is a growing public health concern for the nation, North Carolina, and locally. Obesity is caused due to the lack of physical activity, lack of recreational facilities, pedestrian planning, and poor nutritional diet often due to lack of access to nutritious foods in poorer neighborhoods, rural areas and other environments. Obesity increases the likelihood of someone developing certain chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, some types of cancer, heart disease and high blood pressure.

The Polk County Wellness Coalition's community objective is that the proportion of children and adolescents who are obese will not increase by 6/2012.

Note that the data is based on very low numbers. We do not have sufficient data in Polk County on the body mass index of adult or children to have a true picture.

With the passage of House Bill 1757/S1296, the State Board of Education will be required to develop guidelines for public schools to use evidence-based fitness testing for students

statewide in grades kindergarten through eight. Statewide fitness testing would also provide an on-going database for local and state use in addressing the childhood obesity epidemic.

Our most current data shows that the number of obese children seen the Polk Health Department increased in 2009 and this was also the trend across North Carolina. However the percentage of overweight children decreased. If a child's weight is greater than the 85th and less than the 95th percentile, he/she is considered overweight. If a child's weight is greater than or equal to the 95th percentile, he/she is considered obese.

**Prevalence of Obesity in North Carolina Children 2 through 18 years of age
North Carolina Nutrition and Physical Activity Surveillance System (NC-NPASS)**

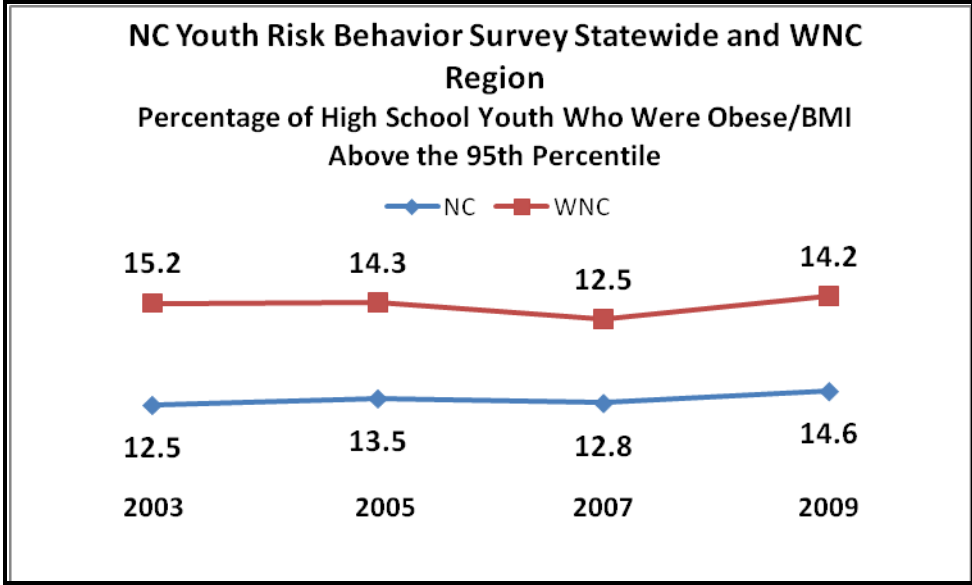
| | North Carolina Obese | Rutherford Obese | McDowell Obese | Polk Obese | Polk Overweight |
|------|----------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 2004 | 17.0% | 14.2% | 10.8% | 15.5% (n=25) | 18% (n=29) |
| 2005 | 16.7% | 13.4% | 14.2% | 17.2% ▲ (n=31) | 17.2 ▼ (n=31) |
| 2007 | 17.3% | 14.4% | 13.4% | 12.7% ▼ (n=24) | 17.5 ▲ (n=33) |
| 2008 | 17.5% | 13.6% | 12.9% | 12.4% ▼ (n=20) | 18 ▲ (n=29) |
| 2009 | 18.0% ▲ | 14% ▲ | 12.2% ▼ | 15.1% ▲ (n=18) | 16.8 ▼ (n=20) |

Definitions: The percentage of overweight children, ages 2-18, seen in public health clinics.

Data Source: <http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/Data/ChildAndYouthData.html>

* North Carolina-Nutrition and Physical Activity Surveillance System (NC-NPASS) includes data on children seen in North Carolina Public Health Sponsored WIC and Child Health Clinics and some School Based Health Centers.

The NC Youth Risk Behavior Survey for Western North Carolina is the most local data available to gauge how Polk County youth are doing in terms of their weight status. The WNC YRB survey includes samples from Rutherford, Polk and McDowell Counties and Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, McDowell, Macon, Madison, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Surry, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey counties. This survey (shown below) monitors BMI of Western NC 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade students. The percentage of obese high school students ranges between 12.5 and 15.2 percent between 2003 and 2009. The percentage of obese high school students tend to be higher in WNC than the statewide percentage.



According to the Western North Carolina Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System, two thirds of adults are overweight or obese. The percentage of obese and overweight adults in WNC is a little lower than North Carolina’s total percentage.

| Percentage of North Carolina <u>Adults</u> Who Are Overweight or Obese 2007 & 2009 Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System | | | | | | |
|---|------------|---------|-------|---------|---------------------|---------|
| | Overweight | | Obese | | Overweight or Obese | |
| | 2007 | 2009 | 2007 | 2009 | 2007 | 2009 |
| North Carolina | 35.9% | 35.3% ▼ | 28.7% | 30.1% ▲ | 64.6% | 65.4% ▼ |
| Western NC No Data Available for Polk County | 37.1% | 34.6% ▼ | 26.0% | 28.2% ▲ | 63.1% | 62.8% ▼ |

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE OBESITY

According to the 2008 Community Health Assessment, survey respondents said personal changes they would make in order to feel healthier are:

1. Increase exercising
2. Lose weight
3. Choose more nutritious foods
4. Decrease or stop overeating
5. Eat fewer fatty foods to lower cholesterol

Increase Physical Activity Through Environmental Design

Vaughn Creek Greenway: The Tryon Parks Committee has made great progress towards creating the Vaughn Creek Greenway. In October the Town of Tryon received word that the town has been awarded a \$95,000 grant from the NC Division of Water Resources for stream and trail improvements. A week later town officials were informed of another grant award for \$101,000 from the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund for the purchase of the 19 acres where the Vaughn Creek Greenway is to be located. In mid-November the Parks Committee was notified by the Polk County Community Foundation that the project would be awarded an additional \$25,000 from their Bradley Fund. This final award was critical for the required match for the Clean Water Management award. The parks committee has been working on the project since October 2005 and hopes to acquire the property sometime in early 2011.

The ultimate goal of the parks committee is to connect three town-owned properties with a pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian trail. The trail would expand from Ziglar Field, to the proposed Lanier Park and on to Woodland Park. The trail would include easy access to the railroad, and there is an existing logging road that bisects the property which leads directly to the existing rail bed. The total system would be about two miles of greenway.

Saluda Grade Rail Trail: The City of Saluda, Town of Tryon, City of Landrum(SC) and the Polk County Commissioners have each approved resolutions of support for turning the former Saluda Grade railroad corridor into a regional trail for hikers, bikers and equestrian users. The Carolina Foothills Chamber of Commerce which oversees business activities in all three towns and Polk County was the first organization to pass the resolution. Organizers believe this conversion will give citizens a great place to exercise for improved health and help grow the economies of all three municipalities. These resolutions plus others will be presented to Norfolk-Southern Railroad in hopes of convincing them to allow the rail bed to be utilized in this manner.

Columbus Installs New Sidewalks: The Town of Columbus adopted their Pedestrian Plan on October 16th, 2008. In September, NCDOT began construction of .4 miles of sidewalk at the intersection of East Mills Street and Park Street to the intersection of East Mills Street and Blanton Street. The sidewalk is on the south side of East Mills Street.

Youth Activities: NC Cooperative Extension-Polk County held a week long youth camp bike week during the summer at Harmon Field.

Increase Local Fresh Food Consumption

The various **Polk County Farmers' Markets** ended their season in November with 38 vendors, live music, and lots of appreciation from the community for our largest farmers' market season to date. Polk County's four markets tripled in three years both in vendors and attendance. Plans are to add mobile EBT debit machines for next years' market customer services.



PolkFresh Store: The Mill Spring Ag Center has applied for grant contributions to support the build-out and start-up of a year-round retail farm store set to open at the Mill Spring Ag Center mid-year, 2011. The store will feature PolkFresh™ and Appalachian Grown Certified local foods and value-added as well as promote agri-tourism in Polk County and nearby areas. This is in part funded by matching-funds from the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP).

The first **Polk County Fresh Farm Tour** was held in June. The tour included 12 stops, 9 of which were working farms, in and around Polk County. More than 200 people participated, and more than \$1100 was raised for the Mill Spring Agricultural Development Center.

Mill Spring Ag Center hosted the first **Polk Farm-to-Table Gala** in September to a sold out crowd of over 200. Farm to Table is a movement to strengthen and inform the sustainable and local foods community by creating a collaborative and unified voice for small farmers, restaurateurs, consumers, and everyone in between, with an emphasis on the importance of grassroots initiative as a means to bring about large-scale change in the American food industry.

10% NC Campaign to Buy Local: The Polk County Cooperative Extension is promoting the 10% NC Campaign encouraging businesses and community members to pledge to spend 10 percent of their existing food dollars locally to support Polk County's farmers. Consumers spend about \$35 billion a year on food. If we spent 10 percent - \$1.05 per day locally - approximately \$3.5 billion would be available in the local economy. A vibrant local food economy will support farms, food and manufacturing businesses and create jobs. Infusing fresh and flavorful fruits and vegetables into diets can significantly reduce diet-related diseases and long-term health care expenses for everyone.

NAP SACC in Polk County: The Rutherford/Polk Smart Start Partnership implemented the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care project (NAP SACC) in one child care center in Polk County, beginning July, 2010. There are 30 Polk County children ages two to five years, enrolled in the participating child care center who will benefit by this project in the first year. At least 80% of the children are living in low income households.

This project is aimed at improving the child care environments, policies and practices of nutrition and physical activity through self-assessment and technical assistance targeting young children ages two to five. The NAP SACC project includes five steps: (1) Self-Assessment; (2) Action Planning pertaining to the child care center's nutritional quality of food served, amount and quality of physical activity, staff-child interactions and the nutrition and physical activity policy; (3) Workshop Delivery; (4) Targeted Technical Assistance; and (5) Evaluation, Revision and Repetition.

With the consultant's assistance, the center director completed an action plan, targeting nutrition and physical activity areas for improvement. Targeted technical assistance is provided to child care staff on a monthly basis and a post assessment survey will be completed by June 30, 2011.

At least one new center will be added to the project the following year, along with follow up and support provided as needed, to the initial participating center.

Fresh Fruits & Vegetable

Served at Schools: As part of the USDA Fruit & Vegetable Grant Program, Sunny View Elementary School students have sampled several varieties of fruits and vegetables like dragon fruit, pluots and broccolini. Most kids have enjoyed the assortment of new tastes and have asked parents to include some of them on their next shopping lists.

While the grant will provide the snacks for the remainder of this year, it is the goal that the exposure to healthy alternatives will lead to better eating habits

and a fit Sunny View community! The Polk Child Nutrition Department administers the USDA Fruit and Vegetable program with the help of school volunteers. The Child Nutrition Department has made connections with a new provider of fresh produce through the USDA NC Produce distributors.



Gardens: Two new gardens have been created at the new Meeting Place for seniors and Heightwood Apartments in Columbus. One of the residents at Heightwood Apartments is growing a beautiful garden and gives the produce to the residents.

Increased Availability of Fresh Produce in the Market Place: New CSAs are offering Polk County residents a new way to participate in Community Supported Agriculture which is based on individual choice. Unlike other CSAs where everyone gets exactly the same box of goods each week regardless of their personal taste Giardini Gardens has set up a system where customers get to order exactly what they want, and in the quantities that they want. CSA customers receive the top priority of the harvest availability each week. By paying an upfront fee, customers help support the local farmers to survive in the months before the produce is harvested, and the fee goes into a debit account that they are able to draw from in throughout the growing season. Each week customers receive an e-mail reminder that sends them to the CSA website where all the available goods for the week are listed. Customers browse the items, order exactly what you would like, and then pick up their individually packaged bag at their convenience any time on pick-up day. The amount of produce ordered is automatically deducted from their personal debit account each week.

There is also an added feature called the Neighbor-to-Neighbor Assistance Network. People can choose to purchase a Fresh Produce Gift Certificate to donate to the Outreach Membership Fund at Thermal Belt Outreach to supply fresh produce and products to families in need in the county.

Address Food Insecurity:

In May 2009, Feeding America released the results of its first analysis of food insecurity in early childhood, Child Food Insecurity in the United States: 2005 – 2007. North Carolina ranked second worst in the nation with 24.1 percent of its children under 5 judged to be food insecure and lacking regular access to nutritional food. The state was 10th worst in food insecurity among all children. The analysis used statistics from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Nationally, the food insecurity average is 17 percent for children under 5.

According to the 2010 Western Carolina Community Action (WCCA) community survey Polk County residents found:

- Buying groceries over the past 18 months has been:
 - A minor problem to afford 38.1% (111)
 - A major problem to afford 25.8% (75)
- 14% said that over the past 18 months, someone in their household had gone without a meal because there was no money for food?

Manna Food Bank has delivered 480,000 lbs of food through **Thermal Belt Outreach and Polk Vocational Services**. The need for food is up in Polk County, MANNA wants to expand their distribution points and volunteer sites need to step up. Presently TBO has space constraints and wants to alleviate this constraint by expanding their facility. MANNA reports that Senior Hunger is also an issue and Eloise Thwing, Executive Director of Thermal Belt Outreach says that the need for food is increasing dramatically and it is imperative that the community help do something about it.

For the four quarter period MANNA distributed 80,797 pounds of food to Polk County. MANNA has shown Polk County Wellness Coalition members how they can advocate on behalf of 49 million hungry Americans by supporting federal, state, and local legislation that addresses the many factors that contribute to food insecurity in our nation through www.hungeractioncenter.org.

With help from MANNA Foodbank, Thermal Belt Outreach provides to 266 qualifying school age children and their families with weekly backpacks filled with nutritious meals each week through the Feed-A-Kid Backpack Program.

Additional food has been acquired through a new donor and over 820 bushels of free produce have been distributed in Polk County through distribution points at the Mill Spring Agricultural Development Center, the Polk County Sherriff's department, Thermal Belt Outreach, The Meeting Place Senior Center, Columbus Ultimate Basement, Sunnyview, and Scoops in Columbus.

Nutrition Education

Cooperative Extension Service - Polk County provided educational programs to the community with all classes filled to maximum capacity.

Cook Smart Eat Smart at the Senior Center and at a low income senior housing community - (4 lessons, 2 hours each)
15 Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less Classes for Polk School employees
Men's Cooking class
Summer Cooking School for Youth
2 Cheese Making Classes

Five Polk County teachers entered the **Fruit and Veggie Challenge** contest to compete for the most creative and effective strategies to teach nutrition education in the classroom with a focus on increasing fruit and vegetable consumption. The competition was sponsored through the Eat Smart Move More NC program of the Polk Health Department and the Polk School Health Advisory Council to encourage the importance of nutrition education and to recognize the teachers who were teaching nutrition education in their classrooms.

Worksite Wellness

- **Employee Health Fair** - In October, the Polk County School System held its annual health fair for employees in the high school cafeteria. The general public was invited to attend this year as well.
- **Maintain, Don't Gain Holiday Challenge**

Rutherford-Polk-McDowell District Health Department promotes the *Maintain, Don't Gain Holiday Challenge* through Eat Smart, Move More (ESMM) NC - a statewide coalition promoting healthy eating and physical activity from November 22 through December 31. The public is invited to participate by registering online at www.myeatsmartmovemore.com. *Maintain, Don't Gain Holiday Challenge* weight management tools include:

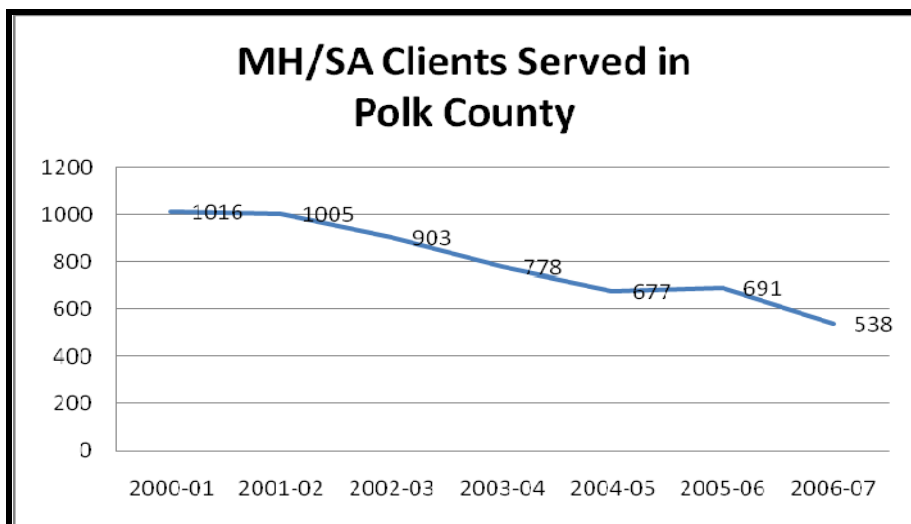
1. **A calorie calculator**, which takes into account your gender, height, age, current weight in pounds, pants' size, current activity and weight goal (i.e., lose 1-2 lbs. per week, maintain current weight, or gain 1-2 lbs. per week) to determine the number of calories you should consume each day;
2. **A meal planner** which gives you the calorie content of your favorite foods, allowing you to plan your meals accordingly;
3. a food diary to help you keep track of the foods you eat throughout the day;
4. **An activity log** where you list your daily activities, how many minutes you spend completing each activity and your level of exertion (i.e., light, moderate or high);
5. **A weight log** where you record your weight at the end of each week, including any comments or tips for the following week;
6. A list of **healthy recipe ingredient substitutions** to make your favorite dishes more nutritious, along with other recipe ideas.

MENTAL HEALTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The Polk County Wellness Coalition objective is to provide services to 50% of uninsured Polk residents with mental health needs and substance use disorders.

Original Baseline (June 2007): 17.9 % (2,615) of residents of Polk County, ages 0-64, are uninsured. Projected MH and SA needs, based on national statistics of 10-14% of public has treatment needs, would indicate 262-366 uninsured citizens of Polk County are in need of MH and/or SA services and are without insurance to secure those services. Interviews from Polk providers (2007) indicate that less than 5% are receiving any services. The increase to 50% would cover a total of between 131 and 183 individuals.

Uninsured and Mental Illness: Americans without health insurance face even greater difficulties in obtaining mental health and addictions treatment services. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, one in five people with a serious mental health condition are uninsured. Without insurance, people with mental illness or addictions disorders are at an increased risk of hospitalization, poor health outcomes, and diminished quality of life. People without insurance are also more likely to rely on more expensive emergency room care. The nation as a whole is economically disadvantaged as a result of the poorer health and premature death of uninsured Americans. The Institute of Medicine estimated that the lost economic value of uninsurance is between \$65 billion and \$130 billion annually.



An estimated 5,074 people in Polk County have a diagnosable mental disorder. Since mental health reform in the state, there has been a drastic decrease in persons being treated. Source: Western Highlands LME Utilization Data

2008 Community Health Assessment:

- 51.2% report that troubled feelings affect work or family some of the time.
- Survey respondents listed limited access to mental health services and drug abuse among adults as top 5 concerns in the community.

Polk County Intentional Self Harm (Suicide) per 100,000 Population

| Raw Values | | | Age Adjusted Rate | |
|------------|--------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| Year | County | State | County | State |
| 2003 | 5 | 949 | 14.2 | 11.1 |
| 2004 | 7 | 1,021 | 35.9 | 11.9 |
| 2005 | 3 | 995 | 15.4 | 11.5 |
| 2006 | 4 | 1,093 | 19.4 | 12.3 |
| 2007 | 7 | 1,074 | 37.4 | 11.9 |

Note: Rates or percentages which have a numerator value less than 20 are statistically unstable
 Source: <http://www.ncpublichealthcatch.com/ReportPortal/design/view.aspx>

The following data is from NC CATCH (Comprehensive Assessment for Tracking Community Health): <http://www.ncpublichealthcatch.com/ReportPortal/design/view.aspx>

| Estimated Youth With Substance Abuse | | |
|---|--------------------|---------|
| Year | Polk County Number | State |
| Age 12-17 | | |
| 2007 | 104 | 58,970 |
| 2008 | 102 | 57,885 |
| Age 18-25 | | |
| 2007 | 278 | 192,391 |
| 2008 | 281 | 204,759 |
| Age 26+ | | |
| 2007 | 996 | 412,273 |
| 2008 | 951 | 405,331 |

| Estimated Persons With Severe Emotional Disturbance | | |
|--|--------------------|---------|
| Year | Polk County Number | State |
| Age 0-17 | | |
| 2007 | 383 | 219,149 |
| 2008 | 381 | 222,906 |
| Age 18+ | | |
| 2007 | 839 | 370,202 |
| 2008 | 831 | 378,594 |

STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS MENTAL HEALTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Services

The NC Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services (DMH/DD/SAS) has been tracking the effectiveness of community systems such as Western Highlands LME through statewide performance indicators since 2006.

The performance indicators are divided into seven categories that cover the processes involved in providing community services. They are intended to capture how well people are getting into care and continuing care in their chosen communities.

The following data is from MH/DD/SAS Community Systems Progress Report First **Quarter** SFY 2010-2011 July 1 – September 30, 2010 reported by Quality Management Team Community Policy Management Section, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services, November 30, 2010.

| WESTERN HIGHLANDS NETWORK DELIVERY OF SERVICES 1st QTR. | Goal * | Polk County | State Average |
|--|---------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Services to Persons in Need | | | |
| Adult Mental Health | ↑ | 49% | 51% |
| Child/Adolescent Mental Health | ↑ | 64% | 55% |
| Adult Developmental Disabilities | ↑ | 47% | 40% |
| Child/Adolescent Developmental Disabilities | ↑ | 20% | 21% |
| Adult Substance Abuse | ↑ | 8% | 11% |
| Adolescent Substance Abuse | ↑ | 3% | 9% |
| Timely Initiation & Engagement in Service | | | |
| Mental Health: 2 Visits within 14 Days | ↑ | 54% | 41% |
| Mental Health: 2 Add'l Visits within Next 30 Days | ↑ | 36% | 25% |
| Developmental Disabilities: 2 Visits within 14 Days | ↑ | 0% | 58% |
| Developmental Disabilities: 2 Add'l Visits within Next 30 Days | ↑ | 0% | 44% |
| Substance Abuse: 2 Visits within 14 Days | ↑ | 100% | 65% |
| Substance Abuse: 2 Add'l Visits within Next 30 Days | ↑ | 50% | 46% |
| Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities: 2 Visits within 14 Days | ↑ | 0% | 51% |
| Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities: 2 Add'l Visits within Next 30 Days | ↑ | 0% | 39% |
| Mental Health/Substance Abuse: 2 Visits within 14 Days | ↑ | 77% | 60% |
| Mental Health/Substance Abuse: 2 Add'l Visits within Next 30 Day | ↑ | 54% | 44% |

* ↑ Goal is to increase the percentage

| Number/Percentage Of Polk County Adults And Youth Receiving Mental Health Substance Abuse Services July 1 – September 30, 2010 (ONE QUARTER) | |
|---|-------|
| http://www.ncdhhs.gov/mhddsas/announce/commbulletins/commbulletin116/sfy11communitysystemsprogressrptq1appendices.pdf | |
| Children with Mental Health problems in need of services | |
| Number in need | 333 |
| Number served | 212 |
| Percentage served | 64% |
| Children with Developmental Disabilities in need of services | |
| Number in need | 99 |
| Number served | 20 |
| Percentage served | 20% |
| Children with Substance Abuse problems in need of services | |
| Number in need | 89 |
| Number served | 3 |
| Percentage served | 3% |
| Adults with Mental Health problems in need of services | |
| Number in need | 865 |
| Number served | 423 |
| Percentage served | 49% |
| Adults with Developmental Disabilities in need of services | |
| Number in need | 129 |
| Number served | 60 |
| Percentage served | 47% |
| Adults with Substance Abuse problems in need of services | |
| Number in need | 1,264 |
| Number served | 97 |
| Percentage served | 8% |
| Appendices for MH/DD/SAS Appendices for MH/DD/SAS Community Systems Community Systems Progress Report First Quarter SFY 2010-2011, July 1 – September 30, 2010 | |

The **Polk County Community Health and Wellness Center** has served 670 Polk County residents since it opened its doors in March 2009; 268 were uninsured clients. Services are available to persons who struggle with emotional difficulties, mental health illnesses, relationship problems, addictions or substance use disorders. Crisis services are also available during office hours Monday through Friday.

Polk Health Navigator - 176 clients received MH services through the referral services of the Polk County Health Navigator

Family Preservation Services provides mental health services to children, families and adults including uninsured. They partner with many community agencies such as DSS, St. Luke's Hospital and the local Department of Corrections. In Polk, they serve 250 – 275 clients and see as many as 25 – 30 clients a day.

Community Meetings: Western Highlands Network hosted a community meeting in February at Polk County Government Offices in Columbus. Participants learned about current plans for addressing crisis services, medical support and service needs in the community.

Family-to-Family Education: In March, NAMI – the National Alliance on Mental Illness offered a free 12 week course called the “Family-to-Family” Education Program, to help friends and loved ones of those living with mental illness. The course was taught by trained family members who have lived this experience and was funded by Western Highlands Network.

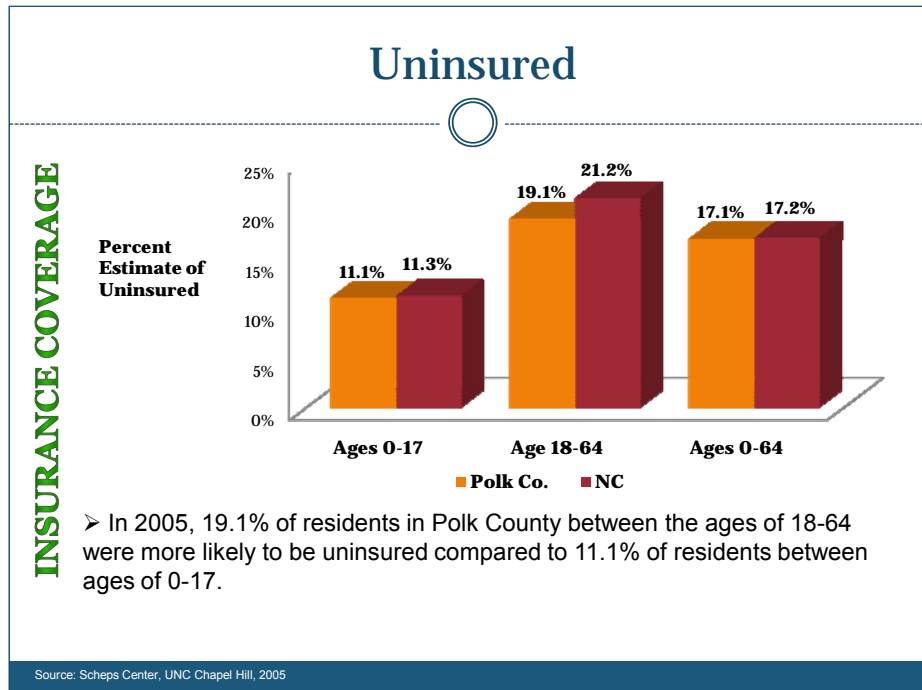
Public Panel Discussion: In March Polk Wellness Center and NAMI Four Seasons presented *Mental Health Recovery Models: From Medical to Peer Support*. The program consisted of an interactive panel discussion showcasing the various models of recovery for persons with mental illness and/or substance use disorders: the Medical Model, Therapy Model, WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) Model, Psychosocial Rehab Model, and the Peer Support Model:

FACE-IT! Concerned residents of Polk County attended a meeting in July to learn about ways to help prevent and reduce prescription drug abuse and misuse at home and in the community. A representative from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) informed community members and Polk County Wellness Coalition members about the FACE-IT! Project that provides local training to support to help communities to better respond to the issues of prescription drug misuse, abuse and other addictions.

ACCESS TO CARE

The objective of the Polk Wellness Coalition is to increase the percentage of uninsured residents in Polk County who have access to primary care from 9% to 16 % at Saluda Medical Center by July 2009 (status: 10.5% of uninsured residents are being seen by Saluda Medical Center per practice report May 2009); continue target of 16% at SMC by July 2013. Saluda Medical Center serves 229 (9%) uninsured residents of Polk County. Primary care physicians cover only a small percentage. The estimated number of uninsured residents with no primary care home is 2,350. The increase to 16 % would cover a total of 418 individuals.

The NC Healthy Carolinians Objective is to increase the percentage of persons with health insurance to 100% of adults 18 years and older having insurance coverage. Healthy Carolinians Baseline Data: 1995-1999: 9.2 percent adults 18 years and older report having no health insurance within the last 12 months.



More recent data seem to conclude that the number of uninsured is going up in Polk County. According to the *County Health Rankings 2010 Snapshot of Polk County* (<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/print/north-carolina/polk>), there are 24% uninsured adults under age 65 compared to 17% for North Carolina. This percentage is higher than Polk County's updated baseline measure of 21.2% Polk County uninsured ages 0-64. (Source: *County Estimates of the Number of Uninsured in North Carolina 2005 Update*, Mark Holmes and Tom Ricketts Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and The North Carolina Institute of Medicine)

In the 2010 Western Carolina Community Action (WCCA) community survey, 18.5% of the survey respondents reported that the children (up to 19) in their household did not have insurance (http://www.wcca.net/SurveySummary_P.pdf) In the same survey 28.9% of the 280 respondents answered that they did not have health insurance.

Access to health care is critical to eliminating disparities in health status among North Carolinians. To fully realize the potential of prevention, each resident must have access to clinical preventive care, primary care, emergency services, dental services, medicines, long-term care, and rehabilitative services.

The population ages 19 to 65 years has no publicly funded health care coverage. Their health care insurance is dependent on their employment status or financial well-being. Of this population, Hispanic/Latinos have the highest uninsured rate. Unemployed or part-time workers and families that no longer qualify for welfare support also lack health insurance.

In the 2010 WCCA Community Survey, of the 138 respondents who answered that they had insurance, 34.8% said they paid for it (not their employer). Even with insurance, people who live in rural areas often experience a shortage of health care providers or lack of facilities to provide health care. 2010 County Health Rankings for Polk County report the primary care provider rate

in Polk County is 73 per 100,000 population compared to North Carolina's rate of 115 primary care providers per 100,000 population. Their target value is 154 per 100,000 population.

- **Polk County Health Resource Navigator**

The Polk County Wellness Coalition Health Navigator is funded through Access II Care of Western NC and HealthNet to better serve the needs of the uninsured between the ages of 18-64 that are at or below the 200% federal poverty level. The Health Navigator makes sure that Polk County residents have information they need to access health and behavioral health systems such as primary care, mental health, substance abuse and social services. The Health Navigator acts as an advocate for the uninsured.

There are too few primary care physicians in Polk County and local doctors are not accepting new uninsured patients. A doctor should not turn away an uninsured person without referring them to the Health Navigator. "The number of frequent users of the Hospital emergency room has greatly reduced and the health navigator program has made an impact." reported Tammy Phipps, St. Luke's Hospital.

From 11-15-2009 until 11-15-2010 the Polk County Health Navigator Program has:

- Served 920 uninsured individuals
- Assisted 773 uninsured individuals with access to medical home/primary care
- Provided 375 uninsured individuals with access to case/disease management
- Provided 920 uninsured individuals with access to prescription medications
- Made contact with 1,351 St. Luke Hospital's uninsured patients
- Contacted 1,279 uninsured patients who came through St. Luke Hospital's emergency department and contacted 72 inpatients
- Distributed 66 prescription vouchers worth \$2,640; 15 to qualified uninsured clients
- Generated \$8,000 of financial resources to provide prescriptions to uninsured clients
- \$4,000 of this amount was awarded through the Office of Rural Health to provide vouchers for a 30 day supply of the prescription to last the client until they can apply for and receive prescription assistance.

Access to Dental Care

- The Collins Dental Center continues to serve children from Polk and Rutherford Counties. They accept Medicaid and Health Choice insurance only, and have a sliding fee scale for uninsured patients.
- The North Carolina Oral Health Section's Registered Dentist Hygienists have been working throughout the county to provide education and prevention services. Their focus areas for the 2009-2010 year has been dental disease prevention, access to dental care, oral health monitoring systems, health education and health promotion. Some of the results for the year are:
 - K - 5th graders screened
 - 24% of kindergarteners had untreated obvious decay in primary teeth
 - 1% of fifth graders had untreated obvious decay in permanent teeth
 - 52% of fifth graders had dental sealant present
- 29 Follow ups

- 1562 Education services

Coordinator for the Fluoride Mouthrinse Program

- Participating Schools: Polk Central and Sunny View Elementary Schools
- 501 participating students
- 530 K, 1st and 2nd graders were provided a toothbrush and cover as part of the Dental Learning Libraries Project

Other Activities include:

- Coordinated Give Kids A Smile Event, where students received free dental care
- Team member working in several counties in western NC to provide sealants in a school setting
- Provided technical assistance to existing safety net facilities
- Participated in school health activities

- **Nurse Family Partnership (NFP)**

NFP is an evidence-based nurse home visitation program that improves the health, well-being and self-sufficiency of first-time, low-income parents and their children is serving 36 first time mothers in Polk County.

Three randomized controlled trials of the NFP model in other states have documented substantial, consistent and dramatic benefits to both mother and child, including improved prenatal health, fewer childhood injuries, fewer subsequent pregnancies, increased intervals between births, increased maternal employment and improved school readiness

The NFP nurse home visitor works with their clients to achieve three important goals:

- Improve pregnancy outcomes by helping women engage in preventive health practices, including obtaining thorough prenatal care from their healthcare providers, improving their diet, and reducing their use of cigarettes, alcohol and illegal substances;
- Improve child health and development by helping parents provide responsible and competent care; and
- 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.

- **Work is being done on housing issues**

Cathy Ruth, Polk County Planner is presently working with community members on housing ordinances.

- **Adult Access To Dental Care**

45 adult patients received services from the dental van and many are on a waiting list. Still working on additional help for adult dental services. The dental van will be back in February.

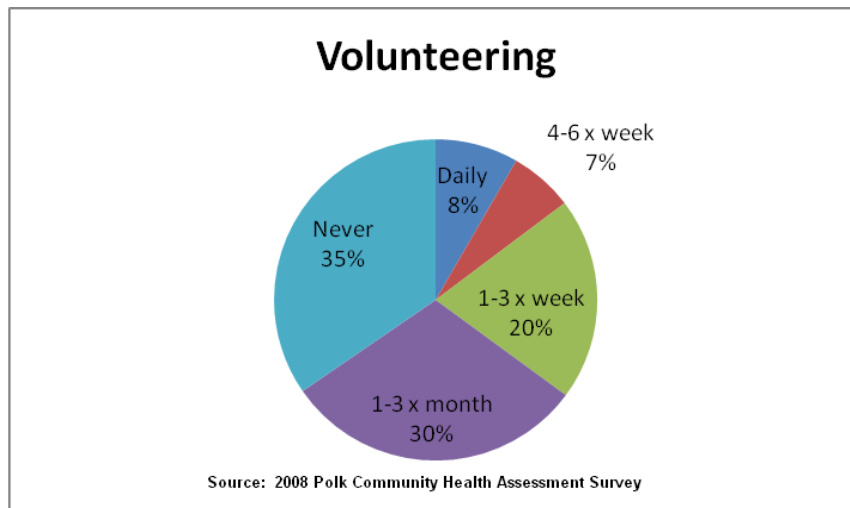
- **Access to Health Resource Information**

A Polk Health and Wellness Resource guide that has been created and is a work in progress that will need constant additions and update provided by Polk County Wellness Coalition members. The resource guide is on the Rutherford-Polk-McDowell District Health Department's web site at http://www.rpmhd.org/new/health_res/guides/polk.pdf

PREVENTION/EDUCATION

Prevention of and education about social afflictions was identified as a priority by the Polk Wellness Coalition Prevention/Education Action Team.

Their objective is to increase social cohesion within the community as measured by 5% increase in rate of Polk residents volunteering 1-3 times /month. Original Baseline: 30.3% of People surveyed responded that they volunteer 1-3 times per month (Polk County 2008 CHA). Date and source of original baseline data: 2008 Polk County Wellness Coalition Community Health Assessment.



Prevention/Education Strategies

The Prevention/Education Team held the Creative Change Series and Unnatural Causes classes in sessions at Isothermal Community College. Seventeen attended the morning and evening sessions. Comments on evaluation sheets were positive. There was a good mix of agency/government staff and community members. Many are looking for opportunities to network, find jobs and seek ways to get connected in the community. Of the 22 people who attended at least one of the classes, ten (45%) have continued involvement in some way with the Polk County Wellness Coalition. There are plans to re-offer the classes in 2011.

In September, Western Carolina Community Action held a public meeting to discuss the *Realities of the Low-Wage Worker*. The purpose of the meeting was to advocate for justice in the workplace and in our customer relationships. The WCCA Community survey results were presented, and Bill Rowe, General Counsel from the NC Justice Center spoke on *Justice is Everyone's Business*. Vicki Meath, Executive Director of Just Economic of WNC presented *Testing Your Low Wage Survival Skills: a Simulation*

EMERGING ISSUES

- **Medicaid Waiver**

Western Highlands Network (WHN), the LME for Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Transylvania and Yancey counties was chosen as the second Medicaid Waiver expansion LME in August, 2010. Along with PBH [who was the pilot for the first 1915(b)(c) Medicaid Waiver in 2004] and Mecklenburg Area Mental Health (chosen in June, 2010), the three LMEs represent a diverse and large portion of the NC Medicaid population. The 1915(b)(c) Medicaid Waivers help provide a continuum of services to persons with disabilities and other populations. The goals of NC Medicaid Waivers are three: increase access for consumers, increase quality of care for consumers and demonstrate cost effectiveness.

The benefits of Medicaid Waiver are hoped to include: 1) regional approaches to specific populations, 2) improved consumer experience (outcomes, safety, satisfaction) and 3) cost containment. As the national health reform nears, including potentially 35-50% more Medicaid enrollees, the Medicaid Waiver expansion across NC for behavioral health, including the integration of care with primary care, is considered by many an essential step for consumers, families and caregivers to gain better health outcomes. (NC Community News update Sept./Oct. 2010, *Western Highlands - Waiver Offers Opportunity* by Don E. Herring MA/Psy, LCSW)

- **Food Security**

2005 – 2007. North Carolina ranked second worst in the nation with 24.1 percent of its children under 5 judged to be food insecure and lacking regular access to nutritional food. The state was 10th worst in food insecurity among all children.

According to the 2010 Western Carolina Community Action (WCCA) community survey:

- Buying groceries over the past 18 months has been:
- A minor problem to afford 38.1% (111)
- A major problem to afford 25.8% (75)
- 14% said that over the past 18 months, someone in their household had gone without a meal because there was no money for food.

58.74% of Polk County school children were enrolled in Free and Reduced Lunch in 2009-10

Source: www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/fbs/.../freereduced/2009-10freereduced.xls

MANNA Food Bank and Thermal Belt Outreach report that the need for food in the community is increasing.

NEW INITIATIVE

Set up a credit card processing machine to receive EBT, credit, and debit cards at four farmers' markets in Polk County.

Goal #1 - To increase local food consumption by consumers who are eligible for EBT and Food Stamps.

Goal #2 - To increase frequency and amount of sales for vendors at Farmers Markets by accepting credit and debit card sales.

Often consumers will not purchase items at the time due to lack of available cash and will not return for larger value items or impulse purchases. By providing customers with an avenue to use their credit or debit cards at the market we will increase attendance of customers who might not otherwise come and increase amount and frequency of sales for vendors. The greatest hope for this program is the use of EBT and Food Stamps funds by eligible consumers to increase local and nutritious food consumption.

This report was prepared by the Rutherford-Polk-McDowell District Health Department

For more information about this report, or how the Polk County Wellness Coalition is addressing these health priorities, or to join our health coalition, please contact:

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The 2010 Polk County State of the County Health Report may be view and downloaded at the Rutherford-Polk-McDowell District Health Department's web site at: http://www.rpmhd.org/new/sotch/reports/2010_polk_sotch.pdf

The 2008 Community Health Assessment may be viewed and downloaded at: <http://www.rpmhd.org/new/cha/2008/index.htm>

This report is also available in public libraries.

Working Together for a Healthy Community