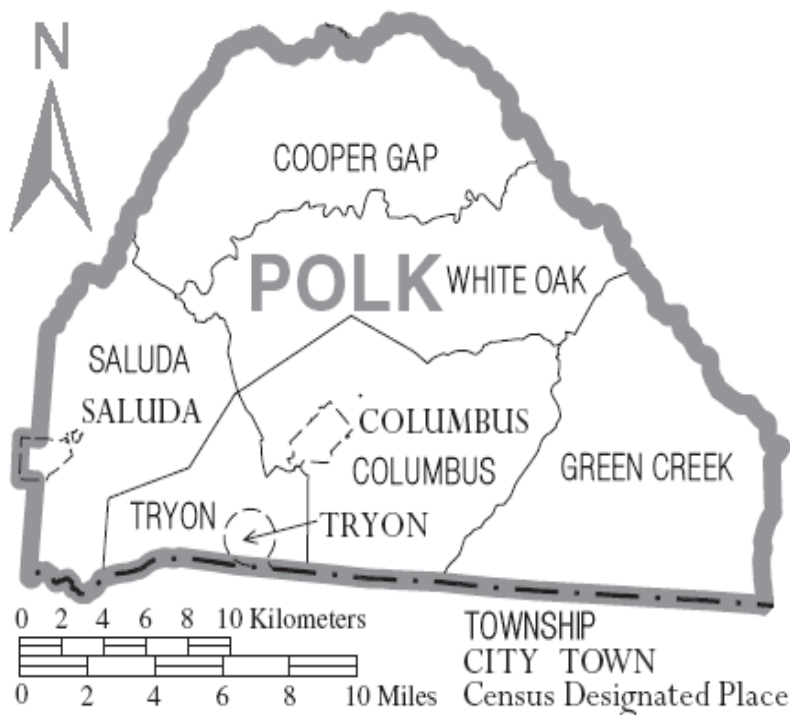


2011 SOTCH

Polk State of the County Health Report



This report may be viewed and downloaded online at:

<http://www.rpmhd.org/sotch>

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Submitted by:

Rutherford-Polk-McDowell District
Health Department

Polk County Wellness Coalition





RUTHERFORD POLK McDOWELL DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Dear Polk County Residents,

Your District Public Health Department has the responsibility to update officials on the “State of the County’s Health” annually except in years when the community conducts a community health assessment.

Although officials expect this report annually, we believe it’s even more important that we share our collaborative efforts with you as we work together to create healthier communities. Positive outcomes and results are achievable when **You** are part of the solution.

I read a quote from Surgeon General C. Everett Koop MD that said, “Healthcare is vital to all of us some of the time, but Public Health is vital to all of us, all of the time.” The SOTCH (State of the County’s Health) report reflects what we are doing as a community to improve health.

I believe it is important we work toward one system for health including: comprehensive prevention, clinical preventive screenings, and disease management. In times of limited healthcare resources it is imperative we design cost efficient strategies and achieve positive results in our communities. This report reflects some of the progress we are making and has been written by our District Public Health Educator Mary Smith. Mary has done a great job and she has provided her contact information if you have questions or want to get involved.

In 2012, we will conduct a comprehensive Community Health Assessment that will seek community input and include evidence-based data to guide our collaborative practices in developing community action plans. Please join our effort to improve **HEALTH!**

Sincerely,

James H. Hines, Jr., Public Health Director
Rutherford-Polk-McDowell District Health Department

Rutherford County Health Department
221 Callahan Koon Road
Spindale, NC 28160
828-287-6100 – Health Dept.
828-287-61001 – Administration
828-287-6059 – HD FAX
828-287-6026 – Home Health
828-287-6479 – HH FAX
828-287-6238 – WIC

Polk County Health Department
161 Walker Street
Columbus, NC 28722
828-894-8271 – Health Dept.
828-894-8678 – HD FAX
828-894-5395 – Home Health
828-894-8678 – HH FAX
828-894-3888 – WIC

McDowell County Health Department
408 Spaulding Road
Marion, NC 28752
828-652-6811 – Health Dept.
828-652-9376 – HD FAX
828-659-6901 – Home Health
828-659-6401 – HH FAX
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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 2011 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. This report will be distributed to the county board of health, county government officials, area libraries, and the local community will have web access.

REVIEW OF DATA

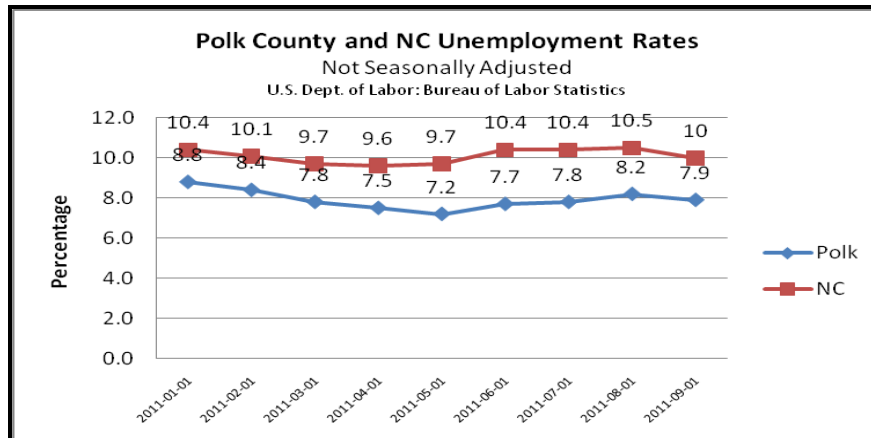
US CENSUS 2010 POPULATION ESTIMATES

	Polk	NC
Population, 2010	20,510	9,535,483
Population, percent change, 2000 to 2010	11.9%	18.5%
Population, 2000	18,324	8,049,313
Persons under 5 years, percent, 2010	4.5%	6.6%
Persons under 18 years, percent, 2010	19.2%	23.9%
Persons 65 years and over, percent, 2010	24.3%	12.9%
Female persons, percent, 2010	52.1%	51.3%
White persons, percent, 2010 (a)	90.8%	68.5%
Black persons, percent, 2010 (a)	4.5%	21.5%
American Indian and Alaska Native persons, percent, 2010 (a)	0.4%	1.3%
Asian persons, percent, 2010 (a)	0.3%	2.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, percent, 2010 (a)	Z	0.1%
Persons reporting two or more races, percent, 2010	1.4%	2.2%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, percent, 2010 (b)	5.5%	8.4%
White persons not Hispanic, percent, 2010	88.4%	65.3%

The US Census reports that in 2009, 15.3% Polk persons living below poverty level compared to 16.2% in the state. 2008 US Census estimates report 14.6% of Polk persons live below poverty level compared to 13.2% statewide.

Unemployment

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



Polk County Health Ranking

The *County Health Rankings* show us that where we live matters to our health. The health of a community depends on many different factors - ranging from health behaviors, education and jobs, to quality of health care, to the environment. Counties in each of the 50 states are ranked according to summaries of a variety of health measures. Those having high ranks, e.g. 1 or 2, are considered to be the “healthiest.”

According to the 2011 Health Outcomes Report, Polk County is 8th in North Carolina as having the identified health factors that influence the health of an individual such as: health behaviors (6 measures), clinical care (5 measures), social and economic (7 measures), physical environment (4 measures).

Polk County ranks 27th among North Carolina counties in health outcomes which are based on an equal weighting of one length of life (mortality) measure and four quality of life (morbidity) measures.

Rank	Health Outcomes	Rank	Health Factors
14	Madison	6	Henderson
27	Polk	8	Polk
28	Henderson	30	Mitchell
32	Ashe	34	Madison
45	Avery	43	Ashe
54	Caldwell	45	Avery
59	McDowell	55	Caldwell
63	Burke	61	McDowell
82	Rutherford	51	Burke
84	Mitchell	64	Rutherford
2011 County Health Ranking Report http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/north-carolina/overall-rankings			

Polk Morbidity/Mortality Rates

When you compare North Carolina's overall death rates to Polk's they generally are a little lower. However when you separate out the white death rates from the minority death rates, most of the minority death rates are higher than the state's rates and Polk County's white's rates.

2004-2008 Age-Adjusted Death Rates				
Source: http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/data/databook/2010/				
	NC	Polk	Polk	Polk
CAUSE OF DEATH:	Overall Rate	Overall Rate	Minority Rate	White Rate
All Causes	861.4	821	1119.6	805.5
Diseases of Heart	202.2	178.9	236.4	175.6
Acute Myocardial Infarction	44.5	44.8	50.5	44.3
Other Ischemic Heart Disease	86.7	75.9	106.5	74.2
Cerebrovascular Disease	54.4	50.5	142.4	46.7
Cancer	192.5	183.1	220.3	181.3
Colon, Rectum, and Anus	17.3	19.4	22.4	18.9
Pancreas	11.1	14.9	30.9	14.2
Trachea, Bronchus, and Lung	59.1	49.3	46.8	49.7
Female Breast	25	15.2	0.0	16.0
Prostate	27.3	11	0.0	11.2
Diabetes Mellitus	25.2	18.7	26.6	18.6
Pneumonia and Influenza	20.3	12.7	0.0	13.2
Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	47.8	48.6	0.0	50.6
Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis	9.1	6.0	0.0	6.3
Septicemia	14.2	4.8	0.0	5.0
Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome, and Nephrosis	18.8	11.4	26.6	10.9
Unintentional Motor Vehicle Injuries	18.6	17.5	0.0	18.7
All Other Unintentional Injuries	28.4	39.9	40.5	39.1
Suicide	11.9	25.5	15.4	26.5
Homicide	7.2	6.0	15.5	5.4
Alzheimer's disease	28.7	41.5	64.1	40.7
Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome	4.4	2.3	15.5	1.4

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 Polk County 2009				Leading Causes of Death in Polk County 2008		
Rank	Cause	Number	%	Cause	Number	%
1	Diseases of heart	63	22.9	Cancer	72	23.6
2	Cancer	60	21.8	Diseases of heart	68	22.3
3	Cerebrovascular diseases	17	6.2	Cerebrovascular diseases	19	6.2
4	Alzheimer's disease	16	5.8	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	16	5.2
5	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	14	5.1	Alzheimer's disease	13	4.3
6	All other unintentional injuries	12	4.4	All other unintentional injuries	8	2.6
7	Diabetes mellitus	8	2.9	Diabetes mellitus	8	2.6
8	Septicemia	7	2.5	Motor vehicle injuries	7	2.3
9	Influenza and pneumonia	5	1.8	Influenza and pneumonia	4	1.3
10	Parkinson's disease	5	1.8	Intentional self-harm (suicide)	4	1.3
11	All other causes (Residual)	68	24.8	Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis	4	1.3
Total Deaths -- All Causes		275	100.0	All other causes (Residual)	82	27.0
Source: State Center for Health Statistics, North Carolina				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 cancer, heart disease, 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.

Leading Causes of Death in All North Carolina Counties 2009			
Source: State Center for Health Statistics, North Carolina			
Rank	Cause	Number	%
1	Cancer	17476	22.7
2	Diseases of heart	17133	22.3
3	Cerebrovascular diseases	4391	5.7
4	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	4324	5.6
5	All other unintentional injuries	2764	3.6
6	Alzheimer's disease	2645	3.4
7	Diabetes mellitus	2107	2.7
8	Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis	1827	2.4
9	Influenza and pneumonia	1719	2.2
10	Motor vehicle injuries	1394	1.8
	All other causes (Residual)	21168	27.6
Total Deaths -- All Causes		76948	100.0

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/cha/>

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.

We do not have sufficient data in Polk County on the body mass index of adult or children to have a true picture and rely on data collected regionally in the Western North Carolina counties.

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.

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. If you compare the baseline data in 2004 with the most current in 2009, the percentage of overweight children decreased from 18% to 16.8% in 2009. The percentage of obese children also decreased from 15.5% to 15.1%. Note that the data is based on very low numbers.

The 2010 Child Health Report Card gave progress in childhood obesity and gave a grade of "F." The supporting data below shows no change or worse for ages 5-11 between 2005 and 2009. Source: <http://www.nciom.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/CHRC2010.pdf>

Percent of low-income children who are obese				
	2009	2005		
	Current Year	Benchmark Year	Percent Change	Trend
Ages 2-4	15.4%	14.9%	3.4%	No Change
Ages 5-11	25.8%	23.8%	8.4%	Worse
Ages 12-18	28.0%	27.2%	2.9%	No Change

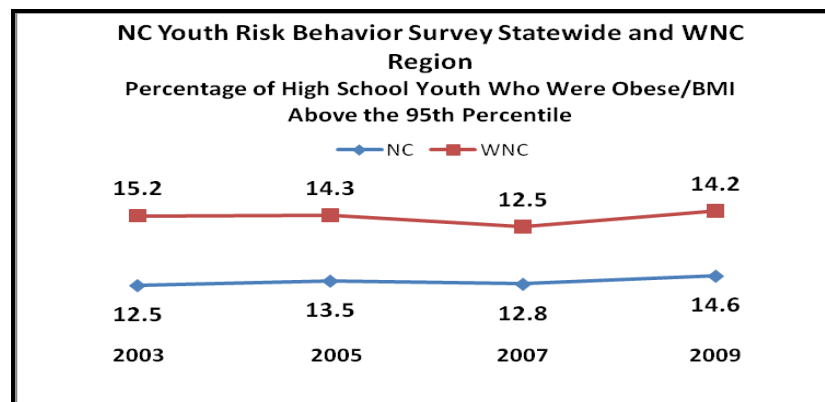
Prevalence of Obesity in North Carolina Children 2 Through 18 Years of Age NC Nutrition and Physical Activity Surveillance System (NC-NPASS)					
	North Carolina Obese	Rutherford Obese	McDowell Obese	Polk Obese	Polk Overweight
2004	17.0%	14.2%	10.8%	15.5% (n=25)	18% (n=29)
2005	16.7%	13.4%	14.2%	17.2% (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 and have actually decreased. The percentage of obese high school students in WNC in 2009 was slightly less than the statewide percentage.



Adult Obesity

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. The percentage of overweight and obese adults has not changed much from 2007 – 2010.

Percentage of North Carolina Adults Who Are Overweight or Obese 2007, 2009 & 2010 Source: Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System Not Data Available for Polk County only									
	Overweight			Obese			Overweight or Obese		
	2007	2009	2010	2007	2009	2010	2007	2009	2010
North Carolina	35.9%	35.3%	36.7 ▲	28.7%	30.1%	28.6% ▼	64.6%	65.4%	65.3% ▼
Western NC	37.1%	34.6%	36.8% ▲	26.0%	28.2%	27.6% ▼	63.1%	62.8%	64.4% ▲

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE OBESITY

- **Increase Physical Activity and Healthy Eating Through Environmental Design**

New Recreation Plan Underway - The Polk County Recreation Advisory Board has begun the task of creating a new recreation master plan that is expected to recommend recreation improvements in the area for the next 10 years. Residents' opinions were gathered through three community meetings and a survey.

Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail Addition – 162 acres of Alexander's Ford has been purchased to provide a nature preserve with biking/hiking trails planned. The National Park Service awarded the county \$15,000 to create a master plan for the area.

Streetscape with Pedestrian Considerations - Tryon Town Council has approved the preliminary design for the town's Streetscape III project, which will include work along the South Trade Street/New Market Road intersection. The design includes the N.C. Department of Transportation (DOT) straightening the intersection of the two roads, placing a crosswalk and an area for plantings as well as a bump out. A pedestrian bump-out is planned for South Trade and Oak Street, as well as sidewalks and landscaping, according to the design.

Sunny View Elementary School Garden was installed with local grant funds. The Health and Wellness Trust Fund and WNC Healthy Kids provided funding to install two rain barrels that will supply water to the garden.



Nature Trail at Polk Central Elementary School has been built to provide outdoor education and experiential learning opportunities for students as well as exercise.

Two school gardens have been installed at Polk Central and Tryon Elementary School. The gardens were made possible by a grant from Health and Wellness Trust Fund, WNC Healthy Kids and the Rutherford-Polk-McDowell District Health Department.

NAP SACC

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 are completed.

The Smart Start funded Child Care Health Consultant employed by the Rutherford/Polk/McDowell Health District, is a trained NAP SACC Consultant. She is facilitating five mandatory workshop sessions for the child care staff. The workshops address the following topics: *Childhood Obesity, Nutrition for Young Children, Physical Activity for Young Children, Working with Families to Promote Healthy Weight Behaviors and Personal Health & Wellness for Child Care Workers.*

3 and 4 yr old class are served broccoli at Country Bear Day School in Columbus.

- **Increase Local Fresh Food Consumption**

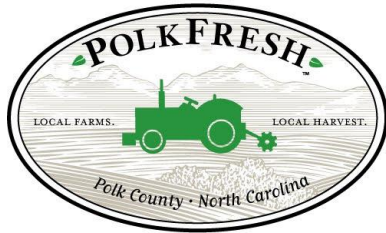
Polk County Farmers' Markets report their best year yet.

A wireless machine was purchased for the Farmers' Markets to accept credit and EBT cards. The credit card processing company failed to set up the EBT account as promised so the Ag Center has completed the required paperwork for USDA and is waiting for a response. Once approved, EBT cards will be accepted at all farmers' markets and the retail store located at Mill Spring Agricultural Center.



PolkFresh Store at the Mill Spring Ag Center is now open and features PolkFresh™ and Appalachian Grown Certified local foods and value-added products from local producers.

The second annual **Polk County Fresh Farm Tour** was held June 25th with hundreds attending. This year the tour was held in partnership with the ASAP Family Farm Tour extending the invitation to visit Polk County to other counties in Western North Carolina. The Polk Cooperative Extension hosted an invitation to partake of the farm tour on bicycles and 15 cyclists took part in this event.



Mill Spring Agricultural Center hosted the second annual **Polk Farm-to-Table Gala** in September selling out to a capacity crowd. The 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.

Slow Food Foothills, a new subchapter of Slow Food Asheville has organized in Polk County. The mission of Slow Food Foothills is to promote and preserve the food culture of our region through the relationships between farmers, the table, families, and the community with whom they share their food, Slow Food Foothills programs and events.

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.

Fresh Fruits & Vegetable Served in Schools:

Polk Central, Sunny View and Tryon elementary schools were awarded grants totaling \$54,000 to purchase fresh vegetables and fruits for their students through the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program for the 2011-12 School year. Sunny View was the only recipient last year. Not only do kids a good nutritious snack in the middle of the afternoon, three times a week, but it also opens a new variety of fruits and vegetables they have never experienced before. One school has held various tasting events and teachers have also incorporated nutrition education into lesson plans.

Pre-K class planting their garden at Polk Central Elementary School

- **Nutrition Education**

Polk Central Elementary School focus for the 2011-12 school year is "Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies." The aim is to promote positive character traits and have teachers emphasize nutrition.

Cooperative Extension Service

Dinning with Diabetes Class at the senior housing community (4 lessons, 2 hours each) 6 participants



Men's Cooking Class - 10 participants - 10 weeks, one day a week, 3 hrs.
 4-H Cooking Classes 3 days, 12 participants
 Eat Smart, Move More, Weight Less for county employees 14 weeks 1 hour each, 12 participants
 Cooking with Kudzu class - 11 participants
 Cheese Making Class - 12 participants
 Serendipity Day Camp at Harmon Field - one week of nutrition education and one week physical activity, 40 participants



WIC Demonstration Garden

The Rutherford-Polk-McDowell District Health Department's Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children serves to safeguard the health of low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk by providing nutritious foods to supplement diets, information on healthy eating including breastfeeding promotion and support, and referrals to health care. The

WIC program added a demonstration garden on site to encourage the growing and eating of fresh local produce to their clients. The McDowell WIC program provided over 4,300 educational contacts with families in 2011.

- **Addressing Food Insecurity**

In FY 2010-11, MANNA FoodBank, through its partner agency, Thermal Belt Outreach Ministry, distributed 100,029 pounds of food to Polk County residents, including more than 12,000 pounds of fresh produce. The total distributed represents a 24% increase over the amount distributed in FY 09-10. At the same time, the number of individuals served increased by 23% over the previous year, yet long term clients remained in need as the number of new recipients increased.

While MANNA and TBOM distribute food to residents in Polk County, total food costs of a household in need could never be completely met by a charitable response alone. Food and Nutrition Services (FNS, known by its outdated name, "food stamps") helps fill the gap between food donated and the real need for supplemental food among Polk residents. As the earnings of Polk County residents has diminished over the past few years, participation in Food and Nutrition Services has increased, due in part to outreach efforts by TBOM and MANNA FoodBank staff. In early 2011, 2,675 Polk Residents were receiving FNS benefits, a 12% increase over 2010. At the same time, these benefits received meant that \$1,777,765.35 in benefits were redeemed in Polk County at 17 stores. (It is estimated that for every \$5 spent in EBT ("food stamp") benefits, \$9.20 is generated in economic benefit for a community).

Most recent USDA analysis of Food and Nutrition Supplement participants in the 11th Congressional District indicates: from 2007-2009 77.5% of households had people over the age of 60 or children under the age of 18 in the home; the median household income was \$14,346 79.1% of households had one or more workers in the home during the previous 12 months.

Feed-A-Kid food bags are assembled and distributed by the Thermal Belt Outreach food pantry and its volunteers on a weekly basis to seven Polk County schools that have identified a nutritionally at-risk child and/or family. The food is intended to last throughout the weekend for each at-risk child. Volunteers pack 320 food bags and deliver them to the schools each week during the school year.

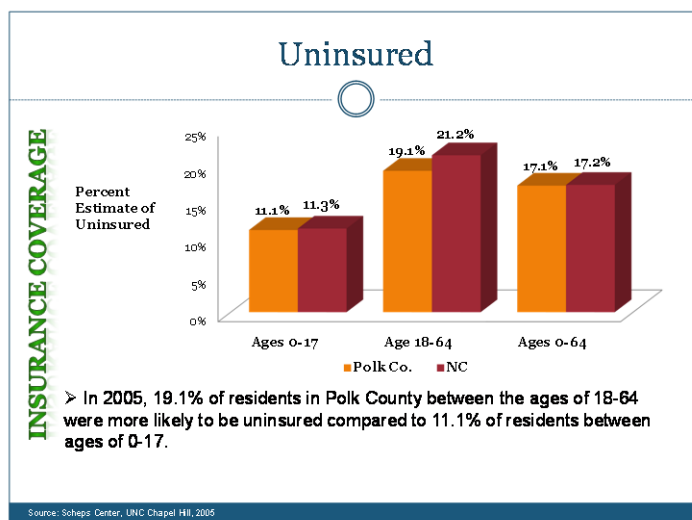
Food Drives - BI-LO holds three food drives year selling pre-made boxes of food for \$5 that go directly to Thermal Belt Outreach after the purchase has been made.

MENTAL HEALTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE

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 addiction 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.

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) indicated that less than 5% were receiving any services. The Wellness Coalition's goal was to increase the number to 50% = a total of between 131 and 183 individuals.



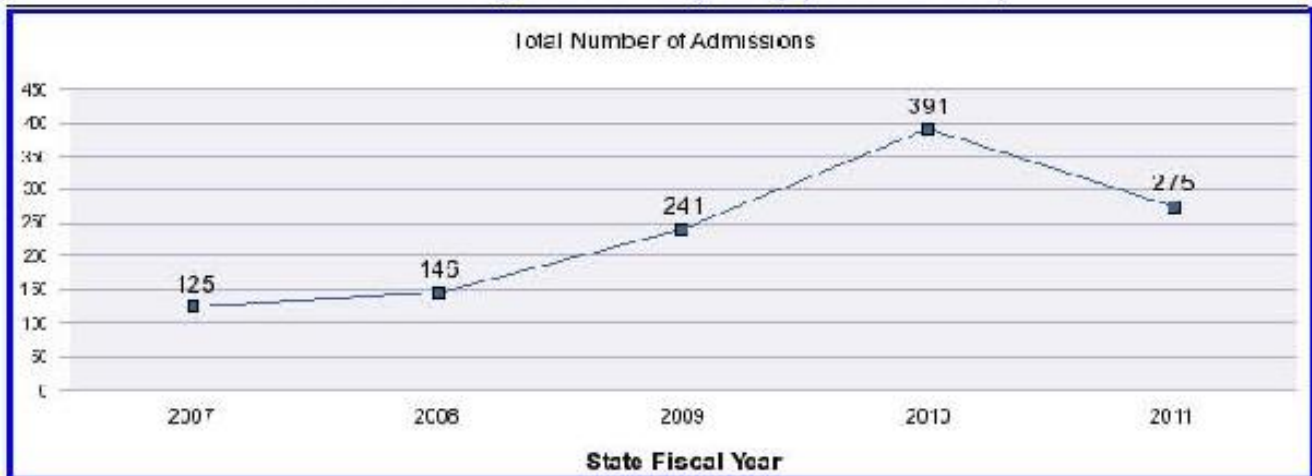
The Western Highlands Network IPRS Consumer Services Report for Polk County reports the following unduplicated numbers of children or adults who received services in mental health, substance abuse or developmental disabilities in 2011:

	SFY 2011-Qtr. 1	SFY 2011-Qtr. 2	SFY 2011-Qtr. 3	SFY 2011-Qtr. 4
Unduplicated Count Overall 429	128	109	100	92

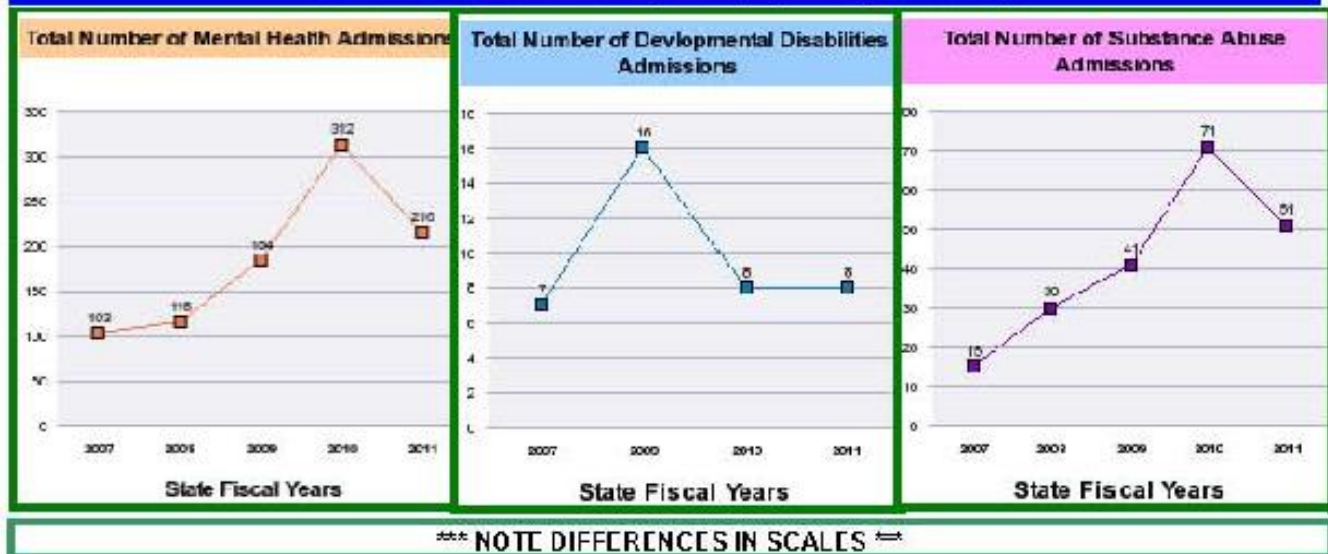
The following is a report of a 5 year summary of admissions by North Carolina Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services.

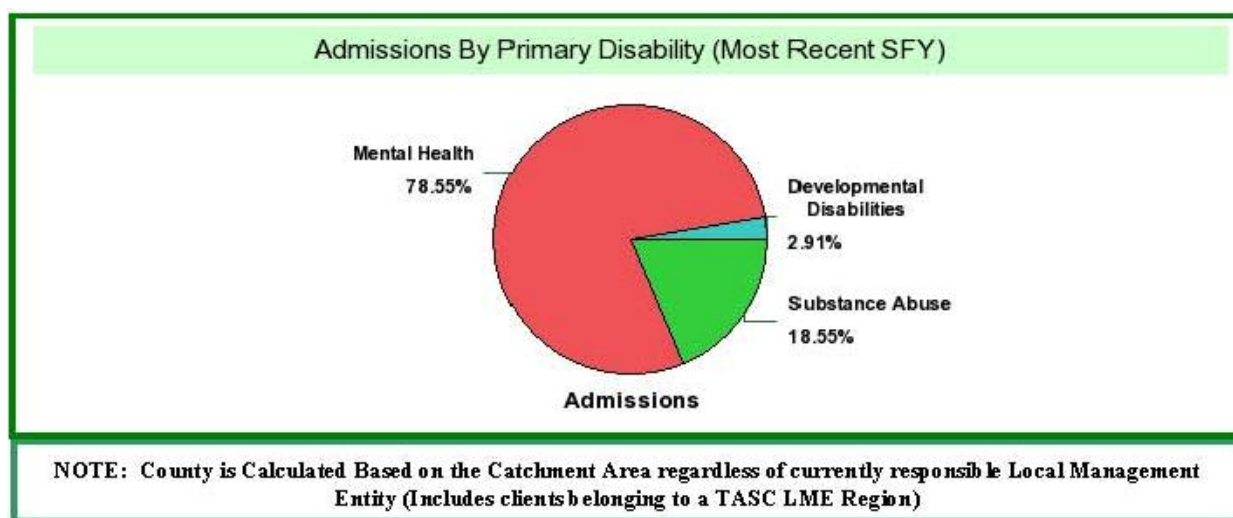
Polk

Five Year Summary of Admissions by County (SFY: 2007 to 2011)



The above graph tracks admissions over the last five state fiscal years (SFY) as reported by this County to the Consumer Data Warehouse (CDW). The three graphs below show a trend analysis by primary disability.





ACCESS TO CARE FOR THE UNINSURED

More recent data seem to conclude that the number of uninsured is going up in Polk County. According to 2011 *County Health Rankings*, <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/north-carolina/polk>, 21% of adults age 19-64 in on Polk County are uninsured compared to 23.2% in NC. This is the closest data to the original baseline of 19.1% in 2005 of uninsured adults aged 18-64.

The same percentages are reported in a 2010 report released by the NC Institute of Medicine:

	Children (0-18)		Adults (19-64)		Total (0-64)	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
North Carolina	282,000	11.5%	1,326,000	23.2%	1,608,000	19.7%
McDowell	1,045	10.3%	5,360	20.0%	6,405	17.4%
Polk	402	10.8%	2,267	21.0%	2,669	18.4%
Rutherford	1,519	10.0%	8,180	22.0%	9,699	18.5%

(Source: http://nciom.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/County-Level_Estimates_08-09.pdf)

10% of children were reported uninsured compared to 11.5% of NC children. Access to preventive and primary care is critical to assuring the health of our children. The data indicate that the percentage of uninsured children (including those in low-income families) continues to increase, largely because North Carolina has experienced dramatic losses in employer-based coverage. The picture would be even worse were it not for a dramatic increase in children's coverage through public health insurance programs over the past decade. This increase is thanks to investments made by the General Assembly and the hard work of state and local agencies and others who enroll children and ensure that they receive preventive care. Source: www.ncchild.org

STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND ACCESS TO CARE

• Primary Care and Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

The Polk Wellness Center recently received three grants from the Polk County Community Foundation totaling \$50,000. The grants allow Polk Wellness Center to provide services to more people in the county who are underserved or underinsured. The community foundation's Startup

Continuation grant of \$30,000 is designed to help with operational, medical and other expenses involved in starting up and building the organization. The Sassoon grant from the community foundation gave the center \$4,000 to be used to provide surgical services for underinsured residents. The center also received a Steinbach grant from the community foundation in the amount of \$16,000. These funds are designated to be used to provide medical, dental, chiropractic and diagnostic services for underinsured residents.

Founded in 2008, Polk Wellness Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization offering family medical care, mental health, substance abuse counseling, patient education and wellness services to residents of Polk County and surrounding areas.

The center uses an integrated model to provide primary medical care, mental health/substance abuse counseling, prevention, education, wellness and recovery support services. Family and primary medical care is offered, including pediatric, geriatric and mental health care.

For more information, call (828) 894-2222 or visit www.PolkWellness.org.

- **Blue Ridge Community Health Services**

Blue Ridge Community Health Services (BRCHS), a nonprofit community health center located in nearby Henderson County, serves Polk County as part of its service area. BRCHS services include family medicine, pediatric medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, school health, medical interpreting, and behavioral health services, including psychiatry and substance abuse services. All services are available to patients regardless of insurance status and no one is turned away for inability to pay. A discount slide-fee is available based on income. Greater than 700 Polk County residents are active patients at BRCHS. Sixty-five percent of the Polk County patients seen at BRCHS are low-income and uninsured. Approximately half of the Polk County patients seen at BRCHS are dental patients, as it is the only dental provider in the region that will accept adult uninsured or Medicaid patients.

- **Specialty Care**

The Hendersonville Free Clinic received \$5,000 to enable eligible Polk County residents to receive care from the specialty clinics: diabetic support, endocrinology, ophthalmology, orthopedics, and physical medicine and rehabilitation (PMR), which targets chronic back and neck pain using a non-invasive, non-narcotic approach. Funding was made possible through a HealthNet grant from NC Office of Rural Health to Community Care of WNC.

- **Medicaid Waiver**

Western Highlands Network (WHN), a Local Management Entity (LME) that serves Polk County, was selected earlier this year by North Carolina Dept. of Health and Human Services to administer the North Carolina Mental Health/ Substance Abuse/Intellectual-Development Disabilities Health Plan, the NC Division of Medical Assistance Medicaid 1516 (b) (c) Waiver program. This Waiver starts January 3, 2012 and affects the behavioral health services covered by North Carolina Medicaid. WHN currently manages state funds for eight counties.

The change means that Western Highlands will manage a provider network that delivers Medicaid behavioral health services to Medicaid eligible consumers currently being authorized and reimbursed through Value Options, a contractor paid for by the state. WHN will be the second PIHP to demonstrate local management of Medicaid services for behavioral health, intellectual and developmental disabilities and substance abuse services, to be followed by the remainder of LME's in NC by January of 2013. To accommodate the increase in authorizations and subsequent claims reimbursement, WHN has expanded staffing and added a Care Coordination Department to ensure that appropriate services are being delivered at the

appropriate level of care by the appropriately certified provider. WHN expects to receive approximately \$93 million to cover all services provided in the eight county area.

WHN has been working with Polk officials to set up an office in the county's new Department of Social Services (DSS) building. Working part time hours, staff will be working with Medicaid enrollees to understand how to access services and assist in identifying community resources locally. This will allow Western Highlands to have a direct presence in Polk County and better serve the consumers who require services of this nature.

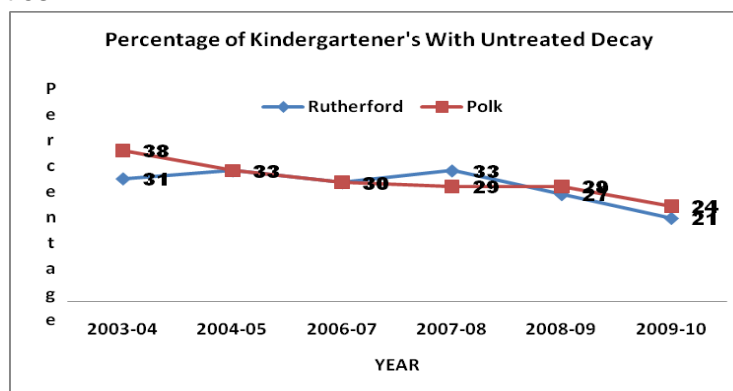
- **Access to Dental Care**

Collins Dental Center

The Collins Dental Center (CDC) is a primary provider of Dental Services for low-income children from Polk and Rutherford Counties. Medicaid and Health Choice insurances are accepted, and there is a sliding fee scale for uninsured patients.

In 2010, CDC provided 6,066 dental visits. CDC also performs oral screenings for Polk County pre-school programs. Students from Western Piedmont Community College engage in clinical training rotations through CDC. Local High School students participate in career- related projects through job shadowing and senior mentoring.

The North Carolina Oral Health Hygienists for the RPM Health District report a decline in kindergartener's with untreated decay. The chart below shows a gradual decline in both Polk and Rutherford Counties.



Data based on report
by RPM Health
District Dental Health
Hygienists

The North Carolina Oral Health Section's Registered Dentist Hygienists have been working throughout the county to provide education and prevention services. Focus areas for the 2010-2011 year: 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 and 5th graders screened: 336

- 22% of kindergartners had untreated decay in primary teeth
- 3% of fifth graders had untreated decay in permanent teeth
- 60% of fifth graders had dental sealant present

Other grades screened: 181 (primarily second graders)

Coordinator for the Fluoride Mouthrinse Program

- Participating Schools: Polk Central, Sunny View
- 425 participating students
- 516 K, 1, and 2 graders were provided technical assistance through Dental Learning Libraries Project

Other Activities include:

- Coordinated “Give Kids A Smile” event where 7 students received free dental care provided by Collins Dental Center and Dr. Cotty
- Team member working in several counties in western NC to provide sealants in a school setting
- Provided technical assistance to existing safety net facilities

- **Adult Access To Dental Care**

Thermal Belt Outreach Ministry sponsored a visit of the North Carolina Baptist Men’s Dental Bus provided dental cleanings, extractions, and fillings on a first come, first served basis to patients twenty-one and over.

- **Health Fairs**

Unity in the Community sponsored two health fairs in 2011. This health fairs were made possible by a grant from the Polk County Community Foundation.

The purpose of the health fair was to motivate and inspire the residents of Polk County to move more and to live a healthier lifestyle.

The grant also made it possible for Tryon residents to take Zumba classes at the Roseland Center and at Zion Grove A.M.E. Zion Church .

Polk County Wellness Coalition’s Access To Care Action Team including the Saluda Medical Center, St Luke’s Hospital, and Community Care of Western North Carolina coordinated a health fair at the Bi-Lo in Columbus. The Farm Bureau Mobile Healthy Living Screening Unit provided bone density scanning, lipid panels, body mass index, and blood pressure checks to 174 (27% male, 73% female). The Polk County Transportation Authority provided transportation for anyone who wanted to attend the event.

Older American Resource Fair was held in May at The Meeting Place Senior Center

- **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. From 7-1-10 to 6-30-11, 408 visits and 17 phone visits were made with 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:

1. 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;

2. Improve child health and development by helping parents provide responsible and competent care;
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.

WELLNESS PROMOTION

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.

Wellness Promotion Strategies

The Prevention/Education Action Team is now called the Wellness Promotion Action Team. The name change reflects the prioritization of wellness promotion as the central goal and process for improving community health (and economy). In fall 2011, the team held another Creative Change Series at the Mill Spring Agricultural Center with 17 attending. Of the 17 people who attended, 9 (53%) expressed a desire to continue involvement in some way with the Wellness Coalition. There are plans to offer the Creative Change Series again in January 2012 in Tryon and in Saluda in the spring.

The underlying principle of the Creative Change Series is to build human capital. Human capital consists of healthy, well educated, skilled, innovative and creative people who are engaged in their communities and participate in governance. The Creative Change Series is utilized as a forum to gather the participant's opinions on the health and wellbeing of their community, to inform them of the goals and functions of the Polk County Wellness Coalition and to recruit volunteers into the work of the Wellness Coalition. The Creative Change Series has contributed to orienting human and social capital building towards a holistic framework of wellness – physical, mental, and spiritual on the individual and community levels.

The 2010 Creative Series recruited volunteers who led the Wellness Coalition through its reorganization and restructuring. Another participant brainstormed her idea with the group to begin an art program that resulted in connecting with “Lennie’s Kids” and the Foothills Humane Society – encouraging broad spectrum of community involvement.

Wellness Promotion members also conducted listening sessions throughout the county with over 50 participants. The listening sessions built bridges in the community, raised awareness of health promotion issues and efforts, and stimulated conversation about the various components of wellness. Input from these listening sessions played a role in broadening the focus and prioritizing wellness promotion as a central goal of the Wellness Coalition.

The Wellness Promotion Action Team is also beginning the 2012 Polk County Community Health Assessment (CHA) process. The group is discussing how to integrate the CHA with our efforts to develop human and social capital. The questions asked and observations made by the

Wellness Coalition through the Community Health Assessment process will help shape our goals and vision as we move forward.

EMERGING ISSUES

Affordable Care Act (ACA)

In March 2010, Congress passed the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

The ACA was enacted to address certain fundamental problems with our current health care system, including the growing numbers of people who lack health insurance coverage, rapidly rising health care costs, and health care quality.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has provisions to expand the health professional workforce, including primary care providers, nurses, dentists, mental health/substance abuse professionals, allied health, public health professionals and direct care workers. The ACA gives priority to health professional training programs that promote interdisciplinary and integrated care, increase the supply of underrepresented minorities, and improve health care quality. The ACA also includes provisions to increase the supply of health professionals in underserved areas.

The change in eligibility requirements will be a major expansion to the North Carolina Medicaid program, especially for low-income adults. To qualify currently, a person must be a citizen or lawful permanent immigrant in the US for at least five years and must meet certain categorical, income, and resource requirements. Medicaid is generally limited to children of low-income families, or adults who are either pregnant, have dependent children under age 19 living with them, disabled (under strict Social Security disability standards), or elderly (65 or older). Even if a person meets these categorical eligibility rules, the individual must also have incomes below a certain income threshold and have limited resources or assets to qualify. Childless, nonelderly and non-disabled adults do not currently qualify for Medicaid, regardless of their income.

However, in 2014, the eligibility criteria will change, and Medicaid will begin covering most adults with incomes up to 138% FPL. The ACA removed the categorical restrictions and resource limits for most adults. Instead, eligibility for children and most adults will be determined based on a person's citizenship (or lawful immigration status) and income.

To put this into perspective, currently most low-income adults working full-time at minimum wage are ineligible for Medicaid in North Carolina. A person working at minimum wage (\$7.25/hour), 40 hours week, 50 weeks/year would earn \$14,500/year in 2010. The incomes of these low-wage workers are generally too high to qualify for Medicaid under North Carolina's current Medicaid eligibility rules.

A single nonelderly adult who is not disabled cannot currently qualify for Medicaid in North Carolina regardless of income. Parents can qualify but it is extremely difficult to do so. A parent in a family of four would only qualify in North Carolina if his or her income was less than \$7,128/year, equivalent to less than half of what a person earns on minimum wage. However, beginning January 1, 2014, this adult would be able to qualify regardless of whether he or she had children. The income guidelines for an individual (single adult without dependent children) would be \$14,945/year or \$30,429/year for a family of four if based on 2010 federal poverty levels. (These income limits are likely to increase by 2014, as they will be based on the 2014 federal poverty levels.) This change is a major expansion and will provide coverage to many low-income adults.

While the ACA includes many provisions to strengthen and build the health professional workforce, the Act did not include new funding for many of these provisions. As part of this effort, the North Carolina Health Professional Workforce Workgroup organized and met approximately one time per month from August 2010-August 2011 to review specific sections of the legislation and examine any new funding opportunities that are made available as part of this legislation. This group worked to:

- Examine funding opportunities for workforce development, including but not limited to: primary care, nursing, allied health, behavioral health, dentistry, public health, direct care workforce Outreach about loan repayment opportunities
- Identify best models for quality improvement and interdisciplinary training in workforce development programs
- Foster collaboration and coordinate implementation efforts.

In the meantime counties with limited medical personnel continue to struggle to provide health care services to the growing number of uninsured or other underserved populations.

2009 Polk County Census Data from LINC		Source: linc.state.nc.us/
Active Primary Care Physicians	19	
Midlevel Practitioners	10	
Registered Nurses	132	
Active Dentists	6	
Total Active Physicians, Nonfederal, Non-resident-in-training	34	
Persons Served in NC Alcohol and Drug Treatment Centers	6	7 (2010)
Persons Served in State Psychiatric Hospitals	15	11 (2010)
Persons Served in Area Mental Health Programs	484	663 (2010)

NEW INITIATIVES

In August 2011, Hospital CEOs and Health Department Directors in the Western NC regional agreed to develop a WNC Regional Community Assessment process in 2012 which would meet everyone's needs. A WNC regional work group has organized to develop a standard set of questions and to determine the survey process and implementation steps to be administered to all WNC counties.

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

Thanks to all the Wellness Coalition members who contributed to this report.

For more information about this report or to become involved with the Polk County Wellness Coalition and its work on access to care, obesity, mental health , substance abuse or wellness promotion, please contact:

Mary Smith, Health Educator
Telephone: (828) 925-0140



The 2011 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/sotch>

The 2008 Community Health Assessment may be viewed and downloaded at: <http://www.rpmhd.org/cha> There will be a new Community Health Assessment conducted in 2012.

This report is also available in public libraries.



Working Together for a Healthy Community