Health of Chatham 2005

Leading Causes of Death

The leading causes of death in Chatham County and in North Carolina continue to be heart disease, cancer and cerebrovascular disease, predominately stroke. Risk factors are those conditions that initially increase the chance of getting a disease. Cancer and heart disease risk factors include age, family history and genetics. There are also several risk factors that a person can control to reduce these risks including not using tobacco, having good nutrition, and being physically active.

Disabilities

Almost 2 out of 10 people in Chatham County have a disability. A disability can impact an individual in different ways depending on age and severity but it is generally considered long-term or permanent. Eight percent have special education experiences. Seven percent have trouble hearing, remembering, or concentrating. Over 87% feel they are not limited in any way because of their disabilities.

Dental Care

Children from low socio-economic backgrounds are five times more likely to have untreated tooth decay and less likely to have ever seen a dentist (or preventive care). In 2001, 33% of kindergarten and 5% of fifth grade had untreated tooth decay in Chatham. The North Carolina Medicaid program provides coverage for dental care but there are still many children in Chatham County who are not receiving appropriate care. There is a national shortage and this affects access to dental care in Chatham. Private providers treat Medicaid clients but often do not have the capacity to serve any new clients. There are only two public dental service facilities available to the over 4,000 Chatham County children with Medicaid: Lee-Dental Clinic and Prince George’s Mercury Clinic.

The Devil: The disconnect from tooth decay or other oral disease can lead to poor concentration, irritability, problems with deep and other problems. This can and does affect a child’s performance in school and at home. These children have a lifelong increase in adult periodontal disease and caries.

The Opportunity: Chatham County Partnership for Children has recently included improved dental health for children as a goal for 2003-2006. Pediatric Health Services is expected to open dental services in Elkin City by the fall of 2003.

Priorities and Emerging Issues

The Current and Emerging Health Priorities listed below were created at the completion of the community health assessment in 2002. Continued monitoring of these and other health issues has resulted in only minimal changes to the priorities. These priority help guide the planning of public health programs and activities in Chatham County.

Current Health Priorities

1. Physical Inactivity
2. Unintentional Injury
3. Contaminated Water
4. Nicotine
5. Unhealthy & Unwanted Pregnancy
6. Family Violence (Domestic Violence/Child Abuse)
7. Tobacco Control
8. Indoor Air Quality
9. Affordable and Accessible Children’s Dental Care
10. Alcohol and Other Drug Use
11. Infant Mortality

Emerging Health Priorities

1. Bacteriuria
2. Growth
3. Health Insurance Coverage
4. Affordable Health Care
5. Jock Opportunities

Healthy Chatham: "Collaborating for Healthier Communities"

In 1994, Healthy Chatham was created to provide a foundation for healthy living and improved health, and to ultimately enhance the quality of life for all Chatham County residents. A community level approach with involvement of the entire community is needed to improve health status for Chatham County residents. The values of Healthy Chatham is a collaborative community involved in creating and nurturing optimal health and well being in Chatham County.

How Can You Get Involved?

1. Become a member of one of the Healthy Chatham partnership agencies.
2. Encourage your church, civic, club or other organization to host a promotion by Healthy Chatham.
3. Call Healthy Chatham at 919-545-8694 for more information or to get involved.

Chatham County Public Health Department
Leading the Charge to a Healthier Chatham
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Alcohol and tobacco use are at or near their lowest levels since 1995 and 1996 respectively. The survey found that about 20% of the population in Chatham County now have never tried alcohol or tobacco. The survey also found that about 75% of respondents do not drink alcohol or smoke tobacco. Smoking rates have declined significantly since 1996, while drinking rates have remained relatively stable.

The survey also found that the majority of respondents support policies that limit access to alcohol and tobacco products, such as raising the legal age for purchase and implementing restrictions on advertising and marketing. The community is committed to reducing substance abuse and promoting healthy lifestyles.

Health of Chatham 2007

Youth Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Use

Data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) indicates that youth drug use in Chatham County is lower than the state and national averages. In 2006, the NSDUH reported that 14.7% of youth in Chatham County had tried alcohol in the past month, compared to 18.4% in Georgia and 22.5% in the United States. The NSDUH also reported that 1.9% of youth in Chatham County had used marijuana in the past month, compared to 6.3% in Georgia and 11.3% in the United States.

Adolescent Pregnancy

In 2006, Chatham County had the lowest rate of adolescent pregnancy in the state, with 18.0 pregnancies per 1,000 females ages 15-17. This is compared to the state rate of 21.0 pregnancies per 1,000 females ages 15-17. The county has implemented various programs and initiatives to reduce adolescent pregnancy rates, including education and prevention campaigns, access to contraceptive services, and supports for adolescent parents.

Overweight and Obesity

The Chatham County Health Department has reported that 30.2% of adults in Chatham County are overweight (BMI 25-29.9) and 4.4% are obese (BMI 30 or higher). This is compared to the state rate of 29.5% overweight and 6.1% obese. The department has implemented various programs and initiatives to address overweight and obesity, including community health campaigns, cooking classes, and physical activity programs.

Diabetes

Diabetes is a major health concern for Chatham County. In 2006, the county had an obesity rate of 31.9%, which is higher than the state rate of 29.5%. This high obesity rate is a significant factor in the prevalence of diabetes. According to the Chatham County Diabetes Prevention Program, 11.1% of adults in Chatham County have diabetes.

Unintentional Injuries

Chatham County has taken steps to reduce unintentional injuries by implementing various programs and initiatives. For example, the county has implemented a program to increase pedestrian and bicycle safety, which has resulted in a decrease in the number of injuries due to these activities. Additionally, the county has implemented a program to reduce distracted driving by implementing distracted driving laws and increased law enforcement.

Physical Activity

Chatham County has implemented various programs and initiatives to promote physical activity. The county has implemented a program to increase access to parks and recreation facilities, which has resulted in an increase in the number of people who engage in physical activity. Additionally, the county has implemented a program to increase access to healthy food options, which has resulted in an increase in the number of people who engage in healthy eating.

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