

Community and Environment Strategies

Increase Jobs and Economic Security

1. Invest in infrastructure (e.g. water, sewer, technology, transportation)
2. Develop regional industries and local resources (e.g. farm to table, fishing, tourism, agriculture, solar)
3. Recruit and retain industry
4. Create workforce development programs to support local economy

Improve Educational Outcomes

1. Increase support for quality childcare and education (birth-5) and parenting supports to improve school readiness
2. Better recruitment and retention of strong teachers
3. Increase technology/internet infrastructure
4. Increase K-12 parent engagement and involvement (e.g. PTA/PTO, classroom visits)
5. Promote innovative/non-traditional educational programs and strategies
6. Increase adult learning opportunities and professional development

Increase Leadership around Rural Health Issues

1. Encourage communication between community leaders (e.g., health, business, education, faith) to support local economic development, education, health care, and other important community issues.
2. Educate state and local leaders about health and health care issues, including the economics of health care and the impact of the health of the community on other areas of development. Encourage them to factor health data into their decision-making.
3. Support or build opportunities for local leaders to come together around health issues in a way that encourages collaboration and supports the implementation/replication of successful programs/policies/practices (e.g. Healthy Carolinians or Partnership for Children model)
4. Identify and support development of local leaders in all disciplines to strengthen rural communities.

Health Behaviors Strategies

Promote Healthy Eating and Active Living

Educate families to support physical activity and nutrition

Work within the education systems (including early education through college) to support physical activity and nutrition

Decrease Substance Abuse

1. Promote and educate doctors on the use of statewide controlled substance reporting system to improve the ability to identify people who abuse and misuse prescription drugs.
2. Use Project Lazarus (a community-based overdose prevention and opioid safety program) as a model to reduce the use of other substances.
3. Promote the use of drug treatment courts, an intervention program where non-violent addicted offenders enter court-supervised treatment, rather than prison.
4. Use school-based interventions for substance abuse prevention.

Improve Mental Health

1. Build/strengthen community supports to improve mental health
2. Use primary care and public health settings to screen for and, when appropriate, provide treatment for mental health problems
3. Educate communities about the signs and symptoms of mental health disorders and suicide

Access to and Availability of Services Strategies

Improve Access by Maximizing Insurance Opportunities

1. Work with employers to maximize insurance coverage
2. Advocate for Medicaid expansion to cover low-income adults
3. Leverage safety net resources to bridge the gaps in insurance coverage for individuals, with a focus on those who are not able to obtain affordable health insurance coverage.

Support New Models of Care to Expand Access to Health Services

1. Expand telehealth efforts
2. Support and expand school-based and school-linked health centers
3. Funders and policies should support new models leveraging leadership, coordination, and sustainability

Improve Recruitment, Retention, and Distribution of Health Professionals

1. Ensure adequate incentives to recruit health professionals into underserved areas, focused on primary care, dental providers, mental health professionals, and general surgeons
2. Involve broader segments of community (e.g., schools, business, community leaders) in recruitment efforts
3. Support health professionals new to rural communities