

In recent years, North Carolina's Division of Public Health (DPH) has worked with state and local partners to develop a vision and roadmap for improving public health efforts to save lives, reduce disability, improve quality of life, and, ultimately, improve the health of our state. In *Prevention for the Health of North Carolina* (2009), the state identified the key preventable risk factors contributing to the major causes of death and disability in the state. This report also began the process of identifying evidence-based strategies (EBSs)—those that have been documented to have a positive impact on health outcomes—to prevent or reduce these risk factors. *Healthy North Carolina 2020* (2011) built on this effort by identifying 2020 health outcome targets for the 40 top health objectives in the state. The state can concentrate its efforts to have a positive impact on population health by focusing on a limited number of key health objectives,

The Task Force on Implementing Evidence-Based Strategies in Public Health built on these previous efforts by focusing on how to increase the use of EBSs at the local level. Local health departments (LHDs) are essential partners in these efforts to improve the health of North Carolinians. LHDs engage in a variety of programs, policies, and clinical interventions to promote and support the health of their communities. *Improving North Carolina's Health: Applying Evidence for Success*, the report of the Task Force on Implementing Evidence-Based Strategies in Public Health, presents a way to improve the health of North Carolinians that can occur if DPH and LHDs, as well as other state partners, work together collaboratively to effectively select, implement, and evaluate evidence-based strategies. Many of the recommendations focus on the need for DPH to create a system that encourages and supports the use of EBSs by local health departments. The Division of Public Health provides some basic support services to all 85 LHDs. As part of this overall support, the Task Force envisions DPH building the infrastructure needed to support EBSs at the local level through activities such as:

- Promoting awareness and understanding of evidence-based public health strategies among state, regional, and local public health staff.
- Providing guidance to LHDs around selecting appropriate evidence-based strategies.
- Creating a system within North Carolina public health that supports and encourages local health departments to implement evidence-based strategies with fidelity.
- Developing evaluation and data collection tools as well as providing training and coaching to local staff to enable them to collect and analyze data.



In return, the Task Force believes that local health departments have a reciprocal obligation to begin to implement EBSs in very specific ways. If DPH provides the foundation for EBS work at the local level, then LHDs have an obligation to ensure their staff receive the appropriate trainings and to start implementing EBSs with fidelity to address North Carolina's public health needs. The Task Force believes that this reciprocal obligation is central to advancing the use of EBSs in North Carolina. Therefore, one of the recommendations is to amend the agreement between DPH and LHDs to reflect this obligation. Finally, the Task Force recognizes that many of our academic institutions and other organizations have developed extensive knowledge about implementing EBSs. Partnering with such organizations is critical to extending the capacity of DPH to educate public health staff about EBSs, identify appropriate EBSs, provide implementation support, and assist with the collection and analysis of data.

State and local public health agencies and supporting partners need to use existing funds wisely to improve the health status of North Carolinians. This report provides a blueprint for how DPH, LHDs, and other partners can work together to accomplish this goal. By implementing these recommendations, North Carolina can strengthen the infrastructure needed to support the implementation of evidence-based public health strategies across the state. Selecting appropriate strategies, implementing these strategies with fidelity, and ensuring that they are having their intended impact offers the greatest chance of continuing the state's past efforts of improving the health and well-being of North Carolinians.

	Department of Public Health	Local Health Departments	Other
<p><b>Recommendation 5.1: Educate State and Local Public Health Staff about Evidence-Based Strategies</b></p> <p>State public health staff, in partnership with other state agencies and other partners should offer generic trainings on evidence-based strategies to appropriate state, regional, and local staff.</p>	✓	✓	✓  NIRN, NCIPH, Center TRT, NC CPHQ, DPH ECU, NC CHW, FCSD NCSU, AHEC
<p><b>Recommendation 5.2: Select Appropriate Evidence-Based Strategies</b></p> <p>The Division of Public Health (DPH) should provide guidance to local health departments (LHDs) around selecting appropriate evidence-based strategies (EBSs). As part of this effort, DPH should work with local health directors, academic institutions, and partnering organizations to identify two state-selected EBSs for 10 of the priority HNC 2020 objectives identified by LHD action plans, and at least one expert contact for each selected EBS.</p>	✓	✓	✓  NIRN, NCIPH, Center TRT, NC CPHQ, DPH ECU, NC CHW, FCSD NCSU
<p><b>Recommendation 5.3: Implement Evidence-Based Strategies</b></p> <p>The Division of Public Health should create a system that supports and encourages local health departments to implement evidence-based strategies with fidelity through utilizing a quality improvement approach; pursuing and publicizing funding opportunities; promoting learning collaboratives; and providing training, technical assistance, and coaching to the extent possible.</p>	✓	✓	✓  NIRN, NCIPH, Center TRT, NC CPHQ, DPH ECU, NC CHW, FCSD NCSU
<p><b>Recommendation 5.4: Monitor and Evaluate Process and Outcomes</b></p> <p>To evaluate the effectiveness of state-selected evidence-based strategies (EBSs) implemented in North Carolina, the Division of Public Health and local health departments (LHDs) should identify or develop evaluation design and data collection tools for each state-identified EBS and provide training and coaching to local staff to enable them to collect the appropriate data. To ensure that state-selected EBSs are implemented with fidelity and properly evaluated, LHDs should ensure that staff who collect data receive appropriate training, collect and submit to the state requisite process and outcome data, and review local process measures to ensure program fidelity.</p>	✓	✓	✓  NIRN, NCIPH, Center TRT, NC CPHQ, DPH ECU, NC CHW, FCSD NCSU

	Department of Public Health	Local Health Departments	Other
<p><b>Recommendation 5.5: Revise the Consolidated Agreement</b></p> <p>If the Division of Public Health (DPH) fulfills the obligations outlined in recommendations 5.1-5.4, then DPH should revise the 2013 Consolidated Agreement to require local health departments (LHDs) to identify and implement two new evidence-based strategies (EBSs) to address HNC 2020 priority objectives from different HNC 2020 focus areas as identified through the community health assessment. The LHD action plans should articulate the selected EBSs, and plans for staffing, training, implementation, and evaluation.</p>	✓	✓	
<p><b>Recommendation 5.6: Collaborate with Partner Organizations</b></p> <p>The Center for Training and Research Translation, within the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, should convene academic and other appropriate organizations to work with the Division of Public Health and local health departments in implementing evidence-based strategies to address the Healthy North Carolina 2020 (HNC 2020) objectives. These organizations should, to the extent possible, assist the state in identifying appropriate EBSs to address priority HNC 2020 objectives; provide implementation support; assist with the collection and analysis of data.</p>			✓  <small>NIRN, NCIPH, Center TRT, NC CPHQ, DPH ECU, NC CHW, FCSD NCSU</small>

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Full Name</b>
AHEC	Area Health Education Centers
Center TRT	Center for Training and Research Translation at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
DPH	Division of Public Health, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
DPH ECU	Department of Public Health at East Carolina University
FCSD NCSU	Family and Consumer Sciences Department at North Carolina State University
LHD	Local health departments
NC CHW	North Carolina Center for Health and Wellness at the University of North Carolina at Asheville
NC CPHQ	North Carolina Center for Public Health Quality
NCIPH	North Carolina Institute for Public Health
NIRN	National Implementation Research Network