COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH
ROCKINGHAM COUNTY
EXPAND JOBS AND ECONOMIC SECURITY
PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT PRIORITIES:
- **EXPAND JOBS AND ECONOMIC SECURITY**
- IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES
- FOSTER STRONG, COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY LEADERS

STRATEGIES TO EXPAND JOBS AND ECONOMIC SECURITY IN RURAL NORTH CAROLINA
1. Invest in infrastructure (e.g. water, sewer, technology, transportation, health care)
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

Invest in infrastructure (e.g. water, sewer, technology, transportation)
Existing efforts: There have been major improvements in the transportation area; infrastructure has created more jobs due to the expansion project of highway 220/68, which is a thoroughfare from Virginia to Piedmont Triad International airport. In addition, there has been a shift in traffic due to the expansion from two to four lanes. Laptops and Chromebooks are being distributed to high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools. The Rockingham County Business & Technology Center (RCB&TC) is currently spearheading an effort to expand wireless services as well.

Barriers: There is a need for up-to-date technology within the school system as well as throughout the entire county. Furthermore, to attract companies who care about the county and are willing to make an investment, the water line has to be expanded. While the Eden pilot program has been used for transportation purposes, the need for public transportation still has to be explored and executed.

Existing efforts: The Rockingham County Business & Technology Center (RCB&TC) is starting to emphasize entrepreneurship efforts and opportunities. RCB&TC has partnered with Piedmont Local Food, which is now Carolina Grown, and retails food and dairy products from the local farmers. There is also a community garden implemented by the Reidsville Housing Authority within the Womack Court Apartments. Presently, the North Carolina State Agricultural Research Station employs students in a few local jobs. This helps in cutting costs for the farmers. Also, Rockingham County has created their first solar farm with plans for more to follow. Another development includes the Museum & Archives of Rockingham County (MARC), which opened its doors for the first time on August 11, 2013, creating the opportunity for increased tourism within the county.

Barriers: There is a need to support the local economy seeing that members of the community perceive that students who go on to attain higher levels of education do not return to Rockingham County. On the other hand, it is essential to increase level of educational given that the current high school graduation rate is only 72%. Furthermore, the need to preserve local funding has diminished as many of the residents commute to Greensboro (outside of the county) for work. In addition, there are individuals who work in Rockingham County, but reside outside of Rockingham County. Lastly, there is a demand to retrain more residents on skills related to farming and growing food.

Recruit and retain industry
Existing efforts: During the summer of 2013, Sturm, Ruger & Company created 150-200 manufacturing jobs. Additionally, Mark Wells, Executive Director of Rockingham County Business & Technology Center, shared his knowledge about twenty business projects being explored for the creation and expansion of jobs. Although, many textile jobs were lost due to the closing of Burlington Mills, talks are underway to reuse the textile mills.

Barriers: Participants stressed the need for jobs development because then healthcare would be affordable.

Create workforce development programs to support local economy
Existing efforts: Local colleges have expanded their efforts for training residents to meet the demands of the brewing and distilling industries within Rockingham County. Additionally, Goodwill has created a job readiness training program, which assists citizens with resume' preparation, math building skills, and job links.

Barriers: Besides the loss of jobs due to the closing of mills within the city of Burlington, former textile workers require retraining as the current manufacturing industry is more technologically inclined. Unfortunately, the workforce is not prepared. Participants shared that 80% of the population going to Rockingham Community College has to be remediated, and thus the demand for higher education and developing trade programs are critical. Participants suggested that Goodwill partner with Rockingham Community College to discuss specialized training based upon the demands of local companies and industries.

COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH
ROCKINGHAM COUNTY
IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES
PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT PRIORITIES:
- EXPAND JOBS AND ECONOMIC SECURITY
- **IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES**
- FOSTER STRONG, COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY LEADERS

Increase support for quality childcare and education (birth-5) and parenting supports to improve school readiness
Existing efforts: There have been several Head Start and pre-K programs created throughout Rockingham County to increase and improve school readiness, such as Smart Start and Parents as Teachers. Additionally, catch-up opportunities are available for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students. A strong Partnership for Children network anchors many of these and other programs. Rockingham County Partnership for Children (RCPC) has made school readiness a focal point of efforts and has raised community awareness around the need for birth-5 education and opportunities.

Barriers: Unfortunately, lack of transportation is a limitation from getting to the programs, so there is a need for a local transportation system.

Better recruitment and retention of strong teachers
Existing efforts: Better wages, subsidies and incentives can be offered as recruitment and retention instruments for strong, qualified teachers. There were few examples of this locally. Some participants felt that our school system's commitment to technology was a recruitment factor but others (including teachers) disagreed.

Barriers: State level policies impact recruitment and retention of teachers, which is a barrier for rural communities. Participants suggested using retired teachers as a resource, perhaps as teaching mentors. Also, community residents would like to see quality teachers recruited who will not be complacent in addressing the needs of students. Finally, they would like to see the recruitment of male teachers.

Increase technology/internet infrastructure
Existing efforts: The Rockingham School Board implemented a mobile learning initiative to facilitate learning efforts. As a result, Samsung Chromebooks have been distributed to students, while teachers received laptops. The Chromebooks are for use during the school day and for use at home. Overall, technology in Rockingham schools has increased, and all classrooms, offices, libraries, and labs are wired with high bandwidth connections throughout the schools There is also a robotics team.

Barriers: Although, broadband Internet expansion has increased throughout the schools, many community residents cannot access wireless technology outside the school, thus expansion throughout Rockingham County must be upgraded.

4- K-12 parent engagement and involvement (e.g. PTA/PTO, classroom visits)
Existing efforts: Aside from the Parent Teachers Association, there isn't a lot of parent teacher engagement. This was identified as a large area for improvement. However, there is an active internet system, which allows parents to view their students work assignments given by teachers. Also there are parent and migrant resources.

Barriers: Due to the low parental involvement, there is a barrier between parents and school faculty. Therefore, improve communication is necessary. Participants would like to see parents and teachers involved in the decision making process. Community residents recommended multi-school involvement as a solution and/or taking the Parent Teacher Association meetings into the communities.

Promote innovative/non-traditional educational programs and strategies
Existing efforts: Rockingham County has several learning initiatives. For example, they have partnered with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library initiative, which offers any child, age birth-five a free, developmentally appropriate book once a month. RCPC also administers Reach Out and Read in partnership with several medical practices. The Community Health Assessment for Rockingham County emphasized the link between education and health, and used the Rockingham Early High School College Initiative for students attending classes at the Rockingham Community College campus as an example of an evidence-based program. The Carolina College Advising Corps helps low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students apply and matriculate into colleges; there is one CCAC advisor in each of the county's four high schools. There is also The Rockingham County Education Foundation (RCEF), which is an organization formed to provide leadership and advocacy programs that promote the value of education across our communities. Rockingham County also has an active 4-H program, which offers responsibility, leadership, self-esteem, and critical thinking skills outside the school environment. Another program is the Leader in Me, which is a school-wide model to increase teacher effectiveness, student engagement, and academic achievement. Finally, the International Baccalaureate (IB) program offers high quality curricula that encourage critical thinking through the study of traditional core content areas.

Barriers: Participants would like to see the community's perception of schools changed. In addition, they shared the idea of having Charter schools formed within public schools. They would also like to see innovative programs geared towards high-risk students. Finally, community residents would like to communicate the vision of their success stories through enhanced marketing and create an outreach center for existing and updated resources.

Increase adult learning opportunities and professional development
Existing efforts: Numerous resources and programs for adults are offered at Rockingham Community College such as Business Services, Small Business Center (both are programs for business owners to assist with employee training), Career Counseling, and Veterans Affairs

programs. There is also job readiness and development program offered by way of the Goodwill Resource Centers.

Barriers: Complacency must be rejected and a value of higher education and vocational training increased on both state and local levels. In addition, race and ethnic disparities must be addressed as it leads to educational outcome disparities. The group recognized the need for our community to value education for all members.

COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH
ROCKINGHAM COUNTY
FOSTER STRONG, COLLABORATIVE LEADERS
PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT PRIORITIES:
- EXPAND JOBS AND ECONOMIC SECURITY
- IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES
- **FOSTER STRONG, COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY LEADERS**

STRATEGIES FOR FOSTERING STRONG, COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY LEADERS
1. Encourage communication between community leaders (e.g., health, business, education, faith) to support local economic development, education, health care, and other issues of vital importance to the community.
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 in order to strengthen rural communities.

Encourage communication between community leaders (e.g., health, business, education, faith) to support local economic development, education, health care, and other important community issues
Existing efforts: There are several agencies throughout Rockingham County offering assistance for a range of services from health advisory boards to juvenile crime prevention program. For example, the Consolidated Health and Human Services Board offers community health and social services, along with professional and consumer services. In addition, the Rockingham County Healthcare Alliance meets with Community leaders to address the issue of healthcare access. There is also the Piedmont Triad Regional Council Area Agency on Aging, which provides community education for healthy programs to offer local classes for residents. The Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (Department of Juvenile Justice) brings together community leaders to advocate for youth mental health services and delinquency prevention programs as well. Strive, an early childhood program, works to improve literacy levels of young children and to improve attitudes toward education overall. Furthermore, the Competitiveness Survey and Strategy initiative was convened by Reidsville Area Foundation to come up with strategies to improve Rockingham County and encourage involvement from community agency leaders. Finally, the Dan River Basin Association has developed a Rockingham County-wide recreational trails plan that has been adopted by all the towns within the county.

Barriers: The Rockingham County Healthcare Alliance group, headed up by Dr. Jennifer Nixon, meets quarterly. However, the group has limited help to meet the demands as Dr. Nixon only has 2 staff workers - neither of whom is employed full-time.

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
Existing efforts: One of the participants shared that the Reidsville Area Foundation is very concerned about this topic.

Barriers: Participants recommended that the broader community, not just leaders, receive education concerning health issues impacting their neighborhoods. In addition, there should be long-term investments because problems impacting health are complex and long-term. Also, funders, whether state government or foundations, need to fund long-term projects rather than just short terms ones for only one or two years. Effective programs and projects should be supported. Such programs and projects that are funded with state funds should be focused on a particular health issue and have a demonstrated record of effectiveness with proven outcomes. State entities should concentrated investments in Tier 1 counties that are the most economically distressed. The state government should not increase the tax burden on Tier 1 counties with limited capacity. Instead, the state should provide Tier 1 counties with funding for mandated services rather than imposing unfunded mandates on them.

State representatives need to be better informed about the challenges facing their constituency in Rockingham County. State legislators have to better understand the impact of education on community for state health and well-being. Their recent education cuts make it apparent they do not understand the interrelationship of these issues. The state needs to foster cross sector collaborations by providing flexible funding to support these collaborations. The leadership training that is made available to professionals from across the state in Raleigh should be offered through a range of strategies to community residents and agency professionals in local communities in Rockingham County. They could offer high quality distance learning at Rockingham Community College or at the Business and Technology Center. Also, they could support convening leaders and other stakeholders who are impacted by healthcare access challenges together to forge partnerships. To encourage youth participation in these training initiatives, we need the program to be web-based; training for youth should be informed by youth with special incentives and include a mechanism to offer them special recognition. It is important to develop local leaders to have state level impact on policy. Rockingham County also needs affordable Internet access across the county. Make resources available to hire interpreters, provide bi-lingual signage and educational materials to increase immigrant access to services. Improve rural transportation, make it affordable and include bike lanes. Also, publicize existing services by helping to market what we already have using multiple strategies to educate local residents about what is here in our county.

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)
Existing efforts: The Nurse Family Partnership Community Advisory Board is a group of various representatives coordinating the implementation of evidence based programs (maternal/child health). This group includes leaders from the Health Department and Social Services; Rockingham County Healthcare Representation; and Business and Economic Development representatives. Piedmont Triad Regional Council Area Agency on Aging convenes quarterly and monthly meetings with local leaders, members of medical agencies, and members of other facilities to establish support. Additionally, the Community Health Assessment – facilitated by the Rockingham County Health Department – involves focus groups with a cross section of government and community leaders to share ideas and rank community needs related to health concerns. Finally, there are Monthly Service Provider Meetings that are held at Avante Nursing Facility to gather information and advice on different community functions and initiatives and to gain support within the community. Speakers come to educate the group on various topics.

Barriers: Although the Dental Health Task Force (local dental professionals and the Health Department) works with Rockingham County schools to address dental health needs of students, they convene on an irregular basis.

Identify and support development of local leaders in all disciplines to strengthen rural communities
Existing efforts: The Rockingham County Aging Services Planning Committee meets to address the needs of older adults, caregivers, and their families (ex: senior centers, nutrition, home aid, respite, adult day care).

Barriers: It was suggested that leadership development efforts should target community residents and youth.

Additional strategies:
1. Need to bring business, government and community leaders together in all Rockingham County towns to develop a comprehensive strategy to address obesity and other health issues collaboratively.
2. Develop strategies to increase service providers and recipients knowledge of what resources exist in Rockingham County
    a. Create a resource Guide of all the services in the county that has a flow chart and criteria to guide service provider's referrals
    b. Develop a mobile application that has the resources in the guide that would be accessed through technology for the same purpose of informing providers about the criteria necessary for people to qualify for certain services.

*The Dan River Basin Association is already developing an app to identify where bike and walking trails are located, farmers markets and other recreational resources.

HEALTH BEHAVIORS
ROCKINGHAM COUNTY
PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING AND ACTIVE LIVING
PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

HEALTH BEHAVIORS PRIORITIES:
- **PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING AND ACTIVE LIVING**
- REDUCE SUBSTANCE ABUSE
- IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH

TASK FORCE STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING AND ACTIVE LIVING
1. Educate families to support physical activity and nutrition
2. Work within the education systems (including early education through college) to support physical activity and nutrition

Educate families to support healthy eating and active living

Existing efforts: Efforts by Department of Health and Human Services and many of its branches offer training and support for healthy eating and active living. Workgroups created by Licensed Practical Nurses help create action plans through Healthcare Alliance and Education Workgroups. In addition, Congregational Nurses help the homeless and Hispanic communities with housing, health care, and navigating the Department of Social Services. The Free Clinic collaborates with Congregational Nurses and takes referrals from them. In addition, the Rockingham County Citizens Academy is helping to bring in leaders; Craig Cardwell is a key player and very active in the community. Also, the Dan River Basin Association brings in stakeholders from all towns within Rockingham County to work on a plan for recreational trails, thus promoting health. Some trails have already been created, which can be seen at RockinghamCountypathways.org. Finally, an app (bike trails, farmers market, etc.) is already being developed by Dan River Association to meet health challenges the community is already faced with.

Barriers: Participants would like to bring leaders and stakeholders together to forge collaborations that inform the community (leaders, professionals, residents, entire community) on issues within Rockingham County. Residents would like to collaborate with churches and schools as an avenue to get the community involved. In addition, participants would like to market what is available within the community, outreach to citizens and educate residents about services, trails, where to get fresh food, resources and how to cook. Also, they would like for training on health topics to be made accessible to community and leaders. Although an app is underway by way of Dan River Association, residents would like an app containing all resources available throughout Rockingham County, perhaps by developing a resource guide for community leaders to be used as a referral flow chart flow for professionals and leaders. They would also like to see a youth leadership program implemented to offer incentives as a method to draw the youth. Participants would also like to have affordable Internet made accessible throughout Rockingham County. Finally, public transportation must be upgraded, made affordable, and bike lanes must be improved.

Work within the education systems (including early education through college) to support healthy eating and active living
Existing efforts: The Rockingham schools are working with Rockingham County Educational Foundation as well as the Education workgroup to develop action plans through the school system.

Barriers: There is a demand to create a distance learning program at Rockingham Community College' Business Technical Center. In addition, there is a lack of funding regarding services (interpreters, signage and bilingual educational materials) for the Hispanic community.

HEALTH BEHAVIORS
ROCKINGHAM COUNTY
REDUCE SUBSTANCE ABUSE
PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

HEALTH BEHAVIORS PRIORITIES:
- INCREASE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION
- **REDUCE SUBSTANCE ABUSE**
- IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH

TASK FORCE STRATEGIES TO REDUCE SUBSTANCE ABUSE
1. Promote and educate doctors on the use of the statewide controlled substance reporting system to help identify people who abuse and misuse prescription drugs.
2. Use Project Lazarus (a community-based overdose prevention and opioid safety program) as a model for substances in addition to opioids.
3. Promote the use of drug treatment courts, an intervention program where non-violent addicted offenders enter court-supervised treatment.
4. Use school-based intervention for substance abuse prevention.

Promote and educate doctors on the use of statewide controlled substance reporting system to help identify people who abuse and misuse prescription drugs.
Existing efforts: As a measure to promote and educate doctors, the Insight Human Services offers a 10-panel screen test, which measures the presence of any illicit substance in the body.

Barriers: Hospital emergency room doctors need to have system in place to flag high risk patients for prescription abuse because the current system is difficult to process. Likewise, there isn't enough time for doctors to identify patients who need substance abuse support. Contributors would like Congregational Nurses to increase their involvement and a more convenient, user-friendly computerized reporting system with wider access beyond doctors. Additionally, there is no in-patient rehabilitation, thus treatments are limited and expensive. On the other hand, prescribing practices of doctors create opportunity for abuse. Finally, participants shared a need for financial support to provide and educate about the dangers of prescription drug addiction and dependence. Likewise, better education about prescription drug abuse for the general population is critical through advertisements and social media.

Use Project Lazarus (a community-based overdose prevention and opioid safety program) as a model to reduce the use of other substances.
Existing efforts: To prevent overdose and reduce substance abuse Project Lazarus works jointly with law enforcement counterparts to educate and take unwanted drugs out of circulation by means of their Operation Take Back. Participants can place unwanted drugs in the pill drop box located at the Sheriff's office.

Barriers: Participants shared the need to inform community residents about Project Lazarus. Also, many stated concerns about strategies that should be implemented to address adults turning to substance abuse as a result of the economic downturn.

Promote the use of drug treatment courts, an intervention program where non-violent addicted offenders enter-supervised treatment, rather than prison.
Existing efforts: Reclaiming Futures is a drug intervention program that offers services for young people facing challenges with drugs, alcohol, and crime. In addition, the Day Mark Recovery Services offers assistance to recovering addicts. Furthermore, there is a mental health focus group of 40-50 participants from the community that conducts quarterly meetings to discuss intervention.

Barriers: Contributors would like an intervention program devised around the same strategy used for non-smoking efforts. One of the biggest hindrances shared by participants is transportation to services and facilities providing treatment. Additionally, participants would like information constructed to address knowledge of treatment programs available through the court systems.

Use school-based interventions for substance abuse prevention.
Existing efforts: As a substance abuse prevention measure, Student Resource Officers formed parent information night to inform and educate parents regarding drug and alcohol challenges. In addition, there are four high schools offering student health centers with on-site counselors and health educators. Also, Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) has implemented a program, which provides strategies for students to make positive choices.

Barriers: Contributors would like to see additional funding for education and drug prevention (DARE ineffective, need contemporary message) in schools, as many believe media images for drugs and alcohol are pervasive and misinterpreted by the youth as cool. Moreover, School Resource Officers are overwhelmed and finding it harder to identify substance abuse users.

HEALTH BEHAVIORS
ROCKINGHAM COUNTY
IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH
PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

HEALTH BEHAVIORS PRIORITIES:
- INCREASE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION
- REDUCE SUBSTANCE ABUSE
- **IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH**

TASK FORCE STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING 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 and substance abuse problems
3. Educate communities about the signs and symptoms of mental health disorders and suicide

Build/strengthen community supports to improve mental health
Existing efforts: To build and strengthen the community, local high schools and some faith-based organizations have implemented supports to improve mental health. To further their efforts, they conducted fairs and outreach supports regarding mental health and suicide in the county. Furthermore, there are two programs that have aligned their efforts by creating supports within the community, such as the Partnership for Community Care's - Access II initiative and the Community Health Integration Program (CHIP).

Barriers: Funding and transportation are barriers within the community. Participants stated the need for more psychiatric beds because the need is greater than the current capacity. In addition, the community needs support for innovative programs that are working. Further collaboration between social workers, the sheriff, and police department is needed. There is also a demand for better crisis services since emergency rooms are over utilized. There is also a need for county wide groups to coordinate and follow up with individuals who have been identified with mental health issues. Participants shared it is crucial to form a partnership within the community as current programs are not well known by residents. Another barrier is the lack of communication between local resources because there is no referral system. Many people within the community have lost their insurance, so the need for Medicaid expansion. With the expansion of coverage for general and mental health, participants shared it would create the opportunity for more providers. Unfortunately, competiveness by providers causes a lack of coordination.

Use primary care and public health settings to screen for and, when appropriate, provide treatment for mental health and substance abuse problems
Existing efforts: Due to a state expansion, tele-psychiatry is available in the area. New mothers are screened for depression and there are referrals, follow-ups, and home visits.

Barriers: Participants shared views with regard to better provider screenings. While there is some primary screening by physicians, there is no coordination of mental health care. There is a

high demand for more mental health providers in the county in addition to more funding for social workers, nurses, psychiatric nurses, and providers. Participants also recommended increased integration of mental health services with primary provider in order to better protect the patient's privacy and reduce stigma of going to a mental health provider.

Educate communities about the signs and symptoms of mental health disorders and suicide
Existing efforts: Efforts by the Parent Teacher Student Organization training has been beneficial for parents and school administration by educating parents and submitting referrals.

Barriers: Participants believe further funding is needed for mental health, along with educating parents and teachers about mental health programs and services geared towards children and young adults (from 0-20). In addition, community residents would like community programs that are current and available in the community. Also, participants would like to see the expansion of Medicaid, which would aid in reaching more people, along with increasing mental health services and providers. Accordingly, the development of a modernized app detailing available services would bridge the gaps for those isolated in the community. Using social media and texting to inform community residents regarding updates about mental health symptoms and resources would aid in this effort.

ACCESS TO AND AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES
ROCKINGHAM COUNTY
MAXIMIZE INDIVIDUAL INSURANCE OPPORTUNITIES
PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

ACCESS TO AND AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES PRIORITIES:
- **MAXIMIZE INDIVIDUALS' INSURANCE OPPORTUNITIES**
- SUPPORT NEW MODELS OF CARE THAT EXPAND ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES
- IMPROVE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND DISTRIBUTION OF KEY HEALTH PROFESSIONALS (I.E., PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS, GENERAL SURGEONS, DENTISTS, AND MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS)

Strategies for Improving Access by Maximizing Individuals' Insurance Opportunities
1. Encourage employers to offer affordable coverage to more employees
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.

Encourage employers to offer affordable coverage to more employees.
There is little going on in the Rockingham county area to encourage employers to offer coverage. In fact, some of the participants feared that employers will drop coverage once people can obtain coverage through the Affordable Care Act.

Expand Medicaid to cover more low income adults
The participants were pessimistic that the political climate would change or that the North Carolina General Assembly would choose to expand Medicaid.

Leverage safety net resources to bring gaps in insurance coverage focusing on those who are not able to obtain affordable health insurance coverage.
Existing efforts: There is a free clinic that provides some services, but to receive services, the person has to have a job. Health Care Alliance offers some primary care, dental, and donated specialty services to the uninsured. Rockingham County Department of Public Health is a safety net provider that provides primary and dental care to uninsured and underinsured county residents. The hospitals also provide charity care for hospital services. There is a FQHC in Caswell and Alamance counties, but it is difficult for people to access those services because of transportation problems. The VA is also available to help people who have served in the military.

Barriers and strategies to overcome barriers: Participants noted that people in the community were not always aware of the safety net resources that did exist in the community. In addition, many of the providers are unaware of the programs, so do not always refer people to safety net resources that do exist.

NEW STRATEGY (PRIORITY): Educate the public about new insurance coverage options available under the ACA, as well as existing safety net resources
Existing efforts: There is very little happening in Rockingham county to educate people about the Affordable Care Act.

Barriers and strategies to overcome barriers: Participants thought it was important to educate the public about new insurance options available in the marketplace, existing safety net resources, and the availability of Medicaid expansion if the state were to choose that option. They discussed strategies to reach the broader community, including presentations at churches, community meetings, health fairs, or at other locations where people congregate (such as schools, PTA meetings, baseball games). They talked about creating a speakers bureau, and working with congregational nurses to have them educate the public. They also thought it was important to educate local physicians/health care providers about the different insurance options so that they could educate the public.

ACCESS TO AND AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES PRIORITIES:
- MAXIMIZE INDIVIDUALS' INSURANCE OPPORTUNITIES
- **SUPPORT NEW MODELS OF CARE THAT EXPAND ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES**
- IMPROVE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND DISTRIBUTION OF KEY HEALTH PROFESSIONALS (I.E., PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS, GENERAL SURGEONS, DENTISTS, AND MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS)

Strategies to 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

Expand telehealth efforts
Existing Efforts: There have been successful efforts at local hospitals with tele-psychiatry, tele-neurology (acute stroke diagnosis in ED), Virtual ICU (staffed by Moses Cone intensivists), and tele-health at school-based health center. Hospital services are mostly staffed by Specialists on Call who can bill for services. The school-based health center tele-health initiative allows the school-based clinic to expand to 5 days/week. Mid-level rotates every other day between health-centers, on alternate days, staffed by RN with tele-health access to mid-level. The county is working on expanding to medical directors facility to allow physician consultation in real time. School health tele-health is supported by a federal grant (equipment such as high resolution cameras).

Barriers: Barriers include low supply of specialists and high costs of facilities (some disagreement as to whether the hospital could bill and collect a facility fee while specialist collected consultative fee). Technical assistance may be needed around billing. The financial model and sustainability for consultative services are unclear. Discussants recognized barriers including credentialing and out of state licensure. There was some discussion of IT needs to support tele-health and the opportunity to work with Rockingham Community College to identify expertise.

Efforts to overcome barriers: Ongoing interest in tele-psychiatry at school-based clinic. A grant proposal is pending. Recruitment of specialists at larger health systems to recruit specialists may help supply and coverage. Discussants expressed need in tele-psychiatry in nursing homes and primary care settings, but there are no ongoing efforts.

Support and expand school-based and school-linked health centers

Existing Efforts: Two schools have jointly run school-based health centers (with tele-health model as described above). The health department houses the state-employed public health dental hygienist who provides education, dental screenings in the elementary schools and coordinates the annual Give Kids A Smile campaign. School-based sealant program from health department and dental bus (private for-profit mobile dental unit) are ongoing. Some participants show concern that dental bus competes with health department dental services and does not provide follow up or urgent dental care in community. Dental services are not comprehensive. NC Mission of Mercy hosted outreach dental programs in 2011 and 2012.

Barriers: Funding is an ongoing challenge. It is not possible to bill for nutrition therapy services or nursing services which would help with financial model.

Funders and policies should support new models leveraging leadership, coordination, and sustainability

Existing Efforts: Several existing efforts were discussed. These included the Rockingham Community Health Alliance (partnership between ORHCC, Hospitals, rural health clinic, etc.) to focus on community health needs. Also, participants mentioned Young Mom's Connect (collaboration between the health department, local education agency, school based health center, and Rockingham County Partnership for Children). This partnership required organizations to work together (address turf issues), and as a result, they were awarded a large grant. The goal of this program is to keep pregnant and parenting girls and women 13-24 in school, healthy, and effectively parenting. A third example of leadership was around dental health with a group of private dentists taking turns on call for local hospital to provide urgent follow up and a dental home in a rotation for indigent patients referred by the ED.

Barriers: The dental effort required privileging through the oral surgery department of Moses Cone, and the participating dentists have been less enthusiastic.

New Strategy
- Programs for All inclusive Care of the Elderly (PACE)
- Funding for the health care of low income, uninsured, and undocumented people of the county.

ACCESS TO AND AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES
ROCKINGHAM COUNTY
IMPROVE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND DISTRIBUTION OF KEY HEALTH PROFESSIONALS
PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

ACCESS TO AND AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES PRIORITIES:
- MAXIMIZE INDIVIDUALS' INSURANCE OPPORTUNITIES
- SUPPORT NEW MODELS OF CARE THAT EXPAND ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES
- **IMPROVE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND DISTRIBUTION OF KEY HEALTH PROFESSIONALS (I.E., PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS, GENERAL SURGEONS, DENTISTS, AND MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS)**

Strategies for Increasing Access by Improving Recruitment, Retention, and Distribution of Key Health Professionals (i.e. primary care providers, general surgeons, dental providers, and mental health professionals)

1. Ensure adequate incentives to recruit health professionals into underserved areas
2. Involve broader segments of community (e.g., schools, business, community leaders) in recruitment efforts
3. Support health professionals new to rural communities

Ensure adequate incentives to recruit health professionals into undeserved areas
Existing efforts: In an effort to create adequate incentives for recruited providers, local banks offer programs with lower interest rate loans as well as provide free continuation education conferences.

Barriers: Unfortunately, information is not disseminated well as to what recruitment and incentives are available. More funds are needed for existing incentive efforts at the state level, particularly since resources at the local level have been reduced. Incentives for rural areas need to be greater than those for urban areas to convince providers to leave urban areas to practice in rural areas.

Involve broader segments of community (e.g., schools, business, and community leaders) in recruitment efforts.
Existing efforts: Educational opportunities for providers have been opened up through the Veteran's Administration and offered to local providers. Rockingham County Health Care Alliance was created to bring together interested community partners in an effort to address the health care needs of residents.

Barriers: Although the educational system has improved greatly, the local system needs further improvement to recruit providers to the area.

Support health professionals new to rural communities

Existing efforts: A simulated hospital is opening at Rockingham Community College, which will allow enhanced local training of medical support staff.

Barriers: Increase the number of mid-level providers that can be supervised by MD, if, based on merit, the MD proves that additional supervision is warranted.

New Strategies Added
- Encourage providers who have retired or are nearing retirement to serve as rotating locum tenens providers for rural practitioners in order to allow time off for vacations and continuing education. Establish a system at the state level to coordinate this approach.
- Invest in growing your own talent – Recruit nurses locally to send to school for advanced practice who will return to community. (The timeframe on this type of approach is much shorter than medical school and residency.)

General Thoughts
The two groups (approximately 8 individuals) thought that the identified strategies were the most important ones for this area. Although two new strategies were suggested, the group agreed that incentives, broader community involvement in the recruitment process, and support to recruited professionals was very important to success.