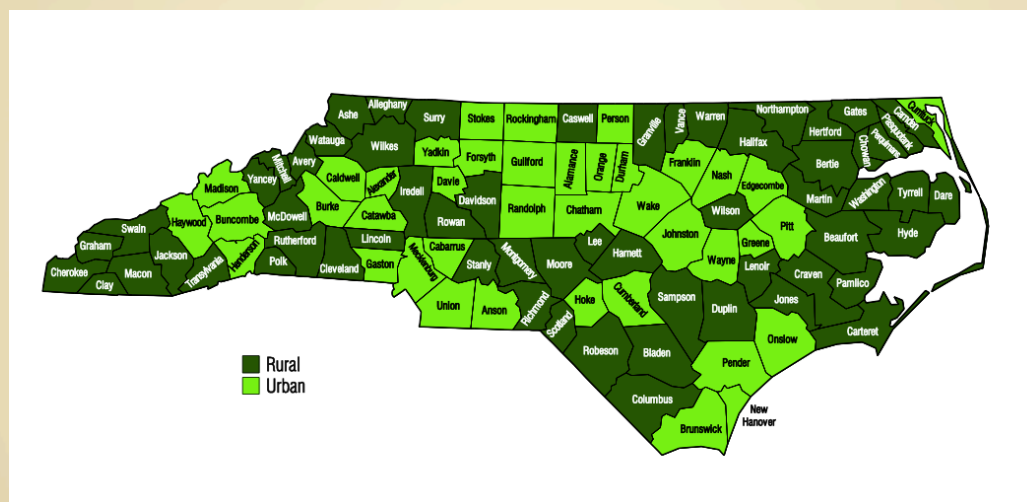


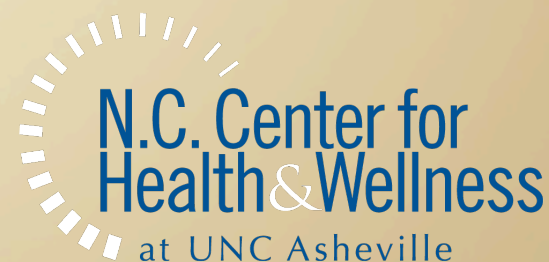
# Healthy Eating, Active Living

## Improving Rural Health in North Carolina

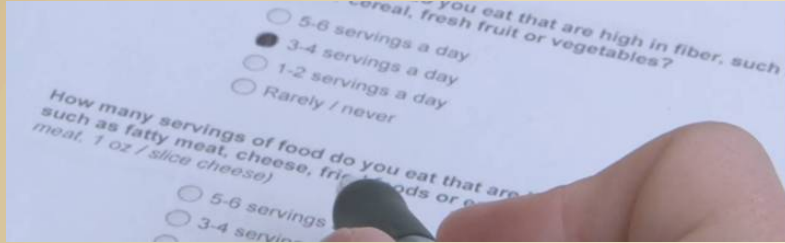


David Gardner, D.A.  
Executive Director  
NC Center for Health and Wellness

NCIOM Task Force on Rural Health June 25, 2013



# Rural Health Disparities



- Higher rates of
  - Obesity
  - Heart Disease
  - Stroke
  - Asthma
- Lower rates of fruit and vegetable consumption
- Lower rates of physical activity
- Lower life expectancy in rural counties
  - Wake County LE: 81.3 yrs.
  - Harnett County LE: 76.8 yrs.

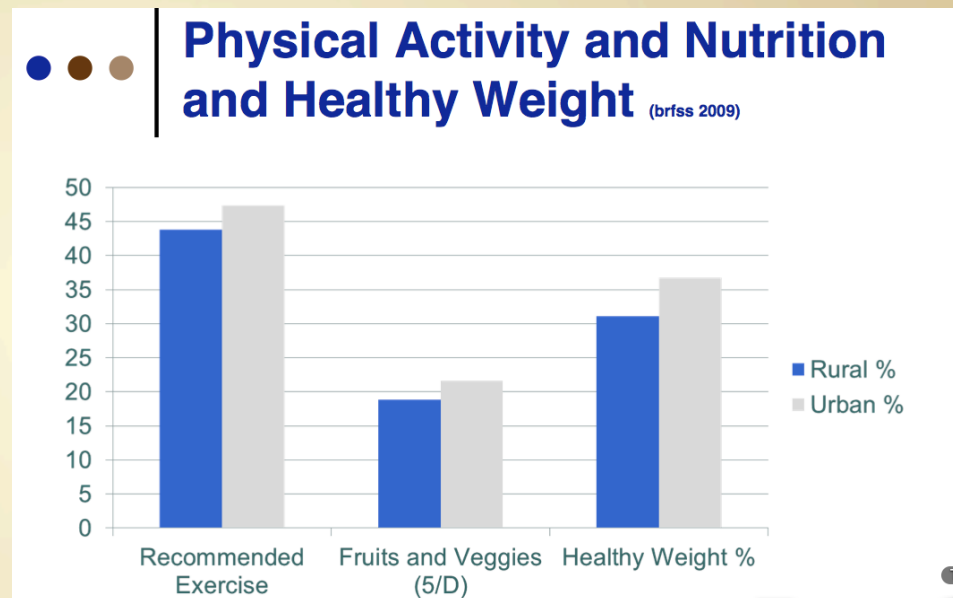
# Improving Rural Health

Clear problem identified:

Rural NC is less healthy than urban NC

Promising solution:

Increase healthy eating and physical activity in rural NC



# Healthy Eating & Active Living

- **Benefits**

- Healthy weight
- Increase life expectancy
- Reduced risk of chronic diseases including
  - ✓ Heart Disease
  - ✓ Cancer
  - ✓ Stroke
  - ✓ Diabetes

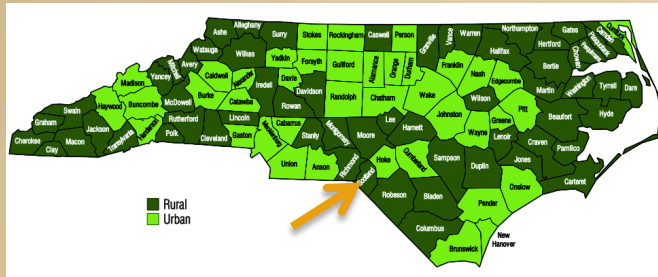




# Barriers to Improving Rural Health

- Access
- Cost
- Communication
- Lack of policy



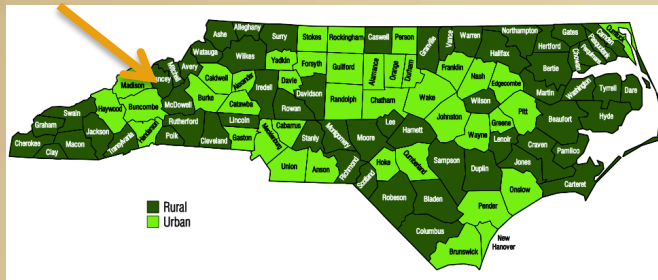


# Rural Health Solution: Community Gardens

- Community Garden project in Laurinburg, NC (Scotland Co.)
- Benefits:
  - Increased focus on fruit and vegetable consumption
  - Agricultural education
  - Outdoor activity
  - Community building
  - Town beautification





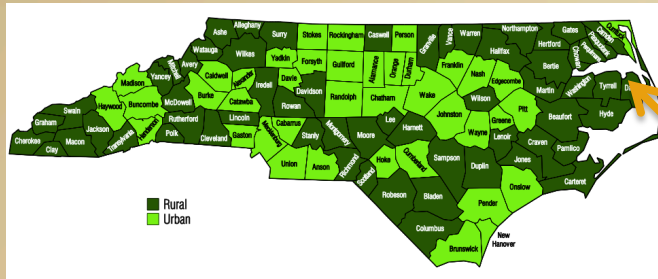


# Rural Health Solution: Joint Use Agreements

- “Getting on the Right Track” project at Mountain Heritage High School (Yancey Co.)
- Benefits
  - Partnered funding for repairs/maintenance
  - Community use allowed and encouraged
  - Access to safe activity space in a county with only 2 miles of sidewalk



# Rural Health Solution: Preventing Obesity by Design (POD)



- Heron Pond Montessori (Dare Co.) reconstructed their outdoor learning environment with Natural Learning Initiative (NCSU) to increase student health

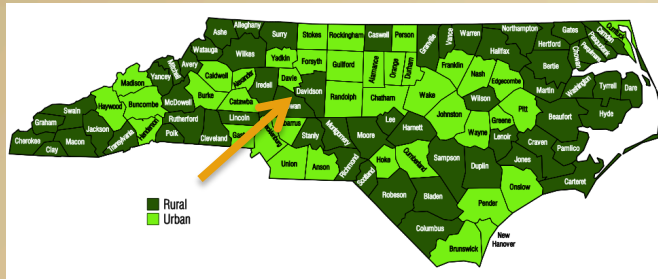


Before



After

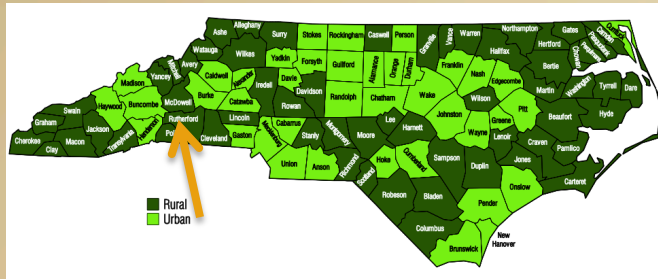




# Rural Health Solution: Wellness Promotion at Faith Based Organizations

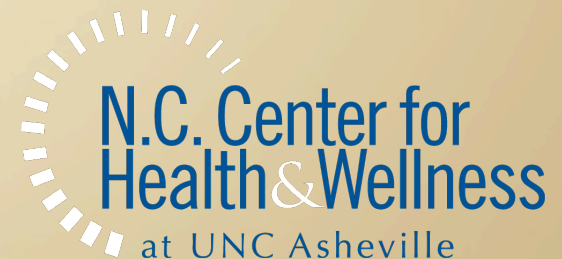
- Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church of Salisbury (Rowan Co.) is a PHW (Partners in Health and Wholeness) certified congregation.
- Wellness Initiatives:
  - A nutritionist teaches families how to use the food already in their homes to make healthy meals
  - Policy in place to offer healthy eating alternatives at church events





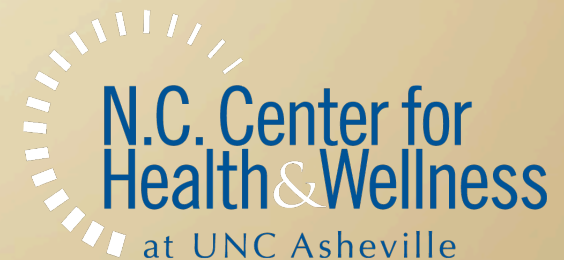
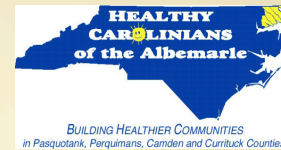
# Rural Health Solution: Farm to School Programs

- NC Farm to School Program (Rutherford Co.)
- Provides farm field trips, local food in cafeterias, hands on cooking lessons, and school gardens
- Inclusive programming for students, teachers, food service staff, and parents



# Rural Health Resources

- Cooperative Extension
- Schools and Colleges
- Government
- Hospital Systems
- Faith Community
- Worksites
- Local Coalitions
- Local Non-profits
- Food and Beverage Industry
- Public Health





# Recommendation

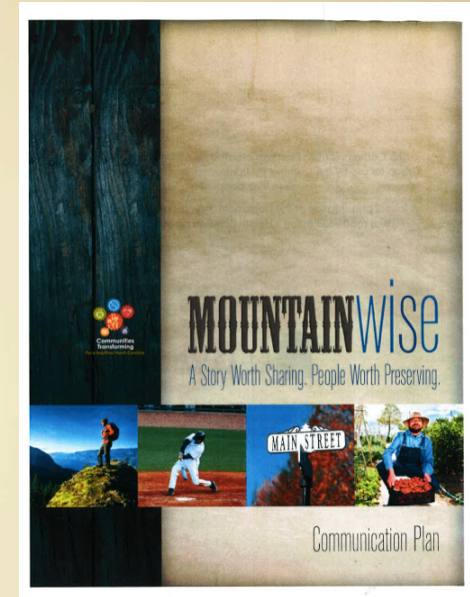
- Develop a comprehensive plan to adopt the *NC Plan to Address Obesity: Healthy Weight and Healthy Communities*





# Recommendation

- Create and disseminate a Healthy Eating and Active Living Communications Plan template for rural NC counties
- Example template from CTGP Region 1 (Mountain Wise)



# Recommendation

- Compile, disseminate and promote a comprehensive healthy eating and active living resource directory for rural North Carolina



# Questions?

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