

HEALTH PRIORITIES BY TASK FORCE TOPICS

The Community Health Assessments (CHAs) of twelve North Carolina counties were examined and the priorities were categorized under the three main topics that our Task Force on Rural Health will cover in the coming months. The three topics are: 1. Community and environmental determinants, 2. Health behaviors, and 3. Health services.

The twelve counties surveyed include the eight rural counties in which the Task Force will conduct community meetings, in addition to four other rural counties across the state. The twelve rural counties are: Beaufort, Bladen, Clay, Columbus, Granville-Vance, Halifax, Jackson, McDowell, Montgomery, Rockingham, Transylvania and Wilkes.

Topic 1: Community and Environmental Determinants

Priority	County/Counties
Success in school	Clay, Granville-Vance
Recreational opportunities/after school activities for youth	Clay, Montgomery
Job opportunities (Note: this was not listed as a final priority, but Montgomery's CHA noted this as a leading concern in the process)	Montgomery

Topic 2: Health Behaviors

Health Priority	County/Counties
Physical activity and nutrition	Beaufort, Bladen, Columbus, Granville-Vance, Halifax, Jackson, McDowell, Montgomery, Rockingham, Transylvania, Wilkes
Obesity	Beaufort, Columbus, Halifax, McDowell, Montgomery, Rockingham, Transylvania, Wilkes
Diabetes	Bladen, Halifax
Chronic disease (including respiratory)	Bladen, Beaufort, Columbus, Granville-Vance
Heart disease	Bladen
High blood pressure	Halifax
Mental health	Rockingham, Transylvania, Wilkes
Substance abuse	Columbus, Halifax, Jackson, McDowell, Rockingham, Transylvania, Wilkes
Reproductive health/teen pregnancy	Bladen, Granville-Vance, McDowell, Montgomery

Topic 3: Health Services

Health Priority	County/Counties
Access to healthcare	Columbus, McDowell, Rockingham, Wilkes
Dental health	Transylvania

Miscellaneous

Health Priority	County/Counties
Cancer	Beaufort, Bladen, Halifax, Rockingham

STRATEGIES FOR PRIORITIES THAT ADDRESS COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINANTS

Priority	Strategies
Success in school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing knowledge and understanding in the community that lead to better health choices and health practices among adults and children, and fewer risky behaviors among youth. (Clay) • Evaluate new approaches to educating youth and encouraging them to avoid destructive behaviors. Mentoring programs linking youth to responsible adults or older youth may be effective. (Clay) • Promote reading at an early age. Reading skills not only improve educational performance, they boost self-esteem, which makes children and youth more resistant to negative peer pressure and experimentation with risky behaviors. (Clay) • Use the birth experience as an opportunity to educate new parents on their roles and responsibilities to their children. Organize educational approaches to equip parents to do their jobs better. (Clay) • Create Judicial Attendance Council to address the needs of families in violation of the NC Schools’ Compulsory Attendance Law without resorting to judicial action. (Granville-Vance) • Launch Teen Court which serves as a sentencing option for first offender youths who commit a misdemeanor crime, can admit guilt, accept responsibility, and be sentenced by a jury of their peers. (Granville-Vance) • Start a Boys and Girls Clubs to provide a safe haven and curriculum-guided programs for elementary and middle school-aged children. (Granville-Vance) • Support Career & College Promise at Vance-Granville Community College that offers 3 pathways for HS student success: College transfer courses, a Career/Technical Education track, and the Early College Program. (Granville-Vance)
Recreational opportunities/after school activities for youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide county-wide recreational facilities and opportunities (Montgomery) • Start county-wide structured after school “Life Program”- where teens can do homework, receive mentoring services, and engage in recreational activities (with meals and transportation provided) (Montgomery) • Fund county-wide youth after-hours activities (Montgomery) • Promote Boys and Girls Club or YMCA (Montgomery)
Job opportunities (Note: this was not listed as a final priority, but Montgomery’s CHA noted this as a leading concern in the process)	N/A

We expanded our list of strategies by examining the County Health Assessments of all NC counties and found two urban counties that listed priorities that address community and environment issues. The two additional counties are Buncombe and Cabarrus.

Priority	Strategies
Success in school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance families’ and caregivers’ ability to support the development of children from birth to kindergarten (Buncombe) • Increase early childhood learning opportunities (Buncombe) • Decrease absenteeism from school (Buncombe) • Increase family support for educational success (Buncombe) • Increase student motivation to learn (Buncombe) • Improve opportunities for physical activity and nutrition during school day as a strategy to increase academic achievement (Buncombe) • Increase the involvement of families, caregivers, and the community in the academic success of all children (Buncombe) • Strengthen the social and basic life skills that youth need for success (Buncombe) • High school students can earn college credits through the expanding list of e-learning opportunities. A new initiative, Early College, in partnership with Rowan-Cabarrus Community College, will offer opportunities for high school students to earn both high school and college credits as part of their high school experience at no cost to the family. Science and bio-tech courses will be emphasized. (Cabarrus) • Form meaningful partnerships with organizations such as Communities-In-Schools, Cabarrus Partnership for Children, Hispanic Learning Center, Academic Learning Center, and Teen Court to expand student and adult learning opportunities. (Cabarrus)
Job opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form meaningful partnerships the Cabarrus County JobLink /Employment Security Commission, Cabarrus Regional Chamber of Commerce, Centralina Workforce Development Board, Cabarrus Economic Development Corporation, Rowan-Cabarrus Community College, Cabarrus County Schools and Kannapolis City Schools plus many others. (Cabarrus)

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