

North Carolina Rural Health Challenges and Community-Based Solutions: Lessons Learned from Bright Spot Case Studies



Sharita R. Thomas, MPP

April 2019

North Carolina Rural Health Research and Policy Analysis Center

- ▶ Funded by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy
- ▶ Director, Mark Holmes, PhD; Deputy Director, George Pink, PhD
- ▶ Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research
- ▶ Rural work focuses on
 - ▶ Federal insurance programs (Medicare and Medicaid)
 - ▶ Hospitals, health care delivery organizations
 - ▶ Access to health care
- ▶ www.shepscenter.unc.edu/programs/projects/rural-health/

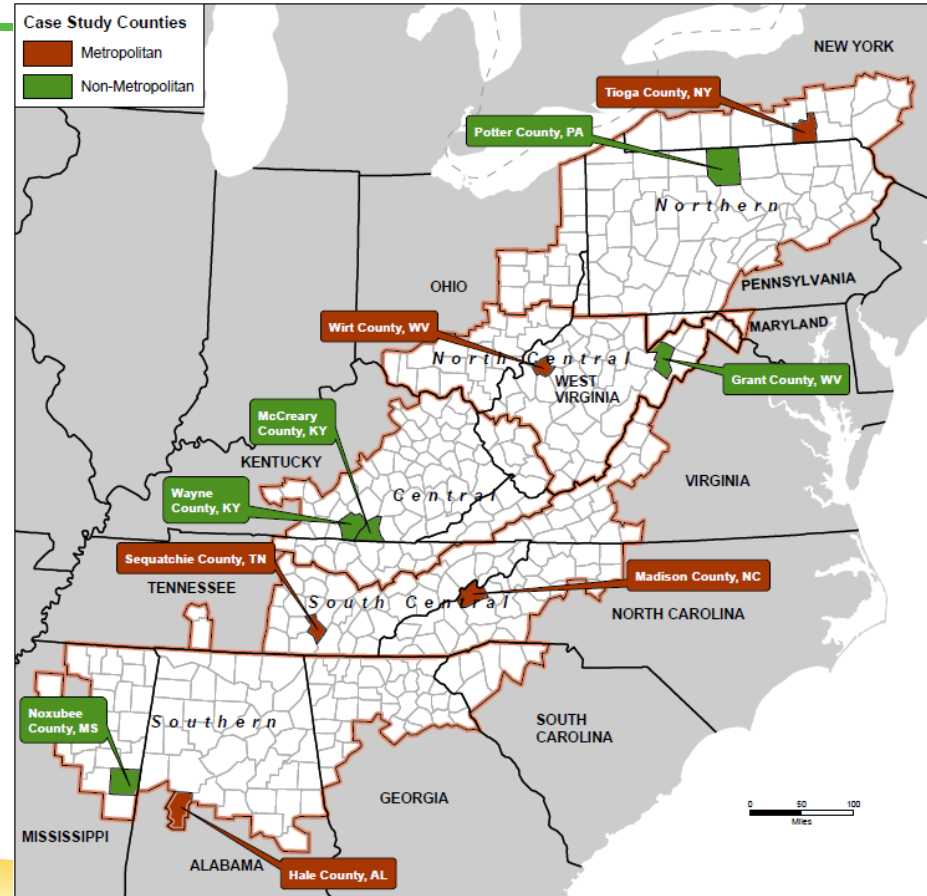
 Follow @ncrural

Outline- Lessons Learned from Bright Spot Case Studies

- ▶ The Project: “Creating a Culture of Health in Appalachia: Disparities and Bright Spots”
- ▶ Overview of Madison County, North Carolina and challenges
- ▶ Description of community-based solutions
- ▶ Supportive Policy
- ▶ Discussion

Project Overview

- To explore health in Appalachia communities
- “Creating a Culture of Health in Appalachia: Disparities and Bright Spots”
- Bright Spots= counties with “better-than-expected” health outcomes
- Identified the top 10% of counties



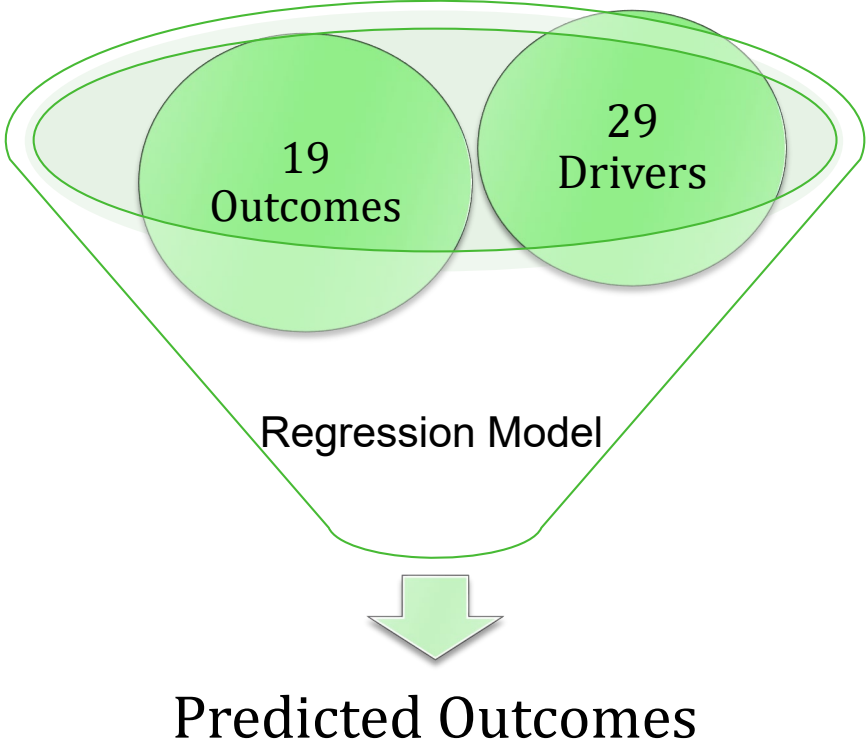
Project Overview

Category	Outcomes	Category	Outcomes
Behavioral Health	Suicide Incidence	Morbidity	Physically Unhealthy Days
	Depression Prevalence		Mentally Unhealthy Days
	Excessive Drinking		Medicare HCCs
	Poisoning Mortality		Diabetes Prevalence
Opioid Prescription Rates	Obesity Prevalence		
Children	Low Birthweight Births	Health Care Systems and Utilization	Heart Disease Hospitalizations
	Infant Mortality		
Mortality	Heart Disease Deaths		
	Years of Potential Life Lost Rate		
	Cancer Deaths		
	Injury Deaths		
	Stroke Deaths		
	COPD Deaths		

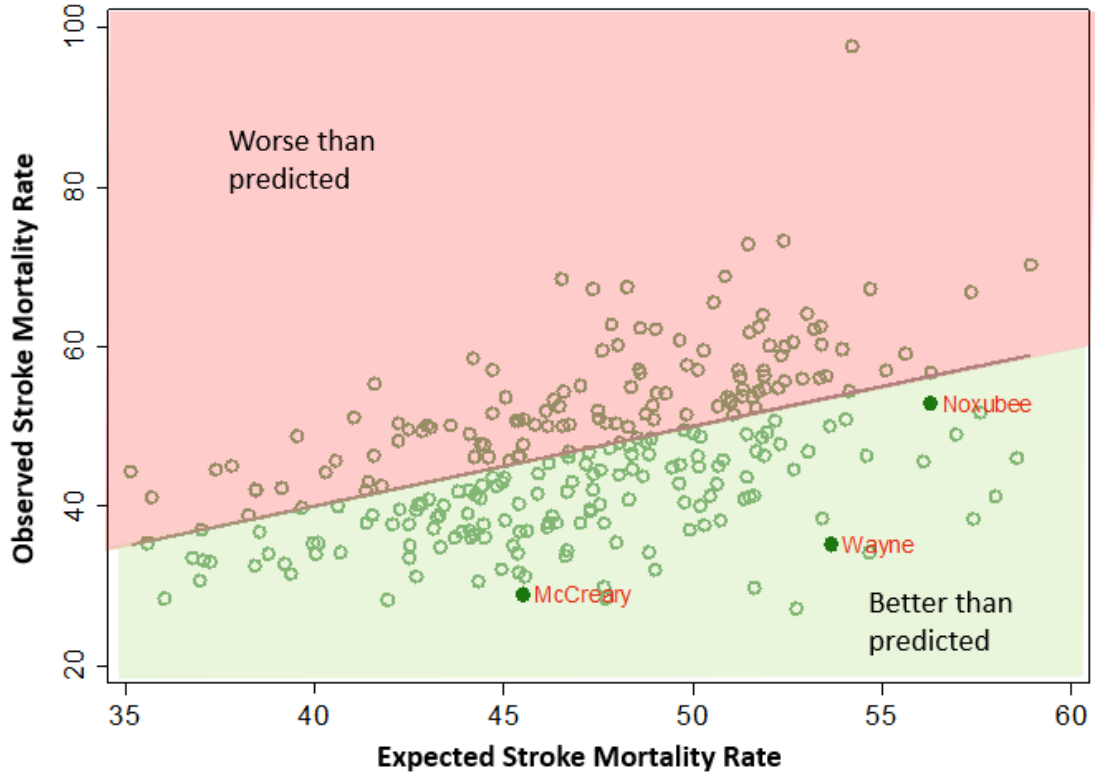
Project Overview

Category	Drivers	Category	Drivers
Children	Teen Birth Rate	Quality	A1C Screening Rates for Persons with Diabetes
Environment	Full-Service Restaurants / 1,000 Pop		Mammogram Screening Rates
	Access to Exercise Opportunities	% Employed in Social Assistance	
	Average Daily Particulate Matter 2.5	% Single Parent Households	
	Grocery Stores / 1,000 Pop	SNAP Benefits per Capita	
Health Behaviors	Student-Teacher Ratio	Social Determinants	Households No Car & Low Access to Stores
	Average Travel Time To Work		% With Housing > 30% Income
	% Adult Smokers		Composite Index Value
% Physically Inactive	Social Association Rate		
Health Care System and Utilization	Chlamydia Rate		% Using Disability Benefits
	Primary Care Physician Ratio		% Adults with Some College Education
	Dentist Ratio		Poverty Rate
	Specialist Physician Ratio		Median Income
	Mental Health Provider Ratio		
	Electronic Prescription Adoption		
	Uninsured Rate Under 65		

Project Overview



Project Overview



About Madison County

- ▶ rural county 20 minutes outside of Asheville
- ▶ Population of 21,000, small towns in the mountains
- ▶ Most leave the community for work
- ▶ Poverty rate above national average
- ▶ Strong roots, sense of community, pride, self-sufficient

Outcomes Better-than-expected

Premature Death- 25% lower than expected

Adults with Obesity- 18% lower than expected

Adults with Diabetes- 12% lower than expected

Heart Disease Hospitalizations- 12% lower than expected

Cancer Mortality- 12% lower than expected

About Madison County

- ▶ Hot Springs Health Program
 - ▶ Historical commitment to community health
 - ▶ Ensured access
 - ▶ Partnerships: health department, Mission Hospital

- ▶ Madison County Health Consortium
 - ▶ Historical commitment to community health
 - ▶ Protective of limited resources

Community-Based Solutions in Madison County

- ▶ Cross sector collaborations and resource sharing
 - ▶ Board of Education and health partnerships School Health Advisory Council
 - ▶ Law enforcement, social services, and health Madison Substance Awareness Coalition

- ▶ Increasing Access

- ▶ Community Educating
 - ▶ Members of the community trained Community Health Advisory Program of the American Cancer Society

What Works in Community-Based Solutions

- ▶ Knowledge of community resources
- ▶ Identifying the leaders and expertise
- ▶ Communicating efforts
- ▶ Acquiring who else can help outside of your community
 - ▶ Offices of Rural Health
 - ▶ Grant programs



Supportive Rural Health Policy

- ▶ Community data
- ▶ Ownership by the community
- ▶ Identify factors influencing health
- ▶ Tailored policy = improved outcomes



Contact

- ▶ www.shepscenter.unc.edu/programs/projects/rural-health/



- ▶ Sharita R. Thomas Sharita.Thomas@unc.edu