



# State of the County Health Report

## 2014

Prepared by: Burke County Health Department

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## At a Glance

The 2014 State of the County's Health (SOTCH) Report is a summary of the current health status of Burke County. The report is a supplement to the Community Health Assessment (CHA), which provides a more comprehensive analysis of the county's health that is produced every four years. The most recent Burke County Community Health Assessment was published in 2011. The next Community Health Assessment will be published in 2015.



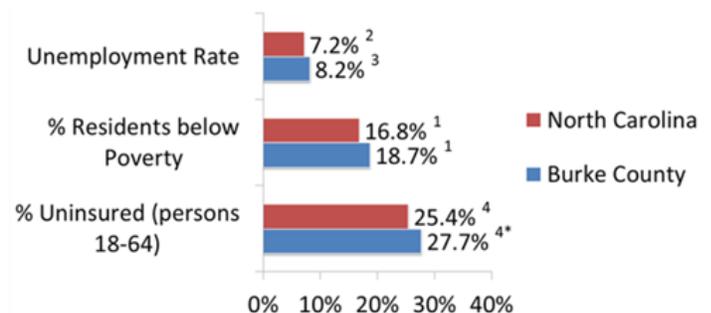
In addition to presenting current local health data and analyzing significant changes in health related issues, the SOTCH report highlights the combined efforts of the Burke County Health Department, our agency partners and residents to address the community's health. Three health priorities were identified in the 2011 Community Health Assessment: physical inactivity, substance use/abuse among adolescents and access to homebound meals.

The 2011 Community Health Assessment and additional SOTCH reports can be viewed online at <http://www.burkenc.org/departments/health-department>. Copies of the 2011 Community Health Assessment can also be found at the Burke County Public Libraries and by contacting Lisa Moore, Health Education Supervisor/Health Promotion Coordinator at [lisa.moore@burkenc.org](mailto:lisa.moore@burkenc.org) or 828-764-9218.

## Burke County by the Numbers

- ✓ Burke County consists of 13 townships and 7 municipalities
- ✓ Morganton is the largest of these and the county seat
- ✓ 2010 total population census was 90,912 with the 2013 population estimate showing a decrease to 89,842 and a median age of 42
- ✓ Burke County continues to be higher in the population of 65 and older residents
- ✓ Since 2010 more than 1,000 new jobs have been announced in Burke County with new investments totaling more than \$85 million
- ✓ Burke County is home to a higher proportion of residents who are unemployed, living below poverty, and uninsured than NC.
- ✓ Median Household Income in Burke County was estimated at \$37,263 compared to \$37,440 in 2011
- ✓ Burke County's high school graduation rate was 88% in 2012-2013, compared to the state average of 82.5%.
- ✓ For the 2012-2013 Burke County's SAT participation rate was 82.5% and the average score was 1,006, while the state average participation rate was 62% and the average score was 1,001.

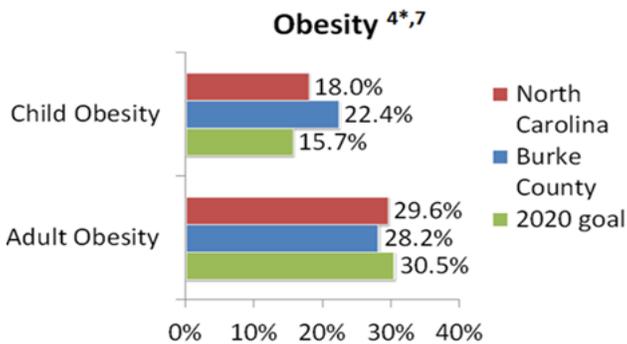
- ✓ The NC Department of commerce annually ranks the 100 counties based on their economic status (per capita income, unemployment rate and population growth) and give a Tier designation.
- ✓ For the last several years, Burke County has been designated as a Tier 1 county which is one of the 40 most distressed economies within the state of NC. Recently, Burke County's 12 month average unemployment rate has improved moving the county from a ranking of 21st to 27th and improved our status to Tier 2.



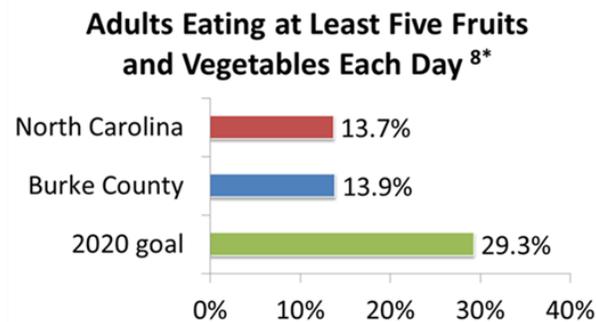
## Pregnancy

- In 2013, there were 99 recorded pregnancies among the 15 to 19 age group in Burke County. Of the 99 pregnancies 10 resulted in abortions. The pregnancy rate among this age group was 38.2 which remains higher than the state rate of 35.2.
- In 2012, no pregnancies were recorded among the 10 to 14 age group. In 2013, 1 pregnancy was recorded within this age group, which resulted in an abortion.
- From 2009-2013, Burke County had 380 live births with short interval pregnancies of six months or less at 13.3% compared to 12.6% at the state level.
- From 2002 to 2006, 8.7% of live births had low birth weights, compared to the state rate of 9.1%.
- From 2007 to 2011, the percentage of residents with low birth weight live births was further reduced from 8.7% to 7.6%, while the state remained unchanged at 9.1%

## Obesity



At 28%, adult obesity rates in Burke County are slightly lower than both the state average (29.6%) and 2020 goal for the country (30.5%). However, almost one quarter of Burke County children are obese, well over the state average.



Far too few Burke County residents are meeting guidelines for fruit and vegetable consumption.

## Unintentional Motor Vehicle Incidents

### 2002-2006 Death Rate

Burke County 22.0

### 2002-2006 Death Rate

State 19.2

Burke County's unintentional motor vehicle incidence rate decreased to 15.7 in years 2007 to 2011.

## Unintentional Injury Deaths

Burke County	Death Rates
1997 to 2001	23.7
2002 to 2006	36.7
2007 to 2011	42.3

Burke County’s death rates due to unintentional injury have continued to rise since 1997.

## Morbidity & Mortality

Leading Causes of Death	2008-2012	2009-2013
1. Heart Disease	1073	1076
2. Total Cancer	1106	1106
3. Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	325	346
4. Cerebrovascular Disease	277	280
5. Alzheimer’s	209	218

## Burke County Tourism

In August 2014, Burke County’s tourism industry was recognized as a pacesetter in North Carolina, ranking first in percentage of tourism job growth and second in the increase in visitor spending. According to figures released by the NC Division of Tourism, Burke County had the largest increase in direct tourism employment from 2012 to 2013, generating over \$12.2 million in payroll for 660 employees in the tourism industry while visitors to Burke County spent \$86.6 million in 2013. Part of this money was spent in the wineries, artist galleries, retail options and breweries that have opened in the last few years.

Burke County is working to develop a 26 mile loop trail around Lake James that will not only provide residents and tourists with an environmentally friendly way to view and experience the lake and its amenities, but will provide environmentally friendly and low-energy alternative transportation and recreation infrastructure. Also, the loop trail will attract additional tourism to the area. Burke County is also in the process of developing a 141 acre Burke County Lake James Park that will be a center attraction for eco-tourism accommodations such as yurts and rustic cabins.

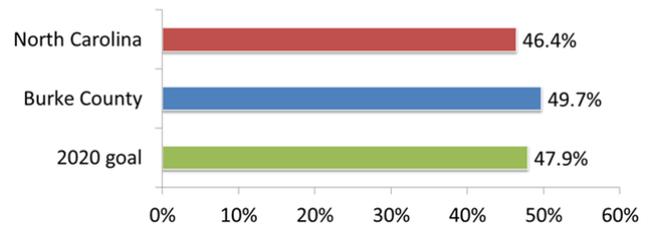
One of the most significant accomplishments in tourism for Burke County was announced on December 30, 2014, when Lake James State Park was named the North Carolina 2014 State Park of the Year by the NC Division of Parks and Recreation. The park encompasses 3,515 acres and was chosen for its “exemplary contribution to the North Carolina state parks mission of stewardship, public service and education,” and specifically recognized for initiatives in managing natural resources, recruiting volunteers and expanding recreation opportunities. The park reported 398,148 visitors in 2013.

## Health Priorities Update from 2011 Community Health Assessment:

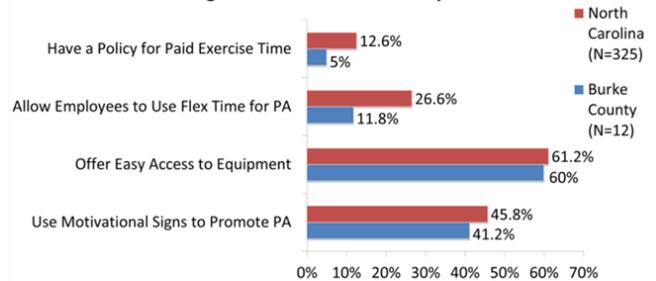
### Physical Inactivity (PA)

- Burke County residents are exceeding the recommended guidelines for physical activity and outperforming NC as a whole. And only 30% of high school youth are watching TV more than three hours per day, compared to 38% across NC.
- This information was derived from the WorkHealthy America assessments of twelve work environments within Burke County.
- A lower proportion of Burke County organizations in WorkHealthy America are meeting standards related to physical activity wellness policies compared to NC as a whole.
- 2013 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System results: 953 total respondents, 273 (28.3%) did not participate in any physical activity or exercise other than their regular job
- 2013 BRFSS results found that out of 328 total respondents, 117 (31.9%) have never used trails or greenways within Western North Carolina. Burke County residents are fortunate to have access to beautiful trails, parks and greenways.

Adults Who Meet the Minimum Recommended Guidelines for Daily Physical Activity <sup>9\*</sup>



Percent of Organizations in WorkHealthy America That:<sup>6</sup>

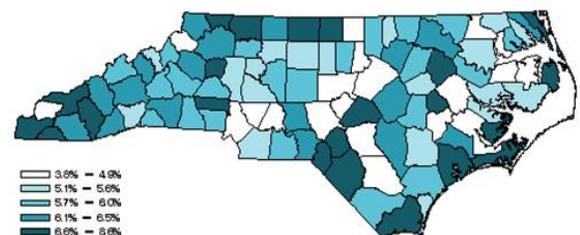


### Substance Use/Abuse among Adolescents

- From July 2014 through December, 2014, Student Assistance Counselors covering the middle and high schools within Burke County saw 257 students for initial or continuing substance use issues compared to 573 for the 2012-2013 school year, when there were 3 full time counselors.
- The Burke Council on Alcoholism and Chemical Dependency maintains a vital presence in the Burke County Public Schools. The federal grant that helped to fund the school program for the past 5 years expired, but financial support from local funders enabled us to retain one full time and one part time counselor to provide these critical services.

### Crashes that Involved Alcohol, 2009-2013

	Total Crashes	Alcohol Involved Crashes	Percent Alcohol Involved
Burke Co.	8,479	474	5.6%
Statewide	1,065,727	54,864	5.1%



This graphic depicts the percent of alcohol related crashes by counties within NC.

## Access to Homebound Meals

- In 2014, Burke County offered 12 Meals on Wheels routes serving an average of 109 meals with approximately 50 to 60 residents on a waiting list, compared to 2013 with 11 routes, serving 130 individuals and a waiting list of 120.

## Community Task Force & Priority Updates:

### Lifestyle Choices Task Force

In 2013, Carolinas Health Care System Blue Ridge, the Burke County Health Department and representatives from multiple community agencies partnered to complete the 2013 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) to meet the hospital's IRS requirements.

The 2013 Community Health Needs Assessment identified diabetes as a priority area. The Healthy Lifestyle Choices Task Force was dissolved and the Diabetes Collaborative was formed to reduce duplication of efforts and better allocation of community resources. The action plan for the Diabetes Collaborative identifies four distinct focus areas:

1. Screening and Education for Pre-Diabetes and Diabetics
2. Clinical Management with Evidence Based Practices
3. Nutrition and Healthy Eating
4. Healthy Lifestyle and Exercise

The Diabetes Collaborative is working to develop a comprehensive approach to diabetes, early detection and chronic disease management. The vision is to open a comprehensive resource center that serves as a destination for diabetes prevention and management and to later move this resource mobility to local areas of Burke County. A comprehensive diabetes resource center will offer healthcare providers, employers and other community agencies, a referral source for consistent evidence based strategies for self-management of pre-diabetes and diabetes.

The centrally located resource center will house a team of committed dietitians, exercise physiologists, health educators, diabetic nurse educators and an office manager, along with providing web-based and community outreach opportunities. This streamlined effort will benefit our rural, medically underserved population by providing opportunities for better patient outcomes, reduction of emergency room visits and decrease outmigration for diabetic services at an affordable cost.

### Healthy Burke Youth Task Force

The Healthy Burke Youth Task Force has disbanded over the past year due to reallocation of resources. All members of the task force continue to work on current and new initiatives related to substance use and abuse among adolescents. Former members continue to address Family Day and Keys to Life, which were identified in the action plan developed from the 2011 Community Health Assessment. Former members are part of the Family Day Planning Committee, Keys to Life Planning Committee, Burke Integrated Health and will partner with the new North Carolina Coalitions Initiative (NCCI) grant to address underage drinking (refer to new initiatives section). All substance use and abuse initiatives include collaboration among all agencies formerly represented on the Healthy Burke Youth Task Force.

## Burke Wellness Initiative

Effective in 2016 the Burke County Health Department will be partnering with Carolinas HealthCare System Blue Ridge to publish a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every three years. For the 2016 CHNA process the Burke County Health Department and Carolinas HealthCare System Blue Ridge will be utilizing the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) model of community engagement. Burke Wellness Initiative is the steering committee for the MAPP process and is comprised of community leaders, agencies and residents. As part of the MAPP process Burke Wellness Initiative will be assessing, formulating goals, strategies and action plans and evaluating processes and programs to better utilize community resources.

## Family Day:

On Monday, September 23, 2014, 220 families (450 adults and 375) attended Burke County's 7<sup>th</sup> annual Family Day. Family Day is a national initiative created by CASA Columbia to promote simple acts of parental engagement as key ways to help prevent risky substance use in children and teens. 42 community agencies hosted booths with activities, crafts and games for families to do together. Agencies present provided families with information about the services they offer.

85% of families reported eating together 5 or more days a week. 85% of families reported doing at least one activity as a family. Of the activities 70% were exercise and/or outdoor activities from walking to soccer to gardening together as a family. The Family Day Planning Committee consisted of A Caring Alternative; AccessCare; BCPS FUTuRES Program; Burke County Department of Social Services; Burke County Health Department; Phoenix Homes/ Caring 4 Children; Early Head Start; Partners Behavioral Health Management; The Cognitive Connection.



## Keys to Life:

On Friday, April 16, 2014, the Keys to Life program took place at Patton High School. Keys to Life was sponsored by the Burke County Community Child Protection and Child Fatality Prevention Teams, North Carolina Highway Patrol, Burke County EMS, NC Alcohol Law Enforcement, Burke Council on Alcoholism and Chemical Dependency, Burke County Public Schools, Burke County Health Department, The Cognitive Connection, Burke County Cooperative Extension, Burke County Sheriff's Office and Morganton Department of Public Safety.

The program's objective is to heighten awareness and illustrate the consequences of underage alcohol use; with an emphasis on and around special occasions and events such as spring formals and proms. Keys to Life occurred the day before prom and encouraged students to refrain from driving while under the influence of alcohol and other substances. During the school day students were called out of class by a student dressed as the "Grim Reaper" who read their mock obituary to the class, stating that each student's life had ended abruptly due to drunk driver. The school day ended with the entire Patton High School Student body assembled to view a simulation of a motor vehicle accident caused by a drunk



driver with student actors. Students heard an actual 911 call over the school's sound system and avidly watched as EMS first responders and law enforcement worked the scene as an actual event.

## Safe Kids Burke County:



Safe Kids Burke County works to prevent unintentional childhood injury, the number one cause of death for children in the United States. Safe Kids Burke County targets the risk areas of bike and helmet safety, child passenger safety, fire safety, medication safety and pedestrian safety. In 2014, Safe Kids Burke County checked a total of 150 car seats and distributed 87 car seats through permanent checking stations and community events.



Members include the Burke County Health Department, Valdese Fire Department, George Hildebran Fire and Rescue, Burke County Fire Marshal's Office, the Burke County Sheriff's Office, Morganton Department of Public Safety, Early Head Start and community advocates. For additional information contact Safe Kids Burke County Coordinator, Ashley Simmons, at 828-764-9219 or [ashley.simmons@burkenc.org](mailto:ashley.simmons@burkenc.org).

## Healthy Aging Task Force

The Healthy Aging Task Force continues to work with the Morganton Burke Senior Center to increase the routes and access to Meals on Wheels homebound meals program but the lack of funding and volunteers remains to be the main hurdles. This group will still devote time and attention to this issue.

## Community Initiatives:

### Burke Health Solutions

Burke Health Solutions is a Duke Endowment grant funded program is comprised of a group of safety net providers and community partners working together to provide health care to the growing number of indigent, medically underserved individuals within Burke County. The mission of Burke Health Solutions Medical Home is to provide comprehensive chronic disease management through a goal oriented partnership between health care professionals and uninsured, low-income Burke County residents. Services provided an outside medical home for those eligible indigent clients receiving care at the Good Samaritan Clinic and fostering chronic disease management through health education and continuity of care. As of January 2014, approximately 91 medically indigent clients have been identified and placed into outside medical homes with approximately 300 Burke Health Solutions chronic disease clients remaining at Good Samaritan Clinic. These clients receive medical services along with group and individual education regarding their chronic disease self-management. Group classes include; diabetes basics, Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less, Stanford University's evidence based program Chronic Disease Self-Management (CDSMP) and CDSMP with a tailored focus on Diabetes. To date, approximately 90 Good Samaritan clients have received education through Burke Health Solutions.

## Burke Substance Abuse Network (BSAN)

The Burke Substance Abuse Network (BSAN) is a coalition of providers, support groups, stakeholders and community agencies working together to 1) network 2) identify gaps in substance use/abuse services and 3) strategically plan responses to community needs within the goal of establishing a vibrant, recovery-oriented community of care. BSAN continues to grow in size and influence in the community. Between 50-60 people gather monthly, representing nineteen different interest groups/sectors of the community. BSAN partners are active in addressing underage substance abuse issues (alcohol and prescription meds), providing education and seeking collaborative and strategic framework solutions to meet community needs.

## Emerging Issues

A gap in primary care services exists in Burke County. To fill this gap, the Burke County Health Department and Carolinas Health Care System Blue Ridge have leveraged resources and services to develop a TeleHealth primary care clinic within the health department to begin serving clients in May, 2015. This primary care clinic will provide access to care for those clients that are not established with a medical home and meet the new federal Title X guidelines of providing or assuring primary care services; thereby, reducing emergency room visits and health care costs associated with primary care visits. TeleHealth primary care services will be provided through existing health department staff and contractual virtual visits with Carolinas Health Care System Blue Ridge. Based on success of this clinic, future plans include moving to a full time clinic with the aid of a local residency program and a full time faculty person onsite.

## New Initiatives:

### Local Food System Initiative

Over the last year, meetings have taken place among a group of representatives from community agencies that have a vested interest in the local food system. These meetings assessed and mapped the immediate resources, documented the current needs and began to gather possible solutions to improve the entire food system from the local growers/producers, sellers and consumers. A core segment of this group identified several immediate needs such as EBT machines located at local farmer's markets; targeted nutrition education and cooking demonstrations along with creating new and expanding existing community gardens that was communicated in a recent grant submitted to the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust.



### Burke Integrated Health

Another exciting venture within Burke County is Burke Integrated Health. This collaboration includes representatives from areas of service including, primary care, mental health, behavioral health and substance use/abuse. It is being formed by partners: A Caring Alternative, Cognitive Connections, Catawba Valley Behavioral Health, Burke Primary Care and AccessCare. Burke Integrated Health will be a safe place for adults or children presenting for behavioral, mental and/or medical care in one location. At this location, clients will receive an array of medical, behavioral and substance use/abuse services that are tailored to their specific needs and allow walk-in access during designated times, same day assessments and services. Crisis services will also be available and a plan to partner with law enforcement to escort

those in need of urgent behavioral health services to this location. The beauty of this ground-breaking partnership is all agencies will be working as one team to ensure that Burke County residents receive the best quality care.

## Healthy Places NC

In October, 2014, Burke County was named by the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust as one of the next Healthy Places designations within NC. This designation by the Trust will create an opportunity for grassroots initiatives to receive grant funding for improvements within Burke County. According to the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, a Kate B. Reynolds Trust partner organization, Burke County was ranked as 77 on the list of 100 healthiest places in NC.

## North Carolina Coalitions Initiative (NCCI)

Our local Burke Substance Abuse Network (BSAN) has been awarded a community grant for support to build the capacity to reduce and prevent substance abuse with funding and leadership from the North Carolina Coalition Initiative (NCCI). This year long, nationally renowned training program will strengthen local coalition's ability to tackle substance abuse within their communities. The NCCI is funded by a NC General Assembly appropriation through the NC Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services to support local substance abuse coalitions. This coalition will be engaging the community to address local conditions, measure the problem and implement evidence based, sustainable changes such as availability of alcohol to minors, illegal use of prescription drugs, as well as attitudes and norms within the community.

## North Carolina Strategic Prevention Framework Partnership for Success Initiative

This SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) grant was just awarded to the Burke Council on Alcoholism and Chemical Dependency for support of a community based substance abuse prevention initiative focusing on reducing nonmedical use of prescription drugs among individuals aged 12 to 25. A community coalition of providers, law enforcement, stakeholders, and community advocates will convene to develop the initial framework for this new initiative.

## Data Sources:

Data was retrieved from the following sources: NC State Center for Health Statistics

- American FactFinder – Census Bureau
- LINC
- NC Department of Commerce: AccessNC
- CDC SNAPS
- NC Department of Public Instruction
- NC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System
- HealthStats
- NC Alcohol Facts
- NC Prevention Partners

## Dissemination:

The State of the County Health report will be presented to Burke County Board of Health and the Burke County Board of Commissioners. For additional information and/or to request community presentations on the report, please contact Lisa Moore, Health Education Supervisor/Health Promotion Coordinator at [lisa.moore@burkenc.org](mailto:lisa.moore@burkenc.org) or 828-764-9218.