



**Strategic Plan
County Fiscal Years:
2024-2028**

Approved by the Burke County Board of Health October 4th, 2023

Mission

The Burke County Health Department promotes the health and safety of individuals, families, and communities by preventing disease, offering care, and protecting the environment of Burke County.

Vision

Long, healthy and happy lives for the people who live, work, worship, and play in Burke County.

At the Burke County Health Department, We Value:

- Innovation
- Diversity
- Inclusion
- Collaboration
- Equity
- Dignity for all People
- Kindness
- Respect

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Executive Summary

The Burke County Health Department is dedicated to enhancing the health and well-being of the community by addressing healthcare disparities, promoting health equity, and providing exceptional healthcare services. A commitment to excellence has guided the development of this five-year strategic plan, which outlines a vision for the future, strategic priorities, goals, and objectives to meet the evolving healthcare needs of Burke County residents.

The vision for the next five years is clear: to become a leading healthcare organization that excels in promoting community health, reducing health disparities, and providing equitable access to quality healthcare services for Burke County.

The selected strategic priorities are rooted in a commitment to serving the community's diverse healthcare needs. These priorities are as follows:

1. **Establish a Culture of Dignity, Love, and Respect for Employees, Patients, and the Community:** At the core of our mission lies the priority to foster a culture of dignity, love, and respect within the organization, extending to employees, patients, and the community as a whole. An organizational culture founded on these principles is not only essential for the well-being of our workforce but is also a cornerstone of quality healthcare delivery. By emphasizing this priority, an environment where compassion, empathy, and inclusivity is created, enhancing the experience of employees, patients, and the community.
2. **Be an Employer of Choice:** As the mission of the health department endeavors to provide exceptional health services to the community, employees are the most valuable asset. To ensure the delivery of high-quality care, a commitment to becoming the premier employer of choice is paramount. This priority centers on attracting, retaining, and nurturing top talent in the healthcare industry. Fostering a supportive, inclusive, and innovative workplace will inspire excellence, enhance staff well-being, and ultimately improve the health outcomes of the community.
3. **Mitigate Substance Use Disorder and Promote Mental Health:** A commitment to the well-being of the community drives the priority of mitigating the negative impact of substance use and mental health disorders. There is a pressing need to address these interconnected challenges comprehensively. By focusing on this priority, the health department can help create a community where individuals receive timely, evidence-based care and support, reducing the burden of substance use disorders and mental health challenges on individuals, families, and society.
4. **Be an Academic Health Department:** The aspiration to become an Academic Health Department reflects a dedication to excellence in public health practice, research, and education. By establishing strong partnerships with academic institutions, the health department can create a dynamic environment that fosters innovation, evidence-based decision-making, and the development of the next generation of public health leaders.

Through this priority, the health department commits to serving as a nexus of knowledge, driving the integration of academic expertise into daily operations and elevating internal capacity to address complex health challenges.

5. **Be a healthcare provider of choice:** Our commitment to being a healthcare provider of choice is rooted in our unwavering dedication to improving the health and well-being of our community. Burke County Health Department aspires to set the standard for healthcare excellence, providing patient-centered care that exceeds expectations and accepts all forms of insurance. By prioritizing this objective, individuals will be empowered to take control of their health, trust and confidence in services will be fostered, and ultimately establish the health department as a provider of choice for a diverse and growing community.
6. **Be a leader in environmental health:** The enhancement of environmental health is a cornerstone of the strategic plan, as the health department is committed to safeguarding public well-being. Through comprehensive environmental surveillance, community engagement, policy advocacy, environmental justice initiatives, emergency preparedness, and collaborative partnerships, the health department's goal is to improve air and water quality, empower communities, develop evidence-based policies, reduce disparities, respond effectively to emergencies, and unite stakeholders in the pursuit of a healthier, more equitable, and sustainable future.

This strategic plan outlines specific goals, strategies, and objectives to guide efforts in each of these strategic priorities. Key initiatives include enhancing employee engagement and leadership development, expanding comprehensive health services, improving access to care, and fostering academic partnerships with local institutions.

To track progress and ensure accountability, milestones have been established with measurements for each objective. These benchmarks will help assess success in achieving the strategic goals over the five-year period.

In the coming years, the health department team will work diligently to implement this strategic plan and realize the stated vision. Health department leadership is committed to building a stronger, more resilient, and equitable public health system in Burke County. The priorities within this strategic plan position the Burke County Health Department to be the chief health strategist and convener of community partners. By enhancing the workforce, addressing critical healthcare challenges, and fostering academic partnerships, the Burke County Health Department will make a lasting impact on the health and well-being of the community.



Methodology/Strategic Planning Process

The strategic planning process was a collaborative effort, involving the Burke County Health Department Leadership Team and representatives from the Board of Health. It unfolded in three phases:

Phase I: Vision and Aspiration Building

In this phase, a two-day strategic planning retreat was facilitated by Dr. Stephen Orton and Margaret Benson Nemitz from the North Carolina Institute for Public Health. Appreciative Inquiry was utilized to clarify strengths and assets, co-develop dreams and aspirations, and identify strategic questions (Carter et al., 2007). Through this process, the foundation was created for a future state.

Phase 2: Analysis and Prioritization

Building on the insights from Phase 1, an analysis of internal operational processes was conducted, community priorities from the 2022 Community Health Assessment were reviewed, and an assessment of the previous strategic plan's priorities was performed. This phase was essential in refining priorities and identifying opportunities for growth.

Phase 3: Finalizing the Strategic Plan

The final phase involved reconciling the goals and objectives identified in the strategic planning retreat with insights from the internal operations analysis and priorities from the Burke County Community Health Assessment (2022). This resulted in the creation of a comprehensive and actionable five-year Strategic Plan, adopted by the Board of Health.

The purpose of the phases of creation is to inform the Strategic Plan with input and expertise from the Board of Health, the employees of the Burke County Health Department, and the community.

This process allowed for a comprehensive plan that is infused with the Health Department's core values.

In Phase 1, The Strategic Planning Team, consisting of Burke County Health Department Staff and Board of Health Members, used a process called Appreciative Inquiry to clarify agency strengths and assets (current state), and to co-develop dreams and aspirations (future state) (Carter et al., 2007). The team referenced priorities from the 2022 Burke County Community Health Assessment (CHA) and reviewed agency data to identify trends and opportunities. Through multiple rounds of brainstorming and designing, the team identified three strategic questions. For each question, the team developed strategies, measures and short-term action plans.

For Phase 2, the Burke County Health Department leadership team continued the strategic planning process through:

1. Evaluation of the preceding strategic plan to assess previous priorities for relevance and/or any outstanding goals or objectives that would need to be carried forward to the new strategic plan.
2. Evaluation of the current internal state of operations to identify opportunities for growth.
3. Evaluation of the current state of public health external operations to identify additional opportunities to improve the health of the people and environment of Burke County.
4. Identification of additional priorities that enhance or support those already identified during the strategic planning retreat.

Phase 3 was designed to compile the information and feedback gathered in the first two phases into the finalized five-year plan, and to set measurable objectives to achieve the selected priorities.

Current State

The "Current State" section provides an overview of the Burke County Health Department's existing conditions, challenges, and opportunities. An assessment of the current state of the organization is necessary when mapping future goals and aspirations in the form of a strategic plan, as well as identifying factors that could inhibit the achievement of the strategic priorities. The Strategic Planning team conducted a SWOT analysis of internal operations and reviewed feedback from a third-party consulting team on internal culture, with the goal of assessing:

- Readiness and ability to meet the strategic priorities identified in the strategic planning session.
- Readiness and ability to meet health priorities established through the Community Health Assessment process.
- Efficiency of operations and capacity for growth.
- Additional opportunities not otherwise identified in the strategic planning retreat.

The SWOT analysis helped guide the strategic planning process to capitalize on strengths, address weaknesses, and capture opportunities while mitigating threats. The evaluation resulted in the determination of comprehensive strategic priorities that include specific objectives created from input from the Board of Health, the citizens of Burke County that responded to the 2022 Community Health Assessment, and the employees of the Burke County Health Department.

Strengths

One of the significant strengths of the organization lies in its successful completion of previous strategic plan priorities. Over the past planning period, the organization has demonstrated its ability to set clear objectives, execute initiatives effectively, and achieve positive outcomes. Its commitment to addressing critical areas, such as environmental health, workforce development, and community engagement, has resulted in tangible improvements in its programs and services.

Another notable strength of the health department is its exceptional leadership, fortified by a robust and committed Board of Health. The department's leadership team demonstrates a deep understanding of public health issues, with a clear vision and mission to address the community's health needs effectively. Their collective expertise, experience, and dedication drive the department's success in implementing strategic initiatives and delivering high-quality healthcare services.

The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) "supports health departments to improve quality, accountability, and performance (Public Health Accreditation Board, July 27th, 2003)." Within the state of North Carolina there are only two health departments that are PHAB accredited, with Burke County being one of those.

The Burke County Health Department employs an average of 50 professionals, ranging from clinical staff to public health educators and administrative professionals. The health department staff is highly skilled, with many combined years of experience addressing the public health needs of Burke County. Their expertise contributes to the quality of our services and our ability to adapt to changing healthcare dynamics.

Strong community partnerships are also a strength of the Health Department. Over the years, BCHD has cultivated strong partnerships with UNC Healthcare Blueridge, local healthcare providers, community organizations, schools, and government agencies. These relationships enhance the ability to collaborate effectively, share resources, and collectively address public health challenges in the community. Strong partnerships are also a fundamental core in achieving the goals of the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) accreditation.

Financial stability is also a significant asset of the health department. With financial support from federal, state, and local governments, as well as private funders, BCHD has the financial resources needed to maintain operations, invest in critical initiatives, and adapt to evolving healthcare needs. The financial stability of the health department is also leveraged with community health partners through the ability to secure and manage grant funding.

Another strength of the health department is the provision of services to residents who do not have access to resources. The department has a commendable track record of serving minority, vulnerable, and underserved populations within Burke County, as evidenced by the selection of the Burke County Health Department for the Diversity Champion Award for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in 2022 (Writer, T. G. S., May 31st, 2022). A commitment to equity and inclusivity ensures that these populations receive high quality, low barrier healthcare services and interventions, reducing health disparities and improving overall community health. The development and coordination of the Street Medicine Team strengthens this commitment through the philosophy of meeting people where they are and extending services to vulnerable populations outside of the health department.

An in-house lab and pharmacy also provide the health department with the ability to deliver results and administer vaccinations with few barriers and less wait time. The health department lab was completely renovated in 2023, increasing capacity and testing options and equipping the lab team with state-of-the-art technology. BCHD also enlists in the federal 340b program, allowing access for thousands of patients to receive medications at minimal out-of-pocket costs.

Weaknesses

Clinic segregation is a critical weakness in the flow of operations. Currently, some of the services operate in silos, with limited integration and coordination between programs. This segregation can lead to inefficient workflows and “bottlenecks”, duplications of effort, and challenges in providing holistic care to the patients. Breaking down these silos and fostering clinical collaboration is essential to optimize resources and provide comprehensive care that could potentially decrease wait times, increase provider productivity, and contribute to patient satisfaction.

A direct result of clinic compartmentalization is a lack of standardization in the intake and screening processes. This lack of standardization limits the health department’s ability for comprehensive data collection, hinders continuity of care between services within the health department, and can lead to duplication in efforts for the health department staff as well as the patient.

Siloed technology also influences staff efficiency and productivity. Currently, the health department utilizes Cure MD for electronic health records. Clinical staff also utilize the electronic health record of UNC Health Blue Ridge to track referrals within the UNC umbrella, and to monitor results and recommendations. There is also no established referral tracking system for patients outside of the UNC Health provider network. Standardizing intake and screening processes, referral tracking, and technological data integration would potentially increase efficiency in workflow and positively impact patient health outcomes.

Opportunities

Medicaid Transformation and Medicaid Expansion initiatives have created a financial opportunity for the health department to increase revenue from billing. Securing contracts with commercial insurance and Medicaid managed care organizations and maintaining up-to-date knowledge of billing codes and practices are opportunities to capture additional funding from treatment services that are already being provided.

The addition of integrated behavioral health services is also an opportunity to address the increasing prevalence of mental health and substance use disorders. These services should be incorporated into the primary care, maternal health, communicable disease, family planning, and children’s health services that are available within the health department and/or developed as an additional program. Behavioral health services within the health department will also enhance community partner services like Community Paramedicine and Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) in the Emergency Department.

Cross-training staff members is another opportunity to increase efficiency and expand capacity. This opportunity will be a necessity for growth in the primary care domain as well as the billing team to account for an increase in responsibilities related to Medicaid Expansion. Cross-training can also



reduce burn-out and improve retention, while expanding capacity by eliminating bottlenecks in the organizational flow.

Internal education, including harm reduction principles and trauma-informed practices, is an opportunity to onboard staff members to new initiatives related to strategic priorities. Internal education and communication are paramount to progress,

particularly concerning change-related growth. This opportunity also facilitates best-practices in treatment and a positive influence on culture.

Finally, a strong referral process will provide the opportunity to follow patients' treatment progress and ensure follow-up care as needed. Leveraging the health department's strong community partnerships will assist in developing a whole-person care approach and means to follow through with resources outside of the health department. Tracking referral data will also allow health department staff to monitor patient health outcomes as well as trends in service gaps and follow-ups.

Threats

Substance Use Disorder is the foremost concern for Burke County's health. The rapid development and availability of illicit substances has created a more pervasive problem that requires expeditious and flexible intervention. The increased lethality from the potency of easily accessible substances has increased the mortality rate from overdoses. The coordinated response to prevent substance use disorders, implement early intervention, support treatment and recovery, and develop harm reduction strategies is paramount in saving the lives of friends, family and loved ones in the county.

The upward trend in chronic disease rates, including diabetes, hypertension, and obesity, poses a significant threat to public health. Without proactive measures, these conditions can lead to increased healthcare costs and reduced quality of life for residents.

Economic trends also pose a threat to BCHD operations and impact. While BCHD is financially stable, the changing landscape of grant, federal, and state funding could influence the health department's ability to achieve its priorities. Ensuring long-term financial sustainability and diversifying funding sources is essential to mitigate this threat.

The Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) are more significant factors that drive health outcomes, such as quality and length of life, including clinical care. All these factors have a major impact on the health, well-being, and quality of life of a person and can contribute to a wide range of health disparities and inequities. The impact of social determinants of health presents a notable threat to the mission. These multifaceted factors, including economic disparities, limited access to quality education, and unstable housing, can undermine our efforts to improve community health. Left

unaddressed, they may perpetuate health inequities and hinder the effectiveness of our programs. To mitigate this threat, we must proactively assess and address these social determinants as a crucial aspect of our initiatives, or else they may continue to challenge our ability to achieve meaningful health outcomes and equitable access to care in our community.

A critical threat facing not only the Burke County Health Department, but the healthcare infrastructure of the county as a whole lies in workforce limitations. As we aspire to promoting community health, reducing health disparities, and delivering high-quality healthcare services, the availability and capacity of our workforce becomes essential. Current workforce limitations, such as shortages in specialized healthcare professionals and public health experts pose a potential barrier to our ability to meet the needs of the community. Additionally, an aging workforce and potential retirements in the coming years may create a void in historical and institutional knowledge and experience (Gollust, 2023). These limitations will require innovative long-term development, recruitment, and retention strategies for skilled professionals to serve within Burke County.

Finally, public health emergencies are ongoing threats the public health departments must proactively anticipate. The recent experience with the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the vulnerability of public health infrastructure to emergencies. Preparing for and responding to public health crises remains a continual threat that requires ongoing planning and resources.

Future State

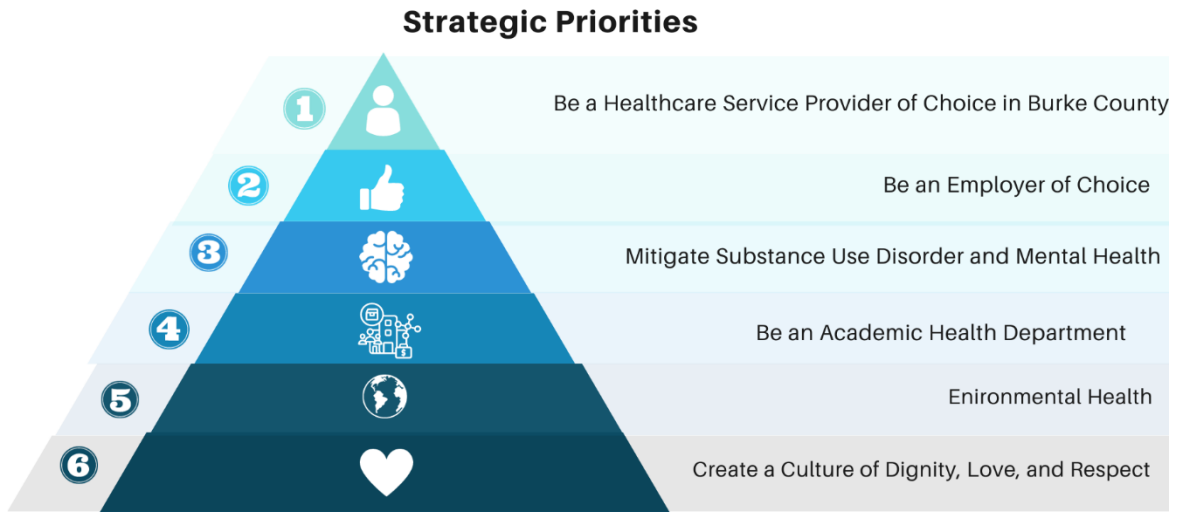
The strategic planning retreat, facilitated by NC Institute of Public Health, helped the Board of Health and the Health Department leadership team develop a comprehensive vision for the future state of the health department. The vision for the Burke County Health Department over the next five years is to become a recognized leader in public health that excels in promoting community health, reducing health disparities, and providing equitable access to quality healthcare services for all residents of Burke County. The health department also strives to build an environment of love and value for staff and support generational change for youth.

The Board of Health and Burke County Health Department leadership team navigated through the Community Health Assessment to identify starting priorities for the community and Public Health. These priorities included Mental Health, Substance Use Disorder, and Obesity. Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder coincide with the 2019 Strategic Plan for Burke County Health Department and current national public health priorities (Burke County Health Department. (n.d.). Additionally, the Health Department leadership team incorporated findings from the internal SWOT analysis to further inform the strategic priorities.

The following strategic priorities have been identified as critical to achieving the vision developed from the strategic planning retreat:

Strategic Priorities

The Strategic Priorities for FY 2024 – 2029 are aligned with the Burke County Health Departments' Mission, Vision, and Values, the Community Health Assessment Priorities, and the Community Health Improvement Plan. These strategies are:



The following section translates the strategic priorities into longitudinal goals necessary to achieve the 5-year vision. Appendix I is a worksheet that itemizes these goals with specific tasks, milestones, timelines, and responsible roles to ensure accountability, efficiency, and timeliness in achievement.

Goal 1: Establish a Culture of Dignity, Love, and Respect for Employees, Patients, and the Community:

One of the primary strategic priorities for the health department is to nurture a healthy and thriving culture for employees and patients. This priority is the foundation for the other strategic priorities to be successful. Patient satisfaction and retention, employee satisfaction and retention, diversity and inclusion initiatives, cultural competency, conflict resolution, and community outreach are specific measurable actions found through-out the priorities that support this priority.

Goal 2: Be an Employer of Choice

In this strategic priority, the Burke County Health Department aims to create an environment where our workforce thrives, grows, and becomes the cornerstone of our commitment to excellence in public health.

Our objective is to reduce staff turnover by 25%, 5% per year by 2028, and increase employee engagement scores by 15% within the next five years. We will measure this through annual employee surveys, exit interviews, and tracking turnover rates. A baseline score will be determined in year 1, then measured annually to evaluate trends. We also aim to implement leadership development opportunities of our management team to foster career growth and retention, and opportunities for professional growth for all employees.

Goal 3: Mitigate Substance Use Disorder and Improve Mental Health as Components of Whole Person Care

This priority acknowledges the pressing need to address substance use disorder and mental health challenges within our community. Through integrated behavioral health services, prevention efforts, and collaboration with community agencies, we will work to improve the well-being of Burke County residents.

Our objectives are to enhance integrated behavioral health services in the existing service array, create a structured referral and follow-up process with community partners, and strengthen the recovery capital network, both within the county and regionally. These objectives will be measured by:

1. Implementing full participation in NC Care 360, including the onboard of internal and external partners.
2. Increasing the percentage of organizational collaborative partnerships by 15% in 5 years.
3. Formal implementation of behavioral health treatment as a service provider within 5 years; including screening questions for mental health, substance use, and social drivers of health.

Goal 4: Be an Academic Health Department

We aspire to become a hub for innovation, research, and collaboration. By fostering academic partnerships and contributing to the field of public health, we aim to enhance our capacity to address emerging health challenges.

Our objective is to establish partnerships with a minimum of three accredited academic institutions to conduct joint research projects within the next three years. We will measure this by tracking the number of collaborative research initiatives, peer review abstracts, invited presentations, capstones, and publications resulting from these partnerships. Additionally, we aim to offer training and internship opportunities to at least 15 students annually to promote engagement with academia.

Goal 5: Be a Healthcare Treatment Provider of Choice

The health department seeks to grow its identity as a preferred healthcare treatment provider in Burke County, offering exceptional services that meet the diverse needs of the community. The objective is to enhance patient satisfaction and retention by 15% within the next five years. We will measure this by regularly assessing patient feedback through surveys and missed appointment rates. Additionally, we aim to increase the utilization of our services by 20% through community outreach and expansion of integrated services in primary care.

Goal 6: Be a Leader in Environmental Health

Our strategic priority is to assert ourselves as a leader in environmental health, acknowledging the significant impact it has on public well-being. To achieve this, we will advocate for and contribute environmental health policies, evaluate innovative methods to measure and reduce water pollution, and develop and implement strategies to reduce environmental health disparities.

Process For Reviews and Quality Assurance

On an annual basis, a comprehensive review will be conducted, evaluating the overall progress made towards the strategic plan's goals and objectives. The evaluation will encompass various criteria, including the achievement of objectives, impact on the community, alignment with mission and vision, resource utilization, and adaptability to changing circumstances. Input and feedback from stakeholders will be actively sought throughout the process, allowing for adjustments and improvements as necessary.

To ensure transparency and accountability, a comprehensive annual report summarizing progress and highlighting successes and areas for improvement will be generated and presented to the Board of Health. Additionally, during the final year of the active strategic plan, the entire plan will be reviewed

and updated to reflect lessons learned and evolving community needs before the next planning cycle begins. This iterative review and quality assurance process ensures that the strategic plan remains dynamic and responsive while upholding alignment with the organization's mission and vision and actively engaging stakeholders in its implementation and evaluation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Burke County Health Department's five-year strategic plan stands as a testament to its unwavering commitment to improving the health and well-being of the community it serves. The organization is driven by the collective aspiration to become a leading public health entity that sets the standard for excellence in public health.

This strategic plan represents a roadmap to a healthier future for Burke County residents. The department is dedicated to building a healthier, more equitable, and resilient community. They are determined to create an environment where their employees thrive, where comprehensive care is provided to all residents, and where contributions are made to the advancement of public health knowledge and practices.

As the department moves forward, accountability will be maintained to the milestones and measurements set for each objective by tracking their progress and adjusting their course as needed. Dedicated staff, strong community partnerships, and excellence in treatment practices position the Burke County Health Department to make the vision expressed in this strategic plan a reality.

Appendix I: Consultant Worksheet

Establish a Culture of Dignity, Love, and Respect for Employees, Patients, and the Community

Long Term Dreams

To nurture a safe and welcoming experience that is inclusive and respectful to all people regardless of age, sex, gender, race and sexual orientation.

5-year Goals	Global Measures
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Culturally Competent and Trauma Informed Customer Service Patient Population that Reflects Diversity in the Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Achieve and maintain an employee satisfaction rate of 85% or higher - Achieve and maintain a patient satisfaction rate of 85% or higher

Strategies	Challenges & Capacity Needs	Partners
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance internal and external stakeholder experience through culturally competent and trauma aware customer service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff capacity - Time limitations - Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MAHEC - Agency/Community Partners
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Proactively & safely respond to emotionally charged situations using conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff Capacity - Time Capacity - Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MAHEC - Community Partners - LME/MCO
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increase engagement with underserved and under-represented populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff Capacity - Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training organizations

Action Plans

Strategy A: Culturally Competent & Trauma Aware Customer Service

Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead
1. Evaluate relevant training curriculums	Selection of curriculum(s)	2024	Assistant HD/Director of Nursing
2. Partner with agencies to train staff/plan trainings	Training Schedule/Calendar for Staff	2024	Director of Nursing/Assistant HD
3. Conduct annual trainings	# of Employees that complete annual trainings	2025-2029	Director of Nursing/Assistant HD
4. Quality Assurance/Improvement	Improvement in Pre/Post Test Training Evaluation Data	2025-2029	Director of Nursing/Assistant HD

Strategy B: Conflict Resolution & De-escalation Training for Managers			
Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead
1. Evaluate training curriculums	Curriculum selection	2024	Assistant HD/Director of Nursing/Director of Behavioral Health
2. Select trainers and timelines for training	Implementation Plan & Training Calendar	2024	Director of Nursing/Assistant HD/Director of Behavioral Health
3. Conduct trainings	# of employees that complete training	2025-2029	Director of Nursing/Assistant HD/Director of Behavioral Health

Strategy C: Increase Engagement with Underserved/Underrepresented Populations			
Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead
1. Develop outreach strategy for mobile services	Identify areas and communities for mobile outreach	2024	Assistant HD/Director of Behavioral Health
2. Expand interpretation services and/or capacity	Increase bilingual staff and/or interpreters	2025	Health Director/Director of

			Nursing/Assistant HD
3. Offer health education community resources and trainings in languages that represent diversity in the community	Hire bilingual health educator	2026	Director of Nursing/Assistant HD
4. Participate in health fairs and events hosted by minority organizations	# of events attended	2025-2029	Director of nursing/Assistant HD
5. Expand outreach and media efforts to include Hmong and Spanish messaging	Increased # of marketing/outreach products & media in Hmong and Spanish	2024-2029	Health Education
6. Develop equity council	Recommendations to the Board of Health	2024	Assistant HD/Director of Behavioral Health
7. Recruit diverse board members	Board members must submit candidates from diverse demographic backgrounds.	2025-2029	Board Chair

Be an Employer of Choice

Long Term Dreams

Employer of choice: competitive pay, robust training and development opportunities, culture of belonging for all, leadership opportunities, great workspace and cutting-edge technology

5-year Goals

1. To establish the Burke County Health Department as a desirable employer with a healthy and supportive working environment.

Global Measures

- Increase incoming applications to open positions by 10%
- Reduce staff turnover by 25%
- Increase employee engagement scores by 15% within the next five years

Strategies

1. Expand Recruitment Strategies

Challenges & Capacity Needs

- Limited regional workforce pool
- Changes in the healthcare environment

Partners

- Human Resources Department
- Media Partners

2. Evaluate & Expand Retention Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of feedback from staff - Budget limitations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consulting Agencies - Human Resources Department
3. Cultivate a Team Environment through Desegregation of Clinic Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resistance to change and new technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MAHEC - Health Department Staff Team
4. Invest in Our Image as a Preferred Employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff capacity - Opportunities for outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Media Partners

Action Plans


Strategy A: Expand Recruitment Strategies			
Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead
1. Salary Comparison Study to determine competitive hiring wages	Regional Survey Burke County acceptance of analysis results.	2024	Assistant HD /HR
2. Identify additional employment benefits	Collect perspective on employee values, determine themes, analyze realistic opportunities. Consult additional LHD leadership teams for examples.	2024-2025	Assistant HD
3. Investigate successful recruiting/hiring plans	Identify Best practices	2023 - 2024	Assistant HD
4. Draft strategic hiring plan	Utilize best practices to produce a strategic hiring plan that is diverse and inclusive.	2024 - 2025	Assistant HD/HR
5. Broaden net for recruiting	Partner with Universities, Public Health Associations, NC Works for posting opportunities and recruitment events. Attend hiring events	2024-2029	HR
6. Improve interview methodology (partner with HR, peer interviewing)	Scientific Best Practices	2025 - 2026	Health Director/HR

7. Expand intern and volunteer opportunities for entry pipeline	Develop an Intern and Volunteer program with projected opportunities within the HD to be located.	2025 - 2026	Health Ed
8. Board to champion Public Health agency openings and workforce strategy	Develop a diverse partnership plan for workforce development and agency openings.	2025 - 2026	Board Chair

Strategy B: Evaluate & Expand Retention Strategies

Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead
1. Actively incorporate employee feedback into programs, policies, and operations	Develop & Implement Employee Satisfaction Survey Complete an employee needs assessment Analyze employee commitment and capacity limits	2024-2029	Executive Leadership Team
2. Evaluate employee compensation	-Employees complete Baker Tilly Surveys and individual interviews. -Burke County acceptance of Baker-Tilly analysis results.	2024	Assistant HD /HR
3. Create an environment that supports consistent information-sharing in a respectful and timely manner	Develop Internal Communication Plan that Includes Opportunities for Feedback Employee Focus Groups and/or Committees	2024	Assistant Health Director/ Health Education
4. Staff retreats	Schedule two Friday team building exercises annually.	2024 - 2029	Health Director
5. Develop "Onboarding Mentor" initiative	Staff mentorship program plan and implementation.	2025 - 2026	Health Ed
6. Study additional staff perks	-Collect perspective on employee values,	2024-2025	Assistant HD

	determine themes, analyze realistic opportunities. -Consult additional LHD leadership teams for examples.		
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Strategy C: Cultivate a Team Environment through Desegregation of Clinic Operations			
Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead
1. Standardize Clinic Operational Protocols	Standard intake process Standard referral and follow-up process	2024 - 2026	Executive Leadership Team
2. Evaluate staff capacity and redistribute workload if bottlenecks are identified	Capacity report	2024	Executive Leadership Team
3. Networking and Cross-training activities	-Monthly in-service lunches with staff to provide education and training opportunities to expand integrated care.  -Develop comprehensive training plan with implementation timeline to cross train appropriate staff following orientation to position. -Invite 4 subject matter experts and community leaders to 4 monthly lunch in-services to expand staff knowledge of community collaboration and population specific care.	2024 - 2029	Director of Nursing/Health Ed.

4. Staff retreats	Schedule two Friday team building exercises annually.	2024 - 2029	Health Director
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Strategy C: Invest in our Image as a Preferred Employer			
Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead
1. Marketing Campaigns that Highlight Culture and Values of the Health Department	-All Public Health Educator Specialists will complete additional public relations trainings. -The Public Health Educator Supervisor will identify and work with a public relations mentor.	2024 - 2029	Health Ed
2. Align with County imaging initiative	-Reconcile health department and county messaging and branding	2024 - 2029	Health Director
3. Consult with marketing agency about image and message development	-Identify and interview 3 marketing consultants. -Develop image and message priorities -Collect baseline feedback from established consumers and public.	2024-2029	Health Director/Health Ed.
4. Build influence with community leaders	-Identify community leaders and advocates. -Identify collaborative opportunities that align priorities. -Visibly show support for community partners.	2024-2029	Health Director

Mitigate Substance Use Disorder and Promote Mental Health

Long Term Dreams

Eliminate stigma; share data; work upstream on determinants of health; help expand wrap-around services; be a leader in SU prevention; integrate behavioral health services into clinic operations

5-year Goals	Global Measures
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To implement behavioral health services that address the substance use and mental health needs of Burke County residents. Strengthen the collaborative care network through the use of a sound incoming and outgoing referral process. To saturate the community with education to reduce stigma and increase prevention, early intervention and access to treatment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Standardize a formal process and track 100% of internal and external referrals. -Increase the percentage of formal collaborative partnerships through local, regional, and state initiatives by 15% in 5 years. -Screening questions for mental health, substance use, and social drivers of health for 100% of new patients. -Increase the number of patients presenting to the health department for substance use and/or mental health services by 25%.

Strategies	Challenges & Capacity Needs	Partners
1. Prevention of negative mental health impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requires patience for long term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Burke County Public Schools - Parenting Programs
2. Prevention of illicit substance use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community engagement capacity and skill - Treatment capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Burke Recovery and other mental health partners - UNC Healthcare
3. Reduce overdose fatalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data limitations - Mobility limitations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EMS - Law Enforcement - UNC Health - SUD Coordination Group
4. Incorporate new behavioral health services into clinic operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staffing - Clinic capacity - Referral sources - Referral processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MAHEC - Other NC Health Departments
5. Create opportunities for equitable access to prevention, early intervention, and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community engagement capacity and skill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocacy groups - Faith community

substance treatment resources		
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Action Plans

Strategy 1: Prevention of Mental Health Impacts			
Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead
1. Evaluate evidence-based prevention campaigns and techniques aimed at reducing stigma while increasing access to care.	Selection of prevention program.	2024	Director of Behavioral Health
2. Identify opportunities for outreach/training of selected programming.	Annual calendar of events.	Annually	Director of Behavioral Health
3. Partner with school system for training related to early intervention, screening, and/or ACEs	List of partnership/training opportunities.	2024 - 2029	Director of Behavioral Health
4. Establish a standardized screening/identification process on intake.	Standardized intake process.	2024	Director of Behavioral Health
5. Establish a closed-loop referral process that tracks continuity of care for individuals identified as having a behavioral health need.	Referral system in place that supports incoming and outgoing referrals.	2024-2029	Director of Behavioral Health
6. Incorporating Social Drivers of Health question intake and/or part of financial interview.	Identification of individual SDOH needs. Identification of macro SDOH needs.	2024-2029	Director of Behavioral Health
7. Provide Health Department Employees with resources, training and information to appropriately respond to mental health concerns	Annual training that may include Trauma 101, Mental Health First Aid, QPR for Suicide Prevention	2024-2029	Director of Behavioral Health

Strategy 2: Prevention of Illicit Substance Use			
Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead
1. Identify and coordinate evidence-based community education programs about the risks of illicit substance use.	Reach a minimum of 500 community members annually.	2025-2029	Director of Behavioral Health

2. Identify opportunities for outreach.	Annual calendar of events with a minimum of 5 events per year.	2024-2029	Director of Behavioral Health
3. Form community partnerships to facilitate/coordinate training & outreach events.	Calendar of collaborative events, with a minimum of 2 per year	2024 - 2029	Director of Behavioral Health
4. Facilitate collaboration through the Burke Wellness Initiative to coordinate resources in the county's nonprofit and substance use provider network.	Substance Use subcommittee meetings	2024	Director of Behavioral Health

Strategy 3: Reduce Overdose Fatalities			
Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead
1. Saturate the community with naloxone.	Distribute a minimum of 1,000 doses of naloxone to Burke County residents.	2024-2029	Director of Behavioral Health
2. Create and facilitate an Overdose Fatality Review panel	Quarterly recommendations from panel.	2024-2029	Director of Behavioral Health
3. Facilitate the Opioid Settlement Collaborative Strategic Planning Process	Strategic Plan for the Use of Opioid Settlement Funds	2024	Director of Behavioral Health
4. Create and update a public-facing resource portal informing the community of the impacts of the Opioid crisis and the coordinated response from Burke County.	ARC GIS Hub Site	2024-2029	Director of Behavioral Health
5. Coordinate trainings and forums to provide education on treatments and resources for individuals with Opioid Use Disorder.	5 Trainings or community forums per year	2024-2029	Director of Behavioral Health

Strategy 4: Incorporate New Behavioral Health Services into Clinic Operations			
Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead

1. Integrate evidence-based treatment for substance use disorders into clinic operations.	Provide at least two methods substance use treatment within the health department.	2024-2029	Director of Behavioral Health
2. Coordinate network of community supports for patients receiving treatment for substance use disorder.	Standardized closed-loop referral platform/process.	2024	Director of Behavioral Health
3. Utilize Peer Support Specialists in Health Department Operations and field operations.	Peer Support Specialist with a caseload of 30 patients.	2025	Director of Behavioral Health
4. Integrate therapy as a service for health department patients.	Contract or county employed therapist with caseload of 35 patients.	2026	Director of Behavioral Health

Strategy 5: Create Opportunities for Equitable Access to Prevention, Early Intervention, and Treatment Resources for Behavioral Health Needs

Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead
1. Ensure representation on Equity Committee for individuals with lived experience	Committee recommendations to Board of Health	2024	Director of Behavioral Health/Assistant Health Director
2. Develop Peer Support Mentor Network	Feedback and input for recommendations in addressing barriers to accessing treatment.	2024	Director of Behavioral Health
3. Offer community behavioral health trainings in languages that reflect the diversity in the community	Minimum of 5 trainings per year	2025-2029	Director of Behavioral Health
4. Include Behavioral Health resources in community outreach to diverse populations	Informational and Educational Resources	2024-2029	Director of Behavioral Health/Health Education

Be an Academic Health Department

Long Term Dreams

Recognized nationally as a model rural health department; push the boundary of health education; integrated with university partners; successful innovation space creating new programs; cutting edge of tech

5-year Goals	Global Measures
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maximize value of opening new building 2. Partnerships with 3 Universities 3. Produce Research with University 	-

Strategies	Challenges & Capacity Needs	Partners
1. Academic Partner strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal bandwidth for collaboration - Staff comfort with leading projects - Academic Interest in Burke County Projects - Financial demands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blue Ridge CC - UNC Healthcare - Campbell - Gillings - App State
2. Invest in our Image as a Leader in Rural Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff Capacity - Opportunities for publication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Academic journals - Academic Partners
3. Training provision strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build training capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal stakeholders
4. Diversify funding and adjust portfolio of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of applicable funding - Bandwidth capacity to expand on new projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dogwood - UNC Gillings - Duke Endowment - NIH - SAMHSA

Action Plans

Strategy 1: Academic Partner strategy			
Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead
1. Begin attending conferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -One staff member from each program will attend one conference annually and network on behalf of BCHD. -Staff members will seek out partnerships 	2024 - 2029	Supervisors

	with academia through conference networking		
2. Submit posters/abstracts for conference presentations	-Partner with academia for consultation and review of submission material 2.30% of all staff will have submitted material for conference presentations.	2024 - 2029	Health Director
3. Work to get staff placed on local non-profit boards	-10% of staff will maintain a seat on a local non-profit board of choice.	2024 - 2029	Health Director
4. Collaborate with students/interns to develop research	-Partner with academia to allow students and interns on research projects initiated by BCHD. -Students and Interns will be involved in 4 research projects.	2024 - 2029	Health Director

Strategy B: Invest in our Image as a Rural Health Leader			
Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead
1. Identify opportunities for publication submissions	List of desired publication platforms	2024 - 2029	Supervisors
2. Abstract submissions	5 abstracts submitted from employees to various journals and conferences about BCHD work.	2024 - 2029	Health Educator
3. Submit posters/abstracts for conference presentations	-Partner with academia for consultation and review of submission material 2.30% of all staff will have submitted material for conference presentations.	2024 - 2029	Health Director

4. Publicly share accomplishments and publications	Social media posts, press releases	2024-2029	Executive Team/Health Education
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Strategy C: Training Provision Strategy			
Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead
1. Identify staff that could fill trainer roles	-Analyze staff capacity to commit to training role -Analyze barriers to accepting trainer role -Develop train the trainer plan -Partner with academia for evidence-based models	2024	Assistant Health Director/ Health Ed.
2. Pursue certifications	-Analyze gaps and needs for supportive unlicensed personnel -Analyze regional access to certificate programs -Identify priority certificates -Analyze various staff opportunities to obtain certificates to enhance role.	2024-2029	Executive Leadership Team
3. Host educational event	-Identify opportunities to educate community on strategic priority topics. -Partner with BWI to host educational events. -Partner with Universities and CC for educational opportunities in classes.	2024-2029	Health Ed.
4. Partner with Academia for staff educational opportunities	-Identify priority educational needs and topics.		Executive Leadership Team

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify faculty from various programs to diversify educational content. -Schedule regular in service and off campus educational opportunities for staff. 		
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Strategy D: Diversify funding and adjust portfolio of work			
Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead
1. Identify grant opportunities to support programs, research and practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Identify local, regional, state, and national grants to support strategic action plan. -Partner with Universities on research grants for BCHD projects. -Apply to research grants with students for dissertation research. -Apply to grants to support furthering educations of staff including certifications, higher educations, research, job related classes. 	2024 - 2029	Executive Team

Be a Healthcare Service Provider of Choice

Long Term Dreams	
<p>To be a preferred destination for residents seeking healthcare services; to continue establishing a healthcare ecosystem where individuals and families in Burke County confidently turn to for diverse healthcare needs.</p>	
5-Year Goals	Global Measures
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offer comprehensive, whole-person care through expansion of service array to include behavioral health screenings and services 2. Provide excellence in customer service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Enhance patient satisfaction and retention by 15% within the next five years.

Strategies	Challenges & Capacity Needs	Partners
1. Increase Access to Care through Mobile Integrated Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environmental and economic variables - Funding 	
2. Increase Access to Care through Expansion of Pay Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Available State/Federal/Grant Funding - Capacity to Procure Contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commercial insurance providers
3. Provide Excellent Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of patient satisfaction survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consulting Agencies - Training Agencies
4. Provide quality patient care in a state-of-the-art environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capital funding - Funding for equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - County government
5. Invest in our Image as a Preferred Service Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborative partners

Action Plans

Strategy A1: Increase Access to Care: Peer Support/Community Health Worker Strategy			
Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead
1. Identify classification and job description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop job descriptions for CHWs and PSS for various programs with program staff input. -Compare classification from OSHR to Substantial Equivalent classification. -Compare market demand -Analyze market compensation 	2024 - 2025	Assistant HD/HR
2. CHW Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Analyze program opportunities, needs, and capacity. -Reach out to LHD's with CHW utilization and assess various uses of the position. 	2024 - 2026	Assistant HD

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Prioritize program with greatest readiness and need for CHW. -Collect program staff input on CHW utilization. -Evaluate usefulness of CHW in pilot programs. 		
3. Assess current funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Review Medicaid reimbursement status. -Identify operational budget modification opportunities -Identify opportunities with opioid settlement. 	2024- 2025	Executive Team
4. Seek additional grants to support CHW positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Identify 3 supplementary grants. -Apply for 3 supplementary grants. 	2024-2027	All Staff
5. Involve staff in defining CHW role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop an Internal CHW and PSS development committee. -Determine priority needs and opportunities from staff perspective. -Utilize surveys and interviews with staff for knowledge of CHW and PSS capabilities. 	2024 - 2025	Assistant HD
6. Work on qualification needs and assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Research CHW qualification and scope of practice. -Consult Executive Director of NCCHWA -Research PSS qualification, training, and scope of practice. - Consult national PSS training centers 	2024-2026	Assistant HD

Strategy 2: Increase Access to Care through Expanding Pay Sources			
Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead
1. Identify opportunities to contract with insurance providers	Evaluate existing contracts	2024	Executive Team
2. Build capacity for expanded billing for existing services	-Increase acceptance of various insurances. -Gaps and deficiency assessment in billing/coding by staff. -Increase billable services following internal capacity assessment that align with the strategic priorities. -Assess Medicaid expansion benefits and promotion of BCHD services to “gap” beneficiaries.	2024-2027	Assistant Health Director

Strategy 3: Provide Quality Patient Care in a State-of-the-Art Environment			
Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead
1. Secure funding and plans for new facility	Project plan	2025	Health Director
2. Identify funding opportunities to upgrade equipment	Grant applications and budget requests	2024-2029	Executive Team
3. Expand/update pharmacy	Increased pharmacy capacity	2025	Executive Team

Strategy 4: Provide Excellent Customer Service			
Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead
1. Develop patient satisfaction survey	Standardized Patient Survey in English & Spanish	2024	Executive Team
2. Begin distributing surveys and collecting feedback	# of completed patient surveys	2024	Assistant Health Director
3. Analyze scores and identify quality improvement actions	Quality Improvement Plan	2024-2029	Executive Team

4. Implement Quality Improvement Actions identified through survey analysis	Improvement in patient satisfaction scores	2024-2029	Assistant Health Director/Director of Nursing
5. Evaluate wait times and appointment availability	Wait time report Capacity report	2024-2029	Assistant Health Director/Director of Nursing

Strategy 5: Invest in Our Image as a Preferred Service Provider			
Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead
1. Social media & marketing activities	-Increase social media engagement by 50%. -Track press releases and media coverage	2024 - 2029	Health Ed
2. Expand community event attendance	-Track staff attendance at community events. -Staff will be present at 60% of requested community events.	2024 - 2029	Health Ed.
3. Upgrade community-facing branding and marketing tools	Updated marketing equipment including logo, website, table, canopy, banners, and brochures	2024	Health Ed.

Be an Environmental Health Leader

Long Term Dreams		
To be a leader in environmental health and stewardship.		
5-Year Goals	Global Measures	
1. to be a recognized leader in environmental health and stewardship, championing best practices and promoting community engagement in environmental health efforts.	- Increase in environmental health best practices and policies	
Strategies	Challenges & Capacity Needs	Partners
1. Increase environmental health best practices	- Staffing shortages	MAHEC Academic Partners

2. Raise Community Environmental Health Awareness	- Staff Capacity	- Media Partners - Cooperative Extension - Farmers Market
3. Invest in Our Image as an Environmental Health Leader	- Staff Capacity	- Media Partners

Actions Plans

Strategy A: Increase Environmental Health Best Practices				
Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead	
1. Evaluate state and national best practices for local implementation	Recommendations to the health director	2024 - 2029	Environmental Health	
2. Identify equipment, software, and/or tools to expand capacity and increase efficiency	Recommendations to the health director	2024 - 2029	Environmental Health	
3. Evaluate staff capacity	Recommendations for staffing, workload distribution, and succession planning	2024	Environmental Health	

Strategy B: Raise Community Environmental Health Awareness				
Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead	
1. Social media & marketing activities	-Track media efforts targeting environmental awareness -Post an EH topic at least twice a month	2024 - 2029	Health Ed	
2. Expand community event attendance related to environmental health	Track staff attendance at community events like Earth Day	2024 - 2029	Health Ed.	

Strategy C: Invest in Our Image as a Leader in Environmental Health				
Action Steps	Measure/Deliverable	Timeframe	Lead	
1. Identify opportunities to be recognized work in environmental health	Presentations, Posters, and Awards	2024 - 2029	Environmental Health/Health Ed	

<p>2. Share success stories from the Environmental Health team</p>	<p>-Include Environmental Health in internal communications. -Publicly share information from the EH team on media outlets</p>	<p>2024 - 2029</p>	<p>Environmental Health/Health Ed</p>
<p>3. Identify Opportunities to Host or Facilitate Events or Forums Related to Environmental Health</p>	<p># of events or forums</p>	<p>2024-2029</p>	<p>Environmental Health/Health Ed</p>

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