



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Ashley L. Mercer, Healthy Carolinians Coordinator, Orange County Health Department
Phone: (919) 245-2440
Email: amercer@orangecountync.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2015 ORANGE COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT REPORT RELEASED

Hillsborough, NC (June 9, 2016) - The Orange County Health Department and Healthy Carolinians of Orange County (HCOC) has released the completed 2015 Orange County Community Health Assessment report. The full report and Executive Summary can be found online at http://www.orangecountync.gov/departments/health/publications_and_statistics.php under County Health Statistics.

The 2015 Community Health Assessment (CHA) enables local public health officials and community groups to monitor trends in health status, determine priorities among health issues, and determine the availability of resources within Orange County to best protect and promote the public's health. The document seeks to be useful, relevant, actionable, and both reflective and forward-looking; as well as provide information for effective strategic community health planning.

The Orange County Health Department and the HCOC partnership worked collaboratively to complete the CHA. The overall health of Orange County was assessed through information obtained from community residents and professionals via: 1) the collection of 1,714 health opinion surveys; 2) the conduct of 5 focus groups and 4 community listening sessions; 3) surveys of 20 content area experts; and 4) data from local agencies, and county and state statistics.

Health issues determined to be the highest priority to Orange County, were:

1. Social Determinants of Health with priority around Access and Poverty
2. Mental Health & Substance Abuse
3. Physical Activity & Nutrition

“The common theme among these three priorities is that they focus on root causes of public health problems and allow us to prioritize intervening early to avoid more costly and less effective interventions later on. That’s where local public health does its best work and I’m excited to get started”, said Orange County’s Public Health Director, Dr. Colleen Bridger.

Findings from this CHA report will help influence strategic planning across the community. HCOC will assure broad dissemination of the full report so that entities contributing to the health of Orange County residents can develop new or modify existing programs, services, and resources to address the community health needs relevant to their stated missions.

Many efforts are underway to address the priority areas, but new initiatives are needed to respond to identified gaps. Progress will require total community involvement including government

agencies and leadership, businesses, local service agencies, the university, hospitals, health care, and residents in order to improve the quality of life for people living in Orange County, particularly those who face economic, emotional, and physical hardships.

The Orange County Board of Health has developed their strategic plan based on the results from the CHA and the HCOC partnership is developing community health action plans. Together these plans detail the steps needed to address the priority issues both at community and policy levels. Both will continue to engage in ongoing evaluation, and will encourage collaboration between agencies and community groups to achieve better health outcomes.

“It is hoped that this report and its follow-up activities will be of use to community members and service providers alike, for all are working towards the goal of making Orange County a healthier place to live, work, play and pray”, said HCOC and Board of Health Chair, Liska Lackey.

To find out how to become involved with work groups addressing the top health concerns in the county, please contact Ashley Mercer, Healthy Carolinians Coordinator at (919) 245-2440 or hcoc@orangecountync.gov

###