

The Herald-Sun

Resident alleges Chapel Hill condo contaminated

Jan. 08, 2015 @ 05:42 PM

[Katie Jansen](#)

CHAPEL HILL —

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Inspections manager Chelsea Laws said code enforcement officer Warren Lipscomb completed the inspection, took pictures and verified that the cleanup had been done.

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OTHER CONCERNS

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As a comparison, he said that the limits on outgoing water for the treatment plant are 200 and 400 fecal coliform. However, he also said that many things could affect the sample, depending on how it was taken and the original cause of the sewage backup.

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"They could've taken (the samples) from anywhere," she said.

Carter said she is aware that she might have to get the samples retaken. But she also said she is worried about the management's commitment to cleaning a more serious problem like sewage based on their response to the mold.

"You can't see bacteria, obviously," she said.

Free radon test kits available in Orange County

By Tribune News Service

Published: Monday, January 12, 2015 at 09:04 AM.

DURHAM — Residents in Durham and Orange counties can get free kits to test the level of radon in their homes.

Each year, about 22,000 people die from lung cancer in the United States caused by the invisible, odorless, radioactive gas that can accumulate in homes and buildings, according to health officials. About 54 percent of those diagnosed with early-stage lung cancer are expected to live no more than five years after diagnosis.

In Durham, free kits will be available from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday at the Human Services Building, 414 E. Main St. They're also available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. any weekday this month at the Cooperative Extension Service Building, 721 Foster St. Call Chris Salter at 919-560-7800 or Deborah McGiffin at 919-560-0521 for more information.

In Orange County, the Health Department is partnering with the North Carolina Radon Program to provide kits.

A limited supply of the kits is available from Monday through Jan. 30 at the Orange County Environmental Health offices at 131 W. Margaret Lane, Suite 100 in Hillsborough. Call 919-245-2360 for more information.

About 7,000 kits are being distributed statewide, according to Stacy Shelp, public information officer for the Orange County Health Department. The North Carolina Radon Program website, www.ncradon.org, has a list of all participating organizations in the state. It also has a limited supply of kits available.

Only one kit per home is needed to determine if a home has a high level of radon, Shelp said.

Carrboro Police Utilize Life-Saving Anti-Overdose Drug for 1st Time — Successfully

By [Danny Hooley](#)

Posted January 13, 2015 at 4:12 pm



A new program of the Carrboro Police Department and Orange County to prevent drug overdose deaths paid off for the first time on Monday night, as a Carrboro officer administered a drug that saved a life.

“Naloxone is, itself, an old drug, but for law enforcement use, it’s reasonably new,” said Capt. Chris Attack of the Carrboro Police Dept. “We’ve only been carrying it since October of 2014.”

Attack told WCHL that at around 8:15 p.m. Monday, Carrboro police and EMS responded to a report of a drug overdose. A Carrboro police officer arrived first on the scene. After assessing the condition of the overdose victim and talking to a witness, the officer administered naloxone.

The person is out of the hospital and doing well, according to Attack.

Naloxone is an opiate antagonist that temporarily reverses the effects of an overdose, providing a brief window of opportunity.

“When you are overdosing on an opiate, receptors in your brain are blocked by the actual drug itself,” said Attack. “And what naloxone does is, basically, free up those receptors so that your body can continue to function and breathe. It gives you that time where you can get somebody to a medical facility.”

Attack said that, depending on the health of the patient and other factors, that “time bridge,” as he calls it, is between 30 and 60 minutes.

The Carrboro Police Department partnered with Orange County EMS and the Orange County Health Department and the North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition to start an emergency naloxone program last fall.

Family Success Alliance targets poverty in children, families

Posted: Wednesday, January 14, 2015 7:00 am

By Amanda VanDerBroek, News of Orange staff writer, a.vanderbroek@newsfororange.com

The voice of poverty is all too often a quiet one.

But the Family Success Alliance hopes to forge change in Orange County by creating a pipeline of success for children.

On Tuesday, Dec. 16, the group made a step toward that goal by choosing two zones out of six identified within the county to pilot the program.

Those selected were zone 4, an area located between Interstates 40 and 85 in central Orange County—which includes A.L. Stanback Middle School and New Hope Elementary—and zone 6, a densely populated area that encompasses downtown Chapel Hill and Carrboro southwest of N.C. 54.

“The idea is to increase outcomes for children and families that are struggling in Orange County,” Meredith McMonigle, Family Success Alliance project coordinator, said. “There’s not a real deep awareness about the existence of those families in Orange County. I think part of that initial priority is just to start that conversation that those communities exist here, and this project is designed to support those children and families.”

How it started

McMonigle said Family Success Alliance grew out of discussions in spring of 2014 when the county commissioners sought to address the increasing rate of child poverty.

Data provided by the Orange County Health Department shows the percentage of children living in poverty has increased in both the county and state in recent years. In 2011, 16.8 percent of children were living in poverty compared to 9.4 percent in 2001.

McMonigle said looking at successful models across the nation combating poverty like the Harlem Children’s Zone and the Promise Neighborhoods, the county set out to initiate its own program—and Family Success Alliance was born.

Health Department Communications Manager Stacy Shelp said six zones were identified as being locations in the county that had higher rates of poverty.

“The purpose of the Family Success Alliance was, once those zones were identified and then the two selected from the application process, was to really create a pipeline where kids aren’t falling through the cracks anymore, that’s kind of a cradle to either college or career success stream for them,” Shelp said. “So it’s going to be an ongoing, this is going to be a long-term project for the county.”

McMonigle said another key component is that it’s a collaboration based on research.

“So the health department is the catalyst for getting the project off the ground, but we’re sort of serving behind the scenes as a backbone structure to bring together this collaboration,” McMonigle said. “Anybody and any entity that is working to support children and families we’ll want at the table.”

Creating and choosing the zones

Using data on poverty, zones were identified, including four in the northern part of the county.

“So looking at, for example, the number of children using the Orange County Health Department clinics, the number of kids on free or reduced lunch, the number of kids on Medicaid, a couple of other data points, pulling that together and seeing which neighborhoods have the highest concentrations, those indicators,” McMonigle said. “There’s a written application and we spent September and into October doing community outreach to let folks know that this was an opportunity.”

In the end, six zones were identified.

As the alliance started its public phase, members of the grassroots Initiative on Poverty, an effort involving local churches, started taking interest in the project.

“There’s great synergy between these two projects,” McMonigle said. “A number of the people involved in the Initiative on Poverty have participated in submitting zone applications, became zone champions.”

On Dec. 16, the Family Success Alliance Council—an array of representatives including those from the school systems, local government, health care, civic and nonprofit groups —voted to choose two of the proposed zones.

McConigle said each of the zones were scored before the meeting, and members of the alliance then heard presentations from the zone champions—a person representing an assigned zone.

“I think the applications were due sometime in November, and then the council members basically had a month to grade or score each application,” she said. “So all of those scores were compiled and presented at the beginning of the Dec. 16 meeting. Basically it was one round of scoring the applications, then the zones gave their oral presentation, and after that the council members had an opportunity to revise their initial score based on what they learned in the presentation. ... The fact is that the scores didn’t change.”

Zones 4 and 6 were selected—one from each school district—to pilot the program.

“There were six identified, and then two were selected to pilot the project, recognizing that we could not start in all six at the same time,” McMonigle said. “Even though it’s pretty clear that there is a real interest to support each zone over time.”

Where to go from here

McMonigle said the next phase will be looking at the chosen zones even more closely.

Performing a gap analysis, conducting needs assessment and developing a zone identity are all on tap to understand the areas better.

“We will pull all of that information together, present it to the zones,” McMonigle said. “We’ll have a community meeting in March and say this is a snapshot of the things happening in the zones.

“So they will bring the priorities to the council, and then it will be working together—the council and community—to set those priorities and begin, whether it’s specific interventions or policy changes, and that will happen after the April 20 council meeting.”

tarheel

Carrboro resident saved by overdose drug

By [Maggie Monsrud](#) | Published 9 hours ago

The Carrboro Police Department [saved the life of a resident](#) Monday night — the first time naloxone was used by any police department in North Carolina.

Naloxone is a medicine that stops opiate overdoses.

“We are also the only other police department in the southeast, other than Georgia, to have used the naloxone kit,” said Capt. Chris Atack, spokesman for the Carrboro Police Department.

At 8:14 p.m. Monday, officers were dispatched to an apartment complex on Old Fayetteville Road in response to a call about an overdose.

Carrboro police were the first to arrive on the scene and administered the drug naloxone to stop a suspected heroin overdose.

Naloxone works by reversing overdose and preventing all subsequent effects.

Atack said the victim was able to come out of the overdose and was doing well as of Tuesday morning.

Atack said this was the first time the Carrboro Police Department used one of its naloxone kits.

All Carrboro patrol officers are trained to use the naloxone kits, including community officers and school resource officers, Atack said. He said the kits are not often used because emergency medical service responders usually are first to arrive on the scene.

Additionally, the Orange County Health Department is allowed to provide naloxone to Orange County citizens through a prescription.

Stacy Shelp, spokeswoman for the Orange County Health Department, said the department was the first in North Carolina to issue prescriptions like naloxone.

Shelp said naloxone is for people who are at risk for drug abuse and family or friends who are concerned about someone who is at risk for drug abuse.

In 2014, there were 86 emergency department visits for unintentional medication or drug overdoses in Orange County, she said.

“So many people are concerned about using it, but the good thing about naloxone is that it won’t have any harmful effects,” Shelp said.

She said after the use of naloxone, overdose victims should seek emergency help.

Joshua Mecimore, spokesman for the Chapel Hill Police Department, said in an email that CHPD officers are also trained to use naloxone.

“We are finalizing our policy and procedures and preparing to deploy it in the near future,” he said.

Atack said the events from Monday night indicated that naloxone is an important program, and the police department would like to improve the training process for the assembly of naloxone kits.

“There are always things you can learn,” he said. “The use of naloxone kits is a skill we train once a year but only use every five years.”

Atack said the Carrboro Police Department is working on making an instructional video on how to use the naloxone kits to reinforce the officers’ training.

“When you’re dealing with opioid overdose or something that is potentially lethal, there is a need to get it right,” he said.

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INDY Week

Carrboro officer is first law enforcement agent in state to reverse heroin overdose with Naloxone

Posted by [John H. Tucker@JH_Tucker](#) on Tue, Jan 20, 2015 at 11:07 AM

On Jan. 13, a press release went out from the Carrboro Police Department announcing that an officer had become the first in the department to administer naloxone, an opiate antagonist, to reverse the effects of a heroin overdose. The overdose had occurred the previous night. What the police department might not have known was that the Carrboro officer was the first law enforcement agent in the state to reverse an overdose with Naloxone.

The Durham-based North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition, a leader in the campaign to save the lives of opiate abusers, today announced that Jan. 12 was "an historic night," and that the Carrboro officer saved the user's life.

In response to a rising number of fatal opiate overdoses, an increasing number of policing agencies across the country have armed officers with Naloxone kits and trained them for overdose situations. Carrboro is one of six law enforcement agencies in North Carolina that currently carry naloxone, according to the Harm Reduction Coalition. The others are Pitt County Sheriff, Greenville Police Department, State Bureau of Investigations, Cramerton Police Department, and Alcohol Law Enforcement.

Officers with the Carrboro Police Department were trained on naloxone use last April through a joint effort between the Orange County Health Department, Orange County EMS and Harm Reduction Coalition. Their program launched officially in October.

Just after 8 p.m. on Jan. 12, the Carrboro officer was dispatched to an apartment complex on Old Fayetteville Road, where a man in his early 30s had overdosed on heroin. When the man did not respond to a sternum rub, the officer assembled a Naloxone kit and squirted half the liquid up one nostril. EMS arrived soon after and administered the rest of the dose up the second nostril. The man woke up in the ambulance a few minutes later and was discharged from the hospital later that night in good health.

"It's a paradigm shift for officers to respond to a drug overdose with Naloxone," said Chris Attack, a Carrboro police spokesman, in a statement. "But I spoke with some officers after the initial training and they are ready to do the right thing."

The victim is doing well, Attack said.

Orange County's anti-poverty program zeroes in on downtown Chapel Hill

BY [AREN BESSON](#) | PUBLISHED 8 HOURS AGO

More than 20 Orange County officials and residents came together Thursday to brainstorm strategies for reducing poverty.

The kickoff meeting was the first of many needs-assessment sessions for [the Family Success Alliance anti-poverty program](#) created last year.

The Family Success Alliance Advisory Council, a group of 22 representatives from local governments and non-profit organizations across the county, hopes to lower the rates of child poverty in Orange County through grassroots outreach and action.

In December, the council decided to target its efforts in Zone 4 and Zone 6 of Orange County. That progress continued with the kickoff meeting, which focused on the needs of Zone 6.

Zone 4 is located between Interstate 40 and Interstate 85, while Zone 6 covers the area from downtown Chapel Hill southwest to N.C. 54.

Stacy Shelp, spokeswoman for the Orange County Health Department, said the meetings will identify where the cracks are in the system and determine the best strategies for fixing those cracks.

"The common goal will obviously meet the needs for specific zones, but then reach out to other zones to provide different support so we don't see kids falling through the cracks," she said.

Carrboro Alderman Damon Seils said the program will more effectively coordinate social services to increase access to education, food and health care for lower-income residents of Orange County.

"We are in the phase where we are figuring out what the needs are so we can decide what to do next," Seils said.

Meredith McMonigle, Family Success Alliance project coordinator, said the data collection is a participatory process.

“We don’t want to come in as outsiders — we are inviting the community to participate in this process,” she said.

Shelp said the needs assessment phase is expected to take two to three months.

“It’s going to be fast, and we want to get it moving quickly in an impactful way,” she said.

Members of the community can give input by coming to needs-assessment sessions, including the Zone 4 session tonight from 5 to 6:15 p.m. at A. L. Stanback Middle School in Hillsborough.

Earl McKee, chair of the Orange County Board of Commissioners, said the county is at a good starting point.

“Any effort that Orange County can make towards ensuring the success of our residents is something we are all obligated to look at,” he said.

city@dailytarheel.com



Orange County

Carrboro police officer first in NC to reverse drug overdose with naloxone

By Richard Stradling

January 21, 2015 Updated 21 hours ago

By Richard Stradling

CARRBORO — The Carrboro Police Department has become the first in North Carolina to prevent a drug overdose death with an antidote drug now being used by a handful of law enforcement agencies across the state.

A Carrboro officer was the first to arrive last week at a home off Old Fayetteville Road where a man in his early 30s had overdosed on heroin, according to police spokesman Capt. Chris Atack. The officer, Teresa Kernodle, administered naloxone, a drug that counteracts the effects of heroin and other opioid drugs, reversing the overdose until paramedics arrived and took the man to the hospital.

All Carrboro officers were trained in using naloxone and have been carrying it since October, Atack said. This was the first time an officer has had call to use it.

It's also the first time a police officer has used the drug to reverse an overdose in North Carolina, according to the N.C. Harm Reduction Coalition, a public health and drug policy organization based in Durham that promotes and tracks the use of naloxone by law enforcement agencies.

"That officer doing that probably helped the person avoid brain damage, which is pretty awesome," said Robert Childs, the coalition's executive director.

Paramedics have carried naloxone (pronounced Na-LOX-own) in their ambulances for decades. But police officers and firefighters are often the first to arrive at the scene of an overdose, and proponents say it makes sense that they, too, have the drug and know how to use it.

The use of naloxone by police and firefighters was made possible by a change in state law in 2013 that broadened who could use the drug. The law, designed to allow heroin and pain-pill users and their friends and family to use naloxone in emergencies, cleared up legal questions about whether first responders could also use the drug.

So far, 14 law enforcement agencies in North Carolina, including the State Bureau of Investigation and Alcohol Law Enforcement, have distributed naloxone to officers or plan to in coming months, according to the Harm Reduction Coalition.

Since August 2013, the coalition also has distributed more than 6,000 naloxone kits to laypeople who are likely to come in contact with drug users, and 251 people have reported using them to reverse an overdose, Childs said.

The wider use of naloxone is part of an effort to counter a spike in drug overdoses in North Carolina. The number of accidental drug overdose deaths in the state has more than quadrupled since 1999, to 992 in 2013, according to the state

Read more here: http://www.newsobserver.com/2015/01/21/4493119_carrboro-police-officer-first.html?rh=1#storylink=cpy

- Details

Healthy Carolinians of Orange County will host a special screening of the short documentary film “Out of Reach,” which addresses the growing problem of prescription drug abuse.

The film will be shown at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 28, at Chapel Hill High School and at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 29, at C.W. Stanford Middle School in Hillsborough. To reserve a seat, call Healthy Carolinians coordinator Ashley Mercer at 919-245-2440

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A panel of local and state police, court and health experts will talk with the audience and answer questions after the film.

Wednesday’s panel includes: Britta Starke, with the UNC Hospitals Alcohol and Substance Abuse outpatient program; Catherine (Kay) Sanford, with the N.C. Harm Reduction Coalition; Jimmy Cioe, with the Governor’s

Film spotlights prescription drug abuse, deaths

By Tammy Grubb

tgrubb@newsobserver.com January 23, 2015

CHAPEL HILL — Local health officials say a free documentary being shown this week should be a wake-up call for parents.

The short film, “Out of Reach,” deals with prescription drug abuse and is the brainchild of a teen filmmaker in Dallas, Texas. It will be shown Wednesday at Chapel Hill High School and Thursday at C.W. Stanford Middle School in Hillsborough.

“This film is a teen’s wake-up call to parents,” said Ashley Mercer, coordinator for Healthy Carolinians of Orange County. “Seeing how rampant prescription drug abuse is in a typical American high school will help put this dangerous behavior on parents’ radar and motivate them to take action.”

Ten Orange County residents die each year from accidental prescription pain medication overdoses, health officials say. Of those cases, roughly 70 percent involve opioids, a class of drugs that includes morphine, oxycodone, codeine and other narcotic painkillers.

The state reported 1,014 accidental drug overdoses – 565 were from prescription opioid painkillers – in 2012. That was an increase of nearly 300 percent – from 297 cases in 1999 to 1,101 cases in 2012 – making it the state’s second-leading cause of accidental death, reports show.

Opioids are involved in more drug deaths than heroin and cocaine combined, according to the N.C. Injury and Violence Prevention Branch of the state Division of Public Health. Plus, the misuse and abuse of prescription drugs plays a role in higher suicide rates, health officials said.

The problem has grown so rampant that the state, in 2013, agreed to let police officers and firefighters administer the drug naloxone to patients suspected of overdosing on heroin and other opioid drugs. Naloxone counteracts opioid effects on the central nervous and respiratory

systems, letting the victim breathe normally. Ambulance crews have carried it for decades.

Carrboro Police Officer Teresa Kernodle may have been the first law enforcement officer in the state to use naloxone Jan. 12 when she treated a man in his early 30s who had overdosed on heroin. The drug has been or will be distributed to 14 law enforcement agencies across the state, including the State Bureau of Investigation and Alcohol Law Enforcement, according to the Harm Reduction Coalition.

Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Hillsborough police also maintain prescription drug drop-off boxes at their respective departments. Residents can bring expired, unused or unwanted medications to the departments during regular business hours.

“Out of Reach” resulted from a collaboration between Dallas native and high school student Cyrus Stowe and director Tucker Capps, the man behind A&E’s “Intervention” reality series. While exploring the world in which Cyrus and his friends live, the film also reflects more broadly on the national issue of teen drug abuse, health officials said.

The production was sponsored by the entertainment company Genart and the Partnership for Drug-Free Kids.

Local and state experts will talk with the audience and answer questions. To reserve a spot for either film screening, call Mercer at 919-245-2440  919-245-2440.

The Herald-Sun

Prescription drug abuse film for teens to be shown

Jan. 25, 2015 @ 06:37 PM

FROM STAFF REPORTS

CHAPEL HILL —

Healthy Carolinians of Orange County on will host special screenings of “Out of Reach,” a short documentary about medicine abuse created by a teen filmmaker.

It will be shown at 7 p.m. Wednesday at Chapel Hill High School, and at 7 p.m. Thursday at C.W. Stanford Middle School in Hillsborough.

Dallas native and high school student Cyrus Stowe was selected by entertainment company Genart and Partnership for Drug-Free Kids to turn his entry into a short documentary with the help of director Tucker Capps (of cable TV channel A&E’s “Intervention”). The documentary captures the issue of teen prescription drug abuse as it exists in Stowe’s world, and is a reflection of the issue of teen medicine abuse across the country.

In 2012, in North Carolina, there were 1,014 accidental drug overdoses, and of those, 565 were from prescription opioid painkillers. In Orange County, prescription pain medication, specifically opioids, causes about 10 unintentional poisonings deaths every year, and prescription drug misuse/abuse is a contributing factor to increased suicide rates.

“This film is a teen’s wake-up-call to parents,” said Ashley Mercer, Healthy Carolinians coordinator. “Seeing how rampant prescription drug abuse is in a typical American high school will help put this dangerous behavior on parents’ radar and motivate them to take action.”

Following the viewing, a panel discussion and questions and answers will take place with experienced individuals.

Wednesday’s panelists include:

Britta Starke with UNC Hospital’s Alcohol and Substance Abuse outpatient program, Catherine (Kay) Sanford with the N.C. Harm Reduction Coalition, Jimmy Cioe with the Governor’s Institute on Substance Abuse, Lisa Mayhew with the Office of State Medical Examiners, and Mike Mineer, with Chapel Hill Police Department.

Thursday’s panelists include:

Superior Court Judge Carl Fox, prosecutor Jeff Nieman, Britta Starke with UNC Hospital’s Alcohol and Substance Abuse outpatient program, and Catherine (Kay) Sanford with the N.C. Harm Reduction Coalition.

Both events will be moderated by Nidhi Sachdeva with North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.



NORTH CAROLINA HEALTH NEWS

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Local Health Directors Eye Future Warily

JANUARY 26, 2015 by [EDITOR](#) in [FEATURED](#), [MEDICAID](#), [PUBLIC HEALTH](#) with [0 COMMENTS](#)

In a time of constant change and budget cuts, directors of North Carolina’s local health departments ponder how they’ll maintain public health services.

By **Rose Hoban**

At the annual meeting of North Carolina’s state health directors last week in Raleigh, small knots of people gathered in the halls and the backs of conference rooms, all discussing the same question: How will public health survive the coming changes in health care financing?

One of the biggest concerns voiced by health directors both off and on the record centered around the future of North Carolina’s Medicaid program. Currently, legislators are discussing changing both how the program gets administered and how services get paid for. And for many local health departments, Medicaid payments – small as they are – are key to keeping budgets solvent.



DHHS Sec. Aldona Wos. Photo credit: Rose Hoban (file photo)

“About one-third of the clients seen in local health departments statewide are Medicaid patients,” said Jim Bruckner, the health director from Macon County. He said the other two-thirds of patients who come into health departments for immunizations, treatment for sexually transmitted infections, reproductive health care and, in many counties, primary care services, are uninsured.

While Medicaid reimbursement alone can’t pay all the bills, Bruckner said those dollars are vital. He explained that departmental infrastructure and nurses’ salaries are built on the foundation of Medicaid reimbursement.

“When we do have outbreaks, like when we deal with pertussis or we deal with Ebola threats, and all those other issues in our communities, when we provide all those other services, Medicaid did contribute in some way to the other activities,” he said.

State Health and Human Services Sec. Aldona Wos praised the work done by public health personnel during an address to the group on Thursday morning.

“We are very fortunate in this state to have a world-class public health network,” Wos said. “When we are well trained, when we are hard working, when we are passionate, actually, our communities become safer and the citizens in our state become and remain healthier.”

But health directors didn’t get much solace from Wos when it came to ensuring state funding. She said that as her department worked to reform Medicaid, her aim was to “do no harm” to public health.

But it’s not clear how public health departments would fit into the Medicaid arrangements being debated in Raleigh, whether state lawmakers decide to shift the program to [accountable care organizations](#) or to managed care.

“We’re taking into consideration what we and everyone else knows is on the ground,” Wos said later. “It’s not a situation where we try to fix one part and all of a sudden the other part breaks apart.”

Unfunded mandates

According to the National Association of County and City Health Officials, health departments across the country have lost more than 44,000 jobs since the economic downturn started in 2008. [In a July 2013 NACCHO study](#), 48 percent of North Carolina’s health departments reported losing staff. About half reported making cuts to at least one program and more than a third of the state’s public health departments reported reduced funding in the prior year while anticipating further cuts.

Even as the economy has recovered, dollars have been slow to come back. Of the total state budget for the Department of Health and Human Services, only 0.13 percent goes to local public health departments. And [cuts to Medicaid reimbursement in last year’s state budget](#) trimmed that revenue further.

Wos acknowledged that Medicaid’s massive budget overshadows the needs of public health departments. And around the hallways, individual health directors said that while they feel as if Wos “gets” public health’s importance, they also said they feel like an afterthought in the state budgeting process.

“I can understand why they would feel that,” Wos said. “The focus of the General Assembly and the amount of programs and the amount of challenges and opportunities is huge. It does not mean that a smaller portfolio is not important, but it does not get the spotlight publicly.”

Lynette Tolson, executive director of the North Carolina Association of Local Health Directors, pointed out that many of public health departments’ activities are mandated by the General Assembly, but that the money often doesn’t follow.

“We do environmental health, we inspect your private wells, we go into restaurants and your food and lodging facilities, we’re the group that makes sure that these are safe place to eat and sleep,” Tolson said.

The legislature determines fees for some of that work and county dollars make up for much of what the state doesn’t fund. But county budgets have been trimmed in recent years too, according to Buck Wilson, the health director in Cumberland County and president of the NCALHD. He said county funding for public health departments covers from as little as 3 percent in some counties to as much as 70 percent.

There’s a constant need to educate county commissioners on the need and importance of maintaining public health effort, he said.

“If people are not healthy, they’re not working, they’re missing school, they’re not generating revenue, it all goes together,” said Wilson, who added that commissioners often don’t see the return on investment from public health funding until health directors spell it out for them.

Tolson said funding doesn't often cover routine costs or the extra dollars needed for incidents such as disease outbreaks.

Ebola response stretches staff thin

Orange County health director Colleen Bridges said her department has spent at least an additional \$40,000 to pay staff for monitoring people returning from countries where Ebola virus is epidemic. She explained that to monitor for Ebola, nurses go out to people's homes in order to see them face to face and watch as they take a temperature reading.

State epidemiologist Megan Davies said people in her office have been putting in a lot of overtime to keep tabs on Ebola since the summer, and they're getting tired. And she said it's not like you can quickly find a highly skilled epidemiologist to fill the gap. Congress finally appropriated money to cover some of the costs of monitoring, but Davies said that money hasn't yet trickled down to states.

"We make sure that the diseases such as Ebola are not spread," Tolson said. "We're all excited that we've only had two deaths in this country because of Ebola, but we forget that it's public health behind the scenes quietly doing its job."

Wos said this year's public health victories – successfully handling Ebola and a challenging flu season – is an opportunity to showcase public health at the legislature. And she said that could be an advantage when making funding requests to legislators for the coming year.

Tagged [Aldona Wos](#), [Ebola virus](#), [National Association of County and City Health Officers](#), [NC General Assembly](#), [NC Public Health Association](#), [North Carolina Association of Local Health Directors](#)

Carrboro PD First NC Law Enforcement to Administer Overdose Reversal Drug

By Carly Swanson

Friday, January 23, 2015 at 05:34 PM EST



CARRBORO, N.C.—Carrboro Police officers said they made state history, by saving a drug overdose victim with a special kit.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control say fatal drug overdoses are the primary cause of death, exceeding motor vehicle deaths.

The Orange Co. Health Department says, on average, 1,000 North Carolinians die each year from drug overdoses.

"It's up 300 percent in the last couple of years," said Carrboro Police Capt. Chris Atack. He says this health problem also impacts public safety.

"As public safety agencies, we are kind of brought into the loop on what's causing the overdose, what's causing people to lose their lives, some are intentional, some are accidental," he said.

However, it was no accident when one of his officers was the first law enforcement agent in the state to save a heroin overdose victim with a special overdose rescue kit.

"She prepared her Naloxone kit, squirted the Naloxone up the person's nose, EMS arrived about minute and a half later, administered the second half of the drug, and the man woke up in the ambulance," said Capt. Atack.

The Orange Co. Health Department provided the police department with training and 30 Naloxone kits, the drug that helps reverse overdose.

"This really is a community issue, and we all have a role to play in reducing drug misuse, abuse and overdose, and police officers in particular are important," said Meredith Stewart with the Orange Co. Health Department.

Capt. Atack says training on how to use the kits is beneficial because law enforcement officers are sometimes the first ones to arrive to an emergency scene and the key to saving a life is early intervention.

"Usually when it's an overdose call, we are dispatched anyway, so we've had officers on-scene that were waiting for fire and EMS to get there and could've been doing something," he said.

Capt. Atack hopes other law enforcement agencies will take his department's life-saving lead.

"If law enforcement can be out there with simple tools and simple training to save a life, I don't see how you could be against it," he said.

Five other departments carry Naloxone in North Carolina. Those departments include the Pitt Co. Sheriff's Office, Greenville Police Department, Cramerton Police Department, the SBI and Alcohol Law Enforcement.

UNC student seeks to ban free tanning

BY MADDIE NORWOOD

Correspondent January 27, 2015

Respect the Rays: Read about Timna Understein's melanoma experience in her own words at <http://nando.com/v5>

CHAPEL HILL — College students seeking a quick tan can often get one without ever stepping outside, because many off-campus apartment complexes offer free tanning beds.

Now a UNC student has asked the Town Council to prohibit free, unregulated tanning-bed use off-campus.

Alaina Zeitany, a junior majoring in nutrition, cited studies that have linked tanning bed use to an increased risk of developing melanoma, a potentially fatal skin cancer. U.S. Surgeon General Boris Lushniak has also warned against indoor tanning (nando.com/v6).

The council referred the issue to town staff for a response at a later meeting, which is routine with citizen petitions.

Zeitany surveyed popular off-campus apartment complexes and found 26 percent offer tanning beds among their amenities. She told the council that she knows one apartment isn't following state guidelines on indoor tanning.

“At this specific apartment, anyone can go to the desk, request the time be set on the tanning bed, and then go around the corner to a separate location and get in the tanning bed,” she said. “They do not check to see your age, if you have previously tanned that same day, or if you are even a resident of the apartment.”

One of the apartment complexes mentioned in Zeitany's petition is Shortbread Lofts, which opened in August. Property manager Cindy Short said use of the stand-up tanning bed is highly regulated. All of the employees who operate it are licensed tanning bed operators, and the tanning bed switch is in a location that is locked after office hours.

Residents who want to use the tanning bed must complete a survey to see if tanning is safe for their skin type and sign a consumer statement. They can only tan once a day for 12 minutes or less. When they sign in to use the bed, they must show the tanning bed operator their protective eyewear.

“When weighing the risk and reward of using a tanning bed, recent research suggests that increased levels of Vitamin D that sun beds provide decrease the incidence of at least 16 internal cancers,” Short said. “So you must weigh this benefit against the possible wrinkles or increase in risk of melanoma.”

“As long as tanning beds are legal in North Carolina and as long as we are following the numerous regulations involved in state law, we feel that residents should have the freedom of will to decide for themselves whether to tan,” she said. She added that residents have been cautious in their use of the bed, with some only tanning for five minutes at a time.

Orange County Health Director Colleen Bridger wrote a letter to Roger Stancil, Chapel Hill’s town manager, opposing free tanning-bed use at apartment complexes.

“People who use tanning beds are 74 percent more likely to develop melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, than those who have never used one... There are no health benefits derived from using a tanning bed, and, given the increased risk of skin cancer associated with their use, I cannot fathom any reason to allow this practice to continue,” she wrote. “I urge you and the Town Council to take whatever action you can to immediately stop this harmful practice,” she stated.

Timna Understein, a three-time melanoma survivor, runs the organization Respect the Rays, which educates school-age children about melanoma and sun safety. She said local tanning regulations don’t go far enough.

“Tighter regulations of tanning facilities is helpful, of course, but follow through and monitoring would be an important piece, as it seems there are facilities that do not follow the rules, as well as patrons who find a way to bypass the regulations,” she stated.

“I would love to see outreach to all of the companies that manage these apartment complexes, such as American Campus Communities, to see about removing tanning beds as an amenity,” she added.

Orange records 23 rabies cases in 2014

From staff reports

January 9, 2015

The county will hold its next Low-Cost Rabies Vaccination Clinic from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, Jan. 24, at the Animal Services Center, 1601 Eubanks Road in Chapel Hill.

The cost for rabies vaccinations is \$10. For more information, call Orange County Animal Services at 919-942-7387.

HILLSBOROUGH — Orange County had 23 animals test positive for rabies in 2014 – most recently, a fox in Hillsborough – Animal Services officials say.

The number is nearly twice the 12 cases reported in both 2012 and 2013.

Hillsborough residents, in the latest case, heard their dogs barking outside Dec. 30. They went out to check and saw a fox walking away. A resident shot the fox and called Animal Control to remove it for testing.

The dogs involved in this case were vaccinated against rabies and have received booster shots required under North Carolina's rabies laws. The state requires local officials to destroy or quarantine animals for six months that do not have a current rabies vaccination.

A communicable disease nurse from the Orange County Health Department planned to contact the residents about the potential they may have been exposed to the rabies when they handled their pets.

“Prevention is the best measure for effective rabies control for pets and people alike,” Animal Services Director Bob Marotto said. “Ensuring cats, dogs and ferrets are current on their rabies vaccinations is one of the most important responsibilities of a pet owner, since it can quite literally be the difference between life and death for their pet and protect the public from rabies.”

Foxes typically contract rabies from a host species, such as raccoons. Other species that are most susceptible to getting rabies from raccoons are dogs and cats, groundhogs and skunks.

Bats also harbor rabies and are largely responsible for human exposure, officials said.

If there is any possibility of exposure from a bat, they said, it is critical that residents immediately contact animal control officials or call 911.

The Herald-Sun

Parts of Orange County lose power

Jan. 29, 2015 @ 10:44 AM

[Katie Jansen](#)

HILLSBOROUGH —

Parts of Orange County, including downtown Hillsborough, lost power Thursday morning.

The Orange County Sheriff's office reported around 10:30 a.m. that Duke Energy hoped to have the power back on by noon.

Orange County Emergency Services estimated that about 3,700 residents in and around Hillsborough were left without power.

The Orange County Health Department announced that it was temporarily suspending services until power returned.

There was not yet word on why the outage occurred. Attempts to reach Duke Energy were unsuccessful.