

# The Herald-Sun

## Orange County connects people to help, hope

Oct. 09, 2014 @ 04:20 PM

[Katie Jansen](#)

For the eighth year in a row, service providers in Orange County came together to provide one-stop aid to those who need it.

Services offered at Project Connect Orange County included housing counseling, educational and employment advice, legal services, haircuts and more.

A wide range of health services was also available, including oral cancer screenings, vision screenings, dental care and foot massages. Participants could make appointments for mammograms, get flu shots and get tested for HIV.

People could also eat breakfast and lunch at the event held at Hargraves Community Center. Will Raymond has been volunteering at the event all eight years. He fell into it by chance, when a friend called him the night before and asked him to bring his truck to help transport needed items. Raymond stayed to volunteer and fell in love.

He said that for many of the volunteers, the annual event is “a highlight of the year.” He estimated that throughout the course of the day, more than 300 volunteers would pitch in to help.

Over the years, he’s seen the event grow and change. He said that this year was a “more focused” event, meaning that it offered “services that can have a real impact on people sooner rather than later.”

His favorite job is to do intake, which involves sitting down with people when they first arrive at the event, learning a little about them and helping them prioritize which services they need.

He said that when he sees people an hour or two after he meets them, they have already had their teeth checked, gotten a haircut and a new pair of socks.

Raymond said they were on track to help at least as many people as they did last year – 250. However, he said the help was more expansive than that because people could take new resources and knowledge home to their families.

Betty Foushee was one of the hundreds who came for help. She is over 80 and has nine kids, 10 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

She said she was in good health at her doctor’s visit because “I do a lot of walking. I go to the Seymour Center, and I go to the YMCA.”

Keith B., who declined to give his last name, said he hoped to get housing and legal advice. He currently lives with two roommates, but he wants to get an apartment. He said it’s difficult to find somewhere affordable that is close to a bus line and a grocery store, things he needs because he is disabled. “People come from all over and they have money, so it makes rent rates go up,” he said.

He also hoped to ask an expert about his Social Security checks, which he has been having trouble applying for and collecting.

“The federal government is quick to take the money,” he said. “But to give it back? Slow as a snail in December.”

He hoped to get his vision checked and to get an oral cancer screening. He needed dental work done but wasn't able to get an appointment because the slots filled up too quickly.

Organizers of Project Connect said that dental work was the most popular service. Even with three partners – UNC School of Dentistry, Carrboro Community Health Center and Orange County Health Department – not everyone could be served.

“It's great that we're getting the care to people who need it, but at the same time we could've had twice as many spots,” said organizer Jamie Rohe.

But the day wasn't just about giving people things to help them – it was also about forging connections. Volunteers set up a story booth where they recorded oral histories throughout the day. George Barrett, who has experience collecting oral histories from the Jackson Center of Chapel Hill, said that it's important for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to tell their stories.

Barrett said the project was “not only to raise awareness about the issue of homelessness,” but also to gain understanding.

“It's easy to homogenize homeless individuals, but when you actually hear their story...they're not just beings on the street, they're people,” he said.

Raymond said that the great thing about Project Connect is that it allowed people to accomplish a lot of necessary tasks in a short time frame – and under one roof. Normally to get all the services offered at the event, a person would have to take at least 10 to 12 different trips, he said.

A similar event is taking place in Durham today from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Durham Bulls Athletic Park, 409 Blackwell St.

## Teen Pregnancy Rates Decline in NC in 2013

By: Vita McHale  
10/08/2014 05:42 PM

NORTH CAROLINA -- In 2013 there were more than 11,000 pregnancies in women ages 10-19 in North Carolina. It's an 11-percent decrease from the year before and the lowest recorded rate in the state's history.

"Teen pregnancy rates have been declining since the early 90s. Back in 1990 more than 10 percent of our state's teen girls got pregnant in a single year and now it's closer to 3.5 percent," said Elizabeth Finley of the APPCNC.

Seventy-five percent of the state's counties saw a decrease in pregnancies. Data provided by the APPCNC shows that of the 75 counties ranked, Swain had the highest rate of 77.3/1,000.

Orange had the lowest at 9.6/1000. It's an almost five point drop from the year before.

"Orange County does a great job at starting to talk about sex at an early age at the schools, providing comprehensive education at the schools and through various community organizations," said Dr. Colleen Bridger of the Orange Co. Health Department.

Bridger says that education is key, especially for at-risk teens.

"I think in the last 5-10 years N.C. has done a much better job at providing comprehensive education and targeting teens who have already had one pregnancy to help them not have another pregnancy in the future while they're a teenager."

"The fact that it's mostly 18 or 19 year olds gives some positives in terms of things like graduation rates. But the fact is we are still not out of the woods."

Finley says other factors are linked to the decline: teens are waiting longer and there is an uptick in women using birth control.

The year 2013 marked the lowest teen pregnancy rate and 1989 marked the highest.

- See more at: <http://centralnc.twcnews.com/content/712694/teen-pregnancy-rates-decline-in-nc-in-2013/#sthash.DkGOW2cS.dpuf>





# tarheel

## Skirting the health standard

### Private clubs no longer inspected in North Carolina

By [Joey DeVito](#) | Published 8 hours ago - October 8, 2014



Tim Boole (left) enjoys a drink in The Cave on West Franklin Street.

Deems Wilson was surprised when, shortly after starting his job as manager of West End Wine Bar, he was told the business didn't get inspected by the Orange County N.C. Health Department.

West End Wine Bar, along with the rest of the private clubs in North Carolina, is no longer subject to health inspections.

"I think it's sort of outrageous that we're not inspected," Wilson said.

The new rule is an effect of the N.C. General Assembly's Regulatory Reform Act, which was passed in July 2013. It was a comprehensive bill that was meant to streamline regulations dealing with restaurants, childcare and a number of other issues.

"What was significant and weird about this law was that those bars that served food were subject to the restaurant inspection laws and this law took them out of the restaurant inspection law," said Jill Moore, an associate professor at the UNC School of Government.

"They don't have to be inspected anymore, even if they're operating a full food service."

Moore said the change was unexpected and she is unsure why it happened.

"To be honest with you nobody knows where this came from or why the General Assembly decided to change the law," she said. "It's really kind of strange. I honestly have yet to encounter anyone who really knows why the change in legislation was made."

#### **Eliminating unnecessary inspections**

Moore said one possible reason for the change is to exempt bars with minimal food service from having to deal with unnecessary inspections. Some places were subjected to the sanitation inspections even though they were only handling already prepared food.

“If that was what the General Assembly was trying to do, to exempt those people who have that kind of limited food service, that I might understand, but that’s not what they did,” she said. “What they did was exempt anybody with any kind of food service.”

While not everyone agrees with the change, some businesses on Franklin Street have benefited from it.

Blue Horn Lounge does not serve any food, and employee Wayne Faust said for places that only serve alcohol, the inspections were unnecessary.

“We only got inspected twice a year before that was changed,” Faust said.

“It’s a lot easier to pass health inspections when you’re not preparing food. It’s alcohol so it’s not like we have our hands on the booze or anything like that.”

He said in places that only serve alcohol, the only things that can pose a health risk are the ice machines, which he said are cleaned regularly at Blue Horn Lounge.

“It just makes it more convenient, we don’t have to have a health inspector come by twice a year,” Faust said. “Even then, it wasn’t a big deal, it wasn’t a big hindrance or anything, but it was largely unnecessary.”

Zog’s Art Bar & Pool Hall bartender James Brown echoed Faust’s sentiments about sanitation inspections.

“We’ve never needed one,” Brown said. “We’ve been cleaning the same way since day one. Every time we find something, we clean it up. Unless someone wants to lick off the floor, I see no real need for it.”

### **Private clubs**

The law eliminated the need for health and sanitation inspections in all North Carolina private clubs.

“Anywhere that food and drink is provided to people potentially causes a health hazard,” said Orange County N.C. Health Department spokeswoman Stacy Shelp.

“Even your kitchen would at home. Sure that causes some concern, but food code is written a certain way for a certain reason.”

A private club has to maintain selective membership and cannot serve nonmembers, unless they are the guest of a member.

Before the change, the sanitation inspection exemption was only given to nonprofit private clubs.

In order to become a private club, the owner of the establishment must submit an application to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission.

The application requires the owner to provide a copy of the club’s membership card, as well as its membership application form.

It also has a yearly permit fee of \$1000.

Private clubs came into existence when the legislature in North Carolina was deciding on whether or not to allow businesses to sell mixed drinks.

“When North Carolina finally adopted liquor permits in the late 1970s, the legislature and the ABC Commission made a policy decision that North Carolina wasn’t going to have bars,” said School of Government professor Michael Crowell.

Crowell said the right to serve mixed drinks was given instead to restaurants, and in order to qualify to sell mixed drinks, a certain percentage of the restaurant's business had to come from food sales.

"The exception to having to serve food was a private club," Crowell said.

"It's not a place where the public can just walk in and get a drink. The state was satisfied that that was okay."

It is this exception that makes being a private club so desirable.

"The benefit of being a private club is that, unlike a restaurant that sells mixed drinks, you don't have to sell any particular amount of food," Crowell said.

"If you're a restaurant and you want to have a mixed drink permit and keep it you can't just have a bar. You have to sell food and it has to be a certain percentage of your business."

Private clubs are still required to undergo inspections from Alcohol Law Enforcement and the ABC Commission, but those inspections do not deal with health and sanitation, he said.

"They're not interested generally in sanitation," Crowell said. "They're interested in the compliance of the ABC laws."

In Orange County, 22 establishments are registered as private clubs, including eight on Franklin Street and five on Rosemary Street.

"I was surprised when I found out that they're no longer inspected," Wilson said.

He said he believes all places that serve food should be inspected. He said even though West End Wine Bar doesn't serve a lot of food, it should still have to be inspected anyway.

"I don't worry about us because I know the quality of work that we produce, but I do worry about Joe Schmo's run-down bar," Wilson said.

"That guy can serve warm oysters on half shells if he wants and there's no regulatory agency to say 'you can't do that.'"

Despite his general concern, Wilson doesn't think West End Wine Bar poses any health risks because of the new law.

"We always carried very high sanitation grades," Wilson said.

"It doesn't really affect us either way, but I do worry about other people."

## AGRICULTURE FARM TO FORK

# Community comes out to support forming a food council

Posted: Tuesday, September 30, 2014 8:05 pm | Updated: 8:09 pm, Tue Sep 30, 2014.

By Amanda VanDerBroek, News of Orange staff writer, [a.vanderbroek@newsfororange.com](mailto:a.vanderbroek@newsfororange.com)

In just an hour and a half, the idea of having a food council in Orange County came a little closer to fruition.

On Monday, Sept. 29, residents, stakeholders and government officials packed the Southern Human Services Center for an interest meeting on the formation of a food council to bring together the community for collaboration and eventually seek out ways to improve the local food system.

Participants were briefed on what it would take to get the effort going and what it would mean to the community to have the entity. A sign up sheet for a taskforce was also passed around in an effort to get the council up and running.

"We really wanted to see how we can capitalize on the strengths we already have here in Orange County around the food system, what we can do together to make our community even stronger around agriculture, food access, local food distribution as well," Molly DeMarco, a researcher at UNC Chapel Hill's Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, said about the interest of creating a council. "So we're just seeing what we can do to move something forward."

DeMarco along with Sarah Blacklin with N.C. Choices at the Center for Environmental Farming Systems, Larissa Calancie with UNC Chapel Hill's Nutrition Department, Jared Cates with Carolina Farmer Stewardship Association, Carl Matyac, director of Orange County Cooperative Extension, and Ashley Mercer with N.C. Department of Health were vocal in getting the effort up and running

Through CFSA, Cates works with groups around the state as well as in South Carolina who are interested in forming a food policy council. Such a committee can be many things, including a nonprofit organization, an official county advisory board or collective coalition of counties.

"Really it's whatever the needs are in the community and however the community decides to move forward as to what that entity will look like," he said.

Cates said food is a common denominator across different community members.

"Think about planning for the environment; think about health for those working in the public health sector, folks working in education trying to get more local food in schools," he said. "Everyone is working in their own arenas and working around food. Lots of times people are not working at the same table, on the same page; everyone is working

in their own silos. So food councils are a way to bring all these different voices to the table, talk about the community food system and find routes for collaboration and routes for solutions.”

Cates said working toward a better community food system that’s place-based, relationship-based and community minded will improve access to local food in the community but will have other results, as well.

“You’re going to have vibrant farms and fishing, you’ll have healthy people, you’ll have better access to locally freshly produced foods, you’ll have stronger communities, you’ll have thriving local economies, and you’re going to have resilient ecosystems,” he said.

Cates said over the past 10 years, many food councils have cropped up around the country, and North Carolina has followed the trend, adding to the potential to grow the range of food councils.

“So imagine how if this continues to go green and more food councils begin to develop,” he said. “Imagine how not only do we have a tool at the community level to help identify assets and opportunities and create collaboration in the community, but think about how all these councils could then talk to each other and work at a state level. You could have some really major impact on state policies.”

Matayac said when the opportunity arose for a food council, he saw it as a great way for the community to provide input on the local food system.

“That’s really what we’re looking at here is not for an opportunity for us to meet, but to really engage the community and help you all assist us in identifying needs, tell us some things we don’t know about and then how to get those things done,” he said.

During discussion, participants brainstormed the various needs of the county and the results they would like to see from the formation of a food council. The topics ranged from food accessibility to community gardens to studying the effects of climate change.

Cates said now that the public interest meeting has been held, the next step would be creating a taskforce.

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## Orange County restaurant inspection ratings to appear on Yelp pages

By [Nick Niedzwiadek](#) | Published 10/01/14 12:53am

Restaurant inspections have long revealed the dirtier side of food locales, including the restaurants frequented by residents of Chapel Hill and Carrboro.

In an effort to make inspection ratings more accessible, Orange County announced Sept. 16 that it would begin posting its health inspection ratings to Yelp. A restaurant's most recent letter grade now appears in the right-hand column of its Yelp page.

Victoria Hudson, an environmental health specialist for the Orange County Health Department, conducts inspections in Carrboro and parts of Chapel Hill and UNC. She said more access to information is beneficial to consumers.

"People should be able to use these scores to assign risk," Hudson said. "The letter 'A' does not necessarily give you the full picture as much as the list of comments does."

Clicking on the inspection score on Yelp reveals more information on previous inspections, including the dates and the number of health code violations found.

In May, for example, an inspection found pink and black mold in the ice machine at R&R Grill, though mold in ice machines was not an uncommon violation at restaurants in 2013 findings. The restaurant lost 1.5 points — a half deduction — and received a 98.5 total score.

Ross Moll, the owner of R&R Grill, said employees cleaned the machine after it was discovered. The machine is [cleaned weekly and inspected to prevent the problem](#).

"I think they do a good job coming down on people who are not up to snuff on things, and they definitely work with people to get things fixed," Moll said about the Health Department.

Bandido's Mexican Cafe also had mold in its ice machine recently, and an inspector observed an employee placing food on plates with bare hands in July. The restaurant lost 1.5 points each for those violations and scored 95.5 overall.

Tony Sustaita, owner of Bandido's, said the inspections help reinforce safe practices.

"Obviously the policy is to be clean all the time, but people mess up once in a while," he said. "Any issue that is brought up in an inspection is addressed immediately."

Both Moll and Sustaita said displaying scores in restaurants and on Yelp helps consumers make decisions.

"I think the only ones who would be concerned would be the ones with negative scores," Sustaita said. "We've had pretty good scores, so from our standpoint it doesn't make a difference."

Stacy Shelp, spokeswoman for the Orange County Health Department, said the county decided to put inspection scores on Yelp because of the amount of traffic the site receives. As of June 30, the site had a monthly average of 138 million unique visitors to its website.

Wake County partnered with Yelp in October 2013 and was one of the first places in the country to do so — behind San Francisco and Louisville, Ky.

Bill Greeves, spokesman for Wake County, said it was an easy way to provide information to the public.

Inspection scores are public information and are already required to be posted in restaurants and in an online database provided by the North Carolina Division of Environmental Health.

“For many years, we had the scores posted on our website, but it was a little buried and the database was difficult to navigate,” Greeves said. “But everyone knows Yelp.”

UNC freshman Alessandra Sacchi said she does not pay attention to inspection scores, for the most part.

“I don’t really pay attention to it at the dining hall because I feel like I should blindly trust that since they are serving thousands of students,” Sacchi said. “For restaurants, if it is kind of sketchy when I walk in, then I’ll take a look, but normally, I don’t pay much attention to it.”

Sacchi said she would be more likely to use Yelp’s mobile app than its website to look up scores.

Greeves said he thought it was important for Wake County to keep local restaurants in the loop during the process to minimize resistance.

“The general response was that we were already doing the inspections and providing them online, and to take that extra step is posting a badge of honor for a good score or providing more incentive to improve if it’s a low score,” he said.

Restaurants are scored on a 100-point scale, and their operating permits are revoked if they score below a 70.

Hudson said she is responsible for inspecting more than 90 different food establishments, including food trucks. Nine of those are on UNC’s campus — including Alpine Deli & Cafe and Rams Head and Top of Lenoir dining halls. She inspects 12 to 16 facilities per week.

Food vendors are inspected one to four times per year, depending on how much food preparation is done at the location, Hudson said. Most restaurants are inspected three or four times annually.

“We do not schedule inspections or give notice,” she said. “If an establishment has a score below an A, it can request a regrade, which we are required to respond to. But that doesn’t guarantee it improves.”

A review by The Daily Tar Heel of 1,277 inspections in Orange County between September 2013 and August 2014 showed that no restaurant received a grade in the 70s. Only three restaurants scored in the 80s — Yum Yum in Hillsborough, Courtyard by Marriott in Chapel Hill and Carolina 1663 in Chapel Hill .

No restaurant in Chapel Hill or Carrboro has had its permit revoked in the past five years, Shelp said.

Inspectors across the state use a standardized form to enforce the state's food code, which went into effect in September 2012 based on standards from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Properly cleaning and washing hands has a four-point value — the highest of any single inspection item. One of the lowest-value items is the cleanliness of bathrooms, which is worth one point.

UNC junior Jesse Zhu said he did not know he could look up scores on Yelp but would probably not do so.

"If you've been (to a restaurant) before, you know what it's like and have a general idea," he said. "I think it's a general reflection, but when it comes down to whether a 94 is better than a 93, then I think it's up to interpretation."

The Spotted Dog has received a perfect score on its last seven inspections. Linda Bourne, Spotted Dog owner, said it is important for restaurants and health inspectors to make a concerted effort to keep the customers safe.

"We take their teaching very seriously, and we work very hard to be safe and earn such high scores," Bourne said.

But some restaurant employees acknowledge there are potential problems with inspection scoring practices.

"I don't think I've ever been to a restaurant in the U.S. where I've seen a low score," said a Breadmen's employee who asked to remain anonymous for job security reasons.

"I don't think the system is accurate, but I think the fault is less in accuracy and more in the fact that I'm not really even sure what a 100 percent score even entails."

The employee said it is important for restaurant employees to collectively prevent issues as much as possible while maintaining service.

"Every restaurant has its underbelly," the employee said.

On Breadmen's most recent health inspection Sept. 11, the restaurant earned a 97.

"When coordinating the staff and distributing tasks in a way that's efficient and manageable, I think it's natural that some of the directives and regulations fall through the cracks," the employee said. "While the group as a whole takes good care of the restaurant, there's no way you can control every individual."

Bourne said the county's health inspections are thorough, but standards can never be high enough when it comes to keeping the public safe.

"Ideally, if they could hire 50 more health inspectors and inspect every restaurant more frequently, that would be great," Bourne said. "But I cannot say enough about the job the people who work there do for us and keeping everyone safe."

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## Local Demand For Food Assistance Grows Despite Economic Recovery

By [Elizabeth Friend](#)

Posted September 24, 2014 at 1:39 pm



Inter-Faith Council for Social Service

Newly released census data shows Orange County's poverty rate may be improving, but the economic recovery has yet to take hold in many communities.

At 10 a.m. on a Friday at the [Inter-Faith Council](#) in Carrboro, about half a dozen people wait quietly for their names to be called. Each is a client at the IFC's [Food Pantry](#). They are eligible to collect one bag of groceries a month. Though not everyone comes that often, many do come regularly.

This is one way Orange County's working poor make ends meet.

Kristen Lavergne is the IFC's Community Services Director. She says many clients work at the university, the hospitals or in the school system, but they struggle to pay their rent.

"The guideline generally is that you shouldn't be paying more than a third of your income in rent, and we find that a lot of our clients are paying at least half and sometimes even more," says Lavergne.

Affordable housing is one of the biggest challenges facing food pantry clients, as many landlords have stopped accepting Section 8 housing vouchers and the demand for off-campus student housing has driven up the cost of renting in Chapel Hill and Carrboro.

"I think having the university here is a blessing in some ways, but it also brings students to this area and the housing competition gets difficult there," says Lavergne.

According to Orange County Health Department data, a local household would need the income from 2.2 full-time minimum wage jobs to be able to afford the median rent on a two-bedroom apartment.

For some, that doesn't leave a lot left over to buy groceries.

The IFC distributes 1,200- 1,500 bags of food each month to families and individuals who live and work in Chapel Hill and Carrboro.

During the recession, Laverge says she saw that number spike, and while demand has since plateaued, the level of need still remains higher than when the recession began.

The numbers of people requiring food assistance may be beginning to stabilize in Chapel Hill and Carrboro, but in rural Orange, the need continues to grow.

Kay Stagner is the Manager of Client Services with [Orange Congregations in Mission](#). She says since 2010 she's seen demand for groceries double at the Hillsborough-based [Samaritan Relief Mission's food pantry](#).

"So far this year we've averaged about 290 households a month, that averages to about 14 food orders a day," says Stagner. "I was looking at our numbers from 2010, just four years ago, and we averaged seven food orders a day."

OCIM serves residents living in the Orange County Schools district. Though housing costs are lower in the rural areas than in the towns, Stagner says many clients struggle to find work that pays a living wage.

"Nobody wants to come here. They just can't find jobs," says Stagner. "They can't find work that will support themselves and their families."

Transportation and childcare costs also take a sizable chunk out of workers paychecks. Stagner says even the weather can play an unexpected role in driving up the demand for food.

"An ice storm like we had last winter, people's power goes out for three, four days, or a week—all of a sudden you have people you haven't even seen before, that have never needed your help before needing help with food because they lost everything," says Stagner.

According to the American Community Survey, the percent of people living in poverty in Orange County has dropped slightly, from 17.4 percent in 2012 to 16 percent in 2013. But that change seems imperceptible to those who work in the area's food pantries.

Stagner says she fully expects demand to increase in the coming year.

"We never know how many people are going to be needing us. It depends on changes in society from gas prices to the weather. We know we will serve more people this year than last year, we always have. But just how much, there's no way to tell."

Both the IFC and OCIM accept non-perishable food donations year-round. For more on how to donate, contact the IFC [here](#) and OCIM [here](#).

## **OC Health Department Wants To Tackle Growing Poverty**

By [Elizabeth Friend](#)

Posted September 23, 2014 at 7:00 am



As the number of Orange County families and children living in poverty continues to grow, officials with the Health Department are looking to other communities for strategies to help those in need.

The number of people living in poverty grew more in North Carolina than anywhere else in the nation, according to US Census Data. The state saw a 17.9 percent increase in its poverty rate between 2006 and 2010.

Despite the perception that Orange County is an affluent area, Meredith Stewart, planning manager for the Board of Health, says more and more local families are struggling too.

“About one in three of our kids in Orange County schools, so that’s both districts, are on free- or reduced-lunch,” Stewart says. “About one in four of our kids in Orange County are on Medicaid. We do have families struggling to get by, as evidence by those numbers.”

The area’s high cost of living is also a challenge for families. In Orange County, a household would need the income from 2.2 full-time minimum wage jobs to be able to afford the median rent on a two-bedroom apartment.

Stewart says officials are just beginning to plan how to tackle the multi-faceted problem of poverty.

“I think a conversation is beginning around the issues that are happening in Orange County and how we can address them from many different angles,” Stewart says. “So, this isn’t something that one person or one group can work on, we all have to come together to think about and talk

about our families and issues like housing, food, education, and childcare. All of these issues go together.”

As part of that conversation, local leaders are looking to other communities that have launched successful intervention programs.

“We’ll have the privilege of having Dr. Betina Jean-Louis from the Harlem Children’s Zone, who will be joining us this Friday starting at 8:00 a.m. at the Friday Center in Chapel Hill, to talk about the Harlem Children’s Zone and the work that they have done to improve the pipeline, as they call it, from cradle to career or college for children and how that was really a community effort that started with a community conversation that we’re starting to have here in Orange County.”

Stewart and others hope that programs such as The Harlem Children’s Zone and the East Durham Children’s Initiative could provide a model for lowering child poverty rates in Orange County.

Friday’s meeting is open to the public.

For more information, [click here](#).

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## Orange County seeks to inform community on smoking ban

By [Luman Ouyang](#) | Published 9 hours ago



Orange County Health Department worker Donna King (right) speaks with Pittsboro, North Carolina resident Sharon Flicker on Franklin Street about the county's smoking ban. Flicker, a former resident of Queens, New York, supported former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg's smoking ordinances and was unaware that Orange County had similar laws.

Photo by [Evan Semones](#)

Residents could start seeing fewer and fewer smokers in town now that [Orange County's smoking ban is being increasingly enforced](#).

[The Orange County Smoke-Free Public Places Rule was passed in 2012](#). The rule bans smoking in vehicles and all public places in Orange County.

Stacy Shelp, a spokeswoman for the Orange County Health Department, said a Smoking Response Team was created in January 2013, but began working in July of that year.

The team is composed of staff from the Orange County Health Department and volunteers - sometimes from partner organizations like the Chapel Hill Police Department , Tobacco Reality Unfiltered and the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health.

The team is usually sent to high-problem areas, Shelp said. They not only persuade smokers not to smoke in public, but also encourage residents to speak out about violations of the rule.

"It is about empowering people to say, 'You can't smoke here,'" she said.

The Smoking Response Team usually goes into the field once or twice a month. During the week of Sept. 15 to Sept. 19, the team came to Chapel Hill almost once or twice a day to educate and survey returning college students, Shelp said.

Coby Austin, tobacco prevention and control program coordinator for the Orange County Health Department, said the team approaches all people, not just smokers.

“We talk to everyone. Somebody may not smoke right now, but you don’t know what they will do in the future,” she said.

Austin said the team asks two questions: whether the person is an Orange County resident and if they are aware of the smoking ban. People are informed of the rule after being surveyed.

Austin said that only 45 percent of residents knew about the rule between May and December 2013, but that the number climbed to 55 percent in the period of January to September 2014.

[People are not always happy about being asked to put out their cigarettes](#), Austin said. She said she reports people’s reactions to the ban to the health department.

“It is important to understand the reaction that people have when they hear about the rule,” she said.

Austin said the smokers do not have to put out their cigarette when they are asked.

“We inform them about the rule, and they would decide by themselves,” she said.

Besides the Smoking Response Team, the health department offers other methods to raise awareness of the ban and help smokers quit.

Chapel Hill bus stops have information about the rule, Shelp said. Buzz Rides, a student-founded taxi company, will train its drivers to inform passengers about the rule and conduct surveys.

In October, the health department will release videos aimed at teaching people how to inform smokers of the rule.

Tiffany Mackey, a member of the Smoking Response Team, said a FreshStart class is going to be launched in October. The four-week class will introduce methods to quit smoking and offer free nicotine replacement therapy.

“It is unfair to tell people to quit but not provide resources,” Mackey said.

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## Orange County health officials offer drug disposal program

By [Sam James](#) | Published 09/22/14 12:58am

After more than 100 people visited the emergency room for accidentally overdosing on prescription medication in 2012, Orange County health officials are looking to curb prescription drug abuse by offering people a free and easy way to dispose of medications they no longer use.

On Thursday, residents can take their old or expired medications to Carrboro Town Commons to ensure they're disposed of properly. The Carrboro Police Department, in cooperation with the UNC Department of Public Safety, the Chapel Hill Police Department, Orange County Safe Kids, UNC Hospitals Police Department, Carolina Association of Pharmacy Students and the Orange Water and Sewer Authority, are hosting a Drug Take Back event from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Sgt. Billy Austin of the Carrboro Police Department said that in the three years the department has sponsored this event, they have received a range of medications.

"We see all kinds of medications at these events, from over-the-counter creams and fluids to controlled opioids," Austin said.

Austin said he's relieved to see these medications coming out of people's medicine cabinets.

"We don't have to worry about friends and family members getting hold of medications that aren't prescribed to them," he said.

Rob Crawford, co-chair for a Carolina Association of Pharmacy Students program that informs the public about prescription drug abuse, said one of the main functions of events like this is to combat misinformation about prescription drug abuse.

"Even if you take medicine that's just expired, or that's not yours, that's abuse," Crawford said.

Stacy Shelp, spokeswoman for the Orange County Health Department, said there is widespread inaccuracies about what actions constitute drug abuse, which contributes to the national problem of prescription drug abuse.

Over the last three years, an average of seven of the 10 poisoning deaths a year in Orange County were from prescription opioids. This is an increase from the average of three and a half to six out of 10 poisoning deaths a year a decade ago.

"It's not always an intended thing. Kids get into medicine cabinets," Shelp said.

In 2012, Orange County had more than 130 emergency department visits related to unintentional overdose, Shelp said. In 2011, there were more than 50 hospitalizations for unintentional overdose.

Austin said events like these help lower poisoning incidents by getting old medications out of reach.

"The supply of excess medications is dwindling due to these events," he said. "It's harder for people to get these medications."

Austin said improperly disposing of medications has adverse effects on the environment because it contributes to soil and water pollution.

"It addresses our need in the community to keep the soil and water supply safe," he said. "Protecting the soil and the water, and protecting people from misusing these medications are the main reasons we hold events like this."

Shelp said residents who cannot attend the event can still dispose of their old medication at the police station.

"The Carrboro and Chapel Hill police offices and the Health Department offices all have 24/7 drop boxes, where anyone can return any old medication, no questions asked," she said.

For students on campus who wish to dispose of old pills, Campus Health Services provides a similar service.

"At any time, any student can bring their unused medications to our pharmacy," said Amy Sauls, Director of Pharmacy at Campus Health Services.

Sauls said people can pull the labels off their medication bottles to protect personal information.

"We don't need any information about you or the medication in order to dispose of it properly," she said.

Sauls said both events and the drop boxes contribute to the overall safety of the community, so it's important for the whole community to participate.

"If you're not using the medication, the safest thing you can do is bring it back," she said.

# The Herald-Sun

## Orange County marks World Rabies Day

Sep. 20, 2014 @ 03:52 PM

[Katie Jansen](#)

Next Sunday marks the eighth annual World Rabies Day, a global initiative to raise awareness about rabies and support prevention of the fatal disease.

To celebrate, Orange County Animal Services will offer two low-cost rabies vaccination clinics this week.

On Thursday, people can get their dogs and cats vaccinated for \$10 in Hillsborough. On Saturday, they'll be able to do the same in Chapel Hill.

By Thursday of last week, Orange County had 20 confirmed cases of rabies this year, said Bob Marotto, director of Orange County Animal Services. Of the carriers, there have been 12 raccoons, three foxes, three bats and two skunks.

The number is up from 12 confirmed cases in both 2012 and 2013, but Marotto said that historical data from the county show a cycle through high and low points over time.

He expects to see up to 25 confirmed cases by the end of the year.

"You are putting your pet at risk if you do not vaccinate," Marotto said.

This year, Animal Services has already held 10 or 11 clinics, doling out about 1,000 vaccinations.

The clinic cost is kept low to encourage people to participate, Marotto said.

Vaccinations at veterinarian offices can be a bit more expensive. For example, Cole Park Veterinary Hospital in Chapel Hill offers dog vaccinations for \$20 and cat vaccinations for \$27.50. There are also additional costs associated with required examinations that accompany the shots, said Arvadia Mason, practice manager at Cole Park.

State law requires dogs, cats and ferrets to be vaccinated as soon as they turn 4 months old. Marotto said vaccinations for other animals, such as horses and other livestock, are encouraged but not required.

Even if animals are kept inside with seemingly no contact with other animals, Marotto said, bats may enter the house and put pets at risk of rabies.

By keeping vaccinations current, pet owners can save themselves potential headache and heartache in the future.

If a pet that is already vaccinated is exposed to the disease, it must have a booster shot within five days. If it doesn't get the booster shot in that timeframe, state law declares it unvaccinated.

But if the animal is unvaccinated at time of exposure, the choice becomes much more difficult than a simple shot: the animal must be either euthanized or quarantined for six months.

This is the procedure required by state law, Marotto said.

Not only can this decision be heart-wrenching for many pet owners, but it can be costly, as well.

At Cole Park Veterinary Hospital, cat quarantines average at about \$4,000, with dog quarantines ringing in at \$5,000. Costs can vary depending on whether the animal's other vaccines are current, Mason said.

The quarantine is necessary because there is no post-exposure treatment for animals. For humans, there are more options, but they too have a hefty price tag.

Rabies post-exposure treatments cost thousands of dollars, although the price varies because the immune globulin administered varies based on a person's weight, said Judy Butler, supervisor for community health services at the Orange County Health Department.

Marotto said it's important for people who have been exposed to seek treatment right away. Once symptoms begin to show, the disease is fatal.

"We're very interested in the well-being of animals, but we're also very interested in the well-being of the public," he said.

Marotto added that the public is lucky to live in a country where rabies prevention is in place. The U.S. sees fewer than 10 rabies deaths per year.

"World Rabies Day always reminds me that it's not that way throughout the world," Marotto said, adding that annually, more than 55,000 people worldwide die of rabies.

"It's a preventable disease, but the infrastructure and prevention often isn't in place, and we see the negative consequences of that," he said. "That is why we do what we do."

#### **CLINICS:**

##### **Hillsborough**

**When:** Thursday, Sep. 25, 5 to 7 p.m.

**Where:** Public Market House, 144 E. Margaret Lane

**Cost:** \$10 (Cash only)

##### **Chapel Hill**

**When:** Saturday, Sep. 27, 9 a.m. to noon

**Where:** Orange County Animal Services Center, 1601 Eubanks Road

**Cost:** \$10. Microchips also offered for \$25.

# The Herald-Sun

## Restaurant inspections now easier to find

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From staff reports

CHAPEL HILL —

Diners everywhere visit the website Yelp.com to identify places to eat, view menus and pictures, and read reviews. Now those looking to visit restaurants in Orange County can also find health inspection ratings on Yelp.

The Orange County Health Department is partnering with Yelp to provide food safety and sanitation information to potential diners.

In the past, people interested in knowing the reasons restaurants received certain a sanitation score would have had to visit the county's environmental health website or North Carolina's public health inspections database. After reviewing the county's web statics and seeing how popular the inspection ratings were, the county decided to contact Yelp about adding health inspection scores to its restaurant pages in an effort to make the ratings more accessible to people living in or visiting Orange County.

"We are excited to have the opportunity to partner with Yelp," said Connie Pixley, Orange County's environmental health food and lodging supervisor. "Customers now can assess the health inspection violations for all of our restaurants by clicking on 'health score.' Specific sanitation violations are noted to help the customer make informed choices about where they want to dine."

Yelp is an online service that relies on user-generated comments and reviews of businesses. It reported an average of about 138 million monthly unique visitors in the second quarter of 2014, with the Yelp site for just Orange County receiving a couple of thousand hits per day.

"Visitors love Orange County's dining options, which now total more than 300," said Laurie Paolicelli, director of the Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau. "We have such a wide range of options and this has created a growing demand for dining information."

"In today's social media world, many content creators add local and national health inspection scores on their sites because many consumers want this information before visiting a restaurant," she said. "We applaud Orange County Health Department in its efforts to partner with Yelp and offer more information for a visitor's consideration."