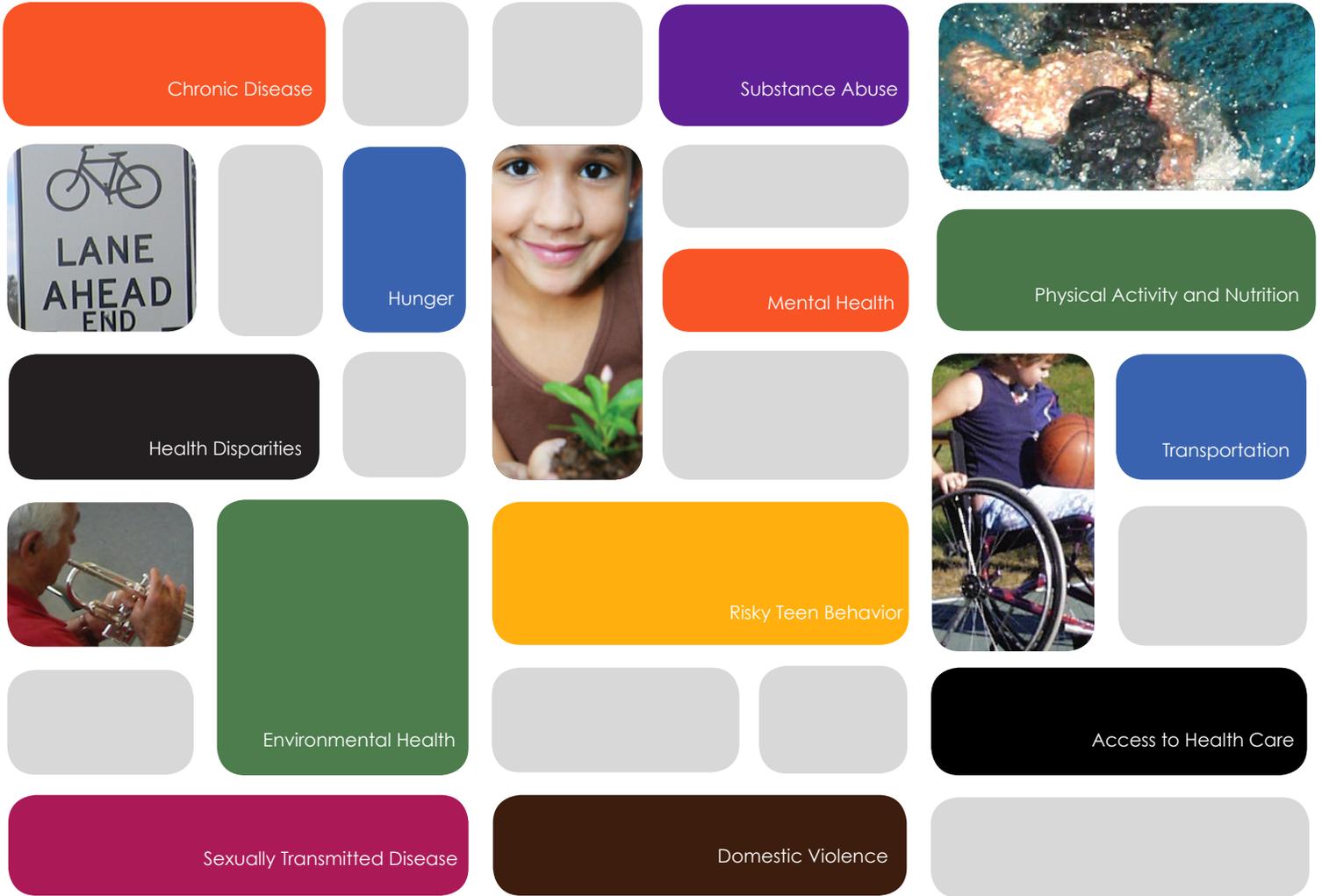


2007 ORANGE COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



North Carolina 2010 Health Objectives

Healthy Carolinians Partnerships are umbrella groups that organize coalitions to address leading health issues in their communities. These local groups work together to achieve North Carolina's 2010 Health Objectives, which were developed by the Governor's Task Force for Healthy Carolinians and mirror the national Healthy People 2010 Objectives developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Overall goals of Healthy Carolinians include increasing the span of healthy life, removing health disparities, and promoting preventive health services.

North Carolina 2010 Health Objectives cover the following areas of health:

- Access to Health Care
- Chronic Disease
- Community Health
- Disability
- Environmental Health
- Health Promotion
- Infant Mortality
- Infectious Disease
- Injury
- Mental Health
- Older Adult Health
- Oral Health

North Carolina wants to achieve the NC 2010 Health Objectives by year 2010. To meet this deadline, counties must address health issues important to their community. Addressing local level health issues is the role of the Healthy Carolinians of Orange County partnership. This partnership strives to improve the health of all Orange County residents by working with community members and organizations to promote healthy lifestyles and, ultimately, empower residents to choose better health.

For more information visit www.healthycarolinians.org and www.healthypeople.gov.



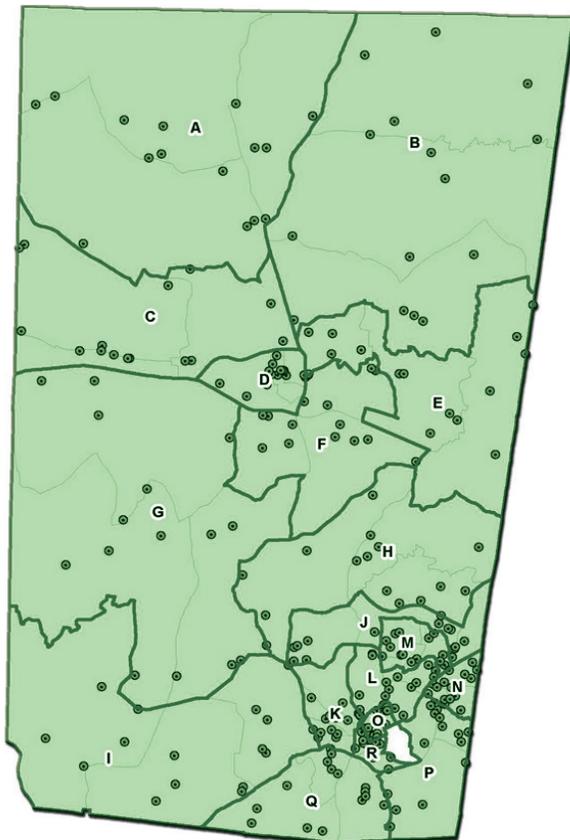
Community Health Assessment

2007 Orange County Community Health Assessment

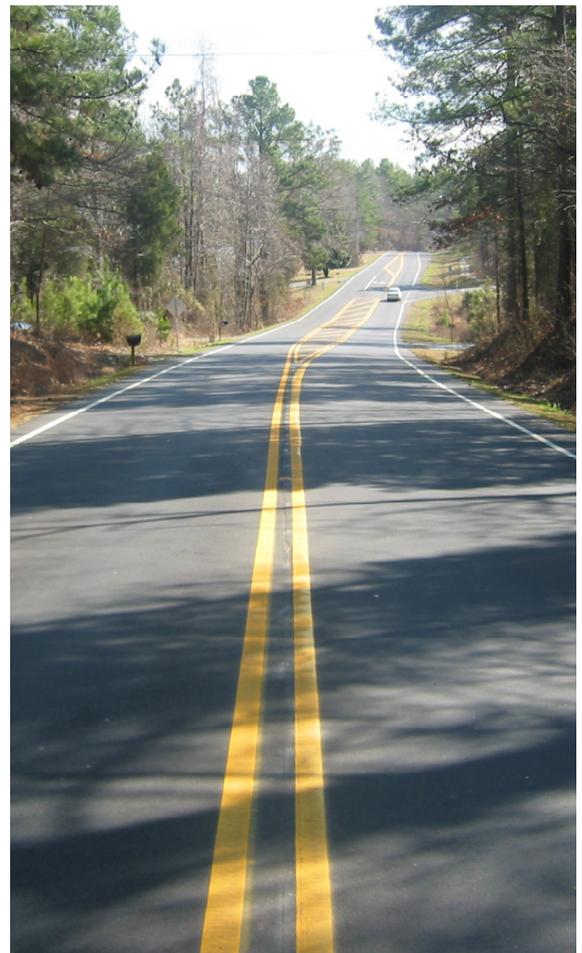
Throughout 2007, Healthy Carolinians of Orange County and the Orange County Health Department worked closely with the community to assess the health of Orange County residents. Data gathered from over 200 community members, over 50 county agencies, and county health statistics were used to assess the health of our community.

This summary highlights the assessment's prioritization process, areas of celebration, and health issues of concern. It does not include all findings and details from the assessment. The full report with references can be found online at www.co.orange.nc.us/health. Hard copies of the report are located at the Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Orange County libraries. To request an electronic version on CD, contact the Healthy Carolinians coordinator.

Community Health Assessment map. Green dots represent areas visited.



Since 1999, Healthy Carolinians of Orange County has coordinated the county's community health assessment process. In April 2007, Orange County Health Department staff and volunteers used Trimble Global Positioning Systems (GPS) to conduct a random survey to assess the county's top health, social, and environmental concerns. Approximately 50 surveyors working in pairs visited homes in northern and southern Orange County. As a result, 202 residents were surveyed in just two weekends. The survey area map is shown below.



Community Health Assessment

The 2007 Healthy Carolinians of Orange County Annual Meeting was the final stage of the Community Health Assessment prioritization process. During this meeting, assessment data was reported. Participants worked in groups to discuss the data, then voted individually on which issues they believed were the most important to address. Over 70 participants attended the meeting including community members and representatives from the Orange County Board of Health, Orange County Board of Commissioners, social service agencies, churches, schools, and the health care sector.



Prioritization of Community Health Assessment Data

The community assessment process uncovers a range of community concerns. While each concern is important, the availability of resources and interest in the community limits the number of issues that can be addressed at a given time. Thus, the community must prioritize which issues to focus on and how use its resources.

First, a Community Health Assessment Team reviewed all data gathered to narrow down the areas of greatest concern for Orange County. The following ten areas were selected:

- Access to Health Care and Health Insurance
- Chronic Diseases
- Domestic Violence
- Environmental Health
- Hunger
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse
- Physical Activity and Nutrition
- Risky Teen Behavior
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Transportation

Secondly, Healthy Carolinians of Orange County held its annual meeting on September 26, 2007. At this meeting, participants voted on which of the ten areas were most important to the community. The following priorities have become the new focus of the Healthy Carolinians of Orange County partnership:

- Access to Health Care and Health Insurance
- Health Promotion
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse
- Physical Activity and Nutrition
- Transportation

Reasons to Celebrate

Excellent Educational Systems

Over half (55.8%) of Orange County residents aged 25 and older have a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to 27.2% nationally. This is largely due to the presence of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which is consistently ranked as one of the top public universities in the nation. In addition to the university, there is strong support for public education in the county, with 49% of the general fund devoted to supporting public education. The Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School district is consistently rated as one of the top achieving school districts in the state. Both Chapel Hill-Carrboro City and Orange County School Systems are experiencing drop out rates lower than the state average.

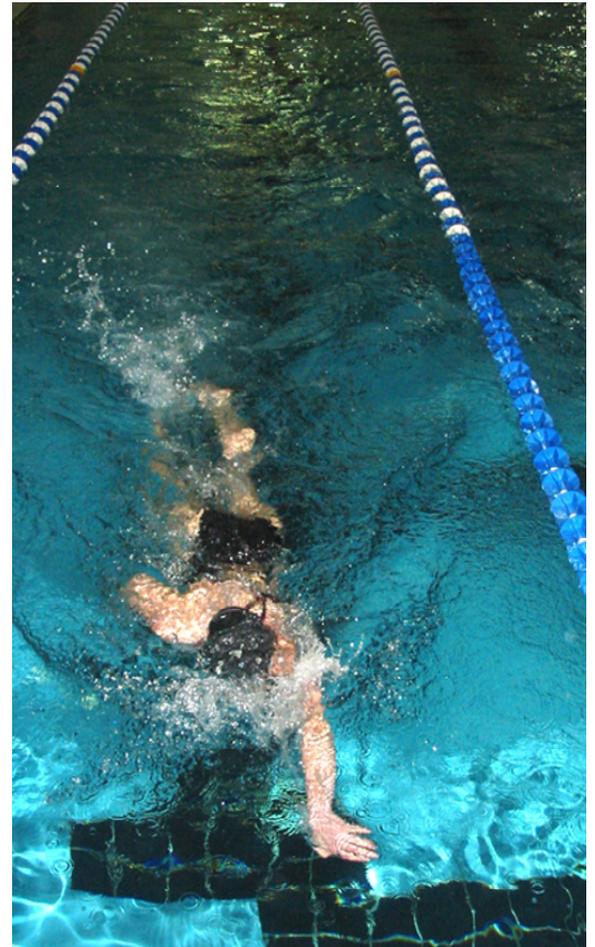
Low Unemployment Rates

In 2006, Orange County's unemployment rate was 3.3%, which was one of the lowest unemployment rates in North Carolina and lower than the state unemployment rate of 4.7%. In addition, Orange County saw an increase in private sector jobs between 2005 and 2006. However, it is important to note that some groups (e.g., African Americans, persons with disability, and youth) have a harder time finding adequate employment opportunities. Thus, there is room for improvement in this area.

Low Teen Pregnancy Rates

In 2006, the rate of teen pregnancy in Orange County was one of the lowest in the state at 20.9 pregnancies per 1,000 compared to the state rate of 63.1 pregnancies per 1,000. Only one other county reported a lower rate. Despite the good news, there were still 154 pregnancies among women 19 years or younger; two of these pregnancies were to girls 10 to 14 years of age. As in previous years, there is significant disparity between whites and minority teenagers with an almost three-fold increase in minority pregnancy rates (14.1 and 40.5 respectively).

Data from the 2007 Community Health Assessment shows that we have many reasons to celebrate including good health and good quality of life. Overall, Orange County is a wonderful place to live and our residents are healthier than others in the state. For this we should be proud.



Reasons to Celebrate

We celebrate **Good Waste Management Practices** in Orange County! Community Health Assessment data shows that Orange County has high rates of recycling with 86% of respondents reporting that they recycle. Orange County experienced a 46% reduction in per capita waste production from its 1991-1992 levels, while the state experienced an 18% increase during the same time period. According to the Orange County Solid Waste Management Department, county landfills managed 85,649 tons of waste during 2005-2006.

Low Diabetes Mortality Rates

Between 2001 and 2005, Orange County's death rate from diabetes was 17.8 per 100,000. This rate is far below the state average and the desired rate for NC 2010 Health Objectives. It is difficult to determine how many Orange County residents are living with diabetes; however, 2005 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System data indicates that only 5.6% of residents have been diagnosed with diabetes. In addition to low diabetes mortality rates, a high percentage (≈96%) of residents reported getting the recommended diabetes screenings (A1c and foot exams).

Low Heart Disease and Stroke Mortality Rates

Between 2001 and 2005, Orange County's death rate from heart disease was 165.3 per 100,000. The death rate from stroke during this period was 60.1 per 100,000. These rates are lower than NC 2010 Health Objectives of 219.8 and 61 per 100,000 respectively and is in part due to the excellent health care system in Orange County, which has active screening, treatment, and aftercare programs. While this data is clear cause for celebration, there is still room for improvement. Heart disease continues to be the leading cause of hospitalization in Orange County and minorities have higher mortality rates from heart disease and stroke when compared to whites.

Low Smoking Rates and Increased No Smoking Policies

In 2006, only 12% of Orange County adults reported that they smoked. This rate is below the NC 2010 Health Objective of 12.5% and much lower than the statewide rate of 22.6%. In addition, policy changes have taken place in the county to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke. Both school systems, the UNC Health Care System, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill are now 100% tobacco free. Many work sites, restaurants, and other venues throughout the county have adopted voluntary non-smoking policies.



Areas of Concern

Overarching Theme for 2007

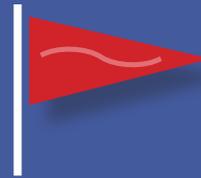
An overarching theme from the Community Health Assessment is that **disparities still exist** in our community between minority and majority racial/ethnic groups, between higher and lower-income residents, and among persons with disabilities. In almost all categories, minorities, lower-income residents, and persons with disabilities experience higher rates of illness and death. Poverty in particular is linked to poor health outcomes. In general, those who live at or below the poverty level suffer disproportionately from chronic diseases, mental illness, and early death. Despite the fact that Orange County is one of the most affluent counties in the state with a median family income of \$71,434 and an unemployment rate of 3.3%, 13.9% of residents lived in poverty in 2006. (Note: The large UNC Chapel Hill student population skews poverty figures for the area near the university.)

Lack of Access to Health Care Services and Health Insurance

Lack of affordable health care services and health insurance were top social and health priorities among residents. While Orange County has a large number of health care providers and excellent health care facilities, many residents do not receive the services they need. Limited access to health care is driven by such factors as lack of transportation, language barriers, disparity in treatments provided to minority residents, the concentration of services in the southern part of the county, and many residents' unfamiliarity with the health care system.

Economic considerations, particularly lack of health insurance, also limit access to health care services. Data indicates that 16.8% of Orange County residents lack health insurance. While access to health care and health insurance affects all groups, lower-income families, persons on Medicaid, and the Latino population are most affected. Access to dental care is of particular concern for these populations. The high cost of dental care makes it virtually impossible for those without dental insurance to afford it. In addition, it is very difficult for residents to find a provider that accepts Medicaid.

While the areas of celebration are evidence that Orange County lives up to its reputation as an excellent place to live and raise a family, data also reveals areas of concern that need to be addressed to improve residents' overall quality of life.



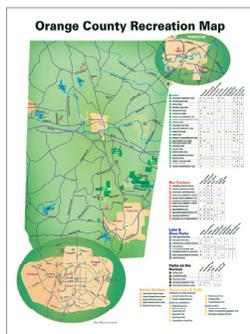
Areas of Concern

Orange County has many great resources that we can build upon to address the obesity epidemic. Healthy Carolinians of Orange County along with its member agencies and partners have initiated projects to educate residents about the benefits of healthy eating and physical activity, as well as provide residents opportunities to engage in these behaviors. These projects serve at-risk populations and the general population. In addition, Orange County's well maintained parks and recreational facilities offer a variety of programs and services to residents.

Steps in the Right Direction...



5-4-3-2-1 Go! Campaign
(Orange on the Move Coalition, Orange County Cooperative Extension)



Recreation Map (Healthy Carolinians of Orange County and Intergovernmental Parks Work Group Members)



Orange County Churches Eating Smart and Moving More Program (Orange County Health Department)

High Breast Cancer Rates

While the rate of death due to female breast cancer has fallen by 13% since 2001, the number of diagnosed cases of breast cancer in Orange County has increased since 2001. Between 2001 and 2005, Orange County had the highest number of breast cancer incidences of any county in North Carolina (196.4 cases per 100,000).

High Obesity Rates

Obesity rates continue to rise across all ages, genders, and racial/ethnic groups in the county, with 51.6% of adults reported as overweight or obese, and 35% of children seen in WIC or health department clinics reported as overweight or at risk of becoming overweight. The rise in obesity is a concern because it contributes to the three leading causes of deaths in Orange County and many other illnesses.

Low Levels of Fruit / Vegetable Intake and Physical Activity

County data shows that the majority of Orange County residents are not eating a healthy diet or getting the recommended level of daily physical activity; two factors contributing to the rise in obesity. Only 32.2% of adults reported eating five or more fruits and vegetables a day and only 30 to 56% of adults report exercising five or more days a week (depending upon which data source is used). Children have less opportunity for recess and physical education classes in school, which makes it difficult for them to get the recommended amount of 60 minutes of exercise per day. Community input suggests that there is a need for greater awareness and education about healthy lifestyle behaviors and a greater push for policy and environmental changes that support healthy lifestyles.

Areas of Concern

Mental Health

It is difficult to obtain accurate data on the number of residents who suffer from mental health disorders. However, it is estimated that 15 to 20% of adults suffer from significant mental illness that impacts their functioning, and that 2,880 children and adolescents in Orange County have mental health needs. Mental health was the fourth most important health concern among residents, with 17% of residents stating that they felt it was difficult to access mental health services, particularly for the uninsured. Residents expressed need for more information on how to find mental health services, more continuity in care between crisis and continued care services, and more referrals from larger agencies to smaller agencies to reduce waiting periods.

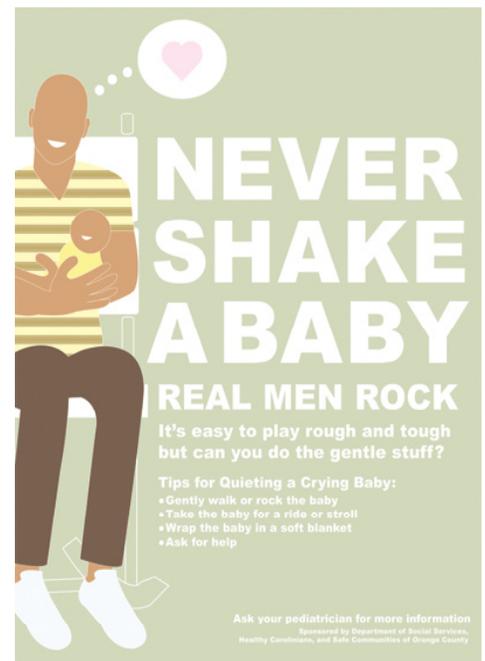
Substance Abuse

Like mental health, substance abuse is difficult to measure; however, it is estimated to be North Carolina's costliest health problem and a problem that exists in our community. Data suggests that a large percent of youth are using substances such as alcohol, marijuana, and cocaine. Additionally, residents cited substance abuse as the second most serious health concern in the community. Substance abuse is an important problem because there is a lack of adequate treatment centers, long waiting periods for services, and a lack of insurance coverage to pay for treatments. Residents also expressed need for more comprehensive and creative treatment options for youth substance abusers, and felt it was important to provide outlets to youth to prevent substance use.

High Suicide Rates

In 2005, there were 17 reported suicides (or 14.2 per 100,000 population) in Orange County. This statistic is higher than the statewide average of 12 per 100,000 and higher than the NC 2010 Health Objectives target of eight. Mental health and substance abuse are significant contributors to a high suicide rate.

We are concerned about **High Rates of Child Abuse and Neglect**. In the 2006-2007 fiscal year, 1,284 children were reported for suspected child abuse, neglect, and/or dependency in Orange County. Of those children, about 30% (376) were found in need of services or they were substantiated for abuse or serious neglect. Child abuse has long-term effects on children and families and ultimately our whole community. Collaboration among community partners continues to be important to assure appropriate services are available for these children and their families.



In recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month 2007, the Orange County Department of Social Services and Healthy Carolinians Advocates for Children Committee with support from Orange County Safe Communities held its first "Real Men Rock" event to focus on Shaken Baby Syndrome prevention.

Areas of Concern

The interaction between people and their environments, natural as well as human-made, continues to emerge as a major public health issue. The quality of life within Orange County continues to attract residents and workers to the area. As the county grows, one challenge is accommodating growth while maintaining the high quality of life residents enjoy. The Orange County Health Department, in collaboration with local and state agencies, provides many services and resources to monitor and protect the environment and health of Orange County residents.

Transportation in Northern Orange

Transportation was repeatedly cited as a barrier to accessing needed services including health services, social services, and recreational opportunities. Transportation is of greatest concern for residents without access to public transportation, residents who live in northern Orange County and other rural areas, persons with disability, and the elderly. While Orange Public Transportation has improved services in northern parts of the county, some residents still find it difficult to access these services. More outreach and education to vulnerable populations about transportation services (e.g., providers, routes, and schedules) and increased access to transportation services is needed.

Perception of Poor Water Quality

Water pollution was cited as the second most important environmental concern among residents, with 38% of residents reporting water pollution as their top concern, 22% of residents citing drinking water quality specifically as a concern and 20% citing ground water quality specifically as a concern. Between 45 and 50% of Orange County residents receive water through a public water supply. These suppliers must meet state and federal drinking water standards. New local standards for well construction have significantly decreased instances of fecal Coliform contamination in new wells. Iron and manganese are commonly found in well water above the Environmental Protection Agency's recommended limits. Although these are secondary contaminants, they generally do not adversely affect health, but can cause significant esthetic issues. The underlying geology of Orange County can contribute detectable levels of arsenic in some wells. Monitoring, education, and outreach to residents about water quality in Orange County is needed.



Our Call to Action

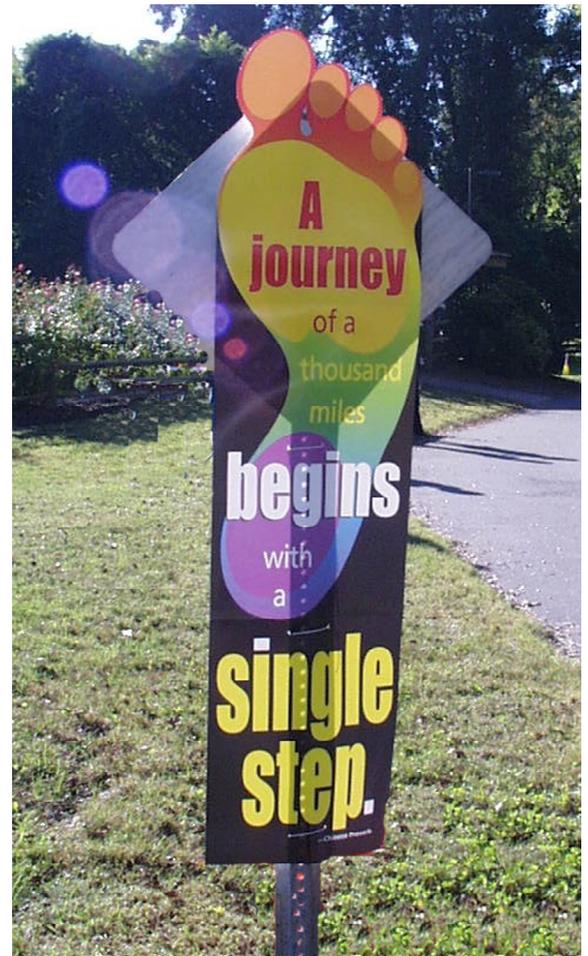
A Journey Begins With a Single Step

Efforts are underway to address priority issues identified in the 2007 Community Health Assessment. New initiatives are needed to respond to pressing issues like improving access to health care and health insurance, and increasing more comprehensive mental health services. Improving the quality of life of Orange County residents - particularly those with economic, emotional, and physical challenges - will require involvement from multiple groups including government agencies, businesses, community and faith-based organizations, our school systems and university, and residents.

Healthy Carolinians of Orange County will develop committees and task forces to determine further actions to initiate to address unmet health needs. Additional analysis of the issues and their underlying causes may be needed to fully understand and respond to identified needs. In 2008, the partnership and its committees will develop Community Health Action Plans outlining strategies for addressing the five chosen priority areas. The partnership will continue to encourage collaboration between community agencies and groups to achieve good health outcomes.

Please see the next page to learn how you can become a member of Healthy Carolinians of Orange County.

Orange County has many assets and many unmet needs. The 2007 Orange County Community Health Assessment report provides a glimpse into the realities existing within our community. For the next four years, the Orange County Health Department and Healthy Carolinians of Orange County will share and use data from this report to influence strategic community health planning. Healthy Carolinians of Orange County will develop a communication plan to ensure broad dissemination of the report and form committees to implement activities addressing priority issues.



HOW YOU CAN BE INVOLVED IN HEALTHY CAROLINIANS OF ORANGE COUNTY:

Join the more than 80 individuals and 50 organizations partnering with Healthy Carolinians of Orange County to find creative solutions to help all Orange County residents make health a priority. Committee and work groups are forming to address top health concerns in the county. To join, contact the Healthy Carolinians Coordinator at 919-968-2022 ext. 291. Membership information and applications are also available on the Orange County Health Department's web site at www.co.orange.nc.us/health (click on the Healthy Carolinians link).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Thanks to the residents of Orange County, Community Health Assessment Team members, and all Healthy Carolinians partners and member agencies who helped to guide and make this year's assessment a true community process.

Cover photos of man with trumpet and swimmer courtesy of David Hunt

Photo on pages 5 and 6 courtesy of David Hunt

Photo on pages 3 and 10 courtesy of 2005 Orange County Active Seniors Project

CURRENT HEALTHY CAROLINIANS OF ORANGE COUNTY OFFICERS:

Chair: Mark Sullivan, Mental Health Association of Orange County
Vice-Chair: Pam Dickens, North Carolina Office on Disability and Health
Secretary: Dee Jay Zerman, UNC Hospital Planning Department
Coordinator: Bobbie Jo Munson, Orange County Health Department



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