2011 Forsyth County Community Health Assessment Report

Forsyth County Department of Public Health
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Preface

This report describes the participants, process, and outcomes of the 2011 Forsyth County Community Health Assessment (CHA). Although this process takes place every four years, the fundamental findings are based on population-based measures and they often change little in such a relatively short period. Some of the critical findings of this process that remain important are:

(a) Forsyth County residents experience a high level of preventable disease and death from tobacco use, unhealthy dietary habits, and inadequate physical exercise;
(b) Forsyth County residents experience a disproportionately high rate of pregnancy loss and infant death; and
(c) Health disparities are even greater in Forsyth County than in the State.

These findings were confirmed in the recent Forsyth County Health Rankings Report which indicated that the strongest predictors of better or poorer health status are better or poorer socioeconomic conditions respectively. The racial differences in socioeconomic status, neighborhood residential conditions, and access to medical care are important contributors to health disparities.

The priority health problems identified four years ago are still central issues. They are: Health Promotion (poor dietary practices, inadequate physical activity, and tobacco use); Infant Mortality (preventing repeat premature births.); Environmental Health (illegal dumping); Community Health (economic justice); Injury (domestic violence); and Mental Health (homelessness & access to care). These priority focus areas have been somewhat reformulated as the result of the current process into the following list of new priority focus areas:

- Physical Activity and Nutrition with emphasis on Healthy Families
- Physical Activity and Nutrition with emphasis on Tobacco Prevention &Cessation
- Physical Activity and Nutrition with emphasis on Nutrition
- Physical Activity and Nutrition with emphasis on Physical Activity
- Chronic Disease with emphasis on Chronic Disease Management
- Maternal and Infant Health with emphasis on Breastfeeding Initiative
- Social Determinants of Health with emphasis on Translating Social Determinants Messages for Lay Audiences

These priority concerns, and the bases for their identification, are discussed at length in the body of this document. The Forsyth County Healthy Community Coalition, which led the process of the CHA along with the Department of Public Health, will continue its efforts to improve the health of our community – through better collaboration with both hospitals, community partners, policymakers and other leaders in our community. The strategies are outlined in the Community Health Action Plans.

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Every four years, Forsyth County Healthy Community Coalition, Forsyth County Department of Public Health and community partners conduct a comprehensive community wide assessment to identify priority health issues and plan interventions to improve the health of the community. It is required for local Health Department accreditation through the NC Health Department Accreditation Board. During this cycle, we have collaborated with both hospitals: Forsyth Medical Center and Wake Forest Baptist Health to meet the Affordable Care Act/IRS 990 Schedule H Requirements for Not for Profit Hospitals. This document will serve as the basis for prioritizing the community's health needs, and culminate in planning to meet those needs.

Forsyth County Highlights from the Community Data Overview

- Cancer, heart disease, chronic lower respiratory diseases and stroke are the leading causes of death.
- African Americans continue to experience higher death rates for Diabetes, Heart disease, Stroke and Kidney Disease compared to Whites
- Whites experience higher death rates for Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease and Suicide compared to African Americans.
- Homicide deaths are 3.1 times higher among African Americans than Whites and 5.0 times higher among males compared to females and the leading cause of death among Hispanics.
- Prostate cancer deaths among African Americans are 2.3 times that of white men.
- Since 2005 to 2009, the non-Hispanic black babies die a rate of almost three times that of white babies
- In 2010, one in every five babies was born to a Hispanic mother and 10.6% were born to teen mothers
- 45,010 Forsyth County residents are uninsured
- In FY 2010, over 50% of Emergency department visits (both hospitals) were by uninsured persons
- There are five(5) dentists per 10, 000 residents
- In FY 2010, more than 1,175 emergency department visits were due to dental care
- 11,000 Adults and 4,200 children were served at Center Point for mental health, developmental disabilities, and/or substance abuse, in FY 2011
- 27% of Forsyth County residents reported that they had one or more poor mental health days in the past 30 days, according to the 2009 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System
- "Outpatient mental health services are needed for adolescents. Alternatives are needed to prisons or institutions" 2011 Stakeholders Interview Report
- In 2011, 21% of middle school students surveyed reported feeling sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row to the extent they stopped doing some usual activities; 13% reported having made a suicide plan and 19% had seriously considered attempting suicide.
- In 2011, 26% of high school students surveyed reported feeling sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row to the extent they stopped doing some usual activities; 12% reported having made a suicide plan and 14% had seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year.
- In 2011, 264 WFUBMC emergency department visits were due to attempted suicide.
- In 2011, 26% of middle school students and 27%of high school students surveyed reported that they were slightly or very overweight.

Ranking Priority Focus Areas

On March 26, 2012, forty-five (45) individuals representing health care, mental health, public health, community members/leaders, education and faith community leader attended the CHA Priority Setting meeting. They were randomly assigned into eight (8) groups to prioritize the seven (7) focus areas. Random assignments allowed members to share their diverse knowledge, experience and challenges in addressing each priority area. They were presented with data specific to each priority area; and copies of the 2010 State of the County Health Report as well as other pertinent data materials for each priority area to facilitate group discussion. They were asked to review and rank each priority area based on the following five criteria:

- *Magnitude*: Proportion of the population affected or vulnerable.
- *Severity:* Impact on mortality, morbidity, disability and quality of life
- *Intervention Effectiveness*: Proven interventions exist that are feasible from a practical, economic and political viewpoint
- *Public Concern:* Degree of public concern and/or awareness

Urgency: Need for action based on degree and rate of growth (decline); Potential for affecting and amplifying other health or socioeconomic issues; Timing for public awareness, collaboration, and funding is present.

The rankings were as follows:

1. Physical Activity & Nutrition
2. Chronic Disease Prevention
3. Maternal & Infant Health
4. Social Determinants of Health
5. Access to Care
6. Mental Health
7. Substance Abuse Prevention

Recommendations

Four (4) action planning teams were formed based on the top four health issues, Physical Activity & Nutrition, Chronic Disease Prevention, Maternal & Infant Health and Social Determinants of Health. Examples of recommended actions are listed below:

Physical Activity & Nutrition

- Focus on chronic disease prevention by targeting children/healthy families and efforts to reduce hospital readmissions and tailor intervention to seniors
- Create and encourage partnership among community agencies/organizations to strengthen their commitment and initiatives related to nutrition and physical activity.
- Mobilize and support specific partners such as YMCA and include Transformation Nation; FC Department of Public Health with Step up Forsyth

Chronic Disease Prevention

- Review evidence-based intervention such as the Pregnancy care model for Chronic disease management
- Focus intervention with high mental health conditions or complications with those with chronic disease management complications

Maternal & Infant Health

- Promote a breast feeding policy through media campaign and presentation to businesses, hospital clinicians, and private practice physicians. According to emerging research, breastfeeding reduces infant mortality by 29%. Breastfeeding needs to be promoted as the norm for infant feeding in Forsyth County.

Social Determinants of Health

- Convene different community and business leaders to increase awareness of this issue
- Mobilize and support specific partners such as businesses, Forsyth Future, CHANGE

2011 Forsyth County Community Health Action Plans

The action planning working groups developed seven (7) community action plans and strategies to address our top priority issues/concerns:

- Physical Activity and Nutrition with emphasis on Healthy Families
- Physical Activity and Nutrition with emphasis on Tobacco Prevention &Cessation
- Physical Activity and Nutrition with emphasis on Nutrition
- Physical Activity and Nutrition with emphasis on Physical Activity
- Chronic Disease with emphasis on Chronic Disease Management
- Maternal and Infant Health with emphasis on Breastfeeding Initiative
- Social Determinants of Health with emphasis on Translating Social Determinants Messages for Lay Audiences

2011 Forsyth County Community Health Report

The full report can be accessed online at http://www.forsyth.cc/PublicHealth/publications.aspx; http://forsythfutures.org/ and http://www.healthycommunity.ws/ . This report serves as a reference for many agencies and organizations developing grant proposals and programming. A brochure summarizing findings and recommendations will be developed and mailed to community funders, elected officials; and will be easy to download and print at the websites listed above.

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