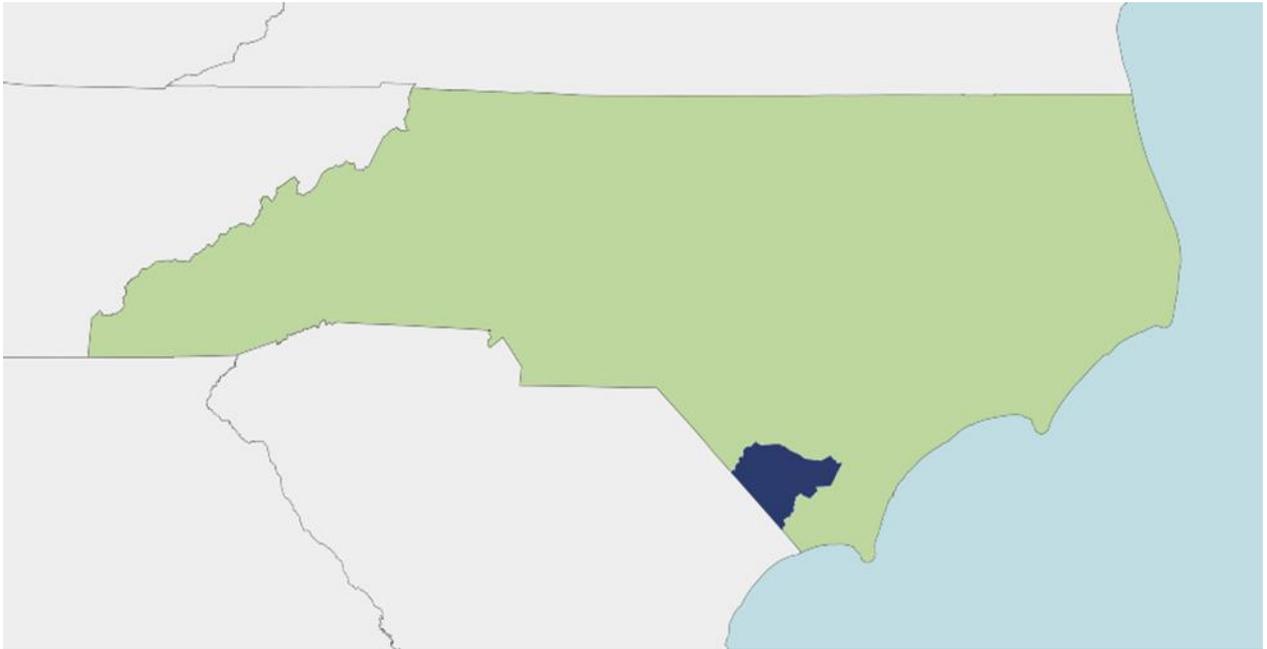


2018 State of the County Health Report

Columbus County, NC



Presented by:

Columbus County Health Department

304 Jefferson Street

Whiteville, NC 28472

State of the County Health Report Overview

Columbus County completed the Community Health Assessment in 2015, as required by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. During the years between the community health assessments, we complete a State of the County Health Report to give residents an update on public health interventions, health priorities and other emerging issues that are important to our county’s residents. This report is intended to provide a “snapshot” and we encourage residents to contact the health department if they have additional questions or need information that may not be contained in this 2018 State of the County Health report.

In this report, main ideas or points of interests are represented by the  (lightbulb) and the word “takeaway” beside it. We anticipate that identifying these main points will make this report easier to navigate.

➤ Community Health Priorities

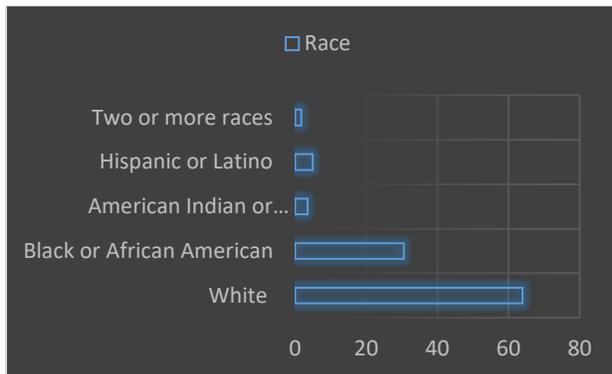
As part of our completion of the 2015 Community Health Assessment, community health priorities were identified using data collected from resident surveys and focus groups. The top 3 community health priorities identified were, in order: chronic disease prevention, obesity, and substance abuse prevention.

 **Takeaway:** Chronic disease prevention, obesity, and substance abuse prevention were all listed as major resident concerns in the 2012 Community Health Assessment as well.

➤ Demographics at a Glance – Columbus County, NC (US Census, 2010)

Population: 58,098

Race/Ethnicity



Educational Attainment

	Columbus County	North Carolina
High School Diploma	80.6%	86.3%
Bachelor’s Degree	12.5%	29.0%

Median Age

Columbus County: 40.9

North Carolina: 36.2

Median Household Income

Columbus County: \$34,949.00

North Carolina: \$46, 868.00

Poverty

Columbus County: 24%

North Carolina: 16.7%

Unemployment (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018)

Columbus County: 4.6%

North Carolina: 3.6%

 **Takeaway:** Columbus County census data indicates that 63% are of residents are white, 31% of residents are black or African American, 5% of residents are Hispanic or Latino and 3.5% of residents are American Indian. The population in Columbus County is slightly older than that of the state. The percentage of people living in poverty is higher in Columbus County than that of the state. Unemployment is higher than that of the state and the median household income in Columbus County is considerably lower than that of the state. Columbus County high school graduation rates are lower than that of the state and there are fewer residents that have obtained a bachelor’s degree compared to the state.

➤ **Vulnerable Population Groups**

Vulnerable population groups are groups of people that may not be able to seek or acquire the healthcare that they need due to a number of factors. When faced with disasters, these groups may be at higher risk of suffering from a negative health outcome(s). Data is from the 2010 Census, unless otherwise noted.

Vulnerable Group	% of population or number
Limited English proficiency	5.3% (estimate)
Children less than five years of age	6.0%
Persons over 65	15.2%
Persons living in poverty	24%

 **Takeaway:** Columbus County has many vulnerable population groups and the graph above is not an extensive list. Almost ¼ of our county lives in poverty.

➤ **Health Priorities and Updates**

The Columbus County Health Department has developed Action Plans for the next three years to work on the following three (underlined> issues:

As we address these issues, we will be working to achieve the following North Carolina 2020 goals (North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services), as outlined below in **bold**:

North Carolina Healthy 2020 Chronic Disease goal: Increase the percentage of adults getting the recommended amount of physical activity; Increase the percentage of adults who report they consume fruits and vegetables five or more times per day; reduce the cardiovascular disease mortality; Increase the percentage of adults who are neither overweight nor obese rate (per 100,000 population); Decrease the percentage of adults with diabetes.

- Chronic Diseases are still the number one concern of residents (this was number one in the 2012 and 2015 Columbus County Community Health Assessment) and there has been substantial emphasis on this topic with our strong community allies. In 2018, the health department sent an additional health educator to be trained to facilitate the Stanford Chronic Disease Self-Management Program – the health department has also signed an agreement to collaborate with East Carolina University’s Office of Healthy Aging Research, Education, and Services in order to reach more Columbus County residents by offering more Chronic Disease Self-Management classes. Another endeavor of the health department to address chronic disease is through policy. As we know, the use of tobacco products and chronic diseases are directly linked – the health department worked with county administration to create a tobacco-free policy for all Columbus County buildings and spaces. Unfortunately, the Columbus County Board of Commissioners did not accept the proposed county policy change.
- Obesity was a close second to substance abuse in the 2015 Community Health Assessment and since obesity is directly linked to chronic disease prevention, our implementation of Chronic Disease Self-Management Programs aim to reduce obesity by stressing the importance of physical activity and nutrition. It also important to reiterate our new collaboration with East Carolina University’s Office of Healthy Aging Research, Education, and Services as it will increase our ability to reach many more county residents – as well as having an additional health educator trained in the implementation of the Stanford Chronic Disease Management Program.

North Carolina Healthy 2020 Substance Abuse goal: Reduce the percentage of individuals aged 12 years and older reporting any illicit drug use in the past 30 days.

- Substance Abuse was the third concern of county residents. During the past two years, substance abuse has been and continues to be addressed through multiple agency efforts. We are working with numerous county and regional organizations to focus on efforts to educate residents about the dangers of opioids and other narcotics. Collaborating with Columbus County’s mental health MCO, Trillium Health Resources, and RI International, we were able to offer the WELL program to county residents. Since holding public forums in collaboration with multiple county and regional entities and organizations in 2017, the health department has applied for multiple grant opportunities to try to secure funds to create and implement post-overdose teams and start a syringe exchange program in Columbus County – unfortunately, we were not able to secure any funds in 2018. The health department has utilized social media to inform county residents about the dangers and signs of opioid abuse and will continue to do so.

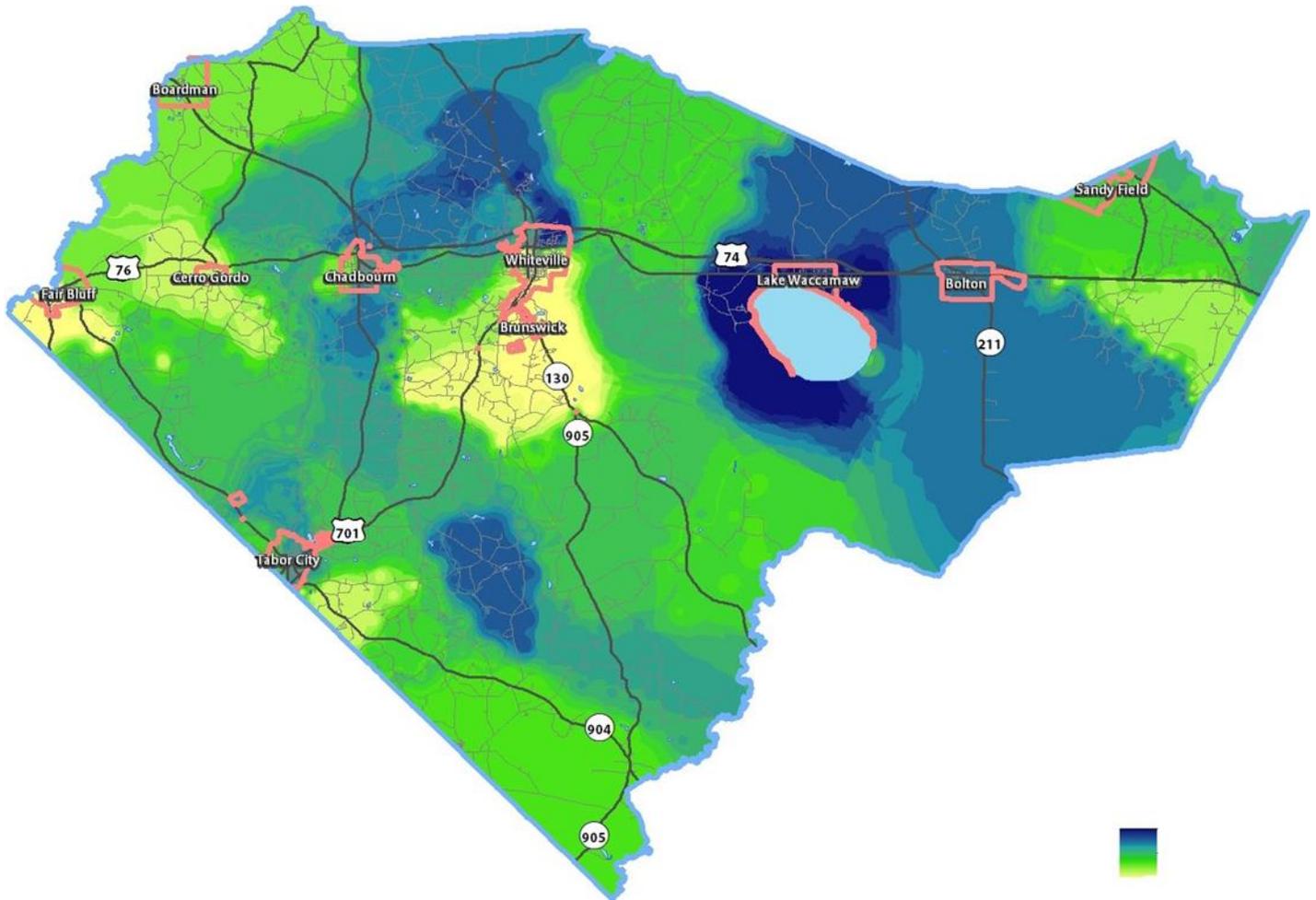


Takeaway: While multiple interventions exist to address Chronic Disease Prevention/obesity and substance abuse, we must continue to work with county and regional entities and organizations to address the concerns of county residents. It is also extremely important to bring together residents to provide additional input and guidance on addressing these issues.

➤ **Social Determinants of Health**

Health is determined by a multiplicity of factors including economic and social. Social conditions such as the zip code in which one resides can affect a person’s health; for example, when we reside in areas with a low concentration of economic prosperity and where educational obtainment is difficult, our health can

be negatively impacted. In 2014, with the assistance of a group of residents and a consulting firm, we were able to identify areas in the county that experience lower socio economic status.



Areas in the blue regions have a higher socio-economic status, while areas in the green and yellow have a lower socioeconomic status. Moving forward, this map will allow us to gauge community health interventions to ensure they will impact county residents that have lower socioeconomic status.

💡 Takeaway: Many areas of our county may be in need of additional or enhanced health services to assist residents in achieving optimal health.

➤ **Additional Indicators of Health**

The chart below provides health information for our county and compares it to state rates. This allows residents and community partners to identify additional health factors that may need to be addressed.

Health Factor	County Rate	North Carolina Rate
Homicides	11.7	6.0
Infant Mortality	10.1	7.2

New HIV Infection Diagnosis, 2007-2011	19.8	17.7
Suicide	13.1	12.2
Pneumonia and Influenza Deaths, 2007-2011	22.5	17.9
Percentage of Individuals living in poverty(2010)	26.9%	17.4%
Cardiovascular Disease Deaths	317.7	235.7
Teen Pregnancy	49.9	33.0



Takeaway: Providing education and outreach to Columbus residents will be essential in addressing a number of health factors. Currently, the health department’s Teen Pregnancy Prevention efforts are funded through a grant provided by North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services; this program (Making Proud Choices) is being implemented in Whiteville High School, ninth grade health and P.E. classes. Columbus County’s teen pregnancy rate decreased by 13.7 percent in 2016. The findings, produced by the N.C. State Center for Health Statistics, were released by Sexual Health Initiatives For Teens, or SHIFT NC. We are proud to announce that after reapplying, the Columbus County Health Department was rewarded NC TPPI funding to continue our Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program. There are many health issues that affect our residents and it will take the community as a whole, working collectivity to make a difference.

➤ **New and Emerging Issues**

In 2018, Columbus County residents faced the recovery of hurricane Florence. Hurricane Florence caused extreme flooding in Columbus County resulting in millions of dollars of damage to homes and businesses. Many residents lost their homes, businesses, and missed many hours of work – the road to recovery for many is still ongoing.

Another new issue that county residents faced in 2018 was the proposition of Malec Bros. Transport Group opening a site in Columbus County to treat logs with Methyl Bromide – proposing to release 140 tons of the methyl bromide into the atmosphere in Columbus County annually. County residents came together to voice their concerns to county leadership and the NC Department of Environmental Quality. After numerous public forums with state and county officials, Malec Bros. Transport Group has withdrawn its application to fumigate logs with Methyl Bromide in Columbus County.

Need more information? Please call the Columbus County Health Department at 910-640-6615 ext. 7026 or email daniel.buck@columbusco.org