

Caldwell County 2019 State of the County Health Report



Photo by: Mark Jackson, Caldwell Journal



A Letter from the Health Director

The Caldwell County Health Department is pleased to present the 2019 State of the County Health Report. This document provides updated information on key indicators for Caldwell County for the purpose of comparing local and state health data about our community's health and well-being.

This report includes information on the progress made over the past three years as well as information on the identified priority areas for the 2017 Community Health Assessment: Preventative Care, Mental Health, and Substance Use.

This information is designed to educate and update community members, community leaders, agencies, organizations and others on progress in addressing certain health issues. This update is also intended to influence the development of new policies that affect the health of the community, guide the planning of health programs, and recruit interested community members to participate in future activities.

The Caldwell County Health Department seeks to “promote, protect and improve the health of our community” by focusing on long-term health priorities identified in the 2017 Community Health Assessment.

If you would like more information on the services and programs offered by the Caldwell County Health Department or would like to be involved in community health programming, please contact the Health Education and Health Promotion Department at 828-426-8506. For additional information on Caldwell County, please visit the county's website at www.caldwellcountync.org.

Sincerely,

Anna Martin

Anna Martin, MPH

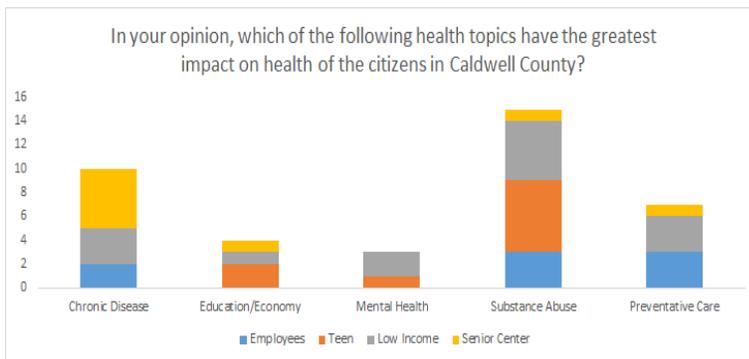
Health Director

Caldwell County Health Department

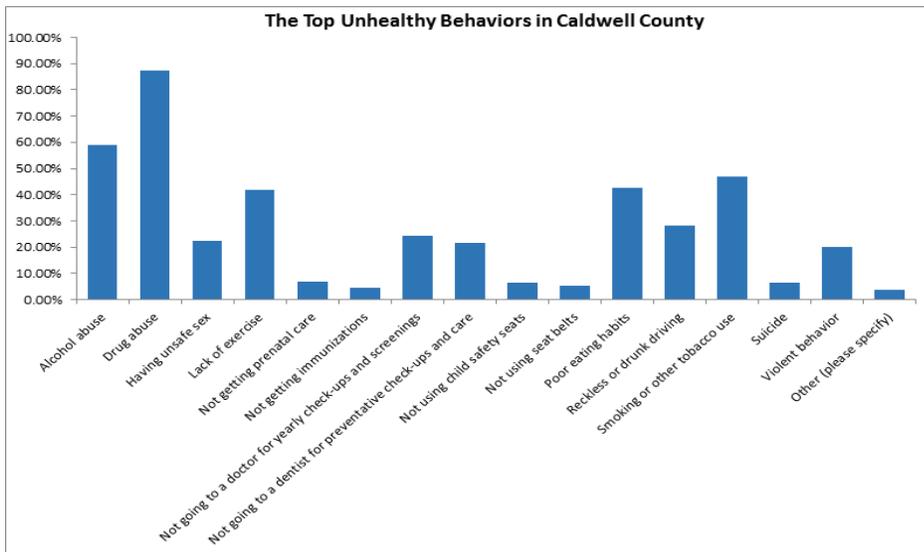
2017-2020

Community Health Assessment

The 2017 Community Health Assessment (CHA) process, started in 2016, engaged key partners to be a part of the process as we identified priorities for the upcoming three years. The committee looked over primary and secondary data, as a community, deciding the top three priorities for the CHA. The top three priorities chosen were Preventative Care, Substance Abuse, and Mental Health.



In each column in this chart, the colors represent how many people in each focus group thought this issue had the greatest impact on the health of the county. For example, more teens ranked substance abuse as a major impact, whereas fewer teens ranked preventative care.



The chart to the left shows the top unhealthy behaviors in Caldwell County, based on the 2017 CHA Opinion Survey. Among the top ranked unhealthy behaviors were Drug Abuse, Alcohol Abuse, Smoking/Tobacco Use, Poor Eating Habits, and Lack of Exercise.

Preventative Care Progress to Date

Intervention: Flu-FIT and Flu-FOBT

Flu-FIT and Flu-FOBT Program allows healthcare providers to increase access to colorectal cancer screening by offering home tests to patients, ages 50-75. In the past, Caldwell County Health Department (CCHD) has partnered with the West Caldwell Health Council (WCHC) on this initiative to offer colorectal screening kits at the same time flu shots are administered. Currently, this is the goal for the 2020/2021 flu season. The action plan in place includes offering colorectal screening kits and education to patients during any flu clinics that are held. In the interim, CCHD has partnered with WCHC to offer kits to any patient upon request during their appointment at the Health Department.



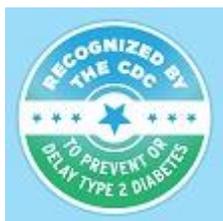
Intervention: Active Routes to School (ARTS)



Caldwell County received an Active Routes to School (ARTS) Grant for funding from October 2018 – May 2019. With this, Caldwell County was able to hire an Active Routes to School Coordinator who oversaw 12 counties in the western region of the state, one of those counties being Caldwell. Charlotte Eidson was hired as the ARTS Coordinator, and since October has built

partnerships with area schools, ordered helmets for distribution to students, and provided assistance to the Caldwell County Safe Kids Coalition. Upon completion of the grant in May, Charlotte contributed to one-time awareness-raising events, on-going walking and biking programs, training of teachers and students, and adopting/revising school-level, school district, municipal-level or regional safe routes to school policies.

Intervention: Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP)



Part of the Preventative Care action plan includes holding at least one Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) during the three-year CHA cycle. DPP provides a framework for diabetes prevention efforts. It brings together partners from the public and private sectors to prevent or delay Type 2 Diabetes in the United States. Participating in a CDC-recognized lifestyle change program can cut the risk of Type 2 Diabetes in half. A key part of the

DPP is the lifestyle change program to prevent or delay Type 2 Diabetes. Hundreds of lifestyle change programs, nationwide, teach participants to make lasting lifestyle changes, like eating healthier, adding physical activity into their daily routine, and improving coping skills. Caldwell County Health Department is working on getting new staff trained and a program implemented in 2020.

Intervention: QuitlineNC



1-800-QUIT-NOW

QuitlineNC provides free cessation services to any North Carolina resident who needs assistance quitting tobacco use. QuitlineNC employs scientific evidence-based methods to help tobacco users quit smoking. Caldwell County has partnered with the North Carolina Public Health Association to provide services to uninsured Caldwell County residents through QuitlineNC. Uninsured residents who express interest in utilizing Quitline services can receive an initial screening call; up to eight weeks of free nicotine patches, gum, lozenges, or combination therapy; up to four counseling calls; mailed materials; and unlimited courtesy calls for additional support. Each participant must speak with a QuitlineNC coach in order to receive free Nicotine Replacement Therapy. This is considered preventative care as tobacco is a major contributor to a variety of chronic diseases.

Substance Abuse Progress to Date

Intervention: Drug-Free Caldwell

Drug-Free Caldwell, which was previously known as Project Lazarus, is a public health non-profit organization addressing substance misuse in the community. Many organizations in Caldwell County come together monthly to serve on this coalition. During 2019, Drug-Free Caldwell completed multiple events. The coalition has been developing a five-year plan to ensure that their efforts fulfill the purpose of the alliance and the community it serves. The coalition partnered with the Lenoir Police Department to share drug safety information at an Operation Medicine Drop. Drug-Free Caldwell has also begun providing vaping prevention education to middle schools in Caldwell County. They have implemented the CATCH My Breath program to 6th, 7th, and 8th grades at Hudson Middle School. They are seeking to implement this program at more middle schools in Caldwell County during 2020.

Intervention: RHA-Matrix Model

This intensive outpatient program for substance use treatment consists of a 12-week program requiring three-hour sessions per week for up to 12 participants. RHA (a substance abuse treatment provider), partnering with ARP (Addiction, Recovery, and Prevention), has been providing this ongoing program for the community. During these sessions, participants work through an evidence-based treatment protocol known as the Matrix Model. The goal of intensive treatment and the Matrix Model is to decrease the number of individuals whose use of substances is causing significant problems in their lives. In 2019, RHA served 126 individuals in the intensive outpatient program.

Intervention: Lock Your Meds Campaign

Lock Your Meds is a national multi-media campaign designed to reduce prescription drug abuse by making adults aware that they are the “unwitting suppliers” of prescription medications,



especially by young people. The campaign includes a wide array of high-quality advertisements, posters, educational materials, and publicity opportunities. CCHD has implemented the Lock Your Meds Campaign as a part of the Drug-Free Caldwell Coalition. CCHD has partnered with Helping Hands clinic to purchase lockboxes. One hundred ninety-six lockboxes were purchased. CCHD also partnered with RHA to distribute medication

lockboxes. Over 80 lockboxes were distributed to facilities in need, including Caldwell Memorial Hospital and West Caldwell Health Council. RHA and the CCHD have also distributed medication safety education materials to the public at an Operational Medicine Drop.

Mental Health

Progress to Date

Intervention: Mental Health First Aid



Mental Health First Aid is an 8-hour course that teaches how to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. This program allows trained staff to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

The Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training is continuously offered to individuals and organizations in the community. Vaya provided MHFA at three trainings to individuals in 2019. Vaya is seeking to give any agency training that would like to receive the program in 2020. Also, during the 2018-2019 school year, 66 Caldwell County school employees were trained. Caldwell County Schools plans to train Dudley Shoals Elementary and Kings Creek School staff in the next year.

Mental Health First Aid is for all individuals and organizations that make up the fabric of a community. The course is presented to professionals who regularly interact with the public, such as chambers of commerce, professional associations, hospitals, nursing homes, rotary clubs, parent organizations, social clubs, and other groups. Many groups and individuals can receive this training including primary care workers, school and college leadership, faith communities, police officers, human resource directors, friends and family of individuals with mental illness or addiction, or anyone interested in learning more about mental illness and addiction are ideal candidates for this training.

Intervention: Community-based Behavioral Healthcare Collaboration

CHART (Community Healthcare Action Research Team) was formed to create new collaborations that engage patients, community members, healthcare professionals, and researchers focused on the Carolina foothills community health priorities. CHART's mission is to identify and prioritize health issues of critical importance to the Caldwell community. This team works to identify solutions, research, and educational programs to resolve or improve conditions concerning the health of our community. CHART strives to address the healthcare challenges in our community with educational programs by conducting research that offers an improvement to our health and acting to bring about better healthcare outcomes.



With the assistance of the Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC), CHART held a Mental Health Summit on February 22nd at the J.E. Broyhill Civic Center. This summit, “Building Capacity to Manage Mental Health and the Opioid Crisis in the Foothills,” included a luncheon keynote session given by Kody Kinsley, North Carolina DHHS Deputy Secretary for Behavioral Health. Education sessions included topics geared towards clinicians, in addition to a

community round table discussion.

Along with a Mental Health Summit, CHART partnered with SAFE (Stop the Addiction Fatality Epidemic) Project to create signage and fact sheets to bring awareness to the opioid crisis. The research team is in the process of getting this signage posted in community organizations such as hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, schools, and churches.

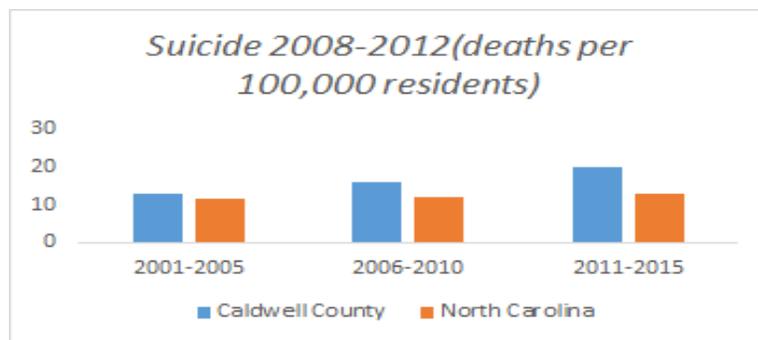
Emerging Issues

Chronic Disease

One area of concern for Caldwell County is Chronic Disease. Chronic Diseases account for over half of the top ten leading causes of death in Caldwell County including heart disease, cancer, respiratory disease, diabetes, etc. Over the past three years, the CHA advisory committee has worked to establish resources in the county to combat these issues. Chronic disease management programs have been successful in the community. However, in this CHA cycle the advisory committee will include Chronic Disease prevention in the preventative care action plan instead of choosing to focus solely on chronic disease management. This group believes that prevention of these diseases is the best way to decrease death rates in the future. Focusing on prevention at an early age or before the onset of a disease, will in turn, decrease the impact the disease has on quality of life.

Suicide

Another area of concern is the suicide rate in Caldwell County. The suicide rate in Caldwell County has been gradually increasing. Suicide can be caused by many factors such as lack of community mental health resources, substance abuse/misuse, economy, etc. As shown in the graph below, the rate from 2001-2005 was 12.9, from 2006-2010 it was 15.8, then increased to 19.8 from 2011-2015. In Graph 18, trend data shows the dramatic increase since 2002. Between 2012-2016, there have been 87 suicide deaths in Caldwell County. Suicide was one of the top 10 causes of death in 2011. In the 2014 CHA process, suicide was part of the mental health action plan. Training in mental health first aid and suicide prevention was conducted during the 2014 CHA Action Planning period and will continue during the action planning process for the 2017 CHA process.



Source: State Center for Health Statistics

Youth Electronic Cigarette Use

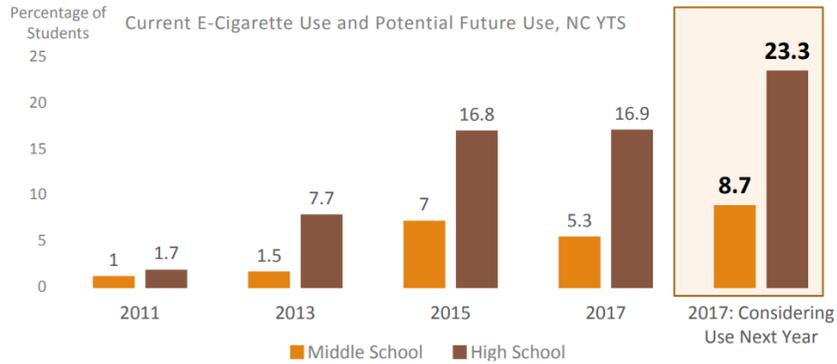
A new area of concern for Caldwell County is electronic cigarette, or e-cigarette, use. As shown in the graph below, between 2011-2017, current youth use of e-cigarettes has increased 894% in high schools and 430% in middle schools in North Carolina. Youth consumption of nicotine in any form is unsafe, as declared by the US Surgeon General. Nicotine use while the adolescent brain is developing can harm brain development and become more susceptible to other addictive drugs. The earlier youth are exposed to nicotine, the harder it is to stop the addiction. Adolescent and young adults who have never smoked, but used e-cigarettes, are 8.3 times more likely to using traditional cigarettes after 1 year compared to those who do not use e-cigarettes. Prevention is critical to create a tobacco-free generation and protect the health of the youth in our community. Catch My Breath, a curriculum tailored to equip students with knowledge and skills they need to make informed decisions about the use of e-cigarettes, has begun implementation in middle schools around the community to address this emerging issue. The school system has also changed policy regarding e-cigarettes in schools to prevent students from using the products.

Between 2011-2017 Current Youth Use of E-Cigarettes Increased:

430% ↑
Middle School

894% ↑
High School

In 2017 more students said they were considering using e-cigarettes in the next year than currently used them



Source: 2017 North Carolina Youth Tobacco Survey

New Initiatives- Infant Mortality Reduction

An Infant Mortality Reduction (IMR) grant was awarded to local health departments in North Carolina to implement evidence-based strategies to decrease infant mortality in the communities they serve. With these grant funds, CCHD was able to purchase and promote long-acting reversible contraceptive (LARC) within the health department. CCHD was also able to promote safe sleep and tobacco cessation. The IMR grant included funds through Maternal Child Health to start a Community Action Team (MCH-CAT). The MCH-CAT is comprised of community representative stationed to obtain the common goal of preventing infant mortality. The grant not only sustained the formation of a group of individuals, but also provided various items to promote infant safety for those in need. Items are distributed based on a referral process. In addition, there has been an annual Child Health and Safety Fair. Each year there has been a great turnout, with over 200 individuals in attendance. Many community vendors are involved and education is given to families with young children ages birth to 5 years old. Also, as a part of this grant one staff member was able to attend Tobacco Treatment Specialist training and take the National Certificate of Tobacco Treatment Practice exam. This year, North Carolina was at an all-time low for infant mortality. The IMR grant began in 2016 and is expected to continue in 2019/2020.

Morbidity and Mortality

Morbidity and Mortality are ongoing concerns for all counties and states. When looking at the incidence of disease and death, it is important to look at modifiable and non-modifiable behaviors. During the next CHA action planning sessions, CCHD and partners will be referring to those behaviors to ensure that Caldwell County citizens are aware of and have access to needed services and education in order to decrease morbidity and mortality. The State Center for Health Statistics compiles the top 10 causes of death each year. Caldwell County's top ten causes of death (below) show that cancer, heart disease, and chronic lower respiratory diseases consistently fall at the top of the list. This has been consistent for a number of years. In 2017, there were 210 deaths from heart disease and 206 deaths from cancer in Caldwell County. From 2013-2017, heart disease and cancer contributed to 28,027 years of potential life lost in Caldwell County.

Rank	2016	2017
1	Diseases of heart	Diseases of heart
2	Cancer	Cancer
3	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	Chronic lower respiratory diseases
4	Alzheimer's disease	Alzheimer's disease
5	Cerebrovascular diseases	Cerebrovascular diseases
6	All other unintentional injuries	All other unintentional injuries
7	Diabetes mellitus	Diabetes mellitus
8	Influenza and pneumonia	Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis
9	Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome, and nephrosis	Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome, and nephrosis
10	Intentional self-harm (suicide) AND Septicemia	Influenza and pneumonia

Source: State Center for Health Statistics