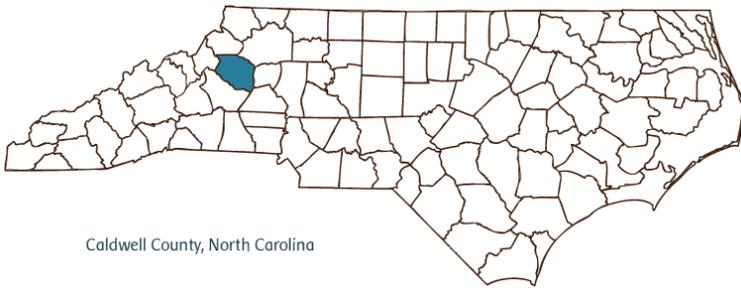


State of the County Health Report

Caldwell County, NC

2013



Caldwell County, North Carolina

The Caldwell County Health Department is pleased to present the 2013 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 identified priority areas: Obesity, Teen Pregnancy and High School Dropout Rates.

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 2011 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 828-426-8462. For additional information on Caldwell County please visit the county's website at www.caldwellcountync.org.

Sincerely,

Denise Michaud

Denise Michaud, MPH, RD, IBCLC
Health Director
Caldwell County Health Department

Obesity

In the 2011 Caldwell County Community Health Assessment (CHA), 34% of those surveyed self-reported that they were overweight or obese. In a recent survey done in 2012 through collaboration between WNC Healthy Impact and the Community Transformation Grant, it was found that 74.4% of those surveyed self-reported that they were overweight or obese. This high increase of self-reporting is an enormous concern for residents in Caldwell County. Self-reporting is a sample of the population but should still be taken into consideration. In 2012, the Child Policy Research Center reported that 30% of Caldwell County adults and 19% of low-income preschoolers were overweight or obese.

Obesity is a health priority in many parts of the United States. As it is linked to many modifiable factors, obesity is also a focus in many health education and prevention strategies. This is true for Caldwell County. Many agencies in the country are working on decreasing the obesity rate for adults and children. The Caldwell County Health Department and Caldwell County Cooperative Extension are just a couple of the agencies working toward this goal. This year we were involved in a number of different interventions and programs that focused on obesity as a priority. This report gives a summary of a few of those programs.

EBT/Debit at Farmers Markets



In 2012, Sawmills Farmers' Market conducted a survey of its customers. Of those surveyed, 47% reported that they or someone they knew would use SNAP benefits, previously known as food stamps, at the market if the service was available. After this survey was conducted, Caldwell County Health Department began working on getting this service at the market. With help from the Community Transformation Grant Project and the USDA, Sawmills Farmer's Market began accepting EBT/ SNAP and Debit cards on August 20, 2013. During the months of September and October, 26

SNAP transactions and 11 debit transactions were made, bringing in almost \$400 of revenue to the vendors of the Sawmills Market.

Because the market now accepts debit cards and EBT/SNAP cards, more Sawmills and Caldwell County residents can purchase healthy foods, providing good nutrition for their families while at the same time supporting their local farmers and producers. This program is important because not only does it support local farmers but it can also break down barriers which can limit an individual's access to healthy local foods.

"The main goal of Sawmills Farmer's Market is to provide an environment where residents of the Town of Sawmills can come enjoy purchasing healthy local produce and crafts from farmers and vendors in our community.

We want everyone in our community, regardless of income, to have access to quality, nutritious foods at our farmer's market," said Olivia Ford, Market Manager.

Obesity

Healthy Corner Store Initiative

Understanding the nutritional and consumer environment of a community is a vital part in increasing consumption of healthy food items. The neighborhood context of communities has a large impact on the availability and affordability of healthy food options. In 2009, only 32.5% of Americans were receiving their daily recommended servings of fruits and vegetables. In 2013, Caldwell County Health Department along with Lenoir-Rhyne University and the Community Transformation Grant Project began the process of identifying convenience stores in the county that could offer healthy food options to customers.

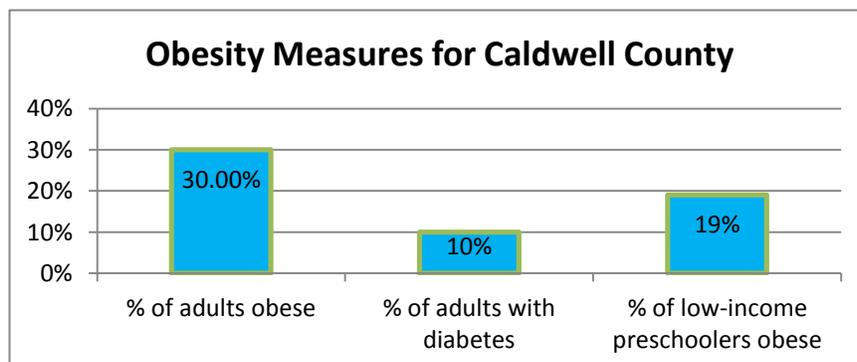


During the first phase, a needs assessment, five convenience/corner stores in Caldwell County were surveyed. These stores were located within food deserts (three miles from a grocery store or supermarket) and store owners agreed to participate in the study. A store owner survey, customer surveys and a Nutritional Environmental Measure Study (NEMS) tool were used to understand the opinions of store owners and customers as well as define the healthiness of the current inventory at the stores.



The surveys were analyzed to determine if the stores would benefit the community by changing inventory. Results of the study showed that most stores offered some healthy food options, but customers were not purchasing those healthy options. Because of these results, CCHD began the implementation stage in mid-August. The results from the needs assessment directed health educators to support store owners in the implementation of changes which included the adoption of practices shown to increase the number of individuals who choose to buy healthy food options at corner stores. This has included in-store signage, changes in display of healthy foods and working with merchandisers to learn how produce and healthy options should be presented and set up in the store to increase sales.

Currently, there are two stores going through the implementation stage. One of those stores reports that sales of produce have increased and more people are asking about those healthier options. This project will continue throughout the next year.



Teen Pregnancy

Teen pregnancy is a public health issue that not only affects the teen but also the school, the baby and the community. As a priority, agencies have continued to work toward decreasing this rate in the county. Caldwell County has continued to see a decrease in teen pregnancy throughout the past year. Caldwell County's 2007 teen pregnancy rate was 77.3 per 1,000 15-19 year old girls while the 2012 rate was 51.1 per 1,000 15-19 year old girls. This drop is encouraging to those working on this issue. Although the rate is still higher than the state's (39.6), Caldwell County is moving in the right direction. An area where Caldwell County has seen tremendous success in reducing the rate is with repeat pregnancies. In 2012, within the state, 24.5% of teen moms were having repeat pregnancies. In Caldwell County, this number was lower at 18.2% of teen mom's having a repeat pregnancy.

Caldwell Council on Adolescent Health Programs

Caldwell Council on Adolescent Health (CAAH) is a non-profit organization, founded in 1983 with the purpose of reducing teenage pregnancy. The Council promotes positive life choices by using best practice models in the classroom. In the 2012-2013 school year, CCAH reached over 7,200 students through their programs. CCAH has four main programs which focus on teen pregnancy and other adolescent health issues.



“Operation: Safe or Sorry”: This program is a 14 session curriculum on Teen Pregnancy Prevention presented to 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students every year.

“Reach Out”: This program refers pregnant or at risk teen girls to resources they may be eligible for but are unaware of. CCAH employs a dedicated, confidential part-time nurse who visits all high schools, middle schools and K-8 grade schools. The nurse obtains referrals from teachers, counselors and principals. This program demonstrates confidence that if there is a teen pregnancy, the mother and the baby deserve to be healthy and the student should be able to complete high school.

“Always Changing”: This program presents a curriculum to all 4th, 5th, and 6th graders and is designed to help pre- adolescents navigate socially through early puberty. The project's goals are to decrease bullying in grades 4-6 and enhance self-esteem while increasing problem solving and responsible decision making skills in Caldwell County Schools.

“Adolescent Parenting Program (APP)”: This program serves females ages 15-19 who are pregnant with their first child or parenting teens that do not have resources to adequately care for themselves or their child while completing high school or an equivalent educational program. Through home visitation services, individualized goal plans, case management and group educational sessions, program participants are empowered to become self-sufficient and build a better future for their babies.

Teen Pregnancy

Making Proud Choices

Making Proud Choices! Curriculum

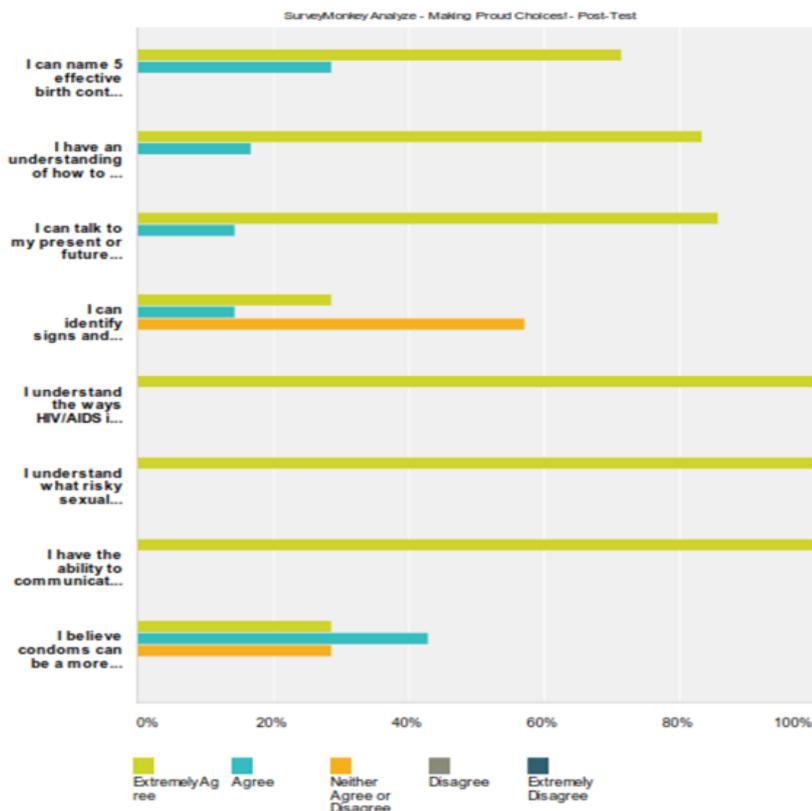


During the 2012-2013 school year, Caldwell County Health Department began implementing a pilot of Making Proud Choices! within one of the high schools in the county. This curriculum discusses some very serious public health problems which are on the rise in our teen population, including unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), like HIV. Making Proud Choices! uses the understanding of social learning theories and interventions for changing behavior within the target audience of

adolescents. Throughout the pilot of this program, 26 students have been reached and pre- and post- tests have been done. The results of this pilot show an increase in the understanding of consequences of unsafe sex and the reason for using condoms. A large majority of students reported after taking the course having more confidence in regards to talking with his or her partner about condom use and being more likely

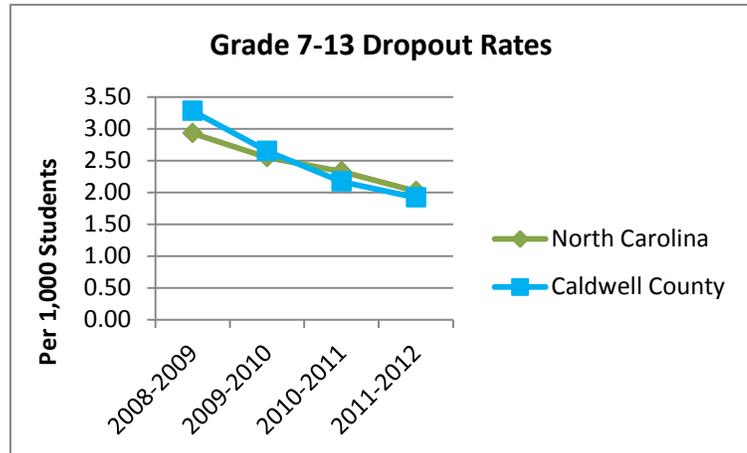


to use a condom if they chose to be sexually active. This program will continue throughout the next year and will be implemented in other high schools across the county.



High School Drop-out

High school graduation is an important issue for public health due to its link to health, the economy and future community needs. Over the past 4 years, Caldwell County Schools have seen an increase in graduation rates and a decrease in dropout rates. Communities-in-Schools of Caldwell County has been working hard over the past 21 years to ensure that every child receives basic needs to be successful.



Caldwell County Schools

Caldwell County Schools have three main programs which are aimed at reducing dropout rate and increasing graduation rates, and include the following:

“Communities-in-Schools”: Communities-in-Schools (CIS) is the nation’s largest dropout prevention organization. The mission of Communities –in-Schools is to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life. By bringing caring adults into the schools to address children’s unmet needs, CIS provides the link between educators and the community. The result: teachers are free to teach and students – many in jeopardy of dropping out – have the opportunity to focus on learning.

“Safe Schools”: The Caldwell County School System will continue to implement their *Safe Schools Program*. One of the major goals of this program is, “All students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug-free, and conducive to learning.” A safe environment is important for student success. Evidence shows those students who are of a minority background and who are less active in their school and academic programs are more likely to drop out. Evidence also shows that 1/3 of dropouts occur during the ninth grade. By partnering with local law enforcement and peer mediation groups, the Safe Schools Program will encourage students to work out their disagreements and encourage them to become active in school programs while teaching them the importance of living a drug-free and bullying-free life.

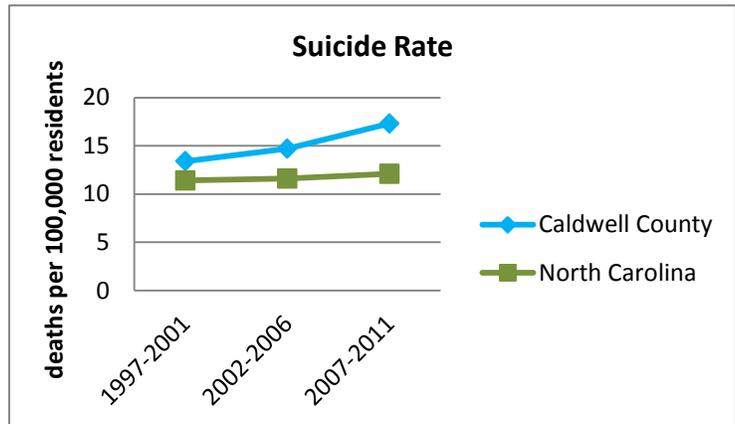
“Why Try”: The Caldwell County School System has implemented the *Why Try? Program*. This program is a strength-based approach to helping youth overcome their challenges and improve outcomes in the areas of truancy, behavior, and academics. Youth are taught social and emotional principles through a series of 10 pictures that teaches a discrete principle. These visuals are then reinforced by music and physical activities.

Community Concern

Emerging Issue

Suicide Rate

Suicide is a rising public health concern. The cost of suicide behavior affects the economy, individuals in the community, families and society. In the United States, suicide is one of the leading causes of death among young adults. Almost 1 in 7 high school students reported having seriously considered suicide in the past year. That translates to 3 students in an average classroom of 20 (CDC, 2010; U.S. Dept. of Education, 2009). In Caldwell County, this is a rising concern for residents.



The graph to the right shows the increase from a rate of 13.4 deaths per 100,000 residents from 1997-2001 to 17.3 deaths per 100,000 residents from 2007-2011. There are many factors which could contribute to this increase including the economy, bullying, sickness and more. Suicide may continue to be a health concern for Caldwell County in the upcoming years and should be focused on.

Mortality

The impact of disease in Caldwell County is illustrated through the Leading Causes of Death. The chart below shows how the leading causes of death have changed between 2010 and 2011. Suicide is now listed while influenza and pneumonia are no longer one of the top 10 causes. These changes can have an influence on priorities and health concerns throughout the upcoming years.

Rank	2010	2011
1	Cancer	Diseases of the heart
2	Diseases of heart	Cancer
3	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	Chronic lower respiratory diseases
4	Cerebrovascular diseases	Cerebrovascular disease
5	Alzheimer's disease	Alzheimer's disease
6	Diabetes mellitus	All other unintentional injuries
7	Influenza and pneumonia	Diabetes mellitus
8	All other unintentional injuries	Intentional self-harm (suicide)
9	Disease of the Kidney	Disease of the Kidney
10	Motor vehicle injuries	Motor vehicle injuries
		Septicemia (blood infection)