

Coastal Carolinas Health Alliance 2008 Regional Needs Assessment Executive Summary

Purpose/ Overview

Southeastern North Carolina and northeastern South Carolina is a region with large numbers of ethnic minorities, increased poverty and high risk for chronic health conditions that burden the health care system and reduce quality of life. The region is largely rural with diminished access to many services. In order to assess and prioritize the greatest needs of the community, Coastal Carolinas Health Alliance (CCHA) in conjunction with other contributing community organizations conducted a regional needs assessment. Through the use of both quantitative and qualitative data, health disparities within the region can be identified. Once the disparities are recognized, a plan of action to improve the health of the region can be formulated with focus in such areas. The assessment comprises secondary health statistics as well as primary data collected from local residents via surveys and in some areas, focus groups. This compilation of information provides vital information necessary to identify the overwhelming needs of the area's residents and develop programs to address those needs. CCHA also hopes to obtain grant funding, where appropriate, to aid in launching suitable initiatives.

Geographic Parameters

Bladen County, NC	New Hanover County, NC
Brunswick County, NC	Pender County, NC
Columbus County, NC	Robeson County, NC
Horry County, SC	Sampson County, NC
	Scotland County, NC

Disparities in which the CCHA Region Exceeds the North and South Carolina State Rates

Breast Cancer	Diabetes Mellitus
Lung Cancer	Cerebrovascular Disease (stroke)
Prostate Cancer	Total Heart Disease & Other Ischemic Heart Disease
Percent of Persons in Poverty	Percent of Teen Pregnancies for Total Population
Unemployment	

Outstanding Community Perspectives

- Greatest health issues of concern: "Heart Disease/Stroke" and "Drug/Alcohol Abuse"
- Greatest impact on the healthcare people receive: "Income and Lack of Health Insurance"
- Most desired community change: Increase the number of local job opportunities and increase the number of safe places to walk/play

Conclusion: Recommendations for Improvement

- Improve job opportunities and offer better healthcare benefits for employees
- Implement more health/wellness screens and increase access to care
- Increase health education within the community with a strong focus on the areas of greatest disparity as identified above
- Attract more high value-added industries to the area and increase the number of parks and recreational facilities operated by local government agencies

