

Bladen County Summary of Assessment Findings

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.

* All data is calculated as the rate of change over a period of time. Data sets are rate per 100,000 of the population, unless otherwise noted. *

Cause of Death/Health Issues

- The Bladen County incidence rate for AIDS cases **increased 90.7% from 1994 to 2006**. From 2002-2006, the Bladen County AIDS rate exceeded the NC rate by 32.26%.
- According to hospital discharge reports, the asthma hospitalization rate for all ages in Bladen County **decreased 48.30% from 2000-2006**. In 2006, the Bladen County rate was 17.81% lower than the NC rate for all ages.
- The Asthma hospitalization rate for children ages 0-14 in Bladen County **decreased 41.86% from 2000-2006**; however, the Bladen County rate remained slightly higher than the NC rate in 2006 by 7.72%.
- The total cancer mortality rate in Bladen County increased 3.17% from 1994-2006 and remained slightly higher than the NC rate from 2002-2006. **Minority males demonstrated the highest cancer mortality rate** from 2002-2006, with white males coming in second.
- The Colon, Rectum and Anus cancer mortality rate decreased by 24.48% from 1994-2006. From 2002-2006, the average rate in Bladen county matched the NC average rate of 18.2 per 100,000 population.
- The breast cancer mortality rate for Bladen county increased 26.99% from 1994-2006. **From 2002-2006, the Bladen county rate exceeded the NC rate by 61.09%.**
- From 1994-2006, the prostate cancer mortality rate in Bladen County decreased 36.57% and remained below the NC rate from 2002-2006.



- The Bladen county lung cancer incidence rate **increased by 22.71% from 1995-2004**. The county mortality rate for Trachea, Bronchus and Lung cancer was 5.85% above the NC rate from 2002-2006.
- The Bladen county mortality rate for Cerebrovascular Disease (stroke) decreased by 24.96% from 1994-2006. **From 2002-2006, the Bladen County rate exceeded the NC rate by 42.23%** with minority males demonstrating the highest rates at both levels.
- The Bladen county mortality rate for Diabetes Mellitus **increased 44.61% from 1994-2006 and exceeded the NC rate by 83.03% from 2000-2006**.
- The total heart disease mortality rate for Bladen county decreased 15.85% from 1994-2006. The county rate exceeded the NC rate by 29.83% from 2002-2006, while minority males continued to demonstrate the highest mortality rate with while males coming in second.
- The mortality rate for acute myocardial infarction (heart attack) in Bladen County decreased by 44.08% from 1994-2006; however, **the county rate was 88.04% higher than the NC rate from 2002-2006**.
- The mortality rate for other ischemic heart disease in Bladen county **increased by 54.65% from 1994-2006**. From 2002-2006, the county rate exceeded the NC rate by 29.44%.
- The Bladen county mortality rate for homicide was 30.56% higher than the NC mortality rate from 2002-2006.
- The total syphilis incidence rate for the total population in Bladen County **decreased 55% from 1994-2006** and the county rate remained 35.71% below the NC rate from 2002-2006. The incidence rate for the minority population **decreased 28.13% from 1994-2006**.

Lifestyle Issues

- The number of persons in poverty in Bladen county **decreased 14.06% from 1980-2000**. The percent of persons in poverty in Bladen county decreased 17.97% from 1980-2000; however **the county rate exceeded the NC rate by 70.73%**
- The unemployment rate in Bladen county increased 4.92% from 1996-2006 and **remained consistently higher than the NC rate** during that time.
- In Bladen county the number of household recipients of food stamps increased slightly from 1994-2003 by 5.08%.
- The number of persons served in area Alcohol and Drug treatment centers in Bladen county **decreased from 1996-2006 by 93.33%, from 15 people served in 1996 to 1 person served in 2006**.
- The number of persons served in area mental health programs in Bladen county increased 13.81% from 1994-2006.
- In Bladen county the number of **public high school dropouts increased 27.5% from 1999-2005**. During the same time period the number of public **high school dropouts in NC decreased 17.49%**.
- The Bladen county mortality rate for unintentional motor vehicle injuries exceeded the NC rate by 79.58% from 2002-2006



Maternal and Infant Health

- The percent of teen pregnancies for girls ages 15-19 in Bladen county has **decreased 39.22% from 1994-2006**. The percent of teen pregnancies for girls ages 15-19 in Bladen county exceeded the percent in NC by 25.76% from 2002-2006.
- The percent of teen pregnancies for minority girls ages 15-19 in Bladen county **decreased 50.10% from 1994-2006**. The percent of teen pregnancies in the **minority population exceeded the percent in the white population by 20.87% from 2002-2006**.
- The percent of low birth weight births in Bladen county increased 10.31% from 1994-2006. The percent of low birth weight births in the **minority population exceeded the percent in the white population by 49.03%**.
- In Bladen County the percent of births to mothers who smoke remained fairly consistent at 16.9% in 1997 and 16.9% again in 2006.

Community Survey Results

- Based on community survey results, **heart disease/stroke** was strongly felt to be the greatest cause of death, which correlates well with secondary data results discussed above. Cancer was second.
- When asked what the biggest health issue of concern within the community is, the majority reported **drug/alcohol abuse**. Obesity was second.
- **Lack of health insurance and/or unable to pay for doctor's visits** were reported as the major factor which keeps people in the community from seeking medical treatment. No appointments available at doctor offices and long waits at the doctor's office was second.
- **Income or insurance** was strongly felt to be the biggest factor affecting the health care of people in the community. Age was second.
- It was felt that people in the community lack funds for **health insurance**. Medicine was second.
- Community members would like to see more: **1) job opportunities**; 2) safe places to walk/play; and 3) wellness screens, within the community to help improve the health of family, friends and neighbors.
- Community members would like to see more: **1) cholesterol/blood pressure/diabetes**; 2) prostate cancer screenings or classes in the community; and, 3) tobacco-free buildings and healthier food choices were both tied.
- **83%** of participants in this study support all public places/buildings being tobacco-free. 15% support, but not in or at all public places/buildings. 2% do not support tobacco-free public places/buildings.

