

# Brunswick 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 Brunswick County incidence rate for AIDS cases increased 14.93% from 1994 to 2006; however, **from 2002-2006, the Brunswick County AIDS rate remained 37.9% below the NC rate.**
- According to hospital discharge reports, the asthma hospitalization rate for all ages in Brunswick County **decreased 34.2% from 2000-2006.** In 2006, the Brunswick County rate was calculated at 5.82% below the NC rate.
- The Asthma hospitalization rate for children ages 0-14 in Brunswick County **decreased 20.6% from 2000-2006.** In 2006, the Brunswick County rate was 12.24% below the NC rate.
- The total cancer mortality rate in Brunswick County decreased 9.3% from 1994-2006 and remained slightly below the NC rate from 2002-2006. **Minority males demonstrated the highest cancer mortality rate** from 2002-2006, with white males coming in a close second.
- The colon, rectum and anus cancer mortality rate **decreased by 24.57% from 1994-2006.** From 2002-2006, the average rate in Columbus County remained comparable, however slightly lower, than the average rate for NC.



- The breast cancer mortality rate for Brunswick County decreased by 12.69% from 1994-2006.
- From 1994-2006, the prostate cancer mortality rate in Brunswick County **decreased 23.67% and remained below the NC rate for 2002-2006.**
- The Brunswick County lung cancer incidence rate increased slightly by 2.37% from 1995-2004. From 2000-2004 the county rate remained slightly higher than the NC rate by 5.15%. The mortality rate for trachea, bronchus and lung cancer in Brunswick County **decreased 11.52% from 1994-2006.**
- The Brunswick County mortality rate for Cerebrovascular Disease (stroke) **decreased 28.29% from 1994-2006.** From 2002-2006, the Brunswick County rate was 16.2% below the NC rate. Minority males demonstrated the highest rates at both levels.
- The Brunswick County mortality rate for Diabetes Mellitus decreased 14.11% from 1994-2006, and the county rate remained 23.62% below the NC rate from 2000-2006.
- The Brunswick County mortality rate for total heart disease **decreased 27.51% from 1994-2006.** From 2002-2006, the Brunswick County rate aligned closely with the rate for NC at 212.6 per 100,000 and 217.9 per 100,000, respectively. **Minority females demonstrated the highest mortality rate** in Brunswick County from 2002-2006.
- The mortality rate for acute myocardial infarction (heart attack) in Brunswick County **decreased 49.68% from 1994-2006,** and the county rate was 23.33% lower than the NC rate for 2002-2006.
- The mortality rate for other ischemic heart disease in Brunswick County decreased by 5.16% from 1994-2006. From 2002-2006, the county rate also exceeded the NC rate by 15.88%.
- The Brunswick County mortality rate for homicide was **9.72% lower than the NC mortality rate from 2002-2006.**
- The syphilis incidence rate for the total population in Brunswick County **decreased 68.97% from 1994-2006** and the county rate was **67.86% below the NC rate** from 2002-2006. The incidence rate for the **minority population decreased 84.04%** from 1994-2006.

## Lifestyle Issues

- The number of persons in poverty in Brunswick County **increased 29.36% from 1980-2000.** The percent of persons in poverty in Brunswick County decreased 36.36% from 1980-2000, yet remained slightly higher than the NC rate.
- The unemployment rate in Brunswick County increased 37.14% from 1998-2006, yet **remained lower than the NC rate from 2003-2006.**
- In Brunswick County the number of household recipients of food stamps decreased slightly from 1994-2003 by 1.89%.



- The number of persons served in area Alcohol and Drug treatment centers in Brunswick County decreased from 1996-2006 by 12.2%, from 41 people served in 1996 to 36 people served in 2006.
- The number of persons served in area mental health programs in Brunswick County **decreased 31.26% from 1998-2006.**
- In Brunswick County the number of public high school dropouts **increased 110.2% from 1994-2005.** From 1994-2005 the number of public high school dropouts in NC increased 23.85%.
- The Brunswick County mortality rate for unintentional motor vehicle injuries **exceeded the NC rate by 48.69% from 2002-2006.**

### Maternal and Infant Health

- The percent of teen pregnancies for girls ages 15-19 in Brunswick County **decreased 46.59% from 1994-2006.** The percent of teen pregnancies for girls ages 15-19 in Brunswick County was 2.49% below the NC rate from 2002-2006.
- The percent of teen pregnancies for minority girls ages 15-19 in Brunswick County **decreased 58.59% from 1994-2006.** The percent of teen pregnancies in the **white population exceeded the percent in the minority population by 13.85% from 2002-2006.**
- The percent of low birth weight births in Brunswick County increased 21.79% from 1994-2006. The percent of low birth weight births in the **minority population exceeded the percent in the white population by 59.77%.**
- In Brunswick County the percent of births to mothers who smoke decreased 9.38% from 1994-2006.

### 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. Fear (not ready to face health problem) was second.
- **Income and insurance status** 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) wellness screens; and 3) safe places to walk/play/healthier food choices, 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) breast cancer; and 3) family planning or classes in the community.
- **79%** of participants in this study support all public places/buildings being tobacco-free. 16% support, but not in or at all public places/buildings. 5% do not support tobacco-free public places/buildings.

