

State of the County Health Report



Orange County, North Carolina



Orange County is a healthy place to live

Next Community Health Assessment coming up in 2007

Each county in North Carolina must conduct a community wide health assessment every four years.

Orange County is already beginning to gather data and talk with residents about health issues and concerns. If you would like to be involved in this important community effort, please contact the Healthy Carolinians Coordinator, Maria Hitt at 968-2022 ext 291 or via e-mail mhitt@co.orange.nc.us

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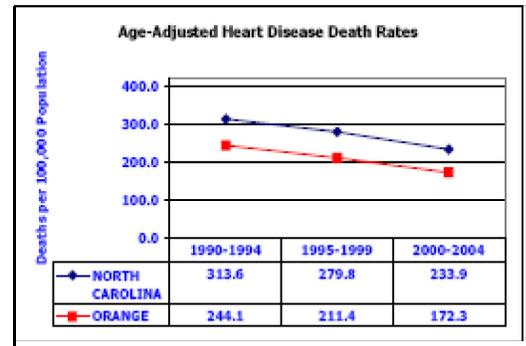
In a review of current health data on Orange County it is clear that our area remains one of the healthiest overall in the State of North Carolina.

A report recently released by the State Center for Health Statistics reviews trends in 16 key health indicators over the past 15 years, in 10 areas the rates of death or other factors have decreased in Orange County and are lower than at the state level.

For example, we have fewer mothers who smoked during pregnancy and received late prenatal care but the incidence of low birth weight has increased slightly from a rate of 7.2 per 1,000 live births in the period from 1990-1994 to a rate of 8.6 in the period from 2000-2004.

Our teen pregnancy rate remains one of the lowest in the state and newly released data from 2005 show our rate of pregnancies among teens ages 15-19 was 21.5 per 1,000, giving Orange County the second lowest rate in the state of North Carolina for the past two years.

Our heart disease death rate is also extremely low at a rate of 172.3 for the period from 2000-2004



From NC State Center for Health Statistics

compared to 233.9 at the state level. We have already achieved the Healthy Carolinians 2010 goal of 219.8 per 100,000 population for deaths due to heart disease.

Youth death rates have dropped as have deaths due to diabetes, stroke, and colon cancer.

To view the full report visit the State Center for Health Statistics website at the following link: <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/data/trends/pdf/Orange.pdf>

Cancer remains top cause of death in Orange County

The overall cancer death rate has dropped over the past decade, but cancers remain the leading cause of death in our county. Compared to the state, Orange County had a lower age-adjusted overall cancer rate for the period 2000-2004 of 189.1 versus the state rate of 197.4 per 100,000 population. And the rates for specific cancers such as colon and lung cancer are lower than the state rates. But when comparing breast,

prostate and pancreatic cancers, the Orange County rates are higher than the state. Of particular concern is the continued health disparity that is reflected in the fact that African-American residents have considerably higher rates of most forms of cancer than do whites. For more specifics on the leading causes of death and the cancer rates by race, see tables on pages 2 and 3.

Leading Causes of Death, Orange County NC 2000-2004

The top causes of death are not surprising and most can be linked to lifestyle factors such as smoking. Poor diet and lack of exercise are also factors which may lead to overweight and obesity and eventually to chronic disease. When compared to the state, there are some differences in the leading causes, namely that heart disease is the top cause of death statewide and cancer is the top cause in Orange County. The state also has a higher rate of deaths due to diabetes, although this is an ever increasing problem in Orange county as it is across the nation.

The table to the right shows the top 8 causes of death for Orange County and North Carolina and compares the age-adjusted rates of death per 100,000 population for these causes.

Cause of death	Orange Co.		NC	
	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate
All Cancers	1 st	189.1	2 nd	197.4
Heart Disease	2 nd	172.3	1 st	233.9
Cerebrovascular Disease	3 rd	60.6	3 rd	67.4
Chronic Lung Disease	4 th	32.5	4 th	46.0
Pneumonia/Influenza	5 th	26.5	8 th	23.8
Alzheimer's Disease	6 th	25.4	6 th	25.5
Unintentional Injuries	7 th	25.1	7 th	24.8
Diabetes	8 th	16.9	5 th	27.5

Data from NC State Center for Health Statistics 2000-2004

Obesity continues to increase

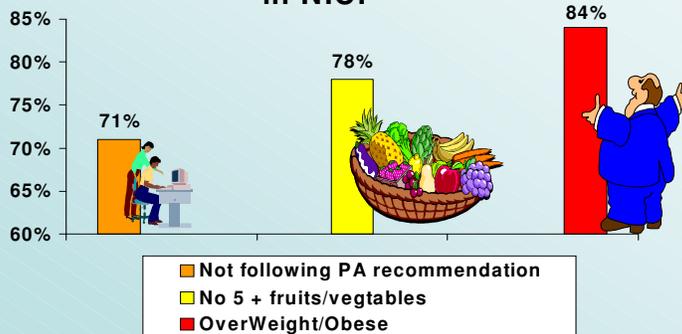


Data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS) shows that the number of Orange County residents that are overweight has increased to 32.2% in 2005 and the number of obese residents is up to 19.4%. The rate has been steadily increasing about 1% per year since 2002. The combined total of overweight and obese persons is now at 51.6%. This is one of the lowest rates in the state with some counties having as many as 60% or more residents overweight or obese, but it is still alarming.

The trend among children is even more distressing with NC NPASS data showing 18.7% of our children ages 2-4 being classified as overweight and an additional 18.6% are at-risk of becoming overweight.

Obesity is a key factor that contributes to the development of diabetes and other chronic diseases, and for this reason many people are working to try and help residents decrease their risks of becoming overweight by promoting lower calorie diets high in fruits and vegetables and getting more physical activity to help reduce or maintain weight. A loss of just 10% of body weight can reduce a persons risk of disease significantly.

Prevalence of Inactivity, Unhealthy Eating, and Overweight/Obesity in People with Diabetes * in N.C.



Source: N.C. State Center for Health Statistics, BRFSS, 2003
Note: *Diagnosed Diabetes

Obesity is a key factor that contributes to the development of diabetes and other chronic diseases

*PA stands for physical activity, the current recommendation is: moderate physical activity for 30 or more minutes per day, five or more days per week or vigorous physical activity for 20 or more minutes per day, three or more days per week

New programs improve healthcare access

The Orange County Health Department began offering primary care at their Hillsborough office in January of 2005 and also began offering two evening clinics per week. They also hired a chronic disease nurse in January 2006 whose role is to follow patients with chronic disease and assure that they have access to a medical home. The primary care clinics that were added to the Health Department in 2005 reached 279 clients through 544 encounters between July 1, 2005 and June 30, 2006. Of these 41% were self pay (81% of these 0-20% pay), 57% received Medicaid, 2% had insurance and 15% of clients served were Hispanic. The health department has received additional funding and will begin offering primary care in the Chapel Hill office in January 2007.

A community care network covering Orange, Chatham, Caswell, and Alamance counties was established in 2003 as part of the statewide Access Care Network. Known as the "Central Carolina Health Network" (CCHN), the project works to increase access to care and improve cost effectiveness for Medicaid and uninsured residents of the 4 counties. Through a federal Healthy Communities Access Program (HCAP) grant the CCHN is working on developing a single portal of entry for the under and uninsured patients in the multi-county health care system. Five case managers have been hired by the CCHN to help Medicaid and uninsured clients, especially those with chronic disease, to establish medical homes and better manage their illnesses.



The latest figures from the Sheps Center for Health Research, estimate in Orange County 16.3% of residents ages birth to 64 are uninsured. This includes 10.4% or 2,754 children from birth to age 17, that were estimated to be uninsured in 2004.

Health disparities still exist in Orange County

When certain members of the community have poorer health outcomes than others it is known as a disparity. In Orange County we continue to see that African-Americans suffer from higher rates of death for many of the leading illnesses. Many factors can contribute to health disparities including a lack of access to health care services, inadequate funds to pay for services, lack of insurance, fear or distrust of the system, or lack of transportation. In the case of many of our immigrant residents, the language barrier often plays a role in creating a disparity in the ability to access care.

gap between African-Americans and Caucasians when it comes to the kinds of numbers we see in our statistical analysis. And the growing Latino population also experiences a tremendous difference in access to care, though the data on this population group is less readily available

Adding services as described in the article above is one way to improve health outcomes, but the fact that disparities have existed for many years and are caused by a complex set of factors including a lack of social and economic parity in our society, make this a very difficult issue to try and correct.

Disparities are caused by a complex set of factors including a lack of social and economic parity in our society

It is difficult to determine how best to reduce the

Disparity ratios for the leading causes of death in Orange County 2000-2004

The disparity ratio is the rate for minorities divided by the rate for Caucasians. The resulting ratio represents the difference between the two groups and shows that the minority death rate for example was 1.2 times higher for heart disease and 3.5 times higher for diabetes than the Caucasian rate.

Cause of Death	Caucasian rate	Minority rate	Disparity Ratio
Heart Disease	165.8	203.1	1.2
Cerebrovascular Disease	58.5	70.1	1.2
All Cancers	178.7	237.5	1.3
Colon Cancer	14.7	27.2	1.9
Lung Cancer	53.7	58.9	1.1
Breast Cancer	26.2	37.9	1.5
Prostate Cancer	30.7	72.3	2.4
Diabetes	11.8	40.8	3.5
Nephritis	9.3	34.3	3.7

Data from the NC State Center for Health Statistics

Family Violence Prevention

Family violence, including child abuse and neglect as well as partner violence is still a top issue in our county. We have been working to raise awareness about the problem and encourage the use of available services to those in need. The Advocates for Children Committee of Healthy Carolinians has continued to offer training to community professionals through the Brown Bag Lunch series and the Professional Training series. From 2003 through 2006 21 half-day trainings have been offered reaching 286 participants with education on how to recognize and respond to domestic violence, child abuse and neglect and sexual abuse. In addition, 25 Brown Bag lunches have been offered with 635 people attending. Topics have ranged from on-line predators and cyber-safety to elder abuse, teen dating violence and the mindset of a batterer.

The committee was recently awarded a grant from the Safe Communities Coalition in partnership with Orange County DSS to develop a community campaign on the dangers of shaking to prevent shaken baby syndrome. Severe shaking of small children and babies is one of the number one causes of infant death and disability and is largely preventable. The campaign will get underway in January 2007 with the provision of educational materials to new parents through local pediatricians and obstetricians offices, UNC Hospitals and the Health Dept.. The project also plans a poster campaign with the theme "Real Men Rock" to include special events around this topic and advertisements to be placed on local buses.

For help call:
Family Violence Prevention Center 866-929-7122 (toll free)
Orange County Rape Crisis Center 919-967-7273
Orange County Dept. of Social Services 968-2000
or 911

Focus on adolescent mental health

The rate of mental illness among young people continues to be of concern with on average 20% of young people experiencing a mental health problem at any given time and 5-9% of children and adolescents having a severe emotional disturbance that significantly impacts their ability to function in the community. Healthy Carolinians has continued to work with community partners to address the issues. In November 2006, a second addition of the Teen Friendly Therapist listing was produced to help children, teens and families select a mental health provider that meets their needs.

and a review of current data. The findings of the assessment included the need to provide more education to young people, families and school staff about mental health and mental illness and how to access available community resources.

Healthy Carolinians also met with the superintendents and representatives of both school systems to discuss current practices and ways to improve the provision of mental health services to students. Much is already being done to help students and families and new programs are on the horizon such as training in confidentiality issues for school personnel and the addition of a new curriculum focused on recognizing signs and symptoms of mental illness, reducing the stigma of mental illness and increasing understanding and awareness.

To read the full report or download the therapist listing, visit the Healthy Carolinians website : www.co.orange.nc.us/healthycarolinians or call the office at 968-2022 Ext 291.



The Advocates for Adolescents Committee of Healthy Carolinians also completed an assessment of adolescent mental health needs in November 2006. The assessment included focus groups with teens and mental health providers, surveys of school personnel

Orange County Health Department and Healthy Carolinians are partnering for a healthy community

We would like to express our thanks to the Orange County Board of Commissioners for their support of our work over the years. The Healthy Carolinians Council and Committees are able to continue to work for a healthier county through the financial support of the Commissioners and the taxpayers of Orange County, as well as the contributions of our member agencies and volunteers.

Thank you!



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