2010 State of the County Health Report

The purpose of this report is to relate current information on the health status of Duplin County including morbidity/mortality data and review priority health concerns selected as a result of a comprehensive community health assessment conducted in 2008.

It serves as a yearly update of accomplishments, health concerns and the actions taken to address these concerns.

This report was designed to promote an understanding of health needs, and to educate the community regarding health issues that affect Duplin County residents. Data for this report was taken from the North Carolina Center for Health Statistics and the US Census Bureau.

2008 HEALTH PRIORITIES

- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Teen Pregnancy
- Asthma
- Education
- Obesity
- Heart Disease
- Infant Mortality
- Dental Health
- Gangs

Emerging Issues for 2010

- Unemployment
- Health Insurance
- Access to Care
- Suicide/Homicide
According to data from NCDHHS for 2005-2009, 32.1 deaths per 100,000 population in the county were attributed to diabetes compared to only 24.1 for the state. Those most affected by diabetes are minority, both male and female. There is an increase in the number of both adults and children with diabetes. This rate is alarming since the implication for complications due to diabetes is increased throughout the lifespan of these individuals.

The Duplin County Health Department has implemented a free Diabetes Education program that is open to all residents of the county who have diabetes. The program focuses on healthy eating and physical activity as well overall management of the disease. Duplin County Health Department and Goshen Medical Center are also addressing the diabetes issue by offering physicals, blood sugar testing and disease management services. Diabetes screening is also done at local health fairs and work places when requested. Duplin General Hospital in collaboration with the Coastal Carolinias Health Alliance now has a Diabetes Bus which can offer classes in various parts of the community.

**OVERWEIGHT/OBESITY/ POOR DIET/ PHYSICAL INACTIVITY**

The health promotion program at the Duplin County Health Department works to address the risk factors for heart disease, cancer and other chronic diseases. The health promotion program implements interventions to increase healthy eating and physical activity. Most recently the Health Department has implemented a Wellness program for county employees and has offered both the Eat Smart Move More curriculum and Weight Wise Woman in the community. The Health Department is also partnering with the Warsaw Wellness Center, the Faison Wellness Center, and the faith community to offer programs in those facilities. During the summer the DCHD worked with Warsaw Middle School and the Head Start program in Greenevers to promote healthy eating and good nutrition.

The health promotion program in partnership with Duplin Partners for Health (DPH), the local Healthy Carolinians coalition, also seeks to increase physical activity. DPH continues to focus on enhancing the Duplin
Commons walking trail and encouraging county employees and the community to use the walking trail to increase their daily physical activity, to control their weight and improve health. DPH is also collaborating with other agencies and organizations to promote healthy lifestyles in the community. The county opened a small gym in Kenansville for county employees during the summer of 2010 to complement the county wellness program.

CANCER/HEART DISEASE

The 2005-2009 rates of death for heart disease and cancer, two of the leading causes of death for Duplin County, far exceed the state average. In Duplin County, the death rate for heart disease is 222.4 per 100,000 compared to the state death rate of 192.2. Heart disease continues to be the leading cause of death for white males in Duplin County. Although the death rate from stokes has declined, Duplin County is still above the state rate.

The 2005-2009 death rate for cancer is 203.9 per 100,000 while the state rate is 190.7. Both heart disease and cancer continue to be major factors affecting the health of the population of Duplin County.

To address these priorities, the modifiable risk factors associated with these health conditions must also be addressed. Those risk factors include overweight/obesity, poor diet, physical inactivity and tobacco use. Members of the community are beginning to recognize these factors as major concerns since they were recently identified in the community surveys as such. Additional factors such as the high poverty rate and lack of health care insurance also play a major role in the health of the community. In 2010 Duplin County was identified as the leading county in North Carolina for residents without health insurance.
**TEEN PREGNANCY**

Currently, the teen pregnancy rate for females ages 15-19 in Duplin County is 44.6 per 1,000. This rate is slightly lower than in the two previous years but is higher than the teen pregnancy rate for NC which is 33.6 per 1,000. Of major concern in the county is the increase in teen pregnancy in one of our local high schools.

![Graph showing teen pregnancy rates](image)

Duplin County hopes to reduce the prevalence of teenage pregnancy by targeting the risk factors that influence teen pregnancy such as lack of knowledge, peer pressure and a lack of involvement in extracurricular activities. The Health Department is currently seeking a grant that will allow us to work with the schools to address the high teen pregnancy rate in the county.

**INFANT MORTALITY**

The 2005-2009 infant mortality rate per 1000 population for Duplin County is 8.7 compared to the state rate of 8.3. The disparity between white and minority infant mortality rates in Duplin County is alarming. The rate of white infant deaths is 6.9 per 1,000 infants while the minority infant death rate is more than two times greater at 14.8 per 1000.

![Graph showing infant mortality rates](image)

Duplin County Health Department has worked with minority women of childbearing age to help to reduce the rates of infant mortality among these populations. SIDS risk reduction education is provided to churches, community groups, hospital staff, and other healthcare providers. Folic acid education and multivitamins are provided to women through outreach services. Latino women are a high priority for Folic acid education and multivitamins due to the higher rates of neural tube defects in this population. The Health Department has a certified lactation consultant who works with new mothers and makes postpartum home visits that include breastfeeding support and neonatal education. In 2010, the Office of Minority Health and Disparities awarded the Duplin County Health Department a grant to promote and support breastfeeding throughout the county. The
Health Department also received the Breastfeeding Friendly Business Award for 2010 from the NC Breastfeeding Coalition.

**ASTHMA**

Asthma affects more than 7 percent of adults and more than 18 percent of children in North Carolina. While asthma impacts all North Carolinians, African Americans, Native Americans, women, the elderly, and children are among the groups most affected by asthma.

The 2007 North Carolina hospital admission rate for children 0-14 years with asthma was 166 per 100,000; Duplin was 224 per 100,000. Data from the NCSCHS indicates that these higher rates are prevalent in the southeastern counties of NC.

The Duplin County Health Department is participating in the Improving Performance In Practice (IPIP) asthma quality improvement initiative with Community Care of North Carolina. This initiative is directed toward developing a disease registry, instituting a chronic care model of care, a work flow analysis and instituting recommended changes in the clinic for the treatment of our asthma clients.

**TOBACCO FREE INITIATIVE**

Duplin County Health Department currently employs two grant funded health educators to work with groups of children from the middle and high schools to educate them about tobacco use. The program is Tobacco Reality Unfiltered (TRU) and these youth groups support all smoke free activities as part of their outreach projects. These groups continue to work with the schools to promote tobacco free environments and educate the youth on the dangers of tobacco use.

**DENTAL HEALTH**

Duplin County has a high percentage of children with poor dental health. While the 2007 state rate for fifth graders with untreated tooth decay is relatively low, the rate for Duplin County is 7.0% compared to our peer counties who have a 4.3% rate. The ratio of dentists in Duplin is 1.9/10,000 population compared with a ratio of 4.4/10,000 for the state. The Duplin County water system is not fluoridated, although the Board of Health and the dentists in the county support fluoridation of the water supply. The Health Department has a mobile dental unit which serves children through 18 years of age. The dental unit is staffed with a full time dentist. The dental unit moves to different schools in the county in order to facilitate the provision of dental services to children in each area of the county. The dental unit is housed at the Health Department during the summer months and provides services there for children as well as limited adult services.
MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health issues have been more prevalent within the county over the past few years since the decline in the economy. Issues such as depression have been noted more frequently. Mental health services are available in the county but access to these services is sometimes difficult for our rural population.

The increase in the suicide and homicide rate is a new issue for the county. There has been a substantial increase in the suicide rate since 2003. The use of alcohol while driving is also a concern. The county has received a grant to form the SOLID (Saving Our Lives in Duplin) campaign in the county to address the incidence of alcohol and drug use. El Centro Latino de Duplin, the Latino advocacy group, is an active part of that initiative.

TRENDS AND INDICATORS

There have been many changes in Duplin County since the last Community Health Assessment in 2008. The county has shown moderate growth, primarily in the increasing Latino population. Many of the health concerns remain the same but access to care, quality of education, unemployment, obesity, and health insurance have all moved to the forefront of concern. There has also been an increase in the number of suicides and homicides in the county during the past year.

While the Duplin County Schools have continued to show improvement, there continues to be concern with low performance in many areas. The county has a new school superintendent who is working closely with the county commissioners to move forward in addressing the educational needs of the children. The new superintendent is also working more closely with each community to listen to concerns and to address the needs of the schools.

There continues to be a need for recreational facilities for the children and youth in the county. The Duplin County Recreation Department was eliminated in 2008 and has not been re-instated. Several groups within the county are addressing this issue including Duplin Partners for Health, and individual townships. The Boys and Girls Clubs in the county were closed this year and the programs that they were sponsoring have not yet been re-started. Duplin County has recently begun a wellness program managed by the Health Department for county employees and hopes to see this expand to other areas of the county since obesity is an issue. The towns of Warsaw and Faison have each opened newly renovated facilities for a wellness center in each community. The county opened a fitness facility for county employees during the summer of 2010.

Duplin County has shown a dramatic increase in the number of diabetics and as mentioned previously, DCHD has implemented diabetic management classes for diabetics in the county. With this diabetes management program,
the diseases and complications that are seen in diabetics such as heart disease, cardiovascular problems and kidney disease will be addressed in a timelier manner.

Over fifty percent of the births in Duplin County were to Latino women. The infant mortality rate for minorities in Duplin County is higher than the state average. These two factors alone indicate a need for increased educational services for the high risk population in Duplin County. The Health Department, Duplin General Hospital and other medical offices are all addressing the need for increased education for this population through parenting classes, breastfeeding classes and prenatal education classes.

Duplin County continues to work toward community improvement in the areas of health and wellness, education, and managing the Latino population as well as other immigrant populations that are now in the county. There are many groups within the county who welcome the input of the general public though membership. These include civic organizations, fraternal organizations, the faith community, and community groups such as Duplin Partners for Health, the local Healthy Carolinians organization, and El Centro Latino de Duplin, the advocacy organization for the Latino community.