



HEALTHY CAROLINIANS OF THE OUTER BANKS
STATE OF THE COUNTY HEALTH REPORT
DECEMBER 2007

NARRATIVE

Healthy Carolinians of the Outer Banks

Healthy Carolinians of the Outer Banks (HCOB) was formed in April of 2001. HCOB represents “A Partnership for A Healthier Dare County” and was developed as a model for the Dare County Department of Public Health to collaborate with members of the community in identifying and addressing health and safety issues. Simply stated, the mission of Healthy Carolinians of the Outer Banks is to mobilize the community to make Dare County a healthier and safer place for all who live here.

HCOB completed a comprehensive community health assessment of Dare County in 2002 and in 2006 and has mobilized concerned citizens into taskforces to combat the community health problems uncovered by the assessments. In 2002 taskforces developed plans of action to address Barriers to Access to Health Care, Substance Abuse, Aging Issues, and Motor Vehicle Injuries in Dare County.

2002 Task Force Accomplishments:

Access to Care Taskforce

Community Care Clinic of Dare – 501c3

Dare CASA-501c3

Motor Vehicle Injury Taskforce

Larger, Easy-to-Read Milepost Signs
Safe Driving Guides for Visitors

Aging Taskforce

Access to Flu & Pneumonia Vaccine,
Elder Abuse Collaborative &
Dare Respite Care

Substance Abuse Taskforce

New taskforces were formed in late 2007 to address **Child Abuse/Neglect, Cancer, Heart Disease/Stroke and Obesity**. Volunteers signed up for taskforces following presentations of the community health assessment, news releases in the local media, and the Healthy Carolinians Annual Meeting. This report serves to summarize the events that have taken place as taskforces have come together.

Obesity Taskforce

The percentage of overweight 12 to 18 year olds in Dare County (35.4%) is higher than the state average of 25.7%. A group of concerned citizens has come together to plan how to address this issue in Dare County and the action plan currently includes programs such as, "Keeping the Lights On" to encourage families to utilize the local school track/gymnasium in the evenings, and a health and fitness walkathon.

Cancer Taskforce

Cancer is the leading cause of death in the county and the 2006 Community Health Assessment confirmed that Lung and Breast Cancer mortality rates have increased from 1995-2005 in Dare. The Cancer Taskforce is currently working on a plan to address awareness and prevention activities in the county.

Heart Disease and Stroke Taskforce

Heart Disease is the second leading cause of death in Dare County but the fact that Heart disease and Stroke mortality rates are much higher in North Carolina, when compared to the United States as a whole, concerned the citizens of Dare County. Planning for a "Women's Healthy Heart Campaign" is underway as well as a "Know Your Numbers" program.

Child Abuse and Neglect

The community health assessment revealed that the number of families investigated for child abuse and neglect has risen 24% since 2001. The most startling information was the discovery that the number of cases where maltreatment was substantiated has risen 27% since 2001. The taskforce is hoping to raise awareness and thereby decrease the number of repeat substantiated maltreatment of children in Dare County by developing a child abuse and neglect community forum/summit.

Population/Morbidity and Mortality

Cancer and Heart Disease remain the top two leading causes of death, with Dare's overall rate of cancer mortality being higher than the state rate. The obesity epidemic is still on the rise in Dare County. A recent report (2006) published every two years ranks Dare County 87th out of the 100 counties in North Carolina for overweight 2-20 year olds. A newspaper article published in January 2008 reported Dare County among the ten counties with the highest rates of unemployment during December 2007. The seasonal workforce in Dare County often experiences financial extremes and as a result lifestyle behaviors may fluctuate (dietary habits, stress levels, etc) more so than in other counties. These findings/reports show a possible correlation to the increased level of concern for health behavior problems as opposed to medical health issues reported in the health assessment.

The Future

2008 is going to be a challenge, however, the enthusiasm and genuine interest in the health of Dare County is phenomenal. The taskforce representatives understand the depth of the issues they are tackling and realize the impact their work will have upon the community.

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