

STATE OF THE COUNTY HEALTH REPORT

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Special points of interest:

- Cancer is the #1 killer of Clay County Residents
- Cardiovascular Disease is the #1 cause of hospitalization for Clay County Residents
- Radon gas has been found at over 88 times the recommended mitigation level in Clay County Homes
- Hep C rates are expected to increase in Clay County, and other WNC counties.
- Clay County will be in the path of the Great American Solar Eclipse that is predicted for August of 2017.

WHAT IS A STATE OF THE COUNTY HEALTH REPORT?

The State of the County Health Report (SOTCH) is a document published yearly by the Clay County Health Department. The SOTCH provides the citizens of Clay County with an update on the health status of the county, and what is being done to improve on the health of its citizens.

The 2016 SOTCH was compiled by the Clay County Health Department in partnership with the Clay County Partnership for Healthy Carolinians. WNC Healthy Impact assisted in the collecting of data used in this document.

The SOTCH is used as a way to inform the citizens of Clay County on the status of work completed on the health needs identified in the 2015 Community Health Assessment, and the work plans written into the Community Action Plans (CAP's).



2015 Community Health Assessment Priorities:

1. Chronic Disease Control and Prevention
2. Access to Healthcare
3. Cancer Control and Prevention

2015 COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT

The Community Health Assessment is a process that is conducted every 4 years for the purpose of looking at the health needs of Clay County. In order to collect information surveys of 3000 citizens were conducted, along with the surveys of local providers, and

other key informants in Clay County. Also, data was collected from the NC State Center for Health Statistics.

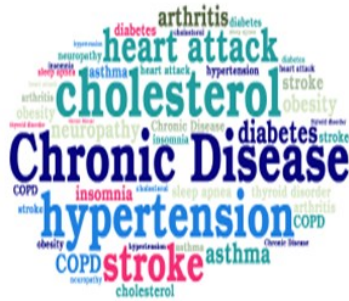
Using this data three priority areas needs were selected by Clay County stakeholders.

The priorities identified are:

Chronic Disease Control and Prevention, Access to Healthcare, and Cancer Control and Prevention. The Clay County Health Department in collaboration with local stakeholders developed Clay County's Community Action Plan (CAP's) using these priorities.

CHRONIC DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Chronic diseases are defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as diseases that are not communicable, develop slowly, and persist for long periods of time. Chronic Disease has always been a major issue for Clay County, North Carolina, and the United



States as a whole. All of the top three causes of death for Clay County citizens—Heart Disease, Cancer, and Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease—are considered to be chronic diseases by WHO. This priority has also been identified in the 2008 and 2012 Community Health Assessments and will be a continual priority in Clay County in the foreseeable future.

Clay County is fortunate to have a robust Diabetes Self Management Education program offered by Shannon Summers MS, RD, LDN at the Clay County Health Department.

Other work conducted on Chronic Disease Control and Prevention includes:

- Health Education and Promotion at local businesses and Health fairs.
- News Paper Articles
- 5-2-1 Almost None Promotion in local schools and child care facilities
- Blood Pressure and vital sign checks in the community
- Adult Health Program
- Expansion of DSME to include Diabetes Support

LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH IN CLAY COUNTY

The Leading causes of death in Clay County have changed since the 2015 CHA. Diseases of the heart are no longer the number one killer of our citizens. Cancer has surpassed heart disease as the number one killer with Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease and Cerebrovascular Disease holding the third and fourth spots respectively.

Rank	Cause of Death -Clay County	# Deaths 2011-2015	Age Adjusted Death Rate 2011-2015
1	Cancer	153	147.7
2	Diseases of Heart	131	140.7
3	Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	52	50.6
4	Cerebrovascular Disease	33	33.0

2015 North Carolina Vital Statistics, Volume 2

PROJECT 24:24 HOURS CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE

“The first group to complete the Project 24 program lost a total of 158 Pounds at the end of their full year”

Project 24 is a CDC recognized lifestyle change program aimed at reducing the participants risk of becoming diabetic. Project 24 is also known as the Diabetic Prevention Program or DPP.

Project 24 consists of group classes with a trained Lifestyle Coach. The Health Department is just starting on it's second year offering this life changing program, and has had its first group com-

plete the program. This lifestyle change program can help you lose weight through eating better and being more physically active. The participants also learn how to reduce stress. All of these things help reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes and of having a heart attack or stroke.



ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE: HEALTH DEPARTMENT IN NEW FACILITY

Access to Healthcare was identified as a priority on the 2015 Community Health Assessment. Clay County is a medically underserved county that lacks an Urgent Care, Free Clinic, or Hospital within its borders and also does not have medical specialists in fields such as pediatrics, Obstetrics, or Cancer treatment. Clay County citizens must travel to surrounding counties or travel up to two hours to reach a major medical facility for hospitalization or treatment.

In November of 2015 the Clay County Health Department opened for services at its new

location on Courthouse Drive in Hayesville. The new Health Department offers 4 exam rooms, double what the previous location offered. This allows two Health Care Providers to operate at the same time. Subsequently the Health Department hired a second Healthcare Provider so that someone is available 5 days a week. Also, with the new building Clay County's Dental Clinic is finally able to co-locate in the Clay County Health Department Building. The Clay County Dental Clinic has seven chairs, increasing its capacity to see patients.

The Clay County Health Department works to give the our county citizens a greater access to healthcare through the following Programs:

- BCCCP
- Adult Health
- Health Net-Adult Case Management
- Hep C Testing



“The Clay County Health Department is offering Hepatitis C Testing at no cost until funds are no longer available.”

LEADING CAUSES OF HOSPITALIZATION IN CLAY COUNTY

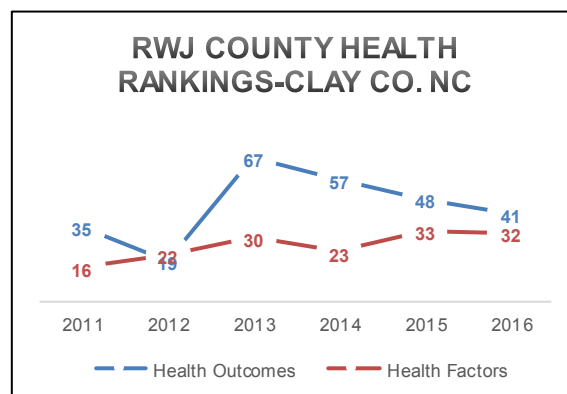
The leading causes of hospitalization for Clay County residents mirrors the leading causes of death to an extent with the top two being due to chronic diseases. These numbers only reflect the county residents who were seen at NC hospitals and do not count those who sought treatment in Ga.

Cause of Hospitalization	Total Cases	Average Cost/Case
Cardiovascular & Circulatory Disease	102	\$36,864
Heart Disease	81	\$40,429
Respiratory Disease	81	\$23,019
Injuries and Poisonings	65	\$33,786
Musculoskeletal Disease	63	\$44,980

NC County Health Data Book-2016 (Clay)

CLAY COUNTY’S HEALTH RANKING

The Robert Woods Johnson Foundation Ranks each county by health status every year. Two categories that are ranked are Health Outcomes (how healthy is the county), and Health Factors (what influences the health of the county). During the last CHA in 2012 Clay Co. was ranked 19th. In 2014 when the last SOTCH was completed Clay County Fell to 57th, however as the graph shows we have improved and are now ranked 41st in the State.



CANCER CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Cancer is currently the leading cause of death for the citizens of Clay County, and the US as a whole, claiming over 584,000 lives per year nationwide. Clay County has continued to have significant cancer diagnosis and death rates for several years now. With the trend continuing unabated and despite the fact that cancer is considered a chronic disease by the WHO, it was identified as needing its own priority.

Clay County's Colon, and Prostate Cancer rates are higher than the State's. That being said, our Lung Cancer rates have decreased over

the past several years, however Lung Cancer is still the number one cause of Cancer death in Clay County.

The Clay County Health Department has been working to address Cancer by:

- Working with Cooperative Extension to hand out Radon Test Kits
- Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Prevention Program (BCCCP)
- Switching to the more accurate Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) from Hemosure for Colorectal Cancer Screening

- Working with Mountain-Wise to reduce our smoking mother rates.
- Promotion of and education on the need for Breast Cancer, Cervical Cancer, and Colorectal Cancer Screenings

	Colon	Lung	F.	Pros-
NC	38.5	70.9	157.9	130.6
Clay	40.6	69.5	130.6	137.0

“Clay County homes have tested as high as 354pCi/L, over 88 times the recommended mitigation level of 4pCi/L.”

RADON GAS IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

Radon is a odorless, colorless, tasteless, naturally occurring radioactive gas. Radon is produced from the decay of Thorium and Uranium found naturally in the Earth. It seeps into homes through cracks in foundations, walls and joints and can also be found in ground and drinking water. Radon exposure is the highest cause of Lung Cancer in non-smokers,

and claims around 21,000 lives per year according to EPA estimates.

According to home testing, Clay County citizens have significant levels of Radon in their homes. The highest level among all houses tested in Clay County is 354pCi/L; it is recommended that a home be mitigated when rates exceed 4pCi/L.

The Clay County Health De-

partment has partnered with the Clay County Extension Office for the past several years to obtain Radon Tests at no charge to citizens of Clay County. The Health Department is also planning on working with the Building Department to encourage new home builds to include Radon Mitigation.

For more information about Radon visit www.ncradon.org

PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONDS TO THE BOTELER FIRE

At the end of October 2016 a lighting strike ignited a wild fire on Boteler Peak in the Shooting Creek community of Clay County. The wildfire burned until the beginning of December when it was finally contained burning a total 9,036 acres. During this time Air Quality became diminished increasing the risk of respiratory issues for those who have compromised respiratory systems.

During this incident the Clay County Health Department responded to his Public Health Emergency by:

- Issuing Air Quality Advisory's on a daily basis, and as air quality improved/ or diminished.
- Partnered with Clay County Emergency Management to request N95 Respirators for Clay County Citizens

- Partnered with Clay County Fire and Rescue and Local Volunteer Fire Departments to open 4 Points of Dispensing (POD) sites and dispensed over 2000 masks in Warne, Shooting Creek, and Hayesville while providing education on their proper use and wear.

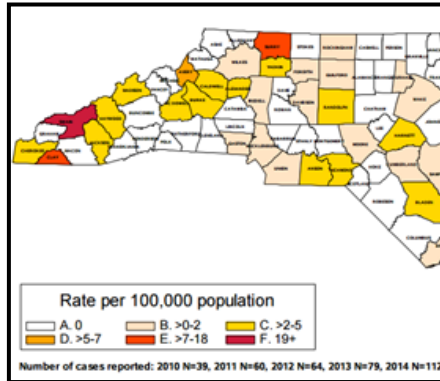
EMERGING ISSUES-HEPATITIS C

In the process of conducting the Community Health Assessment and planning the Community Action Plan, Hepatitis C emerged as a serious health threat to citizens of Clay County. According to a news release by www.drugfree.org, the CDC has identified 220 counties across the United States that are at risk of outbreaks of HIV and hepatitis C from injection drug use. Clay County is included as one of the rural counties identified in NC, along with 4 others. In light of this emergent threat, an intervention plan for Hepatitis C was chosen to be integrated into our Community Action Plans.

The Clay County Health Department is working to:

- Provide Hep C testing at no cost while funding Lasts
- Establish Educational Outreach with the goal of increasing the # of people seeking testing
- Establish a provider network for Treatment

Hep C (Acute) Rates by County Jan 1st-Dec 31st 2013



HARM REDUCTION

North Carolina, like many other states, is in the midst of an overdose epidemic—primarily driven by prescription opioids and, increasingly, heroin. Medication and drug overdose deaths have increased substantially over the past several years. This crisis has prompted a response by public health that addresses several areas. Clay County Health Department is responding to this crisis in our

own county in a number of ways. One response includes facilitating the revitalization of the Safe and Drug Free Clay County Coalition to increase awareness of risky behaviors. These include underage alcohol and tobacco use, illegal drugs, and other harmful activities. Clay County Health Department tracks data related to drug overdoses, and encourages local medical providers to utilize the North

Carolina Controlled Substance Reporting System (CSRS), which helps identify excessive use of controlled substances by patients. The Health Department is also collaborating with other community-based organizations in efforts to reduce deaths by drug overdoses, and the spread of diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis C through education and practical interventions.

“According to the CDC, Clay County has a high risk of having an outbreak of both Hep C and HIV.”

SMOKY MOUNTAIN MEDICAL 2017 MISSION COMING TO CLAY COUNTY

In 2014 the Clay County Health Department assisted with the Appalachian Care Medical Mission which brought US Army, and Airforce Reserve Medical Providers to the area to provide much needed Dental, Medical, Optometry, and Veterinarian Services to Western North Carolina. These providers saw 10,766 patients at no cost at an estimated treatment value of \$1,546, 409.

As a part of our work on providing Access to Healthcare this year (2017) the Clay County Health Department, and Swain County Health Department are partnering to bring this service back to our communities.

The Smoky Mountain Medical Mission will be held the first two weeks in August of 2017 . This is a much needed service and the Health Department is

looking forward to assisting these providers in giving the best possible care to the Citi-



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The next Clay County Community Health Assessment will be conducted in the year 2018. During the years between Community Health Assessments, the Health Department will issue the State of the County Health Report yearly. This report serves to inform the public of the Health Department's work on the needs identified in the CHA, and work outlined in the Community Action Plans. The Health Department continues to work to improve on these plans, and act on emerging health issues as they are identified.

GREAT AMERICAN ECLIPSE OF 2017

On August 21st 2017 Clay County will be in the path of a Total Solar Eclipse that will last approximately 2.5 minutes. Several issues of Public Health concern are set to develop.

- 1) Clay County is expected to have an influx of visitors, and campers which could cause environmental health issues.
- 2) Watching a solar eclipse with the naked eye could cause eye damage. Therefore the need for public health education on proper viewing of a solar eclipse may need to be conducted.

