



COVID-19 & Impacts on Community Health Improvement Plans

On March 3, 2020 North Carolina reported its first COVID-19 case. In the months that followed, life and work changed for many North Carolinians and Dare County was no exception. Executive Orders from Governor Roy Cooper began to impact the ways in which we worked. Some businesses closed, some remained open as essential services. In-person meetings were no longer an option for many of our community task forces, as they went against mass-gathering limits. Additionally, many in health and human service related fields began working from home in Dare County.

Our community, in its usual fashion, rose to the occasion and found ways to alter and continue to provide important programs and initiatives. Challenges may have slowed progress, but did not get in the way of continuing to host meetings and continue a variety of services. A shift was made to online-based meetings and services.

Due to staffing limitations during the COVID-19 pandemic, the completion of the 2020 SOTCH was delayed. In the sections that follow, more information will be provided on the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Substance Abuse Progress

Saving Lives Task Force Public Awareness & Educational Events

- Escape a Vape events were held February 4, 5, & 6 on Roanoke Island, Hatteras Island, and Bodie Island. These events were open to youth and adults and featured a North Carolina teen who began vaping at a young age and became addicted.
- Take Down Tobacco Day presented by Peer Power students to Dare County Board of Commissioners
- Vaping Prevention Billboard placed in Manteo
- Issued quarterly newsletter, The Initiative
- Town Hall Conversations: Medication-Supported Treatment hosted March 11 at Dare County Center in Manteo
- 11th Annual Walk Against Addiction was held September 26, 2020 with 45 individuals in attendance

Syringe Exchange Program

As of June 2020, the Community Care Clinic of Dare is the Syringe Exchange provider for Dare County. This program provides syringes, awareness and education to those in need. The clinic also can provide medical care if needed. 515 Syringes were exchanged in 2020

Pill Disposal Initiatives

Medicine Take Back Events

These events are hosted quarterly in partnership with the Sheriff's Office, The Outer Banks Hospital, Dare County Department of Health & Human Services. In 2020, one event took place at Food-A-Rama in Manteo. Total Pills Collected from municipal law enforcement and the Sheriff's office for 2020: 48,883

Pill Disposal Bags & Boxes

Most pharmacies in Dare County have free pill disposal bags available upon request. This initiative began in September 2019 and continued in 2020. CVS Pharmacies in Manteo and Kill Devil Hills and Walgreen's in Kill Devil Hills have drop boxes. All Local Police Departments have a drug drop box except for Manteo.

Naloxone

Naloxone kits were distributed in a variety of ways throughout the community in 2020. The chart below breaks down four of the most popular methods of distribution:

Number of Naloxone Kits Distributed (2020)

Justice-Involved Persons	45
Post Overdose Response	13
Syringe Exchange Program	18
Community Members	19

Detention Center Outreach

There have been 84 face-to-face, one-on-one consultations with residents inside the Dare Detention Center by an outreach worker. Services included treatment/rehab options available, applications and interviews for sober living, re-entry options and resources. Naloxone kits provided with harm reduction strategies.

Saving Lives Response Team

An outreach worker from the Saving Lives Response Team attempts a face-to-face contact with the overdose survivor and provides a naloxone kit, overdose prevention training, and links to services. In addition to responding to overdoses, individuals can call the response team and request assistance in navigating treatment options. The outreach worker will meet with individuals, assist with paperwork, and provide resources to treatment.

- 11 individuals served
- 32 Naloxone kits distributed
- 73 individual community contacts

Mental Health Progress

Mental Health First Aid

In 2020, the Dare County Department of Health and Human Services, in partnership with the Breaking Through Task Force, began to accelerate the evidence based Mental Health First Aid training program. The program was offered to community members, as well as to community partner organizations. Understanding the program needed to continue in spite of the pandemic, an instructor became certified to deliver the Youth and Adult programs virtually. The following are the number of individuals and the organizations who took either the Youth or Adult course and obtained their certification, which is valid for three years:

Youth Mental Health First Aid

- Guardian ad Litem: 8
- Dare County School Staff: 2
- Dare County DHHS Staff: 3
- Tobacco Prevention Manager: 1
- Faith Community Member: 1

Adult Mental Health First Aid

- Dare County DHHS Staff: 10
- The Outer Banks Hospital Staff: 2
- Community Peer Support Specialist: 1
- Community Members: 2

Breaking Through Task Force Public Awareness Campaign

The goal of this campaign is to improve the overall wellness of Dare County through better access to care, support, improved functioning and promotion of positive mental health. A website was launched in 2020, that has resources for individuals living with mental health concerns and caregivers. Individuals who visit the website can find information on local resources and therapists. The site also features information on basic mental health concerns which includes signs and symptoms of a variety of mental health issues.

Building Community Resilience

The Dare County Schools in collaboration with Children & Youth Partnership for Dare County are providing mindfulness-based and wellness programs to teachers, administrators, counselors and other school staff. Building Community Resilience aims to provide students, teachers and community members with skills to manage stress proactively and enhance emotional self-regulation. Funding is provided through the Outer Banks Hospital Development Council's Community Benefit Grant and NC School Safety Grants. Dare County School staff participated in professional development opportunities and online courses by Mindful Schools, with a focus on further supporting educators and students mindfulness and resiliency skills.

Mindfulness Fundamentals Course

- Dare County School Staff Trained: Approx 165

Mindfulness in the Classroom Course

- Dare County School Staff: Approx 50

Cross Cutting: Substance Abuse & Mental Health Progress

PORT Health

PORT Health's goal is to improve the lives, health and well-being of individuals and families dealing with substance use and mental health disorders by providing a comprehensive range of services that treat the whole person and empower patients to find their way forward.

Substance Abuse Data From July - December 2020, there were:

- 2,478 individuals served with 4.8% of those receiving services in Hatteras Village
- 322 total admissions with 4.96% of those receiving services in Hatteras Village
- 104 adult admissions for individuals with a substance use disorder, with 11.53% of those receiving services in Hatteras Village

PORT Health Substance Abuse Diagnosis (2020)

Diagnosis Abuse & Dependence Types	#
Alcohol	80
Opioid	117
Cannabis	33
Cocaine	26

Women of Worth

Dare County Department of Health & Human Services' Health Educators implement evidence-based programs for women in the Dare County Detention Center and various locations throughout the community. Women of Worth includes: Helping Women Recover and Beyond Anger & Violence. These programs offer an environment that supports and promotes safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration and empowerment.

- 95 Helping Women Recover lessons were provided to an average of 6 participants in the community.
- 22 Helping Women Recover lessons were provided to an average of 15 participants in Dare County Detention Center.
- 16 Beyond Anger & Violence lessons were provided to an average of 15 participants in Dare County Detention Center.

Recovery Learning Circle

This program is held twice a week and facilitated by a Peer Support Specialist with Dare County Department of Health & Human Services. This program helps others to connect with their own challenges in a way to empower themselves to grow, feel better and more connected toward building on recovery and resilience.

These classes are peer facilitated and cover topics such as: coping skills, recovery planning, building hope, empowerment, personal responsibility and support. Participants learn awareness and coping skills for dealing with stress, emotions, interpersonal skills and mindfulness. Participants develop awareness of their own strengths and priorities and learn from and support each other in their recovery process.

January to mid March 2020

- PORT: 11 classes with an average of 9 participants
- Dare Detention: 9 classes with an average of 6
- Currituck Detention: 9 classes with an average of 6 participants

March to December 2020

- All classes switched to virtual format
- Weekly for each month: 3 classes 2-4 people per class
- One-on-One Services average 3-4 sessions per month
- Outdoor classes (weather permitted) occur twice a week with an average of 4 participants

Other CHIP Related Updates

Healthy North Carolina 2030

The Healthy North Carolina 2030 project brings together experts and leaders from multiple fields to inform the development of a common set of public health indicators and targets for the state over the next decade. These indicators will serve as the population health improvement plan for the North Carolina Division of Public Health. With a focus on health equity and the overall drivers of health outcomes (health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and the physical environment), these indicators and targets will help drive state and local-level activities, provide a springboard for collaboration and innovation, and develop a new vision for public health in our state to improve the health and well-being of all people of North Carolina.

Dare County does a variety of work that compliments and intersects with Healthy North Carolina 2030. The following indicators are supported through programs and initiatives in Dare County:

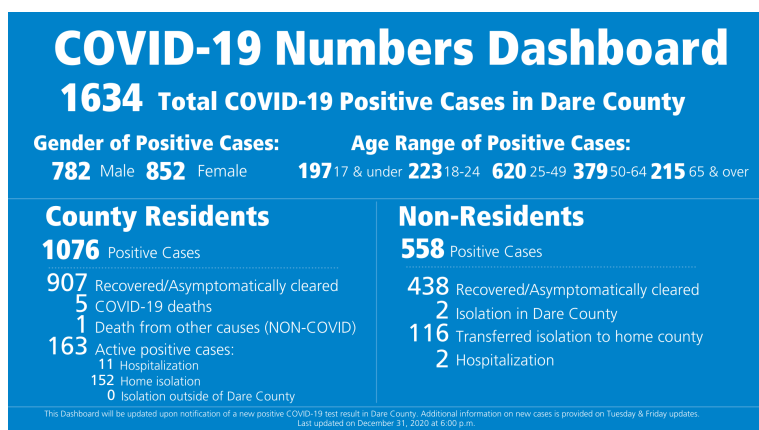
- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Drug Overdose Deaths
- Tobacco Use
- Excessive Drinking
- Suicide Rate

Results-Based Accountability

Results-Based Accountability (RBA) is a disciplined way of thinking and acting to improve entrenched and complex social problems. RBA uses a data-driven, decision-making process to help communities and organizations get beyond talking about problems to taking action to solve problems. It is a simple, common sense framework that everyone can understand. RBA starts with ends and works backward, towards means. Staff from Dare County Department of Health & Human Services attended trainings on RBA and hope to adopt the framework for future Community Health Improvement Plans, Community Health Assessments, and State of the County Health Reports.

Morbidity and Mortality Changes Since Last CHA

Morbidity Data Changes



In 2020, Dare County had a total of 1,634 COVID-19 cases, with 1076 of those being Dare County residents. Thirty-eight percent of cases were in individuals ages 25-49, followed by 23% of cases being individuals 50-64 years of age.

Morbidity data indicates an increase in oral and pharynx cancer, lung and bronchus cancer, liver and bile duct, breast cancer, colorectal cancer, and all cancers.

Illness	2014	2015
Adults 20 + with Diabetes	10%	10%
Adults 20+ with Obesity	25%	24%

Source: County Health Rankings, 2018 & 2019, <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/north-carolina/2021/rankings/dare/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>

Dare County Cancer Incidence Rates (2010-2014, 2013-2017)

Cancer Incidence	2010-2014	2013-2017
All Cancer	430.1	480.0
Oral Vacity & Pharynx	14.3	19.2
Ovarian	13.5	11.4
Lung & Cronchus	68.7	77.3
Pancreatic	12.2	n/a
Bladder	20.1	14.0
Prostate	113.4	108.0
Liver & Bile Duct	7.0	11.7
Breast	116.3	131.0
Colorectal	35.7	37.3

Source: <https://www.statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov/incidencerates/>

Mortality Data Changes

Causes of Death	2012-2016	2013-2017	2014-2018
Heart Disease	157.3	153.2	151.1
Cancer	161.9	168.1	164.5
Pneumonia & Influenza	44	34.1	28.8
Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	35.4	38.3	36.3
Cerebrovascular Diseases	30	35.0	42.1
Alzheimer's Disease	20.8	24.5	27.3
Suicide	20.2	19.6	19.9
Unintentional Non-Motor Vehicle Injury	35.1	39	48
Unintentional Motor Vehicle Injury	n/a	n/a	n/a
Chronic Liver Disease & Cirrhosis	15	17.7	17.8
Septicemia	12	11.5	11.9
Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome & Nephrosis	13.6	15.7	15.0
Diabetes	n/a	8.8	11.8
Homicide	n/a	n/a	n/a
Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total Mortality	700.2	722.0	737.1

n/a indicates fewer than 20 cases; Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, County Health Data Book (2018, 2019, 2020), Mortality, Race- Specific and Sex-Specific Age-Adjusted Death Rates by County; <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/data/databook/>

Since the previous Community Health Assessment period, there have been increases in the rate of deaths due to cerebrovascular disease, Alzheimers, suicide, unintentional non-motor vehicle injuries, chronic liver disease & cirrhosis, septicemeia, and diabetes.

Emerging Issues Since Last CHA

COVID-19

During the month of March, North Carolina and Dare County began to see the impacts of the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic. This section talks about COVID impacts on overdoses, mental health, and our local economy. Dare County Department of Health & Human Services performed a variety of tasks in response to the pandemic:

- Opened, staffed and managed the COVID-19 call center, available Monday- Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- Created and maintained an extensive COVID-19 website
- Trained approximately 50 staff from health education, adult services, family services and administration to be contact tracers
- Provided contact tracing for 1634 COVID-19 cases
- Hosted 7 COVID-19 diagnostic testing clinics which provided 1668 tests
- Hosted 5 antibody testing clinics (in collaboration with diagnostic testing events)
- Hosted 24 COVID-19 health care provider educational webinars
- Supported increased volume of environmental health related COVID-19 inquiries and complaints (restaurants, hotels, etc)
- Held daily calls with local hospital & urgent care centers
- A variety of programs and services have been adjusted by staff to support remote participation across all units in the division
- Assured clinical and field staff had appropriate personal protective equipment
- Supported families experiencing quarantine or isolation with shopping and grocery needs
- Created and released 80 COVID-19 Video Updates
- Provided 72 written DCDHHS COVID-19 updates, in addition to 61 bulletins released by the JIC
- Made approximately 11,860 phone calls to monitor positive residents in isolation
- Made approximately 16,000 calls to direct contacts of positive cases

Overdoses & COVID-19 Pandemic

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of calls involving overdose was trending downwards compared to previous years. Since July, calls involving overdose have quadrupled compared to the previous year (Dare EMS, 2020).

Dare County EMS Calls Involving Overdose (2019 & 2020)

	2019	2020
January-March	8	5
April-June	14	5
July-September	9	24
October-December	8	41

As a result, The Saving Lives Task Force worked with community partners to assure in-person services were able to be altered and offered virtually.

Mental Health & COVID-19 Pandemic

The pandemic halted life as we knew it. Work environments looked different, students were home from school and learning online. After school activities were cancelled with no end in sight. Schools closed in Spring of 2020, and many students remained in remote learning with the start of the new school year. Many families in need counted on schools to link them to necessary support services, such as free breakfast and lunches. Ontop of normal everyday worries, COVID-19 caused many individuals began to experience mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression.

In response to these concerns, the Breaking Through Task Force created a COVID-19 Mental Health Resources Guide for local Dare County Residents. A local Emotional Support Line was also established by Dare County Department of Health & Human Services. Residents could call the line to speak with a therapist to discuss any mental health concerns they had as a result of the pandemic. Dare County partnered with Current TV to create a COVID-19 Destination Dare video promoting educational information and resources available during COVID-19. The video features a portion that focuses on mental health and can be viewed at: <https://currenttv.org/show/destination-dare-ep-60-may-2020-covid-19/>

The Economy & COVID-19 Pandemic

Various Executive Orders were passed by Governor Roy Cooper, in efforts to slow the spread of the virus, that had far reaching impacts on residents. Schools were closed, curfews were established, non-essential businesses were shut down. Dare County's Control Group voted to close the bridges, in efforts to further slow the spread and protect Dare residents from visitors possibly bringing in the virus. Since over 25% of our residents rely on tourism to pay their bills, this was a significant hit to our local economy. Rentals were not able to be occupied and as opposed to providing take-out only, many restaurants closed due to staffing limitations. Access to Dare County was limited to only residents for approximately 6 weeks.

New/Paused/Discontinued Initiatives Since Last CHA

COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts

Mental Health Community Health Improvement Plan

Changed Delivery Methods to Online-Based:

- Mental Health First Aid
- Breaking Through Task Force meetings
- Community mental health providers

New Services:

- COVID-19 Emotional Support Line
- COVID-19 Mental Health Resources Guide

Paused Services:

- Mental Health Champions video series
- Chalk about Mental Health Campaign

Substance Abuse Community Health Improvement Plan

Changed Delivery Methods to Online-Based:

- Saving Lives Task Force meetings
- Keeping Current
- Women of Worth
- Recovery Learning Circle

Paused Services:

- G.R.E.A.T. Program

New Programs & Initiatives

Breaking Through Task Force Launches Mental Health Website

In Spring of 2020, Breaking Through Task Force launched their website, BreakTheStigmaOBX.com. The website serves as a resource and "hub" for mental health information and education, in efforts to break stigma related to mental health concerns.