2025 BURKE COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT

BACKGROUND

- A Community Health Assessment (CHA) is a way for the community to come together to look at the biggest health challenges people face in their county. It gathers input from many voices—including those who are often overlooked—to make sure everyone is represented. The CHA helps identify health problems, uncover gaps or inequalities, and guide decisions about where to focus resources. In North Carolina, every health department is required to complete a CHA every three to four years. The results lead to a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), which sets goals and tracks progress so the community can work together toward better health for all.

- The Community Health Assessment Cycle occurs every 3 years with the last CHA occurring in 2022.

- Every health department in North Carolina is required to conduct a health assessment

- We partner with UNC Health Blue Ridge as non profit hospitals are required to conduct a CHA as well

- Priority selection and CHA input is assisted with the Burke Wellness Initiative (BWI)
  - BWI is a group of community partners who work to address health issues within Burke

BACKGROUND

- Data collection began in April 2024 and ended in June 2024.
  - Primary data collection that we collected new and first hand like the Community Survey.
  - Secondary data collection and review from sources like North Carolina Data Portal and the US Census.

- Data collection was gathered through surveys and focus groups by BWI

- Results of the survey responses were 492 and 3 focus groups of community members who were Individuals Experiencing Homelessness, from the Faith Community, and Cultural Diversity were analyzed by BWI and resulted in having 12 health priorities to choose from

- More in-depth data and explanation of the County's Health can be found in the entire assessment.

TOP 3 PRIORITIES

AFFORDABLE HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness and housing insecurity remain pressing issues in Burke County: 258 individuals are experiencing homelessness per the 2025 Point In Time Count, 73 students lack stable housing, and 33.7% of those who took the survey worry about paying rent or mortgage (up from 18% in 2021).

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

- Substance use remains to be a concern as it is as been an health priority over the last 4 CHAs dating back to 2013.

- Over half (55.2%) of residents who took the survey reported their lives have been negatively impacted by substance use (up from 39% in 2018), and adult drinking rates have risen to 46.2% in 2024 (up from 40.9% in 2012).

MENTAL HEALTH

- Mental health challenges continue to be on the rise: 17% of residents reported having 7+ poor mental health days in a month, 1 in 5 rated their mental health as fair/poor, and residents average 5.5 poor mental health days monthly—higher than state (5.0) and national (5.2) averages.

- Mental Health has placed as a health priority in the 2013, 2016, and 2022 Community Health Assessments.

NEXT STEPS

2026 COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CHIP)

The Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) outlines how Affordable Housing & Homelessness, Substance Use Disorder, and Mental Health be addressed.

2027 STATE OF COUNTY HEALTH REPORT (SOTCH)

The State of the County Health (SOTCH) report is an annual document that tracks data related to the programs outlined in the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). It evaluates whether community programs are effectively addressing the identified health priorities or if adjustments are needed. The SOTCH also highlights any major health-impacting events that occur each year between Community Health Assessments (CHA). The last SOTCH was provided at the 2025 July Board of Health Training.

QUESTIONS

BURKE COUNTY
PUBLIC HEALTH