

# State of the County Health Report Rowan County, N.C. - March 2018



## State of Rowan County's Health

Required each year between the Community Health Assessments, the State of the County Health (SOTCH) report is part of Rowan County Health Department's accreditation process. This report is intended to:

- Heighten awareness about health issues relevant to Rowan County and North Carolina
- Bring attention to areas where policy and environmental changes, partnering initiatives and resources would help create a healthier and stronger community
- Describe local efforts that impact local health issues and quality of life of our community
- Summarize recent progress that addresses the health priorities identified in the 2015 Community Health Assessment
- Identify common ground for joining together to solve community health issues and identifying some of the local initiatives and partnerships that are working to address these issues

The SOTCH Report is designed to deliver information to you that is concise and easy to understand. The data that is included must be accurate, come from reliable sources, be measurable over time, be comparable at a county and state level, and compatible to the needs of our community. As you read this report, you are encouraged to compare Rowan County data to the state's data and then determine for yourself where the community is doing better, the same, or worse than the state. It is quite evident that one's overall health and well-being are improved when environmental and policy changes are made and financial support is offered.

## Health Concerns Selected As Priority Issues

The 2015 Rowan County Health Department (RCHD) Community Health Assessment (CHA) was conducted in partnership with Novant Health. The CHA identified "major issues" in the county and described how those issues were identified. In RCHD's CHA process, it was imperative that the health-related priorities were acknowledged. The following table identifies three health-related priorities per the 2015 CHA, selected to collaborate and address in the forthcoming years. Action plans to address the following priority issues were submitted to NC Department of Public Health in December 2016 for approval.

### 2015 Community Health Assessment Health Priorities

- 1 Tobacco
- 2 Prescription Drug Abuse
- 3 Obesity

### List of Priority Issues

- Preventing Chronic Disease via healthy behaviors – reducing tobacco use
- Promoting the reduction of prescription drug abuse
- Preventing Chronic Disease via healthy behaviors – reducing obesity

### Leading Causes of Death in Rowan County – 2012-2016

Rank	Cause of Death	# of Deaths	Rate
1	Cancer	1,696	244.6
2	Diseases of the heart	1,561	225.1
3	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	535	77.1
4	Cerebrovascular diseases	422	60.9
5	Other Unintentional injuries	336	48.5
6	Alzheimer's disease	307	44.3
7	Pneumonia and influenza	294	42.4
8	Diabetes mellitus	249	35.9
9	Nephritis, nephritic syndrome and nephrosis	168	24.2
10	Septicemia	164	23.6
	Total Deaths – All Causes	7,936	1144.4

*Leading Causes of Death by County of Residence, All Ages: Ranking, Number of Deaths, and Rates per 100,000 population.  
Source: State Center for Health Statistics, North Carolina*

The table above confirms the need to address the chronic diseases that contribute to our leading causes of death. Healthy Rowan's Community Health Action Plans (CHAPS) address tobacco usage, prescription drug abuse and obesity, which all contribute to chronic disease, yet are preventable.

### Health Priorities - Community Health Action Plan Progress

**Priority Issue:** Mental health and related issues including prescription drug abuse.

**Objective:** Reduce the number of medication and drug poisoning deaths in Rowan County by 3% by 2019.

**Interventions:** Narcan Rescue Kit Distribution Program and Medication Take-back boxes.

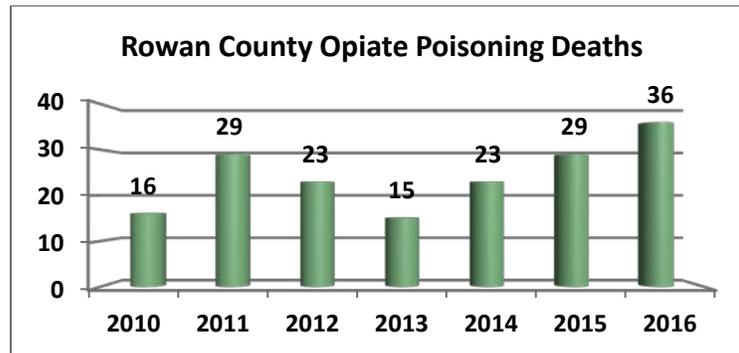
- **Narcan Rescue Kit Distribution Program** - RCHD will prepare and distribute 200 Narcan Kits to participating pharmacies in Rowan County
  - Kits will include: Educational materials, treatment options, CPR shield, latex gloves, a reference for reporting to [www.naloxonesaves.org](http://www.naloxonesaves.org), and a tracking system for Rowan County
  - Local pharmacies will sell the Narcan which will then be distributed with the FREE Narcan Nasal Spray Rescue Kit by the pharmacists
  - RCHD has created a Standing Order so they may too distribute Narcan, along with the eight other local pharmacies.
- **Medication Take-back boxes** - In Rowan County, the Public Health Department has partnered with local law enforcement to install 9 secure collection boxes for unwanted, unused, and expired prescription and non-prescription medications at multiple municipalities throughout the county.

#### Progress:

- 135 Rescue Kits were prepared for distribution to 9 participating pharmacies. One pharmacy is still exploring possible legal ramifications of participation. As of February 2018, 100 kits have been distributed to 4 of the 9 pharmacies.
  - Each Rescue Kit contains the following educational information:
    - What is Narcan and Proper Storage Information
    - CPR Barrier Shield
    - Single pair of surgical gloves

- Copy of the North Carolina’s Good Samaritan Law
  - Quick Start Guide on how to use the Narcan Nasal Spray(English and Spanish)
  - Daymark Recovery Services Brochure
  - 24-Hour Access/Crisis Line Brochure from Cardinal Health
  - After an Emotional Crisis Brochure from Cardinal Health
- Rowan County’s Emergency Services and Telecommunications were made aware that these kits are now within local homes.
  - With this knowledge, anyone that places a call to 911 for an overdose and/or for a nonresponsive person will be asked if they have a Narcan Rescue Kit
- From January through December 2017, law enforcement has removed 2,734 pounds of prescription and over-the-counter medications from 9 secure medication take-back boxes that were installed throughout the county. (<https://www.rowancountync.gov/DocumentCenter/View/10623>)
- A Rowan County Leadership Forum on Opioids was held on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Approximately 115 people were invited and 82 attended, with a focus on elected officials and policy makers. Agencies represented included law enforcement, mental health, school system administration, and the medical/health care community. Packets of information were provided that included an agenda, a substance abuse and mental health resource list for Rowan County, a summary of the STOP act, statistics re: Rowan County opioid use, and an article written by a former RCHD Health Educator\*. The forum included four educational presentations, work groups, and facilitated discussion and presented good feedback. The workgroups were very diverse and provided broad perspectives. A follow-up forum is being planned. <http://www.salisburypost.com/2017/08/31/rowan-county-leaders-discuss-the-opioid-crisis-during-forum/>
  - A Medication Take-Back event was held during the forum. The collection unit was provided by Project Lazarus and the event was manned by RCHD Health Educators. Over 200 pounds of unwanted and unused prescription and non-prescription drugs were collected in a 4 hour period.
  - \*An article, “Be A Part of the Opioid Solution”, was published in the Salisbury Post: <http://www.salisburypost.com/2017/08/31/aldrea-speight-be-part-of-the-opioid-solution/>

*Total Opiate Deaths 1999-2016 for Rowan County was 345. This represents an 800% increase over 17 years. There has been a 125% increase in Opiate Poisoning Deaths from 2010-2016.*



<http://www.injuryfreenc.ncdhhs.gov/DataSurveillance/poisoning/DTH-3-AllOpiatePoisoningsbyCounty-1999-2016.pdf>



**Priority Issue:** Obesity and related diseases/conditions including diabetes, kidney disease, hypertension, high cholesterol, heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, and joint replacement.

**Objective:** Increase the number of individuals that report consuming fruits and vegetables five or more times per day by 3% by 2019\*

**Interventions: Cooking Matters at the Store, Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), and Faithful Families Eating Smart and Moving More (FFESMM).**

- **Cooking Matters at the Store** – Cooking Matters at the Store (CMATS) grocery tours are one time, hands-on nutrition tours designed to help low-income adults make healthy, affordable choices at the supermarket. To implement the program, a Health Educator from the Rowan County Health Department partnered with the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle in Raleigh, N.C. and become a Satellite Partner for the program, with plans to conduct six Cooking Matters at the Store tours for low-income adults by 2019.
- **Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)** - The WIC FMNP is associated with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, popularly known as WIC. The WIC Program provides supplemental foods, health care referrals and nutrition education at no cost to low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding post-partum women, and to infants and children up to 5 years of age, who are found to be at nutritional risk. The WIC FMNP was established by Congress in 1992, to provide fresh, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables to WIC participants, and to expand the awareness, use of, and sales at farmers' markets. RCHD WIC will increase the number of redeemed farmers' market nutrition vouchers from 40% (2014) to 45% in Rowan County by 2019.
- **Faithful Families Eating Smart and Moving More** – “Faithful Families” promotes healthy eating and physical activity in communities of faith. Resources for the program include a 9-session Faithful Families curriculum and the Planning Guide for Faithful Families Eating Smart and Moving More (Planning Guide). The Faithful Families curriculum is co-taught by nutrition and physical activity educators and trained lay leaders from faith communities in small group sessions. Two local churches will implement environmental and policy changes into their place of worship that supports a healthier lifestyle by 2019.

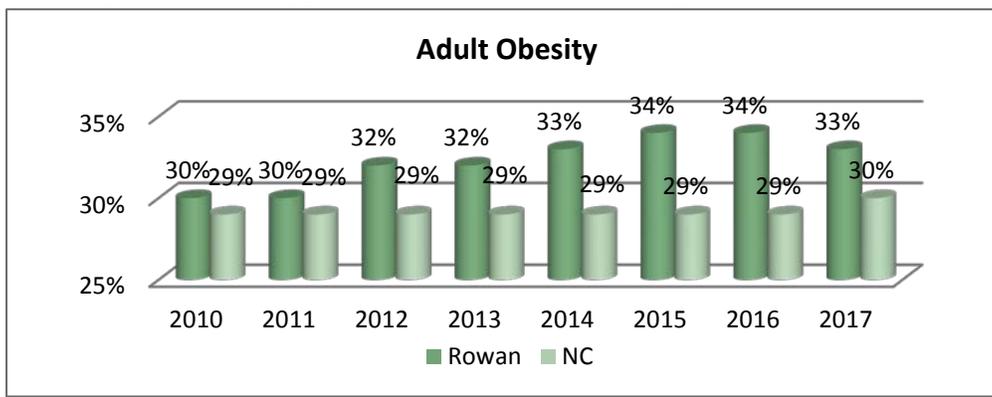
**Progress:**

- **Cooking Matters at the Store** – On September 8, 2017, the Health Educator in charge of this project was offered another position with the county and the Health Educator position was closed; the project was ended due to lack of staff.
- **Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)** – Per the state WIC Vendor manager, there have been some difficulties getting current data reports due to the implementation of Crossroads Software for the WIC programs. The most recent data available (2014) reports a redemption rate of 40%.
  - Because of the transition in the WIC Program to Crossroads software, no data was available for 2015.
  - In 2016, there were 1500 coupons issued and 587 redeemed for a redemption rate of 39%.
  - In 2017 there were 1334 coupons issued and 462 redeemed for a redemption rate of 35%.
  - From 2014-2017, this represents a 12.5% decline in the redemption rate.
  - Salisbury Farmer's Market is the only farmer's market in Rowan County that accepts Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>) coupons.
- **Faithful Families Eating Smart and Moving More** - In collaboration with North Carolina Cooperative Extension (Rowan County). Training for Cooperative Extension staff occurred in Raleigh in December 2017 to meet NC State requirements for FFESMM course instruction; however, the training was not completed. Cabarrus Health

Alliance has initiated two 9-week sessions to commence February 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at Hood Theological Seminary in Salisbury; 12 individuals have signed up for these two sessions.

- **The NC Fruit and Vegetable Outlet Inventory Info (FVOI)** - was developed to identify where community residents have access to fresh fruit and vegetables. Rowan’s farmers markets and direct marketing farmers are a great source of fresh fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods. RCHD’s Health Educators conducted a FVOI in August 2017 to determine where in the county citizens could find farmer’s markets, roadside stands, and produce markets. Surveys were completed on 56% of 16 markets and stands, and information about those providers was forwarded to the state for publication, and posted on RCHD's website.
- \*The data regarding the number (%) of Rowan County individuals that report consuming fruits and vegetables five or more times per day will be updated for the 2019 CHA.

*Adult obesity in Rowan County from 2010-2017 has increased 10%, while the state has increased 3%.  
Adult obesity in Rowan County from 2016-2017 has decreased 3%, while the state has increased 3%.*



Source: County Health Rankings [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org)

Per the American Cancer Society, “Research has shown that poor diet and not being active are 2 key factors that can increase a person’s cancer risk. The good news is that you do something about this. Besides quitting smoking, some of the most important things you can do to help reduce your cancer risk are: Get to and stay at a healthy weight throughout life, be physically active on a regular basis, make healthy food choices with a focus on plant-based foods.” “The evidence for this is strong. The World Cancer Research Fund estimates that about 20% of all cancers diagnosed in the US are related to body fatness, physical inactivity, excess alcohol consumption, and/or poor nutrition, and thus could be prevented.” (*American Cancer Society, Last Medical review: 06/30/2014; Last Revised April 14, 2017*) <http://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancercauses/dietandphysicalactivity/diet-and-physical-activity> (*World Cancer Research Fund International: <https://www.wcrf.org/int/research-we-fund/our-cancer-prevention-recommendations/body-fatness>* )

**Priority Issue:** Preventing chronic disease via healthy behaviors – reducing tobacco use.

**Objective:** By 2019, reduce the percentage of Rowan County adults who report smoking by 3%.

**Interventions:**

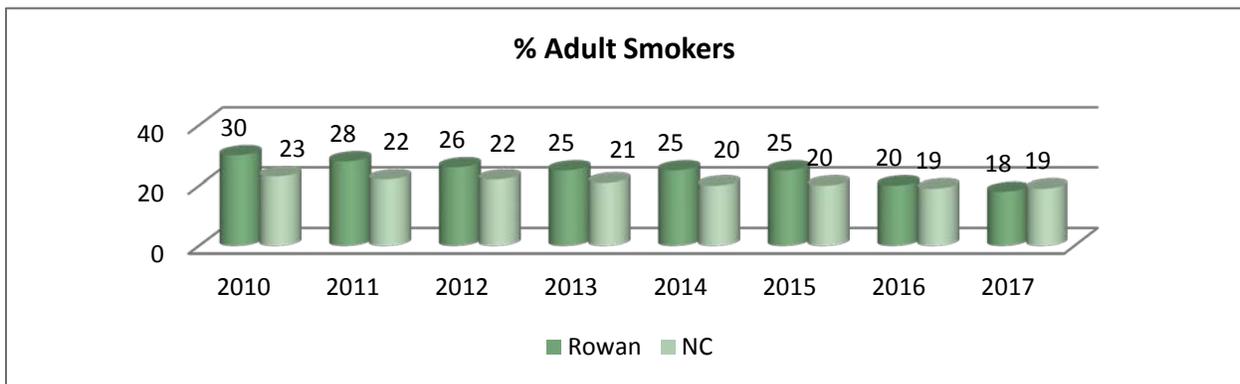
- **Tobacco Free Rowan (TFR)** - ([www.tobaccofreerowan.com](http://www.tobaccofreerowan.com)) The TFR website is maintained to provide information to encourage local businesses and organizations to voluntarily adopt tobacco-free policies. Cigarette smoking is the leading preventable cause of premature death in the United States. (*National Institutes of Health <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/tobacco-nicotine-e-cigarettes/what-are-physical-health-consequences-tobacco-use> ; updated January 2018*).

- **Young Lungs at Play (YLAP)** – An initiative of RCHD which works with partnering agencies in eliminating children’s exposure to secondhand smoke in public parks and playgrounds. “Young Lungs at Play” began as collaboration with the City of Salisbury to adopt a tobacco-free ordinance for all city parks and recreational facilities and grounds.
- **Project Alert** – Project Alert is a free classroom-based substance abuse prevention program for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders that is proven to reduce the experimental and continued use of drugs.
- **Catch My Breath**- Catch My Breath is a best-practices youth E-cigarette prevention program developed by the Michael & Susan Dell Center for healthy living at the University of Texas Health Science Center (UTHealth) School of Public Health.

**Progress:**

- **Tobacco Free Rowan (TFR)** – TFR was developed and launched in late spring of 2016. Tobacco Free Rowan had its first application for membership in May 2016 from Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency. Letters are being sent out to businesses, organizations and agencies in Rowan County. Some of our latest members include Novant Health - Rowan Medical Center, and the J.F Hurley, J. Fred Corriher, and the Saleeby-Fisher YMCAs. Additionally, a billboard advertising the inherent danger and harm of secondhand smoke will be displayed beginning March 2018 for 12 weeks in Salisbury.
- **Young Lungs at Play (YLAP)** – YLAP has assisted area municipalities in developing tobacco-free policies, and provided signage to promote tobacco-free policies in Spencer, East Spencer, Rockwell, Landis, and China Grove in addition to the Brenner Crossing Apartments. In March 2017, signage was provided for the Ellis Park building; in July 2017 for the Fred and Alice Stanback Educational Forest and Park in Spencer.
- **Project Alert** – Project Alert was initiated in fall 2016 at Knox Middle School within the Rowan-Salisbury School System as part of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students Health Education class. 85 students received 11 lessons in two classes per week. One of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes saw a positive increase from pre to post testing of 14.3%. Knox Middle School was offered the classes in the fall of 2017. On September 8, 2017, the Health Educator in charge of this project was offered another position with the county and the Health Educator position was closed; the project was ended due to lack of staff.
- **Catch My Breath** – A local middle school principal, within the Rowan-Salisbury School System, has been contacted and provided with written information regarding the Catch My Breath program. This program was offered to that school’s students in the fall of 2017. On September 8, 2017, the Health Educator in charge of this project was offered another position with the county and the Health Educator position was closed; the project was ended due to lack of staff.

Data trend analysis shows a 36% decrease in adult smokers in Rowan County from 2010 to 2017. Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in North Carolina (*Healthy North Carolina 2020; American Cancer Society*).



Source: County Health Rankings [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org)

## State of the County Health Report for Rowan County

*On the previous pages, readers are able to examine the priorities established from the 2015 CHA and the progress made addressing those issues. Through the years, one of the many challenges faced by RCHD's Community Health Education staff has been extracting real-world information from existing data. The following tables contain data relative to Rowan County citizens' health, economy, social well-being, and education. Readers may compare county to state data and determine the significant issues that impact overall health and well-being. The Rowan County Health Department is committed to obtaining a better understanding of local health needs, building collaborative relationships in the community and improving conditions for a healthier Rowan County.*

*–Stephen A. Joslin, Health Education Specialist III, Community Health Education, RCHD*

### Review of Major Morbidity and Mortality Data & Data Trend Analysis

Death Rates for Leading Causes	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2016 NC	Trend Rowan 12-16	% Change Rowan
Cancer – All Sites	230.9	246.5	259	253	244.6	191.5	Same	5.93
Heart Disease	219.3	229.2	221.5	227.8	225.1	179.9	Same	2.64
Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	68.0	84.6	68.5	87	77.1	51.1	Same	13.38
Cerebrovascular Disease	60.8	62.9	65.6	63.2	60.9	47.3	Same	.16
Alzheimer's Disease	63.7	39.8	35.3	35.9	44.3	34	Better	-30.45
Pneumonia and Influenza	39.1	53.5	33.9	41	42.4	19.5	Same	8.44
Diabetes Mellitus	33.3	26.7	39	41.7	35.9	26.2	Same	7.8
Nephritis, Nephritic Syndrome and Nephrosis	21.7	23.1	18.9	27.3	24.2	18.2	Same	11.52
Septicemia	18.8	22.4	25.2	29.5	23.6	14.6	Worse	25.53

*Ten Leading Causes of Death, w/o #5 (Unintentional Injuries), Unadjusted Death Rates per 100,000 population, all ages. Source: State Center for Health Statistics, North Carolina (Mortality Statistics Summaries) <http://www.schs.state.nc.us>*

Cancer Death Rates	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2016 NC	Trend Rowan 12-16	% Change Rowan
Trachea, Bronchus & Lung	79.6	68.0	88.7	71.9	61.5	55	Better	-20.73
Female Breast	27.1	32.8	21.3	25.5	26.8	25.3	Same	-1.10
Colon, Rectum & Anus	17.4	24.6	23.1	22.3	17.9	15.9	Same	2.87
Prostate	10.3	22.0	16.1	18.9	24.6	19	Worse	138.83

*Age-Adjusted Death Rates per 100,000 population. Source: State Center for Health Statistics, North Carolina (NC Vital Statistics Vol. II) <http://www.schs.state.nc.us>*

## State of the County Health Report for Rowan County

Trends in Key Health Indicators	2004	2009	2014	2014 NC	Trend Rowan 04-14	% Change Rowan
Number of Primary Care Physicians per 10,000 population	5.5	5.8	5.7	8.6	Same	3.63
Number of Dentists per 10,000 population	3.6	3.7	3.5	4.7	Same	-2.77
Number of Registered Nurses per 10,000 population	72.2	79.3	93.6	105.5	Better	29.63
Number of Physician Assistants per 10,000 population	2.0	3.3	4.3	4.8	Better	115

Source: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services; Division of Public Health/State Center for Health Statistics; North Carolina County Trend Reports, February 2017. <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/data/keyindicators/reports/Rowan.pdf>

Socio-Economic Factors	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2017 NC	Trend Rowan 13-17	% Change Rowan
Unemployment*	11.6%	9.9%	8.3%	6.7%	6.0%	5.7%	Better	-48.2
Children in Poverty*	29%	27%	28%	29%	27%	23%	Same	-6.9%
Children in single-parent households*	34%	37%	39%	39%	40%	36%	Worse	17.6%
Uninsured*	21%	19%	21%	19%	17%	15%	Better	-19.0%
High school graduation**	82.9%	80.9%	85.1%	83.3%	85%	85.9%	Same	2.5
Free and Reduced Price meals (PreK-Early College)***	63.4%	63.5%	63.1%	63.5%	68.1	59.8%	Same	7.4

\*Source: County Health Rankings [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org) Note: The 2018 County Health Rankings release date is 3/14/2018

\*\*Source: High School Graduation, NC Department of Public Instruction,

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/cohortgraduate>

\*\*\*NC DPI Free and reduced Meals Application Data, <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/fbs/resources/data/>

### Emerging Issues & New Initiatives



**Active Living**

- Increase physical activity
- Reduce risk of obesity
- Promote healthy community



**Healthy Eating**

- Access to healthy foods
- Decrease chronic disease
- Increase life expectancy



**Tobacco-Free Living**

- Avoid use of all tobacco products
- Live free from secondhand smoke exposure
- Reduce risk of chronic disease



**Healthy Communities!**

- Improve networking and collaboration
- Partner with community to achieve health improvements
- Advocate for health and quality of life for all residents in Rowan County

- **Healthy Rowan** - Healthy Rowan is a collaborative coalition of community organizations working together to improve health outcomes in Rowan County. Healthy Rowan coalition includes representatives from healthcare, government, business and industry, human services, community service agencies, medical service providers, educational institutions, the general population, and the faith community. The coalition is focusing on reducing chronic disease and obesity in Rowan County through a number of initiatives. (<https://healthyrowan.org/who-we->

[are/initiatives/](#)) One initiative on the policy/organizational level is advocating for physical activity breaks during work hours. An initiative on the community level is “The Daily Mile”; an evidence-based intervention to get students more active while at school.

- **Salisbury Greenway** – Stretching for 3.45 miles, the greenway is a recreational area and linear park located in the City of Salisbury for walking, biking and jogging. Several grants have been received that will allow for further expansion of the Greenway in the coming year, and eventually, the Salisbury Greenway will be a 5.2 mile loop. (<https://salisburync.gov/Government/Parks-and-Recreation/Parks/Greenway>)
- **Carolina Thread Trail** - The Salisbury Greenway Committee and local municipalities have partnered with the Carolina Thread Trail. In the future, this will allow Rowan County to be connected to fourteen other counties throughout North and South Carolina. If Rowan County proceeds with this, a total of 1500 miles (100 miles/county) would be laid out as a network of greenways, “blueways” or waterways, and conserved corridors between the two Carolinas. In Rowan County alone, there are 107.8 miles of proposed trails, which includes 70 miles of blueways. (<http://www.carolinathreadtrail.org/>) (<http://www.carolinathreadtrail.org/local-connections/rowan-county-nc-2/>)
- **Prescription Drug Abuse** – Continues to be a concern in our county. As shown on page 2 of this report, there has been a 125% increase in Opiate Poisoning Deaths from 2010-2016. YSUP! Rowan, which stands for Youth Substance Use Prevention Rowan, a new local community coalition received a \$625,000 grant from the drug policy office of the White House. The grants provide funding for YSUP! Rowan to prevent youth substance use, including prescription drugs, marijuana, tobacco and alcohol. The focus will be prevention by helping young people make wise and healthy choices about substance use and build safe and successful lives. Rowan County Sheriff’s Department, NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and Rowan County Department of Environmental Management continue to host annual “Operation Medicine Drop-Off” events. (<https://www.salisburypost.com/2017/09/20/ysup-rowan-receives-625000-drug-free-communities-grant/>)
- **Food Deserts** – Access to healthy foods continues to be an issue in Rowan County. Per the 2017 County Health Rankings (<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>), 9% of our population has limited access to healthy foods, that is, they are of low-income and do not live close to a grocery store; the state is at 7%. Additionally, 16% of the population have food insecurity and lack adequate access to food. Utilizing Healthy Communities funding, RCHD continues to promote local farmer’s markets and fruit and vegetable stands. This year we will be placing a billboard in Salisbury promoting “Eat Fresh, Buy Local” and directing people to the Salisbury Farmer’s market.



- **Persons in Poverty** - Per the 2017 County Health Rankings, 27% of Rowan County children are living in poverty while the statewide percentage is 23%. Our unemployment rate is 6.0%, which is higher than the state average of 5.7%. (<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>)
- **Rowan Helping Ministries (RHM)** – In 2016-2017, RHM: sheltered 705 different men, women and children; clothed those in need: distributed in 6,083 household visits; served 99,889 prepared meals; and distributed 847,241 pounds of groceries in 10,540 household visits. (<http://www.rowanhelpingministries.org/>).

- **Water Pollution** - Duke Energy operates the Buck Steam Electricity Plant on the banks of the Yadkin River. A major coal ash spill in Virginia alerted environmental regulators of the hazardous levels of chromium 6 and vanadium contained in the coal ash. Buck Steam has over 100 acres of ash ponds adjacent to the generating plant. The State of North Carolina required Duke to perform water analysis on drinking water wells adjacent to Buck Steam and other coal-fired plants in the state. High levels of chromium 6 and vanadium found during this testing has resulted in municipal water lines being run to the affected neighborhoods and emptying the ash ponds in the near future. Per the County Health Rankings, “Recent studies estimate that contaminates in drinking water sicken 1.1 million people each year. Ensuring the safety of drinking water is important to prevent illness, birth defects, and death for those with compromised immune systems. A number of other health problems have been associated with contaminated water, including nausea, lung and skin irritation, cancer, kidney, liver and nervous system damage.” (<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/north-carolina/2017/measure/factors/124/description> )
- **Air Pollution** – Per the 2016 report from County Health Rankings ([www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org)), Rowan County averaged 12.7 daily density of fine particulate matter while the state average was 12.3. (<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/north-carolina/2017/measure/factors/125/data>) Fine particulate matter is defined as particles of air pollutants with an aerodynamic diameter less than 2.5 micrometers. These particles can be directly emitted from sources such as forest fires, or they can form when gases emitted from power plants, industries and automobiles react in the air. The relationship between elevated air pollution, particularly fine particulate matter and ozone, and compromised health has been well documented. Negative consequences of ambient air pollution include decreased lung function, chronic bronchitis, asthma, and other adverse pulmonary effects. RCHD continues an Air Quality Awareness Flag Program (AQAFP). Each day The AFAQP uses multi-colored flags to indicate the outdoor air quality. The flags come in four colors based on the Air Quality Index (AQI) from the North Carolina Division of Air Quality. Each day a flag is raised at the health department that corresponds to the color of the AQI for Rowan County. The color of the flag indicates the level of outdoor activity recommended for that day. Day care centers and schools are notified weekdays when outdoor activities should be limited or avoided for sensitive children and adults. This would include people with respiratory diseases such as asthma or heart disease. (<https://www.rowancountync.gov/316/Community-Health-Education> )



**Air Quality Forecast**

**Air Quality Index (AQI)**

- 35 Good (0-50)

**Health Message:**

- No health effects expected.

*Air quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk*

*Rowan County Health Department looks forward to continuing to serve our community and to improve the health and lifestyles of our citizens. If you'd like more information on any of these issues in this report, please feel free to contact us at: Rowan County Health Department, Attention: Community Health Education, 1811 East Innes Street, Salisbury, NC 28146, Phone: 704-216-8777; Fax: 704-216-7968.*