

# Rowan County

# 2014 State of the County Health Report



**Rowan County**



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

## **Healthy Rowan! Task Force**

Healthy Rowan! is this community's state certified Healthy Carolinians' Task Force whose mission is working together to improve the quality of life and health of Rowan County residents. Healthy Rowan! is a partnership of community-based organizations whose goals include:

- Improve networking and collaboration among local leaders for enhanced community health and well-being
- Support future community health needs assessments
- Through partnerships with community-based organizations, secure funds for endeavors that achieve health improvements for local residents
- Speaking with one voice, advocate for the health and quality of life for all people living in Rowan County

Required each year between Community Health Assessments the State of the County Health (SOTCH) report is part of our 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 2012 Community Health Needs 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 2014 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.

***Healthy Rowan! A Healthy Community is Everyone's Business***

## Health Concerns Selected As Priority Issues

The 2012 Rowan Health and Human Services Needs Assessment (RHHSNA) identified “major issues” in the county and how those issues were identified. In Rowan County Health Department’s (RCHD) Community Health Assessment process, it was imperative that the health-related priorities were gleaned. The following tables identify the six leading health-related priorities per the 2012 RHHSNA and the priorities selected to collaborate and address in the forthcoming years that were drawn from the list. Action plans to address the following priority issues were submitted to NC Department of Public Health in June 2013 and approved.

### 2012 Community Health Assessment Health Priorities

- 1 Dental Care
- 2 Medical Care
- 3 Chronic Disease
- 4 Teen Pregnancy
- 5 Physical Fitness
- 6 Prescription Drug Abuse

### List of Priority Issues

- Access to Oral Health Care
- Preventing Chronic Disease via healthy behaviors – reducing obesity
- Preventing Chronic Disease via healthy behaviors – reducing tobacco use

## Leading Causes of Death in Rowan County – 2009-2013

Rank	Cause	# of Deaths	Death Rate
1	Cancer – All Sites	1,575	227.8
2	Diseases of the heart	1,572	227.4
3	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	492	71.2
4	Cerebrovascular diseases	430	62.2
5	Alzheimer’s disease	391	56.5
6	Other Unintentional injuries	289	41.8
7	Pneumonia and influenza	270	39.0
8	Diabetes mellitus	199	28.8
9	Nephritis, nephritic syndrome and nephrosis	153	22.1
10	Septicemia	138	20.0
	Total Deaths – All Causes	7,463	1079.4

*Ten Leading Causes of Death by County of Residence, All Ages: Ranking, Number of Deaths, and Unadjusted Death 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 access to oral health care, obesity and tobacco usage which all contribute to chronic disease, yet are preventable.

## Health Priorities - Community Health Action Plan Progress

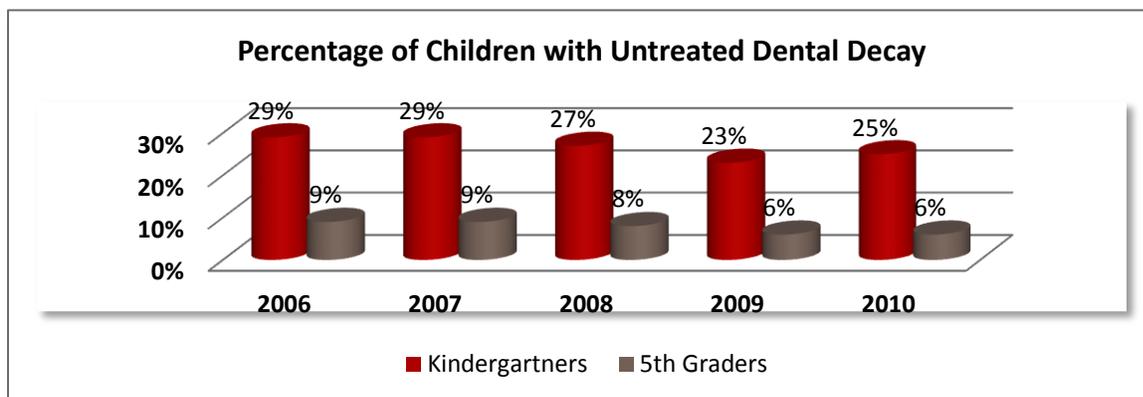
**Priority Issue:** Access to Oral Health Care.

**Objective:** By 2016, reduce the incidence of untreated oral disease in children by 5%.

### Interventions:

- **NC Oral Health Section** - Through efforts of our Public Health Dental Hygienist, during the current 2014-2015 school year-to-date, we have had 1423 calibrated assessments; this represents a 92% increase from the previous school year. Additionally, 2489 children received dental health educational services, and 4 schools, grades 1-5, participated in a weekly fluoride mouth rinse program. Data trend analysis based on most recent available data shows an increase in the percentage of 5<sup>th</sup> graders with dental sealants. (<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dph/oralhealth/library/includes/AssessmentData/2009-2010%20County%20Level%20Oral%20Health%20Status%20Data.pdf>). "Give Kids A Smile Rowan" 2014 - A local dentist donated his office space to provide this service to the community. This project had 5 schools participating with 234 dental exams given; 65 were eligible for sealants. Since October 2013, Rowan County's full-time Public Health Hygienist became a shared asset with 3 other counties, which may hinder further progress in these areas.
- **Community Care Clinic** – The Community Care Clinic of Rowan County continues to become more focused on oral health and providing dental care to qualified, underserved and uninsured adults. In 2010, the clinic had 760 dental visits; for 2014 the clinic had 1,697 visits for dental care. This represents a 123.2% change in the data over the last five years that demonstrates a significant increase in services this clinic provides. (<http://www.communitycareofrowan.org/>)
- **NC Dental Society** – NC Missions of Mercy (NCMOM) Dental Clinic has scheduled another free adult dental clinic at Catawba College in Salisbury on March 6-7, 2015. They plan to provide services to adults in financial need with no other options on a first come, first serve basis. Services will include extractions, fillings, teeth cleanings, full denture repair and partial denture construction.
- **Smile Center** – The Smile Center at RCHD saw 3,913 children in 2014; 80% covered by Medicaid. There was a 24.8% increase in the number of patients served during the last 6 months of 2014 versus the first 6 months.

**Progress:** The following graph demonstrates the reduction in the percentage of kindergartners and 5<sup>th</sup> graders with untreated dental decay. The data is the latest available from the Oral Health Branch of the North Carolina Department of Public Health. The Affordable Care Act, which took effect in 2014, requires that all insurances provide dental coverage for all children through 18 years of age. The number of dentists in Rowan County has not increased from 2008-2012 and remains lower than the state average. This affects access to dental care for adults and children.



Source: NC Division of Public Health, Oral Health Section [ <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dph/oralhealth/stats/MeasuringOralHealth.htm> ]

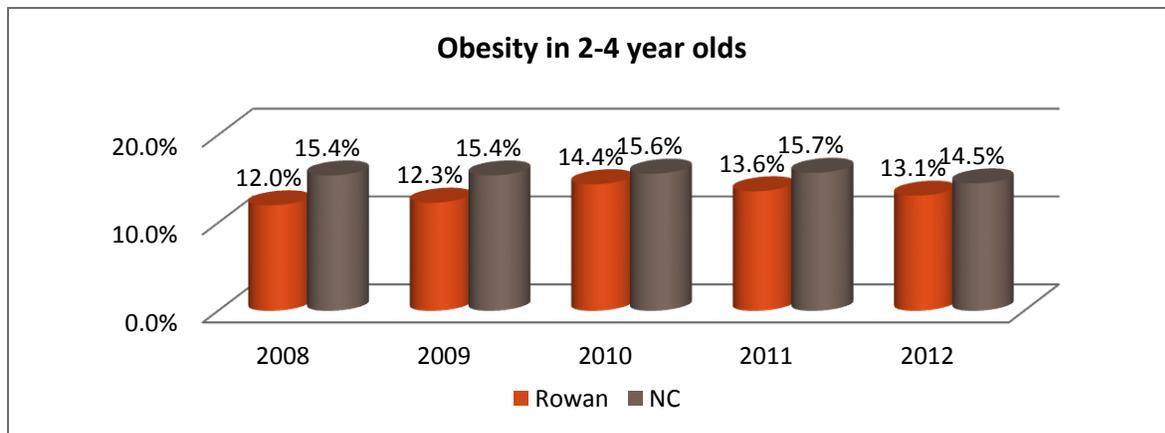
**Priority Issue:** Preventing chronic disease via healthy behaviors – reducing obesity.

**Objective:** By 2016, reduce the obesity rate among Rowan County adults by 3%; reduce the obesity rate among Rowan County children 2-4 years old by 3%.

**Interventions:**

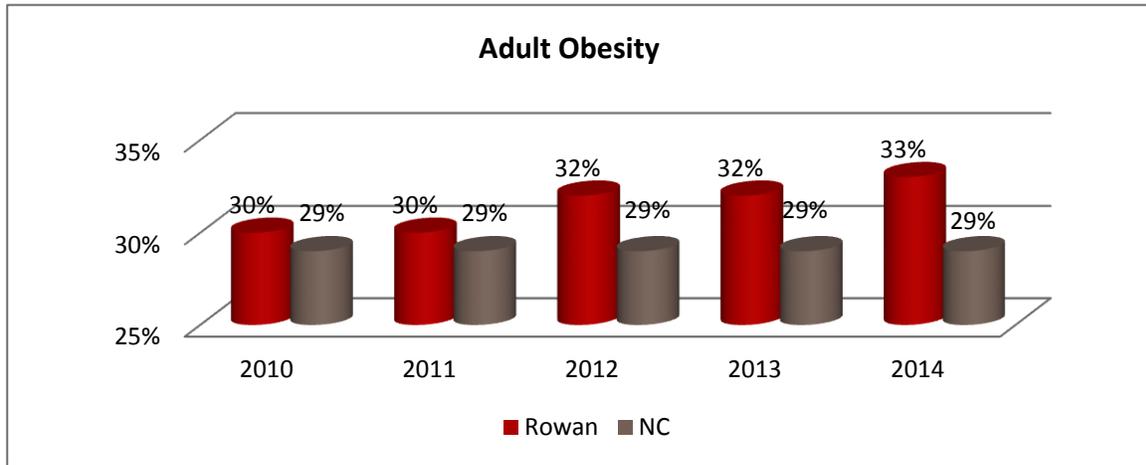
- **Faithful Families Eating Smart and Moving More** - As of December 2014, this program has been provided in three churches, and arrangements are being made to start a fourth church in Spring of 2015. Post class surveys indicate healthier lifestyles were adopted by 80 participants and environmental policies have been initiated including website information, walking programs, church gardens, and water guidelines.
- **Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less (ESMMWL)** – An ESMMWL series was held for 23 Rowan County Government employees. Program participants lost a grand total of 108.5 pounds. 95.6% reported that as a result of the program, they were eating 2-3 cups of fruits and vegetables daily. 91.3% reported that were physically active at least 30 minutes most days.
- **Nutritional and Physical Activity Assessment for Child Care (NAPSACC)** – Start date 2015 to coincide with new curriculum, which has not yet been released.
- **Community Transformation Grant (CTG) Project, Healthy Eating/Farmer's Markets** – CTG funding: Provided 2 billboards to promote healthy eating and support the farmer's markets; Paid for 12 advertisements that were placed in the Salisbury Post; Purchased "No Pets Allowed" signage; Bought street banner add-ons displaying market address and dates that were hung in downtown Salisbury; Provided website upgrades for the Salisbury Rowan Farmer's Market; and bought radio advertisements, social media and newsletter contract services as well as Facebook promotions. Additionally, yard equipment and a table were bought for the China Grove's Market at the Mill.

**Progress:** Data Trend analysis shows a 9.1% increase in childhood obesity in Rowan County from 2008 until 2012, the last year of available data. However, from 2010 until 2012 there was a 9.0% decrease and from 2011 until 2012 there was a 3.6% decrease. Additionally, Rowan County remains below the state percentage of obesity in 2-4 year olds.



Source: North Carolina Nutrition and Physical Activity Surveillance System (NC-NPASS) 2012

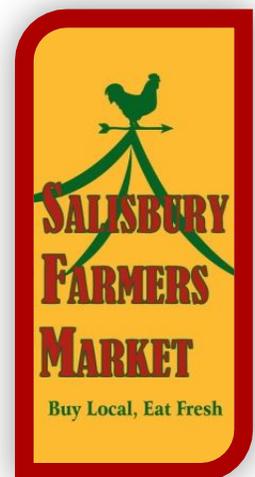
Adult obesity in Rowan County from 2010 until 2014 has increased 10%, while the state has remained the same.



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

Per the American Cancer Society, “Each year, about 589,430 Americans die of cancer; around one-third of these deaths are linked to poor diet, physical inactivity, and carrying too much weight.” Many of these deaths related to diet and activity factors could be prevented by making efforts to make healthier food choices, increase physical activity, and losing unwanted pounds. (American Cancer Society, Last Medical review: 06/30/2014;

<http://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancercauses/dietandphysicalactivity/diet-and-physical-activity> ).



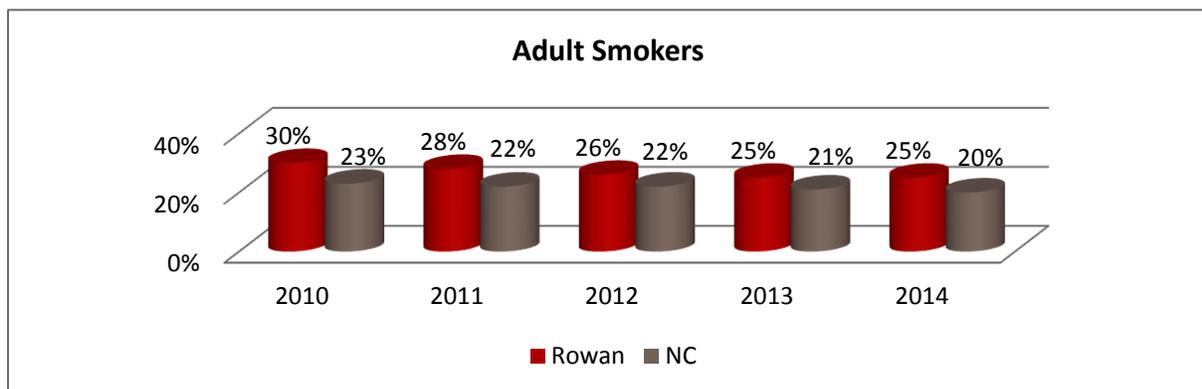
**Priority Issue:** Preventing chronic disease via healthy behaviors – reducing tobacco use.

**Objective:** By 2016, reduce the percentage of Rowan County adults who report smoking.

**Interventions:**

- **Smoke Free Rowan** - ([www.smokefreerowan.com](http://www.smokefreerowan.com)) This website is maintained to provide information to encourage local businesses and organizations to voluntarily adopt an indoor smoke-free policy. Since its inception, 81 businesses, 20 places of worship, 22 non-profits and civic organizations, 36 healthcare providers, 20 schools/day care centers and 2 government agencies have joined Smoke Free Rowan and voluntarily adopted an indoor smoke-free policy.
- **Tobacco Free Parks** – “Young Lungs at Play” began as a collaboration with the City of Salisbury to adopt a tobacco-free ordinance for all city parks and recreational facilities and grounds. As of July 2014, the Town of Spencer has adopted tobacco-free parks, greenways, and governmental buildings/vehicles. “Young Lungs at Play” signs were also provided to Rowan County Parks and Recreation for their designated non-smoking areas at Dan Nicholas, Sloan, and Ellis Parks.

**Progress:** Data trend analysis shows a 16.7% decrease in adult smokers in Rowan County from 2010 to 2014. This trend may be attributed in part to the passage of legislation prohibiting smoking in bars and restaurants that became law January 2, 2010. This was a major step in improving the public health as tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in North Carolina (*Healthy North Carolina 2020; American Cancer Society*). Across the U.S., smoking bans have contributed to a percentage drop in hospitalizations in 2012 for various chronic diseases: -15% for heart attack; -16% for stroke and -24% for respiratory disease (*Circulation Journal, Cathy Payne, USA TODAY*). A more recent meta-analysis study in the Lancet found that smoke-free legislation was associated with reductions in pre-term birth and hospital attendances for asthma ([http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(14\)60082-9/abstract](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(14)60082-9/abstract)).



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



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

*On the previous pages, readers are able to examine the priorities established from the 2012 Community Health Assessment and the progress made addressing those issues. Through the years, one of the many challenges faced by the Healthy Rowan! Task Force has been extracting practical information from existing data. The following tables contain data relative to Rowan County citizen's health, economy, social well-being, and education. Reader's may then compare county to state data and determine the significant issues that affect overall health and well-being. The Rowan County Health Department and Healthy Rowan! are 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, Healthy Rowan! Coordinator*

Death Rates for Leading Causes	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2013 NC	Trend Rowan 09-13	% Change Rowan
Cancer – All Sites	210.7	218.9	229	230.9	246.5	189.0	Worse	16.99
Heart Disease	234.2	208.8	242	219.3	229.2	180.9	Same	-2.13
Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	66.9	65.0	70.3	68.0	84.6	50.7	Worse	26.45
Cerebrovascular Disease	64.8	65.0	56.5	60.8	62.9	45.4	Same	-2.93
Alzheimer's Disease	63.3	63.6	51.4	63.7	39.8	29.2	Better	-37.12
Pneumonia and Influenza	39.9	32.5	29.0	39.1	53.5	19.6	Worse	34.08
Diabetes Mellitus	30.6	22.4	30.4	33.3	26.7	24.4	Same	-12.74
Nephritis, Nephritic Syndrome and Nephrosis	17.1	26.7	21.7	21.7	23.1	18.1	Worse	35.08
Septicemia	17.8	18.1	22.5	18.8	22.4	15.1	Worse	25.84

Source: State Center for Health Statistics, North Carolina (Mortality Statistics Summaries)

Cancer Death Rates	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2013 NC	Trend Rowan 09-13	% Change Rowan
Trachea, Bronchus & Lung	66.9	67.2	70.3	79.6	68.0	56.0	Same	1.64
Female Breast	25.3	27.1	34.3	27.1	32.8	24.8	Worse	29.64
Colon, Rectum & Anus	17.8	19.5	23.9	17.4	24.6	14.8	Worse	38.2
Prostate	24.5	24.9	22.0	10.3	22.0	17.2	Same	-10.2

Source: State Center for Health Statistics, North Carolina (NC Vital Statistics Vol. II)

Children's Dental Health	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2010 NC	Trend 2006-2010	% Change Rowan
Percent of kindergartners with untreated dental decay	29%	29%	27%	23%	25%	15%	Same	-13.79
Percent of 5th graders cavity-free	78%	89%	81%	81%	82%	75%	Same	5.13
Percent of 5th graders with untreated dental decay	9%	9%	8%	6%	6%	3%	Better	-33.33
Percent of 5th graders with dental sealants	37%	44%	37%	46%	51%	44%	Better	37.84

Source: NC Division of Public Health, Oral Health Section [ <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dph/oralhealth/stats/MeasuringOralHealth.htm> ]

Medical Professionals to Population	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2012 NC	Trend Rowan 08-12	% Change Rowan
Number of physicians per 10,000 population	11.6	12.0	12.3	12.7	12.3	22.3	Same	6.03
Number of primary care physicians per 10,000 population	5.4	5.8	5.7	5.3	4.8	7.6	Same	-11.11
Number of dentists per 10,000 population	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.3	3.7	4.5	Same	0.0
Number of registered nurses per 10,000 population	77.2	79.3	80.2	84.7	86.5	103.8	Same	12.04
Number of pharmacists per 10,000 population	7.9	8.5	7.9	8.7	8.8	10.1	Same	11.39

Source: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, The Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research; <http://www.shepscenter.unc.edu/>

Socio-Economic Factors	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2014 NC	Trend Rowan 10-14	% Change Rowan
Unemployment*	7%	12.2%	12.8%	11.6%	9.9%	9.5%	Worse	41.4
Children in Poverty*	17%	22%	29%	29%	27%	26%	Worse	58.8
Children in single-parent households*	9%	32%	33%	34%	37%	36%	Worse	311.1
Uninsured adults*	17%	20%	19%	21%	19%	19%	Same	11.8
High school graduation**	73.0%	76.9%	81.1%	82.9%	80.9%	83.9%	Same	10.8
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2013 NC	Trend Rowan 09-13	% Change Rowan
Free and Reduced Price meals (PreK-Early College)***	51.4%	55.5%	60.5%	61.8%	63.4%	56.1%	Worse	23.3

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

\*\*Source: High School Graduation, NC Department of Public Instruction, <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/cohortgradrate>

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

## Emerging Issues & New Initiatives



- Community Transformation Grant Project** - As a participant in the state-funded initiative, Healthy Rowan! focused on three strategic objectives; the promotion of active living, healthy eating and tobacco-free living. The five year regional project worked through policy, systems, and environmental changes to target the root causes of chronic disease. Unfortunately, funding was cut and the project ended after two years. However, the promotion of these strategic objectives will continue.
- Young Lungs At Play** - Healthy Communities funding has been utilized to create and purchase signs supporting tobacco-free living. Municipalities are being approached and asked to consider adopting a tobacco-free ordinance for their public parks, recreational facilities, governmental buildings and grounds. Town of East Spencer will vote on adopting tobacco-free parks and greenways at their April, 2015 town retreat. Signs will also be erected at Ellis Park Ball Field, with a designated smoking area away from the concession stand, bleachers, and ball fields. "No Smoking" signs are being developed for the Ellis Park Events Center and Equestrian Trails.
- Tobacco-free Museums** - Eight local museums have received a letter promoting the adoption of a tobacco-free facility. Along with this letter, each museum received double-sided window clings that state, "For the Health of Our Community, For the Safety of Our Museums, WE ARE TOBACCO-FREE". Contact information was also provided within the letter if a museum wishes to create a policy and needs help from RCHD. A total of forty-five clings were mailed to the eight, local museums.
- West End Transformation Plan** – Salisbury Housing Authority and the City of Salisbury received a \$7 million 2013 Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) award to fund the construction of 80 new apartments to begin improving housing conditions at Civic Park. Three large buildings and a community building are being constructed as a part of the West End Transformation Project. Phase 1 consists of 80 energy efficient, mixed-income apartments. Of these 80 apartments, 36 will be considered "Assisted" units and 44 "Affordable" units. The first 36 families who currently live in Civic Apartments will move into the Phase 1 units. The 44 Affordable units can be rented to new families who apply and are accepted according their income levels. Phase 1 will be completed by May or June, 2015. Phase 2 of the West End Neighborhood Project will begin soon and will consists of 44 Assisted units which will be filled by the remaining families who formally live in Civic Apartments. The remaining 46 Affordable units will be filled by new, eligible families. Phase 2 should be completed by June, 2016. Two grants were received by the City of Salisbury and the Salisbury Housing Authority to complete both of these phases. Other grants are being sought out that would allow the construction of a community health center and a second Partners in Learning Child Development and Family Resource Center. Both of these centers would be built in the same vicinity as Phases 1 and 2.

- **Salisbury Greenway** – Stretching for 4.2 miles, the greenway is a recreational area and linear park located in the City of Salisbury for walking, biking and jogging. The Salisbury Greenway Committee is currently working with the Salisbury VA Medical Center and the Federal Government in obtaining easements to expand the Salisbury Greenway from Statesville Blvd. to and through the VA Medical Center in order to connect to Kelsey-Scott Park’s segment of the greenway. Easements are also being sought out along Jake Alexander Blvd. and Highway #150 through discussions with private citizens.
- **Carolina Thread Trail** - The Salisbury Greenway Committee has been promoting and partnering with local municipalities to adopt the Carolina Thread Trail. By adopting this plan, it would 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 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” or waterways. By adopting the plan, financial support and grants for the creation of trails and/or greenways becomes more readily available.
- **Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan** – The Town of Spencer and the Town of East Spencer, with the assistance of the City of Salisbury, are currently working on developing a bicycle and pedestrian plan that will help each of the towns to prioritize in creating a safe and economical transportation network. Each municipality envisions having a Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan that will provide a way to determine and focus on transportation improvements that are most needed. It is anticipated that the towns will have a consultant in place by late February, 2015 and begin the planning process in March, 2015.
- **Access to Healthcare** - Novant Health – Rowan Medical Center (NHRMC) has expanded access to healthcare in the following ways: Hired a new physician group to staff the Emergency Dept. at NHRMC; Opened a new practice in Granite Quarry (Nov. 18, 2014); Primary Care South Rowan is set to open a new facility in China Grove April 2015; June 2015, medical students from Campbell University School of Osteopathic Medicine will begin rotations at NHRMC; January 2014 to current – NHRMC has 133 new physicians; Conversion to the electronic medical record (NHRMC “go live” with Dimensions March 2015); Affordable Care Act, making health care delivery systems efficient and affordable (Insurance Marketplace event held January 2015); Population Health Management, aligning with community resources to address overall health vs distribution of health. Additionally, NHRMC continues to take their mobile mammography unit across the County to many locations to bring diagnostic mammograms to women and offer free heart and vascular risk assessments at the hospital for those who want to understand their risk for heart disease.
- **Affordable Care Act** – The lack of health insurance is a barrier preventing/limiting access to health care. Per our data trend analysis, the percentage of uninsured adults in Rowan County is higher than the state average, and the number of physicians in Rowan County is lower than the state average.
- **Federally Qualified Health Center** – China Grove Family Medicine sees uninsured people, people with Medicaid, Medicare, and those with insurance. The clinic is for Rowan County residents who do not have a primary care facility from which to receive on-going medical care. The clinic also sees patients regardless of their U.S. status and Spanish speaking interpreters are staffed. The cost for services is set upon a pay scale for uninsured patients.
- **Prescription Drug Abuse** – Continues to be an issue of concern in our county. Rowan County Sheriff’s Department, NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and Rowan County Department of Environmental Management hosted an annual “Operation Medicine Drop-Off” in October 2014. Ruffy-Holmes Senior Center, along with Home Instead Senior Care, partnered to host “Operation Medicine Cabinet” which provided residents with a “drive-through and drop-off” event for unused prescriptions and over-the-counter medications. Project Lazarus: Community Care of North Carolina (CCNC) developed a series of toolkits aimed at providing information and resources to key players in chronic pain

treatment: care managers, emergency room physicians and primary care providers. Kits were being distributed to Pain Initiative Coordinators in each of CCNC's 14 local networks.

- **Food Deserts** – Access to healthy foods continues to be an issue in Rowan County (<http://www.communitycommons.org/>). Per the 2013 County Health Rankings (<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>), 44% of restaurants in Rowan County are fast-food type. At the same time, 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. Healthy Rowan! continues to promote local farmer's markets and fruit and vegetable stands.
- **Persons in Poverty** - Per the US Census Bureau, (2009-2013 trend data, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37/37159.html>) Rowan County has 18.8% persons living below the poverty level while the state is 17.5%. Per County Health Rankings, 27% of Rowan County children are living in poverty while the statewide percentage is 26%. Our unemployment rate is 9.9%, which is higher than the state average of 9.5%. (<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>)
- **Rowan Helping Ministries (RHM)** – In 2013-2014, RHM sheltered 612 different men, women and children, clothed 11,273 individuals, served 95,536 prepared meals and distributed 549,256 pounds of groceries to 20,499 individuals. (<http://www.rowanhelpingministries.org/>). To address overcrowding issues, RHM completed construction of an expanded facility. This will allow them to continue to provide assistance in meeting basic human needs for those finding themselves in crisis in Rowan County. Additionally, RHM is operating a satellite location in Mt. Ulla, serving clients in western Rowan County.
- **Air Pollution** - During the time period 2010-2012, Rowan County averaged 26.7 air pollution ozone days while the state average for the same time period was 5.3 days. ([www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/)). Healthy Rowan! initiated 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. (<http://www.rowancountync.gov/GOVERNMENT/Departments/HealthDepartment/HealthyRowan.aspx>)
- **Aging Population** – From 2000-2010, Rowan County has experienced a 6.2% increase in population. The state of North Carolina experienced an 18.4% increase for the same time period. In 2000, in Rowan County, 14% of the population was 65 years and older. According to 2013 estimates, 16% of Rowan County's population is persons 65 years and older (while the state is 14.3%), attesting to an aging population. (Source: US Census Bureau, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37/37159lk.html>)

### Summary:

*As the chair of Healthy Rowan! I look forward to continuing to strengthen our community partnerships as we continue to strive to improve the quality of life and health of Rowan County citizens. Our goal with the State of the County Health (SOTCH) Report is to keep our community aware of many of the health issues that Rowan County is currently facing. Two important and emerging issues that Rowan County faces are the increasing number of older individuals in our county and the number of citizens that will now have access to health insurance through the Affordable Care Act. As our population continues to grow older and increases in number, we will need to be better prepared to take care of the growing physical and mental needs of these individuals and their families. Also as more of our citizens begin to have access to medical insurance, Rowan County must be able to meet the needs of these individuals by offering additional staff and services. Healthy Rowan! 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 or if you'd like to become a member of Healthy Rowan!, please feel free to contact me at 704-216-8859 or email me at [amy.smith@rowancountync.gov](mailto:amy.smith@rowancountync.gov).*

*-Amy H. Smith, Healthy Rowan! Chair*