

# WHAT IS CHA?

A Community Health Assessment (CHA) is a process by which community members gain an understanding of the health concerns, and healthcare systems of the community by identifying, collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information on community assets, strengths, resources, and needs. The role of the CHA is to identify factors that affect the health population and determine the availability of resources within the community to adequately address these factors. A CHA provide the basis for discussion and action.

# PURPOSE

The ultimate purpose for the CHA for improving and promoting the health of the community members and creates an environment for change. A collaborative effort among community and residents, social service, public health, and faith-based agencies, hospitals, and academic centers compose the CHA Team. This team has met a total of five times this year to begin answering such key questions as:

- What are the strengths in our community?
- What health concerns do community members have?
- What resources are available and what do we need in the community to address these concerns?

The community members took the lead role in forming partner-

# DATA COLLECTED

Residents shared their concerns and priorities regarding the county's health in listening sessions, surveys, and interviews.

- Twelve listening sessions were conducted incorporating a total of 207 participants from Mitchell County and Interviews of 2 Community Health Leaders were also conducted for Toe River Health District and the Blue Ridge Regional Hospital
  1. Unemployment/Underemployment
  2. Major Health-Related Problems (including chronic diseases & mental disorders)
  3. Lack of Access To Care
  4. Unhealthy Behaviors (Nutrition, Exercise, & Tobacco Use)
  5. Concerns for Elderly Population
- The Community Opinion Survey was offered in hardcopy format, online, and in English and Spanish. 568 Community members completed a fifty-question survey.
  1. Substance Abuse (Alcohol, Drug, and Rx Drug Abuse)
  2. Unemployment
  3. Cancer
  4. Unhealthy Behaviors (Nutrition, Exercise, & Tobacco Use)
  6. Chronic Diseases (Heart Disease & Diabetes)
  7. Dropping out of high school

# THANKS

Thanks to those individuals and agencies who graciously gave their time and expertise in the compilation of this assessment:

Mitchell County Health Department  
Mitchell Community Health Partnership  
Bakersville Medical Clinic  
Mitchell County Schools  
School & Family Health Centers  
Mitchell-Yancey Partnership for Children  
Mitchell County Senior Center  
Blue Ridge Regional Hospital  
Toe River Project Assess  
AMY Regional Library System  
Department of Social Services  
Community In Schools  
Mayland Community College  
Bakersville Baptist Church  
Public Health Dental Hygienist  
Mitchell County Cooperative Extension  
Mitchell County Emergency Management  
Director of Housing Authority  
Center for Latino Services  
Mitchell County Administration  
Mitchell County Department Transportation  
Mitchell County Parks & Recreation  
Mitchell News Journal  
WTOE Local Radio Station  
Mitchell County Safe Place  
Spruce Pine Town Hall  
Mitchell County Commissioners  
United Way of Mitchell County  
Hospice of Mitchell County  
Intermountain Children Services  
Community Volunteers

Community members are encouraged to join the Mitchell Community Health Partnership, a group of concerned citizens working together to improve the quality of health in Mitchell County, which meets quarterly. For more information, please contact:

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# MITCHELL COUNTY



# 2009



# Community Health Assessment



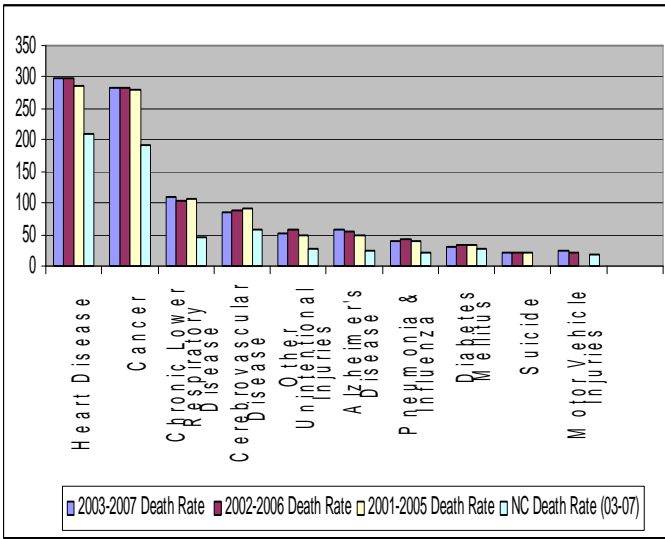
# RESULTS OF DATA COLLECTED

When all the data from surveys, listening sessions, interviews, and a review of statistics was compared, ten top issues emerged for Mitchell County:

1. Substance Abuse (Alcohol & Drug Abuse, & Prescription Drug Misuse)
2. Unemployment/Underemployment (Low Income & Poverty)
3. Chronic Disease (Including Heart Disease & Diabetes)
4. Cancer
5. Unhealthy Behaviors (Poor Nutrition, Tobacco Use, and Lack of Exercise)
6. Mental Health Issues and Lack of Services
7. Lack of Medical Resources (Lack of Insurance, Medical Providers, & Urgent Care Clinics)
8. Lack of Community Resources (Lack of Fitness Center, & Family & Teen Activity Centers)
9. Lack of Education/High School Dropout Rate
10. Aging Problems/Care for the Elderly

While all these health concerns are important and expressed by many concerned citizens, other factors were to be taken into account when accessing the entirety of the county's health. Health is a very broad term and can incorporate various, in many cases, all aspects of life.

# LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH



# POPULATION GROUPS AT RISK

Analysis of Secondary Data statistics included county demographic data, health care access, mortality and morbidity rates, pregnancy and infant statistics, indicators of child health status, and communicable disease statistics. From this data populations more at risk than others are:

- Because of the rapid growth of low income, unemployed and underemployed, the uninsured or underinsured residents are among those at highest risk in this community.
- Residents of Mitchell County who live in rural outlying communities are a population at risk, facing barriers to accessing health resources.
- Children and adults in low income working families are falling through the gap; their income makes them ineligible for some services, and they cannot afford other services.

# PRIORITIES ESTABLISHED

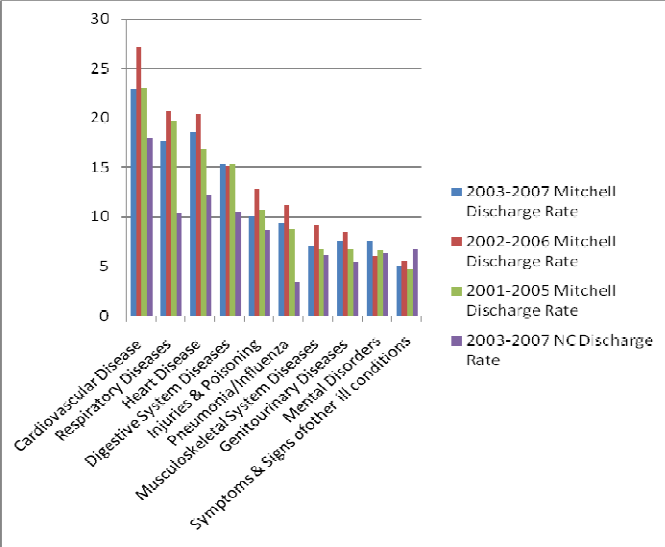
To identify the top ten priority issues for the Mitchell County Health Department and the Mitchell Community Health Partnership to work on over the next several years, the following process was used:

- Analysis of community-based collected data
- Comparing state and peer county rates to Mitchell County rates
- Determining socioeconomic, educational, & environmental factors
- Other shaping social determinants of health in Mitchell County

After analysis of all this data, the CHA Team held a public forum in October 2009 where participants completed a voting ballot in which they ranked their priorities of key health findings presented by experts in the community. These experts included county commissioners, law enforcement, employment security commission, mental health professionals, hospital representatives, and local health department staff.

The Mitchell County CHA Team reviewed the results as well as the prioritized community concerns, and then identified health issues to be addressed over the next several years.

# LEADING CAUSES OF HOSPITALIZATION



# LEADING COMMUNITY HEALTH PROBLEMS

The priorities selected by the Community Health Assessment Team and the Mitchell Community Health Partnership to focus on the next several years include:

1. Substance Abuse (Including Alcohol & Drug Abuse, & Prescription Drug Use)
2. Unemployment/Underemployment (Low Income & Poverty)
3. Mental Health Issues and Lack of Services

The CHA Team decided if these were important enough to be brought up by citizens of Mitchell County and discussed among community members, these would be the priorities we would address.

# ACTION PLANS

The team decided to tackle these through multiple possibilities such as developing a county-wide volunteer database for those wanting opportunities to build a resume for a new career, publishing and mass distributing an updated resource guidebook to offer help to those who need additional resources in the county, and advocate for faith communities becoming more involved in offering workshops on desired topics to students, parents, and other community members. grading different aged people together. These action plans brainstormed by the CHA Team will be discussed in partnership with the Mitchell Community Health Partnership and forthcoming in June 2010 as Community Health Assessment Action Plans.