

# ANNUAL REPORT



Wilkes County Health Department

FY: 2017-2018

## From the Public Health Director, Ann Absher...

Another eventful year at the Wilkes County Health Department and I want to highlight a few of the many accomplishments we were proud to achieve this year.

Upon being designated as Wilkes Community Health Center within Wilkes County Health Department beginning January 1, 2017, the health department and the health center boards and our staff with the assistance of Wilkes Community College have worked to rebrand our logo. We are now Wilkes Health which includes all the activity and programs associated with public health and with community health centers. It is sometimes confusing so we wanted to eliminate part of that confusion by creating our new logo which represents public health, environmental health, health promotion and clinical primary care.

In February, the community health center received a site visit by the federal bureau of primary care to be sure we were meeting all the program requirements. I am proud to say we passed with flying colors. We only missed three questions and those have already been resolved. Our federal project officer was amazed we did so well. I am not, because I have a great team that cares about our community and the services we provide. Also in September, we received additional federal grant funding to provide counseling services for our patients and community education on substance abuse.

Without our community partners we could not offer the level of programs and services to Wilkes County. Wake Forest Baptist Health—Wilkes Medical Center is our partner in providing access to care through Duke Endowment grant and Care Connection Pharmacy. The Health Foundation leads several community prevention efforts to address social determinants of health including Market Bucks for access to healthy fruits and vegetables for families. The Wilkes Public Library, Wilkes County Schools, SAFE kids, Samaritan's Kitchen, BROCC, Wilkes Community College to name just a few of many who supported our work this year. We thank you for making Wilkes County a better place to live, work, play and worship.

The staff of the Wilkes County Health Department appreciates the opportunity to serve our community in efforts to promote health and prevent disease. This annual report is our opportunity to remind you of the types of services that we provide, but also to make you aware of the fact that public health impacts everybody, every day and everywhere.

*“Promoting  
Health and  
Preventing  
Disease in  
Our  
Community”*



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## Mental Health Update

The Mental Health Task Force has been meeting since early 2010. The task force is focused on prevention and access to services. Goals include: community education, integration of physical and mental health, training in preventive mental health interventions, access to care, and drug overdose prevention. The Task Force works to identify gaps in service in mental health care in Wilkes County.

Project Lazarus and Wilkes County Schools are reliable partners in addressing mental health & substance abuse among youth in Wilkes County. The Youth Behavior Risk Survey and PRIDE Survey have been implemented in grades 6-12 of WCS. Project Lazarus leads a Community Coalition, which aims to address substance abuse and accidental overdose in Wilkes County, and a sub-committee of this ground, the Youth Coalition, has been active since 2015 in addressing substance abuse issues among adolescents.

Additionally, Wilkes Community Health Center has received additional funding to tackle Mental Health and Substance Abuse. The center has hired a part time health educator and Licensed Professional Counselor to work with our patients and community.

## Dental Health Update

The Wilkes Public Dental Clinic is there to serve the underserved and underserved children and adults of Wilkes (and the surrounding region on a space available basis) in need of dental care. We will accept Medicaid, Health Choice, Vocational Rehab, BROG Head Start, private insurance, and self-pay patients. A sliding fee scale will be applied for self-pay patients.

The goal of the Wilkes Public Health Dental Clinic is to provide a private practice setting that makes our patients feel special and well cared for in a clinical environment. We want our children and adults to be pleased with the public health choice they have in Wilkes. The dental clinic saw a total of **6,205** unduplicated patients and total of **17,645** visits.

For more information please visit:  
<http://www.wilkespublicdentalclinic.com/>

## Access to Care Update

The access to care task force continues to work with local healthcare entities to ensure access to comprehensive quality health care services. Through this collaboration, uninsured residents can continue to have established pathways to seek primary and specialty care services, outpatient services, care management services and prescriptions drug services. In 2017 when the Wilkes Community Health Center established under the Federally Qualified Health Center, mental health and dental health services are now available services to Community Health Center patients. The uninsured residents of Wilkes County have received over 6 million dollars in donated healthcare services.

## Preparedness

In October 2017, WCHD finalized it's All Hazards Plan. It was included in the Wilkes County EOP by local Emergency Management. This new plan strives to encompass all types of hazards that our county could be faced with. These hazards are chosen based on a regional risk assessment and assumptions. All WCHD's preparedness plans, including the All Hazards, describe how incidents of public significance will be handled at the local level. Public Health agencies should be able to manage a response from beginning to end in coordination with their local Emergency Management, regardless of the type of hazard that is present in the community.

In June 2018, the health department in conjunction with the Town of North Wilkesboro responded to a boil water advisory. WCHD continuously updated the public on the situation and distributed information regarding the safety of their water.

WCHD Preparedness is currently reviewing and updating current plans as well as beginning the process to plan for its next tabletop exercise.

## Environmental Health

**Water Protection:** Residents and businesses receive permits and evaluations for proposed, existing or repaired wastewater systems.

**Septic Permits:** 434

**Well Permits:** 102

**Complaints:** 61

**Water Samples:** 269

**Methamphetamine Lab Notification:** 3



**Food & Lodging:** Unannounced inspection are conducted on facilities at a risk base frequency. Complaints are investigated to ensure compliance and promote public health. Foodservice employees are educated in safe food handling practices.

**Restaurants:** 224

**Temporary Food Establishments:** 33

**Meat Markets:** 10

**School Lunchrooms:** 22

**Lodging Facilities:** 10

**Public Pool Facilities:** 23

**Child & Adult Care Centers:** 42

**Nursing/Rest/Group Home:** 46

**Tattoo Permits:** 6



...You can now search online for Well and Septic Permits?

Visit [www.wilkeshealth.com](http://www.wilkeshealth.com) and click the [Environmental Health tab](#)

Want to View Restaurant Grades On-Line? Go to [wilkeshealth.com](http://wilkeshealth.com) and click the Restaurant Inspections box.

## Chronic Disease and Prevention

With the help of a grant through the Health Foundation, the health department was able to provide Market Vouchers to 50 children from North Wilkesboro Elementary, 50 children at Wilkesboro Elementary, 74 children at Mulberry Elementary, 14 families in Brenner FIT, 80 children through the Summer Feeding Program at the Wilkes County Library, and 10 families through St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Each family received at least \$5.00/week throughout the market season to be spent on fresh fruits, vegetables, and plants.

The health department in partnership with the Northwest Regional Tobacco Manager assisted North Wilkesboro Housing Authority in implementing smoke free policies.

Wilkes County has trained 4 school nurses and 2 health educators to be Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist to help reduce the use of tobacco products and e-cigs within the community.

We are still offering Brenner FIT classes. We graduated 8 families in cohort 3 and currently have 11 families attending cohort 4. Classes were held in the mountain view area and currently North Wilkesboro. We are still advocating for the program to be offered in Spanish so we can better serve our community.

## Care Coordination for Children

CC4C is a population management program that maximizes children's health ages birth up to 5 years old. The program is offered at no charge to children who have long term medical conditions, dealing with social issues, referred by the physician or has had a recent hospital visit. The goal is to improve the healthcare of children.

Wilkes County has approximately **2,535** Medicaid children ages 0-5.

## Pregnancy Care Management

OB Care Management is a population management program for prenatal patients in Wilkes County. Nurses and Social workers work with prenatal women and the OB physician to ensure the best possible care during the pregnancy and after delivery. The goal is to help have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.

Wilkes County has approximately **2,775** Medicaid women age 14-44.

## Health Check

Wilkes County families are contacted to ensure their children receiving Medicaid benefits get a complete physical each year.

Number of children eligible for Health Check: **8,579**

Number of children eligible receiving an annual physical: **3,551**

Participation Rate: **41%**

## Newborn/ Postpartum Services

A registered nurse with experience in postpartum and newborn care makes a one-time visit to new mothers and their babies in their homes following discharge from the hospital. Visits have been proven to play an integral part in providing continuity of care from the hospital to the home. Our goal is to ensure that our families in Wilkes County receive the best start possible to begin a healthy life for their newborns and a smooth transition for the family.

Newborn Visits: **19**

Postpartum Services: **19**



**Breast & Cervical Cancer Screenings-** Women are checked for breast and cervical cancers and further medical care is available for abnormal results.

Cancer Screenings: 64

Abnormal Results: 2

Cancer Identified: 3



Through other funding opportunities the health department was able to provide screenings for women who met certain criteria.

Cancer Screenings: 7

Abnormal Results: 0

Cancer Identified: 0

\*\*There were no Susan G. Komen funds received for FY 2017-2018\*\*

## How We Served the Community

**Adult Health-** Adults age 21 and older receive well and sick care.

Patients: 1,913

Patient Visits: 6,203

**Child Health-** Children age 20 years and below receive well and sick care.

Patients: 1,399

Patient Visits: 2,480

Physicals: 572

Lead Screening: 54

Dental Screenings: 47

**Diabetes and Nutrition Center-** Registered Dietitians offer individual and group classes for Diabetes education. Medical Nutrition Therapy assists patients with Weight Management, Eating Disorders, Hypertension, Hyperlipidemia, Renal Disease, Celiac Disease, Food Allergies, Sports Nutrition and Other Diagnoses.

Diabetes Education/Medical Nutrition Patients: 907

Diabetes Education Visits/Medical Nutrition Visits: 907

After the three month follow-up:

25.4% of our patients are checking their feet daily

50.8% of our patients have a hemoglobin A1c of less than 7%

Average decrease of Hemoglobin A1c of 1.15 points

**Laboratory-** Health Department patients receive lab work to assist with prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.

Lab Tests Performed: 7,892

**Family Planning-** Teens and adults receive complete medical care and are provided with information and options about birth control choices including abstinence.

Patients Served: 519

Patient Visits: 974

Vasectomies: 0

**Pharmacy-** Health department patients may receive medications at reduced cost; or arrangements may be made through an agreement with the WRMC Care Connection Pharmacy.

Total Medications Filled: 1,864

Prescription Medications Filled: 172

Over the Counter Medications Filled: 660

**Vital Records-** Birth and death records are registered and analyzed to discover local health issues, and possible prevention activities.

Live Births Recorded: 367

Deaths Recorded: 616

**Women, Infants & Children (WIC)-** Eligible women and children are provided nutrition education and coupons for supplemental foods. (Numbers reflect average totals from July 2017- April 2018)

Clients: 1,632



## Board of Health Members:

- Joseph Fesperman, MD, Chair
- Don Manus, RPh, Vice Chair
- Sandra Sheppard, RN
- Robert Ricketts, DDS
- Robbins Miller, DVM
- David Gambill, Jr., County Commissioner
- Teana Compeau, Public Member
- Carl Page P.E., Current Vice Chair
- Gary Nash, OD
- Deborah Britton, Public Member
- Sylvia Robinson, Public Member
- Marcia Reynolds– RPh

## Mobile Expanded School Health (MESH)

High school students receive immunizations, sports physicals, sick and injury care, counseling and support. Teen parents also receive pre- and post-natal health information, support and referrals for other services.

- Total Student Visits: 1,969
- Behavioral Health Visits: 1,190 (includes middle school and high school students)
- Medical Visits: 779
- Sports Physicals: 354

## Communicable & Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Screening, monitoring and treatment for certain communicable diseases is available. Coordination with health care providers and public education is provided.

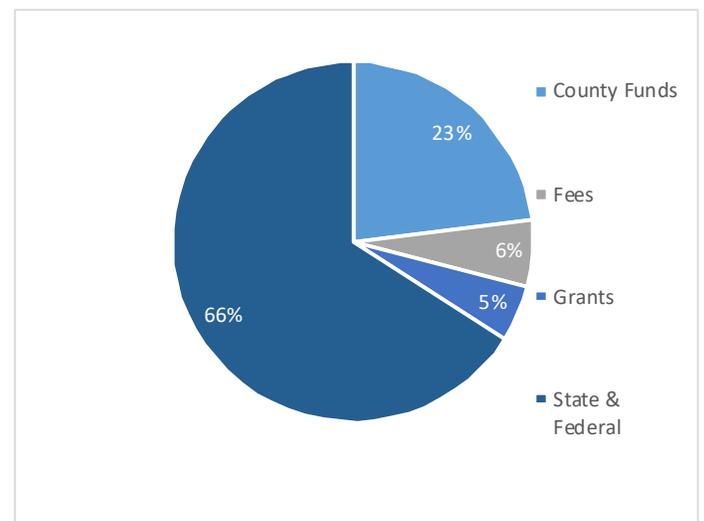
- HIV Tests: 616
- TB Patients: 3
- Rabies Investigations: 60
- Reportable Diseases: 272

## Immunizations (Shots/Vaccines)

Children receive vaccine management, monitoring and administration. Boosters for employment, vaccines for international travelers, and flu and pneumococcal vaccines are also available.

- Total vaccines administered: 3,285
- Total Hepatitis A vaccines: 190
- Total T-Dap vaccines: 681
- Flu vaccines administered: 1,107

## Health Department Revenue



For More Information Please Visit Us On the Web at  
[www.wilkeshealth.com](http://www.wilkeshealth.com)  
 or  
[www.facebook.com/WilkesCountyHealth/](https://www.facebook.com/WilkesCountyHealth/)