



2011

STATE OF THE COUNTY HEALTH REPORT



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HISTORICAL WARREN COUNTY
Photography by: Economic Development Commission, Warren County

INTRODUCTION

Warren County is located in the northeastern Piedmont section of North Carolina. Warren County is bordered by Virginia to the north, Northampton and Halifax Counties to the east, Franklin and Nash Counties to the south and southeast, and Vance County to the west. The climate of Warren County is an average of 59 degrees Fahrenheit.

State and local government is the leading employment in the county, followed by manufacturing, health care and social assistance. Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting and Fishing is a way of life for some county residents. There are 218,000 acres of forest land in the county, and 90-95% of this land is privately owned. There are various programs available to help landowners with planting young trees and middle age trees prior to the process of maturity. Tobacco was the earliest cash crop grown in Warren County. This crop is still being produced today along with cucumbers, cantaloupes, and grains. Although many residents make their living working for state and local government, there are a few industries remaining in the county.

Based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts 2010, Warren County's total population is 20,972. A total of 25.6% ages 0-19 and 55.2% age 20-64 and 19.2% 65 and over. The racial breakdown is 38.8 % white and 52.3% black, 5.0% American Indian, 0.2% Asian, 3.3% Hispanic or Latino and 1.6% two or more races. In Warren County, the per capita income is \$18,037 which is much lower than the State's average of \$24,547 for the past twelve months (2009 dollars). Unemployment is a major factor in such a low per capita income. When the unemployment rate of Warren County is compared to the State, the county is much higher. In 2010, Warren County has a range of 11.1 % -13.9% unemployment rates as compared to the state range of 9.2%-11.8%. Persons living below poverty levels in Warren County are 26.1% as compared to the state rate of 16.2 %. There is a high level of undeveloped areas of the county, which may be a contributing factor to the poverty percentage.

Morbidity & Mortality

The major causes of illness and death In Warren County are chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, cancer, heart disease and blood pressure or stroke. The leading causes of death for all ages are diseases of the heart, cancer, cerebrovascular disease, chronic lower respiratory disease, pneumonia and influenza, motor vehicle injuries, nephritis, nephritic syndrome & diabetes mellitus, other unintentional injuries and septicemia. It is believed that these chronic illnesses can be reduced dramatically though lifestyle changes, including nutrition education, exercise, smoking cessation, and limited alcohol use.

According to NC CATCH for 2007, Warren County exceeds the state with cases of Chlamydia by 74.2%, Gonorrhea by 89.7% per 100,000 populations. However, the data shows Warren County is lower than the state with HIV disease rates. Warren County recorded 96 teen pregnancies ages 15 to 19 or 88.4% pregnancies per 1,000 in 2009 and the state recorded 56 pregnancies per 1,000 teens for the same age group.

Our area has its share of chronic respiratory problems including asthma, emphysema and lung cancer. Because of the agriculture-related force economy, jobs, there are a certain amount of injuries and deaths from farm machinery. The county has a low rate of injury or death from industrial work sites due to little manufacturing in the area and an intense safety program at the county's largest employer.

Other Health Concerns for Warren County

Warren County is one of the poorest counties in the state; citizens are often forced to choose between regular healthcare and doctor visits or such things as groceries, heating fuel or payment of utility bills. The economic situation has always limited a certain group of the population from receiving the services that they not only desire but also desperately need. With most of the work force being either farm or log wood laborers, many are not afforded the luxury of health care insurance. The three main industries within the county provide very little stimulus as far as competitive wages, employee insurance benefits, or preventive healthcare programs for its workforce. Even those persons who are self-employed often are not afforded health or dental insurance because of the high cost and their small amounts of working capital. Where we live has an impact on our health. The health of a community depends on many different factors, including quality of health care, individual behavior, education, jobs and the environment. Health outcomes represent how healthy a county is while health factors are what influences the health of the county. Warren County ranked 92 in health outcomes and 98 on health factors. Health outcomes can be improved by addressing all health factors with effective, evidence-based programs and policies. The Health Department continuously seeks funding sources to provide as many services as possible to that population of the county.

Priority Health Concerns

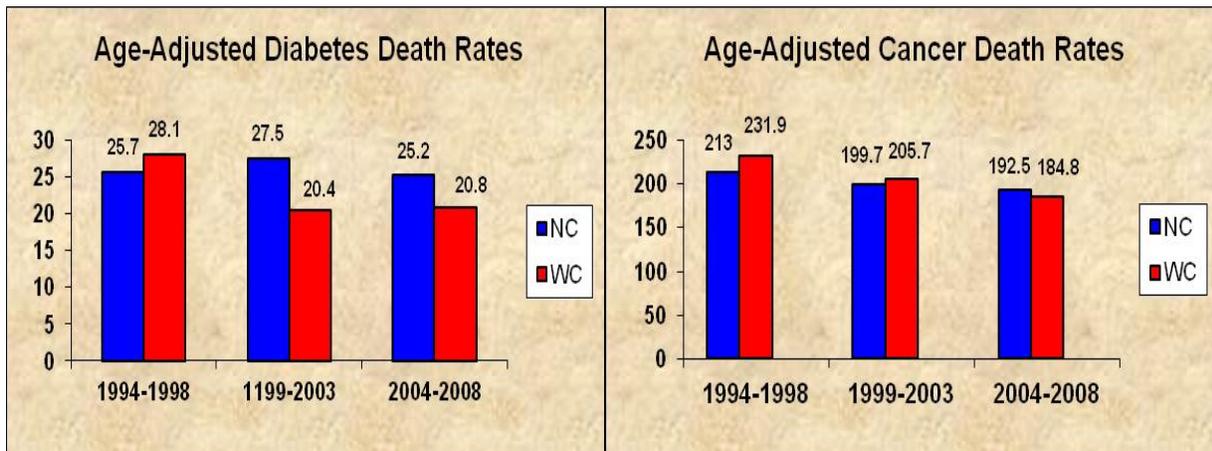
In 2010, Warren County conducted a community health assessment, which, through use of surveys and study of patterns in the community, gave the Health Department a feel for the needs of the area. The surveys identified unhealthy behaviors such as unsafe sex, smoking/tobacco use, poor eating habits, and lack of exercise, not having routine dental and medical check-ups, screenings, reckless driving and violent behavior. The top community issues were drugs/alcohol, dropping out of school, having no hospital here, low income/poverty, unemployment, affordable health services, lack of inadequate health insurance, no health insurance, lack of recreational facilities, and availability of positive activities for teens. Through this assessment, the group was able to determine areas of major concern and make efforts to continue to address the problems in these areas. The efforts of the Healthy Carolinians of Warren County Partnership appears to stimulate genuine interest by government officials, private citizens and special interest groups in that problems are being identified and someone is taking the lead in seeking and providing solutions to the population in a reasonable fashion. The committee is working on the top two areas of concern for the next 4 years, Fitness & Nutrition and STD/ Unintentional Pregnancies.

The six areas of concern that are identified by the committee include:

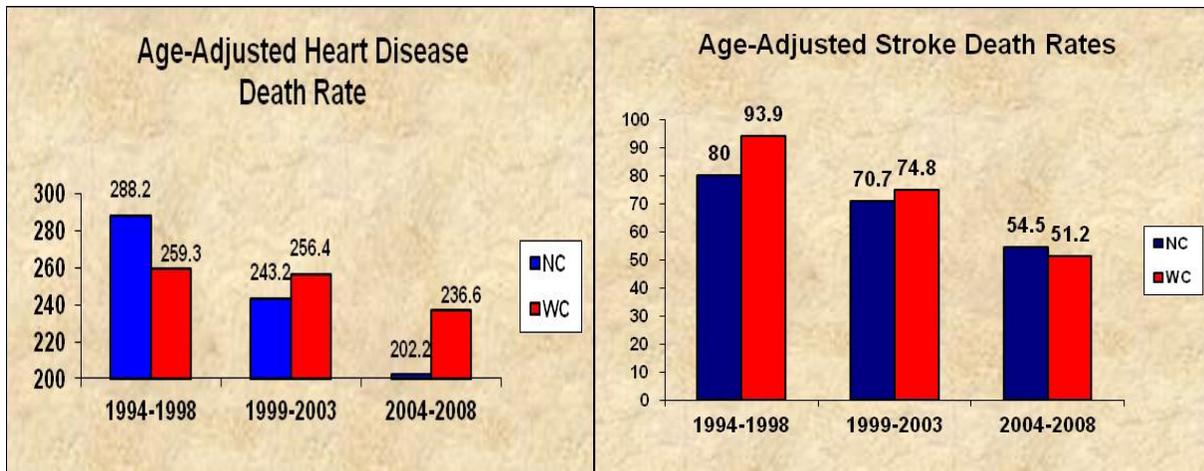
1. **Physical Activity & Nutrition** (Obesity, Diabetes, Cancer, Heart Disease, Cerebrovascular Disease)
2. **STD'S/Unintentional Pregnancy** (HIV, Syphilis, Gonorrhea, Chlamydia)
3. **Tobacco Use**
4. **Substance Abuse**
5. **Injury (motor vehicle, infant unintentional injuries)**
6. **Mental Health**

1. Chronic Diseases (diabetes, cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure)

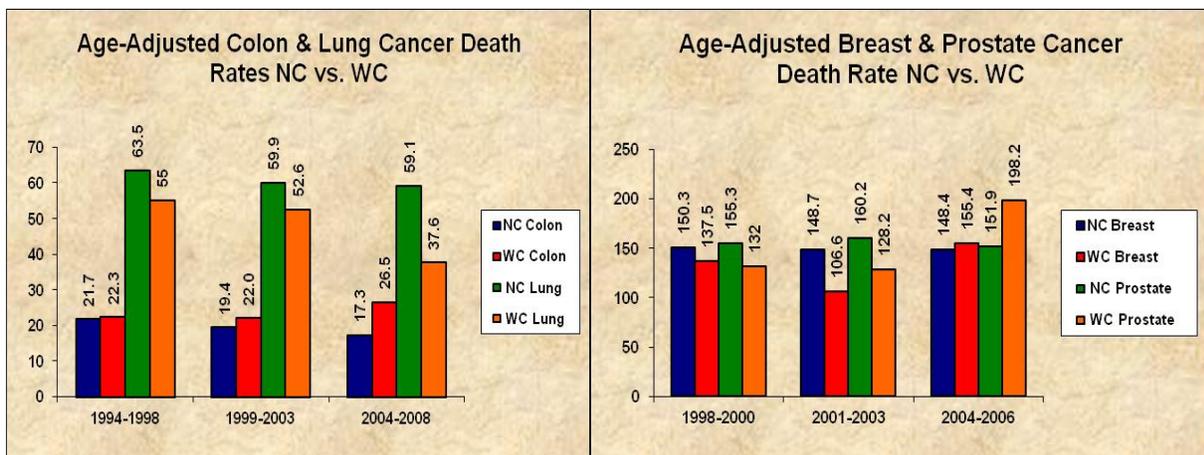
AGE-ADJUSTED DEATH RATES GRAPH AT A GLANCE



(Source: County Health Data Book, North Carolina Statewide and County Trends in Key Health Indicators)

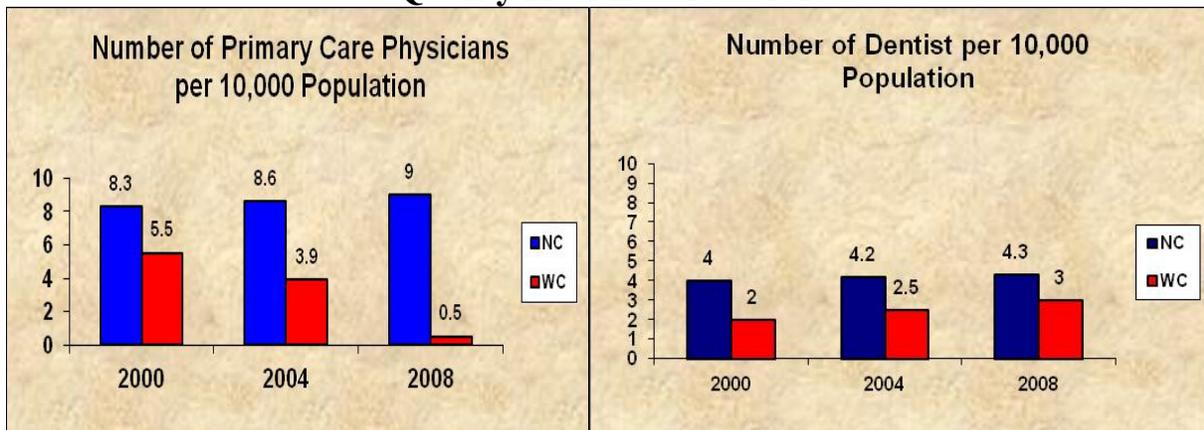


(Source: County Health Data Book, North Carolina Statewide and County Trends in Key Health Indicators)



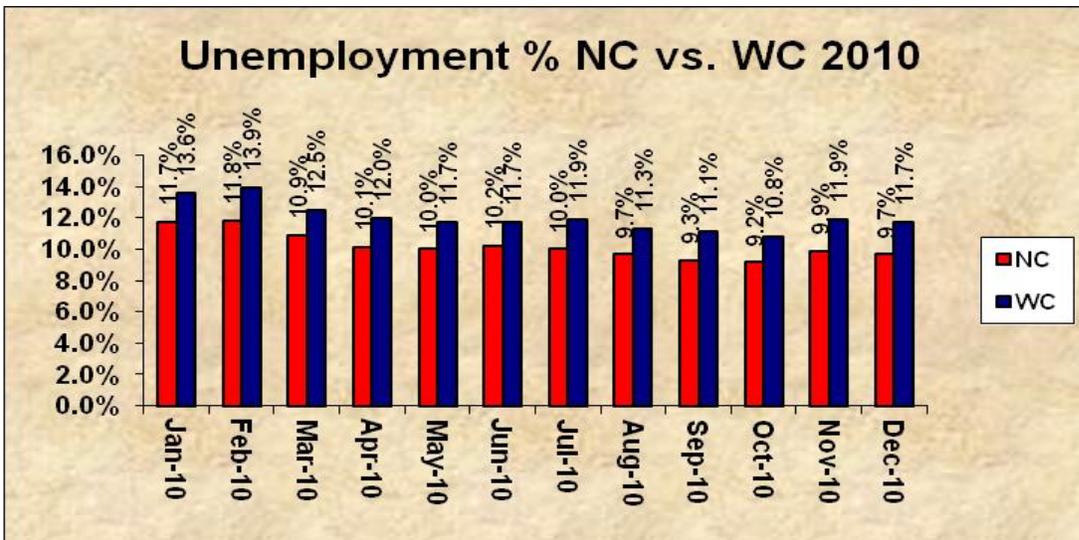
Source: County Health Data Book, North Carolina Statewide and County Trends in Key Health Indicators
 Death rates reveal major areas of health concern in our county. The leading cause of deaths in Warren County and the state are related to heart disease, cancer, diabetes and stroke. Death rates are compared to the state are per 100,000 Population.

Quality Health Care Services



(Source: County Health Data Book, North Carolina Statewide and County Trends in Key Health Indicators)

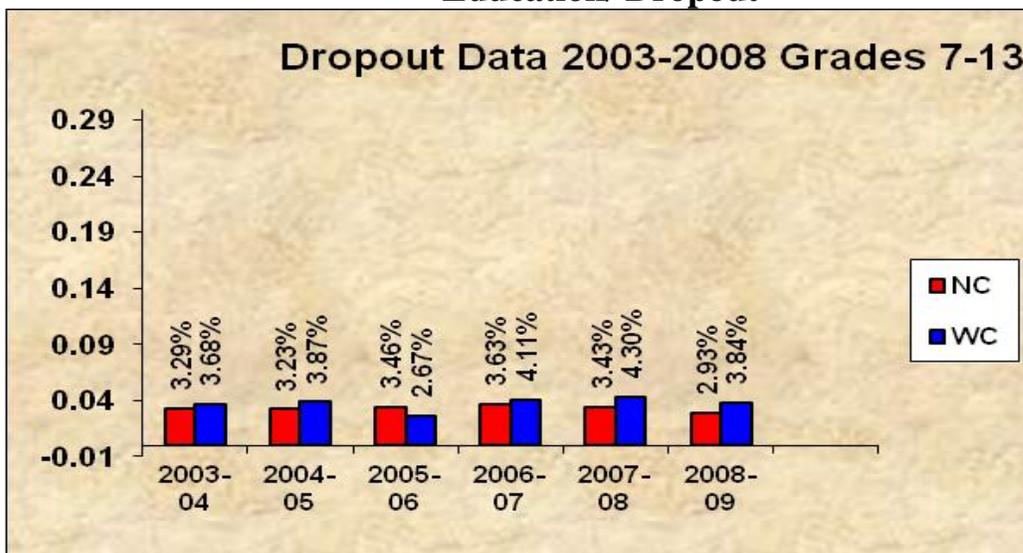
Unemployment



(Source: State Agency Data: Department of Commerce 2011)

The unemployment rate for Warren County exceeds the state rate on an average by about 1% for the entire year of 2010. With no hospital and only minimal industry, the school system and county government employ the most people in the county.

Education/ Dropout



(Source: NC: Department of Public Schools 2010)

The dropout rate is based on students who do not return to school from the previous year. Students who transfer to other public or private schools or who are home schooled are not included. The dropout rate does include students who enroll in community college high school equivalency programs.

Healthy Carolinians of Warren County Goals & Progress

With Warren County being one of the poorest counties in the state, it was obvious there was a great need to address health issues here in the county. The vision of Healthy Carolinians of Warren County (HCWC) is children, teens and adults living healthy and safe lives through goals of:

- ~ Increased citizen participation in physical activities
- ~ Increased citizen commitment to healthy eating
- ~ Decreased use of illegal drugs by children, teens, and adults
- ~ Decreased abuse of alcohol by adults
- ~ Decreased use of alcohol by children and teens
- ~ Increased use of vehicle safety belts
- ~ Increased and proper use of child restraint and booster seats
- ~ Decrease the number of teen pregnancies
- ~ Decrease the number of STD'S
- ~Increased the number of children wearing bike helmets

HCWC continues partnering with individuals as well as organizations to address the concerns. After the completion of the 2010 CHA (Community Health Assessment) the priority areas changed their focus. There are currently two working groups within the partnership: a continuation of Fitness and Nutrition (FAN) and a newly formed committee PSPT (Pregnancy/STD Prevention Team). The committee will continue to work with SAFEKIDS with the Buckle-up program with child restraint safety. Substance abuse education will be conducted on an as needed basis.

FAN (Fitness & Nutrition) COMMITTEE 2009-2010

- Supports the Weight-Wise management program. This is a study conducted by UNC Chapel Hill for middle aged women, ages 45-54, whose BMI is between 27.5 and 45. 20 women participated in the study.
- Supported Warren County Schools with their Safe Routes to School initiative. The action plan for Mariam Boyd Elementary School is estimated to be completed by the end of the 2011-2012 school years.
- Warren County Health Department received funding for an Eat Smart, Move More NC Community Grant. The grant was designed to increase the opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity to 5 African American Churches by offering a mini-grant to enhance or to start a health ministry for their congregation.

PSPT (Pregnancy/STD Prevention Team) of Warren County (new committee)

- This committee has developed an action plan to follow for the next 4 years using evidence-based curriculum to educate and reduce teen pregnancies and STD's.

Former Injury Prevention Committee

- Collaborated with Highway Patrol and local sheriff's department in hosting their third bike rodeo at Northside Elementary School. A total of 63 4th grade students received bike safety and new helmets.
- Participated with the Safe-Kids Buckle-up program providing child restraint safety installations and gave out 50 plus child restraint and booster seats for a small co-payment.
- This committee will not meet again, but will continue to work with the Buckle-up program.

Former Substance Abuse Committee

- Participated at the Warren County Middle school with the Great American Smoke Out activities; set up display and educated students on the dangers of smoking.
- Continued the efforts of implementing a TATU (Teens Against Tobacco Use) club at the middle school.
- Set up displays at the school, churches, health fairs and out in the community educating citizens on the harmful effects of smoking as well as second hand smoke.
- This committee will not meet again, but will continue to work and educate the community as needed.

The Healthy Carolinians of Warren County has been successful in reaching out to a diverse population for participation in the partnership. The program has reached out to the American Indians, Hispanics, churches, civic organizations, county agencies, government officials, politicians and county residents in the community to create cross culture participation.

Early Preventive Health

The Warren County Health Department has several programs in place to address the area of preventive health. Those programs, Exerstyle and Exerstyle plus, provide the wellness center with treadmills, stationary bikes, rowing machines, and low impact aerobics. There is a diabetes support group, regular blood pressure screenings, cholesterol checks and regular distribution of printed materials and samples. Also walking trails have been marked, along with health fairs being held at the local industries.

The Warren County School System is addressing health-related issues. The school system is in the planning stages of having a farmers market at each school for parents and students to

purchase fresh fruit and vegetables. The school systems participated with staff wellness weight loss programs and are focusing on childhood obesity with a 5k walk in October.

Many churches in the county have implemented a health ministry by taking control of their health. There are active exercise programs as well as community gardens that are providing fresh fruit and vegetables for the community.

New and Emerging Issues-The Green Tech Agri-food campus, the first of its kind in the nation, was proposed to utilize Warren County's agricultural heritage and meet national and international demands for locally grown, environmentally sustainable agriculture and food products. According to Economic Development Commission estimates, the meat-processing facility is expected to directly create 50 jobs and with the opportunity to create more than 500 jobs in the livestock, agricultural supply and transportation industries in this region. The site would be expected to grow to include private bio research engineering companies and university/college research projects, as well as manufacturing operations to include production of biodiesel fuel, fertilizer, vegetable/fruit processing, a micro distillery and ready to eat foods.

Warren County is one of eight North Carolina counties selected to participate in the three-year Food-Corps program, designed to promote healthy nutrition among local students through such measures as school gardens. Food-Corps is sponsored by North Carolina 4-H and the North Carolina State University Center for Environmental Farming systems. Warren County's portion of the grant allows the Warren County High School students to participate on such projects as upgrading the school's greenhouse, developing a garden and using the produce they grow to assist a number of classes.

Warren Food-Works is a new venture, opening soon in downtown Warrenton that seeks to use local food to help create decent jobs, healthy people and a more healthy landscape in Warren County region. Food-Works will do this by helping create new markets for locally grown food and helping to establish shared space where value-added agricultural products can be made. Food-Works is partnering with the UNC Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention to pilot a new Produce Packs initiative that connects local farmers to low-income consumers by aggregating, packaging and marketing local produce through small grocery stores and country stores.

Community Involvement

There was a public forum held on October 12, 2011 at Warren County Health Department's conference room. Public opinion on health issues was the main topic for discussion and eight people were in attendance. The citizens were asked several questions concerning the health of the county. There were pros and cons about whether there is a good healthcare system in the county. For example, some positive healthcare systems in the county are three local healthcare providers, optometrists, dentists, first responders, a fabulous EMS and an EMS substation. On the other hand, there is no hospital, no urgent care, no after hours other than 911 and the citizens have to travel out of the county for services.

Most of the citizens reported that they get most of their health related information on-line, local agencies, health fairs and physician offices. When asked what is the health problems that have the largest impact on the community as a whole? The responses were lack of health insurance, knowledge, transportation as well as heart disease, cancer and diabetes. The services that the citizens think the Health Department should provide are adult primary care, dental services (children) and a registered dietician to meet nutritional needs in the county.

Summary

The Healthy Carolinians of Warren County Partnership has pursued and solicited interest from all areas of the county. A collaborative effort continues between Healthy Carolinians of Warren County (159 partners), the Warren County Health Department, local government officials, county agencies, the Warren County School System, and civic organizations in pursuing every opportunity to address, reduce and/or eliminate the health concerns of the county residents. This goal has been reached by visiting high traffic areas such as grocery stores, chamber of commerce offices, convenience stores, government facilities and healthcare provider agencies. This, in addition to placing printed materials such as brochures and posters at various health fairs, schools and faith based organizations, has been a large part of their initial campaign and efforts towards the healthy lifestyles initiative.