



Appalachian District  
Health Department

ANNUAL REPORT

2014-2015

PROMOTE. PREVENT. EMPOWER.



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# Message from the Director

Thank you for your support of the Appalachian District Health Department. Did you know the Public Health System in NC is the only system that includes a strong network of accredited services in all 100 counties?

Our Local Public Health Departments in Alleghany, Ashe and Watauga Counties serve residents in 3 different ways which are consistent with state and federal mandates:

**1. Clinical Personal Health Care Services:** Immunizations, Breast and Cervical Cancer Control, pre-natal care (Ashe and Watauga Counties), primary care for adults and children (Alleghany and Ashe Counties), Nutrition/Diabetes Education, WIC, Lab services, Communicable Disease exams and follow-up and more.

**2. Prevention Activities:** Environmental Health water protection (septic and well permitting) and Food and Lodging inspections and permitting, Emergency Preparedness and Response, Health promotion activities including working to improve access to healthy foods and physical activity, tobacco control and prevention and convening community members for the improvement of the health of our entire population and more.

**3. Epidemiology** (the study of disease in populations) is carried out through the Community Health Needs Assessment,

tracking and trending of communicable diseases across the District, other analysis of population health data and more.

It is a privilege to work with an amazing team to improve the public's health in Alleghany, Ashe and Watauga Counties. This past year we worked effectively to monitor travelers potentially exposed to the Ebola virus and investigated several communicable disease outbreaks all while

health services, please don't hesitate to call any one of our health departments for assistance.

This space is too small for me to share all of our local public health initiatives with you. Please visit [www.apphealth.com](http://www.apphealth.com). Our website offers "breaking news" public health updates, links to restaurant inspections and septic/well permits, information about our services/programs and links to offer

*This past year we worked effectively to monitor travelers potentially exposed to the Ebola virus and investigated several communicable disease outbreaks in addition to our routine services.*

continuing to provide our routine services. We are also pleased to work within each county to provide health promotion/prevention activities that help all of our citizens improve their health. If you have a question about public health or public

patient or customer feedback or general feedback and an easy way to contact us for questions.

Yours in good health,  
Beth Lovette

# Message from the Board of Health Chairman

It has been my pleasure to serve Alleghany, Ashe and Watauga Counties as Chair of the Appalachian District Board of Health. Our District Health Department is one of six multi-county health departments in North Carolina that take advantage of the cost savings that can be achieved through sharing staff and resources across county lines. A recent study showed that district health departments, on average, receive larger proportions of funding from sources other than your county tax dollars. (Comparing North Carolina's Local Public Health Agencies: The Legal Landscape, the Perspectives, and the Numbers; UNC School of Government, May 2012.) Appalachian District Health Department currently receives only XX% of total funding from county allocations to the District health budget.

Each county appoints one county commissioner to the Board of Health and those three commissioners appoint the other board members as outlined in NC General Statutes. Many thanks to Commissioner Karen Leys, Alleghany; Commissioner Brien Richardson, Ashe; and Commissioner Perry Yates, Watauga for their dedication to the health of the counties they serve. A complete Board of Health member listing, meeting schedules, and minutes can be found at [www.apphealth.com/about-us/board-of-health/](http://www.apphealth.com/about-us/board-of-health/).

Sincerely,  
Ken Richardson, Chairman  
Appalachian District Board of Health



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“Health centers are important safety net providers in rural areas. Of the over 22 million Americans who receive care from health centers, approximately a third are rural residents,”

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## Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)

**Appalachian District Health Department and Appalachian Partners in Public Health receive grant to support Primary Healthcare in Alleghany and Ashe Counties.**

(SPARTA, NC) ---Appalachian District Health Department with non-profit organization Appalachian Partners in Public Health as its co-applicant is among the newly announced grant recipients, with \$1.19 million awarded to help serve the primary healthcare needs for Alleghany and Ashe Counties. In 2013, Appalachian District Health Department provided over 12,000 medical and dental visits to over 6,500 patients in the district region. High rates of uninsured adults and chronic disease, and the fact that North Carolina chose not expand Medicaid has presented challenges in maintaining the current level of services with increasing costs and reduced funding available to meet these needs.

This funding allows the Appalachian District Health Department to provide primary care with the patient's needs in mind, including medications, behavioral healthcare, and dental services. “The majority of the (co-applicant) governing board members will be patients of the health center. Community health centers are the best model of consumer directed health care and will nicely complement health promotion and preventive services at the health department,” said E. Benjamin Money, President and CEO of the NC Community Health Center Association.

Additional benefits include federal loan repayment for providers, free malpractice insurance, enhanced Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement, and funds to help cover the uninsured patients. It also provides the agency additional opportunities to apply for more grants that are only available to active federally qualified health center sites.

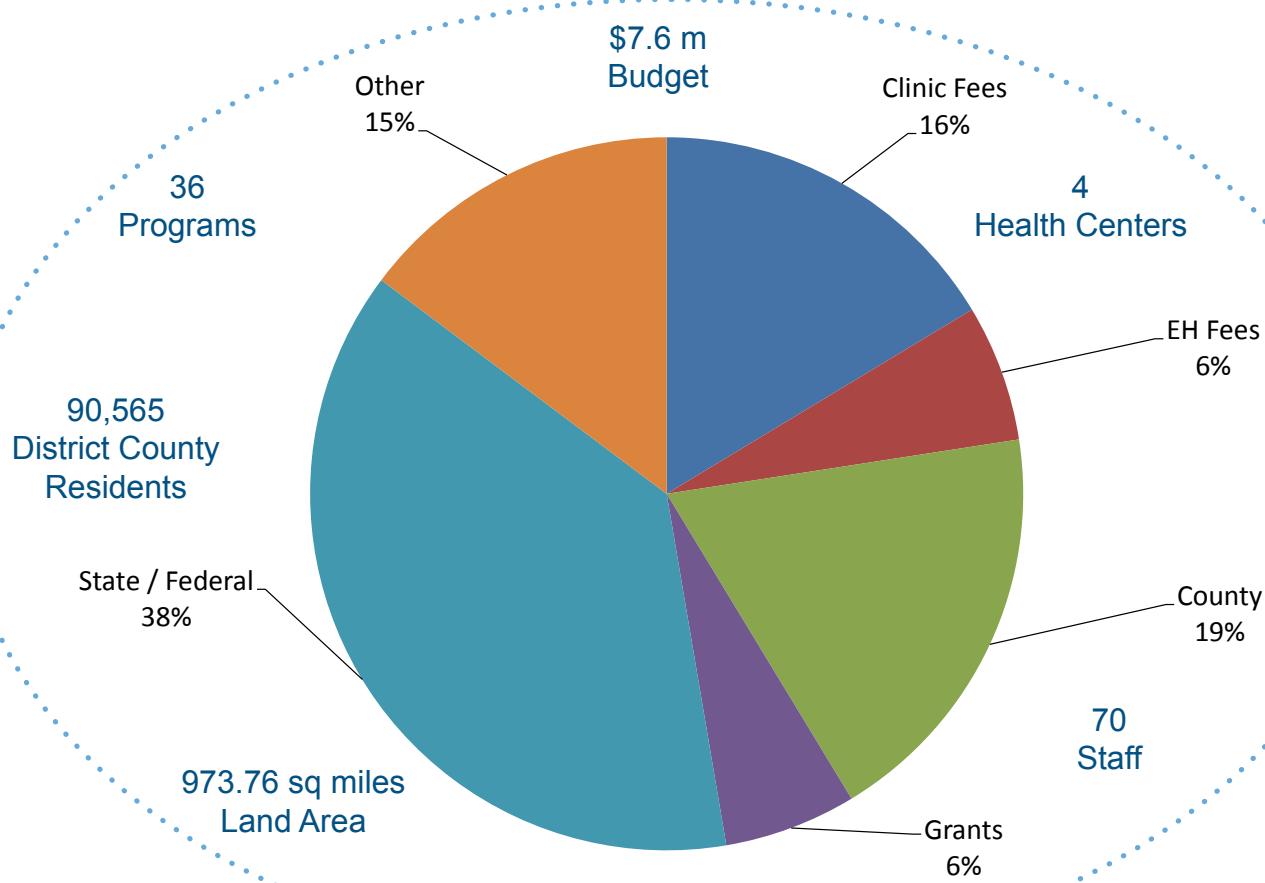
“We are so grateful for this opportunity to partner with Appalachian District Board of Health, the co-applicant non-profit Partners in Public Health and other community stakeholders to serve the needs of Ashe and Alleghany county citizens. In addition to committing ourselves to exceeding customer service expectations and providing quality healthcare, we will be working diligently to fully develop these customer-centered services while continuing to provide population health services like environmental health, communicable disease control, and community health promotion,” said Beth Lovette, Health Director.

In the months ahead, the Appalachian District Health Department and Appalachian Partners in Public Health will be joining together with community partners to work towards a comprehensive multi-year plan that will further enhance primary healthcare services including primary care for adults, women and children, dental care, and behavioral health for Ashe and Alleghany counties.

# District at a Glance

Public health services have been provided in the counties of Alleghany, Ashe and Watauga counties as a District since 1980. Prior to this year the District ranged in size from 2 - 6 counties from 1933. Each of the three counties in the District has its own health department providing local clinic and environmental services. Health promotion, financial and administrative services are provided on a district basis. The financial office is located in Sparta, NC in the local health department and administrative office and health promotion offices are located in the Boone, NC health department. Ashe county consists of three locations with the clinic services in a separate building from the environmental services office. There is also the School Based Health Center which is located at Ashe Middle School.

Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Percent of Revenues



# Technology Updates

The overall state of the Technology systems at the Appalachian District Health Department for 2014 is very good and almost all computer systems have been replaced with new units. The hardware includes approximately 110

computer systems, both desktop and laptop. There are no primary computers that are in need of upgrading, only secondary. Since 2012 a complete overhaul of all systems has been in process.



New server computers have been purchased and half of those are installed and operating. A Printer Management program is being estimated, including

new high volume copiers/printers and a vendor will be selected to assist with money savings in our District printing for supplies, reduced costs per copy, and maintenance.

Our Telecommunications is being evaluated and a upgraded system will be estimated and implemented next year. The Telecommunications will move to VoIP technology. Voiceover IP, or VoIP, is a technology that allows telephone calls to be made over local area networks or the Internet. VoIP systems convert analog voice signals into digital data packets and supports real-time, two-way transmission of conversations using the Internet Protocol (IP). VoIP is a much more efficient medium to transport voice, and at the very best, will produce a much richer experience for the user when one considers the enhanced features of video and instant messaging. We would be able to connect our District offices with a VoIP system and calls would be considered local instead of long distance between counties. There would be a considerable savings especially when having our conference calls between groups. There would also be the advantage of connecting to other employees at different locations as if they were in the same building. We could also implement a more centralized reception and scheduling where needed.



# 10 Key Public Health Actions

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The Appalachian District Health Department protects and improves the health of our community by performing these key actions:

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## **1. Monitor**

Finds health problems in the community

## **2. Diagnose**

Finds what causes health problems.

## **3. Inform, Educate, and Empower**

Teaches people how to prevent disease and improve health.

## **4. Mobilize**

Works with the community to find and solve health problems.

## **5. Develop**

Makes rules and plans that help individual and community health.

## **6. Enforce**

Makes sure rules are followed so that people are safe and their health is protected.

## **7. Link**

Helps people gain access to the health care services they need.

## **8. Assure**

Makes sure our employees are prepared to do their job well.

## **9. Evaluate**

Makes sure our programs are working and doing a good job.

## **10. Research**

Studies new ways to solve health problems.

# District Health Department Services

Services	Alleghany	Ashe	Watauga
WIC Supplemental Nutrition Program	✓	✓	✓
Prenatal Care		✓	✓
Family Planning / Women's Health	✓	✓	✓
Communicable Disease Control	✓	✓	✓
Primary Care / Child Health	✓	✓	
Primary Care / Adult Health	✓	✓	
Diabetes Self Management	✓	✓	✓
Nutrition Consultation	✓	✓	✓
Immunizations	✓	✓	✓
Pregnancy Care Management	✓	✓	✓
Care Coordination for Children	✓	✓	✓
Innovative Approaches for Children w/ Special Healthcare Needs			✓
Community Health Needs Assessment	✓	✓	✓
Youth Tobacco Prevention	✓	✓	✓
Positive Parenting Program (Triple P)	✓	✓	✓
Community Health Promotion and Wellness	✓	✓	✓
Northwest Tobacco Prevention	✓	✓	✓
Leading Coalitions for Community Health Improvement	✓	✓	✓
Water Protection (Septic and Well Permitting)	✓	✓	✓
Food and Lodging (Permitting and Inspections)	✓	✓	✓
District Business Office	✓		
Emergency Preparedness	✓	✓	✓
Alleghany / Ashe Health Alliance	✓	✓	
Top Dog Clinic (School Based Health Center), Ashe Middle School		✓	

# Allied Health

Every three years, the health department collaborates with local hospitals and community partners to conduct a community health assessment. Appalachian District Health Department recently concluded the 2014-15 community health assessment with over 1,100 completed surveys received from across the District. At the completion of the assessment, community priority areas are set and action plans are developed to work towards improvements in population health. The three priority areas chosen from 2015-2017 are: chronic disease, physical activity and nutrition and substance use and abuse.

To access the reports, please visit: [www.apphealth.com/  
health-promotion/community-health-reports-2/](http://www.apphealth.com/health-promotion/community-health-reports-2/)

Based on the priority areas identified from the community needs assessment, the Health Promotion team works with community partners to implement health interventions to address these needs.



The Health Promotion department addresses these needs through the following grant initiatives:

- Active Routes to School
- Northwest Regional Tobacco Prevention
- Innovative Approaches
- Project Lazarus
- Triple P: Positive Parenting Program

# Active Routes to School

Active Routes to School is a NC Safe Routes to School Project supported by a partnership between the NC Department of Transportation and the NC Division of Public Health. Through this project there are ten Active Routes to School project coordinators working across North Carolina to make it easier for elementary and middle school students to safely walk and bike to school, and at school, by promoting pedestrian and bicycle safety curriculum and increasing physical activity on the school site.

Learn more here about the state-wide initiative:

[www.communityclinicalconnections.com/What\\_We\\_Do/  
Active\\_Routes\\_To\\_School/](http://www.communityclinicalconnections.com/What_We_Do/Active_Routes_To_School/)

Active Routes to School in Appalachian District 2014-2015 year:



**Alleghany County:** All three elementary schools: Sparta School, Piney Creek Elementary, and Glade Creek Elementary participated in Bike to School Day by raising awareness about the importance of physical activity at each school site. The students walked or ran around the track during PE, while wearing their Active Routes to School t-shirt to promote the importance of being physically active. 973 students participated in this event!

**Ashe County:** Active Routes to School Coordinator partnered with Ashe Cooperative Extension After School Program to hold their first bike safety day.

The 4-H LEADS Afterschool Program celebrated this important event by coordinating an event to be held at each of the elementary schools: Westwood Elementary, Blue Ridge Elementary, and Mountain View Elementary. The students participated in various learning stations based on the curriculum, Let's Go NC! Bike and pedestrian safety curriculum. Participants were given a free helmet and t-shirt that asked "Did you walk or bike today?" provided by Active Routes to School. While there, children were instructed on how to correctly fit their new helmets and given more information on how to properly fit a helmet to take home

to their parents. The event promoted a more active lifestyle and how to do so safely. 135 students participated.



**Watauga County:** Hardin Park School participated again this year, in International Walk to School Day in October 2014, and in Bike to School Day in May 2015. The celebration of these events is part of a larger partnership between Hardin Park School, the Appalachian District Health Department, the Town of Boone, Boone Police Department, Watch For Me NC, and Active Routes to School, a Safe Routes to School project in North Carolina. The goal of this partnership is to increase student health, as well as pedestrian and biker safety to and from school. Each of these events had approximately 200 students to participate!



# Northwest Tobacco Prevention and Control

Northwest Tobacco Prevention and Control expanded the reach of the grant from 5 counties to 10 counties. The ten county region consists of Local Health Director Region 3, which includes the counties: Alleghany, Ashe, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Surry, Stokes, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yadkin. There are now 10 Regional Managers thought out the state which effectively covers all 100 counties. Tobacco use remains the number one preventable cause of death and disease in North Carolina and the United States. The good news is we know what works and we are making steady progress in North Carolina and the Appalachian District.

We work on this complex public health problem by building support for proven strategies to:

## Prevent the initiation of smoking and other tobacco use

- Almost 90% of adult smokers become addicted before the age of 20, thus it is important to reach the youth.
- 5.6% of middle school students use tobacco in the District.
- 18.5% of high school students use tobacco in the District.
- Education in the schools about electronic cigarettes and other tobacco products (traditional cigarettes, spit tobacco, cigars, etc.).
- Electronic cigarette use has doubled in the past year among youth.
- Education about the effect of increasing the unit price of tobacco products on youth initiation and people who seek to quit tobacco use.

## Eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke

### Help tobacco-users quit:

- Over 150 citizens throughout the district call the North Carolina Quitline (1-800-Quit Now) seeking help in quitting the use of tobacco.
- All 3 Health Department Locations advertise the North Carolina Quitline and help promote it to patients seeking to quit.

## Identify and eliminate tobacco-related health disparities among N.C. populations and communities:

- Youth education and educating school staff in the district about the dangers of tobacco use and emerging tobacco products (electronic cigarettes).
- Rural Mountain communities have higher rates of tobacco use when compared with the state average.



## Innovative Approaches

Parents with Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) experience a complex system of services that are challenging to coordinate. The Innovative Approaches Initiative in Watauga County completed its second year of a three-year funding cycle with many proud accomplishments.



The IA initiative is supported through the NC Division of Public Health, Children and Youth Branch.

The initiative has grown in its scope and participation to strengthen coordination of care for CYSHCN in school, primary and specialist health care, behavioral health services, developmental services, local recreational opportunities, law enforcement interactions, parent advocacy and support. Innovative Approaches also provided # Watauga County families with CYSHCN this year with emergency preparedness training.

For more information please contact: Maria Julian,  
[maria.julian@apphealth.com](mailto:maria.julian@apphealth.com).

## Project Lazarus

Project Lazarus works within a community to address prescription drug misuse and abuse.

**PROJECT LAZARUS**

The Project Lazarus model is based on three foundational components: public awareness, coalition action, and data and evaluation.

These foundational components act as the “hub” of the model with other components being the “spokes.”

The “spokes” include community education, prescriber education, hospital ED policies, diversion control, pain patient support, harm reduction, and addiction treatment. Since this model is intended as a “whole community” approach, we work with coalitions within Alleghany, Ashe, and Watauga Counties to implement the model to reduce overdoses and mortality rates related to prescription drugs. In the past year we have been able to distribute lock boxes, advertise and promote proper disposal of unused or expired prescriptions, and began to establish an additional permanent drop box location for Watauga County.

# Triple P: Positive Parenting Program

## Prevention at Its Finest: Positive Parenting Program in the Appalachian District

The evidence-based Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) has helped more than 6 million children and their families in more than 20 countries around the world. Specifically, Triple P is making a difference in the Appalachian District.

Triple P has trained over

**100 practitioners** across the District and surrounding counties in all Levels of Triple P. As of June 2015, more than **728 interventions** have been delivered to over **700 families and caregivers** and around **1176 children** have been reached with some level of Triple P intervention.

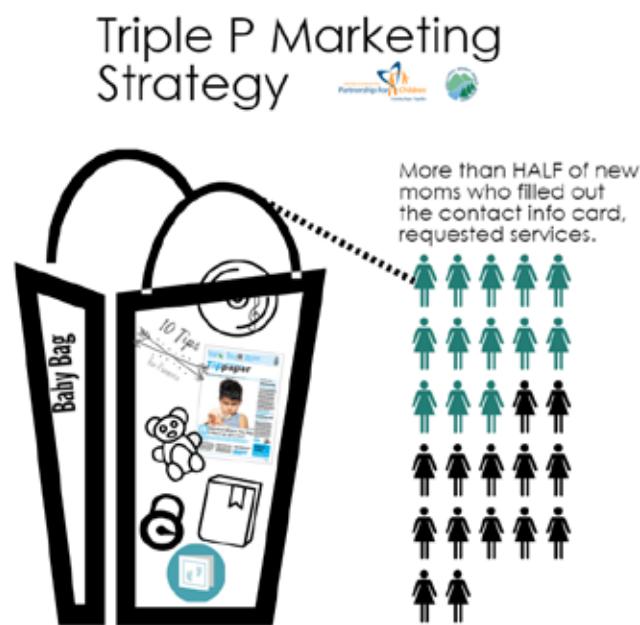
Partnerships throughout the community continue to be fostered as this is a public health population based approach to support positive parenting culture in the High Country.

The Appalachian District Health Department launched the evidence-based Stay Positive Campaign designed to decrease stigma around seeking help for parenting support and increase parental awareness of available

parenting programs in the Appalachian District from February to May 2015. Campaign strategies included culturally appropriate positive parenting messages through brochures, billboards, local and regional newspapers and magazines, television commercials, community events, radio commercials and promotional

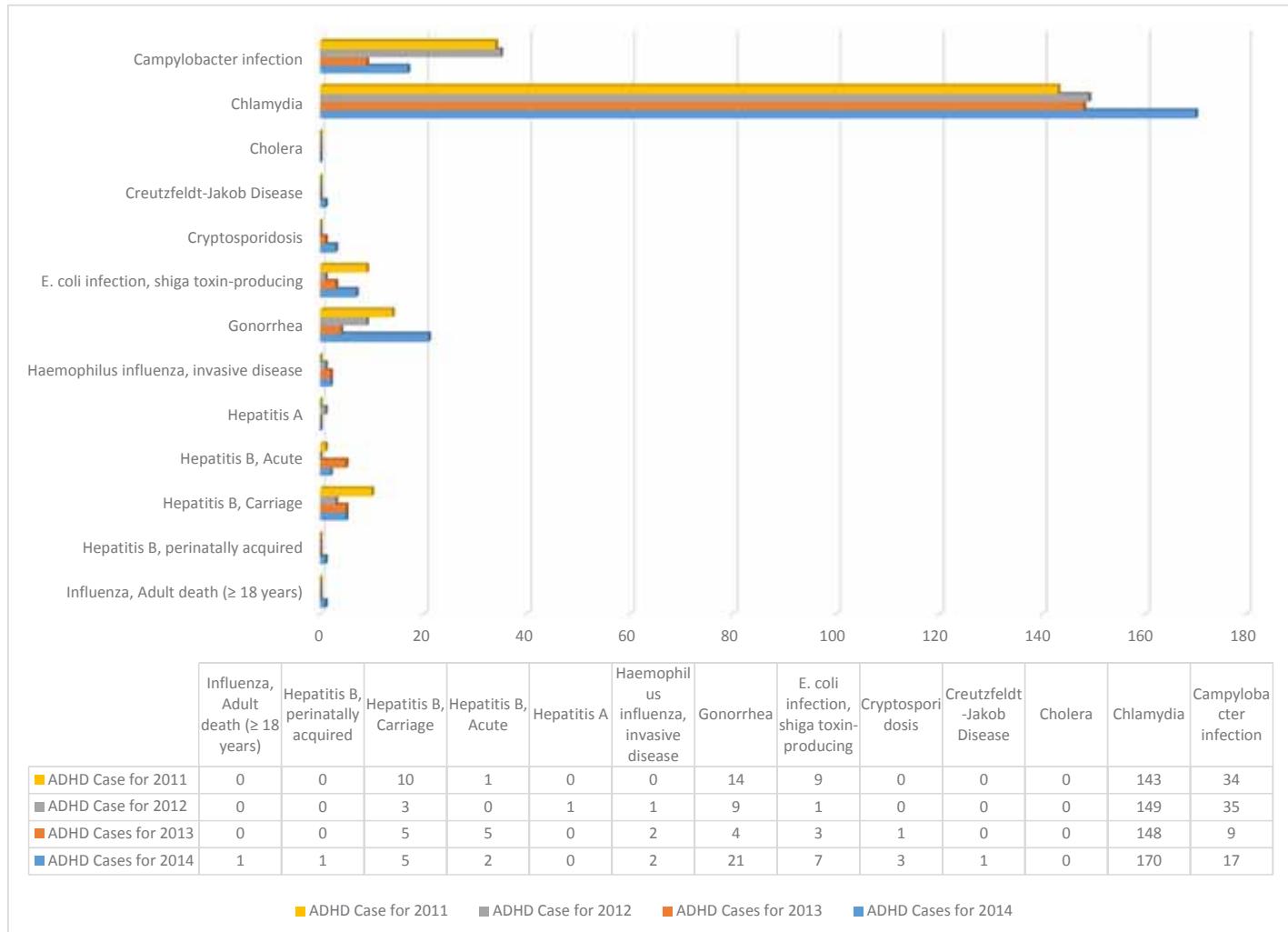
spots, a positive parenting newspaper (Tippaper), and digital/online adverts. In addition, mementos such as baby bags, pens, mugs, water bottles, tooth brushes and teddy bears were used. The messaging pointed clients towards the Triple P North Carolina website. In rural Appalachia, major barriers

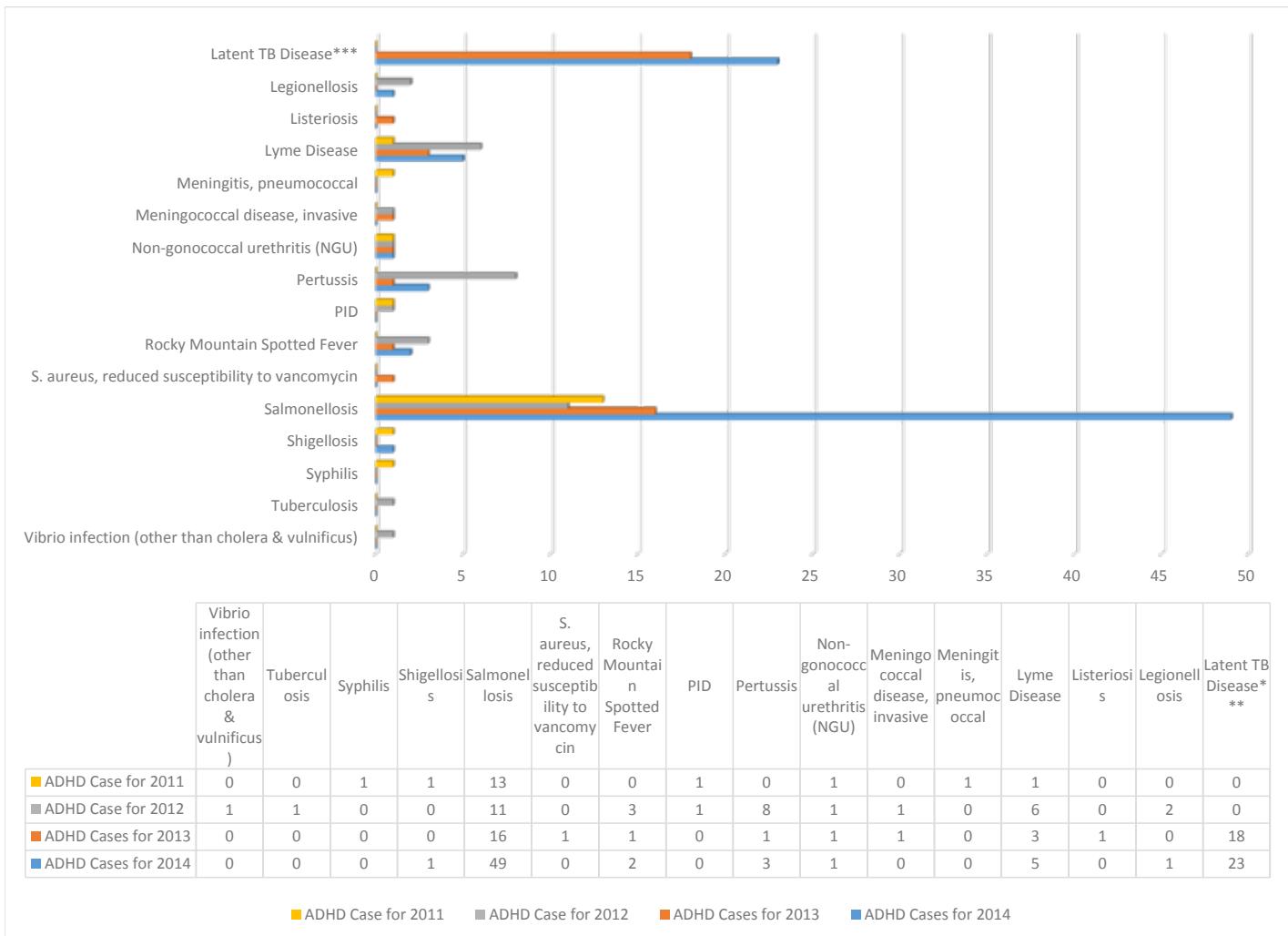
around media and communication exist. Over the four month period of this campaign, website traffic from clients in rural Appalachia increased from around 2% to nearly 19%. To further stress the importance of this sort of campaign, there was a decrease from nearly 19% to almost 11% when the Stay Positive Campaign slowed in June 2015. **For more information contact:** Jennifer Schroeder, [jennifer.schroeder@apphealth.com](mailto:jennifer.schroeder@apphealth.com).



# Communicable Disease

This report shows the number of probable and confirmed cases of disease in the Appalachian District Health Department counties for the calendar year 2014. Because cases are routinely updated, case number may change. The charts also display trends from 2011 thru 2014.





## Rabies Statistics

Note: The total numbers by county in years 2012 and 2013 were cases that met case definition and were reported to CDC. For year 2014, we were able to capture the full amount of surveillance and investigations that include all suspect cases, rabies investigations, and latent tuberculosis disease investigations that required local follow up (i.e. phone calls to patients, contacts to patients and providers and control measures and treatment if necessary).

2013	District Totals
# of bites/ exposure reports	222
# of animals tested positive from reported	14
# of persons recommended Post Exposure Rabies Therapy	29

County	2014	2013	2012
Alleghany	24 reported, 64 investigated	28	24
Ashe	37 reported, 114 investigated	22	53
Watauga	230 reported, 398 investigated	156	157

# Preparedness

There have been several changes and revisions in the work of Preparedness. The Public Health Preparedness and Response Branch have implemented 2 separate assessment reports and each are completed twice a year. The Rubric is an assessment to track ongoing progression toward meeting the CDC's Capabilities and is due every February and September. The Performance Measurement Tracker Report is an assessment to track and facilitate program improvement and organizational learning and is due every March and July.

The Strategic National Stockpile Plan is now called the Medical Countermeasures Plan using the Operational Readiness Review Tool (MCM ORR). This tool replaced the Technical Assistance Review Tool that was previously used to plan how we would dispense medication to a large population in the event of a public health emergency. The MCM ORR tool guides local health departments to implement the tasks and training requirements of the CDC Capabilities and now mandates that our plans are revised to reflect operational based planning. This will be reviewed at the next State Review in October 2015.



The Appalachian District Health Department has been partnering with county hospitals, EMS, local law enforcement, first responders, communication centers, local emergency management to prepare and train staff for Ebola response. This will be an ongoing partnering relationship to continually keep our communities safe and prepared.

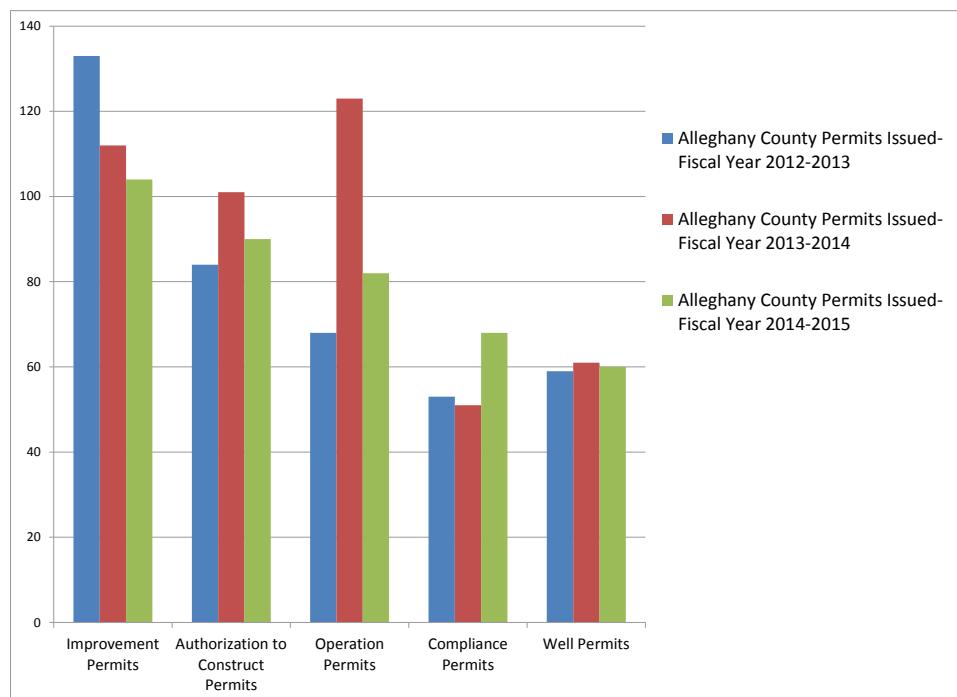
# Environmental Health

## Well and Septic Permitting

The goal of the Environmental Health program, as with any service of the Appalachian District Health Department, is to promote and protect the public's health. The Environmental Health section does this through the education, inspections and the enforcement of State laws and rules relating to environmental issues which impact human health. The most resource intensive programs are the Food, Lodging & Institution Program and the Water Protection Program. In addition to these, we are also responsible for the following: permitting and/or inspection of migrant housing, child care facilities, public swimming pools, rabies contacts, mosquito/vector control and mitigation, methamphetamine lab remediation, lead exposure investigations, and inspection of tattoo operations.

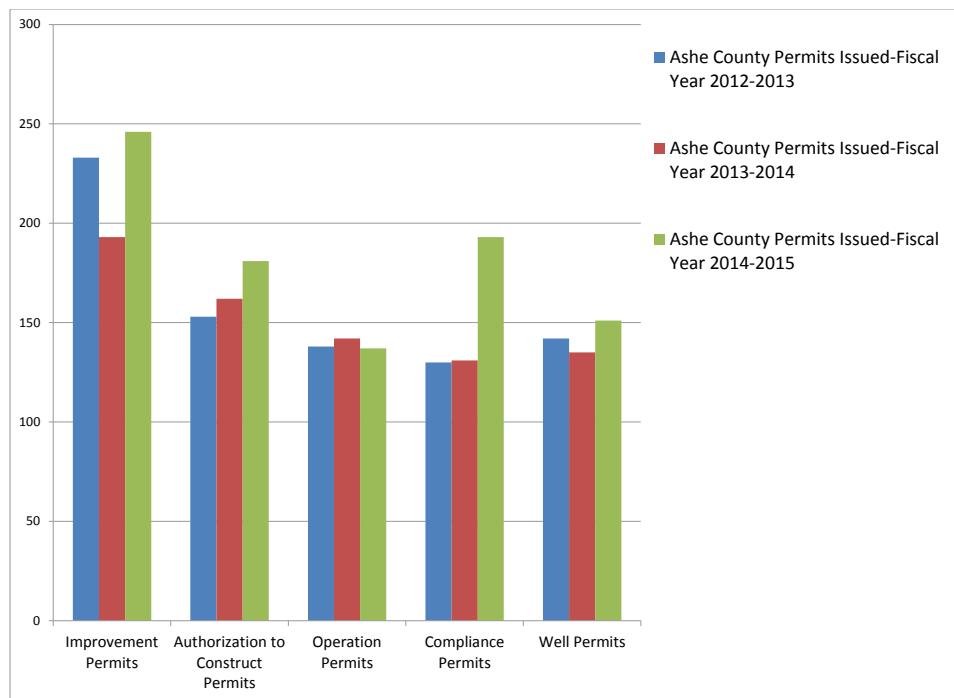
The Environmental Health Section of the North Carolina Division of Public Health provides technical guidance and delegation of authority to the Appalachian District's Environmental Health staff.

### Allegany County



# Well and Septic Permitting

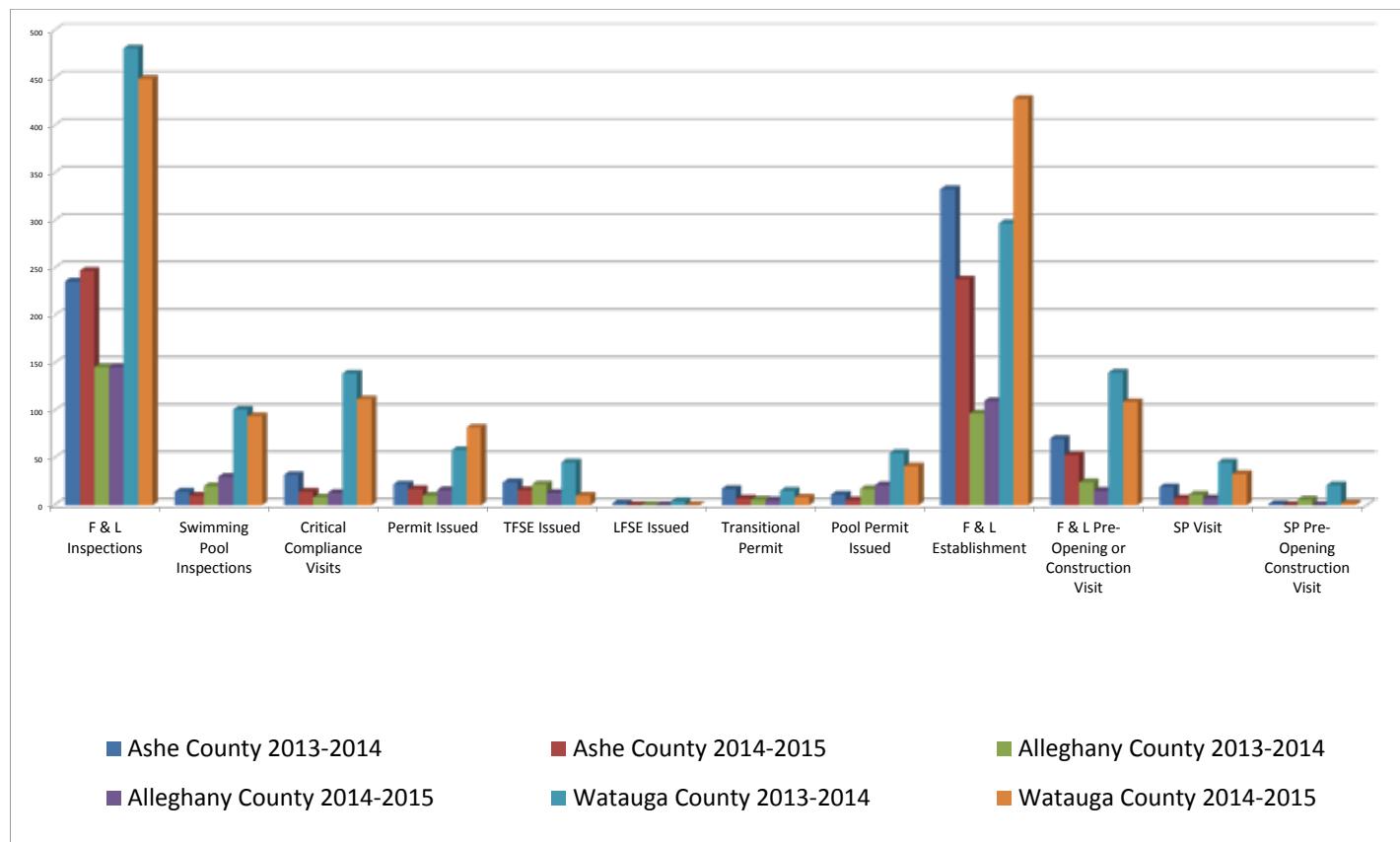
## Ashe County



## Watauga County

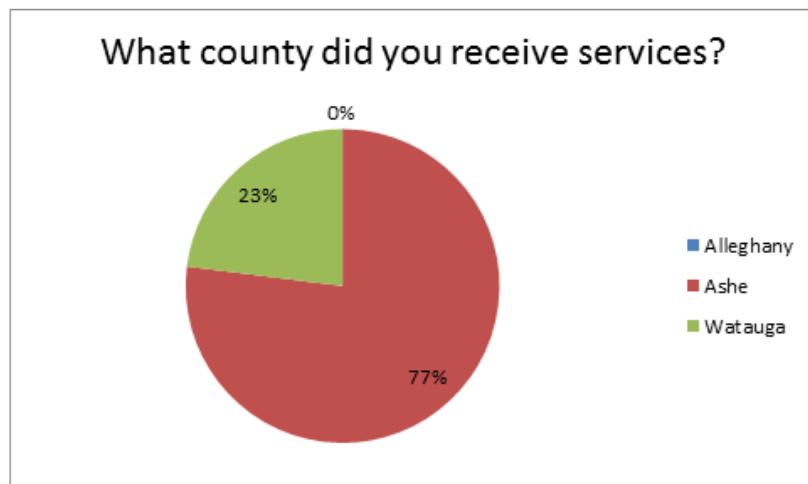


# Food and Lodging Permitting

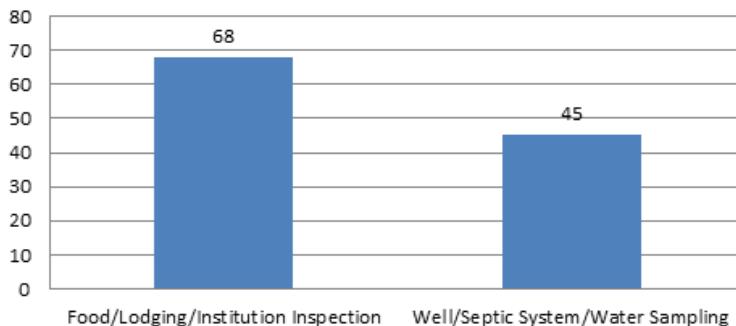


# Environmental Health Data

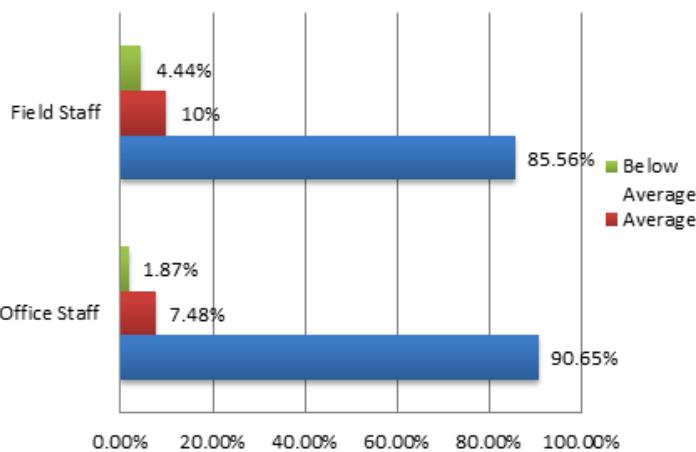
The EH customer satisfaction online survey began in April 2013. Since then, we have received 113 surveys; of those, 68 were from food and lodging and 45 were from spetic and well permits.



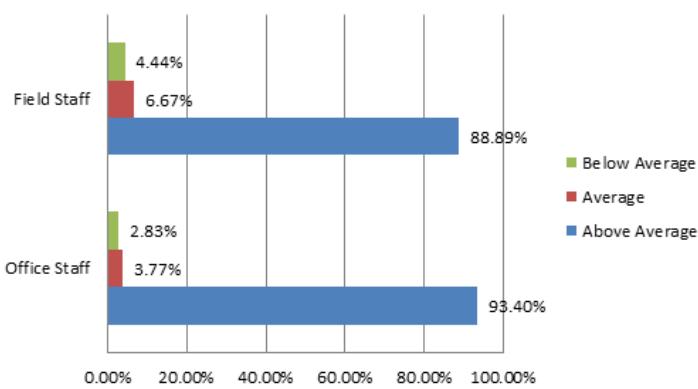
### What program area did you receive service in?



### How would you rate staff promptness and response time?



### How would you rate the professionalism and courtesy of our staff?



### Customer Quotes

**"Laurie Phillips and Andy Blethen are both an asset to the community in their efforts to be immediately responsive and in resolving matters."**

**"Laurie, in the permitting department. Her kind, patient manner and her expertise and knowledge in her field was greatly appreciated!"**

**"One of the staff went out of his way after hours, on a Friday, to help us resolve a septic issue on site. He is always extremely helpful and courteous to me, my staff, and sub contractors. I hope that you pay him well enough to be sure that he stays at ADHD for a long time!"**

**" My experience with the Environmental Health staff at ADHD has always been positive. Jeff Barefoot and Aaron Winters are outstanding, and the office staff is knowledgeable and helpful. Keep up the good work."**

**"I would like to express my appreciation for the work your staff did helping me process two requests for health department assistance. Your staff was uniformly helpful and professional. First, Tanya, your receptionist and the first individual an applicants meets did an excellent job explaining the forms and helping me complete them. Second, Aaron Winters, the officer I dealt with, was very helpful and responsive. He was patient with someone who had little prior experience with the permitting process. I also had a chance to observe that he worked very long hours but none the less always returned my calls and carefully explained the procedures to me. He is an excellent health professional. Finally, your intern, Jon Swaim, helped at several of the inspections. I think he will be a fine addition to your staff. Thanks again."**

# Alleghany County

The status of health in Alleghany County is one of community importance since health affects the community in so many ways. Appalachian District Health Department staff, in partnership with the Alleghany Health Advisory Council and Alleghany Memorial Hospital, led the efforts to understand the community health needs in a comprehensive way during the past year.

## **Chronic diseases that claim most lives and cause the most illness call for prevention**

The leading cause of death in the county is heart disease, followed by a close second in cancer, with most cancer deaths attributed to lung cancer. If all leading causes of death for the county are combined, over 60% are due to preventable chronic disease. This is important since we know that 3 primary risk factors: poor nutrition, lack of physical activity, and tobacco use are linked to them.

## **Health priorities selected**

Health priorities were selected by the Alleghany Health Advisory Council in February, 2015 as described in methods section. These priorities are not all-inclusive, but highlight priority areas this group will be working to better understand and develop community improvement efforts to improve upon them. However, other key areas highlighted in this report will be reviewed as well to make sure all groups working to support health have the ability to also engage.

## **Substance Use and Abuse**

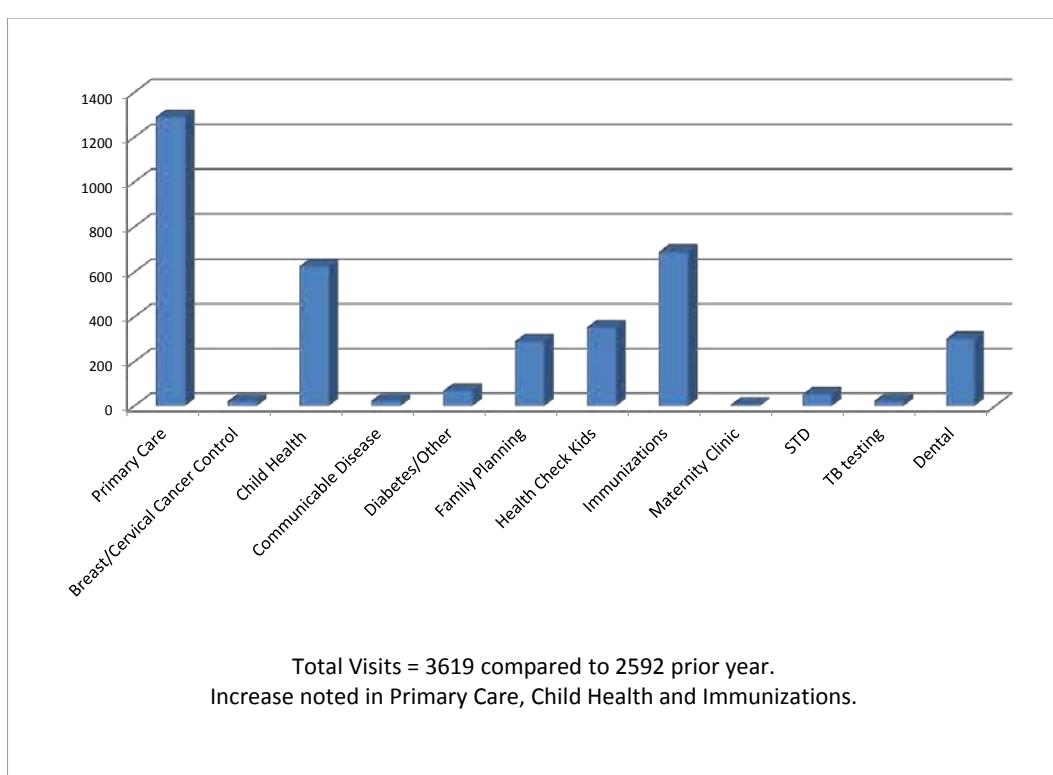
Drugs, alcohol, and tobacco; including misuse or abuse of prescription drugs and use of e-cigarettes or other devices for nicotine delivery

## **Physical activity and nutrition**

Access to physical activity or recreation, accessing healthy foods, and making healthy choices for eating healthy and making physical activity easier for all

## **Chronic Disease Management and Awareness**

Obesity, Heart disease, chronic lower respiratory disease/COPD, stroke, cancer, diabetes, and hypertension



**Alleghany Clinic Visits**

# Ashe County

The status of health in Ashe County is one of community importance since health affects the community in so many ways. Appalachian District Health Department staff, in partnership with the Ashe Health Alliance and Ashe Memorial Hospital, led the efforts to understand the community health needs in a comprehensive way during the past year.

## **Chronic diseases that claim most lives and cause the most illness call for prevention**

The leading cause of death in the county is heart disease, followed by a close second in cancer, with most cancer deaths attributed to lung cancer. If all leading causes of death for the county are combined, over 60% are due to preventable chronic disease. This is important since we know that 3 primary risk factors: poor nutrition, lack of physical activity, and tobacco use are linked to them.

## **Health priorities selected**

Health priorities were selected by the Ashe Health Alliance in February, 2015 as described in methods section. These priorities are not all-inclusive, but highlight priority areas this group will be working to better understand and develop community improvement efforts to improve upon them. However, other key areas highlighted in this report will be reviewed as well to make sure all groups working to support health have the ability to also engage.

## **Substance Use and Abuse**

Drugs, alcohol, and tobacco; including misuse or abuse of prescription drugs and use of e-cigarettes or other devices for nicotine delivery.

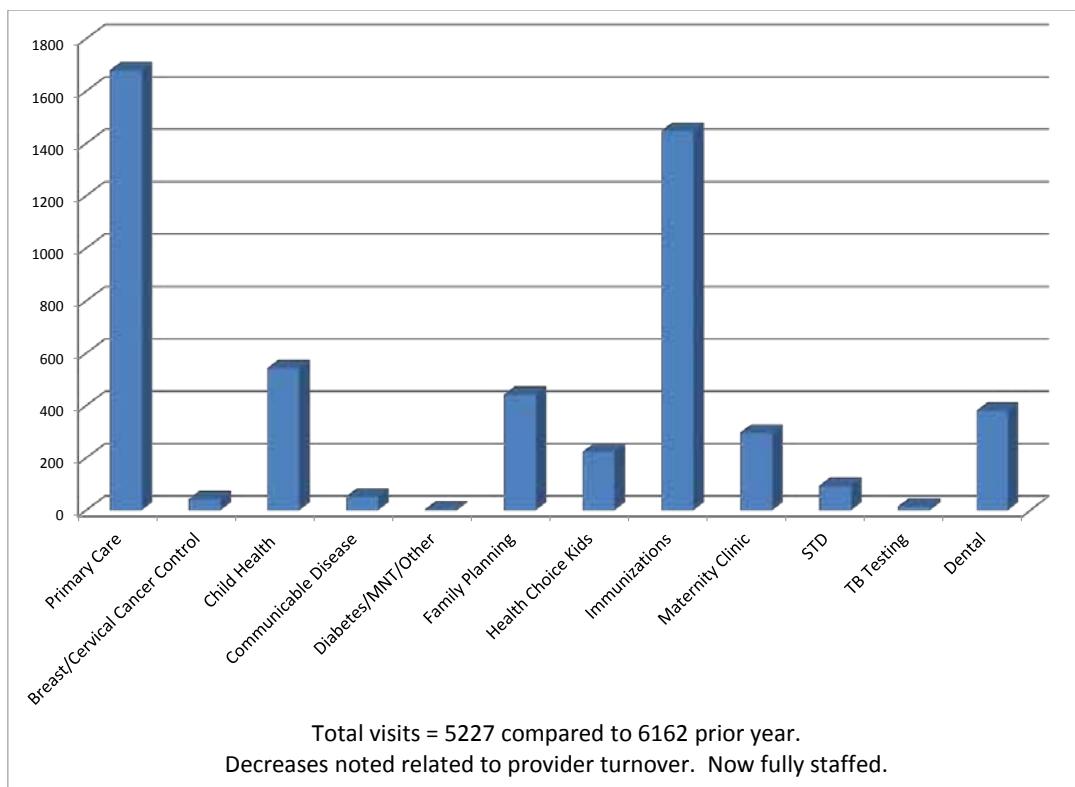
## **Physical activity and nutrition**

Access to physical activity or recreation, accessing healthy foods, and making healthy choices for eating healthy and making physical activity easier for all

## **Chronic Disease Management and Awareness**

Obesity, Heart disease, chronic lower respiratory disease/COPD, stroke, cancer, diabetes, and hypertension

## Ashe Clinic Visits



# Watauga County

The status of health in Watauga County is one of community importance since health affects the community in so many ways. Appalachian District Health Department staff, in partnership with the High Country Visioning Council, Western Youth Network, and Appalachian Regional Healthcare System, led the efforts to understand the community health needs in a comprehensive way during the past year.

## Chronic diseases that claim most lives and cause the most illness call for prevention

The leading cause of death in the county is heart disease, followed by a close second in cancer, with most cancer deaths attributed to lung cancer. Among cancers, lung cancer is the leading type for new cases and deaths and chronic lower respiratory disease/COPD is the 3rd leading cause of death. If all causes of death for the county are combined, 62% are due to preventable chronic disease. . This is important since we know that 3 primary risk factors: poor nutrition, lack of physical activity, and tobacco use are linked to them.

## Health priorities selected

Health priorities were selected by the Health Vision Council in February, 2015 as described in methods section. These priorities are not all-inclusive, but highlight priority areas this group will be working to better understand and develop community improvement efforts to improve upon them. However, other key areas highlighted in this report will be reviewed as well to make sure all groups working to support health have the ability to also engage.

## Substance Use and Abuse

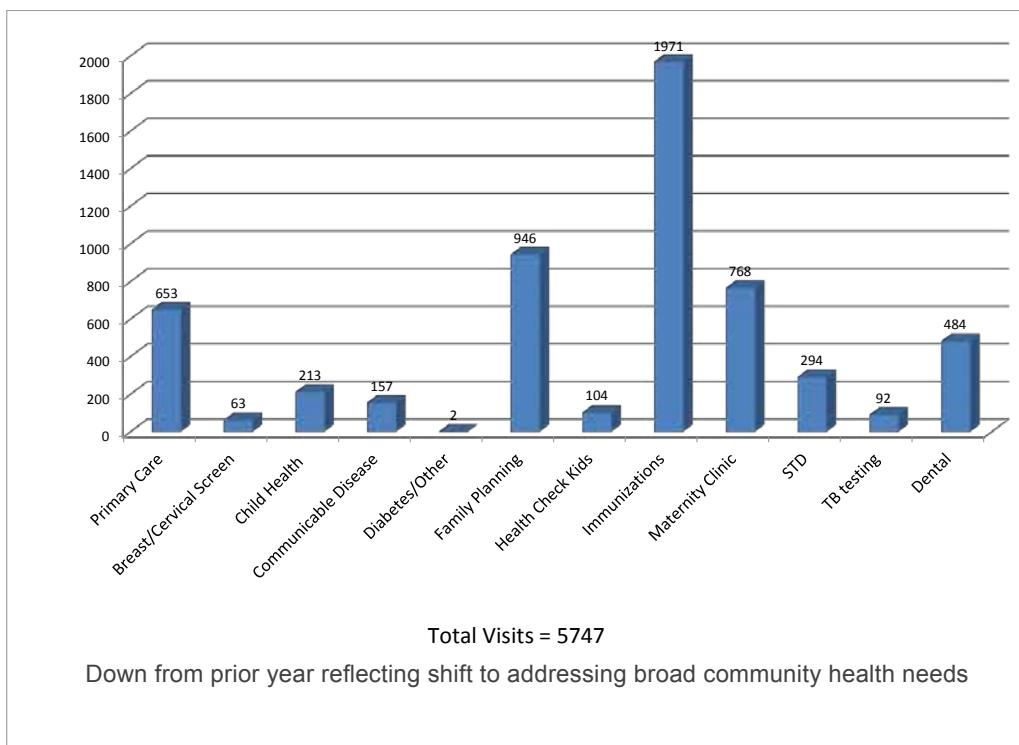
Drugs, alcohol, and tobacco; including misuse or abuse of prescription drugs and use of e-cigarettes or other devices for nicotine delivery

## Physical activity and nutrition

Access to physical activity or recreation, accessing healthy foods, and making healthy choices for eating healthy and making physical activity easier for all

## Chronic Disease Management and Awareness

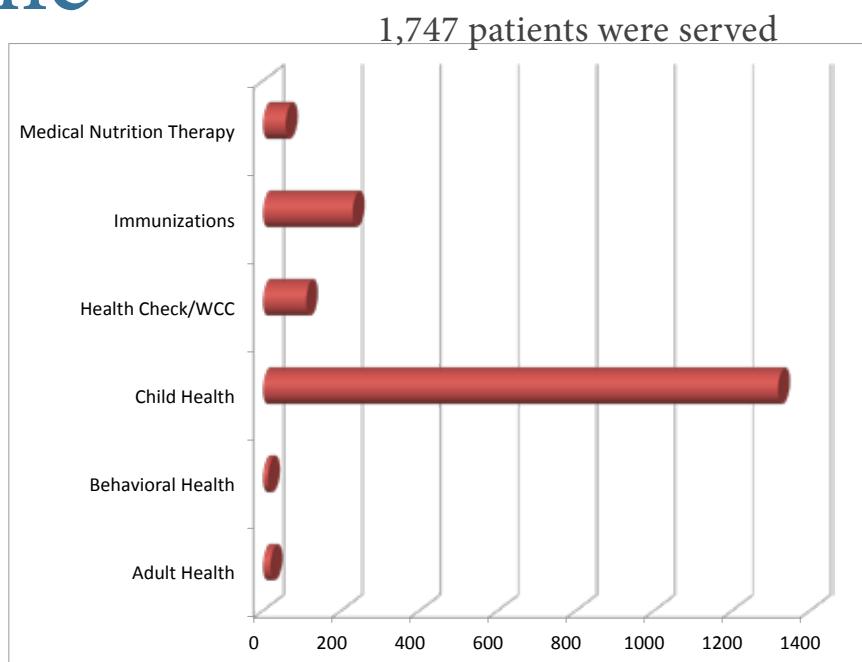
Obesity, Heart disease, chronic lower respiratory disease/COPD, stroke, cancer, diabetes, and hypertension



Watauga Clinic Visits

# Top-Dog Clinic

School based health centers are considered one of the most effective strategies for delivering preventive care, including mental health services, to adolescents – a population long considered difficult to reach. Top Dog Clinic is a school based health center located at the Ashe County Middle School. It is one of only 52 school based clinics in the state.



## Clinic Customer Satisfaction Surveys

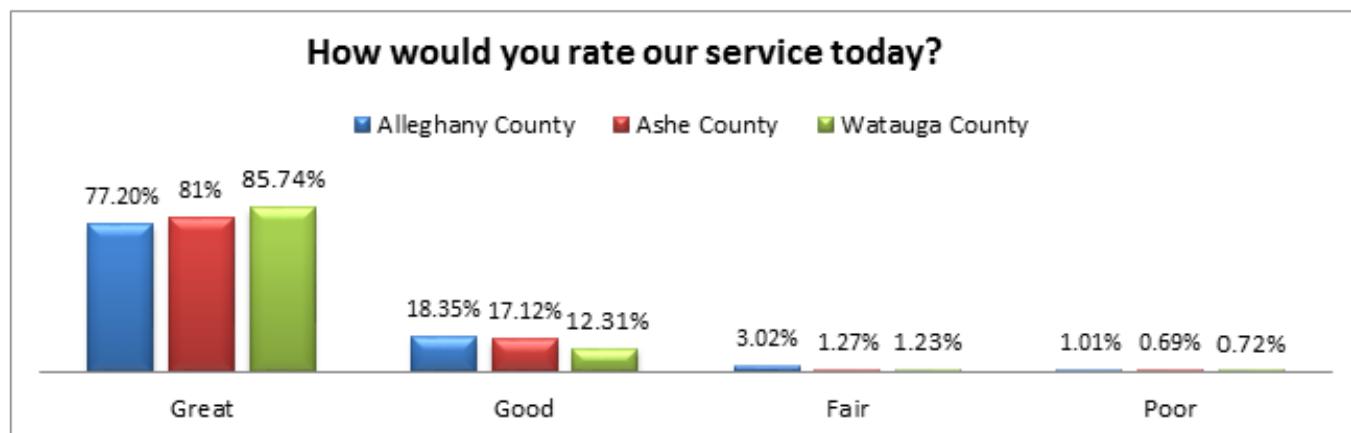
In October 2013, ADHD implemented customer satisfaction surveys to assess services offered. In clinics, iPads were incorporated at check-out in each Health Department for patients to complete. The survey is a total of 9 questions and a Spanish survey is also available that assesses the following areas:

- Reason for visit
- Length of visit
- Rating of services received
- Recognition of staff
- Recommendation of services received to others
- Hours of operation
- Suggestions for improvement

Since 2013, the District has received a total of 3,562 surveys from clinic and WIC services: 1,970 in Ashe, 1,022 in Watauga, and 570 in Alleghany.

Below are the responses for two questions on the survey for clinic: rating of service and recommendation of services to others.

## Clinic Customer Satisfaction Data





## [www.apphealth.com](http://www.apphealth.com)

### Alleghany Health Dept

157 Health Services Rd  
P.O. Box 309  
Sparta, NC 28675

Clinic / Environmental Health:  
(336) 372-5641  
Fax: (336) 372-7793

Business Office:  
(336) 372-8813

WIC / Nutrition  
(336) 372-5644

### Ashe Health Dept

413 McConnell St  
Jefferson, NC 28640

Clinic:  
(336) 246-9449

WIC / Nutrition:  
(336) 246-2013  
Fax: (336) 246-8163

Environmental Health:  
316 Cherry Drive  
P.O. Box 208  
Jefferson, N.C. 28640

(336) 246-3356  
Fax: (336) 846-1039

### Watauga Health Dept

126 Poplar Grove Connector  
Boone, N.C. 28607

Clinic :  
(828) 264-6635  
Fax: (828) 265-3101

Environmental Health:  
(828) 264-4995  
Fax: (828) 264-4997

WIC / Nutrition:  
(828) 264-6641

Top Dog Clinic  
Ashe Middle School  
255 Northwest Lane  
P.O. Box 178  
Warrensille, NC 28643

(336) 384-1625  
Fax: (336) 384-1626