



## HEALTH FOR ALL: PROMOTE. PREVENT. EMPOWER.



# Appalachian District Health Department

## ANNUAL REPORT 2012 –2013

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Letter from Ken Richardson, Appalachian District Board Chair:

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 16% of total funding from county allocations to the District health budget. Governance of Appalachian District Health Department is through the Board of Health. 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 Judy Poe, 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, agendas and minutes can be found at <http://www.apphealth.com/about-us/board-of-health/>.

Greetings,

I have been the Local Health Director with the Appalachian District Health Department for two years now, working with a great team to improve the public's health in Alleghany, Ashe and Watauga Counties. We strive to promote safe and healthy living, prevent disease and protect the environment through education and the provision of the essential services of public health. We provide full service health departments in each county – including health care services for all ages, women's health services, communicable disease tracking, trending and treatment, immunizations, environmental health inspections and permitting and emergency preparedness. 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 health services, please don't hesitate to call any one of our health departments for assistance.

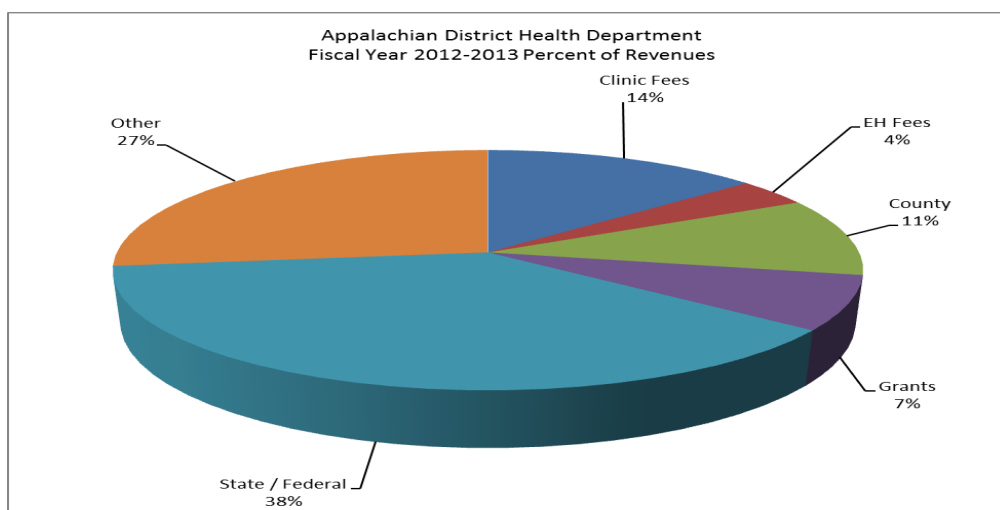
The NC Association of Local Health Directors recently adopted five specific goals from Healthy North Carolina 2020 objectives. The table can be found at [www.apphealth.com](http://www.apphealth.com) and demonstrates the alignment of our District's top health initiatives developed from our Community Health Needs Assessment with NC 2020 goals for local health departments.

For details around individual strategies for each county, please contact me at [beth.lovette@apphealth.com](mailto:beth.lovette@apphealth.com). Or visit our website at [www.apphealth.com](http://www.apphealth.com).

Yours in good health,

**Beth**

Beth Lovette, RN, MPH, Health Director





## ACHIEVING TARGETED IMPROVEMENTS IN HEALTH OUTCOMES

The Communities Putting Prevention to Work set the stage for the Appalachian District community to lead efforts with the Community Transformation Grant Project, a five year Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Grant, in partnership with the NC Region 3 health departments and Appalachian Partners in Public Health. This initiative serves the Appalachian District plus Wilkes, Yadkin, Stokes, Surry, Forsyth, Davie, and Davidson Counties. The Community Transformation Grant Project FY 12-13 accomplishments include:

### #1 TOBACCO FREE LIVING

Development of a regional tobacco prevention and control plan, including support for landlords of private, affordable housing, and the Northwest Regional Housing Authority in creating smoke-free multi-unit housing over the next several months while offering resources for individuals to quit tobacco use. To learn more about resources or projects like this across NC, go to [www.smokefreehousingnc.com](http://www.smokefreehousingnc.com)

#### **Tobacco prevention and control**

Tobacco use is still the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. To be most effective in reversing diseases caused by tobacco use, Appalachian District has partnered with Wilkes and Caldwell Counties with the Northwest Tobacco Prevention Coalition to help prevent youth from initiating smoking, protect individuals from harmful secondhand smoke, and provide resources to individuals, clinicians, business owners, and others interested in supporting those who want to quit. In 2012-13, the Northwest Tobacco Prevention Coalition, in partnership with the Region 3 counties, made the following accomplishments

- 8 youth groups received mini-grants to be peer spokespersons in their school and community to prevent youth from smoking and promote smoke-free opportunities in the community

The Fiscal Year 2012-2013 brought Appalachian District Health Department the opportunity for a Youth Tobacco Prevention Grant, allowing for continued efforts in decreasing youth initiation through creating and sustaining TRU clubs.

A region wide training was held at The Vineyard in Stokes County North Carolina. Approximately 80 students from seven schools across the region attended the training. They did YES! Advocacy training for half the day, the other half they did team building activities. The training conducted by YES! was aimed toward policy and advocacy.

Davidson and Forsyth County combined to do their own youth training at Thomasville High School in Davidson County.

The Oakwoods Country Club located in Wilkesboro, decided to implement a smoke-free indoors policy. The NC Quitline was advertised through various forms of media (internet, newspaper, TV, billboards, radio) in an effort to reach more individuals who want to quit. Learn more at [www.quitlinenc.com](http://www.quitlinenc.com)

### #2 OBESITY PREVENTION

In 2012-13, Appalachian District continued to make great strides. Strong partnerships and opportunities were provided by the Communities Putting Prevention to Work grant. Accomplishments included:

- The Take Step Two campaign, to invite the community to take charge by taking the next step at [www.takesteptwo.com](http://www.takesteptwo.com)

- 31 childcare centers adopting new or revised policies to enhance nutrition and/or physical activity

- 3 school districts increased resources for promoting healthy, active lifestyles among students and staff

- Multiple healthy eating supports such as community gardens at schools, senior centers, and multi-unit housing communities

- Support and outreach to those most in need, such as expansion of Ashe Outreach Ministries and initiation of a healthy living initiative at the Hospitality House of Boone, and cooking supplies for the F.A.R.M. Café in Boone.

- Support and funding to all three counties' Farmer's Markets to increase marketing opportunities to promote healthy eating as well as customer-centered acceptance of SNAP-EBT and WIC farmer's market vouchers

- Serving as grant holder and developing partnerships with Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture and Heifer International to be a founding partner of Blue Ridge Seeds of Change. Find out more at <http://www.blueridgeseedsofchange.org/>

- Partnerships within the region to increase active living and support our economy including:

- Sparta, West Jefferson, and Boone** all adopting complete streets resolutions to support the consideration of all infrastructures for safe use of roadways by all users including pedestrians, cyclists, and bus riders when possible

- Town of **Sparta** to develop a streetscape plan to increase safe, active pedestrian activity downtown

- Town of **West Jefferson** implemented a redesigned streetscape to provide safe, active pedestrian activity downtown

- Watauga County Tourism Development Authority** placed prime signage to promote the Rocky Knob Bike Park

- High Country Pathways** completed design to open the first link of the Middle Fork Greenway

### #3 ACTIVE LIVING

CTG (partnered with Appalachian Partners in Public Health) has contracted with Destination by Design to conduct a regional built environment assessment. Through this process, the regional collaborative and community partners identified projects for each individual county. Alleghany County identified the Alleghany Wellness Center to create a site Master Plan. Ashe County identified Beaver Creek Trail Master Plan and Watauga County identified Middle Fork Greenway as top priorities. To see the *Health by Design Region 3 Master Plan*, go to [http://issuu.com/dbdplanning/docs/health\\_by\\_design?e=0/4503531](http://issuu.com/dbdplanning/docs/health_by_design?e=0/4503531)

#### #4 HEALTHY EATING

- Supporting 5 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Programs to increase availability/promotion of healthy eating.
- Provided tables, tents, and signage for the Lansing Farmers' Market.
- Conducted cooking demos at local markets with Blue Ridge Seeds of Change, Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture and the Children's Playhouse in Watauga County.
- Conducted trainings w/Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) for farmers and market managers to increase availability and promotion of healthy eating.

#### #5 OVERALL

Development of a regional collaborative. To date, the collaborative has met in December and June bringing in community partners from various sectors such as: planning, parks and recreation, school nurses, farmers and multi-unit housing property owners to discuss CTG strategies and recognize community partners for their efforts.

Dissemination of a regional media campaign highlighting local farmer's markets, smoke-free housing, and Community Transformation Grant Project efforts at [www.nwtransformationproject.org](http://www.nwtransformationproject.org)

### Fostering a Positive Customer-Focused Culture

Appalachian District Health Department is making strides to ensure that our clients receive the best experience possible, whether they are bringing their children in for immunizations or applying for a septic permit, we want them to be satisfied with our services.

During the past year, ADHD has implemented a selection of surveys to assess the client experience. First, a client satisfaction survey was put into operation in the clinics. This survey allows our clients the opportunity to provide feedback on whether or not our staff were friendly and respectful; delivered timely service; if our hours of operation met their needs; if they would recommend our services to others; etc. The survey results are driving us to change the way we do business, from ensuring a smiling face at check in to figuring out how to decrease wait times. Next, a client satisfaction survey was implemented in the Environmental Health Offices, and placed on our website. This survey allows building contractors, realtors, restaurant owners and community members to provide feedback on how we can continually improve our services. The Environmental Health Advisory Committee was created to evaluate all aspects of the water protection permitting process. The committee, with representation from both private and public sectors, worked to improve the quality and efficiency of the water protection permitting process. Additionally, EH Staff have instituted new Quality Assurance Plans for both water protection and food/lodging sections which include internal review of permits/inspection reports and staff performance as well as yearly evaluation of the programs by the state. Finally, EH staff are striving to improve communication with stakeholders by providing education classes and monthly reports outlining permitting, fee collection and permit turn-around times to realtors, local home building associations and food service staff. Last, a community survey was conducted to determine if there are any gaps in services in the community and to assess how the health department is doing as a whole. Suggestions from the community included: expanding dental health services, hiring an interpreter, offering some late clinics, and for us to continue to support promotion of local foods program with community partners. Appalachian District Health Department is continuously looking for ways to improve operations and is using input from customers and the community to guide those improvements. Our aim is to assess the effectiveness of our services, improve health outcomes, and provide accountability to elected officials and the public.

### HEALTHY YOUTH

*Health by Design Region 3 Master Plan. Health by Design Region 3 Master Plan.* **Positive Parenting Program:**

#### **Supporting positive outcomes for youth with Triple P**

In 2012, Appalachian District began working toward community supports for positive parenting in recognition of data received in the 2011 Community Health Assessment. As a recipient of a NC Division of Public Health grant, Appalachian District has begun providing supports for positive parenting in partnership with Smart Start Partnerships and other key community partners. Triple P is an evidence-based program that has been shown to decrease substantiated cases of child maltreatment and abuse. The program provides easy to use information and tips that everyone working with families can use to help parents respond to challenging parenting situations and build positive relationships with their children. In 2012-13, 31 community providers achieved Accreditation status as Triple P Practitioners. They will be using this to provide support and tools in partnership with parents as they build on strengths. Collaboration with Ashe Partnership for Children and The Children's Council in Watauga County has provided groundwork for the development of a district-wide steering committee. In the upcoming year, the group will be increasing its capacity through training of additional practitioners and increasing public awareness so parents know how to access the services within their community. A chief priority for the 2013-14 year will be launching the program in Alleghany County in collaboration with community partners and the Alleghany Partnership for Children.

#### **Substance abuse prevention for youth**

In 2012-13, Appalachian District Health Department continued partnership with the Watauga Substance Abuse Prevention collaborative group. One prime way this group has been involved includes review of current data with community leaders and partners. In 2012, Appalachian District Health Department provided guidance and support to Watauga County Schools and Watauga Substance Abuse Prevention in their utilization of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. These reports provide key baseline data which may be tracked over time to focus efforts for successful outcomes that support healthy living and positive academic outcomes among high school youth. Find out more at: <https://www.facebook.com/WataugaSAP>

#### **Prescription Medication Abuse Prevention**

Appalachian District Health Department is a partner with the Project Lazarus coalition, led by Rachel Florence with High Country Community Health. The coalition has worked across community sectors to support the awareness for prevention of prescription drug abuse. Drop boxes have also been placed in the community to

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## COMMUNICABLE DISEASE REPORT 2012\*

\*The complete report can be viewed At [www.apphealth.com](http://www.apphealth.com)

### NEW: Electronic Medical Records

When you visit the health department clinic, you might be surprised that the nurse is no longer documenting on a paper chart but instead is using a small computer tablet. Public Health has gone high-tech! In an effort to maximize efficiencies and improve the quality of patient care, Appalachian District Health Department implemented "Patagonia Health", a new Electronic Medical Record (EMR) in all three local health departments. Patagonia Health is a Meaningful Use Certified EMR, which means the health departments receive federal incentives for each provider using the system. There are specific public health applications within the EMR that keep us in compliance with state and federal programs. The integration of Patagonia Health EMR has led to opportunities for quality improvement. EMRs can help improve health care quality, efficiency, and safety in the following ways:

- \*Quick access to patient records for more coordinated, efficient care
- \*Enhanced decision support, clinical alerts, reminders, and medical information
- \*Legible, complete documentation that facilitates accurate coding and billing
- \*Safer, more reliable prescribing
- \*Reduced need to fill out the same forms at each office visit
- \*Reliable point-of-care information and reminders notifying providers of important health interventions
- \*Convenience of e-prescriptions electronically sent to pharmacy

DISEASE	ALLEGHANY CASES 2012	ASHE CASES 2012	WATAUGA CASES 2012	DISTRICT TOTAL PER DISEASE 2012
Chlamydia	19	23	107	149
E.coli-shiga toxin producing	0	1	0	1
Gonorrhea	0	108	8	9
Haemophilus Influenza	0	0	1	1
Hepatitis A	0	0	1	1
Hepatitis B-Acute	0	0	0	0
Hepatitis B-Chronic	0	0	3	3
Lyme Disease	1	1	4	6
Meningitis-disease	0	0	1	1
Non-gonococcal urethritis	0	0	1	1
Pertussis	1	7	0	8
Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever	0	1	2	3
Salmonellosis	1	5	5	11
Syphilis	0	0	0	0
Tuberculosis	1	0	0	1

Each county Communicable Disease nurse works closely with county Animal Control to quickly identify potential rabies exposures and to recommend the appropriate course of treatment. The Communicable Disease nurse investigates each report of an animal bite or bat exposure to determine if there is a true potential for an exposure to rabies. The following shows rabies statistics for the calendar year 2012.

RABIES STATISTICS 2012	Alleghany	Ashe	Watauga	District Totals
Number of bite/exposure reports	12	49	99	160
Number of animals that tested positive from those reported	2	1	3	6
Number of persons for whom Post-Exposure Rabies Therapy was recommended	3	3	22	28

### FOOD & LODGING ACTIVITIES

COUNTY	Inspections	Compliance Visits	Food, Lodging, Pool Permits	Consultative Site Visits
Ashe	194	12	54	389
Alleghany	199	12	39	156
Watauga	593	55	223	460
District Totals	986	79	316	1005

### WATER PROTECTION UPDATE

COUNTY	Permits Issued	Avg days to first visit	Avg days to issuance
Ashe	796	11	16
Alleghany	397	4	8
Watauga	910	13	19
District Totals	2103	9	14

Visit our website at [www.apphealth.com](http://www.apphealth.com)