



WHO WE ARE: Catawba County Health Partners is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that fosters coalitions aimed at improving priority health issues in Catawba County. Priority health issues are selected by the community every four years in conjunction with the Catawba County Community Health Assessment.

COALITIONS/PRIORITY HEALTH ISSUES:

- **Access to Care** – Improving access to healthcare
- **A.S.A.P. (Alcohol & Substance Abuse Prevention) of Catawba County** – Preventing underage drinking
- **Cancer Task Force** – Promoting prostate and colorectal cancer screenings among at-risk populations
- **Eat Smart Move More Catawba County** – Preventing childhood obesity

MEMBERSHIP: Health Partners is comprised of more than 120 volunteer members representing 54 community partners (such as hospital employees, human resource managers, school staff, nonprofit directors, civic leaders, law enforcement, university and college professionals, and many others).

WHAT WE DO: Health Partners coalitions develop and implement behavior, policy, systems and environmental change strategies to prevent disease and promote health in Catawba County. Following are examples of some of the initiatives currently in place:

- The **Eat Smart Move More Catawba County** Healthy Schools Recognition Program is currently working with 17 schools to help them meet state nutrition and physical activity standards and reduce childhood obesity. The coalition is also implementing a national grant initiative to establish policy and environmental changes that promote physical activity and nutrition in Catawba County.
- **A.S.A.P.** works to prevent permissive attitudes that enable underage drinking and routinely conducts Alcohol Purchase Surveys with local merchants to help prevent the sale of alcohol to minors. The coalition's Youth Action Team frequently makes presentations to parent and neighborhood groups about underage drinking from a teen perspective.
- The **Cancer Task Force** promotes screening of prostate and colorectal cancers – two cancers that can be successfully impacted by early detection – by educating at-risk populations about the importance of cancer screening. The coalition presents educational forums at churches and other gatherings and actively promotes existing cancer screenings in the community.
- **Access to Care** established MACC (Medical Access Catawba County) to provide chronic disease management for low-income and uninsured populations through Greater Hickory Cooperative Christian Ministry. It is currently assessing the impact of healthcare reform on Catawba County.

MANAGEMENT: Health Partners is managed by Catawba County Public Health, which serves as the nonprofit's fiscal agent and provides significant in-kind support in the form of personnel and facilities. The organization is overseen by a Board of Directors representing the medical, educational, financial and business sectors of the community.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: www.catawbacountyhealthpartners.org

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UNDERSTANDING CATAWBA COUNTY'S PRIORITY HEALTH ISSUES: Every four years, Catawba County Public Health engages the community to research and prioritize health issues in Catawba County. With community input, priority health issues are selected and addressed by Catawba County Health Partners coalitions. Priorities are determined in part by the severity of the issues and a lack of community assets.

WHY ACCESS TO CARE?

- 19.1% of the Catawba County non-elderly population (under age 65) is uninsured. This represents 26,168 non-elderly persons in the county, or 16.4% of the total county population.
- In Catawba County, the percentage of people below the poverty level increased by 77%, from 9.1 ($n = 12,688$) in 2000 to 14.3 ($n = 22,457$) in 2009.
- In 2009, 16.2% of adults surveyed in Catawba County reported that they needed to see a doctor in the past 12 months but could not. In 2010, 82.3% reported that finances are the main reason.
- Current unemployment rate in Catawba County is 11.4%, as compared to 9.5% for the state.

WHY CANCER?

- Cancer has long been the #1 cause of death in Catawba County.
- In 2011, cancer became the leading cause of death in North Carolina (bumping heart disease to #2).
- For many cancers, early detection has been shown to improve survival rates.

Why Colorectal Cancer?

- Colorectal cancer death rates among all populations in Catawba County – men, women, whites and minorities – are significantly higher than state and national averages
- If found early, the five-year survival rate for colorectal cancer is over 90%; currently, only 39% of these cancers are found at this stage.

Why Prostate Cancer?

- Although the data is somewhat unstable, prostate death rates for minority men are trending much higher than those for white men in Catawba County.
- The lifetime risk of developing prostate cancer is 1 in 6 for white men and 1 in 4 for black men.

WHY CHILDHOOD OBESITY?

- More than one-third (38%) of the children in Catawba County ages 2-18 are overweight or obese.
- In 2007, this number was 23.8% for children ages 2-20 – less than one quarter of the child population.
- Childhood obesity can cause health issues for children, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and early onset type 2 diabetes.
- Children who are overweight or obese are more likely to become overweight or obese adults.
- Obesity is a risk factor for chronic, debilitating and fatal diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes.

WHY UNDERAGE DRINKING?

- 13.3 years is the average age kids in Catawba County begin drinking.
- 43.5% of Catawba County middle and high school students reported using alcohol in the past year.
- 43% of Catawba County youth report that alcohol is easily available.
- 27% of Catawba County adults think it's acceptable for underage persons to drink "sometimes".
- Routine alcohol purchase surveys show that up to one-third of merchants would sell to minors.

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