

**CHATHAM COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA:
A COMMUNITY DIAGNOSIS
INCLUDING SECONDARY AND QUALITATIVE
DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

Final Document

May 8, 2000

Chatham County Community Diagnosis Team

Anne Downs
Stevenson Fergus
Yvonne Gagnon
Geeta George
Courtney Griffiths
Jamie Newman

Preceptors

Vanessa F. Jeffries, MEd, and Andrea Hickle, MPH
Chatham County Health Department

Field Coordinator

Sandra Crouse Quinn, PhD

Completed during 1999-2000

In partial fulfillment of requirements for HBHE 240 and 241

Department of Health Behavior and Health Education
School of Public Health
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the other members of the Chatham County community diagnosis team: our preceptors, Andrea Hickle and Vanessa Jeffries of the Chatham County Health Department; Mary MacDowell and Wayne Sherman, also from the Chatham County Health Department; Kay Hunt, Beth Gillespie, and Jim Brown of the United Way of Chatham County; and Jackie Ring of Chatham Hospital. Without the collaboration of these team members, this diagnosis would not have been possible. Additional thanks to our professor, Dr. Sandra Crouse Quinn, and our teaching assistants, Yalonda Lewis and Adam Buchanan for their helpful support in this process. And lastly, thanks also to the many residents of Chatham County who so warmly welcomed us into their community.

TABLE of CONTENTS

LIST of TABLES and FIGURES	iv
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
METHODOLOGY	7
CHATHAM COUNTY COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION	
Introduction.....	12
Geography.....	13
History.....	14
Economics.....	15
Recent Social Changes.....	17
Latino Immigration.....	17
Growing Development.....	18
Conclusion	19
CHATHAM COUNTY COMMUNITY PROFILE	
Introduction.....	20
Limitations of Secondary Data	20
Demographics	21
Economic Status.....	23
Educational Status.....	25
Conclusion	26
CHATHAM COUNTY COMMUNITY RESOURCES and ASSETS	28
CHATHAM COUNTY HEALTH INDICATORS	
Introduction.....	32
Mortality	32
Morbidity	36
Health Services in the Community	38
Social Health and Quality of Life Indicators	42
Governmental Body Responsible for Health	44
Environmental Health Issues with Political Repercussions.....	45
Other Health Issues with Political Repercussions	47
Conclusion	48
MAJOR THEMES and ISSUES	
Introduction.....	50
Racial and Ethnic Diversity	51
Growth of the Latino Population	54
Growth in North Chatham	58

Economic Development.....	59
Housing.....	63
Water and Sewer.....	65
Transportation.....	67
Day Care.....	70
Recreation.....	71
Education.....	75
Health.....	79
Substance Abuse.....	82
Communication.....	84
 DISCUSSION and RECOMMENDATIONS.....	 86
 REFERENCES.....	 92
 APPENDICES	
Appendix A: Interview and focus group guides	
Service provider interview guide.....	A-2
Community member focus group guide.....	A-4
Community member focus group guide in Spanish.....	A-7
 Appendix B: List of focus groups and service provider interviews.....	 A-9
 Appendix C: Community forum report and materials	
Forum report.....	A-10
Flyer.....	A-14
Flyer in Spanish.....	A-15
Newspaper announcements.....	A-16
Presentation slides.....	A-17

LIST of TABLES and FIGURES

Table 1.	Largest Employers	16
Table 2.	Population by Age.....	21
Table 3.	Population Distribution by Race and Ethnicity	22
Table 4.	Public School Enrollment	22
Table 5.	Hispanic Births.....	22
Table 6.	Percentage of Home Ownership by Race and Ethnicity.....	23
Table 7.	Unemployment Rates by Race and Ethnicity	23
Table 8.	Per Capita Income by Race and Ethnicity	24
Table 9.	Percentage of Persons Below the Poverty Level by Race and Ethnicity	24
Figure 1.	Percent of Adults Age 25 or Older Who Have Completed at Least High School or GED	25
Table 10.	Percentage of Students at or Above Grade Level by Race and Ethnicity.....	26
Table 11.	Leading Causes of Mortality.....	33
Table 12.	Comparison of Cause Specific Mortality Rates to <i>Healthy Carolinians 2000</i> Objectives	34
Figure 2.	Auto Death Rates	34
Table 13.	Infant Death Rates.....	35
Table 14.	Leading Causes of Mortality by Gender and Race	35
Figure 3.	Homicide Related Mortality Rates for White and Minority Males	36
Table 15.	Leading Causes of Hospitalization	37
Table 16.	Specific Disease Rates	37
Figure 4.	Syphilis Rates.....	38
Table 17.	Communicable Disease Incidence	38

Table 18.	People Per Health Care Provider and Hospital Bed.....	39
Table 19.	Health Insurance Coverage.....	41
Table 20.	Barriers to Access to Health Care Services	41
Table 21.	Crime and Arrest Rates for Selected Crimes	43
Table 22.	New Home Construction, Average Cost Per Unit	44

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Chatham County Health Department, the United Way of Chatham County, Chatham Hospital, and six graduate students from the Department of Health Behavior and Health Education at the UNC School of Public Health collaborated to conduct this community diagnosis of Chatham County. The purpose of this community diagnosis was to learn about the health and quality of life concerns of people across the county, and the resources and strengths that exist in the county for dealing with those concerns. The community diagnosis process used primary and secondary data to discover and analyze both the concerns and strengths of the county.

Methodology

Secondary data was gathered from a variety of published sources. Main sources of secondary data included area newspapers, the Chatham County Economic Development Commission Report, the North Carolina Statistical Abstract, the U.S. Census, and the North Carolina Center for Health Statistics.

Primary data was gathered from focus groups and interviews with community members and service providers. The development of the interview and focus group guides, as well as the identification and recruitment of interview and focus group participants, was completed using a process of close collaboration between all members of the community assessment team. Interview and focus group guides comprised of open-ended questions were designed to facilitate discussion about thoughts and experiences of Chatham County residents and service providers. During a four-month period, the team conducted 18 focus groups and eight interviews with a total of 157 residents and/or service providers. One hundred of those participants were female and 57 were males. Eighty-nine participants were White (57%), 40 were African American (25%), and 28 were Latino (18%). Coding and data analysis began after completion of the focus

groups and interviews. After reading the interview and focus group notes, the team categorized comments from the interviews and focus groups into themes. All of the comments within each specific theme then were examined together to provide a complete picture of each issue.

Limitations of the Methodology

Because the 1990 U.S. Census provided much of the demographic information for the secondary data section, limitations exist in describing the recent population growth in northern Chatham and in the Latino community. Since focus group and interview participants were not recruited randomly, a limitation also exists in our primary data collection. While attempts were made to maximize representativeness of the Chatham County population by seeking residents from different parts of the county, and of various ethnicities, occupations, and socioeconomic statuses, it is unclear whether the participants were representative of the Chatham County population as a whole.

Findings

Please see the complete document for a substantive discussion of the issues of community assets, racial and ethnic diversity, growth of the Latino population, growth in North Chatham, economic development, housing, water and sewer, transportation, day care, recreation, education, health, substance abuse, and communication, as well as for a discussion of future recommendations. Findings regarding some of the most salient issues are highlighted below.

Community Assets

Chatham County is a community rich with both potential and currently used resources. Residents spoke with pride about their community, mentioning many of its strengths, such as the natural beauty of the county, the diversity among county residents, a neighborly attitude, collaboration between businesses and county agencies, and the numerous leaders of the county,

both formal and informal. Residents frequently cited the community's churches as sources of support. Finally, many residents felt that Chatham is strengthened by its active volunteerism, though some also often mentioned the need to sustain and further increase the volunteer efforts within the county.

Racial and Ethnic Diversity

Chatham County residents discussed both the benefits of and the challenges from the increasing racial diversity resulting from the growth of the Latino population. Community members spoke of the opportunities for learning and personal growth as a result of the increasing diversity. Also noted was the increase in interracial church and civic groups within the county. However, some in the county hold concerns about the growing Latino community, as evidenced by a recent anti-immigration demonstration in Siler City. A service provider suggested that the negative perceptions about the Latino community could be changed by community leaders demonstrating accepting attitudes. Moreover, another resident felt that the acknowledgement of Latino residents' contribution to the local economy would change negative perceptions.

Housing

Many county residents were concerned about the lack of quality, affordable housing within the county. While the number of housing units in Chatham County has increased, much of the new housing is beyond the financial means of many current residents. More than half (1549) of the 3067 very low-income households in the county paid more than 30% of their income for housing in 1990 (Chatham Habitat, 1999). Residents mentioned problems such as the "run-down" nature of houses, lack of heating or air conditioning, and broken plumbing. County residents of various ethnicities felt that a lack of quality housing was especially a concern for rural residents and for Latinos living in the Siler City area.

Recreation

The lack of adequate recreational opportunities within the county was raised in nearly every focus group and interview conducted for this community assessment. These concerns mirrored the findings of a recent survey, in which 65% of the 590 respondents characterized the recreational facilities and activities in the county as “inadequate” (Chatham County Department of Parks and Recreation, 1999). County residents perceive the lack of recreational opportunities as affecting all age groups in the county. Many residents feel that the problem especially affects county youth. Solutions proposed by community members to address the lack of recreational opportunities included increasing the amount of county funding for recreational activities, utilizing school buildings for recreational activities on the evenings and weekends, as well as applying for grants. In September of 1999, the County Board of Commissioners approved a parks and recreation master plan that addresses many of these concerns of county residents.

Education

The quality of education was an area of concern for many county residents. Secondary data from the Department of Public Instruction (1998) affirms these concerns, showing that the average Chatham County SAT score (973) is lower than the state average (982). Moreover, residents noted that disparities in quality exist among the schools within the county, stating that schools in Moncure and Siler City have many needs. Some residents feel that the school system should improve its ability to recruit and retain good teachers. Community members, especially Latino community members, were also concerned about the lack of English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers within the district. According to community residents, a result of the growing student population is that the schools are unable to maintain the quality of education they offer, and this, in turn, impedes future growth in the county.

Health

The health problems most often cited as concerns by the community were not the leading causes of mortality in Chatham County, which are heart disease, cancer, and cerebrovascular disease. Rather, residents were most often concerned about dental care, diabetes, and sexually transmitted diseases. A common sentiment expressed by a wide range of county residents was the need for additional health education and preventative health care. The barriers to accessing health care commonly mentioned by residents were a lack of transportation and inadequate financial resources. Residents suggested sliding scale clinics and the ability to pay for medical care incrementally as ways to overcome the financial barriers.

Economic Development

Many Chatham County residents expressed a wide variety of often-conflicting ideas for methods to increase economic development in the county. However, most Chatham County residents agreed that increasing the number of businesses and employment opportunities within the county was critical to the future of Chatham. Some residents felt that increased employment opportunities within the county were necessary for current residents to have the ability to work without commuting out of the county. Increased employment opportunities were also considered necessary for Chatham's youth to have the capability in the future to stay, work, and live in the county. Moreover, residents stated that strengthening Chatham's economy was necessary to increase the tax base within the county.

Recommendations

Chatham County residents have many recommendations for the future of the county. One of the most critical recommendations mentioned by many residents is the need for increased communication within the county. Many residents feel that the current lack of communication

within the county contributes to many of the concerns discussed above. Currently, residents do not all rely on a single news medium, causing difficulties in communication between different parts of the county. Moreover, many residents felt that the county lacked spaces such as community centers where different groups could interact, further inhibiting communication between different groups within the county. The lack of communication can be addressed on many levels. At the policy level, county government could work to develop a method to increase communication across the county, as well as to provide funding for spaces in the community that would encourage communication between different groups. At the community level, residents could collaborate with county officials to create these spaces and to encourage the various communities within Chatham to continue current discussions as well as engage in future discussions.

References

Chatham County Department of Parks and Recreation (1999). Chatham County Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Pittsboro: Chatham County Department of Parks and Recreation.

Chatham Habitat (1999) [online]. Retrieved April 5, 2000, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.beachsite.com/habitat/why.htm>

Department of Public Instruction (1998). In North Carolina Community Assessment Process. North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. State Center for Health Statistics and Office of Healthy Carolinians/Health Education.

METHODOLOGY

This section describes the process of data collection and analysis for the secondary data and the primary data sections of the document. Secondary data sources are identified and limitations of these data are explained. Discussion of the primary data includes the development of the focus group guide and interview questions, strategies for contacting focus group participants and interviewees, as well as coding and data analysis. Also discussed are limitations in our primary data collection and analysis methods.

Secondary Data

Data sources for the community description section included books addressing Chatham County's history and geography, area newspapers, and World Wide Web pages containing information specific to the county such as the Chatham County Economic Development Commission Report and the North Carolina Statistical Abstract. Sources of information for the community profile included the 1990 U.S. Census, Chatham County Department of Building Inspections, the North Carolina Literacy Resource Center, and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Because the last census report was collected nearly 10 years ago, sources for estimating the recent growth in the Latino population included the Office of Hispanic Liaison, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, and FaithACTION, an ecumenical institute. Sources for the health indicators section included the North Carolina Center for Health Statistics, the Governor's Task Force on Health Objectives for the Year 2000, area newspapers, and *The Health of Chatham 1996–97*, a document produced by the Chatham County Health Improvement Project (CCHIP).

There are several limitations of the secondary data used. Because the 1990 U.S. Census provided much of the demographic information, our ability to describe the recent population

growth in northern Chatham and in the Latino community is limited. There are also limitations in describing morbidity in the county due to difficulties in accessing information. Apart from reportable diseases, morbidity information must be collected through a variety of sources such as hospitals, clinics, and urgent care centers. We relied heavily on the North Carolina Center for Health Statistics for morbidity data.

Primary Data

Before we began conducting focus groups and interviews, we obtained approval to conduct research on human subjects from the University of North Carolina School of Public Health Institutional Review Board (IRB). An application was submitted outlining the research protocol for conducting interviews and focus groups as well as steps to ensure participant confidentiality. Included with the IRB application was a draft of the fact sheet for focus group and interview participants that outlined the purpose of the community assessment and contact information for those related to the project. Draft copies of the interview and focus group guides for community members and service providers were also included with the application. Upon IRB approval, we were permitted to conduct interviews and focus groups.

Working in partnership with representatives from the Chatham County Health Department, the United Way of Chatham County, and Chatham Hospital, we next developed interview and focus group guides, comprised of open-ended questions that were designed to facilitate discussion about thoughts and experiences of Chatham County residents and service providers (see the Appendix for copies of the focus group and interview guides).

Team members from the Health Department, the United Way, and Chatham Hospital provided us with contacts in the community. When conducting focus groups and interviews, we identified ourselves as graduate students from the University of North Carolina School of Public

Health working as part of a team with the participating local agencies. Some of the focus groups were attended and conducted by representatives from the participating local agencies. We informed participants that our findings would be shared with these organizations to update various reports and to aid in the development of new programs, and that our findings would be shared at an upcoming community forum. The focus groups were organized by representatives of the Health Department and the United Way. Individual interviews with service providers and community members were conducted to supplement the information obtained during the focus groups. Again, representatives of the Health Department and United Way helped to identify potential interviewees; we also received suggestions from focus group participants.

Each focus group began with the distribution of fact sheets. Participants were encouraged to read the fact sheets before the start of the focus group discussion. After the arrival of all of the participants, the team members formally introduced themselves and described how the focus group was to be conducted. Two team members attended each focus group. One team member served as the focus group facilitator, or discussion leader, while the other team member took notes with pen and paper or laptop computer. The facilitator described the community diagnosis process along with the purpose of conducting focus groups and interviews. Confidentiality was addressed along with ground rules for the discussion. After obtaining permission from the participants, focus groups and interviews were tape recorded to maximize accuracy in recording the participants' responses. As an introduction, focus group participants were asked to state their first name, how long they have lived in Chatham County, and where in Chatham County they live. Newcomers were asked what brought them to the area. This introduction allowed participants to identify what they considered their community to be. Topics addressed in the focus group guide included changes in the community over time, assessment of community

strengths and weaknesses, resources and activities, health, and employment. The closing addressed whether there were any issues of importance that were not addressed. Focus group participants were also asked to identify the most important issues discussed.

During a four-month period, the team conducted 18 focus groups and eight interviews with 157 residents and/or service providers. One hundred of those participants were female and 57 were males. Eighty-nine participants were White (57%), 40 were African American (25%), and 28 were Latino (18%). Four of the 18 focus groups were conducted in Spanish with Latino community members and were later translated into English for data analysis.

Coding and data analysis began after completion of the focus groups and interviews. After reading the interview and focus group notes, the team divided comments from the interviews and focus groups into themes (categories reflecting the major issues discussed in the focus groups and interviews) by cutting up a copy of the interview and focus group notes. Each focus group and interview was color coded so that the focus group or interview from which the comments originated could be identified. Themes that were identified include community strengths, recreation, diversity, housing, education, jobs/economic development, daycare, farms, water/sewer, traffic/transportation, health, and communications.

Several limitations are inherent in our methodology for collecting primary data. First, focus group and interview participants were not recruited randomly. Rather, our participants were a convenience sample of the Chatham County population. Therefore, we cannot be certain that our participants are representative of Chatham County community members and service providers. Attempts were made to maximize representativeness of the Chatham County population by seeking residents of various ethnicities, occupations, socioeconomic statuses, and by seeking residents residing in communities located in various parts of the county. A potential

limitation in our coding and data analysis procedure includes removing comments from the context in which they were stated. A major strength of the primary data collection and analysis procedures we used is that we were able to capture the thoughts and feelings of Chatham County residents in their own words.

CHATHAM COUNTY COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Introduction

A community can be defined in many ways. Heller (1989) defines community in three ways: community as locality, the relational community, and community as collective political power. Chatham County, and the various communities within Chatham County, can variously be described as encompassing all of these aspects of community. Community as locality refers to the geographic notion of community, in which people come together because of physical proximity. Examples of this type of community within Chatham County include Fearington Village, the Governor's Club, Jordan Grove, and Moncure. Relational community refers to the social cohesion that develops with close interpersonal ties. Common interests bring people together into this type of community, and social relationships are formed because of those interests. Groups such as the He Cares and *De Madre a Madre* support groups, and men's and women's clubs found in many of Chatham County's churches are examples of relational communities within the county. Community as collective political power refers to the organization of individuals for social action. People form these types of communities because of a desire to influence political leaders. Chatham County's Agribusiness Council and the Hispanic Liaison are examples of this type of community within Chatham County.

This section provides an overview of Chatham County, the larger community within which all of these various communities are found. We begin with an exploration of Chatham County's history and geography, the present circumstances of its economics and social climate, and a discussion of recent changes that could affect its future. Chatham County has a history of racial and ethnic diversity beginning with its original occupants, several tribes of Native Americans and early European immigrants. For many years, the majority of the population

consisted of African Americans and Whites. More recently, like North Carolina in general, Chatham County has experienced an influx of Latinos. Although Chatham County is primarily rural in character, recent growth in certain areas of the county poses significant challenges and opportunities for residents.

Geography

Chatham County is located in the geographic center of North Carolina, less than 46 miles from Raleigh, the state capital (Tetterton & Tetterton, 1998). The county is bordered on the north by Alamance, Orange, and Durham Counties, on the south by Lee and Moore Counties, on the west by Randolph County, and on the east by Wake and Harnett Counties (Chatham County, North Carolina, 1999). Composed of gently rolling hills, the county covers 708.9 square miles in total area (Tetterton & Tetterton, 1998). Elevations within the county vary from 200 feet in the southeastern region to 770 feet in the northwestern region (Hadley, Morton, and Stroud, 1976). Oak-Hickory-Pine forest is the prevailing unit of natural vegetation (Hadley et al., 1976). The county has 108,363 acres of farmland with 117 acres being the average size of a farm (Chatham County, North Carolina Statistical Abstract, 1996). The predominant soils are from the red-land and gray-land groups, each covering 40% of the total area of the county (Hadley et al., 1976). The three main rivers of the county—Haw, Deep, and Rocky—unite to form the upper portion of the Cape River near the southeastern part of Chatham (Hadley et al., 1976). Other water resources include the Shearon Harris Reservoir, New Hope River, and B. Everett Jordan Lake (Tetterton & Tetterton, 1998, p. 48). The man-made, 46,768 acre Jordan Lake, completed in the early 1970s, serves multiple purposes including flood control, water supply, water quality control, recreation, and fish and wildlife conservation (Jordan Lake, 1999).

Pittsboro was established as the county seat on January 6, 1787 (Chatham County, North Carolina, 1999). Other towns of the county include Siler City in the western part of the county, Goldston, Bear Creek, Bennett, and Bonlee in the southwestern part of the county, Moncure in the southeastern part of the county, and Bynum in the northeastern part of the county (Tetterton & Tetterton, 1998).

History

Settlers from England, Scotland, Ireland, and Germany arrived in the area now known as Chatham County in 1745 (Hadley et al., 1976). Early settlers traveled up the Cape Fear River from the North Carolina coast or over land from Pennsylvania and Virginia. Prior to 1700, explorers, hunters, and traders passed within 10 to 12 miles of the northwestern corner of Chatham County as they traveled along a trading path to the Native Americans of the Catawba region. Native Americans are thought to have lived in the Chatham County area centuries before the settlers arrived (Hadley et al., 1976). Tribes specific to the region included the “Cape Fear Indians,” the Eno, the Sissapahaw, and the Keyaweas (Molloy, 1996).

Chatham County was named for the first Earl of Chatham, William Pitt, to honor his defense of American rights in the British Parliament (Hadley et al., 1976). Prior to 1771, the area that is now Chatham County was originally part of Orange County. The county was created because of the difficulties officials faced governing expansive Orange County, which was then ten times larger than it is today (Chatham County, North Carolina, 1999).

Slavery was an integral part of life in North Carolina through the Civil War. According to the first Federal census in 1790, Chatham County had a total population of 9,221, including 1,632 slaves owned by 310 slave holders (Hadley et al., 1976). By 1850, the county’s population included 12,164 Whites, 5,985 slaves, and some 300 free Blacks (London, 1923). Slaves served

mainly as domestic servants and farm and plantation laborers. Much of the early growth of industry in Chatham County relied on slave labor. For example, prior to the Civil War, slaves were forced to construct a plank road from Pittsboro to Fayetteville, accelerating trade within these areas (London, 1923).

After the Civil War, both African Americans and Whites in the county worked farms; ran their own businesses such as stores, restaurants, funeral homes, and banks; and worked to improve their communities. While agriculture was the primary source of livelihood in Chatham County, higher crop yields and production methods that required fewer workers allowed more people to move into enterprises other than agriculture. In the latter half of the 19th century, logging, grist mills, mining, and manufacturing were subsequently of greater importance in the county. As electricity replaced water as the source of power, the centers of business were also able to move away from water sources. After the Great Depression of the 1930's, livestock production replaced subsistence farming as the major form of agriculture, while textile mills and furniture production continued to grow in importance (Hadley et al., 1976).

Economics

Most (81%) of Chatham's population of 45,204 lives in rural areas of the county, with only 19% living in towns: 13.2 % of the population lives in Siler City, 4.6 % lives in Pittsboro, and 1.2% reside in other towns (Chatham County Economic Development Commission Updated Report, 1999). Pittsboro, Siler City, and Goldston are the only three towns in Chatham County that are incorporated. Due to the proximity to Raleigh, Durham, Research Triangle Park, and Chapel Hill, over 46% of Chatham residents commute outside the county for employment. Based on the number of people employed, the major industries in the county are manufacturing (45%), retail trade (13.3%), services (13.2%), government (11.1%), and construction (6.8%). The

companies with the largest workforce are poultry processors, followed by manufacturers of polyester fiber and hosiery, upholstery fabrics, and plastics (see Table 1). The following are the top contributors to the tax base in Chatham County: Carolina Power & Light Co., Allied Signal, Inc., Governor’s Club, Carolina Meadows, Weyerhaeuser Co., and Mastercraft Fabrics Corp. (Chatham County Economic Development Commission Updated Report, 1999). Governor’s Club, a gated community, and Carolina Meadows, a retirement community, are both located in Northern Chatham and are the third and fourth largest sources of tax revenue for the county. This demonstrates the importance of real estate development in Chatham County.

Table 1: Largest Employers in Chatham County

Company	Number of Employees	Product
Townsend, Inc.	1300	Poultry processing
Allied Signal	850	Polyester fiber
Gold Kist, Inc.	800	Poultry processing
Glendale Hosiery	700	Hosiery manufacture
Mastercraft Corp.	650	Upholstery fabrics
Oneida Molded Plastics	300	Plastics
Weyerhaeuser Co.	300	Fiberwood
Charles Craft	220	Upholstery fabrics

Source: Economic Development Commission Updated Report, 1999

Small businesses are also a vital part of the economic health of the county with 832 businesses each employing under 49 employees. Many of these smaller businesses specialize in wood processing, furniture production, electronics, software and Internet consulting, steel fabrication, and machining.

Agriculture remains an important business in the county, accounting for 31% of the total county income in 1994 (Chatham County, North Carolina Statistical Abstract, 1996). As of 1997, there were 956 farms in Chatham County, with an average farm size of 118 acres. Chatham County ranked second in the state for beef cows, fourth in the state for cattle, and twelfth in the state for hay production in 1998 (North Carolina Department of Agriculture, 1999). The five top

agricultural products are poultry, forestry (trees, shrubs and lumber), milk, tobacco, and cattle. Like many other rural areas in the U.S., lower fixed crop prices have forced farmers to raise more and more food on less land. Though the number of small farms has remained the same in recent years, many farmers have divided their land, selling part of it for residential development, and using the remainder for part-time, recreational ventures (S. Groce, personal communication, October 20, 1999).

Recent Social Changes

In recent years, Chatham County has undergone a number of changes that have fundamentally altered the character of parts of the county. Among these changes are an influx of Latino immigrants, particularly in and around Siler City, and growing development in the northern portion of the county. This development is made up primarily of retirement communities and subdivisions of professionals who commute to Chapel Hill, Research Triangle Park, Raleigh, and other parts of the Triangle to work. These changes have provided challenges to the current county residents, but can also be seen as real opportunities as the character of Chatham County diversifies.

Latino Immigration

Like the rest of North Carolina, Chatham County has over the past five or so years experienced an unprecedented increase in the number of Latinos moving to the county, predominantly from parts of Mexico (M. Ravenel, personal communication, October 4, 1999). Some estimates have put the number of Latinos currently residing in the county at close to 10,000 (Shapard, 1999). The challenges of determining just how many of these new residents there are will be discussed later in this document; however, it is important to note here the challenges and opportunities facing the county as a result of this immigration. Because these

newcomers come from different cultures and speak a different language, it is inevitable that misunderstandings will arise. In addition, the burgeoning population may place a strain on county-provided services. This can be illustrated by the August 18, 1999, letter that was sent by the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, asking for assistance establishing which immigrants were in the county illegally and deporting those who were, causing fear among some members of the Latino community (Case, 1999). Despite these misunderstandings, the increase in the number of Latinos has had many positive effects on the county, not the least of which has been a significant contribution to the local labor force and economy. Chatham County's Latino residents work in local industries such as furniture manufacturing and poultry processing plants, and Latino consumers make up a large portion of the local economy. In fact, a Walmart superstore planned for Siler City is expected to rely heavily on the buying power of Latinos (Cuadros, 2000). Other positive results of the increase in the Latino population will be discussed later in this document.

Growing Development

Another important change to have affected the county in recent years has been the rapid development of portions of the county close to high tech and other professional jobs in Wake, Durham, and Orange counties, and an increase in the number of retirement communities in the county. Similar to the challenges surrounding the new Latino residents, this new development may cause concern among longtime residents. The people moving into these new communities are for the most part not only new to Chatham County, but also to Central North Carolina, and are often new to the state of North Carolina and to the South. This means that the new county residents tend to identify more with the Triangle area as a whole than with traditionally rural Chatham County. As stated previously, this real estate development contributes heavily to the tax

base. However, it has also placed a burden on the county's resources, as new roads, schools, and county services have had to be provided for the new residents. In 1999, the Chatham County Commissioners voted unanimously to implement an impact fee on new residential construction in the county. The \$1,500 fee on single family homes was enacted to help pay for the cost of new schools (Riggsbee, 1999).

Conclusion

The strengths and challenges of Chatham County lie in its ability to adapt to the many aspects of growth including its growing diversity. Economic shifts in the county have resulted from increased real estate development, which is in demand as the population increases. Increases in numbers of residents seeking county services will continue. The many interconnected issues related to the changing social environment will need to be balanced to provide a good quality of life for all who call Chatham County home.

CHATHAM COUNTY COMMUNITY PROFILE

Introduction

In recent years, Chatham County has experienced tremendous population growth, resulting in increased racial and cultural diversity as well as disparities in economic levels and a trend toward increased aging of the population. The Latino population has grown significantly in the previous decade (Shapard, 1999), and the age distribution of the county's population has shifted towards an increase in age due to the in-migration of retirees (Molloy, 1997).

As a whole, the economic status of Chatham County residents is better than the economic status of North Carolina residents. This trend is true for both general county indicators and indicators stratified by race or ethnicity. However, the data also suggest that within the county large economic disparities exist between White, African-American, and Latino residents. The distribution of educational levels within the adult population of Chatham County is similar to the distribution of educational levels within North Carolina as a whole. However, here too, discrepancies exist between the educational achievement levels of current White students and students of color.

Limitations of the Secondary Data

Data from the 1990 U.S. Census provided much of the demographic information in this report. However, because they were collected ten years ago, these data do not reflect the recent increase in population growth and its effect on economic and education factors. While the per capita income appears to be comparable to North Carolina state figures, the influx of residents with higher incomes to the northern part of the county masks the lower income levels for the remainder of the county. Recent data about the influx of Latinos to the county, not addressed by 1990 Census data, have been obtained from a variety of other sources (Office of State Planning,

1999, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1999). Difficulties arise in determining the true number of Latinos residing in Chatham County, due to immigration issues and the fact that they are less likely to appear on social services rolls such as Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) and Medicaid. The reader should note that in the 1990 Census, Hispanic status was not collected as a racial category. Therefore, there is overlap among the racial categories and Hispanic status. The reader should also note that, while we have tried to be consistent in our use of the racial and ethnic terms White, African American, and Latino, when reporting secondary data we use terms consistent with the original data source (e.g. Black, Hispanic, or non-white). Moreover, due to the small percentage of the population represented by Asian/Pacific Islanders and Native Americans within the county, we have expanded the “Other” category to include these two racial categories.

Demographics

Although Table 2 reports the percentage of Chatham residents over the age of 65 to be slightly higher than the percentage reported for the state, 14.43% versus 12.13%, the percentage of residents in Chatham County over the age of 65 continues to increase. In 1998, the percentage of residents of Chatham County over the age of 65 was estimated to be 17.9% (U.S. Census 1999). This represents an increase of 24% in the percentage of the population over the age of 65 in an eight-year period.

Table 2. Population by Age, 1990

Age In Years	Chatham County		North Carolina	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<1	447	1.15%	80,000	1.21%
1 – 14	6,900	17.80%	1,255,416	18.94%
15 – 24	4,709	12.15%	1,051,786	15.8%
25 – 64	21,110	54.46%	3,437,094	51.85%
≥ 65	5,593	14.43%	804,341	12.13%

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

U.S. Census population figures stratified by race or ethnicity for Chatham County show a distribution similar to percentages reported for the state (see Table 3). However, since 1990, the number of Latino residents in Chatham County has increased dramatically. In the last ten years, Chatham County Public Schools have experienced as much as an eight-fold increase in the percentage of Latino students, while the total enrollment numbers have only increased by 16% due to a decrease in the numbers of African-American and White students (see Table 4). Likewise, the number of Latino births in the county has escalated to six times the number reported in 1990 (see Table 5).

Table 3. Population Distribution by Race and Ethnicity, 1990

Race/Ethnicity	Chatham County		North Carolina	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White	29,194	75.32%	4,971,127	74.99%
Black	8794	22.69%	1,499,142	21.86%
Hispanic	564	1.46%	131,642	1.16%
Other	207	.54%	76,726	1.98%

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

Table 4. Chatham County Public School Enrollment

Date	Number of Hispanics	Percent of Total	Total
1990 - 1991	66	1.1%	5786
1997 - 1998	461	6.8%	6730
1998 - 1999	597	8.88%	6725

Source: Department of Public Instruction, 1999

Table 5. Hispanic Births in Chatham County

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Number of births	20	22	42	42	51	66	100	100	123

Source: Office of State Planning, 1999

Other organizations have provided estimates of the Latino population in Chatham County. FaithACTION, an ecumenical institute, estimated the Latino population excluding migrant workers to be 4,698 in 1998, and the Office of Hispanic Liaison has estimated that 10,000 Latinos currently reside in Chatham County, up to 4,000 of whom live in Siler City (Shapard, 1999).

Economic Status

A much larger percentage of Chatham County residents own their own homes than do residents of North Carolina. This difference is especially notable within the African-American population. In Chatham County, 73.11% of African-American residents own their homes while only 49.63% of African Americans within the state are homeowners (see Table 6).

Table 6: Percentage of Home Ownership by Race and Ethnicity, 1990

	White	Black	Hispanic	Other
Chatham County	78.46%	73.11%	37.18%	44.93%
North Carolina	72.90%	49.63%	41.45%	54.43%

Source: U.S. Census, 1990

According to the Triangle J Council of Government (1999), the unemployment rate for the county was 2.4% and the unemployment rate for the state was 3.6% in 1997. Unemployment rates from the 1990 U.S. Census, stratified by race and ethnicity, also show similar low levels of unemployment in comparison with state levels (see Table 7).

Table 7: Unemployment Rates by Race and Ethnicity, 1990

	White	Black	Hispanic	Other
Chatham County	2.5%	8.1%	0%	0%
North Carolina	3.6%	9.9%	7.3%	8.2%

Source: U.S. Census, 1990

However, the low levels of unemployment within the county do not accurately reflect the lack of jobs within the county. As a community member explained, “Many companies see the low rates of unemployment within Chatham and decide not to locate here. What they don’t realize is that many residents commute to work outside of the county and would prefer to work in the county.”

Per capita incomes, especially within the African-American population, are higher for Chatham County than North Carolina as a whole (see Table 8). However, per capita income figures for the county can hide the stark disparities in income within the county. In the census

tract that includes Siler City, the per capita income for Whites is \$13,913 while the per capita income for African Americans is \$7,740. Furthermore, in the census tract that includes the Northeastern portion of the county, the per capita income for Whites is \$19,133 and the per capita income for African Americans is \$9,573 (U.S. Census, 1990). One community member explains this phenomenon by saying, “My perception is that the heaviest percentage is at the bottom because of the polarity (disparity among income levels within the county). The affluent in the county are retired. In the middle [class], Chatham doesn’t have a high population.”

Table 8: Per Capita Income by Race and Ethnicity, 1990

	White	Black	Hispanic	Other
Chatham County	\$14,706	\$9,037	\$14,561	\$5,137
North Carolina	\$14,450	\$7,926	\$9,544	\$7,974

Source: U.S. Census, 1990

Another indicator of income disparities within the county is the value of new homes. In the census tract that contains Baldwin and Williams Townships, in the northeastern part of the county, the average value of a new home in 1998 was \$237,253. However, in the Gulf Township, in the southwestern part of the county, the average value of a new home in 1998 was only \$100,492 (Chatham County Department of Building Inspections, 1999). Additionally, while the percentage of persons below the poverty level is lower for Chatham County than for North Carolina, the percentage of persons below the poverty level is much higher among African-American residents than White residents (see Table 9).

Table 9: Percentage of Persons Below the Poverty Level by Race and Ethnicity, 1990

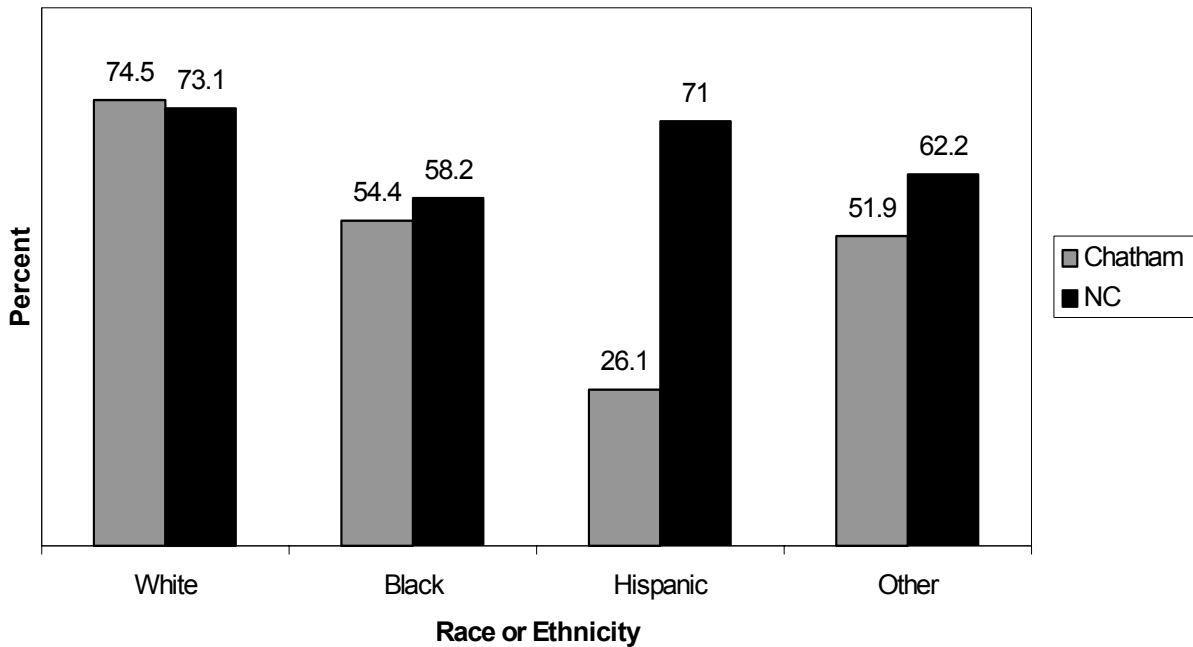
	White	Black	Hispanic	Other
Chatham County	7.6%	19.8%	1.98%	13.56%
North Carolina	8.4%	25.9%	19.19%	21.63%

Source: U.S. Census, 1990

Educational Status

According to the 1990 U.S. Census, 70.1% of Chatham County residents and 71.2% of residents of North Carolina had completed high school or obtained a GED. The percentages of White and African-American adults in Chatham County who had completed at least high school or obtained a GED are comparable to the percentages at that educational level in those groups in the state overall (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Percent of Adults Age 25 or Older Who Have Completed at Least High School or GED, 1990



Source: U.S. Census, 1990

In both Chatham County and North Carolina, the percentage of White residents with at least a high school education is significantly higher than the percentage of African-American residents with at least that level of education. The large difference in the percentage of Latino residents in Chatham versus North Carolina with at least a high school education can be explained as a statistical anomaly because of the small number of Latinos recorded in the 1990 Census in Chatham.

Another educational indicator to consider for the adult population is the rate of illiteracy within the county. As a result of the difficulties associated with estimating illiteracy rates, these figures use the percentage of the adult population with less than nine years of education as a proxy for illiteracy. The illiteracy rate for Chatham County is estimated to be 13.2%, or 5,116 Chatham County residents, while the rate for the state is 12.69% (North Carolina Literacy Resource Center, 1999). The 1997-98 dropout rate for the Chatham County School District was 3.78%, while the state rate was 3.73% (Department of Public Instruction, 1999). Within the Chatham County school district, the percentage of students who are at or above grade level on the end-of-grade tests is much higher for White students than for African-American and Latino students. These percentages are composite percentages of all students in third through eighth grade on the reading, writing, and mathematics end-of-grade tests (see Table 10).

Table 10: Percentage of Students at or Above Grade Level by Ethnicity, 1997-98

	All Students	White	Black	Hispanic
At or above grade level	72.3%	81.5%	51.4%	53.5%

Source: A Report Card for the ABCs of Public Education, 1999

Conclusion

In conclusion, Chatham County is currently experiencing two large demographic shifts. First, the number of Latino residents has increased significantly since the 1990 Census. Furthermore, the percentage of the population who are older than sixty-five has increased in recent years as a result of the in-migration of retirees as well as the natural aging of the population. Despite positive economic indicators for the county such as a low rate of unemployment and higher per capita incomes in Chatham County than in North Carolina as a whole, economic disparities still exist between different areas of the county as well as between racial and ethnic groups within the county. And finally, while educational attainment levels for

Chatham County are comparable to state levels, the disparities in educational achievement of current students in different racial and ethnic groups are troubling.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND ASSETS

Chatham County is a community rich with resources. Residents who took part in this community diagnosis often spoke with pride of their community and their preference for its quiet lifestyle. The county's physical environment, the spirit of its community, the strength of its churches, and the diversity among its residents are among the strengths identified by county residents.

Many residents appreciate the natural beauty of Chatham County and its location, as a resident describes, "in a rural setting between two lakes." According to one community member, the county's open spaces provide a "country-type atmosphere." Another resident pointed out the benefit of enjoying the rural nature of the county while possessing "quick access to urban programs." Community members agree on the importance of maintaining the existing nature of Chatham County. Residents said, "We must be careful about putting too many stresses on farmers. When you make a farm nonviable, that's when you'll lose the attractiveness of the county" and "The same thing (rural atmosphere) that brought us here is dissolving before our eyes."

A neighborly attitude is a highly valued asset in the lives of the community. One service provider in the county described,

There's a strong sense of place, even for the people who are new to the community. There's a desire to anchor—to be a part of the community. There's a strong sense of neighborhood...ties that develop in a short while after people move to Chatham.

This shared value of neighborliness is exemplified in the following story:

We still have a lot of community spirit. A barn fell on a guy's cattle [during a snow storm]. There were lots of people that came over with a frontloader to help pull off the debris...people willing to get out, hip deep in snow—that's commendable. You still got a lot of folks who look out for their neighbors.

This caring and concern for neighbors has a positive effect on the safety of the community. For the most part, residents expressed feeling safe in their neighborhoods and perceived a low level of crime. One community member remarked, “People look out for one another,” and another reported “[Chatham has] safe neighborhoods, not a lot of crime.” This close-knit community feeling may be challenged as Chatham County changes; a few residents expressed concern about the growth of the county contributing to a loss of community spirit.

Chatham County is strengthened by its active volunteerism. There are numerous programs and agencies in the county that have a strong base of support from community volunteers. In interviews with residents of the county, no less than 30 organizations or programs were mentioned as relying on volunteers to carry out their programs or of contributing volunteers from their agency to assist with other efforts in Chatham County. For example, Habitat For Humanity relies heavily on volunteers for their house-building efforts and volunteers with the United Way of Chatham County interact with other agencies to work toward the goals of the agency. The community’s unity, brought about by its strong volunteer efforts, contributes to its competence to undertake the many collaborative efforts within the county, as well as to extend assistance outside of the county. In interviews, residents related stories of aid given outside the county to victims of Hurricane Floyd and to friends and relatives of county residents in need of assistance.

Interviews with county residents revealed that community businesses also contribute ongoing support to causes or collaborate with county agencies, such as the Health Department, to assist the county in serving its residents. Schools are also the recipients of the efforts of many volunteers. For example, it was reported that residents of Carolina Meadows have “adopted” a school in Silk Hope to which they volunteer their services, and that Governors’ Club has done

the same for a school in Moncure. Even though retirees serve actively as volunteers in Chatham County, community residents feel the potential of this valuable resource has yet to be fully realized. One community member explains, “These retired people have brought their diverse talents and shared them with the community. They’re a resource that can be further developed.” A group of retirees recognizes this and has undertaken efforts to organize themselves; Carolina Meadows hosted a Volunteer Day in April 2000 to introduce potential volunteers to sites where their efforts are needed. Due to growth in the county, volunteer efforts will continue to be important to sustain this asset of the community. As was mentioned in connection with other issues, communication throughout the county is a vital ingredient to the continued success of volunteerism. A potential volunteer expressed this thought: “If the county wants us to get involved, they need to let us know what’s there. A list of charities available in the county would be useful.”

Many in the county expressed pride in the community’s churches. As one resident stated, “The community churches are real strong. They’re just phenomenal—it’s not only the one you attend...they’re unbelievable!” A common theme discussed by community members was the number of activities, including health-related events, that were accomplished through church support. Many community members also believe that the churches provide an excellent mode of communication and a good source for recruiting volunteers. The pastors of churches have credibility and are thus good avenues for distributing information. The churches have the potential to become an even more powerful community resource. As a service provider stated, “For the most part, churches are sleeping giants, an untapped [resource].”

A number of residents feel that strength in the community comes from the diversity of county residents. Long-term residents of Chatham County contribute a sense of history while

newcomers present different and new perspectives. The farming community, the arts community, business owners, and Latino residents, all provide a unique vision of the county, while exhibiting pride in Chatham County as a desirable place to live. Much of the diverse population comes together at community gatherings. Old Fashioned Farmers Day, Taste of Chatham, the Art Studio Tour, and Senior Day are all examples of gatherings that serve to unite the diverse aspects of the community. Fund-raising events provide another avenue for residents to gather, and as one community member stated, “The entire community comes to gather for a common goal.”

An additional strength of the county is the large number of leaders, both informal and formal, who influence and provide assistance to community members. Many community residents named church leaders as people they felt they could turn to in a time of need. But there are many other informal leaders who county residents feel they can count on for needed support. Included among these are county commissioners and a number of residents who have never considered running for office, but who are consistently mentioned as strengths of the community. One resident described the dependence of the community on the consistent efforts of these informal leaders in this way: “the formal leaders change; the informal stay the same.”

Overall, Chatham County has a large number of strengths, which have been readily identified with pride by its residents. Included in these are the natural beauty of the county, the neighborly and volunteer spirit that community members possess, the strength of the churches, and the diverse and interesting backgrounds of its residents. The challenge facing the county is to match the many assets of the community with the needs of its residents, in order to improve the lives of those residing in Chatham County. One resident summed it up by stating, “There’s a lot of talent, skill, and experience in Chatham County; let’s take advantage of the opportunities!”

CHATHAM COUNTY HEALTH INDICATORS

Introduction

The health of a community is influenced by a variety of social, environmental, and personal factors. One way of quantifying the health of a community is through examining death and disease rates, known as mortality and morbidity rates, respectively. In this section of the document we compare Chatham County's mortality and morbidity rates to those of North Carolina as well as those set by *Healthy People 2000* and *Healthy Carolinians 2000*. *Healthy People 2000* is a national health promotion agenda that focuses on three main goals: increasing the years of healthy life for Americans, reducing health disparities among Americans, and achieving access to preventive services for all Americans. *Healthy Carolinians 2000* is a community-based health promotion agenda targeted towards improving the health of North Carolina residents. In addition to examining Chatham's mortality and morbidity rates, we also explore factors influencing the health of the county by evaluating access and availability of health services, social health indicators, environmental health, the governmental body responsible for health, and health issues with political repercussions.

Mortality

The adjusted mortality rate due to all causes is lower in Chatham County than in North Carolina (see Table 11). The age-adjusted death rate, expressed as deaths per 100,000 population, is computed by the direct method. These rates are those that would be expected if the age composition of each county's population were the same as that in a standard population (such as the state in 1990). The top five leading causes of death in the county are diseases of the heart, cancer, cerebrovascular disease, cancer of the trachea/bronchus/lung, and pneumonia and

influenza. Moreover, mortality rates for the county are lower compared to rates for the state for most causes of mortality.

Table 11: Leading Causes of Mortality: Adjusted Death Rates per 100,000 Persons, 1993-1997

Health Indicators	Chatham County	North Carolina
Diseases of the heart	223.8	251.6
Cancer	180.2	197.4
Cerebrovascular disease	60.5	65.8
Trachea/bronchus/lung cancer	48.0	60.3
Unintentional motor vehicle injuries	33.1	20.8
Pneumonia and influenza	31.4	30.2
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)	28.6	38.3
Female breast cancer	25.0	27.2
Prostate cancer	23.7	36.2
Colon/rectum/anus cancer	21.0	19.6
Diabetes mellitus	19.6	22.6
Other unintentional injuries	15.1	19.8
Homicide	14.3	10.6
Suicide	13.0	12.3
Septicemia	7.9	8.3
Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis	6.7	9.0
AIDS	6.6	11.3
Arteriosclerosis	5.7	5.2
Nephritis/nephrotic syndrome/nephrosis	4.8	8.5
All causes	783	846.8

Source: North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics, 1997

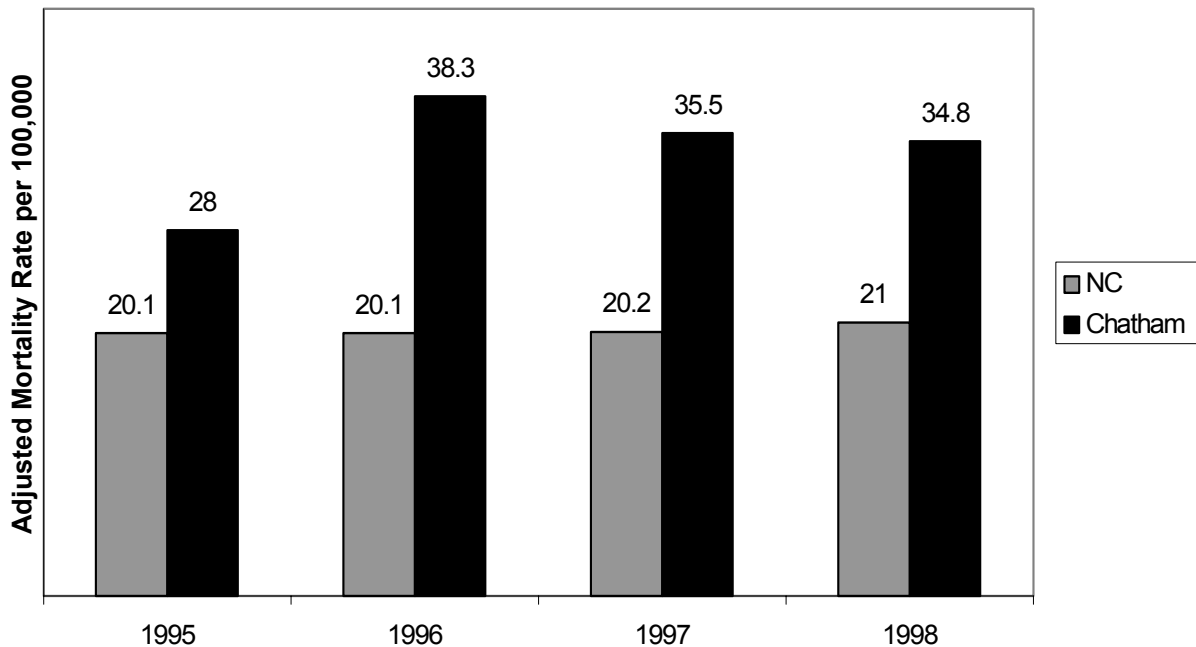
Further, Chatham County has reached and surpassed the goals to decrease mortality rates set by *Healthy Carolinians 2000* for heart disease, cancer, cerebrovascular disease, diabetes, and other unintentional injuries (see Table 12). Despite these successes, mortality rates for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and unintentional motor vehicle injuries still remain higher in the county than the goals set by *Healthy Carolinians 2000*. Additionally, Chatham County has a substantially higher rate of unintentional motor vehicle accident deaths compared to the state rate (see Table 11). In fact, Chatham County's auto injury death rates have remained substantially higher than North Carolina's rates for the past four years in a row (see Figure 2).

Table 12: Comparison of Cause-Specific Mortality Rates: Adjusted Rates per 100,000 Persons, 1993-1997

Health Indicators	Chatham County	Healthy Carolinians 2000 Objective
Heart disease	223.8	248.9
Cancer	180.2	204.7
Cerebrovascular disease	60.5	62.4
Unintentional motor vehicle injuries	33.1	29.6
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)	28.6	25.5
Diabetes	19.6	20.3
Other unintentional injuries	15.1	61.4

Source: Governor's Task Force on Health Objectives for the Year 2000, 1992, and State Center for Health Statistics, 1997

Figure 2: Auto Death Rates (per 100,000)



Source: State Center for Health Statistics, 1999

Infant mortality rates indicate the well being of infants as well as the overall public health and well being of a community. The overall infant mortality rate and infant mortality rates stratified by race within the county are higher than the comparable state infant mortality rates (see Table 13). Further, when infant mortality rates for Chatham County are broken down by race, disparities become evident. Infant death rates are 2.25 times greater for other races than for

Whites in the county. (The categories “Other Races” and “Minority,” reported here and below, are the categories used by the State Center for Health Statistics for reporting its data.)

Table 13: 1998 Infant Death Rates: Rates per 1,000

	White	Other Races	Total
Chatham County	8.9	20.0	10.5
North Carolina	6.4	16.3	9.3

Source: North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics, 1998

Table 14: Leading Causes of Mortality in Chatham County by Gender and Race: Adjusted Death Rates per 100,000 Persons, 1998

Cause	White Female	White Male	Minority Female	Minority Male
Diseases of heart	241.6	237.3	254.6	399.6
Cancer	225.5	175.2	274.1	554.9
Cerebrovascular disease	96.6	67.8	97.9	44.4
COPD	26.8	67.8	58.7	44.4
Pneumonia and influenza	85.9	56.5	78.3	22.2
Diabetes mellitus	*	39.6	39.2	44.4
Injuries	10.7	28.3	38.2	22.2
Auto injury	16.1	50.9	39.2	44.4
Suicide	5.4	22.6	*	*
Septicemia	5.4	5.7	19.6	*
Nephritis	5.4	5.7	58.7	*
Chronic liver disease	*	5.7	*	*
Hypertension	5.4	5.7	19.6	22.2
AIDS	*	5.7	*	*
Homicide	*	5.7	19.6	88.8
Arteriosclerosis	5.4	11.3	19.6	*

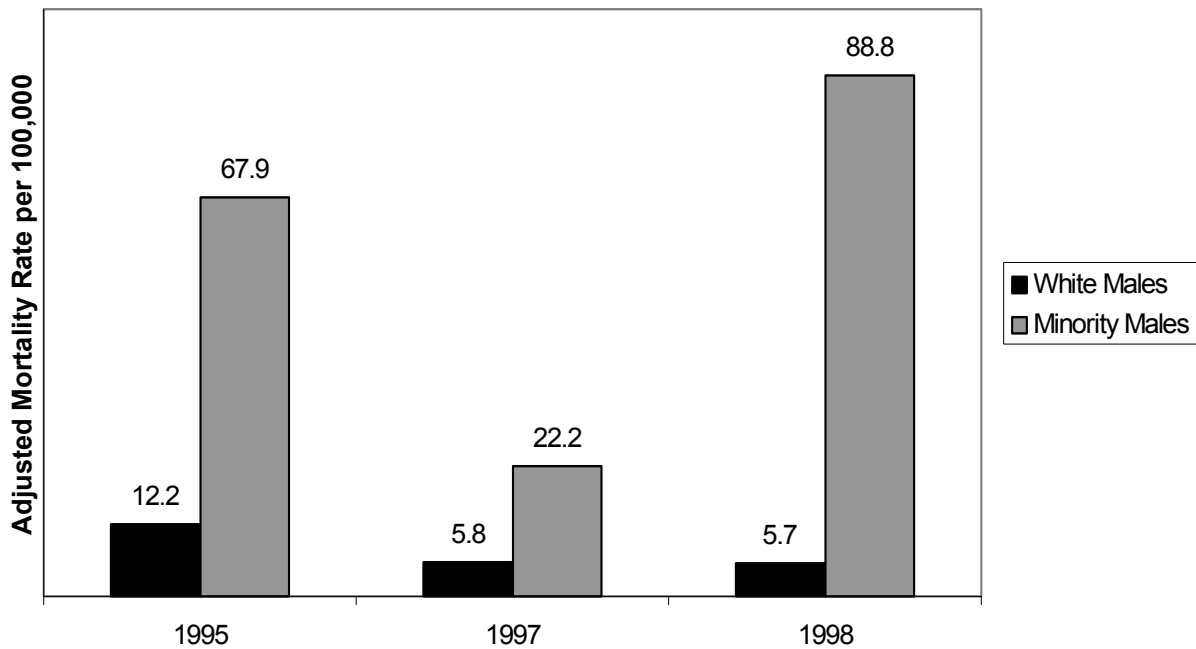
Source: North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics, 1999

*Data were not available for the category

Health disparities also appear when death rates are stratified by race and gender (see Table 14). Minority males in Chatham County have substantially higher rates of mortality due to diseases of the heart, cancer, hypertension, and homicide compared to all other racial and gender categories. They have a 68.4% higher mortality rate due to diseases of the heart, a 216.7% higher mortality rate due to cancer, a 311.1% higher mortality rate due to hypertension, and a 1457.9% higher mortality rate due to homicide compared to White males. It is interesting to note that homicide mortality has been consistently higher in minority males than White males for the past

few years in Chatham County (see Figure 3). Minority females have higher rates of mortality than White females for all causes (where data are available for both groups) except pneumonia and influenza (see Table 14).

Figure 3: Homicide Related Mortality Rates for White and Minority Males in Chatham County



Source: State Center for Health Statistics

Morbidity

Apart from reportable diseases, current information on morbidity is somewhat more difficult to find. Because of this lack of information, this data is older if not absent altogether in comparison to mortality information. The leading causes for hospitalization in Chatham County have been circulatory system problems, pregnancy, respiratory diseases, and musculoskeletal problems (see Table 15) (Molloy, 1997). Rates for cancer are lower in the county than for the state or country except for breast cancer (see Table 16).

Table 15: Leading Causes of Hospitalization for Chatham County Residents, Fiscal Year 1994

Rank	Major Diagnostic Category	Cases	Percent
1	Circulatory system	839	19.9%
2	Pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium	466	11.0%
3	Respiratory system	408	9.0%
4	Newborns and other neonates	373	8.8%
5	Musculoskeletal system and connective tissues	342	8.1%
6	Digestive system	326	7.7%
7	Mental diseases	230	5.5%
8	Nervous system	180	4.3%
9	Heptobiliary system and pancreas	131	3.1%
10	Kidney and urinary tract	124	2.9%
11	Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic	123	2.9%
12	Female reproductive system	108	2.6%

Source: The Health of Chatham, 1996-97

Table 16: Specific Disease Rates per 100,000 Persons

Disease	Chatham County		North Carolina			National
	1995	1997	1995	1997	1999	1999
Cancer incidence total	422.8	426.4	401.7	455.8	470.4	452.0
Female breast cancer	169.7	144.4	131.1	142.5	123.2	128.1
Lung cancer	48.6	62.9	63.1	69.2	70.2	63.5
Prostate cancer	30.9	*	26.1	*	149.5	136.9
Syphilis	4.4	1.6	4.2	3.0	9.8	3.2
Gonorrhea	15.4	18.6	33.3	22.7	230.6	122.5
Chlamydia	15.4	15.5	21.9	23.0	204.3	207.0
AIDS	0.5	0.2	1.1	1.1	10.9	19.5
Hepatitis B	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.4	4.9	11.4
Tuberculosis	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.6	**6.6	**5.5

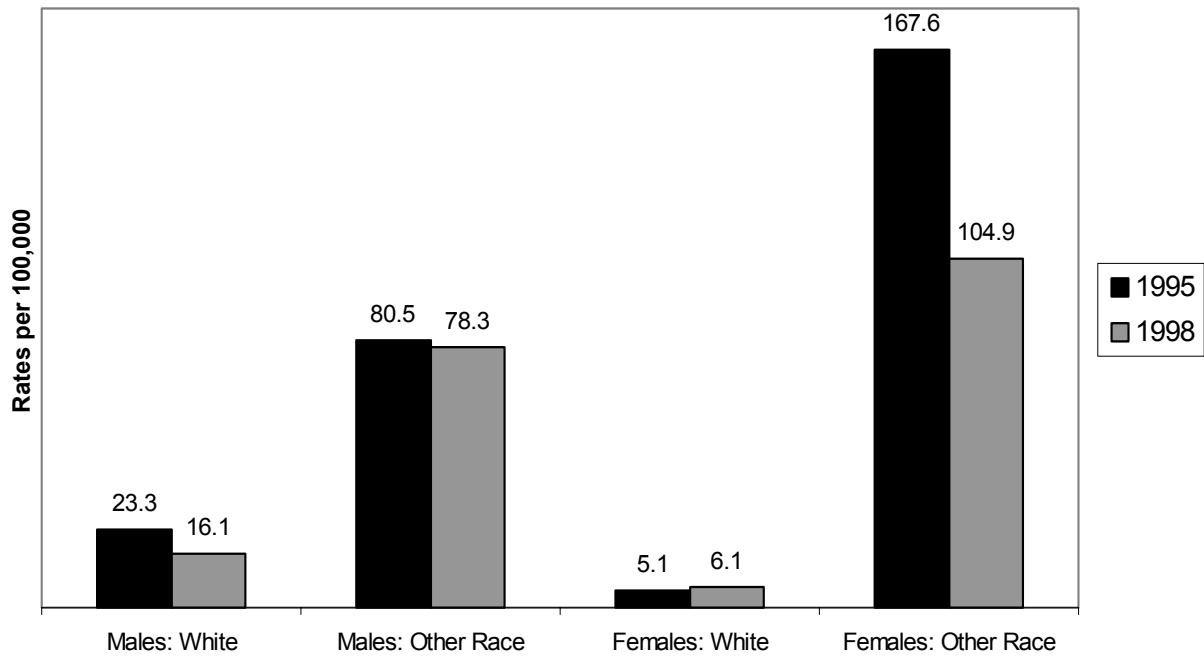
Source: North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics, 1998, and Health Care State Rankings 1999, 7th ed.

*Data were not available for the category

** 1998 figures

While Table 16 indicates that the total rates for sexually transmitted diseases are lower in the county than the state, a closer look at the distribution by gender and ethnicity within the county indicates that sexually transmitted disease rates are higher among minorities than among Whites. Figure 4 shows the syphilis rates in the county stratified by gender and race; similar disparities exist in the rates of gonorrhea and chlamydia in the county.

Figure 4: Chatham County Syphilis Rates



Source: State Center for Health Statistics, 1999

Most communicable diseases occur at a much lower rate in the county than the targeted levels set by *Healthy People 2000*, except for tuberculosis which was more than double this target rate in 1998 (see Table 17).

Table 17: Communicable Disease Incidence in Chatham County, Rates per 100,000 Persons

Disease	1995	1996	1997	1998	2000 Goals
Salmonellosis	35.0	2.3	17.7	10.9	16.0
AIDS	4.7	--	2.2	8.7	43.0
Hepatitis A & B	21.0	4.6	4.4	*	16.1
Tuberculosis	2.3	4.5	2.2	8.7	3.5
Shigellosis	*	11.3	24.4	8.7	*
Campylobacter	*	4.5	2.2	6.5	25.0
Food borne disease	*	*	48.7	2.2	**45.0

Source: North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics, October 1999 and *Healthy People 2000*

*Data were not available for the category

**Sum of incidence for salmonellosis, campylobacter and E. coli

Health Services in the Community

By looking only at the number of people per health care provider and hospital bed, it may appear that Chatham County suffers from a lack of medical services as compared to North

Carolina as a whole (see Table 18). However, those Chatham County residents with health care coverage who are able to travel to such nearby medical centers as the University of North Carolina (UNC) in Orange County, Duke University in Durham County, or other medical centers in counties close by, have access to a wide range of health services. Traveling to Chapel Hill, Durham, or elsewhere requires time, transportation, and financial resources—resources that are not available to all of the county’s residents. Therefore, it has been recognized that more services must be made available in the county, as evidenced by Chatham County’s classification as a Health Manpower Shortage Area (Molloy, 1997). Chatham County residents participating in this community assessment commented on the difficulties inherent in needing to travel outside of the county for health care: “there are volunteers to take people to UNC, but it is an effort to get it,” and “in receiving health care, there are many people who don’t have the transportation.”

Table 18. People Per Health Care Provider and Hospital Bed, 1997

	Chatham County	North Carolina
Primary care physician	2,149	1,281
Primary care physician plus extender*	1,561	1,007
Registered nurse	258	113
Dentist	5,014	2,495
Hospital bed	631	332

Source: North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics

*Primary care physicians plus nurse practitioners and physician assistants weighted as .66 of a physician

Nonetheless, there are a number of sites where residents may obtain health care services within the county. Physician services from individual and small group practices are located primarily in and near Pittsboro and Siler City; there are no physician practices in Bennett, Bonlee, or Gulf. The Chatham County Health Department also offers a variety of services to county residents. Health care provided at Health Department offices in Pittsboro and Siler City includes services in the domains of child health (e.g. exams, screenings, and parenting education), general clinic (e.g. immunizations; HIV, TB, and pregnancy testing; and flu shots),

primary care (e.g. physical examinations and preventative, diagnostic, and treatment services), maternal health (e.g. prenatal care and maternity care coordination), family planning, and sexually transmitted disease care. Additional community health centers and family practices located in the county include Piedmont Health Services in Moncure, Chatham Primary Care in Siler City, Chatham Family Physicians in Pittsboro and Goldston, and UNC Chatham Crossing Family Practice in North Chatham. Also, a school-based health clinic in Pittsboro, the Body Shop, is available for adolescents at Horton Middle School. Chatham Hospital, a 68-bed facility located in Siler City, is the only hospital located in Chatham County. Despite the various services offered, a lack of birthing services exists in Chatham County; however, Chatham Hospital's plan to open a new birthing center will help to meet this need (A. Hickle, personal communication, November 24, 1999). As previously mentioned, county residents often travel to hospitals in the surrounding counties for hospital services (Molloy, 1997).

As in any community, there are several barriers Chatham County residents face when accessing these health care services. As in much of the U.S., chief among these barriers is the inability to pay for the services, usually a result of a lack of health insurance coverage. As a participant in one of our focus groups said of problems people face in obtaining health care in the county, "not so much access, but more paying for it...many people can't afford it." As can be seen in Table 19, the percentage of Chatham County residents without health insurance coverage in 1995 (14.9%) was somewhat higher than the North Carolina figure (12.8%). Among those living below the poverty line, the percentage uninsured both in the county and in the state is much higher. However, in this respect, Chatham County is doing somewhat better than the North Carolina average, with 28.3% of those below the poverty line in the county and 26.7% in the state overall lacking health insurance. It should be noted that recent estimates indicate that the

number of Chatham County residents without health insurance has doubled since 1995, when these data were collected (Morris, 1999a).

Table 19. Health Insurance Coverage, 1995

	Chatham County		North Carolina	
	Total	Total below poverty	Total	Total below poverty
Private insurance only	65.9%	17.7%	64.5%	15.8%
Medicare	14.3%	23.1%	14.4%	18.3%
Medicaid	7.5%	47.4%	10.8%	52.5%
Uninsured	14.9%	26.7%	12.8%	28.3%

Source: Center for Health Policy, Law and Management, Duke University, 1995

An encouraging trend among children in North Carolina—which is likely to also hold for children in Chatham County—is that in 1999 there are 15.8% more children covered under the federal Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and Medicaid combined as compared to the number that were covered under Medicaid only in 1996. This increase in North Carolina stands in contrast to net decreases despite CHIP in the number of children covered in a number of other states as a result of families losing Medicaid coverage because of reforms to the nation’s welfare system (Pulos, 1999).

Table 20. Barriers to Access to Health Care Services in Chatham County

As reported by residents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transportation difficulties ▪ High cost of health care coupled with inadequate financial resources ▪ Language barriers ▪ Lack of understanding of how to get into and use the health care system ▪ Inconvenient hours of operation ▪ Need for specific programs and services ▪ Not knowing about the available services ▪ Lack of “whole” view of person and lack of humanity in health care ▪ Lack of acceptability of health care options available ▪ Lack of coordination between primary and specialty providers ▪ Lack of sensitivity to the family and social context

Source: Health of Chatham, 1996-1997

Additional barriers county residents face when accessing health care will be addressed in later chapters of this report. In another similar project conducted by the Chatham County Health

Department, county residents identified several barriers. These barriers are listed in Table 20 in order of frequency mentioned.

Social Health and Quality of Life Indicators

A healthy community should imply more than just the absence of disease; a community can be considered truly healthy only when it is healthy socially and its members have reached a certain level in the quality of their lives. There are a number of indicators that can be used to gauge a community's social health and quality of life, including crime, public safety, housing, and the social health of its children.

Crime and arrest rates in 1998 for Chatham County and North Carolina indicate that, despite a recent high profile murder case in the county (Morris, 1999b), Chatham County residents enjoy greater safety and lack of crime than do North Carolina residents as a whole (see Table 21). Of notable exception is the arrest rate for driving while intoxicated (DWI): the arrest rate for this crime was 1296.3 per 100,000 in the county compared to 873.0 per 100,000 in the state. Although the county generally has low crime rates compared to the state, within the county differences do exist. Siler City crime rates are notably higher than the county rates as a whole (North Carolina Department of Justice, 1999). The Siler City violent crime rate is 1295.2 per 100,000 while the county violent crime rate is 334.6 per 100,000 (North Carolina Department of Justice, 1999). In other words, Siler City's violent crime rate is 287% higher than the county's violent crime rate. Siler City property crime rate is 6440.0 per 100,000 while the county property crime rate is 3058.0 per 100,000, for a Siler City property crime rate 111% higher than the county property crime rate (North Carolina Department of Justice, 1999).

Table 21. 1998 Crime and Arrest Rates per 100,000 for Selected Crimes

	Chatham County	North Carolina
<i>Crime rates</i>		
Violent crime*	334.6	591.8
Property crime**	3,058.0	4,835.9
<i>Arrest rates</i>		
Simple assault	613.8	871.6
Vandalism	77.6	150.9
Prostitution	0	15.6
Drug laws	334.6	576.6
DWI	1296.3	873.0

Source: North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, 1999

*Murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault

**Burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft

State figures indicate that 267 concealed handgun permits were issued in Chatham County between December 1, 1995, when it became legal in the state to keep a concealed handgun, and October 14, 1999. This means that there are approximately 5.9 registered concealed handguns in the county per 1,000 residents, slightly above the North Carolina rate of 5.7 per 1,000 residents. Additionally, there were 98 full-time police officers in the county in 1998, for a total of 2.2 officers per 1,000 residents, below the state total of 3.6 officers per 1,000 residents (North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, 1999).

For a community to thrive, affordable housing must be available to all of its members. Though recent growth has increased the number of housing units in Chatham County, much of the new housing is beyond the financial means of most current county residents. In fact, one of the priority issues identified by a prior study of the county was the lack of affordable housing (Molloy, 1997). In the focus groups we conducted, affordable housing was again mentioned as an issue that residents believe needs to be addressed. As one participant said of the developers working in the county, "Property values go up and they are not willing to build low cost housing." Recent construction data support this view (see Table 22). The average cost for a single-family dwelling was \$179,369 in 1999. This is beyond the reach of many in a county

where 8.4% of the population lives in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 1995) and the median family income in 1998 was \$44,341 (North Carolina Department of Commerce, 1999).

Table 22. Chatham County New Home Construction, Average Cost Per Unit

	Single Family Units	
	Number	Average cost
1993	317	\$137,967
1994	409	\$155,382
1995	363	\$169,941
1996	406	\$183,429
1997	389	\$179,782
1998	410	\$182,482
1999	345	\$179,369

Source: Chatham County Department of Building Inspections, 1999
(1999 figure as of 8-31-99)

In examining the social health of a community, it is also critical to include an examination of the health of children. In 1997-98, the number of children in the custody of the Department of Social Services was 8.4 per 1,000 children for Chatham County, while the rate for the state was 6.6 per 1,000. Also in that year, 64.9 children per 1,000 in Chatham County were reported to the Department of Social Services for child abuse, neglect, and dependency. Of these reports, 33.9%—affecting 191 children—were substantiated. The rate of juveniles in the juvenile justice system is substantially lower for Chatham County than for North Carolina: in 1996-97, the juvenile custody rate in Chatham County was 17.9 per 10,000, while the rate for the state was 81.9 per 10,000 (North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, 1999).

Governmental Body Responsible for Health

The services provided by the Chatham County Health Department include administration, community health promotion and advocacy, preventive health services, family outreach services, environmental health, and animal control services (Chatham County Health Department, 1999).

According to the Health Department’s mission statement, “the Chatham County Health

Department exists to provide and encourage the provision of quality health programs that protect

and promote health, prevent and control disease, reduce and rehabilitate disability, and establish and maintain healthful lifestyles and a safe environment” (Chatham County Health Department, 1999). An eleven-member Board of Health governs the Chatham County Health Department; this board is largely responsible for monitoring the public health of the community (Chatham County Health Department, 1999). Publicly elected county commissioners appoint county residents to the Board of Health.

Environmental Health Issues with Political Repercussions

The role of the Board of Health has been controversial during the last few years in part due to hog farming regulations which have had potential economic and environmental impacts on the community (V. Jeffries, personal communication, November 12, 1999). On March 25, 1997, the Chatham County Board of Health approved regulations to prevent factory-style hog farms from moving into Chatham (Price, 1997a). The regulations applied only to farms with 3,000 or more hogs. Soon after, the Chatham County Agribusiness Council questioned the constitutionality of the new regulations by filing a lawsuit in federal court against members of the Board of Health, the County Health Director, and Chatham County (Price, 1997b). This lawsuit has not yet come to trial.

A politician’s stance on environmental health issues can be a determining factor in the outcomes of Chatham County elections. The two key issues cited in the 1998 race for county commissioner were restrictions on hog farming and stance on a golf course subdivision planned for a site near Jordan Lake (Price, 1998a). Winners of the race in District 3, Carl Outz, and District 5, Rick Givens, were against new hog regulations (Price, 1998b). The only elected candidate who supported the new hog regulations was in District 4, Gary Phillips. Phillips was elected over Henry Dunlap, a commissioner since 1974, in part because Phillips was opposed to

the 600-acre golf course subdivision, Astoria, while Dunlap supported it (Price, 1998b). Phillips has been described as being “an expert on conservation easements” who is concerned with “protecting farmland and the rural charms of the county and environment” (Price, 1998a).

The issues of restrictions on hog farming and the growing numbers of subdivisions in Chatham County are intricately related. Opponents of the hog restrictions, “cast the debate as a battle between Chatham’s old-line farm families and the newcomers seeking a country lifestyle...near employment centers in Chapel Hill, Raleigh, and Research Triangle Park” (Price, 1997a). The newcomers have raised other questions in the political arena. In January, 1999, the County Commissioners considered a nine-month moratorium on new residential subdivisions in order to “get ahead of reactionary planning” (Price, 1999b), which was not put into effect (K. Everage, personal communication, December 2, 1999). Commissioners have been challenged to find ways to encourage industry growth to balance the tax base while being conscious of zoning issues.

In 1994, Chatham County rezoned the University Lake watershed to allow twice the previous density development (Price, 1999e). Allowing dense development in the watershed alarmed neighboring Orange County because University Lake is used as the drinking-water reservoir for Chapel Hill and Carrboro. Chatham Commissioner Gary Phillips explains that up to 35% of septic systems fail in poor soils commonly found in watersheds. Homeowners in densely developed areas do not have enough land to reconstruct their septic systems, which can lead to pollution of the water source (Price, 1999e). In August of 1999, commissioners decided to hold a public hearing in November to discuss reducing land use in the University Lake watershed by banning dense development in that area (Price, 1999e). Shortly thereafter, the proposal to ban dense development was approved (K. Everage, personal communication, December 2, 1999).

The Haw River, Rocky River, Deep River, and Jordan Lake Impoundment are Chatham County's water sources (Molloy, 1997). Despite these water sources, Chatham County is currently experiencing a water shortage. Cary and Apex own the only intake on Jordan Lake leaving Chatham County to purchase its raw water from those municipalities. Chatham County recently received a state grant which it will use in part to construct a pipe to link with Durham's water system, providing officials time to weigh their options for a permanent raw water source (Price, 1999f).

Another issue that affects Chatham County residents is Carolina Power & Light Company's (CP&L) proposal to double its high-level nuclear waste storage at the Shearon Harris power plant located in neighboring Wake County (Price, 1999a). CP&L is currently using two of its four storage pools for spent fuel rods. If allowed to use all four of the storage pools, the Shearon Harris plant could become the largest storage facility for used fuel rods in the country (Price, 1999c). This has left Chatham residents and politicians concerned about the risk of an accident involving the radioactive waste (Price, 1999d).

Other Health Issues with Political Repercussions

Other health issues with political repercussions include disease outbreaks among Latinos. Because many Latino immigrants come from countries where routine vaccinations and screenings are not required or readily available, Latinos have been central in recent outbreaks of rubella and tuberculosis (Stocking, 1997; Molloy, 1997). Sixty of the 85 North Carolinians infected with rubella in 1996 were from Chatham County, making this the first North Carolina outbreak since the vaccine was developed in 1969 (Stocking, 1997). This caused Chatham County to launch massive vaccination efforts in which the Health Department called upon medics from the National Guard and the March of Dimes for supplies (Stocking, 1996) and

collaborated with local businesses in immunization efforts (Molloy, 1997). Many businesses now require new employees to submit proof of immunization. Employers refer those who have not obtained vaccinations to the Pittsboro or Siler City Health Department clinics where screening and vaccinations are provided free of charge (Molloy, 1997).

Another example of officials quickly acting to prevent disease occurred in June of 1995, when local and state public health officials initiated a Rapid Intervention Outreach Team (RIOT) to address the increase in syphilis incidence rates that were occurring both in the county and statewide (Molloy, 1997). Outreach efforts were focused on identifying residents with syphilis through door-to-door screening, partner identification, treatment, and counseling. Partly as a result of those efforts, syphilis incidence rates in the county fell from 4.4 per 100,000 persons in 1995 to 1.6 per 100,000 persons in 1997 (see Table 16). Chatham County achieved a greater decline in syphilis incidence rates than did the state as a whole, for which syphilis incidence rates fell from 4.2 per 100,000 in 1995 to 3.0 per 100,000 in 1997.

Conclusion

In general, mortality rates for Chatham County are lower than the state's rate and *Healthy Carolinian 2000* goals. However, there are disparities in mortality rates across racial and gender groups in the county. The county offers a variety of health care services to meet the health needs of its residents. However, Chatham County residents often travel to neighboring counties for health services. Traveling to neighboring counties, lack of transportation within the county, and lack of health insurance all present barriers to obtaining health care. The lack of affordable housing poses a quality of life concern for many Chatham residents. Despite these challenges to resident well being, Chatham County has crime rates that are lower overall than those for the state. Other quality of life concerns have had political repercussions involving issues such as hog

farming regulations, land use, and disease outbreaks among Latinos. Personal, social, and environmental factors have all interacted to influence the health of Chatham County residents.

MAJOR THEMES AND ISSUES

Introduction

In focus groups and interviews conducted with Chatham County residents, several salient themes emerged. Residents spoke about the demographic changes occurring in the county, both as a result of the growth of the Latino population and as a result of growth in the northern part of the county. Economic development was on the minds of many residents, as were two related issues: housing, and water and sewer services. Additionally, county residents told us about their views of the transportation, day care, recreation, and education services currently available in the county, and also their concerns regarding health and, related to health, substance abuse. Finally, an overarching issue mentioned by many residents and that has an effect on all of these has to do with communication within the county.

In the sections that follow, we discuss each of the above issues in more depth, describing the different ways that county residents view these issues, illustrating these views with quotes from the residents who took part in this diagnosis. (Please note that, to save space, longer quotes are set apart and single spaced; this does not mean that these quotes are any more important than shorter quotes. Additionally, we have noted where quotes were translated from Spanish.) As a means of highlighting where residents' views are congruent with or different from available secondary data, we include such data or refer back to earlier sections of our review of the secondary data, where appropriate. Also, where possible, we identify specific solutions, most of which were mentioned by county residents, either in our focus groups and interviews, or at the community forum held as part of this community diagnosis. For more information about the community forum, please see the community forum report in the Appendix.

Racial and Ethnic Diversity

Chatham County's racial and ethnic diversity was frequently mentioned during our interviews and focus groups. According to one community member, "There's a great diversity in Chatham County with Latinos, African Americans, and then Anglo Saxons who have lived in Chatham for generations after generations." Chatham County's growing diversity was mentioned most frequently when community members were asked about the changes in the county they had observed over time. Specifically, an increase in the Latino population was often noted. Some residents saw the increasing diversity as a community strength, while others were concerned about problems that may arise because of it.

A Siler City resident and parent shared her perspective on the strengths of the increasing diversity as follows: "We have an opportunity to educate kids about cultural diversity." Another resident explained her opinion of how community members could be affected by the increasing diversity by stating, "I think we can grow a lot in our ability to appreciate the richness of diversity." One community member had already observed the effects of the increasing diversity and stated, "I see more interracial church and civic groups doing things together and uniting for common causes."

There have been two recent, highly publicized incidents in Chatham County related to the growth of diversity in the county. Concerns about the increasing Latino population led Chatham County Board of Commissioners Chairman Rick Givens to write a letter to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service to ask for help in "getting these folk properly documented or routed back to their homes" on August 18, 1999 (Shapard, 1999; Commissioner's letter, 1999). After taking part in a weeklong trip to Mexico for policymakers sponsored by the North Carolina Center for International Understanding, Givens was cited in the *News and Observer* as having

said that he would never again send such a letter (Glascock, 2000b). He was cited as saying, “I’m man enough to admit when I’m wrong” and “I was surprised at how much I didn’t know—and how much I thought I knew” (Glascock, 2000b). Concerns about the growing Latino community also led to a demonstration in front of Siler City’s town hall on February 19, 2000 (Glascock, 2000a). The demonstration was organized by a Siler City resident, and was led by David Duke, a former Republican Louisiana state representative and onetime grand dragon of the Ku Klux Klan (Glascock, 2000b).

One service provider suggested that negative perceptions about the Latino community could be changed through an accepting attitude from community leaders such as agency leaders, town officials, and religious leaders. She explained, “An accepting attitude from the leadership can trickle down to the community level.” Other residents we spoke to believe that acknowledging the Latino community’s contributions to the county’s economy will help to change negative perceptions. One such resident stated:

I think there could be more of a celebration [of] the strengths that Latino citizens and all citizens bring. I think the presence of such a large number of Latinos is unfairly perceived as an economic burden. If you go to Siler City and you look at who is spending money and where they’re spending money, you might want to look at the revenue that they bring in.

Another resident addressed the concerns that some residents have about Latinos working in local industry as follows: “We need to help people see the value in having other folks in their trades—it makes all of us better. We don’t need to ever [feel] threatened.” A Latino resident explained, “We have to leave [our home countries] to search for a new life for ourselves, and more than anything, our children. We did not come to rob anyone. We want even less to strip anyone of what is theirs. No, of course not. We want simply the opportunity to move forward” (translated from Spanish).

According to the residents and service providers we talked to, racial divides are not always limited to long-term residents versus Latinos. One White county resident and parent said, “When we first came here (18 years ago) the racial division was very strong. My daughter’s class was divided in the middle. She was told she was on the wrong side of the room—she was told not to talk to black people.” One service provider described racial divides among adolescents by saying: “There has been name calling and minor assaults.” One of our focus groups indicated that racial divides have been experienced at the workplace. A local industry employee said, “My boss told me that it wasn’t professional to eat with Latino and black people. I learned Spanish and wanted to use it.”

Many residents we talked to were hopeful about the future of race relations and diversity in Chatham County. One resident said, “I hope that there is right now in progress a heightening of awareness that will create a higher level of not just tolerance but appreciation of diversity.” Another resident identified this as an issue she thought the county should address: “We need to work on attitudes towards people who are different—handicapped, Whites, Blacks, and Latinos. We just simply have to do more in respecting their dignity.” A long-time Chatham County resident said,

I think there have always been friendships cross-culturally in Chatham County that are deep and lasting. Some of which are formed out of perhaps disagreements but where people were willing to hang in there and fight to get to know each other and appreciate each other. Chatham is a very good place to live and there is a strong will in the county to keep it that way.

Two recent diversity celebrations illustrate this will among many county residents to recognize and accept the contributions of different groups in the county. In late March, the Chatham County Schools held a “Cultural Awareness Week” (“Schools celebrate,” 2000). Schools across the county took part in various ways. One school’s activities consisted of plays as well as dance and music demonstrations. Other schools had guest speakers from various countries, story tellers,

and cuisine sampling. At one school, students finished the week by signing a tolerance pledge promoting tolerance and acceptance of diversity. At another school, students wrapped up the week with an “International Costume Day.” A Spring Cultural Unity Festival was held on March 20, 2000, in Siler City (“Unity festival,” 2000). International dishes and performances from American, Mexican, Pacific Island, Native American, and East European cultures were highlighted. The international dishes were donated to the festival by local restaurants and grocers. Entertainment included music, Polynesian dancers, an African-American storyteller, a folk dancer performing Bulgarian dance, and drama from a local theater company (“Unity festival,” 2000).

Growth of the Latino Population

Both secondary data discussed in the community profile section and the comments of residents show that the Latino population within Chatham County has grown substantially in the past decade. County residents have observed this phenomenon, with descriptions such as “there are many Latinos” (translated from Spanish) and “the [Latino] population is growing” (translated from Spanish). The growing Latino population has had positive impacts on the economy while also posing challenges for the county and its residents. As discussed above, this increased diversity of Chatham County has both benefited and challenged the county.

In addition to increasing the diversity of the county population, the growth in the Latino population has provided much-needed labor for industries within Chatham County. With current unemployment rates under 3% (Triangle J Council of Government, 1999), industries within Chatham County are experiencing extreme labor shortages and Latino workers are filling this critical need (R. Willis, personal communication, April 8, 2000). Moreover, Latino residents have started several businesses in the Siler City area, expanding the local economy, and Latino

consumers have increased the demand for local goods and services. A Latino resident of Siler City stated, “already, they sell more, more than anywhere, in the food stores. There, a Latino will spend two hundred to three hundred dollars” (translated from Spanish). Latino residents are cognizant of their positive impact on the economy, explaining, “. . .the merchants in the county, are realizing.. or they know, that we can be of much help (economic support)” (translated from Spanish).

Service providers, merchants, employers, and government agencies have had to adapt their services to meet the language and cultural differences of the Latino community. A primary need of Latinos in Chatham County is increased availability of bilingual services. Latinos who participated in focus groups are aware of the already increased numbers of interpreters in the community, stating: “There are already many institutions that have interpreters” (translated from Spanish). Moreover, Latino community members spoke positively about growing numbers of service providers and business people in the community who are recognizing the importance of learning Spanish to enhance communication with the Latino community. The efforts of both non-Latinos and Latinos within the county to bridge communication difficulties demonstrate the potential for different segments of the larger Chatham County community to work together on common problems.

Despite the increase in translation and interpretation services within the county, the availability of bilingual services still falls short of the demand. Increasing bilingual services within the county is still a critical need. Latino residents still describe difficulties in communicating in various community settings. A community resident in Siler City felt that “sometimes, the problem is that they cannot communicate with us” (translated from Spanish).

Another resident said, “In the hospital, well, they lack workers that speak Spanish. Well, there are none [now]” (translated from Spanish).

In addition to providing bilingual services, community agencies such as the Hispanic Liaison and the *Manos que Ayudan* (Helping Hands Center) serve as resources and advocates for the Latino community. Many local Latinos cited these organizations, as well as the Health Department and local churches—St. Julia’s, in particular—as sources of support, resources, and information. As partners with the Latino community, many of these sources of support collaborate with the community to address their concerns. Moreover, these organizations often facilitate communication and interaction between the Latino community and other non-Latino communities within the county. Consequently, they have the potential to aid understanding and partnership between Latino and non-Latino communities. A Latina community member gave her perspective on the significance of support from these organizations:

There are people, social workers, educators, all of these people, that have demonstrated that yes, we can overcome in this environment, that it is not necessary to speak English, that it is not important that we are of another culture, of another race, from another country, that equally we can be here without fear (translated from Spanish).

Importantly, the Latino community also provides for its own members, as reflected in this quote: “to solve a problem...there are many people that know how.... We help each other a lot” (translated from Spanish). The ability of the Latino community to help each other demonstrates the growing strength of this community.

For some Latino residents living in Chatham County, the lack of legal residence documentation is a concern. In 1990, 18% of the Hispanic newcomers to North Carolina were not U.S. citizens (Johnson, Johnson-Webb, & Farrell, 1999). Focus group participants explained that without documentation, work opportunities are severely limited. For residents without documentation, even looking for a job is difficult. A Siler City resident explained, “Even to go to

look for work with [false] papers, one is fearful of, well, a deportation, going to jail, for violating the law” (translated from Spanish). A focus group participant related the difficulties of a friend lacking documentation: “A friend, he told me, he had gone to get his license, with bought papers and they threw him in jail because the papers were not his. And, he had to pay like \$1,500 to get his car out and leave jail” (translated from Spanish). However, undocumented Latinos are fearful of applying for legal residency status. One community member stated:

I would like to apply for my permit but...they will mail one a deportation letter, because they have my photograph, my signature, my fingerprint, my address and everything. And, then since I apply and they don't give it to me, they can mail me a deportation letter. Then, it is more problems for me (translated from Spanish).

Other Latino residents expressed concern about the barriers to college education created by a lack of documentation. One woman said, “... I had good grades, I had a scholarship for the university, but I could not continue, I don't have a social security number.” Another woman related of undocumented Latino youth in general, “... they (graduating students) cannot continue...in the university, for being illegal. At that point, many people’s illusions, from studying for so long, are broken.”

Neither community members nor service providers had solutions to the issue of a lack of documentation. However, it was suggested that Chatham County residents and service providers should be cognizant of these concerns of undocumented Latinos and work to address these needs. While immigration policy is set at the federal level and cannot be changed by county officials, representatives of Chatham County could work with state and federal leaders to facilitate the provision of work permits.

In all, the growth of the Latino population has benefited Chatham County through contributions to the economy and increased diversity. Businesses as well as service agencies have been responsive to the cultural and linguistic needs of this population. However, additional

bilingual services continue to be necessary and issues surrounding documentation continue to require attention.

Growth in North Chatham

County residents we interviewed noted the growing residential development in the northern part of the county; these observations are in congruence with the secondary data presented in the community description section of this document. This growth consists primarily of retirement communities and subdivisions of professionals who commute to areas such as Chapel Hill, Research Triangle Park, Raleigh, and Durham. Some of the residents we interviewed referred to the newly developed subdivisions as “bedroom communities” because so many of the residents have jobs in neighboring counties. A North Chatham resident we spoke with said she feels “connected to Durham” since that is where she works and her children go to school. Another North Chatham resident said she volunteers in Chapel Hill and a family member attends the Chapel Hill Senior Center. Some Chatham residents are concerned that newcomers in North Chatham will increasingly offer their volunteer services and donate to charities in neighboring counties. One North Chatham resident suggested that newcomers be given a booklet containing information concerning volunteer opportunities and charitable organizations in Chatham County.

The growth in North Chatham has brought change to the county. One North Chatham resident notes that there are “fewer trees and vistas” due to the increasing number of housing subdivisions. Several residents noted a need for attracting business and industry to “level out the tax base” so that the county would be able to support the new residents’ need for schools, water, sewer, and highways.

Economic Development

Historically, agriculture was the major source of income in Chatham County, but this has changed in recent years. Now there is a mixture of agriculture, manufacturing, wood processing, furniture production, electronics, software and Internet consulting, steel fabrication, and machining. As one resident commented regarding these changes:

There is a growing diversity in the economy of Chatham. During the 50's and 60's it was largely agricultural, now it [is] agriculture and industry that supports families. There's some growth in our industrial base. The largest industrial base was in the Moncure area; now Siler City has passed it by maybe five to eight percent. Even though we have the greatest growth in residential [development], which does not support itself, we are getting some growth in the commercial revenue sources.

The ties to the land are strong and many want to recognize this connection. As one farmer stated, "We'd like to see the ag (agriculture) community blend in with the rest [of the community] and be accepted and liked for what we are. The ag community adds a lot to Chatham County. They are Chatham County." A businessman added,

People don't realize the role, the economic contribution that agriculture makes to the county...People don't think about [the fact] that only eight to ten percent of their income goes for food. The rest can go for TV, car, gasoline, etc. When there starts to be shortages of food, people may start to understand where the food comes from. If we don't keep the agricultural base, the food will have to come from somewhere else.

While the farming community has an apparent appreciation of the value of agriculture, many realize that the tax base must be broadened with other sources. Residential property contributes less in taxes than is needed to cover all the services that support the county residents. For example, the tax revenue on a \$200,000 home provides only enough revenue to cover one child in cost expended for schooling (T. Tucker, personal communication, March 22, 2000). This demonstrates the need for a broader non-residential tax base. One long-time resident suggested,

We have to make [industry] pay for itself, we need to regulate it some, that if you want to locate here you will pay for the services required to support the industry. If [Chatham

is] so choice and everyone wants to live here, then they've got to cough up and pay for the support services.

This shift away from farming, combined with much of the recent growth, has resulted in a wide range of income levels in Chatham County. Referring to this disparity of income, a retiree noted, "The affluent in the county are retired. In the middle [income range], Chatham doesn't have a high population. If [we] were seeking, we would want to have more of the middle class, these working people moving in."

Many county residents see a need to attract different types of business. As one businessperson observed, "New businesses are not being attracted. There is a lack of diversity in business." Residents' concerns about development and the environmental damage that sometimes follows may contribute to this situation. As one resident noted, "Every time someone tries to bring something in, someone hollers and stops it. When someone wanted to bring in a concrete plant...they rose up and stopped it. No one wants anything in here and industry knows it."

Another concern regarding what is needed to strengthen the economy of Chatham was expressed by an elderly resident in the following way:

Jobs, so that my grandchildren might be able to stay here—and have a job. Cause a lot of kids that go up to college now, they either go out of the state or go out of the county or somewhere to get a job.

A businessman sees this movement of young people out of the county as a lost resource for the future: "We're losing a lot of our potential aggressive young leaders, our young people, cause they have no reason to come back." A retiree commented, "Children are not being educated for highly skilled jobs." Another resident expressed the importance of education in today's job market:

Today's companies are willing to pay for knowledge, and in order for a company to come into the area, the educational level of people needs to be raised...It's amazing the number of applicants, even young people, without four years of high school.

With almost fifty percent of the labor force going outside Chatham for employment (Chatham County Economic Development Commission Updated Report, 1999), the quality of jobs available in Chatham is a concern of many. One resident noted that "the jobs are low-paying, and no union, and service [in nature]." Another remarked, "Some work in Siler City, but people travel to Asheboro, Chapel Hill, Greensboro, Moncure, lot of jobs in Siler City without good benefits." A rural resident observed, "Just here in Bear Creek? Because there's nobody working right here in this little particular town. Everybody has like [to go to] Sanford, Siler City, Pittsboro, Chapel Hill." A service provider noted, "I'd like to see more employment opportunities for upwardly mobile with opportunities for growth in the workplace located in Chatham County, so we don't have that high percentage of people commuting outside the county for work." In Moncure, a young man commented, "very few kinds of jobs right here, a few contractors but [they] hire you outside of county for work, Raleigh, Cary. Mostly production work, lots of employees come from outside the county [Sanford, Lee County]. Plants around here got a lot of people who come into [the] county for work." While low paying, these jobs are seen as opportunities by Latinos moving to Chatham County. As two Latino residents noted, "Simply, one wants to work," (translated from Spanish) and "There is a lot of work here" (translated from Spanish). All of these responses are congruent with the low unemployment rate and the types of industry currently in the county.

Several factors contribute to the limited quality of jobs and types of industries in Chatham County, such as the historical factors and limitations related to the available labor force

mentioned above. The importance of economic development to the future of Chatham cannot be overstated. One resident summed up the significance by stating:

Jobs would be first. If you take care of that you take care of what falls down the line...If you got jobs you will be able to keep up with going to the doctor, education, transportation. If you don't have a job, you can't get any of these.

Residents of Chatham County clearly recognize the impact that economic development has on their quality of life, and made suggestions for improving the economic situation in the county. A long-time resident suggested,

Maybe our governing body should be looking at making the companies that are here know that they are welcomed, beside going out and getting new industry. Industry has to come in, it will take time to put the infrastructure and things into place to attract them.

Evidence that the community has the ability to address this issue was demonstrated at a small-group discussion of economic development at the community forum. One example mentioned by a resident of the creative problem solving being used in the county to address both business issues and preservation concerns is an agreement made between the county and a large company moving to Pittsboro. The company has agreed to use gray water from the county's water treatment plant in its manufacturing operation; not only will this save the county the expense of completing treatment of this water, but it will also provide the company with water of sufficient quality for its manufacturing process. Another example of the ability of the community to address these issues was a suggestion made by a farmer about how the county could maintain farming despite rising land costs through the creation of land trusts, which could provide younger people with access to land for farming that they would not be able to afford otherwise.

In summary, we found that people across the county are aware of the need for decisions on economic growth, and hold strong opinions about what those decisions should be. While

planning is underway at the county level, there are many perspectives about whether current plans are adequate for the speed at which change is occurring within the county.

Housing

Many residents of Chatham County are concerned about the housing available in the county. Specifically, residents feel the county lacks affordable and good quality housing for community members. Further, there are specific subpopulations in Chatham that are especially impacted by the county's housing problems.

The concern that there is a lack of affordable housing in the county is pervasive throughout Chatham. Residents feel that land is expensive and that building costs are rising. In addition, the \$1,500 impact fee for building new houses in the county that was approved last year further increased the price of a new house. Currently, there is no public subsidized housing available in the county. Comments made by some community members in reference to the lack of affordable housing included the following: "Property values go up and they are not willing to build low cost housing," "People need a place to stay but they don't have the money," and "We need inexpensive housing." There are currently no incentives to develop affordable rentals within the county, so most of the new housing takes the form of upscale homes, primarily in the northern part of the county. Data show that although recent growth has increased the number of housing units in Chatham County, much of the new housing is beyond the financial means of most current county residents. In 1999, for example, the average cost of a new home in Chatham was about \$180,000 (see Table 23). In addition, the average cost of housing increased by 30% from 1993 (\$137,967) to 1999 (\$179,369) (Chatham County Department of Building Instructions, 1999). More than half (1549) of the 3067 very low-income households in the county paid more than 30% of their income for housing in 1990 (Chatham Habitat, 1999) and as the

average cost of housing in the county increases it will only be more difficult for those with low incomes to find affordable houses.

Related to the lack of affordable housing is the issue of quality housing in Chatham. According to one resident, “Adequate housing is a serious issue.” Another resident stated, “Housing is a big-time problem. Quality housing for the poor and low middle income—we just don’t have an adequate supply.” Siler City and Pittsboro are the only two areas in the county that currently have housing codes. Further, in 1990, 2.2% of Chatham County residents lacked complete indoor plumbing (Harris, 2000). Secondary data show that the issue of affordable and quality housing is a pressing issue for those with low incomes. In 1990, 57.4% (1760) of the 3067 very low-income households in Chatham had a “housing problem” as defined by the U.S. Census (Chatham Habitat, 1999). In addition, 64.5% of all renter households earning 50% or less of median income had such housing problems (Chatham Habitat, 1999).

Interviews revealed that Latino community members feel that housing is a serious issue for them. Some of the comments regarding housing made by Latino community members included, “The truth is that the majority of the houses here are very run down. And, what they charge in rent is a lot. Why? Because there is nowhere else to go to live” (translated from Spanish), “We did not have heating, nor hot or cold [air conditioning]. Nothing!” (translated from Spanish), “Below the house...the plumbing is broken, water collects and then it smells very bad” (translated from Spanish), and “Housing is the most important [issue for the community to address]” (translated from Spanish). Residents of various races and from different areas in the county also feel that quality housing is especially a concern for Latinos. Comments that reflect this sentiment included, “Latinos need help in purchasing homes,” “One reason they are piled up like that is that there are not enough housing units for people. If they had somewhere to go they

would. There's no affordable housing [for Latinos],” and “There is a housing crisis with the Latinos in Siler City.”

County residents spoke of the disparity in the quality of houses found in the county. As one community member noted,

The contrast in this county is so...extraordinary. You ride over to the Governor's Club, then in a few minutes you can go to Snipes Trailer park, it's like a third world country there. Those people are living in houses where they charge by the head and they sleep in shifts...we don't need people living like that in this county.

The issue of quality housing is also an issue for rural residents. Lack of toilets, incomplete kitchens, bad water, and no sewer connections are some of the housing challenges faced by rural residents (Harris, 2000).

In summary, both primary and secondary data show that affordable, good quality housing is an issue in Chatham County. The recent growth in the county has added to the housing problem. The housing condition of a community is an important environmental factor that affects the health and quality of life of members of that community. Thus, to enhance the well-being of Chatham County residents it becomes important to improve the present housing situation. Currently, Chatham has an Affordable Housing Coalition that is trying to tackle some of the housing concerns in the county. As evidenced at the community forum, several community residents feel that strengthening this coalition with community members is one way the community can try to improve housing conditions in Chatham.

Water and Sewer

A related issue of concern to many county residents is that of water and sewer. Residents speak of the high costs of these services, of their concerns about the safety of the county's water and the adequacy of the water supply, and of how the current situation hinders economic growth in the county. When asked what is needed in the county, one resident of Moncure noted, “water,

sewers, schools, sheriff. We buy our water from Lee County while we sell water to Wake County. Need to expand water sources. Bring the water system into the 21st century. Sewer and gas coming through here would be nice, too.” Some of these concerns are not necessarily felt throughout the county since residents of Pittsboro and Siler City do not have to rely on wells and septic systems like residents of the rest of the county. As one Pittsboro resident responded when asked what has changed in his community: “We have got water and we didn't have it. Don't know how many years it has been, we had wells but it wasn't good water.”

Costs were mentioned as a concern, both for those who rely on wells and septic systems and those who have access to “county” water and sewer services. This was explained by one resident as follows:

That isn't even what it costs to put a septic system in, that costs six to ten thousand dollars, you need \$15,000 before you even get started. See, we have county water but it costs you \$2000 to hook up, so everywhere you go, it is a block of money.

This may be one reason why the boom in home building in the past several years has been primarily made up of expensive homes, as mentioned earlier.

Residents are also concerned about ensuring that they have a safe supply of water. As one community member noted as being among the concerns in the county, “only septic tanks outside Siler City and Pittsboro . . . wells going dry. Not enough water.” Another said, “If they could purify the water it would be fine.” Another safety issue raised by a resident relates to fire safety, “upgrade water system, we can't use [water] for actually fighting fires, just for flushing, cause put in too small [water] lines.”

Another concern of residents related to this is that new businesses will not be attracted to Chatham until these water and sewer issues have been resolved. As one Chatham resident noted: “I think the sewer problem would be the most concern for new businesses coming here until they

get that sewer system straightened out.” This lack of infrastructure may explain why the majority of businesses within the county tend to be employers with few employees, as smaller businesses may be affected less by the county’s water and sewer limitations. While many other factors may affect whether businesses locate in Chatham, these water and sewer limitations will continue to be a factor for growth of business within the county. An additional result of the water and sewer situation is that it affects the number of people who can be accommodated in the county.

Although Jordan Lake is within Chatham County and could provide an abundant and safe source of water, one resident explained, “Chatham had a chance to have a water intake and turned it down because it would mean development. They missed their chance.” Because of this, Chatham County currently gets most of its non-well water from the Haw River and sources outside the county.

Transportation

A lack of available transportation was a major concern of both urban and rural Chatham County residents. A community member simply stated, “the transportation is not sufficient” (translated from Spanish). Without adequate transportation, Chatham County residents often cannot access work opportunities and health services within their communities nor easily complete many tasks of daily living such as grocery shopping or washing clothes, significantly affecting their quality of life. One community member in Siler City explained the difficulties saying, “If one doesn’t have a car, one cannot go anywhere, .. to the store, ..to wash, necessary things” (translated from Spanish).

Chatham Transit Network provides transportation services within the county for those who need them on a limited basis. These services include subsidized low-cost transportation to locations within Siler City and Pittsboro and other locations within 2.5 miles of the routes they

service for local human service agencies. However, this transportation must be arranged a day in advance for locations outside of Pittsboro and Siler City, and for locations within Siler City or Pittsboro, the wait for same-day transportation may be up to two hours (H. Stovall, personal communication, April 13, 2000). However, the services the network is able to provide are limited by its funding, routes, limited seating, and the rural nature of the county. Because of the long distances between locations in the county, mass transit is not always cost-effective. Moreover, many county residents are unaware of these services. The Triangle Transit Authority will assist county residents in starting vanpools to travel to work within Orange, Wake, or Durham counties (H. Stovall, personal communication, April 13, 2000). Some residents within the county also use taxis to reach the grocery store and laundromats. However, other residents commented on the lack of taxis within the county and the expense of those available.

Without transportation, county residents often have difficulty accessing available employment options. In Chatham County, a lack of transportation is especially problematic because of the large percentage of Chatham residents who must travel long distances to work. Limited transportation often leads to limited work opportunities. A county resident explains, “there is work, but there is no transportation. There are people who get transportation to Pittsboro, they go, they go with others, but suddenly, the one who drives doesn’t work there, and the others are left without work. It’s ten, it’s six [people] that are left without work” (translated from Spanish).

Adequate transportation is also necessary for residents to access health services within their community. Community residents described the difficulties in using medical services without reliable transportation. One county resident said,

The best would be transportation, [for] one not having a car. My husband goes to Moncure to bring back medicine for his heart and sometimes I am working ...and he

gets sick and I worry there because we don't know anyone for transportation for him (translated from Spanish).

A mother who could not drive expressed her concern about transportation should her children become ill by stating: "...because, sometimes, a child gets sick, and ... how does one dare to drive if you live outside of Siler City" (translated from Spanish).

Chatham County residents have developed many informal structures and networks within the community to aid each other with transportation, displaying the ability to effectively address this issue. A long-time Latina community resident has told community members, "I will loan myself, I have a car, I have a license. [If] someone calls me and has an emergency, it's fine" (translated from Spanish). However, on rare occasions, these arrangements can become exploitive. A community resident described the situation, saying "when one already has possibilities, one exploits those who do not, because they charge a lot of money. They charge a lot, seventy, eighty dollars [for a ride]" (translated from Spanish).

Community members also proposed several solutions to the problems of a lack of transportation. One community member proposed that the community "takes charge to buy vans and someone to work with these vans" (translated from Spanish). A mother who was unable to drive suggested that the community offer driving school for women. She explained her need for these classes: "Sometimes, the husband is not there, he is working. Well, what do I do? I have the car there, but what do I do?" (translated from Spanish). At the community forum, a community resident suggested that employers share the responsibility for transportation, helping to arrange carpools and distributing information about available transportation resources. Moreover, the resident suggested locating the employers in a central area to facilitate transportation to employment. In fact, Chatham County recently bought land near Siler City for

the development of an industrial park that could potentially facilitate transportation by having employment in a central area (Riggsbee, 2000).

In all, the lack of transportation for county residents impedes access to work opportunities and health services. Chatham Transit Network is only able to meet the transportation needs of some county residents. The informal ride system within the county helps meet the transportation needs for some residents. However, many county residents do not have the necessary access to reliable, low-cost transportation. Nevertheless, through the present solutions community members have developed to meet the community's transportation needs, the community has also demonstrated the necessary community strengths to collaborate with others to create effective and innovative solutions to the challenges posed by a lack of transportation.

Day Care

Many Chatham County residents find that affordable, quality day care for children is lacking in the county. Similar to housing and health care, residents expressed difficulties paying for child care. Additionally, even when they are able to pay for it, residents find that they are not able to locate facilities in their communities. Illustrative comments made by county residents included the following: "Affordable child care and affordable housing are two things somebody needs to take care of along with health care." Many Latinas expressed concern about the lack of affordable childcare in their communities, especially when multiple children need childcare. One said,

There are many children and very few daycares. Because of this, there are many women who care for children illegally. Many mothers have to leave their children with women who don't [provide] sufficient care. There are women, it is only one woman who watches six children. Then, it is a bit difficult (translated from Spanish).

In a focus group of day care providers, many participants expressed frustration with the regulations they must follow to receive state certification. One participant said, “You’re supposed to be spending quality time with the children but you can’t, because of all the regulations.” Specific regulations cited included regulations mandating that healthy food be served to the children and regulations aimed at stopping the spread of germs. As day care providers in the county said, “You can’t fry food and give it to your children. There’s certain things you just have to fry. They’ve forgotten what a child is,” and

Every time you wipe a nose, you’re supposed to wash your hands...It looks good on paper and it sounds good...but when we’re outside [and a child sneezes] do I take all the kids back inside to wash hands again?... They’ve forgotten common sense.

Chatham County child care providers believe that these state regulations are a cause of the lack of day care in the county. As one provider said, “They need to loosen rules and regulations that are too stringent. They are going to lose everyone.”

Recreation

A leading concern of many Chatham County residents is the lack of adequate recreational opportunities in the county. In fact, this issue was raised in virtually every focus group and the majority of interviews conducted for this community assessment. This concern echoes the findings of a recent survey conducted by the Chatham County Department of Parks and Recreation, in which 65% of 590 respondents characterized the recreational facilities and activities available in the county as “inadequate” (Chatham County Department of Parks and Recreation, 1999). General comments made by residents concerning recreation included, “I think it’s serious that we do not have parks and recreation based in the county,” and “we just don’t have a lot of leisure activities.”

County residents perceive the lack of recreational opportunities as affecting all age groups in the county, although many residents feel that the problem particularly affects Chatham

County youth. There are a few recreational outlets for youth in the county, such as the Pittsboro Teen Center, the Teen Works Teen Center in Siler City, and the Sprott Youth Center in Moncure, but these facilities do not meet the needs of all of the youth in the county. Quotes from residents illustrating this theme include, “Teenagers need a place to direct their energy. We aren’t giving them enough recreational opportunities,” “We need somewhere for people to meet and greet, and [where] the kids can play basketball,” and

We need a comprehensive recreation program in Siler City for youth that is multi-cultural in its scope, targeted to specific interests of the different cultural groups. We need more after-school and weekend activities, leisure time activities.

Residents believe that the lack of formal, organized activities for youth, and the lack of facilities where youth can engage in informal recreation, result in youth having too much unstructured free time. This, residents believe, may lead young people to engage in unhealthy and illegal activities such as having sex at an immature age, taking drugs, and being involved in violence. Various residents spoke specifically about youth getting into trouble as a result of a lack of recreation as follows: “The kids need something to do besides drugs, activities for them to have an alternative,” “Turns the child to negative things, in the streets selling, kids end up with a disease—selling,” “We need more recreation. If we had more, that would help out in the crime department, keep them busy,” and

Students need more interaction time. We need more after-school activities... We do have a free after-school program but it is more for fifth and sixth graders. The seventh and eighth graders are too cool for the program. Most students get pregnant between three and six in the afternoon.

Residents mentioned many specific facilities and activities that they wish were available in the county. These wishes mirrored the results of the Parks and Recreation Survey (Chatham County Department of Parks and Recreation, 1999), and included trails for hiking, jogging, walking, and biking; an indoor swimming pool; more parks located in individual communities

throughout the county; a movie theater (currently there are no movie theaters in Chatham County); library branches in the areas outside of Pittsboro, Siler City, and Goldston; a centrally-located community center where the diverse groups and populations of the county could come together in informal ways; and a YMCA. Some of the numerous comments made by residents included, “We need improvements in roads for bicyclists. We need bicycle paths. It’s very dangerous for people to bike on Chatham roads,” “An indoor swimming pool would provide exercise...[and would] help those with arthritis,” “Chatham needs a movie theater,” “A North Chatham library branch—it could be a great resource,” and “I wish we had something like the YMCA—a place where the community and families could go.” Though residents interviewed for this community diagnosis felt that all of these deficiencies are important to address, the Parks and Recreation survey found that swimming was the top recreational activity that Chatham County residents pursued outside of the county (Chatham County Department of Parks and Recreation, 1999).

Chatham County residents proposed several possible solutions to the lack of recreation available in the county. These included increasing the amount of county funding for recreational activities; opening up school buildings to non-school recreational activities in the evenings and on weekends; soliciting donations of time, money, and land from businesses and individuals; and applying for state and federal grants. As residents said, “I think the county should do something about recreation. We pay our taxes so I think they should do something about it,” “Why do we build community colleges and school buildings just to leave them standing half the time empty?” “There are a lot of [school] facilities that are only used for part of the day,” “I got a video about activities, where up in Flint, Michigan, schools were used until 4 PM, and other groups use the buildings up to 10 PM at night,” “It would be nice if we could all agree to focus on building a

community center over the next ten years,” and “There is grant money out there to develop things like [recreation] but most of it is cash for cash matching, so you have to have some money to get it going.”

Interestingly, though a large portion of B. Everett Jordan Lake State Park is located within Chatham County, few residents mentioned that resource as a solution to the county’s lack of recreational opportunities, nor did residents mention Jordan Lake when asked about the strengths of the county. Possible, though unsubstantiated, reasons for this apparent oversight include that the recreational activities available at the lake and surrounding park do not fulfill the needs of county residents, or lingering negative feelings related to the creation of the lake on formerly privately owned land. Other reasons may include the attitude that Jordan Lake, because it is a state facility used by people from all over the Triangle, does not really belong to the residents of Chatham County; or similarly, because it is located on the extreme eastern side of the county, Jordan Lake does not fulfill the need that residents have for recreation within their neighborhoods and communities, nor is it easy to get to for those without transportation.

In summary, many residents of Chatham County are dissatisfied with the recreational activities available to them within the county. It is apparent that, because of the extraordinary growth in much of the county, the county leadership has given other issues and needs precedence over recreation. However, as residents point out, having adequate recreational opportunities would greatly enhance the quality of life of Chatham County residents, and it is precisely the quality of life within the county that is highly valued by residents. It should be noted that the county has a talented and dedicated Director of Parks and Recreation who is committed to realizing many of the recreational needs of county residents, and who has begun the process of doing so. The County Board of Commissioners approved a parks and recreation master plan in

September, 1999, in which many of the issues raised above are stated as county goals (T. Burnett, personal communication, February 11, 2000). As evidenced by our conversations with county residents, many in Chatham County look forward to those goals being met.

Education

An issue of concern for many Chatham County residents is the quality of education provided to children in the county schools. General comments made in relation to this topic include, “None of the schools in Chatham are any good,” “Chatham is not keeping up with education,” “We need better schools,” and “The schools hurt Chatham County.”

Secondary data show that the quality of education in Chatham is an issue that requires attention. According to the Department of Public Instruction (1998), the average SAT score of students in Chatham County is 973, which is in fact lower than the state’s average score of 982. In addition, data from “A Report Card for the ABCs of Public Education” (1999) show that almost 30% of Chatham County students in the 3rd through 8th grades are below grade level on the end-of-grade tests. Further, the data show that there is a disparity between races where a higher percentage of minorities (Black: 48.6%, Hispanic: 46.5%) are below grade level than are Whites (18.5%).

Chatham residents feel that certain schools in the county are especially lacking in the quality of education they provide. Moncure residents feel that this is true for the schools in their area. Some Moncure residents said, “The Moncure school has always been behind in what it seems to need” and “The schools, especially in Moncure, really need to be upgraded.” Residents in the northern part of the county also echo the sentiment that there is a disparity between the schools in the county. Some of them mentioned, “The difference between North Chatham and

Moncure schools is tremendous. You would be appalled by Moncure,” and “Moncure and Siler City schools are the poorest...Not all schools are treated the same.”

Many community members feel that the school system should do a better job of recruiting and retaining good teachers. Offering incentives to teachers is one strategy that was suggested. Two county residents stated, “There is a shortage of teachers because they are not being paid enough” and “The pay [for teachers] is never as good as other lines of work.” This is supported by the fact that Siler City lost sixteen teachers in one year (P. Cuadros, personal communication, April 7, 2000). A recent survey conducted by the Chatham Education Foundation found that nearly half of the county’s teachers plan to leave within the next five years (Harris, 2000). The top reason these teachers gave was better pay elsewhere.

Chatham residents also feel that there is a need for more teachers and other resources to more effectively teach the growing number of English as a Second Language (ESL) students in certain areas of the county. Latinos feel that communication between teachers and Latino parents is a problem because of the language barrier. As two Latino residents stated, “Some times, the problem is that [teachers] cannot communicate with us” (translated from Spanish), and

[Teachers] sent my sister papers from the school, then she didn't know if it was a notice because they are written in English. Then, my sister says ‘What do I do with this paper, let me look for someone to read it to me’...Then, a week passes until she finds someone to read the paper (translated from Spanish).

Other community members feel that schools need increased resources to overcome the language barrier in educating ESL students. Community residents stated, “The teachers don’t have enough interpreters...We don’t have enough resources to deal with the language problem. [The schools] are getting kids that move in that speak no English,” “The Latino children need ESL teachers,” and “We have not been actively recruiting Latino and/or bilingual teachers for the classroom.”

The lack of adequate resources to handle the growing number of ESL students has an effect on the quality of education that students receive. One county resident remarked,

Having so many Hispanic youth in the community, because of the language barrier and cultural differences has created a problem in the school system not only for the students, but also for teachers and administrators. [This] has an effect on the quality of education.

Recent growth in the county has resulted in an increase in student enrollment in the schools. However, schools are unable to keep up in terms of the quality of education they offer. This, according to county residents, will impede the growth in the county. Quotes that illustrate this viewpoint include, “The school system is an impediment to growth,” “People wait to move here until their kids are out of school because the school system is so bad,” “Schools are crucial...people moving here from other parts of the county...ask about schools,” and “I know three people that own property here but won’t come because of the school system.” Residents also feel that the poor quality of schools results in so-called “white flight,” the movement of White students out of a school. The following quote from a community member represents the sentiments of many county residents: “You’ve got the problem of white flight from the school. Parents are pulling kids out of the school [and taking them] outside the district to get away from the district.”

Another concern regarding education in the county is that the schools are not located close enough to some communities. Community members remarked, “People who live in the Corinth area...have to send their kids to Pittsboro for high school” and “Schools are farther away, deeper into Chatham.” One Corinth resident stated, “you have to get on a bus and go to Pittsboro to go to high school...that’s ridiculous.” A Pittsboro school official said, “We are pulling kids from so many different places to come to this school...that’s a disadvantage for us.” It should be noted that according to the school district’s Capital Project Needs Plan, one new

elementary school in the western part of the county, another one east of Jordan lake, and a high school in the eastern portion of the county will be built over the next five years (Morris, 2000).

Many community residents feel that there is a need for improved sexual education in the schools. Some community members stated, “I am concerned with the sex education in the schools...They need to provide birth control to the kids,” “I think you just simply have to do some reproductive education...particularly with kids asking questions,” and “I would like to see sexual education in the school.” Currently, Chatham County Public Schools teach an “abstinence until marriage” sex education curriculum in accordance with the 1995 state law on sex education (B. Crotts, personal communication, April 13, 2000). According to this law, schools can only teach that abstinence from sexual activity until marriage is the only certain means of avoiding out of marriage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases (“Sex education,” 2000). Local schools may adopt a comprehensive sex education program only after holding a public hearing and making objectives and instructional materials available for review (“Sex education,” 2000).

In conclusion, both primary and secondary data show that the education offered in Chatham schools is an issue in the community. One solution mentioned by community members to improve the education status in the county is to have parents involved in their children’s education. One resident said, “[We] must start educating the parents to be involved in their children’s education.” As previously mentioned, residents believe that recruitment and retention of good teachers is also important to improve the quality of education in Chatham schools. Chatham County residents believe that a good education is crucial for Chatham County’s development. As one resident said, “Without good schools Chatham won’t survive as a positive place for families.” Recently, a group of concerned citizens has formed a group called CRISIS to address these concerns about the educational system.

Health

Health has an impact on the employment status, economic security, and overall quality of life of the residents of Chatham County. The issue of health was considered in a variety of ways by community members. Specific health problems and the need for more health education were discussed. Residents also mentioned the variety of sites at which they received health care, as well as the barriers that exist to accessing that care.

The health problems that most often contribute to mortality in Chatham County mirror those in the state as a whole. The leading causes of death are heart disease, cancer, and cerebrovascular disease, or stroke (See Table 12). Statistics demonstrate these diseases have a high impact on health in Chatham County. However, only a few residents made references to heart disease and, to a lesser extent, cancer. Stroke was never mentioned as a health concern by county residents.

The health problems most often cited by the community were not the leading causes of mortality in Chatham County; rather, residents said that they were concerned about dental care, diabetes, and sexually transmitted diseases. The need for dental care was most often mentioned by county residents with respect to children. One community member mentioned the Health Department's efforts to address this problem, stating, "Programs are in the works...they may soon be offering teeth varnishing to prevent caries." In fact, the Chatham-Lee Dental Planning Committee recently announced the establishment of a community dental clinic for children of families with limited means. Preventive dental services will be offered through the Chatham County Health Department when the clinic opens in the fall of 2000 ("Grant to build," 2000). Diabetes was mentioned with respect to specific segments of the county. A health care provider whose practice consists primarily of Latino patients stated, "Diabetes—there is a fairly large

number of cases among the young Mexican population.” An African-American resident said, “Diabetes, I would think, would be one of the main things in our community. We do have a lot of people that have diabetes.” These remarks coincide with diabetes being the eleventh leading cause of mortality in Chatham County as a whole, and the sixth leading cause of mortality for minorities (See Tables 12 and 15). Similarly, when asked about the main health problems in the community, minority community members were more likely to mention sexually transmitted diseases than were white residents of the county.

One explanation for the disparity between the leading causes of mortality in the county and the health conditions with which residents are most concerned lies in the manner in which county residents identify themselves. Rather than identifying with Chatham County, residents describe their community in smaller units, e.g. the Latino community, a specific church group, a particular town or locality, or a particular age group. Therefore, the most significant health concerns for them are those that are the most salient in their immediate surroundings. Another explanation is the increased awareness that has resulted from health programs or education efforts targeting specific diseases. Community members spoke of programs “checking for diabetes” and “education about syphilis when it (the incidence) went up in the county.”

A common sentiment expressed by a wide range of county residents was the need for additional health education and preventive health care. Prevention of health problems was thought to be an attainable goal by many members of the community. One resident spoke about the need for education in this way: “Some of it (health problems) could have been avoided...if they had known about some different things that they could’ve done.” Another resident commented, “The Health Department has to gather all of us together and tell us: this is necessary for your health” (translated from Spanish). In addition, many community members expressed a

desire for health education to be delivered to the youth in the school setting, in order to teach the role of preventive health care at an early age.

As mentioned previously, residents of Chatham County receive health care in a variety of settings, within as well as outside the county. Within its borders, county residents most often mentioned the Chatham County Health Department, UNC clinics located throughout the county, and Chatham Hospital as places where they obtain health care. Many community members spoke positively about the Health Department, saying, “It (the Health Department) helps us quite a bit,” and “I think the Health Department does a marvelous job.” Some residents prefer seeking care at Central Carolina Hospital in Lee County and UNC Hospitals in Orange County instead of staying in Chatham County. Residents cited many reasons for this including, “It’s (Central Carolina Hospital) modern, but still small town,” and “Siler City doesn’t seem to be a complete hospital; it’s limited in what it can do,” and “Health care is so technical that you have to go to large facilities.” Latino residents cite the language barrier as a reason for not seeking care within the county, stating, “There was no one [at Chatham Hospital] who spoke Spanish,” and “In Chapel Hill, there are some who speak [Spanish] perfectly” (translated from Spanish).

One theme central to many discussions of health was the barriers to accessing health care that exist for many Chatham County residents. In one of these discussions it was observed that “The biggest health issue is lack of access to care. It is influenced by a lot of things like the language barrier, transportation, ability to pay, insurance, and residency status.” Community members most often cited lack of transportation to get to clinics or hospitals as a barrier to accessing health care. A resident commented, “There’s an inability to get to care because there is no public transportation,” and another added, “Transportation is a major issue. How do they get to it (health care) if they don’t drive?” Inadequate financial resources also impact the ability of

the community to receive health care. Paying for prescription medications is a particular concern for county residents. One resident commented on the difficulty some community members experience paying for prescriptions as follows: “They would either not get it (medication) or charge it to the pharmacy and when they topped out (reached the allowable limit), won’t get anymore.” Another resident added, “I have seen people cash their Social Security checks and then add to that to give to the druggist.” And yet another resident commented, “A lady had blood pressure over 200 and just couldn’t afford medicine.” Many residents lack health insurance to assist with the cost of physician visits and offer solutions for this problem including “sliding scale clinics because so many don’t have insurance” and “the possibility of paying little by little” (translated from Spanish). Employers also have difficulty keeping up with the costs of health insurance as demonstrated by the comments of one employer:

I just went to a higher deductible to keep my employees covered. I’ll pay half the deductible and some won’t be able to foot their half. I’m paying half the deductible hinging on most of my employees not getting sick.

One consequence of county residents’ inability to access medical care regularly is that many people forego preventive care and rely on urgent care for medical needs. Residents describe waiting “until it becomes a crisis,” or “when it is an emergency,” and report, “When the problem is already serious, that is when they come [for health care]” (translated from Spanish).

Substance Abuse

When asked to reflect on the challenges facing Chatham County, many residents cited substance abuse as the number one problem. Concern about the influx of drugs and alcohol into the community was expressed by many different segments of the county’s population. One employer commented, “Last year we had eight to ten people test positive [for drugs]; drugs are a problem all over,” and a service provider described the prevalence of illicit drugs in this way:

“It’s not in one neighborhood—it’s in several neighborhoods. Highway 421 comes right up from the coast and gives a good route for drug travel.” One resident remarked on the often hidden presence of drugs in Chatham County by stating, “A lot of drugs—more than residents understand,” and another commented on the abuse of alcohol in this way: “The money that they earn, they drink it—they get drunk” (translated from Spanish). These opinions on the pervasiveness of substance abuse reflect the finding that there has been a 29% increase in hospitalization rates in Chatham County for alcohol and drug related diagnoses from 1996 to 1998 (NC Department of Health and Human Services, 1999). A recent news report of Siler City officials seizing an estimated 5000 pounds of marijuana also verifies the presence of drugs in the county (Riggsbee, 2000).

Drugs and alcohol were thought to impact many aspects of the community, including youth, families, and community safety. As mentioned earlier, many residents believe that the lack of recreational activities available for school-aged children plays a role in the incidence of drug use. Substance abuse is thought to affect the family unit as well. This was explained by a resident as follows: “Alcohol definitely breaks up families and drugs does as well.” Residents of Chatham County raised the issue of the effect that drug and alcohol abuse has on the safety of the community. One resident commented on the types of crimes committed in the county by stating, “Some serious crimes...you can see people either prostituting or getting ready to move drugs. Penalties need to be more serious.” And a service provider is of the opinion that drugs were related to the fact that “within the past 12 months there have been 3 murders.” Another safety issue surrounding the problem of alcohol abuse presents itself in the form of driving while intoxicated (DWI); the rate of arrests for DWI in Chatham County is 48% higher than the rate at the state level (North Carolina Department of Justice, 1999).

Several reasons were given for the causes of substance abuse by residents, including, “It’s that there are many men who come alone [to live in the United States]. Friends...surround him and make him fall into drugs, into vices” (translated from Spanish), and “Alcohol is more socially acceptable than drugs.” While many residents support rehabilitation programs to deal with addiction once it has occurred, other community members stress the need for education and drug prevention programs as a first step toward addressing the problem of substance abuse in the county. A service provider explained the complexity of the issue of substance abuse and the need to involve the whole community to address the problem, saying, “I believe substance abuse is holistic in nature, and the family, the church, the neighborhood—there has to be a coming together that says we will not tolerate this happening to us and our children.”

Communication

A common theme weaving through many community members’ concerns is a lack of communication. County residents feel that improving communication within the county would have a significant positive impact on many of the issues discussed above, including racial and ethnic diversity, growth in the Latino population, economic development, housing, transportation, recreation, education, and health. Currently, all residents do not rely on a single news medium, causing difficulties in communication within the county. As one county resident explained,

We are not able to get WNCA throughout the county...And Chatham News and Record is really not, even though they make an effort to make it, a county-wide newspaper...so we don’t have a single news medium that we can all depend on to get information across the county.

The lack of a single news source limits residents’ ability to learn about the concerns of different parts of the county, county-wide issues, community events, and volunteer opportunities. In

addition, the lack of a single news source limits county residents' awareness of many programs and services that exist in the community to address their needs or concerns.

Residents also felt that increased communication was needed between different communities in the county. A Latino community member suggested having more multicultural and multilingual meetings and forums, stating: "... one doesn't only invite the Latinos, but the Americans [as well]. Although they are interpreting for us, as much for them as for us, we are learning what they think, they are learning what we think [so] that we can interact...that we can relate" (translated from Spanish). Many residents felt that communication could be improved between different groups in the community by providing spaces to facilitate these discussions. Residents suggested additional community centers, libraries, and other recreational facilities as potential spaces to increase communication between different groups within the county.

In conclusion, community members viewed the lack of communication within the county as a cause or a contributor to many of their concerns. Community members felt that information dissemination across the county needs to be improved and that communication between the different communities within Chatham must be fostered.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the social ecological view of health behavior and promotion, health and quality of life outcomes may be influenced by factors operating on the intrapersonal, interpersonal, organization, community, and policy levels (Sallis & Owen, 1997). This view posits that, for real and lasting health behavior change and community development to occur, appropriate factors along each of these levels must be addressed. Based on our review of both secondary and primary data for this community diagnosis, we have identified a number of factors operating on each of the social ecological levels that have implications for health education and community development within Chatham County. However, we feel that addressing factors at the policy, community, organizational, and interpersonal levels will provide the most impact in Chatham County. We provide below a definition of each of these levels, as well as a discussion of steps that may be taken on each level within the county to address some of the issues raised by community members in our interviews and focus groups. Though possible, we do not feel that trying to bring about change by focusing on individuals for an entire county is practical. According to the social ecological view, addressing factors at each level will ultimately affect all of the other levels, including individuals. We base our discussion of these recommendations both on suggestions made by community members themselves, and on our review of the secondary data.

Policy Level

In order to bring about change, it is sometimes necessary to influence those in political and other decision-making positions to take certain action. This is because some decisions—such as where taxpayers' money will be spent, or what safety regulations must be implemented in a factory—are necessarily made by elected or other types of officials. Actions that are aimed at

bringing about change in such officials are said to be operating on the policy level of the social ecological framework. In speaking with Chatham County residents, we identified a number of issues that could effectively be addressed on the policy level. Among these were recreation, growth and economic development, and housing.

Concerning recreation, numerous county residents related to us that a number of county officials do not seem committed to providing adequate recreational opportunities in the county. We feel that one way to achieve this goal would be for county residents to come together to exert collective political influence on the county's decision makers. For example, if citizens began to attend meetings of the County Board of Commissioners and express their support of the goals of the Department of Parks and Recreation's master plan, eventually the majority of the board would come to realize the importance of supporting this plan, even though they have many other competing issues to address. The board would be compelled to take action towards achieving those goals.

Another concern that can probably best be addressed on the policy level is growth and economic development. County officials have already made a large step towards bringing more employers into the county by purchasing land for the development of an industrial park near Siler City (Riggsbee, 2000). However, it seems to us that an even more concerted effort towards planning for growth and development of the county, coordinated with neighboring counties, is necessary for managing the economic and environmental challenges posed by the unprecedented changes taking place in the county and the region as a whole.

Finally, we feel that changes on the policy level could effectively alleviate some of the problems with housing brought up by county residents. For example, as mentioned earlier, outside of Pittsboro and Siler City there are no housing codes in the county, nor is there any

public housing available in the county. Many county residents also wish to end their dependence on well water and septic systems. Solutions to all of these problems lie with the county's leadership; similar to recreation, a possible step for county residents to take is to come together and exert pressure upon the county's elected officials to produce change in this arena.

Community Level

The entire county of Chatham may be considered one large community with several smaller communities nested within its borders. Many of the issues that were discussed by Chatham County affect the entire community of county residents. These issues are therefore best addressed at the community level of Chatham County with support from the many smaller communities, e.g. church groups, the Latino community, or the agricultural contingent. The building of coalitions, consisting of members from various organizations, would seem to be a natural step for Chatham County to take to address problems involving the entire community. Many organizations and agencies are already established in segments of the county, and with the communication that could occur in coalitions, the result would be a representation of all the voices in the community. Some of the issues that lend themselves to solutions at the community level are housing, substance abuse, and race relations.

The Affordable Housing Coalition is already in place to address the problem of the lack of affordable and good quality housing that has been identified by county residents. As previously mentioned, the residents of the county most affected by the housing issue include Latinos and those with limited incomes. The existing coalition could be strengthened by including more representatives from these segments. Residents representing the different communities within Chatham could also contribute to Habitat for Humanity's volunteer efforts to bring affordable housing to the county.

The problem of substance abuse in Chatham County is also best addressed at the community level. Current drug laws have not been able to stem the tide of growing substance abuse. One solution proposed by county residents involves bringing together various components of the community such as churches, leaders, service providers, and families to discuss the problem and plan actions to be taken to deal with this issue. Groups in the county that are concerned with the impact that substance abuse has on their lives may best be able to effect change in the community. An example of where this approach has recently been successful is the Wake County town of Fuquay-Varina, where residents successfully came together to rid the town's streets of drug dealing, and are continuing to work together to address the problem of substance abuse (Collins, 1999; S. Haws, personal communication, April 20, 2000).

Finally, race relations is another issue that can be addressed by intervention from the many components that make up the community. Chatham County has begun to empower itself by bringing the segments of the county together for solutions; continuing and expanding these efforts can only lead to positive change in the relations among racial groups in the county. Some examples of what has been started and should be expanded include interracial church groups uniting to show support for the diversification of the community, particularly in response to the recent demonstration against Latinos, and community leaders expressing an acceptance of and support for the growing Latino population, sending a positive message to all community members. Additionally, a Forum for Race Relations was recently organized in the county, drawing a diverse group of participants together to bring the issues of race relations out in the open and discuss possible solutions.

Organizational Level

Organizational level factors are those issues which best can be addressed within the

structure of an organization; that is, change is not effectively brought about on the policy or community levels, or by only one or two individuals, but rather from changes in the organization itself. Some of the issues important to Chatham County residents that can best be addressed at this level include issues of education and transportation.

While we recognize that a school district is a complex organization, with many implications and issues operating on the community and policy levels, we feel that several factors in the Chatham County school system should be addressed. This will help to bring about the changes desired by many of the county's residents. Among the issues that can be addressed within the school system are a more equitable distribution of resources among schools, providing for the language needs of Latino students, and increasing the levels of merit pay for teachers. Finding solutions to these problems may require inviting increased participation of parents and other community members to the school-level decision making process, or considering whether the system for funding education itself may require some change through issuing bonds or some other effort.

The lack of transportation in the county could be addressed through collaboration with Chatham County businesses. Employers could provide assistance to their employees to facilitate transportation to work. For example, employers could facilitate the formation of rideshare groups among their employees, or could provide employees with information about resources available in the county regarding transportation.

Interpersonal Level

Interventions at the interpersonal level of the social ecological framework target relationships between individuals—such as families and friends—to bring about positive changes. Solutions to problems at this level would seem to be most effective in addressing the

issues of substance abuse and health care access in Chatham County. One way to remedy the substance abuse problem in the county would be to focus programs on the families and friends of high-risk populations. Emphasis could be placed on helping these members provide social support and a social environment that is less conducive to substance use. Programs that focus on the interpersonal level could also be useful in improving health care access for residents within the county. Participants at the community forum felt that it would be beneficial to pair people who have difficulty “navigating” the health care system with volunteers to provide advice, suggestions, information, aid, and services in obtaining health care services.

Conclusion

We have outlined above a number of suggestions for actions that may be taken by residents of Chatham County to address some of the issues important to them. A number of these suggestions were made by residents of the county, so for the most part we can be certain that they are relevant to their communities. Though all of the issues discussed may not appear to be directly related to physical health, we feel that, by addressing these issues, the overall health of the residents of Chatham County is sure to be improved. Residents have identified these issues as affecting the quality of their lives, and we believe that any positive change in residents’ quality of life will in turn positively affect their health. This view of the connection between quality of life and overall health is reflected in the World Health Organization’s definition of health: “A state of complete physical, social, and mental well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (p. 351 in Nutbeam, 1998). Though in many respects the diverse groups within the county meet these criteria, we believe that by bringing about the suggested changes to resident’s quality of life and health, Chatham County can be an even better place in which to live and work.

REFERENCES

- Case, M. (1999, September 29–October 5). Asking for trouble? Independent Weekly, pp. 12-13.
- Chatham County Department of Parks and Recreation (1999). Chatham County Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Pittsboro: Chatham County Department of Parks and Recreation.
- Chatham County Economic Development Commission (1995) [online]. Retrieved October 13, 1999, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.co.chatham.nc.us/busassist/busa.html>
- Chatham County Economic Development Commission (April 1999) [in press]. To be posted on the World Wide Web: <http://www.co.chatham.nc.us/busassist/busa.html>
- Chatham County Health Department [online]. Retrieved November 9, 1999 from World Wide Web: <http://www2.emji.net/chathamhealth>
- Chatham County History [online]. Retrieved October 19, 1999, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~ncchatha/chathist.htm>
- Chatham County, North Carolina [online]. Retrieved October 11 and 19, 1999, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.ntrnet.net/~galin/chatham.html>
- Chatham County, North Carolina Statistical Abstract (1996) [online]. Retrieved October 11 and 13, 1999, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.ntrnet.net/~galin/chatabst.html>
- Chatham Habitat (1999) [online]. Retrieved April 5, 2000, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.beachsite.com/habitat/why.htm>
- Collins, K. (1999, December 14). Ready to evict drug dealers. News & Observer.
- The Commissioner's Letter (Sept/Oct, 1999). Chatham Crossroads.
- Cuadros, P. (2000, April 4). When David Duke goes marching in. Salon News.
- Department of Public Instruction (1998). In North Carolina Community Assessment Process. North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. State Center for Health Statistics and Office of Healthy Carolinians/Health Education.
- Duke University, Center for Health Policy, Law and Management, Nov. 1999.
- FaithACTION (1999) [online] Retrieved February 16, 1999, from the World Wide Web: <http://s1001.infi.net/~faithact/hispanic.html>
- Glascock, N. (2000, February 20). Rally divides Siler City. News & Observer.

- Glascoek, N. (2000, February 16). Leader in Chatham vows to aid newcomers. News & Observer.
- Governor's Task Force on Health Objectives for the Year 2000 (1992) [online]. Retrieved November 9, 1999, from World Wide Web: <http://www.healthycarolinians.org/pdfs/gtf92rpt.pdf>
- Grant to build children's dental clinic (2000, February 24). Chatham News and Record, p. 5-A.
- Hadley, W., Horton, D., & Strowd, N. (1976). Chatham County 1771-1971. Durham, NC: Moore Publishing Co.
- Harris, S. (2000, March 7). Bringing the outhouse in. News & Observer.
- Harris, S. (2000, April 11). Teacher shortage growing in Chatham County. News & Observer.
- Healthy People 2000. Washington D.C., U.S DHHS, PHS, USGPO 1990, Pub. #PHS91-50212.
- Healthy People 2000. Review, 1998-99, Washington D.C., U.S. DHHS, CDC, Pub.# 99-1256.
- Heller, K. (1989). The return to community. American Journal of Community Psychology, 17(1): 1-15.
- Johnson, J., Johnson-Webb, K., & Farrell, W. (1999). A profile of Hispanic newcomers to North Carolina. *Popular Government*, 65(1): 2-12.
- Jordan Lake (1999) [online]. Retrieved October 11, 1999, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.ntrnet.net/~galin/jordan.html>
- London, A., Jr. (1923). Historical Background of Chatham County. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Department of Rural Social Economics.
- Molloy, M., ed. (1997). The Health of Chatham County, 1996-1997. The Chatham County Health Improvement Project (CCHIP). University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Center for Public Health Practice, School of Public Health.
- Morgan, K. O., ed. (1997). Health Care State Rankings 1999, 7th ed., Morgan Quitno Corp.
- Morris, A. (1999a, October 14). Health board seeking help of regional health care providers to serve uninsured. Chatham Record, p. 1.
- Morris, A. (1999b, November 11). Youths charged with first degree murder in Gulf killing. Chatham Record, p. 1.
- Morris, A. (2000, March 9). As Hispanic population grows... Schools respond to influx. Chatham Record.

Nutbeam, D. (1998). Health promotion glossary. *Health Promotion International*, 13(4): 349–364.

North Carolina Department of Agriculture (1999) [online]. Census of agriculture statistics: Chatham County. Retrieved March 16, 2000 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.agr.state.nc.us/stats/cntysumm/chatham.htm>

North Carolina Department of Commerce (July 1999). North Carolina, a better place to be: Chatham County. Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Commerce, Economic Policy and Research Division.

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (December 1999). North Carolina community health assessment process. Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, State Center for Health Statistics and the Office of Healthy Carolinians/Health Education.

North Carolina Department of Justice (1999) [online]. Retrieved December 2, 1999, from the World Wide Web: <http://sbi.jus.state.nc.us>.

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (1999) [online]. Retrieved October 26, 1999, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/>

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (1999). A Report Card for the ABCs of Public Education 1997-98, Volume II.

North Carolina Literacy Resource Center (1999) [online]. Retrieved September 14, 1999, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.nclrc.state.nc.us/NCLRC/home/nisulit2.htm>

North Carolina Office of State Planning (1999) [online]. Retrieved October 27, 1999, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.ospl.state.nc.us/demog/hispdata.html>

North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation (1999) [online]. Retrieved November 8, 1999, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.jus.state.nc.us/Justice/>

North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics. Unpublished mortality and morbidity data for 1995 to 1998 by gender and race provided in private communication from R. Clark, October 1999.

North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics (1999) [online]. Retrieved November 10, 1999, from the World Wide Web: http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/healthstats/pocketguide/profile_2.cfm

North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics (1999) [online]. Retrieved November 2, 1999 from the World Wide Web: http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/healthstats/pocketguide/profile_1.cfm

- Price, J. (1997a, March 26). Chatham board OKs restrictions on big hog farms. News & Observer.
- Price, J. (1997b, May 14). Lawsuit challenges hog farm regulations. News & Observer.
- Price, J. (1998a, May 2). 2 Key Issues in Chatham race. News & Observer.
- Price, J. (1998b, November 5). Hog talk draws Chatham voters. News & Observer.
- Price, J. (1999a, January 28). Expert to review CP&L proposal. News & Observer.
- Price, J. (1999b, January 30). Chatham leaders mull official cooling period on development. News & Observer.
- Price, J. (1999c, February 2). Chatham opts to wait and see on nuke waste. News & Observer.
- Price, J. (1999d, February 2). Wake delays action on nuclear waste plan. News & Observer.
- Price, J. (1999e, August 6). Chatham rethinking watershed. News & Observer.
- Price, J. (1999f, July 14). Water-pipe grant a temporary fix for Chatham. News & Observer.
- Pulos, V. (1999). One Step Forward, One Step Back. Washington, DC: FamiliesUSA.
- Riggsbee, R. (1999, October 21). Impact fees now countywide. Chatham Record, p.1.
- Riggsbee, R. (2000, February 14). 5000 lbs of pot worth \$5 million: Officers make big haul. Chatham News and Record, p. 1-A.
- Riggsbee, R. (2000, March 30). County buys land. Chatham Record, p 1.
- Sallis, J. F., & Owen, N. (1997). Ecological Models. In K. Glanz, F. M. Lewis, & B. K. Rimer (Eds.), *Health behavior and health education: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 403–424). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Schools celebrate cultural diversity (2000, March 30). Chatham News and Record.
- Sex Education in North Carolina (2000, April 2). News & Observer, p. 26A.
- Shapard, B. (1999, October 5). Chatham urged to welcome immigrants. Durham Herald Sun, pp. 1-2.
- State Center for Health Statistics (1997) [online]. N.C. Vital Statistics, Volume 2-1997. Retrieved November 9, 1999, from World Wide Web: <http://hermes.sches.ehnr.state.nc.us/SCHS/healthstats/deaths/lcd/>

State Center for Health Statistics (1998) [online]. North Carolina 1998 final infant death rates. Retrieved November 9, 1999, from World Wide Web:
<http://hermes.sches.ehnr.state.nc.us/SCHS/healthstats/deaths/ims1998/>

Stocking, B. (1996, May 10). Measles outbreak hits Latinos hard. News & Observer.

Stocking, B. (1997, May 11). Rubella strikes Latinos. News & Observer.

Tetterton, B. & Tetterton, G. (1998). North Carolina County Fact Book (vol. 1). Wendell, NC: Broadfoot's of Wendell.

Triangle J Council of Government (1999) [online]. Retrieved October 14, 1999 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.tjcog.dst.nc.us/TJCOG/>

Unity Festival showcases world cultures' diversity (2000, April 6). Chatham News and Record.

U.S. Census Bureau (1990). Census of Population and Housing: North Carolina. [Machine-readable data file].

U.S. Census Bureau (1995) [online]. 1995 County estimate of poverty, North Carolina. Retrieved March 10, 2000, from the World Wide Web:
<http://www.ospl.state.nc.us/sdn/census/poverty95.htm>

U.S. Census Bureau (1999). Populations Estimates Program, Program Division.

APPENDIX

Service Provider Interview Guide

1. Opening

- Thank you
- I am a graduate student from UNC SPH working with Chatham County Health Department, United Way, and Chatham Hospital
- We work with a community in NC to conduct a community diagnosis (help community identify its strengths, weaknesses, and future directions).
- Community forum to be held March 2, 2000, 7-9 at CCCC
- Interested in your thoughts and experiences, opinions
- This interview should last 60-90 minutes

2. Confidentiality

Your comments will remain confidential. We will be reporting summaries of the comments made by community members but will not identify who said what, nor will we identify the names of the individuals we interview. I would like to take notes and tape record this interview. I want to make sure that we accurately record what you tell me. Feel free to not respond to any question I ask, or hit the Stop button on the tape recorder at any time. After we are finished using the tapes for this class, the cassettes will be stored at the Chatham County Health Department. Is this okay with you?

3. Ground Rules

Right to refuse: if at any time while we're talking you don't want to answer a question, you do not feel comfortable, or you would like to end the interview, please feel free to let me/us know. Do you have any questions about anything I've said so far?

4. Overview of Services (verbal transition: "Let's begin by having you talk about the people you provide pastoral services to")

- Could you please provide me/us with an overview of your duties?
- Which groups of residents in Chatham County do you serve? (aka 'have contact with')
- How does your agency meet the cultural and language needs of the various groups of Chatham County?
- How do community members know about your services?

5. Community (verbal transition: "Now let's switch gears and talk about Chatham County")

- What would you say are the strengths of Chatham County? (ask to elaborate if necessary)
- What would you say are the greatest needs of Chatham County? (ask to elaborate if necessary)

- What kinds of community projects have been undertaken in Chatham County during your time of working with community residents? Probe: How would you explain their success or lack thereof?
- If you were going to try to implement some type of community project in your community, who from the community would you try to involve to ensure success? (ask for organization name, if they list providers)
- What community needs are not met by your agency or other organizations in the area?
- How is the community involved in determining the services that you provide?
- How has Chatham County changed since you've been here? How do you think it will change in the next 5 years?

[Optional Check in with interviewee]

- What are some of the quality of life issues in Chatham County? (ask to elaborate if necessary)
- What are some of the health issues or concerns in Chatham County? (ask to elaborate if necessary)
- Of all of the issues we have discussed today, which do you feel are the most important for the community to address?
- What would be the best way to get more community members people involved in these issues?
- Is there anything else you can tell me/us about Chatham County?

7. Documents

- Does your agency have any literature (e.g. annual reports, brochures, etc.) that might be useful to us?

8. Referrals

- Is there anyone who you would recommend that we talk to about the needs of Chatham County?
- Would you be willing for us to mention your name when we contact them?

9. Closing

- Do you have any questions for me?
- You may contact me if there is anything that you want to add to your statements.
- As Spring approaches we will invite you attend the Community Forum at which time the findings from our study will be reviewed/ discussed.
- Thank you again for your time and information.

Community Member Focus Group Guide
Chatham County Community Assessment, 1999-2000

1. Opening

- *Thank you* for taking the time to meet with us for this discussion group. We recognize that your time is valuable and we appreciate your participation.
- We are part of a team consisting of the Chatham County Health Department, the United Way, Chatham Hospital, and graduate students from the UNC School of Public Health conducting a community assessment in Chatham County. This means that we help the community to identify its strengths, challenges, and future directions. My name is _____ and I am from _____. (Fill in appropriate agency.) I am here today with _____ from _____ who will be taking notes on what is said during the discussion. The information we gather will be summarized and shared with the community, the local health department, the United Way, and the School of Public Health. The community assessment will also be used to update the CCHIP report. In addition, we will present our results to the community at a forum that will be held in the spring.
- The *purpose* of speaking with you today is to find out about your thoughts and experiences of living in Chatham County. We are interested in your opinions. There are no right or wrong answers.
- *Time*: The discussion should last 60 to 90 minutes.
- We distributed fact sheet as you arrived that described the assessment in more detail. On the fact sheets are phone numbers of people you can call if you would like more information after you leave here today. Did everyone get a fact sheet?

2. Confidentiality

- Your comments today will remain confidential. We will be reporting summaries of the comments made by community members but will not identify who said what, nor will we identify the names of the individuals who participate. We'd like to only use first names in the discussion, if that is okay.
- We would also like to take notes and tape record this interview. Your input is important and we want to make sure that we accurately record what you tell us. Feel free to not respond to any question we ask, or hit the "stop" button on the tape recorder at any time. After we are finished using the tapes to summarize what people say, the tapes will be stored at the Chatham County Health Department. However, your full name will not be attached to the tape. Is this okay with everyone?

3. Ground Rules

- You are not required to answer any question you may not wish to.
- If at any time while we're talking you do not feel comfortable, or you would like to end the interview, please feel free to let me know.
- Please speak clearly, listen to the responses of other participants, and do not interrupt others.
- If you cannot hear what I am saying or what the other participants are saying, please ask us to speak up.
- Also, please do not discuss responses of the people in this discussion with others when you leave here today.

Does anyone have any questions about anything I've said so far?

Opening Question (5 min)

Let's go around the table to give everyone the opportunity to say his or her name and answer these two questions:

- How long have you lived in Chatham County? Where in Chatham County do you live? If you are new to the area, what brought you here?

Changes over time (10 min)

- How has your community changed over the past five years? Probe: Is there anything different about your community now that was not the case 5 years ago?
- How do you think your community will change over the next 5 years?

Assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the community (15 min)

- If you knew someone that was considering moving to your community, what would you tell him or her about the area to convince them to move here? Probe: What are other strengths or good things about your community?
- What are your concerns about your community? Probe: What additional concerns do you have?

(Use list of topics as a probe to generate discussion if necessary)

Resources/Activities (15 min)

- What kinds of projects have people in your community worked on together in the past five years? How were you involved in these efforts?
- If you needed help for some reason, or you needed to get something done, whom would you turn to? Probes: Who are the important people in the community for getting things done? Who are the formal/informal community leaders? What groups exist in the community?
- What resources or activities would you like to see in your community that are not here now?
- What would it take to get more people involved in community activities?

Health (10 min)

- What are the main health problems of people in your community?
- What do people that you know do when they have health problems? Probe: Do they seek care?

Employment (5 min)

- What do you think of the jobs available in the community? Probe: Are they “good” or “bad” jobs?

Closing (5 min)

- Is there anything else we have not asked about that is important for us to know about your community?
- Of all the issues we have talked about today, what issues do you think are the most important for your community to address?

List of topics to prompt discussion in groups that are not talkative.

Child care
Diversity
Drugs/ Alcohol
Education
Environment
Growth
Health/ health care
Housing
Jobs
Police/ crime
Recreation
Religion
Tobacco
Transportation
Youth/ Teens

Community Member Focus Group Guide in Spanish
Chatham County Community Assessment, 1999-2000

4. Apertura

- *Gracias por su tiempo para esta reunión. Entendemos que su tiempo es importante y agradecemos su participación.*
- Somos parte de un equipo que consiste en el Departamento de Salud del condado de Chatham, el United Way (una organización que recauda fondos y financia organizaciones sin fines de lucro), el Hospital de Chatham y la Facultad de Salud Pública de la Universidad de Carolina del Norte, y estamos haciendo un estudio de la comunidad en el condado de Chatham. Me llamo _____ y soy de _____. (Fill in appropriate agency.) Hoy, estoy aquí con _____ de _____ que estará tomando apuntes de nuestra discusión. La información que nosotros encontremos será resumida y compartida con la comunidad y el departamento de salud local. Además, presentaremos lo que encontremos a la comunidad en un foro que será en la primavera.
- Estamos hablando con ustedes hoy con el propósito de aprender sus pensamientos y experiencias acerca de vivir en el condado de Chatham. Estamos interesadas en sus opiniones.
- *Tiempo:* Esta discusión debe durar sesenta minutos.
- Nosotros distribuimos una hoja de información cuando ustedes llegaron que describía el proyecto en más detalle. Las hojas tienen los números de teléfono que ustedes pueden llamar si quieren más información del proyecto después de que salgan hoy. ¿Todos recibieron una hoja?

5. Confidentiality

- Sus comentarios hoy serán mantenidos en forma privado. Solo vamos a hacer resúmenes de los comentarios de los miembros de la comunidad pero no vamos a identificar quién dijo qué cosa ni vamos a identificar los nombres de individuos que participaron. Quisiéramos usar nombres solo en esta discusión. ¿Está bien?
- También, quisiéramos tomar apuntes y grabar esta discusión. Sus pensamientos e ideas son importantes y queremos asegurar que recordemos exactamente lo que ustedes nos dicen. Por favor, siéntanse cómodos en no responder a cualquier pregunta que hagamos o presionen el botón “stop” en la grabadora en cualquier momento. Después de terminar, los casetes van a estar guardados en el departamento de salud del condado de Chatham. Pero, sus nombres y apellidos no estarán guardados con los casetes. ¿Está bien ?

3. Reglas para la discusión

- Ustedes no tienen que responder a cualquier pregunta que no quieran.
- En cualquier momento, si ustedes quieren terminar la discusión, favor de decirme.
- Por favor, hablen claramente y no interrumpen a otros. Si no, el casete será difícil de entender.
- Además, por favor, no hablen de las respuestas de otros en esta discusión con otra gente cuando ustedes salgan de aquí hoy.

¿Tienen ustedes preguntas sobre lo que he dicho?

Opening Question (5 min)

Vamos a empezar por darles a todos, uno por uno, la oportunidad de decir su nombre y responder a estas preguntas.

- ¿Hace cuánto tiempo vive Ud. en el condado de Chatham? ¿Dónde en el condado de Chatham vive usted? ¿Dónde vivía usted antes de vivir en el condado de Chatham?

Changes over time (10 min)

- ¿Cómo ha cambiado su comunidad durante los últimos cinco años o hasta que usted llegó? Probe: ¿Hay algo diferente de su comunidad ahora a como era hace cinco años?
- ¿Cómo piensa Ud que su comunidad vaya a cambiar durante los próximos cinco años?

Assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the community (15 min)

- ¿Cuáles son las cosas positivas de su comunidad? ¿Si ustedes ¿Cuáles son otras cosas buenas o ventajas de vivir en esta comunidad?
- ¿Cuáles son sus inquietudes o preocupaciones acerca de su comunidad? ¿Qué preocupaciones o inquietudes adicionales tienen ustedes?
(Use list of topics as a probe to generate discussion if necessary)

Recursos/ Actividades (15 min)

- ¿En qué tipos de proyectos han trabajado juntas personas en la comunidad durante los últimos cinco años? ¿Cómo participaron ustedes en los esfuerzos?
- ¿Si ustedes necesitaran ayuda por alguna razón, a quién buscarían? Probes: ¿Quiénes son las personas importantes en la comunidad para hacer cosas? ¿Quiénes son los líderes comunitarios formales e informales? ¿Cuáles grupos existen en la comunidad?
- ¿Cuáles recursos o actividades les gustaría ver en su comunidad que no estén aquí ahora?
- ¿Qué se puede hacer para que más gente participe en actividades comunitarias?

Salud (10 min)

- ¿Cuáles son los problemas de salud principales de la gente en su comunidad?
- ¿Qué hace la gente que ustedes conocen cuando tienen problemas de salud? Probe: ¿Buscan atención médica?

Trabajo (5 min)

- ¿Qué piensan ustedes de los trabajos que hay en la comunidad? Probe: ¿Son trabajos buenos o malos?

Clausura (5 min)

- ¿Hay algo que no les hayamos preguntado que es importante que nosotros sepamos de su comunidad?
- ¿De todos los temas que hemos hablado hoy, qué temas piensan que son los más importantes para resolver en este condado?

List of Focus Groups and Service Provider Interviews

October 26, 1999	Community members focus group, 2 White females, 3 White males
November 9, 1999	Community members focus group, 2 African-American females, 1 African-American male, 1 White female, 1 White male
November 13, 1999	Community members focus group, 5 African-American males and 1 African-American female
November 16, 1999	Community members focus group, 4 White females, 8 African-American females, 1 African-American male
November 16, 1999	Church focus group, 8 African-American females
November 30, 1999	Neighborhood focus group, 5 Latino females, 2 Latino males
November 30, 1999	Church focus group, 5 African-American females and 3 African-American males
December 8, 1999	Service provider interview, Latino female
December 10, 1999	Civic focus group, 1 African-American female, 7 White females
December 10, 1999	Neighborhood focus group, 4 Latino females, 5 Latino males
December 13, 1999	Community member, African-American female
December 13, 1999	Neighborhood focus group, 7 White females, 5 White males
December 16, 1999	Service providers focus group, 7 White females, 1 African-American female
December 21, 1999	Neighborhood focus group, 3 White males, 7 White females
January 10, 2000	Civic focus group, 2 African-American and 15 White males
January 16, 2000	Church focus group, 2 Latino males, 3 Latino females
January 21, 2000	Community members focus group, 6 Latino females
February 1, 2000	Business community focus group, 3 White females, 4 White males
February 9, 2000	Church focus group, 6 White females
February 3, 2000	School system service provider, White female
February 4, 2000	County businessperson, White male
February 4, 2000	Church representative, African-American female
February 6, 2000	Church representative, female
February 9, 2000	Business association focus group, 4 White males, 5 White females
February 11, 2000	County government service provider, 1 African-American female
February 11, 2000	Health care service provider, 1 White female
February 15, 2000	Health care service provider, 1 White male

Community Forum Report

Students from the UNC School of Public Health, team preceptors, the Director of the Health Department, a Health Department employee, and two representatives from the United Way were involved in the planning of the forum, which we decided to call a “community meeting.” The advisory committee members were very knowledgeable about the community and thus were helpful in the planning process. The committee brainstormed on possible neutral, centrally located gathering places that would be accessible to the most number of county residents. Upon discussion, it was decided that it would be held at the Central Carolina Community College (CCCC) in Pittsboro. Further, upon deliberation of the most suitable date and time for the event, it was decided that the community meeting would be held from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 2, 2000.

The committee decided that it would be helpful to have at least one resource person for each topic that would be discussed at the meeting. The role of the resource person was to answer any questions participants had in regards to the topic of concern and share prior steps that had been taken in order to address the topic. The advisory committee members agreed to contact appropriate service providers to attend the forum and serve as resource people.

UNC students created a flyer for the community meeting. One side of the flyer had information about the meeting in English and the other side had Spanish translation. Members of the advisory committee had the flyers distributed across the county. Flyers were also mailed to all interviewees. United Way representatives also helped in distributing the flyers in the county by sending copies of the flyer to their member agencies along with a letter encouraging them to distribute the flyers through their agency. A total of 500 flyers were circulated throughout the county. In addition, the community meeting was publicized in the *Chatham News/Record* one week before the event, and in the February/March issue of the *Chatham Crossroads*.

The community meeting took place at the multipurpose room in Building Two at CCCC. Refreshments were served at the event. Participants got nametags and the agenda for the meeting as they arrived.

The meeting began with a welcome to participants and introductions of those involved in the community diagnosis process. This was followed by a thirty-minute presentation by UNC students. The presentation started with a description of the community diagnosis procedure. Next, the team presented the major themes (community strengths, recreation, diversity, housing, education, economic development, health, and communications) that emerged from the community diagnosis and used primary and secondary data to support their findings. Overhead slides were used in the presentation. A UNC student translated the entire presentation simultaneously in Spanish. The overhead slides were also translated and projected.

After the presentation, participants were given a ten-minute break. They were asked during the break to place a sticker on a poster representing one of the eleven topics that emerged from the community diagnosis procedure that they wanted to discuss in small groups. The topics (recreation, housing, education, health care access, drugs and alcohol, transportation, economic development, diversity, water/sewer, daycare, and agriculture) were posted around the room and stickers were provided. Participants were instructed to join the small group that was to discuss

the topic that they had put their sticker under. Seven small groups discussed the top seven issues that participants chose. One UNC student facilitated each group. A translator was provided for the two Spanish-speaking participants.

The small groups were comprised of community members, resource people, and a facilitator. The small group began with a “go-around” icebreaker in which each participant said his or her name and briefly described what about the topic interested him or her. This provided an opportunity for every participant to bring his or her voice into the group and helped lead into the small group discussion topic. If needed to prompt discussion, the groups were given scenarios related to each discussion topic, which had been developed by the UNC students. The facilitator read the scenario and led the group through a series of questions to help participants discuss their concerns around the topic and to come up with possible steps that the community could take to remedy the problem. One group member was asked to volunteer to take notes and report back to the large group at the end of the small group discussion. A brief description of what was covered in each small group is included below.

The recreation small group was made up of about fifteen participants. Residents discussed the lack of recreation in the county for themselves and their children. There was a good discussion between the director of the Chatham County Department of Parks and Recreation and other small group participants as she outlined her plans to found a non-profit parks and recreation foundation as a way to leverage more money from the private sector. She mentioned the difficulties she faces in implementing her vision of improved facilities in the county, including opposition on the part of some of the county commissioners, and reluctance on the part of schools to open their doors to the community for recreation after school. Residents discussed the need to let the school board, the school superintendent, and the county commissioners know that recreation should be more of a priority for Chatham County.

The housing small group, comprised of about fifteen participants, discussed the lack of affordable, good quality housing in the county. Participants mentioned how expensive land is and how quickly building costs are rising within the county. Participants also discussed the problems associated with the lack of public subsidized housing and affordable rental units. The group agreed that something had to be done in the county to improve the present housing situation. Some of the solutions discussed included approaching the county commissioners to ask for their help to remedy the housing situation, petitioning for a county wide housing code, providing better education to residents on their rights as tenants, and strengthening the affordable housing coalition with better funding and participation from community members.

The education small group was made up of nine participants. Participants discussed the lack of funding for education in the county. Some mentioned that one way to improve services provided to students was to increase the number of volunteers at schools, especially in schools that needed them the most. Participants also felt that increasing the emphasis on the value of education in the community might help improve student motivation for education. Specifically, they stated that there should be a way to show students how education can be useful in solving problems.

The small group that discussed access to health care included fourteen participants. The group discussed the need to improve communication to increase community awareness of the

health services available to community residents, the lack of transportation for community members to get access to health care, the difficulty residents face in “navigating” the health care system, and the expensive nature of health care. Some solutions the group discussed included the need for a group, such as the one at the community meeting, to meet on an ongoing basis to help find solutions to improve community member access to health care. Participants also felt that it would be beneficial to pair people who have difficulty navigating the system with volunteer advocates to assist them in getting what they need once they get to the doctor. The group felt that churches would be great places to find such volunteers and that churches could also be an effective avenue for communicating to the community what services are available in the county.

The small group that discussed drugs and alcohol was comprised of only four participants—one service provider and three community members. The community members were interested in finding out more about the situation in the county in relation to adolescent drug and alcohol use. Consequently, the discussion in this group consisted mostly of the service provider answering questions that the community members posed to him. According to the service provider, drug and alcohol prevention programs are not high on the priority list for schools since they are more concerned about core curriculum instruction in order to improve student test scores. He also felt that there is a lack of drug and alcohol treatment centers for youth in the county.

The eight participants in the transportation small group discussed the difficulties county residents face as a result of the lack of adequate transportation in the county. These included an inability to get to work and go to places such as the grocery store or laundromat. They also discussed the lack of knowledge among community residents about transit services that currently exist. Participants noted that one reason Chatham County does not have more mass transit is due to the rural nature of the county. Since county residents are not located in one densely populated area, increasing transit services would not be cost-effective. Some of the possible solutions to the lack of transportation in the county discussed by the participants included: pressuring the county commissioners and state government to allocate more money for transportation, providing rural communities with a subsidy to start a taxi company to help other residents in the same area, starting a donate-a-car program whereby county residents could donate cars to an organization that would then give them to community members in need of transportation, and providing bicycles to those in rural parts of the county so that they could ride to a central meeting point to catch transit service. Moreover, the need to shift the responsibility for transportation from employees to employers was discussed.

The economic development small group consisted of seven participants. The discussion included the concerns of farmers about maintaining the rural character of the county while balancing industrial and residential growth in a planned manner. Participants recognized the need to widen the tax base to support schools and other infrastructure. One solution proposed as a way to keep a portion of the land agricultural while addressing the rising expenses of land was the use of land trusts. Another issue that the group discussed was increasing the number of better paying opportunities available within the county so residents would not need to commute outside for work.

After forty-five minutes of discussion in the small groups, participants reconvened as a large group. The notetakers from the small groups presented what they had discussed in each of

their groups. Following the small group presentation, one UNC student and the preceptor closed the meeting by thanking the participants for their attendance. Participants were given the opportunity to sign up to get involved in future efforts to work on any of the issues discussed in the community meeting. The list was collected by the preceptor, an employee of the Health Department, who has contacted those who signed up for future collaboration.

In general, the community meeting was a success. About 100 community members and service providers attended the community meeting. However, certain subsections of the population, including Latinos and youth, lacked adequate representation at the meeting. Moreover, most of the participants were from the northern part of Chatham. Nonetheless, the considerable participation at the community gathering illustrates that Chatham has a large number of residents who are interested in improving the quality of life in the county and thus have the capacity to bring about the changes they desire.

Flyer Advertising the Community Forum

Your friends and neighbors in Chatham County are talking about...

*... child care ... clean air ... crime ... dental health ... diversity
... drugs and alcohol ... education ... environment ... growth
... health care ... housing ... jobs ... mental health ...
recreation ... transportation ... water ... youth ...*

- Do you have something to say about these issues, or any others, and how they are addressed in Chatham County?
- Do you want to hear what other Chatham County residents have to say about them?

You are invited to a Chatham County Community Meeting

- ✓ Come hear the results of a recent, county-wide community assessment, and talk to other county residents and representatives from local agencies about what you think is important.

Where: Central Carolina Community College multipurpose room, two miles west of Courthouse Circle on U.S. 64 in Pittsboro

When: Thursday, March 2, 2000, 7:00-9:00 PM

Sponsored by: Chatham County Health Department, Chatham County United Way, Chatham Hospital, and UNC School of Public Health

For more information: Please call Vanessa Jeffries at 542-8220, Beth Gillepsie at 542-1110, or Courtney Griffiths at 933-1519

Refreshments will be served



**Sus amigos y vecinos en el condado de Chatham
están hablando de...**

*... cuidado para los niños ... delincuencia ... salud dental ...
diversidad ... drogas y alcohol ... educación ...
medioambiente ... cuidado médico ... crecimiento del
condado viviendas ... trabajo ... salud mental ... recreo ...
transporte ... agua ... adolescentes ...*

- ¿Tiene usted algo que decir acerca de estos temas u otros temas y como resolverlos en el condado?
- ¿Quiere usted escuchar a lo que otros residentes del condado de Chatham quieren decir acerca de estos temas?

**Le invitamos a una reunión
comunitaria del condado de Chatham**

- ✓ Venga y escuche a las resultas de un estudio comunitario reciente del condado de Chatham y hable con otros residentes del condado y representantes de agencias locales acerca de lo que usted piensa es importante.

Dónde: Central Carolina Community College multipurpose room, dos milas oeste del Courthouse Circle en U.S. 64 en Pittsboro

Cuándo: jueves, el 2 de marzo de 2000, 7:00-9:00 en la tarde

Patrocinado por: el departamento de salud del condado de Chatham, Chatham County United Way, el Hospital de Chatham, y Escuela de Salud Pública en la Universidad de North Carolina en Chapel Hill

Para más información: llamen a Courtney Griffiths en 933-1519 (hispanohablante)

Servimos refrescos. Habrá intérprete.



Community Forum Announcements

Chatham News/Record
February 24, 2000

Chatham Crossroads
February/March, 2000

Special community meeting March 2

The future of health and human services in Chatham County will be the focus of a special community meeting March 2. The meeting is open to the public and will be held from 7-9 p.m. in the multipurpose room of Building 2, Central Carolina Community College, Pittsboro campus.

The meeting will present findings about the health and quality of life in Chatham County, in a community assessment produced through a joint effort by the Chatham County Health Department, the United Way of Chatham County, Chatham Hospital, and a team of graduate students from the UNC School of Public Health.

The team gathered information

from various sources, including published documents, focus groups of local residents representing a wide variety of economic, geographic and social backgrounds, and individual interviews with local health and human services professionals and community leaders. Over 200 people who live and/or work in Chatham County were involved in this process.

Following presentation of the team's findings, the meeting will feature an open discussion of potential future directions for the county.

Your thoughts are greatly needed

On March 2, the Chatham Health Department, with the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill School of Public Health, the United Way of Chatham and Chatham Hospital, is holding a Community Forum at the Central Carolina Community College Multi-purpose room in Building 2 from 7-9 p.m. This Forum will present information on the county assessment that was begun in September 1999 and the pub-



lic is encouraged to attend. The goal of the assessment is to learn the strengths and concerns of the county through focus group discussions. The results will be used by the above groups to direct programs and use of resources to best meet the needs of Chatham County. This assessment is a follow-up of the one done in 1997 that produced the Health of Chatham. For more information contact Vanessa Jeffries, 542-8220, Chatham Health Dept. or Courtney Griffiths, 933-1519, UNC-SPH.

Community Forum Presentation Slides

What is Community Assessment?

- Strengths, challenges, and future directions of Chatham County identified
- Information gathered on the health and quality of life of Chatham County residents
- Sources of information included primary data sources (interviews and focus groups with 157 residents) and secondary data sources (published documents, surveys, newspapers)

Overview of Topics

- Community Strengths
- Recreation
- Diversity
- Housing
- Education
- Economic Development
- Health
- Communications

Community Strengths

- Community spirit
- Neighborly
- Strong churches
- Volunteerism
- Central location
- Natural beauty

Here's what you said...

- "There's a strong sense of place, even for the people who are new to the community. There's a desire to anchor—to be a part of the community. There's a strong sense of neighborhood...ties that develop in a short while after people move to Chatham."
- "We're near cultural centers and universities...arts; you can be anywhere in 45 minutes. We've got the best hospitals within an hour...We've got a lot of positives."
- "The community churches are real strong. They're just phenomenal—it's not only the one you attend...they're unbelievable!"

Recreation

- Lack of recreational opportunities for youth and adults
- Recreation seen as a way to keep kids "out of trouble"
- Recreation seen as a way to bring groups in the county together

Here's what you said...

- "Teenagers need a place to direct their energy. We aren't giving them enough recreational opportunities."
- "We need somewhere for people to meet and greet, and [where] the kids can play basketball."
- "Why do we build community colleges and school buildings just to leave them standing half the time empty?"

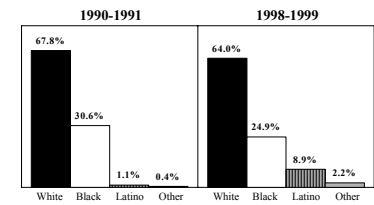
Specific recreation wishes mentioned by residents

- Biking, hiking, and walking trails
- Swimming pool
- Parks
- Movie theater
- More libraries
- Community center
- YMCA

Diversity

- Growth in northern part of county
- Growing number of residents over 65 years old
- Growing Latino population

Chatham County Public School Enrollment by Race



Here's what you said...

- "I see more interracial church and civic groups doing things together and uniting for common causes."
- "We need to work on attitudes towards people who are different—handicapped, Whites, Blacks, and Latinos. We just simply have to do more in respecting their dignity."

Here's what you said...

- "I think we can grow a lot in our ability to appreciate the richness of diversity."
- "We have to leave to search for a new life for ourselves and more than anything, for our children. We did not come to rob anyone. We want even less to strip anyone of what is theirs. No, of course not. We want simply the opportunity to move forward."

Housing

- Lack of subsidized housing in the county
- Most housing is beyond financial means of residents
- Cost of average home increased by 23% from 1993 to 1999
- Housing codes
- Access to city water and sewer

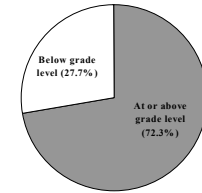
Here's what you said...

- "Property values go up and they are not willing to build low cost housing."
- "The majority of the houses here are very run-down. And, what they charge in rent is a lot. Why? Because, there is no where else to go to live."
- "Housing is a big-time problem. Quality housing for the poor and low to middle income—we just don't have an adequate supply."

Education

- Quality of education
- SAT scores lower than NC average
- Increase in enrollment
- Differences among schools in county

Test Results of Chatham County Public School Students (3-8th Grade)



Source: Report Card for the ABCs of Public Education, 1999

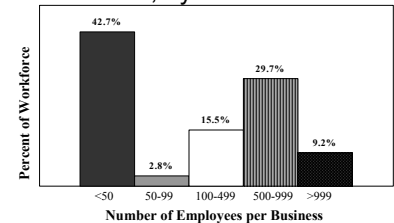
Here's what you said...

- "Chatham is not keeping up with education."
- "The school system is an impediment to growth."
- "Without good schools, Chatham won't survive as a positive place for families."

Economic Development

- Low paying jobs
- Low unemployment rate
- 46% of residents work outside Chatham County
- Many small businesses

Chatham County Private Workforce, by Size of Business



Source: Chatham County Economic Development Commission, 1999

Here's what you said:

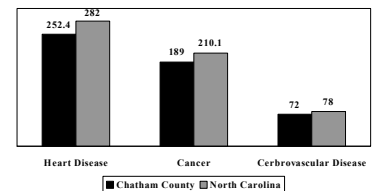
- "Jobs would be first. If you take care of that, you take care of what falls down the line....You will be able to keep up with going to doctor, education, transportation. If you don't got a job, you can't get any of these."
- "Most of the working people work outside of the county... It's misleading when they look at the unemployment rate because what they don't realize is that they [county residents] would rather work at home than drive"

Health

- Leading causes of death: heart disease, cancer, cerebrovascular disease
- Dental care, diabetes, and sexually transmitted diseases cited most often as specific health concerns
- Biggest barriers to healthcare: transportation and inadequate financial resources
- Number of uninsured residents doubled since 1995

Three Leading Causes of Death: Chatham County and North Carolina

1994-1998 age-adjusted rates per 100,000 population



Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics

Here's what you said...

- "The biggest health issue is lack of access to care. It is influenced by a lot of things like the language barrier, transportation, ability to pay, insurance, and residency status."
- "As good as I think the Health Department does in many ways...again, because of the lack of transportation, how broadly spread out this county is, I am convinced that numerous citizens are still not reached in terms of preventive healthcare."

Drugs and alcohol

- Arrest rates for DWI higher than NC
- 23% increase in hospitalization rates for alcohol and drug related diagnoses from 1996 to 1998
- Concern about drugs and alcohol mentioned often in reference to teens
- Several residents cited drugs as the county's biggest problem

Here's what you said...

- "The drug problems really impacts the fabric of the neighborhoods...the community needs to support each other and work to find ways to deal more effectively with that problem."
- "There needs to be a massive coming together of the entities involved to talk about attacking the problem of substance abuse...that says we will not tolerate this happening to us and our children."

Communications

- Challenges in communication affect other county issues
- Lack of county-wide news media
- Polarization within the county
- Bilingual services growing but still lacking

Here's what you said...

- "We are not able to get WNCA throughout the county...And Chatham News and Chatham Record is really not, even though they make an effort to make it, a county-wide newspaper...so we don't have a single news medium that we can all depend on to get information across the county."

A closing thought...

- "We still have a lot of community spirit. A barn fell on a guy's cattle...There were lots of people that came over with a frontloader to help pull off the debris...people willing to get out, hip deep in snow, that's commendable. You still got a lot of folks who look out for their neighbors."