

APRIL 2016

Public Health
CHAWBA CHUNY

PUBLIC

health

MONTHLY UPDATE

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In April, the Cancer Task Force WellBusiness initiative commended 30 local employers for their efforts to promote and support employee wellness.

Area businesses place spotlight on employee wellness

The Cancer Task Force announced 30 recipients of WellBusiness recognition during an awards luncheon held at Catawba Country Club April 21. Now in its second year, the WellBusiness program recognizes local businesses for their efforts to improve employee health and help reduce the impact of cancer in Catawba County.

To earn a WellBusiness designation, companies demonstrated their commitment to meeting proven worksite wellness standards in tobacco use, physical activity, nutrition, cancer screenings, and policy and organizational support.

Companies documented their worksite wellness practices through a no-fee application process. Additional criteria included the company being located entirely or partially in Catawba County with wellness practices impacting employees in Catawba County. Achievement levels were factored into the program to make recogni-

tion accessible to businesses of all sizes, industries and budgets.

Companies earning WellBusiness status receive program publicity and advertising, an award certificate and banner, access to networking and technical resources, plus the ability to market the company as a WellBusiness in promotion and workforce recruitment.

“Being named a WellBusiness is a way for local companies to show their dedication to the health and wellness of their employees and the community as a whole,” said Amy McCauley, Cancer Task Force coordinator and Community Outreach Manager at Catawba County Public Health. “We would like to congratulate these WellBusinesses for making health a priority and for embracing evidence-based wellness practices that not only provide outstanding wellness opportunities to employees, but also create environments where health is a sustainable practice.”

RECIPIENTS

Companies that earned WellBusiness designations:

GOLD

AdvancePierre Foods, Broome Associated Insurance, Catawba County Government, Catawba Regional Hospice, Catawba Valley Medical Center, CertainTeed, CommScope, Cornerstone Health Care, Corning Optical Communications, LLC, Frye Regional Medical Center, HSM Solutions, Klingspor Abrasives, Inc., Transportation Insight, US Conec Ltd., von Drehle Corporation and YMCA of Catawba Valley

SILVER

Alicia Carroll, MD, Ophthalmic Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery Center, Century Furniture, City of Hickory, City of Newton, Lee Industries, Inc., Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs, P.A., McCreary Modern, Inc., Merchants Distributors, LLC, Piedmont Cardiology Associates, Sherrill Furniture Company, United Church Homes and Services, and Vanguard Furniture Company, Inc.

BRONZE

Lexington Home Brands and WestRock

Fighting disease

The Epi Team is always on the lookout for emerging diseases in our community and helping prevent outbreaks.

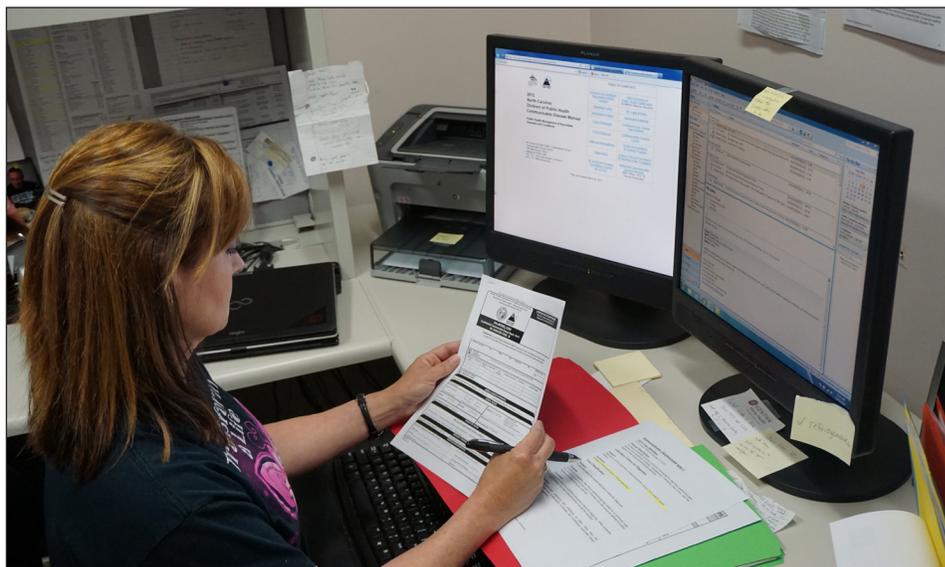
Public concern about the widespread outbreak of disease in the United States or even a pandemic that spreads around the world has risen in recent years with more global travel.

Catawba County Public Health has a team in place that is prepared to meet a serious health emergency, from foodborne illnesses to the latest global threat like the Zika virus. The Epi Team includes public health administrators, along with those with expertise in nursing, water quality, communicable diseases and other areas that could come into play during a possible epidemic.

“The purpose of a local health department Epi Team is to prepare for and manage public health’s response to a communicable disease outbreak or other public health threat,” said Kelly Isenhour, Catawba County’s assistant health director. “Engaging a multidisciplinary team in the assessment and response planning assures the actions are comprehensive.”

The team meets quarterly, even if there are no specific health threats or emergencies in Catawba County. The group also discusses information received from the Centers for Disease Control and state health officials about emerging global threats such as the Ebola and Zika viruses.

If a serious health threat emerges, the Epi team must get to work immediately. A common scenario



Communicable disease nurse Cheryl Gray conducts an investigation into a possible case of Salmonella. Gray is part of the Catawba County Public Health Epi Team.

might be a localized outbreak of a foodborne illness.

“My duty during a foodborne outbreak is to visit a food service establishment if that is possibly where the outbreak originated,” said Scott Carpenter with Environmental Health, the division that also makes routine safety inspections of all businesses that serve food. “For me and the Environmental Health staff, the hardest part is not being able to figure out what made a person or group of people sick.”

The team has one goal: Ensure the health of county residents.

“When the Epi Team is in action managing an outbreak or other event, all members are very focused and working collaboratively toward one goal,” Isenhour said. “We do whatever we need to do to accomplish our goal, which most often is to protect the health of the public.

It is rewarding to know the work you are doing, although not seen or realized by most, is making a difference in the community.”

To make that difference, communication is essential.

“The hardest part during an outbreak is trying to keep everyone on the Epi Team informed of everything going on from the nursing side of things,” said communicable disease nurse Meghan Bergman.

When there is an outbreak, team members may need to assemble quickly — that includes nights and weekends.

“We never know when we will receive a call about a communicable disease or a possible outbreak,” Isenhour said. “Therefore, preparation is critical to mobilizing the team so we can limit disease spread and resolve the outbreak quickly.”

— BY DAVE HARDIN, CATAWBA COUNTY PIO

Vaccines Working So Well, Diseases Don't Pop Up As Often



Emily Killian

HICKORY, N.C. – You may not have heard a lot about diphtheria, measles, whooping cough or polio, but that's a good thing – it means childhood vaccinations are working.

That's one reason why April 16-23 has been designated as National Infant Immunization Week. Although there won't be parades in the street, and nurses brandishing needles of vaccine won't be honored in the news as heroes, the week is especially important for the overall health of infants, children and adults alike. Despite the marked lack of public celebration, the week will bring attention to a potentially lifesaving service that is performed by public health every day.



ON THE AIRWAVES

Did you hear our message about infant immunizations? It aired on WHKY-TV and WCNC-Radio in April.



CLIPPED

from the news

Know your farmer,

BY MICHELLE T. BERNARD
O-N-E REPORTER

Spring has sprung and with its arrival we get warmer weather, lots of flowers blooming and local farmer's markets opening.

For all you "locavores" it's a cause for celebration. A locavore is a person interested in eating food that is locally produced, not moved long distances to market. Commonly the term "local" means food grown within 100 miles of its point of purchase or consumption.

The beauty of shopping at a local farmer's market is two-fold. First, you are getting food that is much fresher than what you can get at most grocery stores. Second, you are able to meet the person that grew or raised the product. Knowing the farmer can be more valuable than any certification or stamp of approval.

Go to the market with plenty of time to walk around and speak to the farmers. Ask questions about how they raise their products. That's what they are there for. Most of them enjoy contact with their customers and are happy to share with you how they farm.

Catawba County now has four farmers' markets that will be opening shortly.



O-N-E PHOTO BY MICHELLE T. BERNARD

Luke Sears holds two trays of micro greens that are ready to be harvested and taken to the Hickory Farmers' Market.

tour, share farm growing practices and ethics and answer customer questions, offering a transparency not available at other markets or grocery stores.

Customers can visit the market welcome booth to learn about these scheduled farm visits, along with market demonstrations and community information.

Lastly, in an effort to reduce food waste and strengthen community partnerships, CFM will be collaborating with Highways and Hedges, a Conover-based business that collects donated fresh produce and distributes it to local food banks.

Area health initiative receives \$450,000

HICKORY — Catawba County Health Partners has been awarded \$450,000 from The Duke Endowment to help improve health in Catawba County.

Catawba County Health Partners is one of five coalitions selected to participate in The Duke Endowment's new initiative, Healthy People, Healthy Carolinas. Health Partners will use the funds over three years to address chronic health issues and associated risk factors, including physical inactivity and poor nutrition. The coalition's application for the Healthy People, Healthy Carolinas initiative was sponsored by Catawba Valley Medical Center.

The initiative's four other coalitions represent Chatham County, Granville and Vance counties, Montgomery and Richmond counties, and Wilkes County.

Catawba County Health Partners serves as a community focal point to help identify needs, mobilize resources, facilitate collaboration, bridge gaps and coordinate community-wide efforts toward improving the county's most critical health issues. The coalition relies on community collaboration to create an environment that makes it easier for residents to make healthy choices.

"Our environment — where we live, where we go to school and work, how we spend our free time

and even our ability to access fresh food and safely exercise near our homes — contributes to our health and well-being," said Michelle Roseman, board chair for Catawba County Health Partners and chief operating officer/executive vice president of Catawba Regional Hospice. "To truly improve overall health in our community, we have to think about what affects our health in new and different ways. It's more than just what we eat and how many calories we burn. If we can improve health for even a part of our community, we will have learned a lot about how to increase quality of life for all Catawba County residents."

America's Health Rankings places North Carolina 31st among all states for the overall health of its residents, with two out of three people living in North Carolina identified as being overweight or obese. Healthy People, Healthy Carolinas recognizes that health and well-being are created and sustained not just through individual and clinical efforts, but through the cooperation and support of the community as a whole.

"The health challenges facing the Carolinas have been decades in the making," said Mary Piepenbring, vice president of The Duke Endowment. "They cannot be effectively ad-

ressed overnight, nor can they be solved by individuals and organizations working alone. We're starting with communities that have considerable health needs, but also proven ability to take on local challenges. They have a history of successful community-wide collaboration."

The first step is to strengthen the infrastructure of the local coalitions that are coordinating the effort, so that they're well-positioned to identify and implement interventions that work. Representatives from Catawba County Health Partners and the other four coalitions will participate in a learning collaborative with opportunities to share information with each other as they develop best practices for organizing, planning and implementing evidence-based programs known to improve health.



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