

# 2016 State of the County Health Report - Polk County



The following SOTCH Scorecard was created and submitted by March 10, 2017 in order to meet the requirements for the **Polk County** annual State of the County's Health (SOTCH) Report.

Clear Impact Scorecard™ is a strategy and performance management software that is accessible through a web browser and designed to support collaboration both inside and outside organizations. WNC Healthy Impact is using Clear Impact Scorecard™ to support the development of electronic CHIPs, SOTCH Reports and Hospital Implementation Strategy scorecards in communities across the region.

Scorecard helps communities organize their community health improvement efforts:

- Develop and communicate shared vision
- Define clear measures of progress
- Share data internally or with partners
- Simplify the way you collect, monitor and report data on your results

The **2015 Community Health Assessment** priority areas are:

- **Tobacco Use**
- **Healthy Eating and Active Living**
- **Mental Health**

The following resources were used/reviewed in order to complete the SOTCH:

- [2017 County Health Data Book](#)
- BRFSS
- Vital Statistics
- County Health Rankings

## Priority 1- Tobacco Use

R	Healthy People - Tobacco Free Lifestyles	Time Period	Actual Value	Target Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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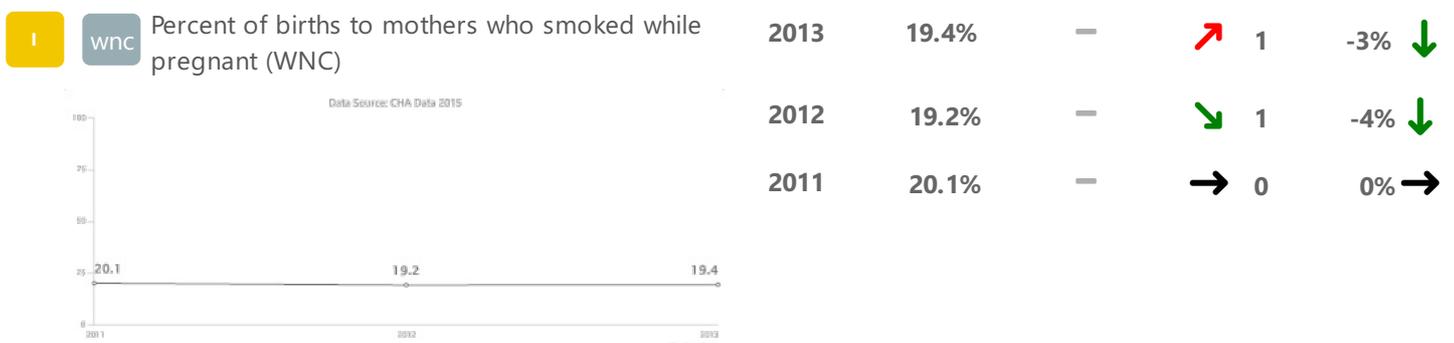
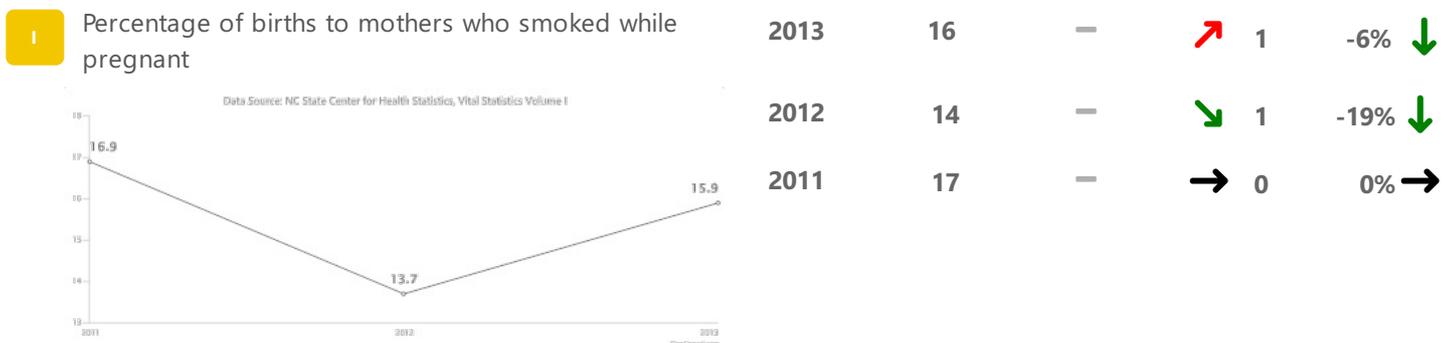
### Progress Made in Last Year

The following progress was made in 2016 on Tobacco Use in Polk County.

- \$10,000 was placed in digital ads to promote Quitline NC in strategic media used by target populations.
- Promotion of Quit Line (1-800-QuitNow), tobacco cessation and harmful effects of e-cigarette use.
- To help community members better understand the link between tobacco, marijuana and e-cigarette use among youth, Marjorie Vestal, Public Health Consultant with the Rutherford-Polk-McDowell Health District, hosted a Triangulum in September 2016. The Triangulum was offered to local Middle School and High School staff especially Health and Physical Education teachers, counselors, nurses and School Resource Officers to better prepare them to deliver relevant lessons and interventions designed to reduce the likelihood that youth will start using tobacco or THC in aerosols (AKA Vapes) such as e-cigarettes. Approximately 38 individuals attended this event.
- A Nicotine Support Group has been started at St. Luke's Hospital for anyone who has stopped smoking recently, quit several years ago, or most importantly for those who are still struggling with nicotine addiction. The support group features a new format in smoking cessation and support with weekly meetings facilitated by credentialed respiratory therapists with more than 50 years of combined experience and uses the 12-step concept of Nicotine

Anonymous and The American Lung Association Program.

- Many workplaces and insurance companies require benefit-eligible employees to sign a nicotine attestation including St. Luke’s Hospital and any employer who participates in the Blue Cross Blue Shield State Health Plan (Health Department, Polk County Schools, etc.). The attestation allows for an insurance premium discount to tobacco-free employees and encourages and provides resources to employees who want to stop using tobacco.
- Many local organizations provide tobacco cessation information to patients at point-of-contact on a consistent basis, i.e. Emergency Department, doctors’ offices, inpatient admission, RPMHD Maternity Clinic, Primary Care Offices, etc. They also participate in providing community education including information on current trends and updated information on the safety and hazards of e-cigarette use. Some organizations also provide education and support to residents of low-income housing in Polk County to promote a “No Tobacco” environment.



<b>P</b>	Mass Media Campaigns promoting Quit Line NC	Time Period	Actual Value	Target Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change

## Partners

The partners for this intervention include:

- Lead Agency: RPMHD Role: Place ads and other promotions to promote Quitline
- Target population representative: Yes, local smokers market test ads. Role: Test message effectiveness
- Tobacco and Control Branch, St. Luke's Hospital, Blue Ridge Health Center, PF3 Health Coalition Members Role: Promote Quitline

<b>P</b>	Triangulum Seminar for Educators	Time Period	Actual Value	Target Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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## Partners

The partners for this intervention include:

- **Lead Agency: RPMHD Role:** Project Coordinator
- **Target population representative:** Polk School Administrators, Educators, school nurses, SROs, Counselors, ultimately MS and HS students. **Role:** Attend Seminar, use new curriculum to deliver Tobacco Prevention Education to MS and HS students.
- NC Tobacco and Control Branch will provide training
- RHA Prevention Services will delivery best practices and curriculum updates for Tobacco Prevention Education.
- Schools will provide space and give Teachers time to attend Seminar.
- Sheriff's Department will provide SRO to attend Seminar and apply new information when working with students. **Role:** Attend and Promote Seminar. Extend new research on ENDS to appropriate intended audiences. Use new curriculum and related information to prevent use of e-cigarettes and other harmful substances among youth and adults.

<b>P</b>	Tobacco-Free College Campuses	Time Period	Actual Value	Target Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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## Partners

The partners for this intervention include:

- **Lead Agency: RPMHD Role:** Educate and support policy level change
- **Target population representative:** yes, students and faculty Role: Mobilize student body and faculty
- **Partners:** Rutherfordton Town Manager, Board of Health Members, RHI Legacy Foundation, PF3 Health Coalition members. Role: Community Organizers and Supporters

<b>P</b>	Implementation of the 5As Counseling Method for Tobacco Cessation	Time Period	Actual Value	Target Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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## Partners

The partners for this intervention include:

- **Lead Agency: RPMHD Role:** Train Health Providers to provide brief cessation counseling, to educate and Refer to Quitline
- **Target population representative:** Yes, Health Department Clients and staff. Role: Provide Cessation Counseling and Quitline Referrals
- NC Tobacco Branch, PF3 Health Coalition, Blue Ridge Health Clinics. Role: Provide 5As to Clients.

## Priority 2- Healthy Eating and Active Living

<b>R</b>	Healthy People at a Healthy Weight	Time Period	Actual Value	Target Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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## Why It Matters?

The Rutherford Polk McDowell Health Department and the Polk Fit, Fresh and Friendly Health Coalition have been working to expand opportunities to increase physical activity through the built environment. These efforts include healthy food access, community gardens, “walkability” and bikability”, new playgrounds and community plans to improve recreation areas.

An increased level of physical activity among children and adults reduces the risk of many chronic diseases including diabetes, heart disease, stroke and obesity. Strategies and improvements are focused on increasing physical activity among low-income families and children especially those living in rural areas that are currently “activity deserts”.



In an effort to reduce chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease, Healthy Eating and Active Living has been a priority area for Polk County for several years. In 2012, Healthy Eating and Active Living was one of three chosen health priorities. Related activities and interventions been launched by a subcommittee called “Polk Fit”.

Through the efforts of Polk Fit and Polk Recreation, there are now more places to be active in Polk County and more awareness of how to access those places.

Improvements to local food systems and markets continue to take place, making fresh local produce more available and affordable.

### Specific Populations At-Risk

Low-income adults and children are at greater risk for poor nutrition and transportation barriers to physical activity. According to data from the 2010 US Census, the total population of Polk County is 20,520. Males are more likely than females to get the recommended amount of physical activity (51.1% versus 41.9% 2009). Our target audience is low-income adults with an emphasis on females. Income and education are related to physical activity levels. For example individuals with the least income are the least likely to get the recommended level. The recommended level is achieved by 33.9% among people making \$15,000 or less and by 54% among those making \$75,000 or more (2009). In Polk, 16.7% of adults live below 100% of poverty in the aggregate period of 2009-2013 according to the US Census Bureau.



**The Healthy NC 2020 Focus Area to which this priority and related result are aligned is Physical Activity and Nutrition.**

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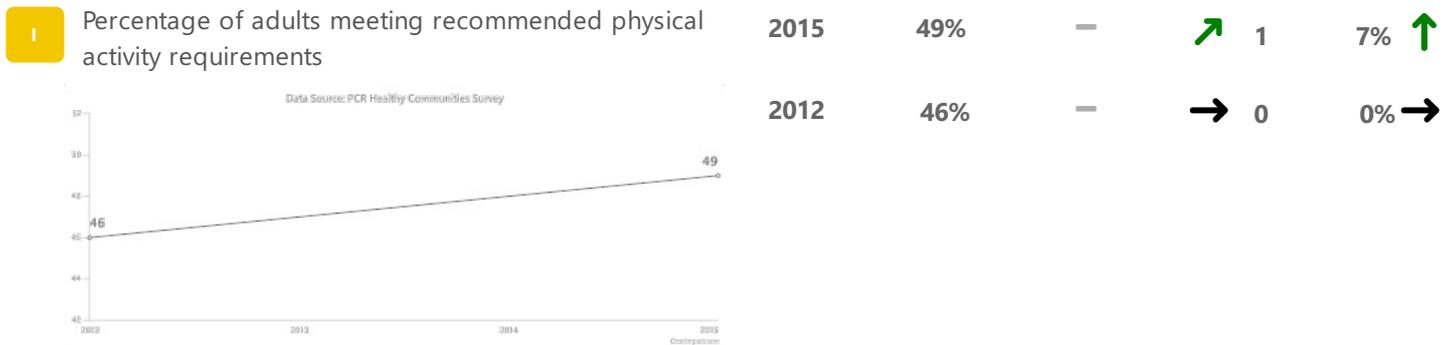
### Progress Made in Last Year

The following progress was made in 2016 on Healthy Eating and Active Living in Polk County.

- Created and distributed a Polk County Walking Trail and Playground guide, available both in hard copy and online
- Worked with Polk County Recreation Department to upgrade the playground at Stearns Park in Columbus
- Supported Community Transformation Grant strategies to 1) increase the number of community organizations that promote joint use/community use of facilities and 2) increase the number of communities that support farmers’ markets, mobile markets and farm stands.
- Partnered with St. Luke’s Hospital Diabetes Educator to promote healthy eating
- Polk DSS began a community garden, Grow Food Where People Live – blueberries, strawberries & persimmon are to be grown.
  - Staff planted a small spot of tomatoes, melons, peppers – didn’t do well as they did not amend the soil
- Polk DSS is currently attempting to:
  - locate funding to expand Grow Food Where People Live to make the whole campus an edible landscape
  - Implement a “compost” spot on campus
- Polk DSS Participates on various community groups / discussions around food insecurity, access to health services, etc. (Polk Fit, Fresh & Friendly; Growing Food Connections, Foothills Health Network)
- A “healthy living / wellness” program was initiated with DSS staff encouraging more activity, weight loss, better eating, self-care.
- Polk DSS shares information with FNS participants and encourages participation in the local farmer’s markets
- Polk DSS also helps to distribute “ChopChop – The fun cooking magazine for families” in the community (the state provides these in both English & Spanish).
- The Diabetes Self-Management Education Program (DSME) program at St. Luke’s Hospital provides an individualized and comprehensive curriculum in which the person with diabetes learns how to manage all aspects of diabetes from monitoring medications, diet and exercise, to psychological and psychosocial stress. This program is

provided by a Certified Diabetes Educator (CDE) and consists of two three-hour classes followed by individualized goal setting and problem-solving.

- St. Luke's Wellness Program provides a variety of activities for employees to participate in to promote healthy behaviors. In order to participate, employees must complete an online health risk assessment, annual wellness exam, and annual bloodwork. St. Luke's also offers benefit-eligible employees onsite biometric screenings and counseling to provide a convenient, free way for these employees to know and track important numbers, including lipid panel, glucose, and blood pressure. Other activities supported by the wellness program include participating in local races/walks, tracking steps, attending wellness lectures or presentations, and a wide-variety of other options. Participants receive a reduction in their monthly insurance premium as well as other wellness incentives, including Health Savings Account contributions.
- St. Luke's began a Weight Watchers at Work program on October 7, 2016 with 20 employees for a 17-week series. To date, this group has lost a combined total of 269 lbs. Another 17-week series is currently in the sign-up phase, and with the minimum 20 sign-ups, employees will receive a discounted rate, have a variety of payment options, and have the convenience of attending meetings on-site. The next session begins February 10, 2017 and currently has 21 participants registered. Participation in the program is also rewarded through the Workplace Wellness Program.



P	Healthy Foods & Community Gardens	Time Period	Actual Value	Target Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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Partners

The partners for this intervention include:

- **Lead Agency:** Partnership for Children and Cooperative Extension Role: Community Organizer and Program Implementation
- **Target population representative:** Polk Agriculture, Groundswell International working with families. Role: Program guidance, design, implementation and promotions
- Groundswell International, Polk Agriculture, DSS, Thermal Belt Outreach, PF3 Health Coalition, Cooperative Extension. Role: Increase capacity and participation

P	Build Active Living Communities	Time Period	Actual Value	Target Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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Partners

The partners for this intervention include:

- **Lead Agency:** RPMHD/Active Routes to School Program. Role: Program Coordination
- **Target population representative:** Partnership for Children, PF3 Polk Fit Committee members, Active Routes Coordinator and teachers working with inactive adults and children Role: Program guidance
- Active Routes to Schools implement program, coordinate events
- Polk Recreation will distribute educational materials
- Cooperative Extension will offer nutrition education.
- PF3 Health Coalition will promote events
- Polk Schools will support efforts of the SHAC to identify and strengthen school policies and programs for promoting healthy and active living
- SHAC will work with Polk Schools to revitalize school gardens and provide model policies for healthy foods and recommended activity levels for children and staff.
- **Role of all partners:** Promote healthy eating policies, community events and spaces to be active. All partners will provide program support, marketing and promotions, volunteers to assist at events.

P

Offer evidence-based clinical preventive screening, counseling and treatment guidelines

Time Period	Actual Value	Target Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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**Partners**

The partners for this intervention include:

- **Lead Agency:** RPMHD Role: Convener, Implementation
- **Target population representative:** Polk PF3 Coalition Hear to Help Program Coordinator will do outreach with target audience. Role: Outreach to target population, program design and marketing guidance
- PF3 Coalition Staff, Hear to Help Staff will promote program to target audience.
- RPMHD and local Clinics will implement program
- St. Luke’s Hospital System will implement program, offer screenings
- **Role of all participating clinics:** Offer evidence-based clinical preventive screening, counseling and treatment guidelines

**Priority 3 - Mental health**

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Access to Mental/Behavioral Health Services and Education for All Ages

Time Period	Actual Value	Target Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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**Why It Matters?**

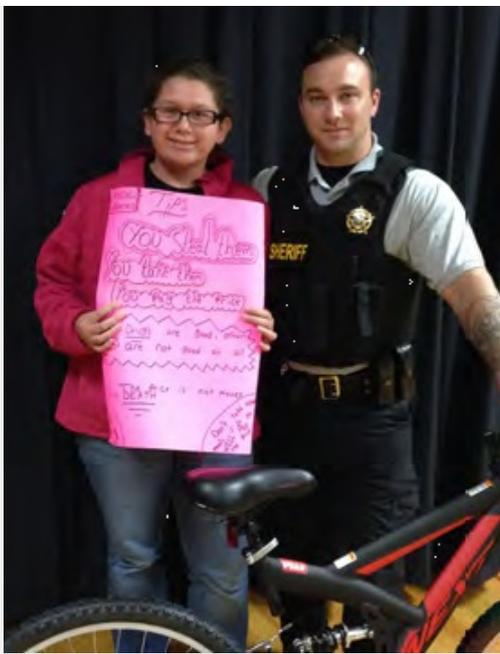
Mental health, an integral component of individual health, is important throughout the lifespan. People with poor mental health may have more difficulty with relationships, succeeding in school or work. Overall well-being is tied to mental health.

Depression is linked to lower productivity in the workplace. Depression is also a leading cause of suicide. Anxiety, depression, and substance abuse are associated with an increased use of health care services.

Specific Populations At-Risk

Youth alcohol use: Students in grades 10-12 are 1.5 times more likely to use alcohol than younger students. Young adults aged 18-25 are more likely to report illicit drug use than people of other ages. Other at-risk populations include: pregnant women abusing substances and children living in families with a history of substance abuse.

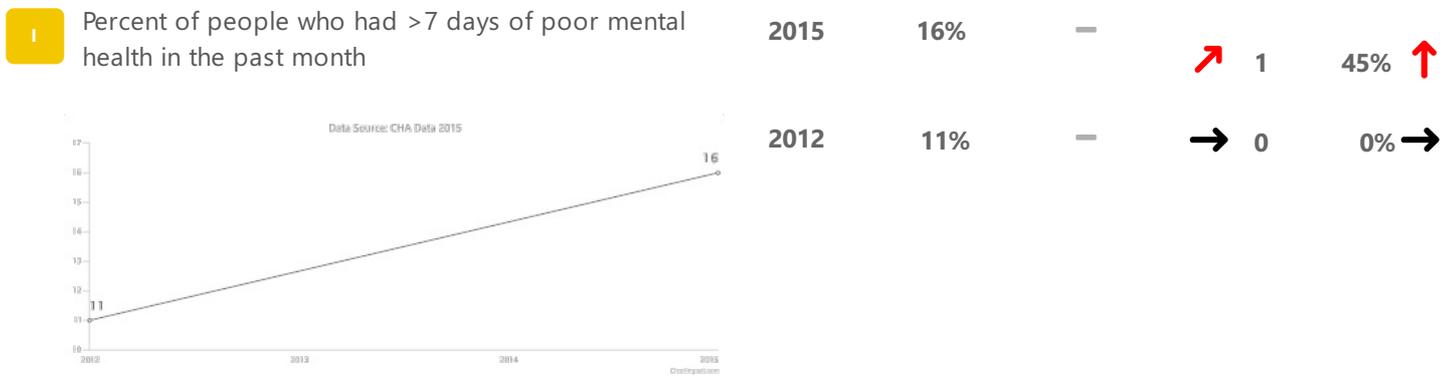
The Healthy NC 2020 Focus Area to which this priority and related result are aligned is Mental Health.



## Progress Made in Last Year

The following progress was made in 2016 on Mental Health in Polk County.

- Many of the behavioral/mental health patients have co-morbid chronic pain conditions. Conversely, chronic pain conditions can affect an individual's behavioral/mental health. Providing comprehensive pain management services to Polk County residents is an important piece of addressing the overall behavioral/mental health services available because appropriate medical management can reduce inappropriate prescribing and help to reduce purchase of street drugs by people coping with chronic pain.
- Continued community awareness about mental illness, available services and resources, and support for inter-agency communications
- St. Luke's will continue to host and support the "Mental Health Task Force." This is a coalition of mental health service providers, local agencies, law enforcement, and hospital designees that meets monthly to collaborate on current issues and share information. This group also brings in outside speakers to provide current information on trends in mental health.
- "Impaired driving" education and hands-on workshops in collaboration with local law enforcement is provided for high school students.
- Community "first-responders" such as ministers, primary care providers, and county service providers continue to be identified so that they can be educated on responding to mental health crisis in community settings.
- Polk Substance Abuse Committee continues to work on reducing prescription drug use.
- Senior Life Solutions is the intensive outpatient counseling program in place to address the emotional and behavioral health needs of adults in our community over the age of 65. Through a combination of group and individual therapies, Senior Life Solutions assists older adults who may be experiencing feelings of depression, anxiety, PTSD, unresolved grief/loss along with many other life stressors.
- St. Luke's Hospital is contracting with Old Vineyard Behavioral Health Services to provide psychiatric consultations for patients in the Emergency Department, as needed. This service allows ED patients with mental health conditions to be evaluated sooner by a psychiatrist, start an appropriate care and/or medication plan, and be evaluated for discharge or facility placement at earlier point.
- During the 2016/17 school year, RHA Health Services worked with the administrative staff and health education faculty at Polk County Middle School to coordinate a series of guest lectures provided by various community experts to all of the 6th, 7th, & 8th graders enrolled in health in a given 6-weeks. Topics varied according to each of six 6-week period. Not all students take health every six weeks, and many students take health every six six weeks. Approximately 200-225 students were reached each of five 6-week periods. Lectures were provided by Basil Savitsky and Kim McDonald at RHA, Jessica Powell at Steps to Hope, and Jimmi Buell at NC Extension Service. Learning objectives were aligned to NC Standard Course of Study for health education on (a) mental and emotional health, (b) tobacco prevention, (c) prevention of substance abuse, (d) healthy relationships, and (e) nutrition.



**P** Substance abuse prevention programs

Time Period	Actual Value	Target Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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**Partners**

The partners for these evidenced-based substance abuse prevention programs and evidence-based healthful living curricula in schools include:

- Lead Agency: Polk Substance Abuse Committee (PSAC) Role: An ongoing committee who provides a lot of community education and awareness to youth and other organizations a like in our community.
- Polk County Schools with Polk County Sherriff’s Department Role: An ongoing partnership where the school includes substance abuse prevention programs and exposes students to the realities of substance abuse and the risks and dangers.
- Polk Fit Fresh and Friendly (PF3) Role: Ongoing partnership where information, events, initiatives and trainings related to substance abuse is shared at the Health Coalition meetings. All partners at the table help support and promote their work

**New and Emerging Issue & Initiatives**

**R** Monitor New and Emerging Issues

Time Period	Actual Value	Target Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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**Narrative**

These are the new or emerging issues in our community that were not identified as priorities in our 2015 CHA.

- There has been a rise in suicide rates. PSAC and VAYA have been working on this to increase awareness. The Mental Health Advisory Board and VAYA Health have provided Mental Health Training to address the issue.
- High rates of childhood poverty and uninsured children and prompted an interest in addressing Social determinants of health. The data shows poverty and children living in poverty are comparatively high in Polk County. Accessibility and affordability of health care, health resources, and activities promoting healthy lifestyle is a major concern.
- Polk County has numerous resources available to help people with food insecurity, transportation, health care, improving wellness, as well as other social determinants of health. The desired outcome is to ensure improved communication so that people in need are matched with the appropriate resources.

- Polk Fit, Fresh and Friendly (PF3) wellness coalition is partnering with St. Luke's Hospital and its Foothills Health Network (FHN) to address social determinants of health, specifically dealing with two-way communication of needs and resources with Polk's most vulnerable populations, the poor, the elderly, and children. An initiative known as "Hear2Help" is underway as a cooperative initiative among the organizations represented by PF3 and FHN.
- PF3 and St. Luke's will provide community wide poverty simulations. Dealing empathetically with those in poverty may provide specific challenges to preconceived ideas and inherent discrimination for specific groups with whom organizations are unable to identify. Poverty simulations will allow employees and volunteers who work with these groups to have better understanding of those they are working with and trying to help.
- PF3 and St. Luke's Hospital will each send a delegate to become a COPE (Cost of Poverty Experience) trainer.
- Trained personnel will provide poverty simulations to employees and volunteers of community-wide agencies.
- Heightened awareness for others will help reduce the social stigma and increase the utilization of community resources, programs, and wellness activities available.

#### Polk Leading Causes of Death 2015

Source: State Center for Health Statistics NC 2015

Rank	Cause	Number	%
1	Cancer	64	22.1
2	Diseases of the heart	61	21.1
3	Alzheimer's Disease	23	8
4	Cerebrovascular diseases	20	6.9
5	CLRD	18	6.2
6	Influenza and pneumonia	10	3.5
7	Parkinson's	8	2.8
8	All other unintentional injuries	7	2.4
9	Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome	6	2.1
10	Diabetes mellitus	3	1
	All other causes (residual)	69	23.9
	Total Deaths – all causes	289	100

### R Keep Track of New Initiatives & Community Changes

Time Period      Actual Value      Target Value      Current Trend      Baseline % Change

#### Narrative

The following are new initiatives or changes in our community in 2016.

- Projects under consideration for 2016-2017 by the Polk Fit work group of the PF3 Health Coalition include:
  - Bringing Speedway to Health to Polk County. Speedway to health is designed for elementary aged children and teaches them about anatomy, physiology and body systems.
  - Securing a grant to implement a community walking program.
  - Developing creative ways to increase utilization of existing trails and parks.
- Hear2Help is a new program that will engage volunteers to leverage existing relationships in the community to get the word out about the many wellness related resources available to Polk County residents, while at the same time learning directly from the community about unmet needs and gaps in services.
- Active Routes to School is hoping to engage 1 additional school to participate in Walk to School Day in May 2017.
- St. Luke's has recently started a Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) which is aimed at helping those diagnosed with prediabetes or at risk for diabetes (based on clinical risk factors) in making lifestyle changes to prevent or delay the onset of diabetes. This is an accredited program and is based on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) curriculum.

- Growing Rural Opportunities is launching a Mobile Market utilizing a bus that will be on the road by Spring of 2017. The goal of the Mobile Market is to entice local food consumption with consumers not already accessing farmers markets or farm stands/stores in our community. The market will go to places of employment, recreation, and low income to alleviate all levels of local access. There are two distinct parts of the market which will be pre-ordering food boxes and then point of sale purchases. The vast majority of foods are sourced from Polk County farmers with some filler products purchased from regional farms.
-