



2012

STATE OF THE COUNTY HEALTH REPORT



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HISTORICAL WARREN COUNTY
Photography by: Economic Development Commission, Warren County

INTRODUCTION

Warren County is located in the northeastern Piedmont section of North Carolina. Warren County is bordered by Virginia to the north, Northampton and Halifax Counties to the east, Franklin and Nash Counties to the south and southeast, and Vance County to the west. The climate of Warren County is an average of 59 degrees Fahrenheit.

State and local government is the leading employment in the county, followed by manufacturing, health care and social assistance. Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting and Fishing is a way of life for some county residents. There are 218,000 acres of forest land in the county, and 90-95% of this land is privately owned. There are various programs available to help landowners with planting young trees and middle age trees prior to the process of maturity. Tobacco was the earliest cash crop grown in Warren County. This crop is still being produced today along with cucumbers, cantaloupes, and grains. Although many residents make their living working for state and local government, there are a few industries remaining in the county.

Based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts 2011, Warren County's total population is 20,861. A total of 25.7% ages 0-19 and 54.8% age 20-64 and 19.5% 65 and over. The racial breakdown is 40.3 % white and 52.5% black, 5.4% American Indian, 0.3% Asian, 3.4% Hispanic or Latino and 1.5% two or more races. In Warren County, the per capita income is \$17,838 which is much lower than the State's average of \$24,745 for the past twelve months (2010 dollars). Unemployment is a major factor in such a low per capita income. When the unemployment rate of Warren County is compared to the State, the county is much higher. In 2011, Warren County has a range of 12.5 % -14.2% unemployment rates as compared to the state range of 9.5%-10.5%. Persons living below poverty levels in Warren County are 27.0% as compared to the state rate of 15.5 %. There is a high level of undeveloped areas of the county, which may be a contributing factor to the poverty percentage.

Morbidity & Mortality

The major causes of illness and death in Warren County are chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, cancer, heart disease and blood pressure or stroke. The leading causes of death for all ages are diseases of the heart, cancer, cerebrovascular disease, chronic lower respiratory disease, pneumonia and influenza, motor vehicle injuries, nephritis, nephritic syndrome & diabetes mellitus, other unintentional injuries and septicemia. The leading causes of death for the state are diseases of the heart, cancer, Cerebrovascular disease, chronic lower respiratory diseases, other unintentional injuries, Alzheimer's disease, Diabetes mellitus, Pneumonia & Influenza, Nephritis, nephritic syndrome, nephrosis, and motor vehicle injuries to name the top ten causes. It is believed that these chronic illnesses can be reduced dramatically though lifestyle changes, including nutrition education, exercise, smoking cessation, and limited alcohol use.

According to the North Carolina Department Health Human Services (NCDHHS) communicable Disease Branch, Warren County exceeds the state with Chlamydia and Gonorrhea rates for 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010. The state exceeds Warren County's rates for Chlamydia in 2011, but not for Gonorrhea. However, the data shows Warren County is lower than the state with Primary

and Secondary Syphilis rates for the same years with the exception of 2009 when Warren County had a 10.3 and the state had a 6.2 rate in these areas. Warren County recorded 40 teen pregnancies ages 15 to 19 and a 61.2% pregnancies rate in 2010 and the state recorded 15,957 pregnancies and a 49.7 % rate for the same age group.

Our area has its share of chronic respiratory problems including asthma, emphysema and lung cancer. Because of the agriculture-related force economy, jobs, there are a certain amount of injuries and deaths from farm machinery. The county has a low rate of injury or death from industrial work sites due to little manufacturing in the area and an intense safety program at the county's largest employer.

Other Health Concerns for Warren County

Warren County is one of the poorest counties in the state; citizens are often forced to choose between regular healthcare and doctor visits or such things as groceries, heating fuel or payment of utility bills. The economic situation has always limited a certain group of the population from receiving the services that they not only desire but also desperately need. With most of the work force being either farm or log wood laborers, many are not afforded the luxury of health care insurance. The three main industries within the county provide very little stimulus as far as competitive wages, employee insurance benefits, or preventive healthcare programs for its workforce. Even those persons who are self-employed often are not afforded health or dental insurance because of the high cost and their small amounts of working capital.

Where we live has an impact on our health. The health of a community depends on many different factors, including quality of health care, individual behavior, education, jobs and the environment. Health outcomes represent how healthy a county is while health factors are what influences the health of the county. Warren County ranked 87 in health outcomes, down previously from 92 and 88 on health factors down previously from 98. Health outcomes had been improved by addressing all health factors with effective, evidence-based programs and policies. The Health Department continuously seeks funding sources to provide as many services as possible to that population of the county.

Priority Health Concerns

In 2010, Warren County conducted a community health assessment, which, through use of surveys and study of patterns in the community, gave the Health Department a feel for the needs of the area. The surveys identified unhealthy behaviors such as unsafe sex, smoking/tobacco use, poor eating habits, and lack of exercise, not having routine dental and medical check-ups, screenings, reckless driving and violent behavior. The top community issues were drugs/alcohol, dropping out of school, having no hospital here, low income/poverty, unemployment, affordable health services, lack of inadequate health insurance, no health insurance, lack of recreational facilities, and availability of positive activities for teens. Through this assessment, the group was able to determine areas of major concern and make efforts to continue to address the problems in

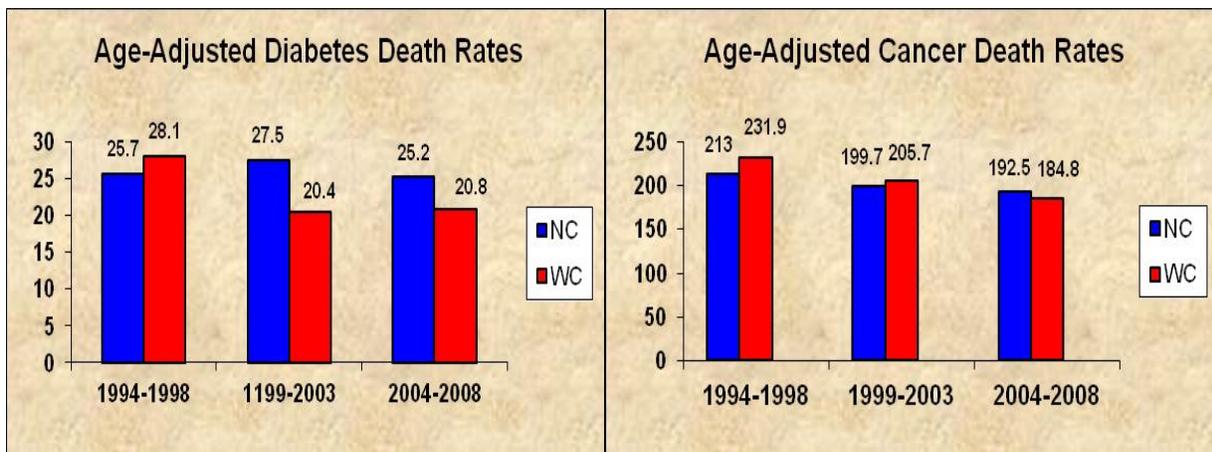
these areas. The efforts of the Healthy Carolinians of Warren County Partnership appears to stimulate genuine interest by government officials, private citizens and special interest groups in that problems are being identified and someone is taking the lead in seeking and providing solutions to the population in a reasonable fashion. The committee is working on the top two areas of concern for the next 4 years, Fitness & Nutrition and STD/ Unintentional Pregnancies.

The six areas of concern that are identified by the committee include:

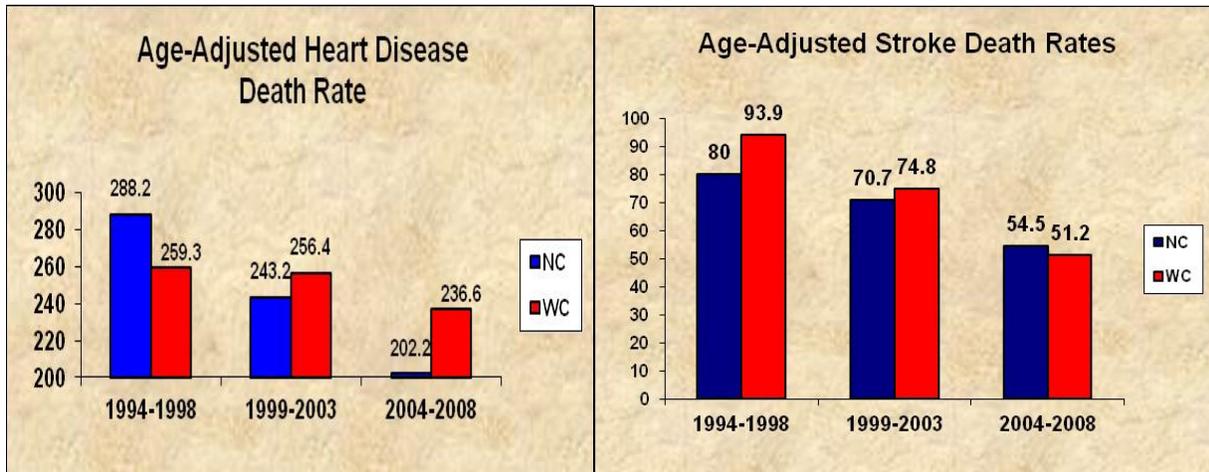
1. **Physical Activity & Nutrition** (Obesity, Diabetes, Cancer, Heart Disease, Cerebrovascular Disease)
2. **STD’S/Unintentional Pregnancy** (HIV, Syphilis, Gonorrhea, Chlamydia)
3. **Tobacco Use**
4. **Substance Abuse**
5. **Injury (motor vehicle, infant unintentional injuries)**
6. **Mental Health**

1. Chronic Diseases (diabetes, cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure)

AGE-ADJUSTED DEATH RATES GRAPH AT A GLANCE

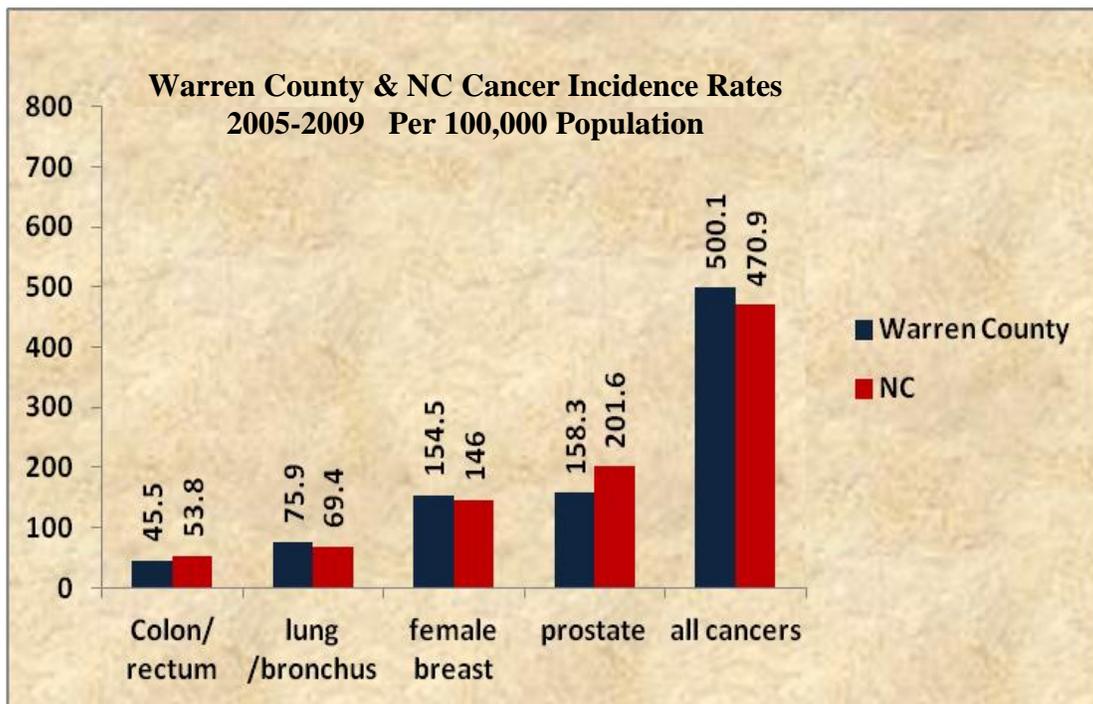


(Source: County Health Data Book, North Carolina Statewide and County Trends in Key Health Indicators)



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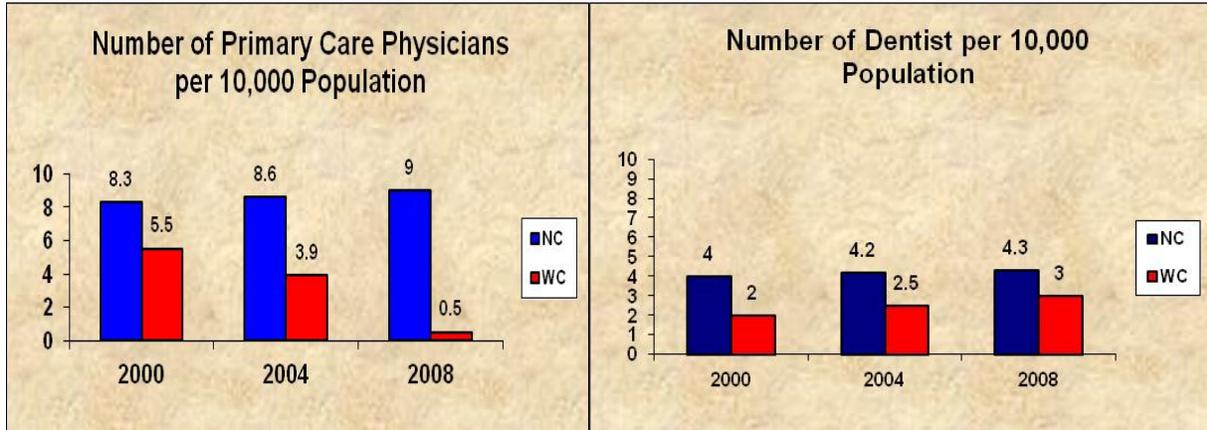
Death rates reveal major areas of health concern in our county. The leading cause of deaths in Warren County and the state are related to heart disease, cancer, diabetes and stroke. Death rates are compared to the state are per 100,000 Population.



Source data: NC Central Cancer Registry 01/2012

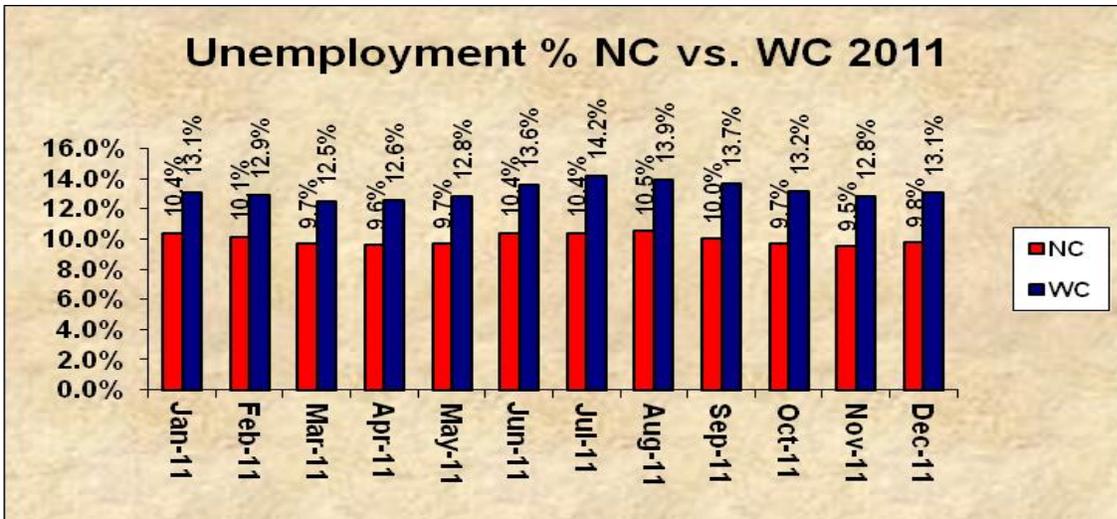
Warren County slightly exceeds the state with total cancer rates and with all other cancers with the except for prostate cancer.

Quality Health Care Services



(Source: County Health Data Book, North Carolina Statewide and County Trends in Key Health Indicators)

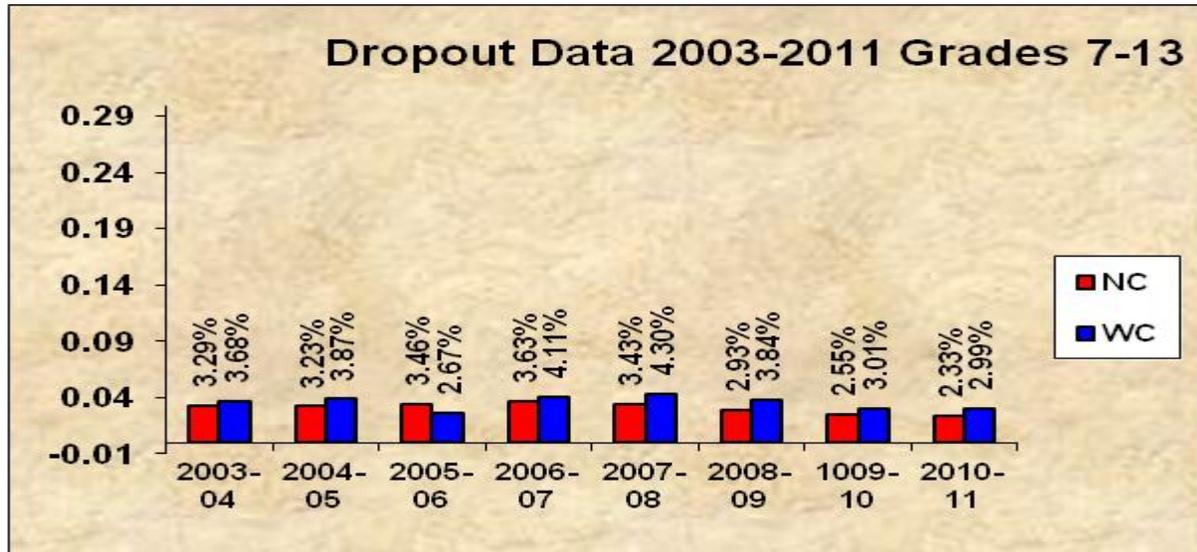
Unemployment



(Source: State Agency Data: Department of Commerce 2012)

The unemployment rate for Warren County exceeds the state rate on an average by about 1-4% for the entire year of 2011. With no hospital and only minimal industry, the school system and county government employs the most people in the county.

Education/ Dropout



(Source: NC: Department of Public Schools 2011)

The dropout rate is based on students who do not return to school from the previous year. Students who transfer to other public or private schools or who are home schooled are not included. The dropout rate does include students who enroll in community college high school equivalency programs.

Healthy Carolinians of Warren County Goals & Progress

With Warren County being one of the poorest counties in the state, it was obvious there was a great need to address health issues here in the county. The vision of Healthy Carolinians of Warren County (HCWC) is children, teens and adults living healthy and safe lives through goals of:

- ~ Increased citizen participation in physical activities
- ~ Increased citizen commitment to healthy eating
- ~ Decreased use of illegal drugs by children, teens, and adults
- ~ Decreased abuse of alcohol by adults
- ~ Decreased use of alcohol by children and teens
- ~ Increased use of vehicle safety belts
- ~ Increased and proper use of child restraint and booster seats
- ~ Decrease the number of teen pregnancies
- ~ Decrease the number of STD'S
- ~ Increased the number of children wearing bike helmets

HCWC continues partnering with individuals as well as organizations to address the concerns. After the completion of the 2010 CHA (Community Health Assessment) the priority areas changed their focus. There are currently two working groups within the partnership: a continuation of Fitness and Nutrition (FAN) and a newly formed committee PSPT

(Pregnancy/STD Prevention Team). The committee will continue to work with Safe kids with the Buckle-up program with child restraint safety. Substance abuse education will be conducted on an as needed basis.

FAN (Fitness & Nutrition) Committee

- **F3 Project (Faith Farming)** has completed Phase 1 and Phase 2. The participants in Phase 1 developed a tool kit as part of the faith component of the project. When the committee do another Eat Smart Move More (ESMM) training and a free kit will go to the first 10 churches that register for the training.
- **Pickleball** is still being played each Wednesday and some Fridays have also been included. There has been a second court added to accommodate the additional players. There has been an average of 8 to 12 people weekly. There were a total of 323 participants from January to November in 2011.
- **Family Play Day** is a non-structured play day was held at the Warren County Recreation Complex. The mission was to set aside a time for families to come together and have a day of physical activity. The event was held on Saturday August 25, 2012, but we only had six present due to the weather conditions and other events. The committee decided to host the event again in the spring and fall of 2013.

PSPT (Pregnancy/STD Prevention Team) of Warren County

- The committee developed a brochure and some interest cards for this new committee. The brochure and cards are displayed at all community events and health fairs.
- The committee's first of a series of articles on Teen Pregnancy and community awareness was published in the local newspaper the week of June 22, 2011. The article was entitled *Warren County... We Have a Problem*.
- The second article ran in the paper at the end of the year was entitled ***Who is eligible for Medicaid and Work First benefits?*** In today's economy, many individuals are finding themselves in situations that cannot be taken care of unless they depend on benefits such as Medicaid and Work First.
- The committee developed a survey for parents to fill out at WCHD 3rd Annual Health Night Out. The committee is in the process of planning a public forum discussing the issues of STD/Pregnancy in the county.

The Healthy Carolinians of Warren County has been successful in reaching out to a diverse population for participation in the partnership. The program has reached out to the American Indians, Hispanics, churches, civic organizations, county agencies, government officials, politicians and county residents in the community to create cross culture participation.

Early Preventive Health

The Warren County Health Department has several programs in place to address the area of preventive health. Those programs, Exerstyle and Exerstyle plus, provide the wellness center with treadmills, stationary bikes, rowing machines, and low impact aerobics. There is a diabetes support group, regular blood pressure screenings, cholesterol checks and regular distribution of printed materials and samples. Also, walking trails have been marked, along with health fairs being held at the local industries.

Warren County Health Department held its 16th Annual Health Fair on Tuesday, April 17, 2012. The vendor hours were from 10:00am to 2:00pm and the screening hours were from 10:00am to 6:00pm. This event was in partnership with Farm Bureau's Healthy Living for a Lifetime™ and Five County Community Operations Center.

Healthy Living for a Lifetime is an initiative that seeks to provide rural North Carolinians with the benefits of living a healthier lifestyle by providing free professional health screenings, educational materials, and resources designed to encourage a commitment to healthy living. To accomplish this, we will use a 50-foot Mobile Health Screening Unit to administer tests and bring together community organizations to provide guidance and advice to screening participants. Free cholesterol, blood glucose, blood pressure, body mass index (BMI) and skin damage assessment were offered to the public. There were over 170 people that were screened. Also, there were 23 vendors from area agencies. A total of 500 people came out to the event.

Warren County is one of eight North Carolina counties selected to participate in the three-year Food-Corps program, designed to promote healthy nutrition among local students through such measures as school gardens. Food-Corps is sponsored by North Carolina 4-H and the North Carolina State University Center for Environmental Farming systems. Warren County's portion of the grant allows the Warren County High School students to participate on such projects as upgrading the school's greenhouse, developing a garden and using the produce they grow to assist a number of classes.

Many churches in the county have implemented a health ministry by taking control of their health. There are active exercise programs as well as community gardens that are providing fresh fruit and vegetables for the community.

New and Emerging Issues-

Henderson-Vance Safe kids Coalition is working to help bring Warren, Franklin, Halifax and Northampton counties into a five county coalition to be renamed Safe kids North Central Coalition. Safe Kids USA is a nationwide network of organizations working to prevent unintentional childhood injury, the leading cause of death and disability for children ages 1 to 14. We educate families, provide safety devices to families in need and advocate for better laws to help keep children safe, healthy and out of the emergency room. More than 600 coalitions and chapters in 49 states bring together health and safety experts, educators, corporations,

foundations, governments and volunteers to educate and protect families. The Warren County team is looking for firefighters, EMS, schools personnel, faith-based organizations, day cares, DSS, law enforcement and citizens to become involved with forming this committee

The North Carolina Division of Public Health (DPH) has been awarded Community Transformation Grant (CTG) funding to work with state and local partners to implement policy, systems and environmental changes that support tobacco free living, active living, healthy eating and high impact evidence-based clinical preventive services over a five-year period. Funding for CTG is authorized through the Affordable Care Act 2010.

Johnston County is the lead agency for this grant project. Region 7 that includes Franklin, Granville-Vance, Halifax, Johnston, Nash, Wake, Warren, and Wilson counties have been awarded \$400,000 per year for the 5 year grant period of March 1, 2012 – September 30, 2016. Continuation of funding will be dependent upon project performance and continued funding from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Coordinators have been hired for the region and action plans have been developed to address the focus areas to begin implementation October 1, 2012.

Community Involvement

On September 15, 2012 there were more than 350 people attending the 30th anniversary of protest against the PCB landfill built in the nearby community of Coley Springs Missionary Baptist Church in 1982. Construction of the landfill followed years of public outcry, resistance and legal actions that came after transformer oil contaminated with toxic polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) was illegally sprayed in Warren and 13 other counties in 1978. The state of North Carolina and the federal Environmental Protection Agency chose the poor, rural and mostly minority populated Warren County for the PCB landfill, which they claimed was safe and would not leak. Some 30 years later, local residents with memories joined a number of college students to remember the event of the past. The events had a number of keynote speakers and a historical marker that will be placed in the Afton Community to commemorate the PCB protest was unveiled. The commemoration concluded with a walk along the route protesters marched some 30 years ago.

Summary

The Healthy Carolinians of Warren County Partnership has pursued and solicited interest from all areas of the county. A collaborative effort continues between Healthy Carolinians of Warren County (159 partners), the Warren County Health Department, local government officials, county agencies, the Warren County School System, and civic organizations in pursuing every opportunity to address, reduce and/or eliminate the health concerns of the county residents. This goal has been reached by visiting high traffic areas such as grocery stores, chamber of commerce offices, convenience stores, government facilities and healthcare provider agencies. This, in addition to placing printed materials such as brochures and posters at various health fairs, schools and faith based organizations, has been a large part of their initial campaign and efforts towards the healthy lifestyles initiative.