

Progress on CHIP



All Scotland County priorities are addressed in the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). Click on the links below for Progress Made in 2024.

For the priority area **Obesity/Overweight (Hypertension, Heart Disease, Diabetes and Cancer)** see *Progress in 2024* note tabs for each program below.

[Positive Youth Engagement and Healthy Behaviors](#)

For the priority area **Mental Health and Substance Use/Misuse including Tobacco/E-Cigarettes** see *Progress in 2024* note tabs for each program below.

[Substance Use Disorder Campaigns x](#)

[Operation Medicine Drop x](#)

[Opioid Prevention and Education Network \(O.P.E.N.\) x](#)

[Lock Your Meds Campaign x](#)

[Every Try Counts x](#)

[QuitlineNC \(Supported by Healthy Communities Grant\) x](#)

For the priority area **Positive Youth Engagement for Healthy Behaviors** see *Progress in 2024* note tabs for each program below.

[Youth Peer Group x](#)

[Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program x](#)

[Teen Fest x](#)

Priorities Scotland County began focusing on in 2022-23 are ongoing in 2024. We can now continue delivering our messages through the normal outreach efforts where we meet with, educate and inform people in face to face settings for trainings, education and information including utilizing our media resources, social media, programs and services, meetings and classes as requested.

Mental Health: Even before the COVID pandemic, clinicians were seeing alarming trends across many indicators of child and adolescent mental health, according to the North Carolina Child Health Report Card 2023. Suicide became the leading cause of death for children ages 10-14 in 2019. In 2020, an unprecedented 67 children ages 0-18 died by suicide in North Carolina and one in five NC high school students reported seriously considering attempting suicide in 2021, up from 16% in 2017. Diagnosis of mental health concerns are also on the rise - a 49% increase from 2016. While the data is startling, the sudden attention to mental health issues since the pandemic means this issue will be more focused on. Like substance misuse and those needing support, increased attention can mean decreased stigma, allowing those in need to seek out the help they need with less anxiety.

Because of this and the data on overdose and substance use in Scotland County, a well-attended Mental Health Roundtable, planned through Representative Garland E. Pierce's office and Scotland County Health Department, was held February 21st at the Wagram Recreation Center, where a distinguished panel of speakers provided information and education on mental health, substance use, resources, and data. A question and answer session followed for the participants to gather input and suggestions from the community. Additional roundtables on this issue are being planned. We have also begun to promote the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline throughout Scotland County and within our Health Department with educational materials being distributed during outreach events along with social media posts and radio programs discussing mental health, overdose and suicide prevention along with the resources available to our communities. When someone calls the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, they are connected to trained counselors who provide free and confidential emotional support to people in a mental health crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in the United States.

A second annual Teen Health Event, "Teen Fest", was held Saturday, September 21st, 2024, at Scotland High School. This collaborative effort focused on teen issues and resources such as seat belt and driving safety; smoking and vaping prevention/awareness; mental health; physical activity and nutrition; overdose awareness/prevention; peer pressure; along with interactive activities. Seventeen agencies were involved in providing educational/informational exhibits.

Opioid Awareness/Prevention Efforts - Outreach efforts continue for overdose awareness and prevention through a variety of methods such as purchased ads, PSA's, written articles in local newspaper, social media posts, during outreach and special events and through educational presentations in group settings. This also includes education and information about safe medication disposal to prevent unintentional poisonings, potential overdoses, and safe environments. Scotland County now has three easily accessible Medication Drop Box locations (City Hall/Police Dept.; Sheriff's Office; and Wagram Town Hall) where people can take unused, unwanted, expired medications to drop off safely and securely. Additional locations are being considered.

In addition, because of the dedicated and collaborative work of the Scotland Opioid Settlement Collaborative, we were able to get funding approved for three evidence-based programs and staffing, that we hope will lessen the impact of the opioid overdose epidemic in Scotland County, increase support and accessibility and care for those struggling with drug misuse, and provide additional prevention services. Those will be the 1) Recovery Care Program (Family Court), the 2) Opioid Outreach Program through the Department of Social Services and the 3) Safe Choices Program for the Middle and High School students. In addition, funds were also allocated for Narcan to be purchased for Emergency Medical Services use.

As mentioned last year, Mental Health/Substance Use Mobile Care Units, (funded through EastPointe, M.C.O., now Trillium, M.C.O.), managed through Stephens Outreach Ministries, are being utilized in chosen locations in Scotland County and set up on scheduled days to make it easily accessible to those needing counseling, screening, support, and resources.

Tobacco Prevention: A Youth 'Peer' Group for tobacco and vaping prevention continues to be on our radar but has yet been developed for a variety of reasons, the main being that the COVID-19 pandemic kept us from real contact with students until this school year, then other priorities ensued. Nevertheless, we continue to discuss with our regional Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch and the school system to get this strategy up and running for the 24-25 school year. The school system provides the educational "Aspire" Program for middle school students who are caught with tobacco/vaping items while at school. The "CATCH My Breath" program is being updated and will be provided in Scotland County Schools once we have trained staff in place. We continue to promote Quitline NC for smoking and tobacco cessation through purchased ads, social media, PSA's, written articles, referrals through our clinics and during outreach events.

Morbidity and Mortality Changes Since Last CHA



Leading Causes of Death 2022:

In 2022, Scotland County's leading causes of death were very similar to year before with 515 deaths (excluding fetal deaths). **Heart Disease, again, was the leading cause of death in Scotland County with 109 deaths.**

The next five leading causes of death in Scotland County for 2022 were: **Cancer 88; Cerebrovascular Disease 39; Diabetes 32; COVID-19 31; Alzheimer's Disease 20;** (per 100,000 population). There were four suicide and nine homicide deaths in the county. (NCDHHS County Health Data Book 2024, SAS Output).

Emerging Issues Since Last CHA



Emerging issues during the last year remain nearly the same as reported in our SOTCH 2023: HIV/AIDS continued to be an emerging issue along with overdose incidences and number of Emergency Department visits due to opioid overdose. Mental Health and Substance Misuse and Drug Overdose Deaths have also increased significantly. (others?)

Scotland County Newly Diagnosed HIV/AIDS Infections from 01/01/2018 to 12/31/2023:

| Newly Diagnosed Cases | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|-----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Scotland County | | | | | | |
| HIV Infections | 3 | 10 | 9 | 6 | 8 | 10 |
| AIDS | 6 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 2 |

North Carolina HIV/STD Surveillance Report Vol. 2022 and 2023, No. 4; NC DHHS Communicable Disease Branch

In North Carolina, HIV testing is available at no charge to clients in all local health departments and in a number of community-based organizations (CBO). In addition, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services provides resources and technical support to community-based organizations, community health centers, health departments, and state and local correctional facilities to expand HIV testing in clinical and jail settings. Scotland County Health Department provides an HIV Infectious Disease Clinic that provides care to patients with HIV/AIDS. In late September 2023, Scotland County Health Department opened a PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) Clinic for HIV-negative individuals that are high risk for contracting HIV infection and are interested in PrEP as a means to prevent HIV. The clinic offers counseling, lab tests and monitoring.

In **2023**, Scotland County Health Department provided #1,197 HIV screening tests and in **2024**, provided #937 HIV tests thru December 2024.

Scotland County Overdose incidences: Substance use and abuse are major contributors to death and disability in North Carolina. Nearly 12 North Carolinians died each day from a drug overdose in 2022. Substance Use Disorder (SUD) has devastating impacts on the life of the people who experience it, their families, and their communities.

In **2022**, Scotland County EMS was dispatched to 217 overdose calls and Narcan was administered 184 times; There were #20 drug overdose deaths (57.4 per 100,000 pop.) in Scotland County in 2022. In **2023**, EMS was dispatched to #193 overdose calls and Narcan was administered #164 times; The rate of Fentanyl-positive deaths in Scotland County from March 2023 to February 2024 was (55.4 per 100,000 pop.) with #19 deaths. (NC OCME.DHHS.NC.Gov); In **2024**, from Jan. 1st thru December 31st, Scotland County's EMS was dispatched to #206 overdose calls and Narcan was administered #144 times.

In **2023**, there were 112 Emergency Department visits for drug overdose at a rate of 321.6 (per 100,000 pop.); From May 2023 to April 2024, Scotland County had the 2nd highest rate at (201.0 per 100,000 pop.) for ED visits among counties due to opioid overdose. Richmond County had the highest rate at (225.3 per 100,000 pop.) (ED Data - NC DETECT '23-24).

New/Paused/Discontinued Initiatives Since Last CHA



Diabetes Smart Program (New) - Health Department staff have been preparing for and completing the requirements to offer the evidence-based, self-management, diabetes education and support program that is proven to lower one's A1c, manage blood sugar levels, and control complications from diabetes. Persons diagnosed with diabetes will be referred through their provider and participate in classes that will focus on self-care behaviors on blood sugar numbers, food, physical activity, medicines and dealing with stress. Start date is planned for Spring or Summer 2025.

Health Department Mobile Unit (New) - A new Mobile Health Van was purchased late 2023 through COVID funding to help reach underserved and vulnerable populations eliminating some of the barriers they face when it comes to access to health care. The mobile unit will be utilized to provide immunizations such as Back to School Vaccine Clinics, Flu and COVID-19 vaccines, WIC services, and for outreach events to enhance our efforts in promoting public health and our programs and services.

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Clinic (New) - Scotland County Health Department's PrEP Clinic was opened in September 2023, that would focus on reducing new HIV infections in high risk people. In (Date) a \$5,000 Wal-Mart Communities grant was received to provide education, counseling, and medication assistance.

Newborn/Postpartum Home Visit Program (New/resumed) - this child health support program was brought back in February to reach new moms and their babies early with preventive services and anticipatory guidance to help reduce infant morbidity and mortality rates. The program is a one time nurse visit to the home and delivers health, social support and educational services directly to families in their homes. All women and newborns who are residents of Scotland County and receive Medicaid (regardless of income, private medical provider or hospital delivery) are eligible for the program.

Supporting Women's Health Services Grant - Program established through funding awarded to expand increase contraceptive access and improve maternal and infant health for underserved, uninsured or medically indigent patients. This program has enabled the health department to establish a satellite clinic at St. Andrews University.

Diabetes Support Group and Education Program (resumed) - This well-attended educational program resumed this year after being put on hold due to the COVID pandemic. Monthly programs for those who have just been diagnosed with pre-diabetes, diabetes, or who need diabetes maintenance receive education from relative professionals on a variety of chronic disease-related topics such as nutrition/healthy eating, foot care, physical activity, medications, stress and mental health, sick days and diabetes, wound care, heart health, oral health, smoking and diabetes, heat-related illness, avoiding complications and more. The annual Diabetes Health Fair "Living the Sweet Life" resumed in November 2023, where a distinguished panel of speakers educate the participants on the importance of diabetes and health. Participants are also provided opportunities to visit exhibitors pertaining to healthy living during the event. There were approximately 135 community members and 23 vendors in attendance for the 2024 "Living the Sweet Life" Diabetes Health Fair.

Dental Health (resumed) - Our public health dental hygienist is now able to provide the annual screenings, fluoride treatments, and sealant projects to our school-aged children in 2023, 2024 school year. Education, information and dental health screenings began April 2023. We are working closely with our Public Health Dental Hygienist with the NC Oral Health Section, to schedule trainings for those who influence children's and older adult's health. Although dental health was not identified in our top three issues to focus on these three years, this is still an important and ongoing issue that the health department promotes and partners with the NC Oral Health Section's Public Dental Health Hygienist and our school system. At time of this report, specific data for Scotland County was not available due to changes in programs at the State level.

Physical Activity/Nutrition (resumed) - Scotland County's beautiful parks, walking trails, and playgrounds have been updated and made inclusive for disabled youth and adults through collaborative efforts and funding. A newly renovated Community Center continues to be developed at the I.E. Johnson Elementary School, where activities, events, classes, and meetings are being held. The new Laurel Hill Community Center provides opportunities for active living and recreation in a safe, inclusive environment and opened to the public in 2023. Most recent, Square Dancing Classes were added and are well attended. In addition, Scotland Yard, a part of Scotland County's Parks and Recreation facility was completely refurbished and updated in 2023 to be an inclusive play environment for all. Add nutrition info here...

ICO4MCH: - The Improving Community Outcomes for Maternal and Child Health (ICO4MCH) Initiative is provided through a competitive grants process to achieve improved birth outcomes, reduced infant mortality and improved health among children aged 0-5. This grant cycle, we continue the work of the Community Action Team and have added community doula services.

Reducing Infant Mortality in Communities : This new effort similar to the former Infant Mortality Reduction grant to implement evidence-based strategies proven to reduce the infant mortality disparity ratio; current strategies include: doula support services, safe sleep education, health equity impact assessment and community based partnerships.

Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention: This funding was awarded to provide essential comprehensive sexual health education which includes topics about abstinence, encouraging parent and teen communication responsible citizenship and building self confidence among adolescent participants.