

**2004  
STATE OF THE COUNTY**

The Partnership for a Healthy Durham is dedicated to collaboratively improve the quality of life of its community.

**REORGANIZATION**

The Durham County Health Department is pleased to present the 2004 State of the County Health Report. The report is a very brief account of key health indicators in chronic diseases, sexually communicable diseases and maternal and child health issues.

In 2003, the Health Department and the Durham Health Partners presented a very detailed Community Health Assessment as required by the office of Healthy Carolinians and Health Education. Since the submission of the report, the Durham Health Partners has modified its scope and disbanded the "Health Committee" which was responsible for carrying out the Healthy Carolinians initiative.

Currently, the Health Department has assumed the responsibility of reorganizing the Healthy Carolinian Initiative in Durham. To achieve this objective, the Department held two reorganization meetings in the past five months and conducted extensive discussions on the purpose, direction and membership of the initiative. Finally a decision was made to merge the Durham County healthy Everybody and the Healthy Carolinian initiative into the Partnership for a Healthy Durham. Healthy Everybody, an initiative sponsored by the Durham County Commissioners, the City of Durham, and the Durham University Medical Center, has almost identical health objectives as the healthy Carolinian initiatives. Efforts will continue to recruit and diversify the membership and work towards recertification of the initiative.

The Health Department and the Board of Health have set the following broad goals and developed priority health objectives that were designed to address identified health issues. This report is a very brief summary of some of the health issues.

**Goals**

- Promote optimal health and wellness of children
- Reduce premature death rates
- Prevent and control communicable disease



## A BRIEF HISTORY

Durham County is located in north-central North Carolina in an area commonly referred to as the Piedmont region. Unlike most counties in North Carolina, Durham County is primarily made up of one large city, the City of Durham.

The Durham Chamber of Commerce Research Committee declared April 26, 1853 as Durham's official birthday. The birthday is marked by the establishment of the first post office in town. Durham's name, however, originated about a decade earlier when Dr. Bartlett Durham donated a four acre tract of land to the North Carolina railroad. On the land donated, a new train station known as Durhamsville was established. Eventually the area became known as Durham. On April 10, 1869, the town of Durham was officially incorporated.

## DEMOGRAPHY

Over the past many years, Durham County experienced a growing and shifting population. This trend is expected to continue for many years to come. Currently birth rates exceed death rates thereby raising the natural increase of the population. The County also continues to attract migrants from within and outside of the United States of America. By far, the largest number of migrants to Durham County are Latinos from Mexico and other Latin American countries.

The total population of Durham County in 2003 was estimated at 236,088. of this, 203,966 lived within the Durham City limit. The remaining 32,092 people lived in the non-incorporated sector of the county (SCHS, September 22, 2004).

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## HEALTH INDICATORS

Health, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), is "A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". This definition, therefore, clearly implies that the state of health is dependent not only on the body's interaction with disease agents, but also on an individual's ability to interact with the social, political and the physical environment. Given the complexity of an individual's experience with these environments, it is rather difficult to assess the overall quality of the interaction. However, by adopting WHO's holistic definition of health the use of health outcomes can serve as useful indicators for making this assessment.

The Durham County Health Department continues to address priority health objectives that were developed by the Board of Health. The objectives were designed to address identified public health problems. Three of the identified health problems that affect a large segment of Durham County's population are related to chronic diseases, communicable diseases and maternal and child health issues.

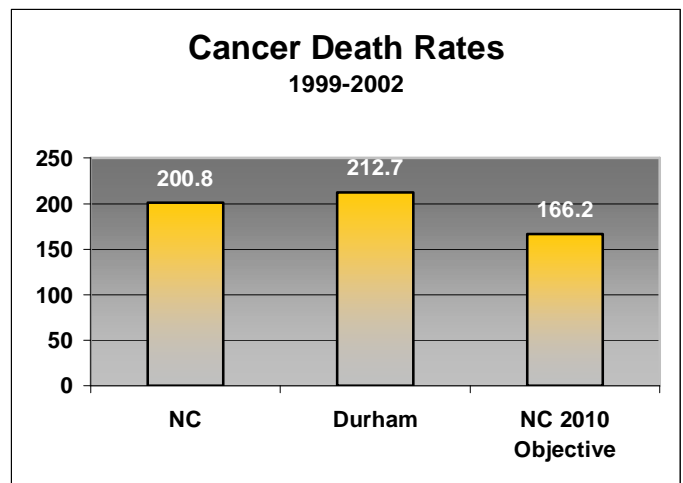
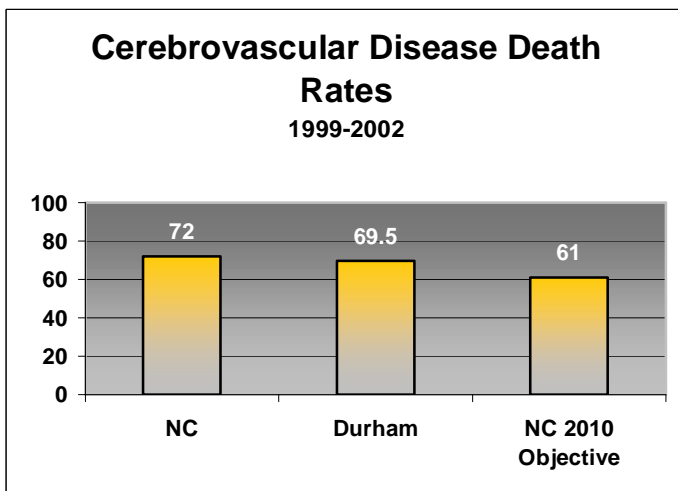
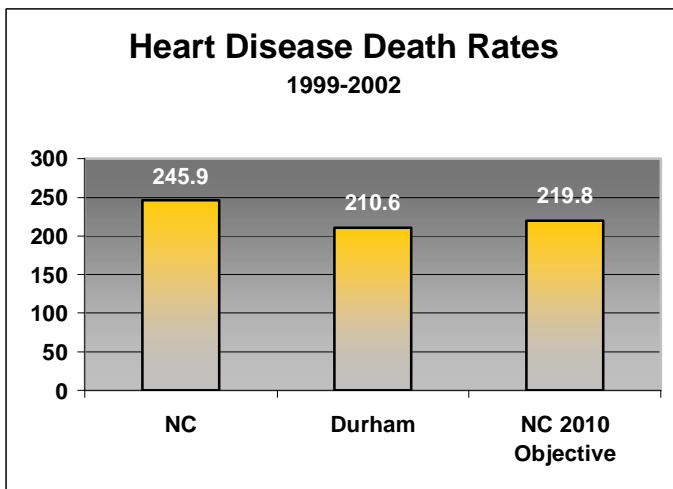
## CHRONIC DISEASES

Chronic diseases, such as heart disease, cancer and stroke, are the leading causes of death not only in Durham County, but also in North Carolina and the United States of America as a whole. Risk factors that are associated with chronic disease are sedentary lifestyle (lack of physical activity), diet, smoking and high cholesterol.

Chronic diseases can be controlled or prevented by adopting behaviors that are conducive to good health. The behaviors are participating in regular physical activity (exercise), eating healthy and nutritious foods, and avoiding tobacco use.

The following graphs show rates of the three leading causes of death in North Carolina and Durham County. The rates are per 100,000 population, race and gender specific age adjusted rates for 1998-2002.

## CHRONIC DISEASE RATES



Source NC- DHHS State Center for Health Statistics

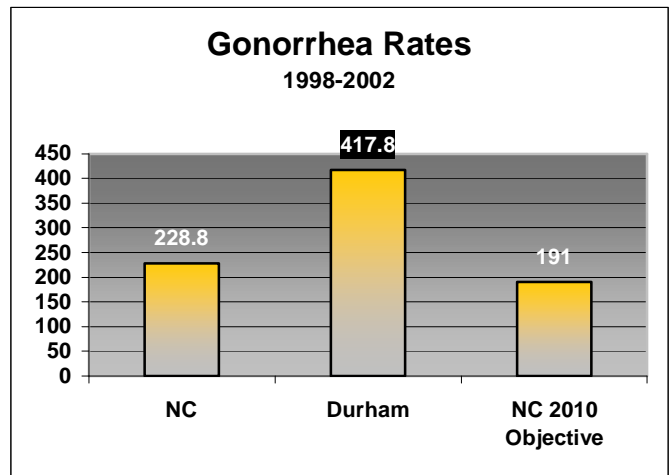
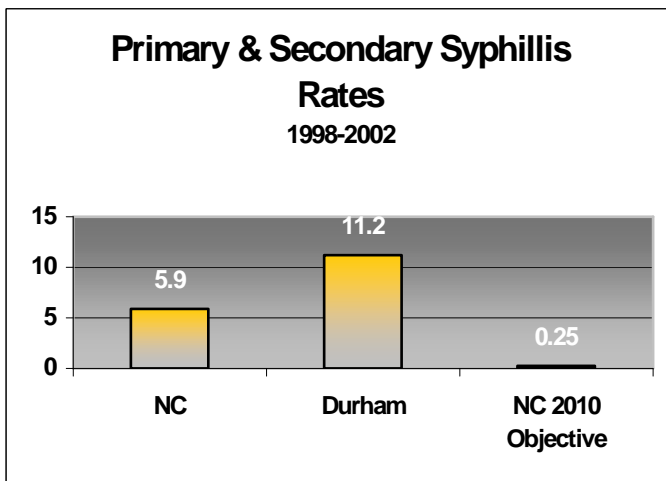
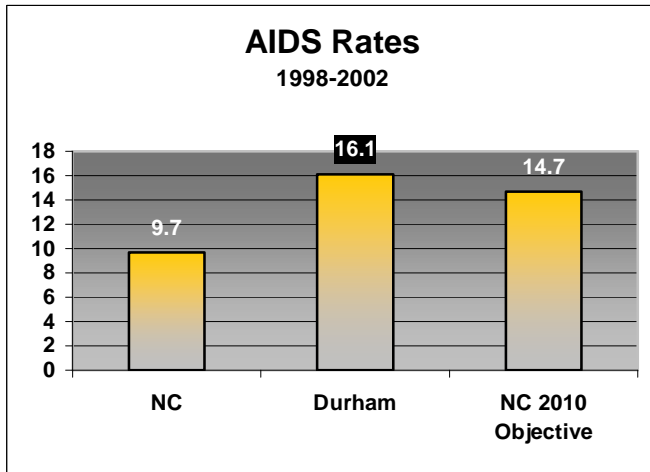
[www.schs.state.nc.us](http://www.schs.state.nc.us)

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Durham County continues to experience one of the highest rates of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in North Carolina. Contributing factors to the high STD morbidity are: The existence of many learning institutions that attract large numbers of sexually active young people, increased use of injection drugs, and reduced fear of infection, e.g. In the case of HIV.

The Health Department continued to provide STD diagnosis and treatment, prevention education at the community level, and free distribution of preventive methods on site and in the community. Screening for syphilis at the Durham County jail and at different community sites is an ongoing activity. The Department continues to train area barbers/ beauticians as lay health advisors to address HIV/STDs.

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASE RATES



Source NC- DHHS State Center for Health Statistics  
[www.schs.state.nc.us](http://www.schs.state.nc.us)

**MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH**  
**INFANT MORTALITY**

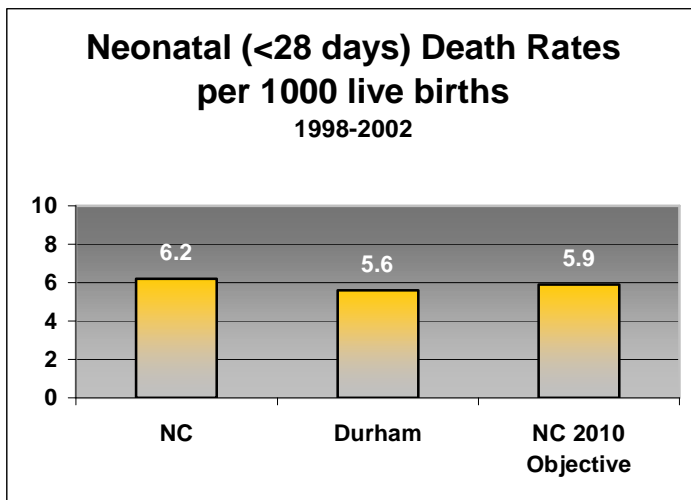
The two major components of maternal and child health that are addressed in this section are infant mortality and teenage pregnancy.

The infant mortality rate of a community reflects the general health and well-being of that community. A high infant mortality rate may indicate unmet health, nutrition and medical needs as well as unfavorable environmental and economic conditions in the community.

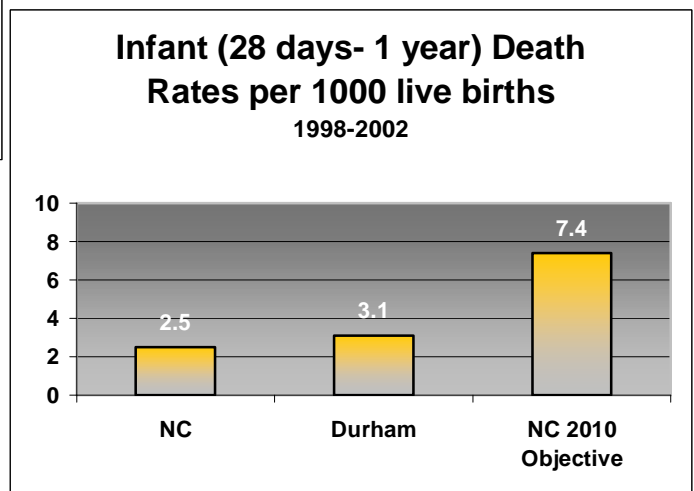
The five year rate (1998-2002) for infant mortality in both North Carolina and Durham County are 8.7 deaths per 1000 live births. However, infant mortality rates in Durham County declined sharply in 2003, marking the lowest mortality rates recorded so far for both white and nonwhite residents.

The Durham County Health Department hosts the Durham County Infant Mortality Reduction Task Force, a network of residents, agencies, and organizations striving to improve infant mortality rates in Durham.

**INFANT MORTALITY RATES**



Source NC- DHHS State Center for Health Statistics  
www.schs.state.nc.us

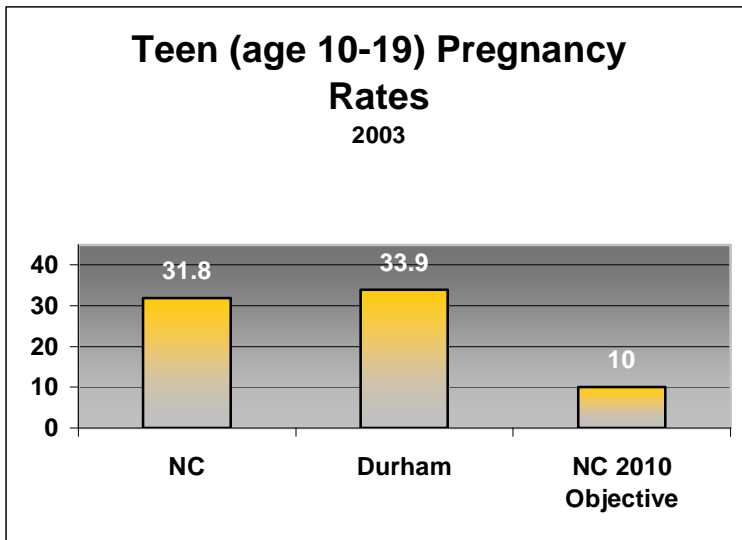


## MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH TEENAGE PREGNANCY

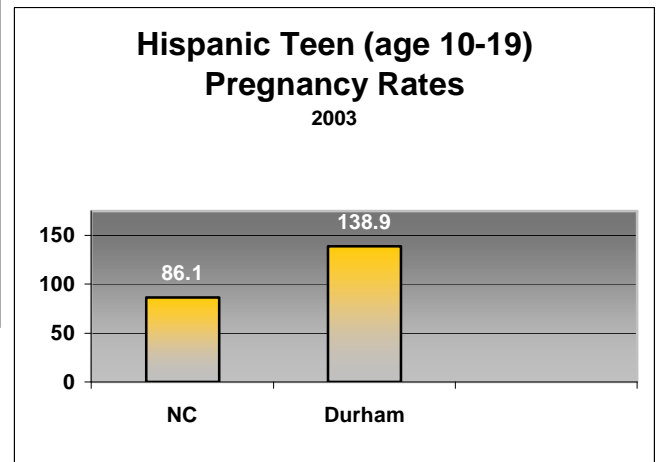
Teenage pregnancy continues to be a major health and social concern for Durham County. Teenage mothers are more likely to be unmarried, poor and lacking a high school education. They, therefore, rely heavily on their families and public assistance for their livelihood.

The children of teenage mothers face high risks of developmental problems, difficulty in school and delinquency in their teenage years. Of significant importance for the Health Department currently is the very high rate of teenage pregnancy for the Latino residents in Durham county. The 2003 teenage pregnancy rate for Hispanics was 138.9 per 1000 live births.

### TEENAGE PREGNANCY RATES



Source NC- DHHS State Center for Health Statistics  
[www.schs.state.nc.us](http://www.schs.state.nc.us)



### TEENAGE PREGNANCY continued

The Durham County Health Department continues to address teenage pregnancy by offering prevention and educational programs for the community. Collaboration with schools and agencies, to address the high rate of Hispanic teenage pregnancy through culturally appropriate educational intervention is a key component of the Department's effort.

## NEW & EMERGING PUBLIC HEALTH THREATS

Since September 11, 2001, the threat of mass attack using chemical and biological agents has forced public health practice to pay special attention to bio-terrorism. The Durham County Health Department has, therefore, already refocused its attention to meet the new challenge by preparing and training its workforce.

The Department has already meet the need for rapid response by establishing public health response teams. Each public health practitioner is assigned to a team that can respond quickly to emerging health threats if the need arises.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Durham community members have already been engaged in addressing a wide range of health issues by participating in task forces and other groups. These groups include but are not limited to the following:

- The Infant Mortality Reduction Task force
- The Durham Coalition for the Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy
- The Communicable Disease Advisory Council
- The Lay Health Advisors for infant mortality and HIV/STDs Prevention Education
- The Partnership for Healthy Durham
- The Durham County Wellness Team
- The Durham Fitness and Nutrition Council
- Local faith based organizations
- North Carolina Central University

The Durham County Health Department has refocused its attention to meet the new challenge by preparing and training its workforce

## Durham County Health Department



### PARTNERSHIP FOR A HEALTHY DURHAM

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The Partnership for a Healthy Durham is dedicated to collaboratively improve the quality of life of its community. The vision of the Partnership is that the people of Durham will enjoy good physical, mental, and social health and well being.

#### Partnership Members

Durham County Health Department

Duke University Health System

Durham Regional Hospital

Durham County Cooperative Extension

CAARE Incorporated

Community Health Coalition

Faith Based Organizations

North Carolina Central University

Community At-large

Durham County Social Services

TROSA

Lincoln Community Health Center

Triangle United Way

Senior Pharmassist

Council for Senior Citizens