



**Durham County Health Department
The Durham County Health Department**

**Durham County State of the County Health
Report**

2005

2005 State of the County Health Report Durham County Health Department

Reorganization and Recertification

The Durham County Health Department is pleased to present the 2005 State of the County Health Report. The report is a brief account of key health indicators in chronic diseases, sexually communicable diseases and maternal and child health issues.

In 2004, the Health Department assumed the responsibility of reorganizing the Healthy Carolinian initiative in Durham, and applying for recertification. May 1995 was the initial certification date for the Durham County Healthy Carolinians Task Force. The Task Force was subsequently recertified in 1996 and 2000. In 2004, a one-year extension was granted for the recertification application process. The Partnership for a Healthy Durham was recertified in 2005.

In the process of re-certification, we determined that the political leadership of our community was also committed to Durham Citizens being healthy, a goal that replicated the outcomes we envisioned in the partnership. County and city governments began a results based accountability process that identified healthier citizens as one of the desired outcomes. Developing a framework that incorporated the results based accountability process for achieving healthy families with the Partnership for Healthy Durham initiatives has resulted in an integrated and interactive plan for addressing the health needs of our community.

The Partnership for a Healthy Durham is addressing six priority health issues: Access to Care, Substance Abuse, Obesity and Chronic Disease, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (HIV/AIDS, Syphilis and other STD's), Infant Mortality, and Teenage Pregnancy.

Approximately 17% of Durham residents report no source of health care coverage (source: 2004 BRFSS). To address this issue, the Access to Care committee was formed, and is working actively to reduce health disparities and to increase access to health care to all residents of Durham County. The work of this committee impacts the work of all the activities of the partnership.

Demography

Durham County is located in north-central North Carolina in the Piedmont region of the state. Unlike most counties in North Carolina, Durham County is primarily made up of one large city, the City of Durham. The total population of Durham County in 2004 was estimated at 239,733. The population has increased by 7.4% from April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2004. Durham County is a very diverse county; according to census data approximately 51% of Durham's residents are white, 40% are African Americans, and 8% are Hispanic/Latino. (Source: quickfacts.census.gov)

Morbidity and Mortality

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 obesity.

**Table I: Durham County: Leading causes of death
(Number of deaths by year)**

Durham County	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total	Rank
Diseases of heart	422	355	367	383	325	1852	2
Cancer	389	388	397	376	401	1951	1
Cerebrovascular diseases	135	105	135	126	96	597	3
Chronic lower respiratory diseases	74	49	61	70	53	307	4
All other unintentional injuries	56	37	55	48	66	262	5
Diabetes mellitus	35	56	48	56	49	244	6
Alzheimer's disease	61	38	44		47	190	8
Influenza and pneumonia	37	43	46	46	54	226	7
Motor vehicle injuries	28	33	32	36		129	10
Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis	32	29	32	40	35	168	9

Source: North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics, 2005

The three top ranked leading causes of death are the same for African Americans as for the general population, but other leading causes of death, such as HIV/AIDS (ranked fifth) and assault/homicide (ranked sixth) are worthy of note.

The increasing burden of HIV/AIDS in the African American community reflects the trend in North Carolina and the nation as a whole. Nineteen hundred and ninety-six was the first year in which AIDS cases among African Americans surpassed cases among Whites in the U.S. By 1999, over 72 percent of all people with AIDS in North Carolina were African American. Socioeconomic factors, particularly issues of poverty and access to health care services are strongly implicated in these health disparities, and underscore the need for strong prevention, testing, and treatment programs for HIV/AIDS. (Source: www.healthycarolinians.org)

Homicide is the sixth leading cause of death among African Americans in Durham County. Many of the victims as well as the perpetrators are young males, between 16 and 20 years of age. Homicide primarily occurs among people who know each other (friends, family, rival gang members) and involves firearms. Homicide is the *second* leading cause of death in North Carolina among young African American men ages 15 to 24 years.

Cigarette smoking is highest among African American men, increasing their risks of cancer, heart disease, cerebrovascular disease and chronic lower respiratory disease. (Source: www.healthycarolinians.org) See Table II below.

TABLE II: Durham County: African Americans — Leading causes of death (Number of deaths by year)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total	Rank
Diseases of heart	134	145	130	133	542	2
Cancer	149	146	139	145	579	1
Cerebrovascular disease	49	50	44	40	183	3
Chronic lower respiratory disease		17	16		33	10
All other unintentional injuries	12	19	17	21	69	8
Diabetes mellitus	30	28	23	28	109	4
Alzheimer's disease	15	16		17	48	9
Influenza and pneumonia				22	22	
Motor vehicle injuries	15				15	
Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis	13	16	24	24	77	7
Septicemia			21		21	
Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) disease	27	23	19	22	91	5
Assault (homicide)	20	23	18	20	81	6

Motor vehicle deaths are the number one cause of death among people of Hispanic / Latino origin in Durham County. These deaths may be related to use of alcohol while driving, and / or lack of driver education in this population. Additional areas of significant disparities that are shared with African Americans include the relatively high homicide and AIDS death rates among Latinos in Durham County and North Carolina as a whole. See Table III below.

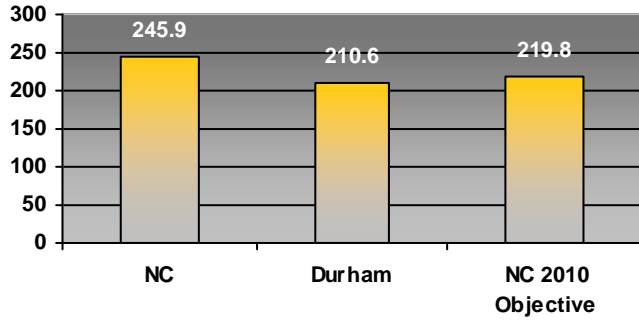
TABLE III: Durham County: People of Hispanic / Latino origin -- Leading causes of death (Number of deaths by year)

Durham County: Hispanic/Latinos Leading Causes of Death	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total	Rank
Motor vehicle injuries	5	5	12	6	28	1
Cancer		4	6	7	17	2
Diseases of heart		2	2	1	5	5
All other unintentional injuries	3	4	3	4	14	3
Assault (homicide)	1	7		2	10	4
Certain conditions originating in the perinatal period		2	1	1	4	6
Congenital malformations, deformations, and chromosomal abnormalities		1	3		4	6
Intentional self-harm (suicide)	1			1	2	7
Cerebrovascular diseases		1			1	
Septicemia		1			1	
Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) disease		1		1	2	7
Diabetes mellitus	1			1	2	7
Influenza and pneumonia		2			2	7

Source: North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics, 2005

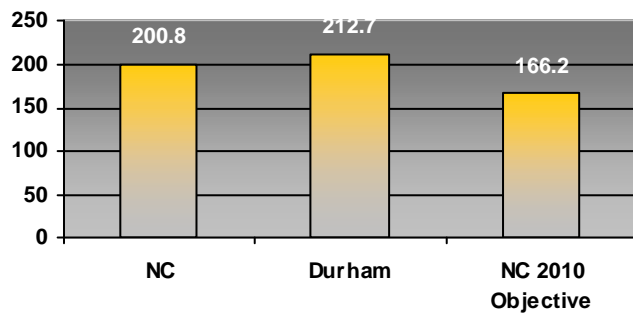
Heart Disease Death Rates

1999-2002



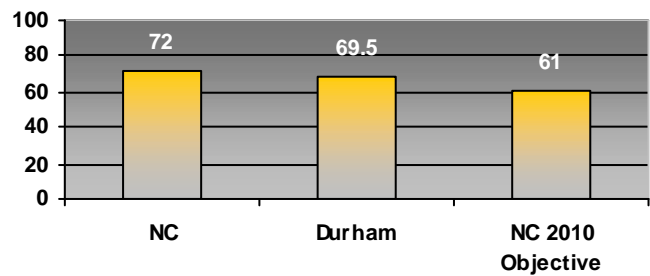
Cancer Death Rates

1999-2002



Cerebrovascular Disease Death Rates

1999-2002



Priority Health Issues

The Partnership for a Healthy Durham is addressing six priority health issues: Access to Care, Substance Abuse, Obesity and Chronic Disease, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (HIV/AIDS, Syphilis and other STD's), Infant Mortality, and Teenage Pregnancy. The process of selecting priority health issues was data driven; based on Durham's 2003 Community Health Assessment. In 2005, the major accomplishments of the initiative in Durham have been to reorganize the Partnership for a Healthy Durham under the leadership of Durham County Health Department, to diversify the membership, and to achieve recertification of the initiative. The Durham County Health Department has established a coordinator's position for the Partnership for a Healthy Durham, partially through funding obtained from the Kate B. Reynolds Foundation.

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 met the new challenge by establishing public health response teams, preparing and training its workforce for emergency preparedness. 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 Partnership for a Healthy Durham Steering Committee

The Infant Mortality Reduction Task Force

The Durham Coalition for the Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy

The (HIV/SID) Communicable Diseases Advisory Council

The Lay Health Advisors for infant mortality

The Durham County Wellness Team

The Access to Care Subcommittee

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Subcommittee

The Minority Health Clearinghouse

The Obesity and Chronic Disease Subcommittee

The Durham Fitness and Nutrition Council

Local faith based organizations

North Carolina Central University

Duke University Medical Center

City of Durham Parks & Recreation Department

Durham County Public Schools

Durham Regional Hospital