

# 2012 Stanly County State of the County Health Report

Prepared by  
Deborah Bennett, CHES  
Public Health Educator  
Stanly County Health Department

## INTRODUCTION

The 2012 Stanly County State of the County Health (SOTCH) Report is a review of health indicators and status applicable to Stanly County residents. The purpose of the SOTCH Report is threefold: 1. Inform the community and stakeholders about the health status of Stanly County residents; 2. Provide a starting point for community involvement in addressing identified health concerns and issues; and 3. The State of North Carolina requires this report to be written, except when the Community Health Assessment is conducted and a report written. The most current Stanly County Community Health Assessment report was written in 2011. The 2012 Stanly County SOTCH Report complements and updates the information provided in the Stanly County 2011 Community Health Assessment Report. The 2011 Community Health Assessment Report can be accessed on the Stanly County Health Department's webpage at [www.health.co.stanly.nc.us/](http://www.health.co.stanly.nc.us/).

## OVERVIEW

Stanly County is located in the south central portion of North Carolina, approximately 45 miles east of Charlotte. There are 10 incorporated communities in the county: Albemarle, Badin, Locust, New London, Norwood, Oakboro, Richfield, Stanfield, Red Cross, and the Village of Misenheimer. The unincorporated communities include Aquadale, Big Lick, Cottonville, Endy, Finger, Frog Pond, Lambert, Millingport, Palestine, Palmerville, Plyler, Porter, and Tuckertown.

According to the 2010 U.S Census, 32.29% of the county population lives in urban areas and 67.71% of the population lives in rural settings. It is estimated by the N.C. Department of Commerce that in 2010 the majority of Stanly County residents worked in Stanly County – 61.7%. However, 36.7% of residents worked in North Carolina, but outside Stanly County and 1.6% worked outside North Carolina. The 2012 September estimated unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) was reported at 9.1% (estimated) which was slightly higher than the statewide unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) at 8.9% (estimated). (U.S. Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics)

The three top employment sectors are government, healthcare and social assistance, and manufacturing. The five largest employers in Stanly County in 2011 were Stanly County Schools, Stanly Regional Medical Center, Wal-Mart Associates, Inc, County of Stanly, and Michelin Tire Center. (North Carolina Department of Commerce) The 2010 estimated median worker earnings was \$26,892. The 2010 estimated median family income was \$58,125. The estimated percentage of the total population with income below the poverty level the last 12 months was 12.7%. (North Carolina Department of Commerce)

It is estimated that 80.5% of the population, 25 years and older, have graduated from high school. It is estimated that 15.3% have earned at least a Bachelor's degree. (North Carolina Department of Commerce) Pfeiffer University and Stanly Community College provide higher education opportunities in Stanly County.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

### Stanly County 2010 U.S. Census

	2010 U.S. CENSUS		2000 U.S. CENSUS	
	Number	Percent (%)	Number	Percent (%)
<b>GENDER</b>	60,585		58,102	
Male	30,111	49.7%	28,671	49.3%
Female	30,474	50.3%	29,429	50.7%
<b>AGE</b>				
Persons under 5 years	3,590	5.9%	3,609	6.2%
Persons 65 years and over	9,507	15.7%	8,314	14.3%
<b>RACE</b>				
African American /Black	6,604	10.9%	6,657	11.5%
Asian	1,091	1.8%	1,049	1.8%
Caucasian/White	50,649	83.6%	49,196	84.7%
Native American/ American Indian	182	0.3%	144	0.2%
Native Hawaiian & Other Native Pacific Islanders	Z	Z	11	0.0
Reporting two or more races	727	1.2%	459	0.8%
<b>ETHNICITY</b>				
Hispanic/Latino	2,181	3.6%	1,237	2.1%

Z - Value greater than zero but less than half unit of measure shown

Comparing the 2000 U.S. Census data with the 2010 data shows that females continue to slightly outnumber males in Stanly County. There was an increase in the percentage of people 65 years and older as well as the percentage of Hispanic/Latino population. There was a slight decrease in the percentage of persons under 5 years of age as well as African American/Black and Caucasian/White populations.

## **Stanly County Community Health Assessment**

A community health assessment was conducted in Stanly County in 2011. Survey participants were asked to identify their top health concerns and community issues. The five top health concerns identified by the survey participants were: Tobacco Use/Smoking, Obesity/Overweight, Illegal Drug Use, Cancer, and Diabetes. A strong correlation between the leading causes of death in Stanly County with Tobacco Use/Smoking and Obesity/Overweight can be drawn. The five leading causes of death were: Heart Disease; Cancer – All Sites; Cancer- Trachea, Bronchus, & Lung; Cerebrovascular Disease; and Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease.

The top five leading community concerns were identified as: Unemployment/Underemployment, Lack of/Inadequate Health Insurance, Child Abuse & Neglect (physical, emotional, and sexual), Crime (theft, robbery), and Lack of Recycling. The (not seasonally adjusted) unemployment rate in Stanly County in December 2011 was 10.8%. (North Carolina Department of Commerce)

There is a direct correlation between Unemployment/Underemployment and Lack of/Inadequate Health Insurance. Most people are covered by their (or parents') employers' health insurance benefits. When people lose their jobs, health insurance coverage is no longer available unless they can access it through COBRA. For some small businesses, health insurance is a benefit too expensive to offer their employees.

### **Review Priority Health Concerns**

#### Tobacco Use/Smoking

Tobacco Use/Smoking was listed as the number one health concern in the Stanly County 2011 Community Health Assessment. This was somewhat a surprise as there are more and more constraints on where people can legally smoke in Stanly County. However, it is not surprising when the financial and health aspects of tobacco products are considered.

Increased health risks associated with the use of tobacco include coronary heart disease, cerebral hemorrhages (strokes), cancers (including lung, bladder, esophageal, kidney, oral, throat, and stomach cancers), and chronic obstructive lung diseases (including emphysema, bronchitis, chronic airway obstruction). ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) According to U.S. Health & Human Services and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports, tobacco use causes more deaths every year than all the “deaths from human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), illegal drug use, alcohol use, motor vehicle injuries, suicides, and murders combined.” ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov))

There are financial consequences of tobacco use. At one time, tobacco products were very inexpensive to purchase, but that is no longer the situation. The cost of smoking products has increased as well as the taxes levied on various smoking products although North

Carolina has one of the lowest tobacco taxes in the nation. There are increases in the cost of health care associated with tobacco use. This is due to the increase in the incidence of chronic diseases that can lead to long term disability and/or death.

### Obesity/Overweight

Obesity/Overweight was the second highest health concern listed in the Stanly County 2007 and 2011 community health assessments. Obesity/Overweight is a health concern for children and adults. A person is considered obese when his or her weight is 20% or more above normal weight. The most common measure of obesity is the body mass index or BMI. A person is considered overweight if his or her BMI is between 25 and 29.9; a person is considered obese if his or her BMI is over 30. ([www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com))

The health ramifications of obesity and overweight can be physically and emotionally damaging to adults and children. Adults are at increased risk for coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, strokes, high cholesterol, osteoarthritis, infertility, and cancers (including endometrial, breast, and colon). ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) The harmful physical effects of childhood obesity and overweight have short term and long term implications. There is an increase in diagnosis of children with hypertension, high cholesterol, breathing problems (including asthma and sleep apnea), type 2 diabetes, joint problems, and gallstones among other health risks.

Obesity and overweight can have an emotional impact on adults and children. It can result in social isolation for some. For others, it may result in poor self-esteem or a lack of self-confidence. Discrimination may occur in some situations.

## **Progress**

What is being done in Stanly County to address Tobacco Use/Smoking and Obesity/Overweight health concerns?

### Tobacco Use/Smoking

1. There are local municipalities that support no smoking policies in their town government buildings. These municipalities are County of Stanly, Locust, and Oakboro.
2. There are public parks and recreation areas that are no smoking. These parks are Locust and Oakboro. Albemarle Parks and Recreation is in the process of adopting and implementing a no smoking ordinance for their parks.
3. Stanly Regional Medical Center, all Stanly County schools, Stanly Community College, Pfeiffer University, and all food establishments in Stanly County are smoke free.
4. QuitlineNC information messages were developed and are airing on The Stanly Commons and Stanly County Health Department TVs as well as the digital display board located on the First Street side of The Stanly Commons.

5. Dennis Joyner, Health Director, will interview Ann Houston Staples, Director of Public Education & Communication N.C. Division of Public Health, Chronic Disease and Injury Section - Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch, for the health department program, Public Health in Action. This taping is scheduled for December 5, 2012, at Stanly Community College (SCC). The program and an accompanying public service announcement will air on SCC Television (SCC-TV Channel 21) the months of December (2012) and January (2013). The program will be available after airing via SCC - Video on Demand.

### Obesity/Overweight

1. Passport to Fitness, administered by Stanly Regional Medical Center staff, is a school based program addressing childhood obesity by increasing physical activity levels and nutrition knowledge. Stanly County school personnel are trained on implementation of the curriculum. A lesson is delivered each month to Stanly County K-5 classrooms.
2. ENERGIZE!, administered by Stanly Regional Medical Center staff, is a program that teaches young people how to build lifelong, healthy attitudes about food and fitness. The Stanly County YMCA provides physical activity instructions and discounted membership to program participants.
3. Search for the Gold, a popular annual event sponsored by the Stanly County Partners in Health Coalition, promotes families to be more physically active by utilizing the local parks. There are 200 gold painted shoes hidden throughout every park in Stanly County for a two week period. People find a shoe and return it to Partners in Health Coalition members during a special one day event in a designated local park for a prize.
4. North Carolina Cooperative Extension will be offering cooking demonstrations at the local Farmers Market in the upcoming season. This will teach participants healthy food selection and healthy food preparation techniques.
5. There are activities underway to increase the awareness and availability of Farmers Markets and farm/produce stands in Stanly County. Signage is being purchased to promote the Farmers Market and farm/produce stands. It has been proposed that an indoor Farmers Market being initiated at the Stanly Commons. This would increase county employees' healthier food selection as well as those accessing services at the Stanly Commons.

## **Review Changes**

Note: The most current data available when this report was written is being used.

### Tobacco Use/Smoking

The following statistics are from the North Carolina Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (NC BRFSS) unless otherwise noted. Stanly County is included in the Piedmont Region data. The Second Hand Smoking questions in the 2010 and 2011 NC BRFSS were different. Both responses are included in this report.

1. In the Piedmont Region, 20.2 % of adults reported smoking tobacco products in 2011 compared to the 18.9% in 2010.
2. In the Piedmont Region, 47% of high school students reported ever having used any tobacco product and 20.4% of high school students currently use tobacco. (2011 NC Youth Tobacco Survey)
3. In the Piedmont Region, 23% of middle school student reported ever having used any tobacco product and 6% of middle school students currently use tobacco. (2011 NC Youth Tobacco Survey)
4. In the Piedmont Region, 84.8% said “yes, they would like for their indoor workplace to be smoke free” (2010 NC BRFSS). While 45.7% of those in the Piedmont Region said they would like for outdoor parks to be smoke free. There were 56.6% respondents that stated they would like for sporting venues to be smoke free. While 78.2% of people in the Piedmont Region said they would like for indoor recreational areas to be smoke free. These questions were not asked in the 2011 NC BRFSS.
5. In the 2011 NC BRFSS, the question posed to those surveyed was “On how many of the past 7 days, did someone smoke in your indoor workplace while you were there? The responses were: 7 days – 4.6%, 1-6 days – 4.7%, and 0 days – 90.8%.

### Obesity/Overweight

1. Adults
  - a. In the Piedmont Region (includes Stanly County), 63.8% of adults are overweight or obese (2011 NC BRFSS).
  - b. In the Piedmont Region (includes Stanly County), 63.2% of adults are overweight or obese (2010 NC BRFSS) compared to the 62.2% in 2005 (2005 NC BRFSS).
2. Children
  - a. In the Piedmont Region (includes Stanly County), 23.4% of youth 2-18 years of age are overweight or at risk for becoming overweight (2007 NC-NPASS).
  - b. In Stanly County, 35.6% of children ages 2-18 are either overweight or obese (2009 NC-NPASS).

### Overall

There was a slight increase from 2010 to 2011 in the number of adults reporting that they smoked according to the NC BRFSS data. There was only limited workplace indoor smoking reported by NC BRFSS survey participants. The percentage of youth using tobacco products is troubling as it foretells serious health issues for them as adults that could be prevented.

There is an upward trend in the percentage of adults reporting they are overweight or obese in the NC BRFSS reports. There was a significant increase in the percentage of youth that were overweight or obese from 2009 to 2007 – 23.4% to 35.6%. The percentage of youth overweight or at risk for becoming overweight is troubling as it foretells serious health issues for them as adults that could be prevented.

## **New & Emerging Issues**

### **Affordable Health Care**

Affordable health care is a major concern, especially to those without health insurance. According to the U.S. Census Bureau Small Area Health Insurance Estimates (SAHIE) Program, it was estimated that there were 18.9% Stanly County residents under 65 years of age who did not have health insurance in 2010. This was an increase from the previous years' estimates as there were 18.6% without health insurance in 2009, 18.3% in 2008, and 17.4% in 2007. According to the U.S. Census Bureau Small Area Health Insurance Estimates (SAHIE) Program, it is estimated that there were 9.4%-13.8% uninsured in 2010 who were under the age of 19 who were at or below the 200% of poverty. Although somewhat limited in scope, there are two sources that seek to address this issue in Stanly County. These health care providers are The John P. Murray Community Care Clinic and Stanly County Health Department. The John P. Murray Community Care Clinic provides health services for adults who are employed or actively seeking employment. The Stanly County Health Department provides health care services to Stanly County residents from infancy through adulthood.

The health insurance landscape is in the process of changing due to the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) by the U.S. Congress. Its overall purpose is to provide everyone access to affordable health care coverage regardless of age or pre-existing conditions. Some of the PPACA requirements are:

- All will be required to have health insurance, except for religious exemptions
- All will be eligible for affordable health insurance despite pre-existing conditions
- Screening programs are covered without deductions or co-pays (such as mammograms, colonoscopies)
- Adult children are covered by their parents' insurance until age 26.

Regardless of how one feels about the PPACA, it is important all citizens have affordable health care coverage. Detecting health problems early will save lives and lower the cost of health care.

### **Aging Population**

The aging population of Stanly County is trending upward. In the 2000 U.S. Census, approximately 19% of the population was 60 years and older. In the 2010 U.S. Census, approximately 22% of the population was 60 years and older. The aging population has increased needs as they are becoming less independent and more dependent. Their health status is declining with regards to experiencing increased chronic diseases which result in utilizing more health care services, such as primary care, hospitals, pharmacies, home health care services, in-home services, and nursing home services. There is, also, the increased

need for home delivered and congregate meals as well as transportation services. Older people need increased protection from crime, especially financial scams and elder abuse.

Residents, ages 60 to 64 years old, presented the largest population percentage increase in Stanly County - 4.4% (U.S. Census 2000) to 6.2% (U.S. Census 2010). This indicates the beginning influx of Baby Boomers entering senior adult status, 60 years and older. As they have throughout their lifetime, Baby Boomers are redefining the expectations of their age bracket, which may mean increased involvement in their communities or working. They want resources available to maintain their health. These resources may include affordable health care, accessible park systems, social interaction opportunities, etc.

## **Morbidity & Mortality Data**

### **Mortality Data**

The top five causes of mortality in Stanly County in 2010 were: heart disease; cancer – all sites; cancer – trachea, bronchus, & lung; cerebrovascular disease; and all other unintentional injuries. The only difference between the 2009 and 2010 mortality rates was all other unintentional injuries replaced chronic lower respiratory diseases as the fifth leading cause of death. In fact, the rate of all other unintentional injuries almost doubled from the previous year. All other unintentional injuries could be the result of falls, drowning, poisoning, respiratory blockage, etc.

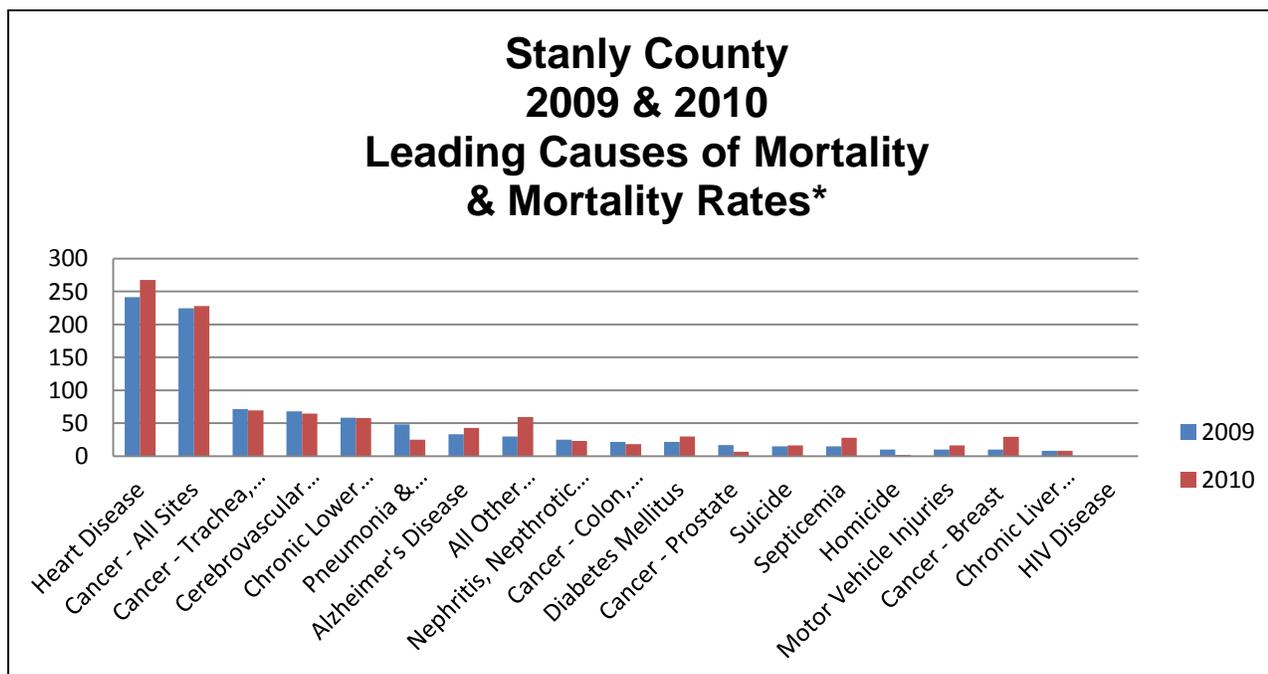
The two priority health concerns selected to be addressed were Tobacco Use/Smoking and Obesity/Overweight. Addressing these health concerns is justified when looking at the leading causes of death in Stanly County. Five causes of mortality out of the top six causes of mortality have a direct correlation with the use of tobacco products while three of the top five causes of mortality have a direct correlation with obesity/overweight.

In fact, most of the top five causes of mortality could be prevented by lifestyle changes or choices. These changes include making healthier food choices, regularly exercising, not using tobacco products, not being exposed to tobacco by-products, following safety rules, fall-proof one's environment, as well as poison proof one's home.

It is important that people of all ages get annual health exams as recommended by their health care provider. Health exams allow people to know what their risk factors are early, so they can be addressed. It is important to know one's family health history. This information is helpful in making life choices.

Stanly County 2009 & 2010 Leading Causes of Mortality & Mortality Rates*		
	2009	2010
Heart Disease	241.3	267.4
Cancer - All Sites	224.7	227.8
Cancer - Trachea, Bronchus, & Lung	71.6	69.3
Cerebrovascular Disease	68.2	64.4
All Other Unintentional Injuries	30	59.4
Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	58.3	57.8
Alzheimer's Disease	33.3	42.9
Diabetes Mellitus	21.6	29.7
Cancer - Breast	9.9	29.5
Septicemia	15	28.1
Pneumonia & Influenza	48.3	24.8
Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome, & Nephrosis	25	23.1
Cancer - Colon, Rectum, & Anus	21.6	18.2
Suicide	15	16.5(T)
Motor Vehicle Injuries	10	16.5(T)
Chronic Liver Disease & Cirrhosis	8.3	8.3
Cancer - Prostate	16.8	6.6
Homicide	10	1.7
HIV Disease	0	0

\*per 100,000 population      Red indicates higher rate



\*per 100,000 population

## Morbidity Data

(Source: North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics unless otherwise noted.)

There are incidences of reportable infectious diseases in Stanly County. There have been four (4) reported cases of pertussis in 2012 in Stanly County as of October 10, 2012. All cases were in children eight years old and younger. (North Carolina Electronic Disease Surveillance System) The incidence of active Tuberculosis (TB) cases is usually low – one to two cases a year. As of September 2012, there were two (2) reported cases of TB in Stanly County.

Tick borne diseases have been reported in Stanly County in 2012. There were five (5) reported cases of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, two (2) cases of Lyme disease, and one (1) case of Ehrlichia, HME, in Stanly County from January 1, 2012 through October 12, 2012. (North Carolina Electronic Disease Surveillance System)

There was one (1) reported case of Cryptosporidiosis, a waterborne disease, from January 1, 2012 through October 12, 2012. Ingesting contaminated water or practicing poor hygiene contributes to the incidence of this disease.

Food safety is a paramount concern as there have been 17 reported cases of Salmonellosis, nine (9) cases of Campylobacter Infection, and one (1) case of Vibrio Infection in Stanly County from January 1, 2012 through October 12, 2012.

One major area of concern is sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Chlamydia is the most reported STI in Stanly County. The rate of reported chlamydia in Stanly County had been trending upward from 2007 until 2010 from 167.3/100,000 to 534.8/100,000. However, the rate of reported chlamydia cases in 2011 decreased to 359.8/100,000. (N.C. 2011 HIV/STD Surveillance Report)

The reported cases of gonorrhea had been trending upward from 2008 through 2010 – 53.6/100,000 to 201.4/100,000. In 2011, the rate dropped to 71/100,000. The incidence of syphilis is sporadic. The reported rate of incidence in 2008, 2009, and 2011 was zero. In 2010, the reported rate of syphilis was 1.7/100,000. (N.C. 2011 HIV/STD Surveillance Report)

There are 78 Stanly County residents living with HIV Disease (HIV or AIDS) as of October 2012. The incidence of the reported cases of HIV Disease is low, but the upward trend is troubling. From 2009 to 2011, the rate has risen from 8.4/100,000 to 9.9/100,000. As of October 2012, there have been four (4) reported cases of HIV disease and one (1) reported case of AIDS in Stanly County.

According to Stanly County Animal Control, there has been an increase in the number of human and domestic animal exposures with rabid animals in Stanly County. Human exposure occurs when one is bitten by a rabid animal or comes in contact with its saliva. This usually occurs when an owner comes to the rescue of an unvaccinated household pet. In 2011, there were four (4) reported cases of rabies that involved six (6) exposures. Three people were exposed to rabies – one bitten by a rabid cat and two (2) from handling a rabid skunk. There were, also, two (2) dogs and a cat exposed to rabies. Their exposure was the result of contact with a rabid raccoon, skunk, or cat.

From January 2012 through October 2012, there were 10 reported cases of rabies that involved 17 exposures. One exposure to rabies involved two (2) humans bitten by or contact with a rabid skunk. Domestic animals exposed to rabies this year include 13 dogs, one (1) cat, and one (1) goat. Wildlife animals responsible for these rabies exposures were four (4) raccoons and six (6) skunks. One needs to be aware that other wildlife animals, such as bats and foxes, may carry rabies.

## **Other Changes in Stanly County**

### **Aging Focus**

Community Adult Respite Experience (C.A.R.E.) Café located in Albemarle provides respite care for caregivers of frail older adults. This service provides the older adults socialization and intellectual stimulation opportunities Monday through Thursday from 10am until 2pm. This service has been available for two years.

The Stanly County Adult Day Health Care is a new facility that is in the process of being established in Stanly County. This program will serve adults with physical or developmental impairments, such as dementia, cerebrovascular disease, Parkinson's disease, accident related disabilities, etc. Services provided will include healthy meals (breakfast, lunch, snacks), administration of medications, monthly health screenings by a nurse, and assistance with personal care needs. This program will be a satellite facility in Stanly County for the Coltrane L.I.F.E. Center.

### **Environmental Focus**

#### **Badin Lake "Capping" Project**

The state of North Carolina and Alcoa reached an agreement on the remedial action needed regarding contaminated areas of Badin Lake. Alcoa has agreed to install a cap (sand, gravel, and rock) over two areas of contaminated soil in Badin Lake. These areas were

contaminated by low levels of PCB from Alcoa's aluminum smelting plant. At this time, there is a health advisory regarding the consumption of fish at Badin Lake due to contamination.

## **Grant Focus**

### **John P. Murray Community Care Clinic & Stanly County Health Department Susan G. Komen for the Cure Grant**

The John P. Murray Community Care Clinic and Stanly County Health Department each received grant funds from the Susan G. Komen for the Cure. Services funded include providing low income women access to screening/diagnostic mammograms, ultrasounds, and biopsies. The John P. Murray Community Care Clinic, also, received funds for outreach and education activities.

### **Stanly County Health Department Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina Grant**

The Stanly County Health Department received funds from Blue Cross Blue Shield North Carolina Foundation to purchase equipment and materials to provide root canals to pediatric patients enrolled in the Stanly County Dental Clinic. Prior to receiving these funds, this service was provided at the UNC School of Dentistry in Chapel Hill.

### **Stanly County Health Department Community Transformation Grant**

Stanly County Health Department is part of a regional effort that recently received a regional Community Transformation Grant from the North Carolina Division of Public Health (NCDPH). This grant, which totals \$2 million over the span of five years, will be used to target the economic, social and physical root causes of chronic disease. The project will impact nearly 1.3 million North Carolinians across the region. Cabarrus Health Alliance will serve as the lead agency to coordinate efforts and provide infrastructure for the funding. The other counties participating are Alexander, Cabarrus, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Rowan, and Union counties. The Community Transformation Grant Project will focus on collaborations with community organizations and local government agencies to implement prevention programs proven to make a positive impact on health. Targeted efforts will be made to address health disparities in each county.

Community Transformation Grant Project will work with community partners and local agencies across the region to implement efforts to:

- Increase tobacco-free regulations in various indoor and outdoor locations
- Boost convenience/corner stores offerings and promote healthier food and beverage options

- Establish and enhance local farmers markets, mobile markets and farm stands
- Develop joint-use agreements with community organizations to increase access to physical activity opportunities

**Stanly County Senior Center  
Stanly County Community Foundation Grant**

The Stanly County Senior Center received funds from the Stanly County Community Foundation to fund Funtastic Fitness, a program that promotes physical fitness in seniors. Exercise classes will begin in 2013 and last for six weeks at the Norwood, Oakboro, and Locust nutrition sites. Some of these funds will, also, be used to provide free exercise classes three days a week at the Senior Center in Albemarle. There is no age requirement for these classes.

**Housing Focus**

The focus of funding homeless housing services is undergoing a change. The effort is to move away from emergency shelters and transitional housing towards permanent self-housing assistance for homeless individuals. Currently, there is a lack of affordable housing in Stanly County. There is a wait for conventional public housing between six (6) months to two (2) years.

**Nutrition Focus**

**Stanly County School System**

The Stanly County School system is implementing the new meal patterns required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. The goal of this act is to promote better nutrition and reduce obesity in our children. The updated standards include the following:

- Offer fruits and vegetables every day
- Provide only fat-free or low fat milk
- Offer more whole grain-rich foods
- Limit calories, proteins and grains based on the age of the student
- Offer a la carte food items that have strict nutritional requirements

The school is mandated to provide healthy meals to children. However, these efforts can be circumvented by children not eating the healthy foods they are provided or lunches from home that contain less nutritious or junk foods. There have been some instances where children were still hungry even after eating all the food they were provided. This was especially true for students who participated in athletics.

## **Farm and Food Council**

Farm and Food Council, a tri-county network of people and organizations from Anson, Montgomery, and Stanly Counties, was recognized by the counties' County Commissioners in 2012. The purpose of this council is to “encourage, support, and coordinate the local farm and food system....” Many activities are planned to accomplish this, including the provision of affordable, locally grown nutritious foods to all socio-economic groups and educating people on safe and healthier food preparation and storage. It is understood that if nutritious foods are available and people know how to prepare and safely store them, diets will improve. The vision and efforts of the Farm and Food Council include addressing the incidence of obesity.

## **Community Involvement Opportunities**

The needs are great in Stanly County as are the opportunities to get involved – to make a positive difference in our community. There are many agencies and organizations that could use the expertise, energy, and resources of our citizens to address these needs. Where does one find out about these groups?

The following is a partial listing of entities where one can find out what agencies and organizations there are in Stanly County and contact information. The newly established NC211 service is available through the United Way of Stanly County. NC211 is a free and confidential service for finding community health and human service resources in Stanly County and 80% of the counties in North Carolina. NC211, also, provides volunteer opportunities. This information can be accessed 24 hours a day every day of the year online at [www.unitedwaync.org/volunteer](http://www.unitedwaync.org/volunteer) or by dialing 2-1-1 from your telephone. For more information, contact Christy Bogle at 704-982-6916.

A list of Stanly County agencies and organizations is available online on the Stanly County Health Department website at [health.co.stanly.nc.us/communitydirectory\\_01.htm](http://health.co.stanly.nc.us/communitydirectory_01.htm). The local school and churches are, also, helpful sources of volunteer opportunities.

## **Conclusion**

According to the 2011 Community Health Assessment, the majority of residents believe Stanly County is a great place to live, raise children, and grow old. The lack of employment opportunities in Stanly County is the one major concern with the residents.

Health issues selected to be addressed this upcoming year are Tobacco Use/Smoking and Obesity/Overweight. These were the top two health concerns in the 2011 Community Health Assessment results. There are resources available to assist people in addressing these two health concerns.

Tobacco Use/Smoking resources include the QuitlineNC at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669). This free resource provides support for those North Carolina residents who are trying to quit using tobacco. The venues include a telephone service that can be called 24 hours a day seven (7) days a week, Quitline Coach calling you, and/or a WebCoach available 24 hours a day online. American Lung Association ([www.lung.org/stop-smoking/](http://www.lung.org/stop-smoking/)), American Cancer Society ([www.cancer.org/index](http://www.cancer.org/index)), and American Heart Association ([www.heart.org/](http://www.heart.org/)), have information and/or programs to assist people trying to stop using tobacco products.

There are many resources for concerned citizens that address obesity concerns. One resource is the North Carolina Cooperative Extension. This local agency provides many programs to promote a healthy lifestyle including assisting people in making healthier food choices. Another resource is the United States Department of Agriculture. Its website has information and resources online to assist adults in helping children make healthier food choices. ([www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/healthierschoolday/default.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/healthierschoolday/default.htm))

Accessing fresh produce is an additional avenue to address obesity concerns. Stanly County's farmers provide the citizens of Stanly County the opportunity to purchase fresh, locally grown produce. This fresh produce is available at the Farmers Market in downtown Albemarle on Wednesdays (June, July, and August) as well as Saturdays (April through October). There are, also, many local farms and road side stands where fresh produce can be purchased throughout the growing season.

To get an overview of health issues being addressed in Stanly County, concerned citizens are encouraged to attend meetings of Partners in Health Coalition, a Healthy Carolinians Task Force. Partners in Health Coalition is comprised of community members and local agency/group representatives who seek to improve the health of Stanly County citizens through mutual cooperation, communication, and education. ([www.stanlycountypih.org/](http://www.stanlycountypih.org/)) For more information, contact Jennifer Layton at 704-986-3018.