

## Community Health Assessment

Community assessment is the foundation for improving and promoting the health of community members. The charge of the Community Health Assessment (CHA) is to identify factors that affect the health of a population and determine the availability of resources within the community to adequately address those factors. Through collaborative efforts forged among community leaders, public health agencies, businesses, hospitals, academic and faith communities, and other service providers, the community can begin to answer key questions such as (a) “What are the strengths in our community?” (b) “What health concerns do community members have?” and (c) “What resources are available and what do we need in the community to address these concerns?” (NCCHAI, 2012)

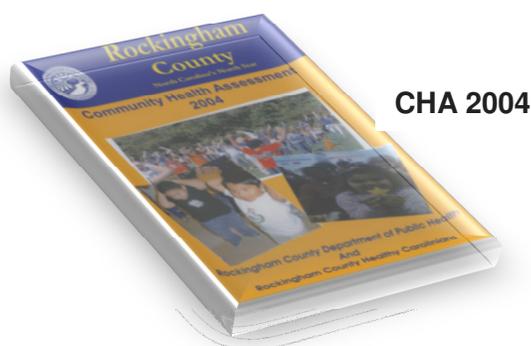
The CHA is conducted every four years and meets requirements for state accreditation of local health departments. In addition to providing an understanding of the community’s health, the CHA provides a blueprint that guides the Health Department in strategic planning as well as guides Healthy Carolinians and community partners in their efforts to better serve the citizens of Rockingham County.

The assessment criteria are as follows:

- Identify priority health issues
- Identify priority health populations
- Identify community resources
- Develop a community-based action plan to address the identified concerns
- Report the results to residents, community agencies and community stakeholders

The 2012 Community Health Assessment will be the third health assessment conducted by the Rockingham County Department of Public Health and the Rockingham County Healthy Carolinians Partnership. The initial health assessments were conducted in 2004 and 2008, respectively.

The Rockingham County Department of Public Health was pleased to collaborate with United Way of Rockingham County for the 2012 CHA. The successful partnership provided a combination of valuable resources in creating a document more reflective of the entire community.



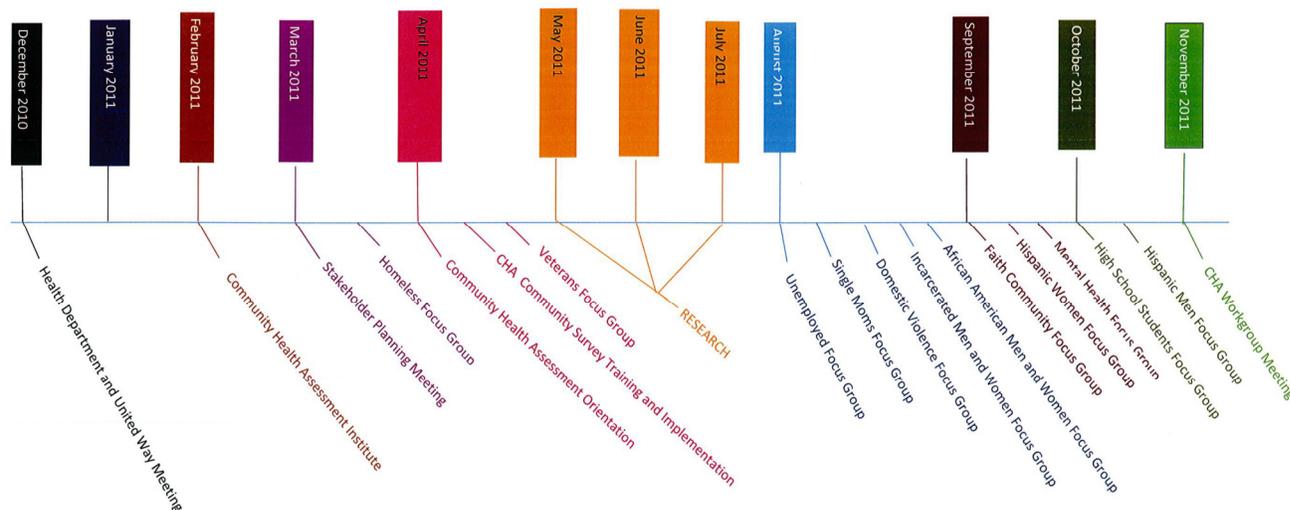
CHA 2004



CHA 2008

In December 2010, the Rockingham County Department of Public Health, the Rockingham County Healthy Carolinians Partnership, and the United Way of Rockingham County came together to begin preparing for the 2012 CHA.

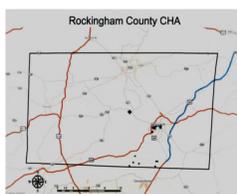
**Figure 1.1** The Rockingham County Community Health Assessment's Gantt Chart of First Year



## Data Collection Methodology

Local data collection consisted of conducting community-wide surveys, hosting focus groups among target populations and retrieving data from a variety of reputable sources including the North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics, United States Census Bureau data, and the Rockingham County Department of Public Health for comparison with state data. Through the collection of both local (primary) and existing (secondary) data, a comprehensive, aggregate report was developed from Rockingham County's priority health issues, priority health populations, and community resources.

## Surveys



Geographic maps located 211 random households throughout Rockingham County. A 32-question survey was provided by Healthy Carolinians and United Way of Rockingham County. The surveys, presented on paper in both English and Spanish, were conducted through door-to-door visits. On April 28, 29, and 30, 2011, more than 40 health department staff members and/or community partners were trained on how to interpret the geographic survey maps based on a two-stage cluster sampling design provided by the North Carolina Public Health Preparedness and Response Team. Each survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Findings from the surveys allowed community members to identify first-hand information regarding quality of life, community problems and concerns, personal health, emergency preparedness, and general demographic information of participants. Chapter 14 will provide the analyzed results of the community surveys.

## Focus Groups

As part of our primary data collection, 12 focus groups were held. The data gained through the focus group sessions provided a wealth of assessment information and gave stakeholders an opportunity to take a glimpse into worlds that they (in many cases) would not experience. The 12 focus group sessions were held at various locations throughout the county and 12 structured questions related to health and lifestyles were asked during each session. A minimum of six participants and a maximum of 12 were permissible for each group. The focus group participants consisted of members of the following target populations:

<b>African American Men and Women</b>	
<b>Faith Community (Pastors)</b>	
<b>High School Students</b>	
<b>Hispanic/Latino Men</b>	
<b>Hispanic/Latino Women</b>	
<b>Homeless Citizens</b>	
<b>Incarcerated Men and Women</b>	
<b>Mental Health/Substance Abuse Service Recipients</b>	
<b>Single Parents (Including Teens)</b>	
<b>Unemployed Citizens</b>	
<b>Veterans</b>	
<b>Victims of Domestic Violence</b>	

## State and Local Statistics

Secondary data was collected through a variety of sources and has been archived in the reference sections, which provides an entire list of all data sources used in this document. Secondary data will also be available in the *Rockingham County Data Book* found on the department's website, [www.rockinghamcountypublichealth.org](http://www.rockinghamcountypublichealth.org).

*"It's a great give and take when you work with the community. The assessment is hard work, but it's one of the best core public health functions. When the groups get out there and talk to the people in the community, the community gets educated as well as the volunteers conducting the interviews. You can really get to hear the heart of what's going on in the county."*

*Debi Nelson, Assistant Branch Head, Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Branch during Rockingham County's CHA Planning Meeting, March 2011*

## References:

North Carolina Community Health Assessment Initiative (NCCHAI). (2002). Retrieved January 2012 from <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/schs/data/databook/2002/Guidebook2002.pdf>