

## CCHA Regional Summary Conclusion and Recommendations

Many health disparities have been identified through the Regional Needs Assessment as outlined in the Regional Profile and Summary. Areas that have been identified as needing the most improvement are: Health/Wellness screens to identify risk factors for prevention of major illnesses, Health Education, Substance Abuse, Poverty/Lack of Income, Safe Places to Walk and Play, Heart Disease/Stroke and Community Assistance programs.

### Recommendations for Areas of Focus

- **Job opportunities and healthcare benefits for employees:** Increasing job opportunities would help address the poverty issue which affects the majority of the counties within the region and also makes health insurance available to a larger portion of the population at a more affordable rate. This change would also serve to address the unemployment rate for the region which exceeds North and South Carolina state rates.
- **Health and wellness screens through community outreach programs:** Health and wellness screens should be offered free of charge and at affordable rates several times a year in a variety of settings so that the entire community may benefit. Advertising well ahead of time and in a variety of public settings would also help to increase the turn outs and make better use of the community's time and efforts. Working with local physicians to identify the at-risk population and marketing services to this demographic set may increase attendance and help with preventative measures to stop disease states before they get worse.
- **Health education within the community:** Classes should focus on diabetic counseling, HIV/AIDS awareness and counseling, STD awareness and prevention, Healthy Heart programs, substance abuse education, stress management such as effective non-violent coping mechanisms, safe sex education for the pre-teen/teen population, and general health education. Classes should be easily accessible and advertised in a variety of settings. They can include collaborative efforts with local health departments and schools.
- **Safe Places to Walk and Play:** Initiatives surrounding this problem could include attracting business into the region by offering incentives to large corporations for opening plants in the region. Submitting grants to the federal government and state level funders to create more parks and recreational compounds that are policed.
- **Medication assistance:** Programs should be set up throughout the region to help assist with the costs of medications and medical care. The amount/availability of prescription drug samples through local doctors' offices and health departments needs to be increased. Providing the "working poor" with access to free clinics will also help to alleviate this problem. Use the data gathered in this report to submit for federal endowments to provide community care clinics throughout the region.

- **Community outreach:** Outreach programs focused on providing transportation to and from doctors' visits would help to improve the regions health by providing access to those who have no means of transportation and therefore lack access to the medical resources currently available.
- **Reduction of Heart Disease and Stroke:** Disease prevention programs should be focused on this disparity. Providing healthier food choices in schools and restaurants throughout the region will help provide residents with choices. Offering low-fat cooking classes in schools and at community centers will also benefit the residents of the CCHA communities.
- **Reduction of Substance Abuse:** Education of youth and support programs should prove to be effective measures to combat drug and alcohol abuse. Programs to address the dependency issues of adults need to be expanded and marketed through local physicians and health department. Providing access to counseling and intensive therapy to adults will model drug-free lifestyles for the next generation.