

# Iredell County SOTCH

## 2014 State of the County Health Report

For the first time in history the life expectancy of this generation will be shorter than their parents, due to the increased prevalence of chronic diseases.

The Iredell County Healthy Carolinians Task Force is pleased to present the 2014 State of the County Health Report (SOTCH Report), with a focus on the county's top health issues. Iredell County completed their most recent Community Health Assessment in 2011. The next one is being conducted this year (2015) and will be available in March of 2016.

Physical inactivity and inadequate nutrition, as well as tobacco use were determined to be the top health priorities. This is mainly because seven of the top ten health concerns (heart disease, cancer, diabetes, nutrition, lack of physical activity, healthy aging, and stroke) are related to these top health priorities. Tobacco-free living, healthy eating, and active living subcommittees were formed to create evidence-based action plans with strategies to improve overall health.

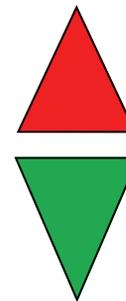
The SOTCH report provides information about the top health issues and provides updates on how we are working in the community and with partners to improve health. Recent morbidity and mortality data are highlighted, along with recent subcommittee project accomplishments.

The 2014 SOTCH Report is available to the general population, community partners, and stakeholders electronically on the Iredell County website. Hard copies are available at the Iredell County Health Department (Statesville & Mooresville locations), at the Mooresville, Statesville, Troutman, and Harmony libraries, and will be discussed in various news releases. The SOTCH was presented and approved at the Board of Health in the February 19th, 2015 meeting.

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### Legend:



**Health status worsened**

**Health status improved**



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Iredell County Health Department

## Quick Facts (Recent valid data is from 2013)

Iredell County Demographics		
Estimated 2013 Iredell County population is 164,517		
	Estimate	Percent
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	83,410	50.7%
Male	81,106	49.3%
<b>Race</b>		
White	136,878	83.2%
Black or African American	20,071	12.2%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	987	0.6%
Asian	3,783	2.3%
Multi-racial/ Other race	2,796	1.7%
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Hispanic (of any race)	11,845	7.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, State and County QuickFacts 2013

### 2013 Economic Snapshot

- **Unemployment (2013):** 6,601 individuals (or about 8% of the potential workforce) are unemployed
- **Median Household Income (2009-2013):** \$50,329
- **Below Poverty Line (2009-2013):** About 13.8% of people live below the poverty line (less than \$23,550 for a family of 4)
- **SNAP Benefits (2013):** 7,154 families currently receive SNAP benefits\*

\*Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is a federal food assistance program to help eligible low-income families buy the food they need for a nutritionally adequate diet.

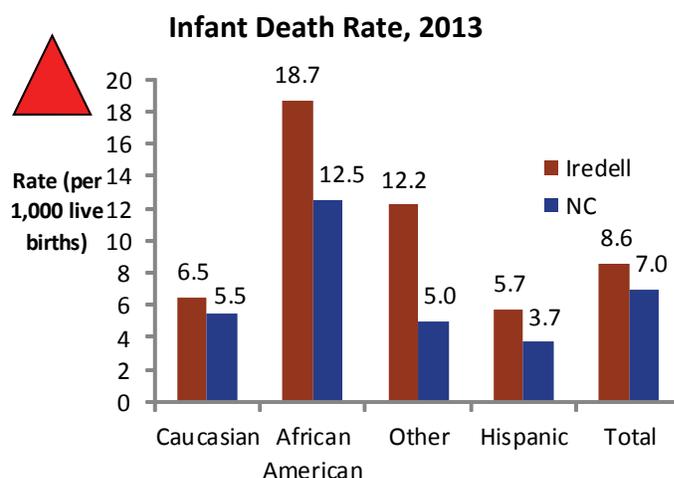
Sources: United States Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics, labor force data by county, 2013; U.S. Census Bureau, State and County Quick Facts, 2013; Iredell County Department of Social Services

## Infant Births and Deaths

Between 2009 and 2013 there were 98 child and infant deaths in Iredell County. In 2013 alone, there were 1,752 births and 15 infant deaths. For the first time in three years, the average infant death (mortality) rate for this county (8.6), surpasses North Carolina's rate of 7.0. Not only is infant mortality on the rise, but also, a statistically significant racial disparity still exists. African Americans have the highest infant death rate of 18.7. While higher than the state rate, Caucasians have a much lower rate of 6.5. In just three years, the Hispanic infant mortality rate rose from 4.2 in 2010 to 5.7 in 2013.

Tobacco use, which is most prevalent among

the non-Caucasian population of Iredell County, is related to poor birth outcomes. Mothers who smoke, or who are around secondhand smoke, are more likely to deliver their babies early. Preterm delivery is a leading cause of death, disability, and disease among newborns. Abstaining from tobacco use, acquiring prenatal care, and living a healthy lifestyle are all crucial for a positive birth outcome.



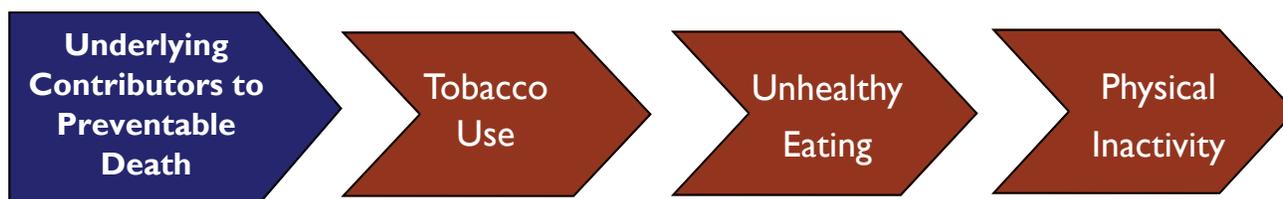
Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, 2013 NC Infant Mortality Report

## Leading Causes of Death

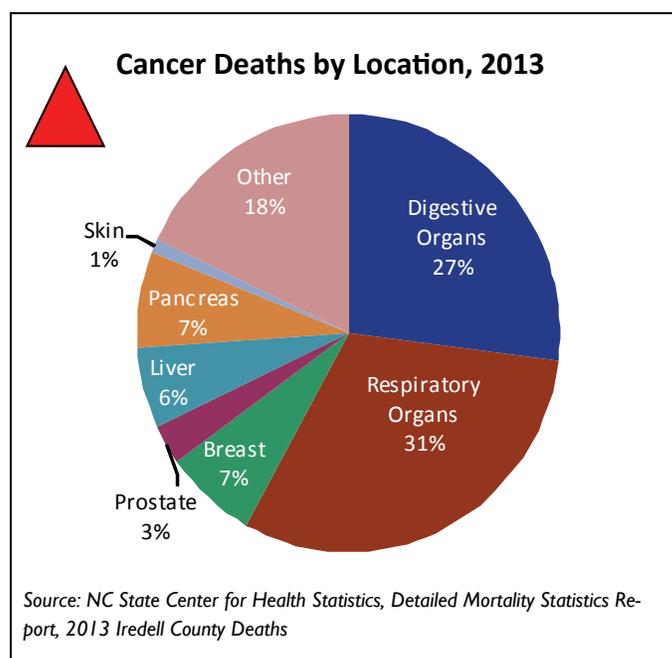
**52% of deaths in Iredell County are, unfortunately, caused by preventable chronic diseases.**

2013 Leading Causes of Death		
	Iredell	NC
Cancer	23.1%	22.3%
Diseases of the Heart	20.8%	21.4%
Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	5.9%	6.0%
Cerebrovascular Disease	5.4%	5.4%
Alzheimer's Disease	3.3%	3.4%
All Other Unintentional Injuries	3.2%	3.5%
Diabetes Mellitus	2.9%	2.9%
influenza and Pneumonia	2.3%	2.3%
Motor Vehicle Injuries	2.0%	*
Septicemia	1.8%	1.8%
All Other Causes (Residual)	29.3%	28.9%
<small>*Motor Vehicle Injuries are not a leading cause on death in NC</small>		
<small>Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, 2013 Leading Causes of Death</small>		

The most recent 2013 Iredell County data indicates the leading causes of death are cancer, heart disease and chronic lower respiratory disease. Seven of the top ten causes of death in Iredell County were chronic disease related. Chronic diseases and conditions are among the most common, costly and preventable of all health problems. These persistent conditions leave in their wake deaths that could have been prevented, lifelong disability, compromised quality of life, and growing healthcare costs. (CDC)



As noted in the 2011 Community Health Assessment, cancer was, and still continues to be, the leading cause of death in Iredell county. In fact, it rose three percent between 2012 and 2013. In 2013 there were 343 cancer deaths in Iredell County. Of these, over half were due to cancer of the respiratory and/or digestive organs. The pie chart to the right displays the percentage of cases for deaths of each location of cancer in the body. Cancer risks can be reduced by receiving regular medical care, avoiding tobacco, limiting alcohol use, avoiding excessive exposure to ultra-violet rays, eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, maintaining a healthy weight and being physically active.



## Reproductive Health

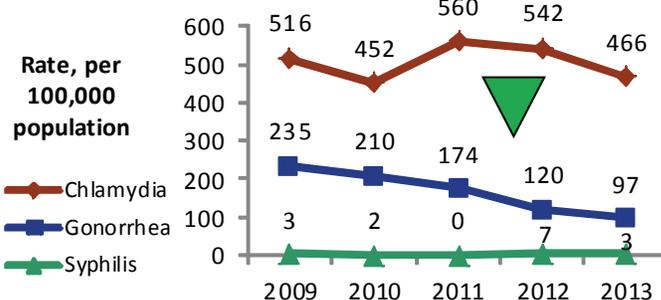
### Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis rates in Iredell are lower than the state and have been for at least the previous five years. The gonorrhea rate has seen a steady decline while rates of chlamydia and syphilis have fluctuated in the past few years. The most recent decline in all three STD's can partly be credited to the increase in reproductive health education provided to the 15-24 years of age population.

### Teen Pregnancy

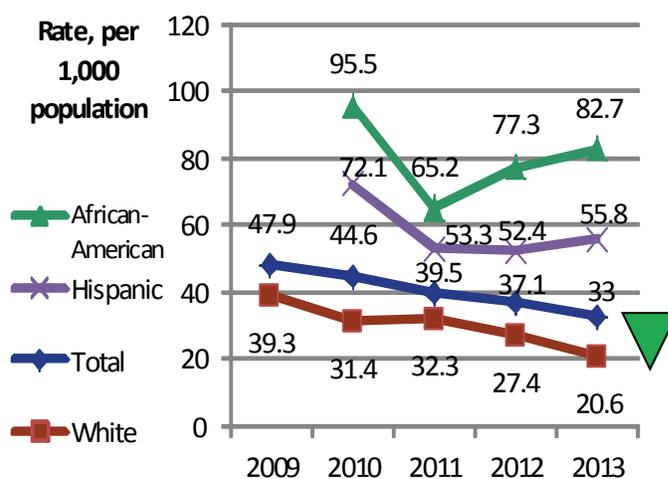
Overall, Iredell has seen a consistent decline in the number of pregnant 15-19 year olds. This is partly attributed to the NC Healthy Youth Act of 2009, which gives schools access to comprehensive family planning and reproductive education, and the teen pregnancy prevention program "PARC" (Proud and Responsible Communities). However, there is still work to be done because the Iredell County teen pregnancy rate of 33 continues to bring substantial social and economic costs through immediate and long-term impacts on the teen parents and their children. There is still a significant disparity gap between the highest teen pregnancy rate (African-American - 82.7) and lowest (Caucasians - 20.6) that needs the attention of local public health educators and clinicians.

Sexually Transmitted Disease Rates, 2013



Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, NC HIV/STD Surveillance Report 2013

Teen Pregnancy Rate, 2009-2013



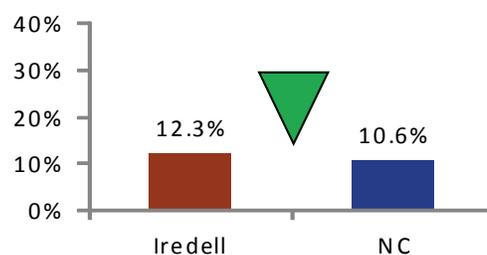
\*African American and Hispanic specific rates unavailable for 2009

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, 2009-2013 NC resident pregnancy rates ages 15-19

## Smoking During Pregnancy

The percent of mothers who smoke during pregnancy in Iredell County decreased from 14% (2005-2009) to 12.3% (2011-2013), but continues to be higher than that of the state, so work is still being conducted to address this issue. Just this year, 20 "What Mommy Does Baby Does" educational models were distributed by the Health Department to local OBGYN's, to help clinicians educate parents about the danger tobacco has on a fetus. Smoking and secondhand exposure during pregnancy increases the risk for reduced food and oxygen to the unborn fetus. Other risks include miscarriage, birth defects, preterm delivery, low birth weight, increased expensive newborn hospital stays, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Smoking During Pregnancy, 2011-2013



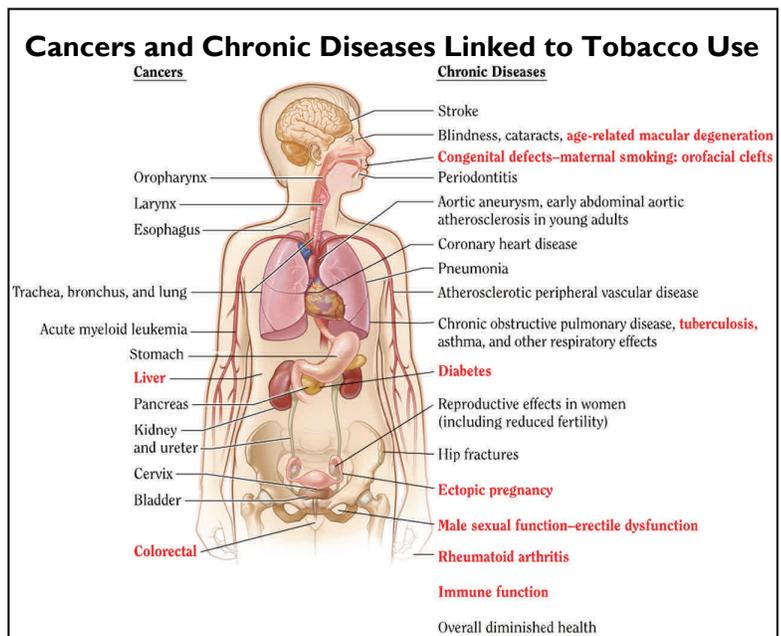
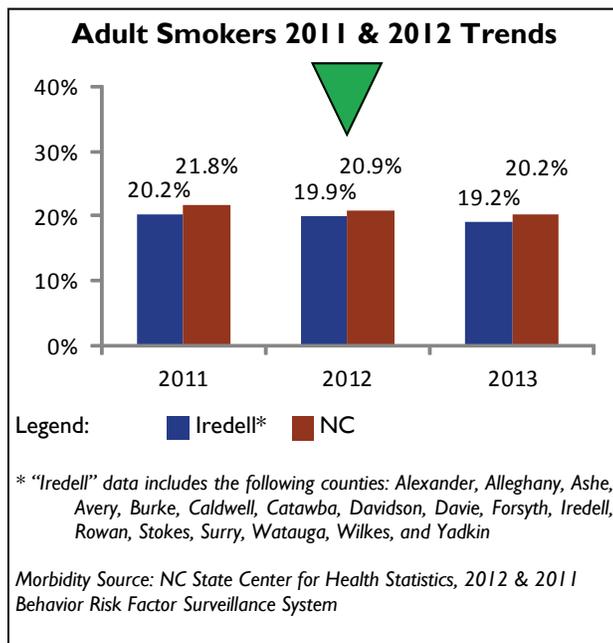
Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, 2011-2013 NC resident births where mother smoked during pregnancy.

## Tobacco Use: Community Progress on Selected Health Priorities



- 2015 Goal: Decrease Iredell County tobacco use by 3%, as measured by data that will be available from the NC State Center for Health Statistics in the fall of 2015.
- Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in North Carolina.
- Current adult smokers comprise 19.2% (2013) of the Iredell population.
- Tobacco-free initiatives and policy changes promote a social norm where tobacco use or secondhand smoke are not accepted. Maintaining smoke-free air is especially important for places where children live and play, such as parks.
- Through funding provided by the Healthy Communities grant, Iredell Health Systems gave 18 scholarships for tobacco-free instructional and cessation classes to those who were ready to kick their tobacco addiction.
- Iredell Health System (IHS) is working with local businesses and industries to promote tobacco-free workplaces. In 2014, J.C. Steele & Sons and Kewaunee Scientific Corp. became tobacco-free workplaces.

- As depicted in the top picture, many daycare facilities have become smoke-free and received window clings and yard signs so that visitors would be more aware of the policy.
- Once again, as seen in the bottom picture above, local boys and girls scouts picked up over 9 gallons of cigarette butts around the county, even in places where people seek physical activity. The jars of cigarette butts are used to help build support for tobacco-free places.
- The Iredell County Health Department sponsored a Multi-Unit Housing Lunch-and-Learn at Mitchell Community College’s Mooresville location where many businesses became interested in making their facilities tobacco-free in 2015.
- Iredell County OBGYN offices were provided with “What Mommy Does Baby Does” educational models to increase knowledge regarding the danger of tobacco use during pregnancy.



## Healthy Eating: Community Progress on Selected Health Priorities

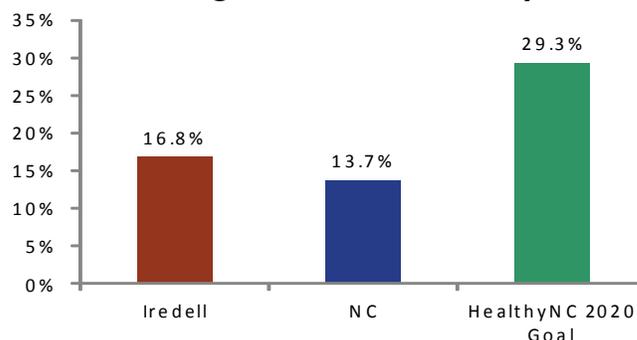


- 2015 Goal: Increase fruit and vegetable consumption in Iredell County by 5%, as measured by data that will be available by the North Carolina State Health Statistics Office in the fall of 2015.
- The 2013 Iredell farmers' market season was successful. The markets were promoted in a variety of different ways. Some of these avenues included: point-of-service signage, permanent signage, banners, yard signs, brochures, newspaper and radio advertisements, media, postcard mailings and promotion with other organizations and employers. We have worked with each of the individual markets in recent years to help them customize their marketing needs.
- The most recent data indicates that 83.2% of Iredell County does not consume the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables per day. The Healthy NC objective for the year 2020 is for 29% of North Carolinians to consume five fruits and vegetables per day. The state percent is only at 13.7% in 2011. Since Iredell's percent is much lower than the state goal of 29%, we are strategically planning with community partners, including farmers, convenience marts, businesses and industries and safety net organizations to improve fruit and vegetable consumption to impact health outcomes in Iredell County.
- A program sponsored by the Health Department and Iredell Christian Ministries called "Share the Harvest" has increased access to fresh fruits and vegetables among low-income residents with limited access to fresh produce. Through the program, growers donate excess produce, and in return, a local food pantry has more fresh produce available for their low-income clients. In the first year, over 700 pounds of produce were donated. In 2015, "Share the Harvest" hopes to collect over 1,000 pounds of produce, and increase the number of participating farmers, to share with safety net organizations so they can get the produce in the hands of those in need.
- 408 adults and youth participated in face-to-face classes and learning experiences, sponsored by the Iredell Cooperative Extension, designed to teach them the importance of healthy eating and how to achieve their nutrition related goals.

Fruits and vegetables are naturally designed with various nutrient-dense vitamins, minerals, fiber, and phytochemicals, which are often called antioxidants, flavonoids, flavanols, carotenoids, and polyphenols.

Fruits and vegetables naturally contain exactly what your body needs to guard against many chronic diseases, including heart disease, type-2 diabetes, and cancer.

**Consume Five or More  
Fruits, Vegetables or Beans a Day, 2011**



Morbidity Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, 2011 Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System

## Active Living: Community Progress on Selected Health Priorities

- 2015 Goal: Increase physical activity in Iredell County by 3%, as measured by data that will be available by the North Carolina State Health Statistics Office in the fall of 2015.
- Physical activity among the Iredell community remains low, as noted in the table below. Only about half of the adult population in Iredell County get the recommended amount of regular aerobic activity, and about one third get the recommended amount of muscle strengthening activity.
- 57.6% of residents do not take advantage of the trails and greenways that are available for community use, so the “Parks and Trails of Iredell County” brochure was created to increase awareness of these available resources. The brochure has been distributed in various locations and organizations throughout the County and is available on various websites for the community at large to access. [www.co.iredell.nc.us/departments/health/forms/park\\_handout\\_1page.pdf](http://www.co.iredell.nc.us/departments/health/forms/park_handout_1page.pdf)
- Representatives from 14 agencies came together to form a health panel who determined that physical inactivity was the top health priority. The health panel’s findings and improvement opportunities were presented to the United Way board. The United Way is partnering with the Health Department and other agencies to improve physical activity across Iredell County.

### Physical Activity in Adults

**2020 NC Goal: 60.6% of population will receive the recommended amount of physical activity.**

Percentage of <b>Iredell*</b> residents who met aerobic activity recommendations. (2011)	49.1%
Percentage of <b>Iredell*</b> residents who met muscle strengthening recommendations. (2011)	28.9%

\*2012 “Iredell” data includes the following counties: Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Iredell, Rowan, Stokes, Surry, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yadkin

Morbidity Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, 2011 & 2012 Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System

### New Physical Activity Initiatives



Iredell County Health Department health planners provide the school systems with information about active living best practices during school health advisory meetings to help improve policies and environmental changes to best impact the health of the student body. The Iredell-Statesville School System was awarded a \$1.8 million Physical Education Program grant. This program, FITNESS, began in February 2014 and will impact students in all of the middle schools and six of the elementary schools.

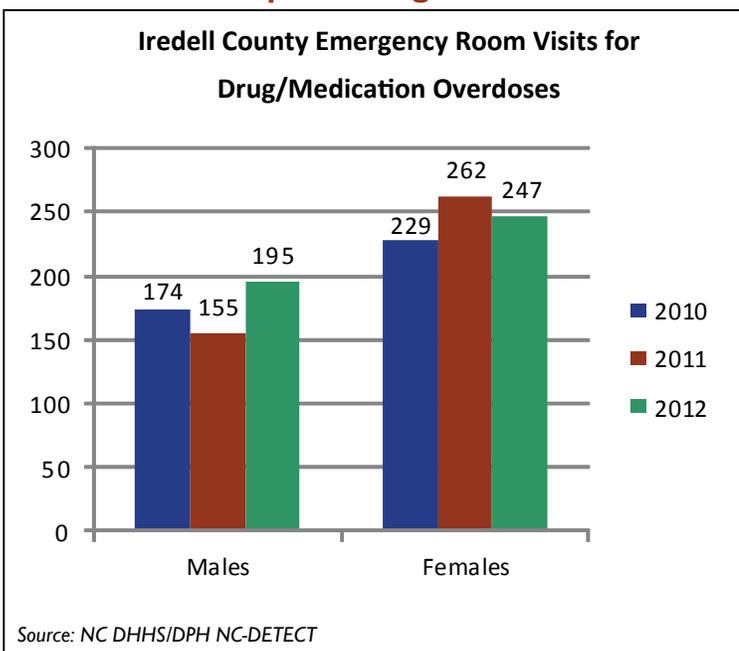


The Healthy Communities grant provided funding to implement active living environmental changes that were in alignment with partnering agencies. An innovative hop-scotch sidewalk is being built in the spring of 2015 at the new Scotts Rosenwald Park. To support and increase active living, six bike racks are being placed at various community college and county government locations to both promote biking and accommodate commuting needs for those that bike.

## Emerging Issues

- **Tobacco:** An increasing number of vapor shops and tobacco specialty stores, use of e-cigarettes, misuse of tobacco patches, flavored candy-like tobacco products marketed and targeted to youth along side candy, access to small and flavored cigars are creating harmful environments.
- **Alcohol:** New alcohol products like alcopops and palcohol are proving dangerous among the youth in Iredell County. The marketing and popularity of these products do not allude to the dangers they may cause if consumed irresponsibly.

### Illicit and Prescription Drug Abuse and Misuse



During the 2011 Community Health Assessment, drug abuse and misuse was found to be one of the top three health concerns important for the community to address. However, there was, and still is, insufficient internal human resources to address this concern. There are several types of commonly abused and misused drugs. Unintentional deaths involving prescriptions of opioids have radically increased and currently outnumber those from heroin and cocaine combined. The extremely addictive opioid pain relievers like codeine, hydrocodone, and oxycodone are some of the most abused

prescriptions today causing disability and death. Even psychiatric drugs such as Xanax, Klonopin, and Valium are being abused and misused by many. Commonly abused Over-The-Counter (OTC) drugs are pain relievers, medicines with caffeine (such as diet pills), and those with the ingredient Dextromethorphan. Dextromethorphan is the active ingredient in more than 100 cold and cough medications. One of the greatest difficulties with preventing OTC drug abuse or misuse is to inform teens and adults about their dangers, because they are perceived as safer than prescription drugs. Drug and prescription overdose is a current and substantial crisis in Iredell County. The table above depicts the rising number of emergency room visits in Iredell County since 2010, with female visits being more prevalent. Unfortunately, since 1999 the state has seen a 300% increase in unintentional poisoning deaths. The widespread drug misuse and abuse predicament imposes a major financial burden on society. For example, the abuse of opioid pain relievers alone cost the United States up to \$72.5 billion annually in healthcare expenditures.

## Emerging Issues and Related New Initiatives

### Project Lazarus

Thanks to CDC funding, the Iredell County Health Department was able to partner with the new Project Lazarus Coalition to purchase and disseminate opioid overdose prevention kits to Iredell County first responders. The Iredell County Emergency Management Department was later able to gain funding to purchase the Naloxone overdose antidote kits for all of its units and first responders. This coalition has worked with key emergency room team members from all three county hospitals to establish chronic pain policies. Several Iredell County municipalities are promoting drug take-back events and “Prevent Drug Overdose” flyers have been distributed to Iredell County pharmacies. Naloxone training was provided to EMS professionals to enhance awareness and knowledge of when and how to use the antidote to prevent disabilities and save lives.

Unfortunately, the NC prescription drug related mortality rate has been on a rapid upward trend since 1996, and has now become a significant public health concern that deserves attention. The Iredell County Health Department has proposed to secure a health education specialist position for FY 15-16, where 20% of their time would be spent in the community partnering with Project Lazarus and other agencies to address the prescription drug abuse and misuse tragedy. Again, based on the Community Health Assessment, substance abuse and misuse is a top health concern in Iredell County. Immediate and long-term effects of drug use are: rapid decrease of physical health, lower academic performance, physical injuries, violence, internal organ damage, increased unintentional pregnancies, increased sexually transmitted diseases, stress, depression, legal issues, financial pressure, homelessness and death. Studies show that teens and young adults who are taught about the risks associated with drug abuse and misuse are up to 50% less likely to abuse drugs.

### Ebola Virus Disease

The 2014 Ebola epidemic is the largest in history, affecting multiple countries in West Africa. Two imported cases, including one death, and two locally acquired cases in healthcare workers have been reported in the United States. The Iredell County Health Director rapidly enlisted local, regional, and state public health specialist support to plan and prepare the epidemiological team, emergency responders, and partners to be able to react to a potential or actual Ebola case involving an Iredell County resident. Below are just a few local Ebola related activities that took place.

NC State Public Health, Center for Disease Control and Prevention Ebola conference calls	Regular update meetings with 4 healthcare entities, emergency management, EMS, Public Health employees, and more	Health Risk Reduction Awareness: flyers, posters, public meetings, website
Ebola exercises with healthcare systems, emergency responders, public health, and other key individuals to test and improve Ebola related procedures	Encouraged Ebola screening procedures with healthcare providing offices, hospitals, and first responder agencies throughout the county	Conducted contact tracing training to find everyone that comes in contact with an Ebola patient to quickly find and help potential Ebola patients
Consulted with Emergency Communications to modify dispatch protocol to screen 911 calls	Preparedness meetings with animal control, Iredell Statesville Schools principals, and veterinarians	Worked with legal and law enforcement to bring awareness to Ebola quarantine and isolation orders

## Iredell County Healthy Carolinians Task Force

The Iredell County Healthy Carolinians Task Force is a group of Iredell County residents working together to emphasize public health preventive health practices to improve the quality of life and health status of all individuals. Iredell County Healthy Carolinians was established in 2004, and is made up of community members, leaders and organizations who are committed to improving the health of Iredell County residents.

### Iredell County Public Health Department Facilitation Team

Megan Kindley, Healthy Carolinians Coordinator

Norma Rife, Director of Public Health Development & Promotion

Jane Murray, Health Director

### Healthy Carolinian Taskforce

Jim Ashburn, Iredell County Community Foundation

Stuart Madow, Brookdale Churchill

Todd Black, Mooresville Graded School District

Kim McCall, Mooresville Graded School District

Liz Burns, United Way of Iredell County, Inc.

Mitzie McCurdy, Lake Norman Regional Medical Center

Nancy Davis, City of Statesville

Grady Mills, Community Member, Past Board of Health Member

Jane Edniston, LiveWELL Health Center

Amy Naylor, Mitchell Community College

Amy Eisele, Statesville Police Department

Jackie Negley, Iredell Council on Aging

Jennifer Griffith, Iredell County Partnership for Young Children

Amanda Peters, Iredell-Statesville School System

Richard Griggs, Statesville Recreation and Parks Department

Joyce Rogers, Town of Harmony

Melissa Jablonshi, Iredell County Partnership for Young Children

Ann Simmons, Iredell County Cooperative Extension

Karen Kerley, Iredell-Statesville Schools

John Snow, Iredell Health System

Marta Koesling, Iredell County Partnership for Young Children

Janie Stikeleather, Davis Regional Medical Center

Lauren Leopard, AccessCare

Lisa Warren, Iredell Health System

**Iredell County Health Department and Iredell Health System are partnering to assess the community to improve overall health. Help us work toward a healthier Iredell County.**

**Please join the Iredell County Healthy Carolinians Task Force! 704-924-4089**

**Electronic copies of this report and other Iredell County health reports are available at:  
[www.co.iredell.nc.us/departments/health/healthdata.aspx](http://www.co.iredell.nc.us/departments/health/healthdata.aspx)**

