

# Forsyth County 2008 State of the County Health Report



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Forsyth County Healthy Community Coalition and the Forsyth County Department of Public Health are pleased to present the 2008 State-of-the-County Health (SOTCH) Report. The report describes the latest data for key measures of community health and well being in Forsyth County, North Carolina compared to the state targets described in North Carolina-2010 Health Objectives and the national targets described in Healthy People 2010 Objectives. The SOTCH Report is designed to inform community members, leaders, agencies, organizations, and others interested individuals about Forsyth County's progress over the last year. It is also designed to influence the development of policies that further improve community health and recruit community members interested in participating in future activities. If you would like to get involved with the Forsyth County Healthy Community Coalition, please contact the Coordinator at (336) 703-3175 and visit our website: <http://www.healthycommunity.ws/>.

This report is available in electronic form at [www.forsyth.cc/publichealth](http://www.forsyth.cc/publichealth). For more information on NC 2010 Objectives and Healthy People 2010, please visit [www.healthycarolinians.org/healthobj2010.htm](http://www.healthycarolinians.org/healthobj2010.htm) and [www.healthypeople.gov/](http://www.healthypeople.gov/).

## 10 leading causes of death and years of life lost in Forsyth Co.

Year of potential life lost is a way to measure the impact of early deaths in a community. The higher the years of potential life lost, the higher the impact because the community loses the time that a person might have lived and contributed to his or her family and society. In North Carolina, the life expectancy at birth is 75.8 years compared to US average of 77.8 in 2004.

In 2006, Forsyth County residents who died lost an average of 9.4 years of life due to early death and a total of 26,492 total years of life. Motor vehicle injuries – which disproportionately involve younger people – had the highest average number of years of life lost per death (33.2 years).

Cancer, heart disease, stroke, and chronic lung disease are the leading causes of death in Forsyth County. Chronic diseases account for 60 percent of all deaths in the county. There have been dramatic increases in diabetes and obesity in the past decade; these conditions exacerbate many other health problems.

In 2007, 41 percent of adults in Forsyth County were overweight and another 23 percent were obese. While death itself is unavoidable, it may often be postponed if chronic health conditions and risky behaviors (*tobacco use (smoking); poor diet; physical inactivity and alcohol consumption*) are prevented or controlled.

Total deaths and years of potential life lost for the 10 leading causes of death in Forsyth County

Cause of Death	Total Number of Deaths	Average Yrs of Life Lost (for each death)	Total Yrs of Life Lost
1. Cancer	673	8.3	5,575
2. Heart Disease	554	6.6	3,661
3. Stroke	198	4.1	810
4. Chronic Lung Disease	170	3.5	587
5. Unintentional Injuries	97	22.7	2,200
6. Diabetes	83	10.1	836
7. Alzheimer's Disease	81	0.4	34
8. Kidney Diseases (Nephritis, Nephrosis)	55	3.3	179
9. Pneumonia & Flu	53	6	317
10. Motor Vehicle Injuries	47	33.2	1,562
<b>Total Deaths -- All Causes</b>	<b>2,824</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>26,492</b>

Data Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics.

## Step Up, Forsyth! Initiative is a big success in 2008



The BeHealthy Coalition, a member of our Forsyth County Healthy Community Coalition, has successfully

increased the number of participants in this year's Step Up, Forsyth! initiative.

Thanks to excellent marketing through paid advertising, the total number of participants in this year's program increased to 967. The goal for this year was 850. We anticipate that well over 1,000,000 minutes will be logged for walking by the closing date of November 7, 2008.

A follow-up survey will be administered to participants at the end of the

project to determine the percent of participants continuing a physical activity program, participation in additional ongoing physical activity programs, and percent of participants who were repeat Step Up, Forsyth! participants.

For more information about Step Up, Forsyth!, please visit [http://forsyth.cc/PublicHealth/stepup\\_home.aspx](http://forsyth.cc/PublicHealth/stepup_home.aspx).

## WSFC Schools are getting healthier

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools and partnering agencies are lowering the number of students who eat high-sugar and high-fat foods. Since 2004, they have supported Chartwells Foodservice and the Wellness Policy Committee in offering healthier choices on the lunch line in elementary and middle schools.

In 2004, only five elementary schools offered lower-fat and lower-sugar lunch options. By the start of this school year, the Healthy Alliance Program, which offers healthier meal, drink, and snack items, has expanded to all 42 of the elementary schools.

We are also working towards having all schools implement the School Wellness Policy. All county schools participated in training and received copies of policy appendices

in August 2007. The appendices include copy-ready handouts healthy fundraising, healthy snack items, healthy brown bag lunches, nutrition reading list, rewards and incentives, and celebrations to aid schools as they move towards implementing the entire policy. We will conduct a survey in Spring 2009 to assess changes schools have made so far and help schools fully implement the policy.

In an effort to promote health and wellness among county teachers and staff, the YMCA of Northwest North Carolina launched a faculty wellness partnership with the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools for the 2008-2009 school term. Faculty can request fitness and health education classes from the fitness consultant assigned to the school from a near-by YMCA branch. In addition, the YMCA is

offering free faculty participation in Fit Linxx, a computerized physical fitness tracking system. Schools can use Fit Linxx to monitor fitness competitions between classrooms, grade levels, or schools.

For more information about school nutrition, please visit <http://www.healthycommunity.ws/lifestyle.aspx>.

### In Forsyth County...

- ◆ 15.4% of kids, ages 2-18 years, are overweight<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ 57.5% of adults are overweight or obese<sup>2</sup>
- ◆ Only 26.9% of people eat 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>2007 NC-NPASS. <sup>2</sup>2006 NC BRFS. <sup>3</sup>2005 NC BRFS. All available from NC State Center for Health Statistics.



## Forsyth Co. continues working to keep Youth Tobacco-Free

The Forsyth County Healthy Community Coalition, Tobacco Prevention Program, Coalition for Drug Abuse Prevention, and Infant Mortality Reduction Coalition continue working together to prevent and reduce tobacco use among high school students and adults in our community.

Youth volunteers have been promoting TRU in Forsyth County by circulating information at presentations and health fairs. TRU, which stands for “Tobacco. Reality. Unfiltered.” is a North Carolina initiative for teens and by teens to encourage them to stay tobacco-free. In 2008, youth volunteers led 14 activities to promote teen tobacco prevention and visited 7 tobacco merchants to educate them on the sale of tobacco to minors.

In addition, on July 1, 2008, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools went 100% Tobacco Free. Teen volunteers have promoted

compliance to the policy by passing out over 900 reminder cards to school visitors during the 2008 football season. We also ran ads in school sports programs to remind students, families, faculty, and staff of the new policy and will distribute Cessation Resource Kits containing NC Quitline materials to faculty, staff, and students in December 2008.

Adult and youth volunteers have also been involved in promoting smoke-free policies in restaurants in Forsyth County. Volunteers met with restaurant managers to share information on the benefits of going smoke free. Currently, 330 of the 689 restaurants in Forsyth County are now smoke-free, up from only 11 restaurants in 2006.

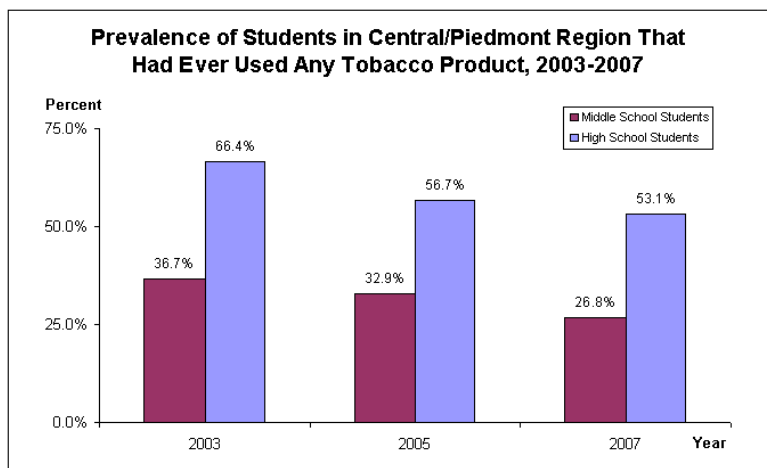
For more information about youth tobacco prevention, please visit [www.smokefreeforsyth.org](http://www.smokefreeforsyth.org) or contact the Youth Tobacco Prevention Coordinator at (336) 703-3147.



The Youth Advisory Council presenting Tobacco 101 at the Boys & Girls Club, 2008.



Youth volunteers at a wellness fair at Greater Cleveland Ave. Christian Church, 2008.



Data sources: 2003, 2005, and 2007 Youth Tobacco Survey Middle School Fact Sheets for the Central Region of NC; 2003, 2005, and 2007 Youth Tobacco Survey High School Fact Sheets for the Central Region of NC.

### In North Carolina...

- ♦ 72.4% of middle and 64.7% of high school students have been told by a parent/guardian about the dangers of tobacco use<sup>1</sup>
- ♦ 19.5% of middle and 22.1% of high school students think young people who smoke cigarettes have more friends<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>NC Youth Tobacco Survey 2007 Middle School and High School Tables. All available from NC Dept. of Health and Human Services.

## Forsyth Co. continues efforts to prevent Preterm Births



In-Service training for 17P at Aegis Family Health Center , 2008.

Prematurity and low birth weight are the leading causes of infant death in Forsyth County. Women who have already had one premature baby are at high risk of having another baby before term. 17P, a form of progesterone, has been shown to lower the risk of having another baby prematurely by over 30% among this group of women. In August of 2008, the Infant Mortality Reduction Coalition housed in the Department of Public Health, partnered with UNC Center for Maternal and Infant Health, Healthy Start/Baby Love Plus, and the Community Care Network to provide in-service training session

called “Preventing Repeat Premature Birth” to health care providers who interact with women who have had premature babies or who interact with children born prematurely.

The 17P in-service trainings provide skills to local obstetricians for incorporating 17P into everyday medical practice. A locally produced video and 17P toolkits are distributed with information on 17P protocol, administration, pharmaceutical suppliers, and insurance billing. To date 5 obstetric physician practices and 66 health care providers have been trained. A total of 21 toolkits have been distributed thus far. Phase 2 of the 17P Campaign is planned for 2009 with training offered to pediatricians, faith leaders, social workers, nurses, and child care providers. A bereavement conference is planned in early spring and will include advocacy for use of 17P for women who have had a previous preterm birth.

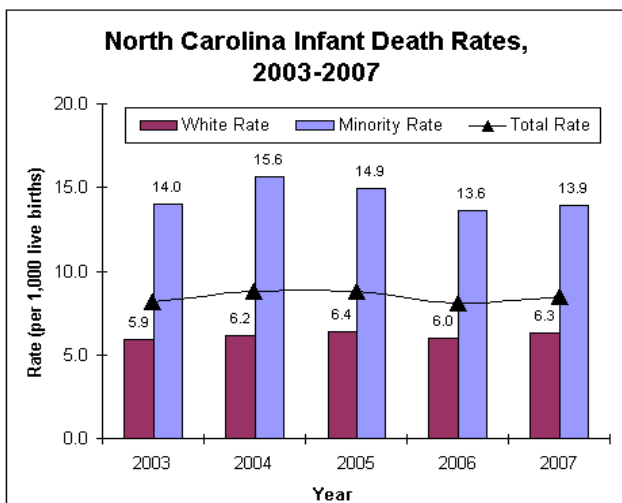
For more information. Please visit <http://www.helpourbabies.org>.

**North Carolina has the 7th highest infant death rate of all US states, with 8.5 infant deaths for every 1,000 births.<sup>1</sup>**

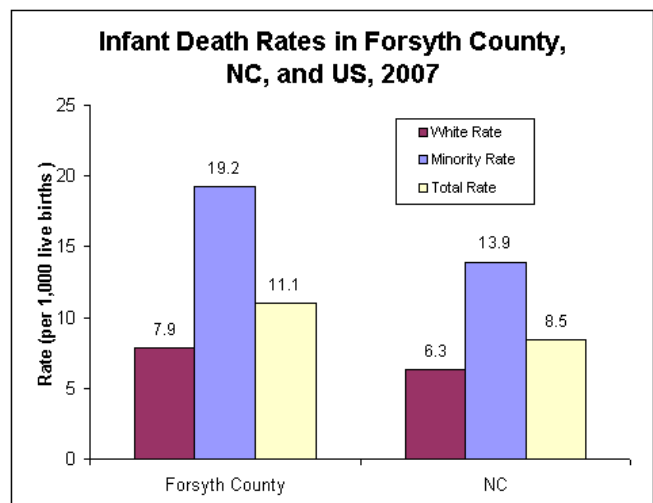
### In Forsyth County...

- ◆ There are 11.1 infant deaths for every 1,000 live births.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ Non-white infants are 2.4 times more likely to die than white infants.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ 73.2% of infants who died in 2006 were born premature.<sup>2</sup> Over half were born at least 3 months early.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>2008 Forsyth County Infant Mortality Reduction Coalition Fact Sheet. <sup>2</sup>2008 State Profile: NC from the National Center for Health Statistics.



Data Source: 2007 NC Infant Mortality Report. NC State Center for Health Statistics.



Data Source: 2008 Fact Sheet: Forsyth County Infant Mortality Reduction Coalition. Forsyth County Department of Public Health.

## Several ongoing activities educate about Domestic Violence

In an effort to prevent domestic violence and better assist victims, we continue to offer training workshops and community education. The Domestic Violence Community Council, a collaborative group of over two dozen agencies, held a training for local stakeholders and human services agencies in October entitled "Everyone Can Make A Difference." The training examined ways to include men in the movement against domestic violence, ways to engage community members, agencies, and faith-based organizations, and future trends and challenges.

This year, we also held health care provider trainings for the Wake Forest University Physicians' Assistant Program, Forsyth County Department of Public Health employees, and Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center Preceptor Program, a mentoring program for new nurses. These trainings aid providers in recognizing domestic violence, enhance their screening

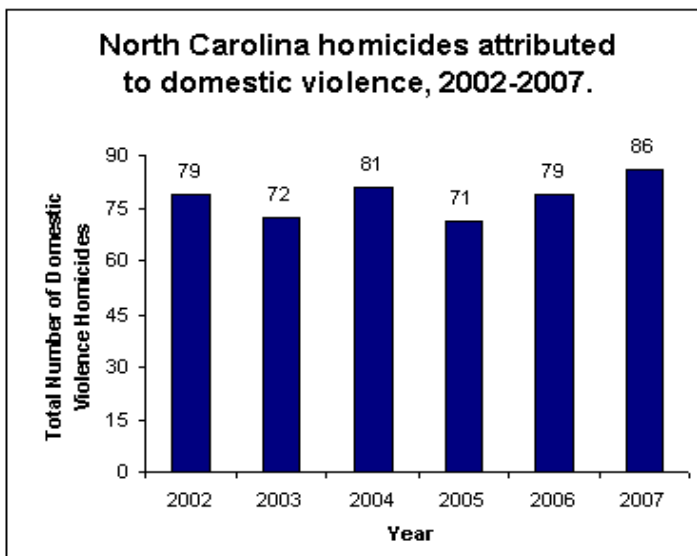
skills, and explain how to appropriately respond to victims. Providers also learn about local services, programs and resources to deal with domestic violence and related issues.

Family Services Rape Prevention Education Program, "R.A.P., Raising Awareness and Prevention," has been offering training to male college students to teach young men in middle and high school the benefits of healthy relationships. Program topics include gender roles, violence against women, positive communication, and media influences. R.A.P. and other community organizations and businesses also sponsored the "R.A.P. Summit," which included filmmaker Byron Hurt (*Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes*) for a viewing/panel discussion and a workshop. The event drew over 250 college students, youth, human service providers and stakeholders.

To educate victims of domestic violence about criminal and civil

remedies, representatives from Family Services, Winston-Salem Police Department, Sheriff's Office, Legal Aid, Magistrate's Office, and District Attorney's Office have collaborated to create a fact sheet. The fact sheet is available at [http://www.co.forsyth.nc.us/sheriff/victim\\_domestic.aspx](http://www.co.forsyth.nc.us/sheriff/victim_domestic.aspx).

For more information about the Domestic Violence Team, please visit [http://www.healthycommunity.ws/domestic\\_violence.aspx](http://www.healthycommunity.ws/domestic_violence.aspx). For more about the Domestic Violence Community Council, please visit [http://www.familyserv.org/vr\\_vrc.cfm](http://www.familyserv.org/vr_vrc.cfm).



Data source: 2002-2007 Domestic Violence Homicides. NC Coalition to Against Domestic Violence.

### In the US...

- ◆ 10.6% of women and 2.1% of men reported experiencing forced sex some time in their lives.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ 20-25% of women in college reported experiencing an attempted or a completed rape in college.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ 60.4% of female and 69.2% of male victims were first raped before age 18.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ 10.8% of girls and 4.2% of boys grades 9-12 were forced to have sexual intercourse some time in their lives.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sexual Violence Facts at a Glance, Spring 2008. Sexual Violence Prevention. CDC.

## Confronting Economic Injustice is issue # 1 for H.E.A.T.

Economic injustice continues to be a problem not only in Forsyth County, but in the nation. One of the objectives of the Health Equity Action Team (H.E.A.T.) is to promote public awareness and dialogue on issues relevant to poverty and health. To do this, we are showing the documentary series, "Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?". This compelling series examines the ways in which social factors like wealth, class, and racism influence health. Since January 2008, a

total of 2,243 community members have had an opportunity to see the documentary series. The goal for this year was 2000. A total of 37 groups have shown the DVD at their respective organization or church. We will continue to identify organizations and churches throughout our community to share the documentary series.

The Health Equity Action Team planning committee is currently meeting to plan an event in the

spring of 2009 to celebrate our accomplishments with the showing of Unnatural Causes. Organizations, churches, and various community groups will be invited to help us in our celebration.

For more information about the Health Equity Action Team, visit <http://www.healthycommunity.ws/racial.aspx>. For more information about "Unnatural Causes," visit [http://www.healthycommunity.ws/documentary\\_series.aspx](http://www.healthycommunity.ws/documentary_series.aspx).

## Environmental Health raises awareness of Illegal Dumping

The Environmental Health Team has been busy this year planning a new project to raise public awareness about illegal dumping. In 2007, local agencies and government offices throughout Forsyth County received about 13,000 citizen complaints, many of which involved illegal dumping. The new project will help to reduce illegal dumping by providing community outreach and education of illegal dumping and its effects and also encourage more reporting of illegal dumping and dump sites by citizens. To aid in this, we have developed an educational brochure for public distribution. The brochure points out that illegal dumping is a crime and has negative impacts on human health, the environment, and the community. It also provides phone numbers and instructions for reporting illegal dumping in Forsyth County and its municipalities. In addition, the Environmental Health Team will visit each town manager's office in the incorporated municipalities to discuss illegal

dumping, other solid waste issues, and the new brochure, prior to its distribution. We will all seek the continued support of the Board of Commissioners and Sheriff's Office to combat this problem.

Bob Costner of News 14 Carolina interviewed team member Minor Barnette on October 28<sup>th</sup> about illegal dumping. His story appeared in the station's repeating news loop for 24 hours. To read the story or watch the video, please visit <http://news14.com/Default.aspx?ArID=600902>.

The Environmental Health Team is also continuing efforts to monitor and expand the "No Idling" air quality enhancement project at elementary schools in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County. The no-idling campaign focuses on the 10 schools with the worst before- and after-school traffic problems: Union Cross, Sedge Garden, Southeast Middle, Meadowlark Elementary, Clemmons Middle, Jefferson Middle, Northeast Middle, Gibson Elementary, Latham

Elementary, Downtown Middle and Speas Elementary. Team members have met with PTA, principals, staff, coaches, and teachers at select schools. "No-idling" signs have been posted at the schools, and parents dropping off and picking up their children from school are encouraged to turn off their car engines while waiting.

For more information about the Environmental Health Team or our activities, please visit <http://www.healthycommunity.ws/environmental.aspx>.



## CenterPoint addresses Mental Health and Homelessness

In October, CenterPoint Human Services organized a fair at the Gateway YMCA to promote mental health services available to the community. CenterPoint, a local management entity for Forsyth, Stokes, and Davie counties, manages funds allocated for mental health, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse services. We also contract with agencies to provide services and monitors them to ensure quality care. Over 80 providers and partner agencies attended the fair and displayed information about their services. Workshops were held on Autism, Anxiety & Depression, Stigma, Health & Nutrition, and Advocacy. An estimated 300 people attended.

CenterPoint hosted a community roundtable event in March to get feedback about delivery of services for mental health, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse. In addition, CenterPoint, the Mental Health Association, and the National

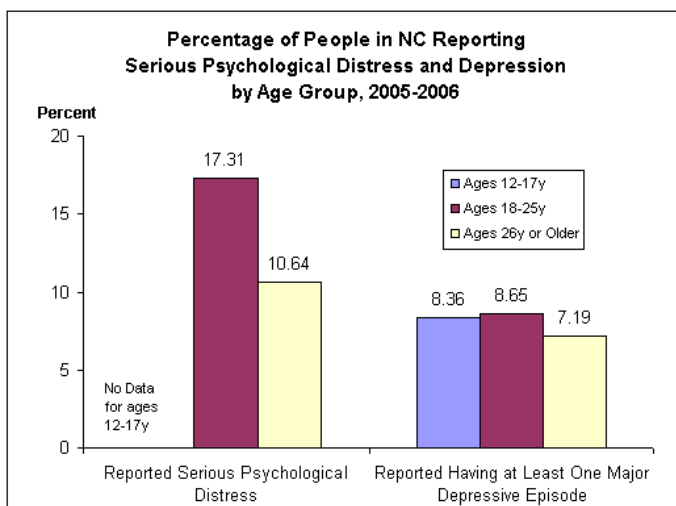
Alliance on Mental Illness hosted an open forum in April for public comments on services in Forsyth, Stokes, and Davie Counties. Over 130 people attended the two hour meeting and voiced their concerns regarding our service system and expressed their desires for guidance from area political leaders.

Because many people who are homeless also experience mental health difficulties and lack money or insurance to afford treatment, CenterPoint housing specialists continue to help people find housing options, access the mental health system, and obtain affordable and safe places to live. Dave Allred, a housing specialist, was appointed to the Mayor’s Commission on the Ten-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness. Housing specialists work closely with the Housing Authority, Rescue Mission, Bethesda Center, Forsyth County Housing Coalition, and other agencies in identifying homeless individuals, assessing their

needs, and exploring resources that would improve their situations.

CenterPoint employees recently volunteered for Habitat for Humanity to build a home for a low income family. This experience prepared staff to work with Habitat for Humanity in building two homes in 2009 for families whose heads of household have mental illness. We is also working to construct a 12-unit single-occupancy apartment building designed for low-income individuals with mental health needs.

For more information about CenterPoint and our services, please visit <http://www.cphs.org/>.



Data sources: SAMHSA, Office of Applied Studies, National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2005 and 2006.

**In North Carolina, there were at least 9,521 people who were homeless in 2006, and 1,333 of them were children.<sup>1</sup>**

### In Forsyth County...

- ◆ 1,040 people were homeless
- ◆ 15.9% were chronically homeless
- ◆ 5.7% were severely mentally ill
- ◆ 19.5% had issues with chronic substance abuse

<sup>1</sup>2006 N.C. Interagency Council for Coordinating Homeless Program annual point-in-time survey.

<sup>2</sup>2006 Homelessness Assessment Data. Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs - Winston Salem/Forsyth County

# THANK YOU!

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We would like to express our thanks to the Forsyth County Healthy Community Coalition and its action teams, community members, leaders, agencies, and volunteers. It is because of their work and their support that we are able to complete this report. We thank them for their efforts in improving our community over the years.

We also thank the Board of Health, the Board of Commissioners, and the taxpayers of Forsyth County. The Forsyth County Healthy Community Coalition and its action teams are able to continue working for a healthier county through their ongoing support.

For hard copies, please contact Jennifer Staten in the Epidemiology & Surveillance Division at 336-703-3146 or [statenjl@forsyth.cc](mailto:statenjl@forsyth.cc).

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