

NEW HANOVER COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT



ANNUAL REPORT
2000/2001

New Hanover County Health Department Board of Health

The Board of Health is appointed by the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners as the governing body for the Health Department.



Wilson O. Jewell, DDS
*Chairman
Dentist*



Gela N. Hunter, RN, FNP
*Vice-Chairman
Registered Nurse*



Henry V. Estep, RHU
Public Member



Michael E. Goins, OD
Optometrist



Robert G. Greer
County Commissioner



W. Edwin Link, Jr., RPH
Pharmacist



Anne B. Rowe
Public Member



Melody C. Speck, DVM
Veterinarian



Phillip P. Smith, Sr., MD
Physician



**William T. Steuer, PE,
RLS**
Professional Engineer



Estelle G. Whitted, RN
Public Member



Frank R. Reynolds, MD
Medical Consultant

Director's Message



David E. Rice

We are pleased to provide you with the New Hanover County Health Department Annual Report for fiscal year 2000-01. It represents the provision of public health programs and services for people in New Hanover County. The core concepts that guide our efforts are: it is better to prevent disease than to have to treat disease, and controlling health risks is one of our best disease prevention strategies.

The mission of the New Hanover County Health Department is to protect the public health and environment, promote healthy living and optimize the quality of life through preventive, restorative, environmental, and educational services. In fulfilling our mission, the Health Department provides preventive health services, environmental protection programs and health enhancement activities. An emphasis on health promotion and education embraces all of our programs, services and activities.

During fiscal year 2000-01, the Health Department experienced many challenges and opportunities. Among the most notable highlights were:

- Strategic Planning Retreat
- NCPHA in Wilmington
- Animal Cruelty Cases
- Folic Acid Grant
- Guard Your Smile
- Salute To Teens
- Enhanced Mosquito Surveillance
- Jail Accreditation
- Tobacco Merchant Education
- Laboratory Accomplishments

This document focuses on most of our programs, services and activities. The breadth of our Health Department, however, prevents us from covering all our promotion, prevention, and protection endeavors. For a more detailed account of our past and current efforts, please visit our web site at: <http://www.nhcgov.com/HLTH/HLTHmain.htm>

“From the Northeast River to Federal Point, and from the Cape Fear to the Sea—City, Suburb, Village and Farm—we are one people striving for healthful and useful living.”



David E. Rice, MPH, MA
Health Director

Division Directors

Assistant Health Director

Lynda F. Smith

Animal Control Services Director

Dr. Jean P. McNeil

Child Health Director

Janet B. McCumbee

Communicable Disease Director

Beth W. Jones

Community Health Director

Betty B. Creech

Dental Health Director

Dr. David W. McDaniel

Environmental Health Director

Dianne M. Harvell

Laboratory Director

Susan M. O'Brien

Nutrition Director

Nancy R. Nail

Women's Health Care Director

Betty Jo McCorkle

Mission Statement

The mission of the New Hanover County Health Department is to protect the public health and environment, promote healthy living and optimize the quality of life through preventive, restorative, environmental and educational services.

Motto

“Your Health - Our Priority”

Highlights

STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT

In an effort to prioritize the health needs of New Hanover County, the Board of Health and Health Department Management Team participated in a Strategic Planning Retreat in October 2000. Facilitated by William Herzog, Associate Professor Emeritus from UNC Chapel Hill's School of Public Health, the two-day session provided Board, Management and Staff members an opportunity to review the health status of the county's citizens. A detailed list of priorities, goals and objectives was developed and shared with the full Health Department Staff. This unique retreat provided a positive atmosphere to share information, ideas and concerns. The established priorities are continually revisited through monthly updates which are shared with the Board and Staff.

NCPHA IN WILMINGTON

Wilmington was the proud host of the North Carolina Public Health Association's Annual Meeting, held September 20-22, 2000. NHCHD received awards recognizing the outstanding achievements and accomplishments of staff members and the programs in which they work. Awards or scholarships were presented to the Community Health, Communicable Disease, and Environmental Health Divisions. Having the meeting in Wilmington presented a unique opportunity to share the rich history of public health in New Hanover County. Many meeting attendees participated in a tour of the downtown area, historic Oakdale Cemetery, and NHCHD facilities.



Courtesy of the Wilmington Star-News

ANIMAL CRUELTY CASES

Animal Control Services was successful in rescuing three sets of animals from three separate locations in the county. Each rescue required multiple hours of preliminary work and follow up care for the animals brought into the shelter. These cases have increased public awareness about animal cruelty cases in the area, and they encourage those who witness mistreatment to share their

testimony to capture future offenders.

FOLIC ACID GRANT

The Women's Health Care Division embarked on a new venture with the March of Dimes and community partners to provide educational information on the importance of taking a daily vitamin that includes folic acid. A grant was received from the March of Dimes to purchase and distribute multivitamins and information to women of childbearing age. Partnerships with NHC Register of Deeds and UNCW Student Health, in addition to NHCHD efforts, will ensure broad distribution in the community. Folic acid, when taken prior to conception, has been proven to greatly reduce the risk of certain birth defects, and has also been linked to lower incidences of heart disease, stroke, and some forms of cancer.



GUARD YOUR SMILE

In celebration of Public Health Month, the Dental Health Division sponsored a regional initiative to increase the use of mouthguards as a method of injury prevention. Results of the *Guard Your Smile* campaign were impressive with over 1,000 adults and children receiving information. Additionally, many young soccer players were professionally fitted for mouthguards free of charge. Co-sponsors of the event were the YMCA, Cape Fear Community College, and the North Carolina Oral Health Section.

SALUTE TO TEENS

The Communicable Disease Division sponsored *Salute to Teens* as part of the Public Health Month celebration. Adolescents received immunization assessments and updates and information on healthy lifestyle choices. Door prizes were purchased with money raised by the Division and included a grand prize of a personal computer and printer.



ENHANCED MOSQUITO SURVEILLANCE

The Centers for Disease Control Fay-Prince Trap is currently being implemented in the Vector Control Program to enhance mosquito surveillance efforts. Designed as a daytime trap, it features a bold contrast of glossy black and white panels. This unique visual element attracts day flier mosquitoes. The trap features a wind orienting cover and a suction motor, which blows the mosquitoes into a collection cup. To increase the traps catch, staff will use CO2 and scented water buckets placed near each trap. *Gravid Culex* mosquitoes find water scented with alfalfa ideal for egg laying. The traps will be set at complaints and other container-breeding suspicious sites to quantify the population of these difficult to trap species. Our goal is to monitor *Aedes albopictus*, *Culex quinquefasciatus*, and other *Culex* species, which may prove significant to the spread of West Nile Virus.



JAIL ACCREDITATION

The Jail Health Program, part of the Community Health Division, received notification in February 2001 from the National Commission on Correctional Health Care that they had met all standards and achieved national accreditation. New Hanover County's program is one of few in North Carolina that have been accredited. The reputation of the Jail Health Program results in frequent requests from other counties for assistance in program development.



TOBACCO MERCHANT EDUCATION

The Project ASSIST Tobacco Prevention Coalition co-sponsored a Merchant Education campaign in partnership with a local youth empowerment organization. Coalition members and area youth canvassed the College Road, Wrightsville Beach, and downtown Wilmington areas, targeting stores where tobacco products are sold. The youth presented pledges to store owners and managers, asking them not to sell tobacco products to people under the age of 18. Of the 51 stores visited, 96% signed pledges to check identification and not to sell to underage buyers. The youth also noted the number of tobacco advertisements posted in and around the stores.



LABORATORY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This year marked another inspection of the NHCHD Laboratory by the NC Division of Facility Services to ensure compliance with the Federal Clinical Laboratory Improvement Acts. These acts govern the way laboratories function in every aspect from personnel and testing, to quality assurance. The Laboratory was found to have no deficiencies on this inspection. The Laboratory was also instrumental in assuring that NHCHD would be ready for a voluntary OSHA inspection of county facilities from the NC Department of Labor. The Laboratory and the Health Department had no deficiencies on this inspection, either. This again demonstrates the excellent quality of service provided by the Laboratory.

Administration

The Administration Division is responsible for the administration, operation and fiscal management of the New Hanover County Health Department.

GOALS

- Assure a positive public image and serve the citizens of New Hanover County
- Provide assistance in administrative, financial, personnel and vital records
- Support the Board of Health, Health Director, Assistant Health Director, Division Directors and Health Department Staff
- Monitor, maintain, and purchase computer equipment, and provide Information Technology expertise to staff
- Prepare Property Management work orders and assist with scheduling of Health Department maintenance

PERSONNEL

GOAL

- Provide personnel services for approximately 189 Health Department employees and serve as liaison between the New Hanover County Department of Human Resources and the Health Department

Personnel services include processing payroll and personnel action forms; orientation to new employees regarding policies and proce-

dures; annual open enrollment for county personnel benefits; and the maintenance of personnel records and the New Hanover County and Health Department Personnel Policy and Procedure manuals.

VITAL RECORDS

North Carolina General Statutes 130-A requires the Health Department administer the Vital Records Program under the direction of the Health Director.

GOAL

- Assure vital records are filed as required by Chapter 130-A of North Carolina General Statutes and are submitted to the North Carolina State Division of Vital Records and New Hanover County Register of Deeds within the required time period.

Deputy Registrars are appointed by the Health Director to process birth and death certificates for New Hanover County. The hospital is responsible for filing birth certificates and funeral directors are responsible for filing death certificates with local Health Department Deputy Registrars.

Certified copies of birth and death certificates are available at the New Hanover County Register of Deeds or from the North Carolina Office of Vital Records. Fees are charged for certified copies of certificates.

Vital Records for Fiscal Years 1996/97 - 2000/01

New Hanover County	FY1996/97	FY 1997/98	FY1998/99	FY1999/00	FY 2000/01
Birth Certificates	3,071	3,549	3,604	3,446	3,592
Death Certificates	1,585	1,795	1,972	1,923	1,939

Animal Control Services

Animal Control Services (ACS) is responsible for surveillance of rabies exposure situations and protects our community's citizens and their companion animals from this viable zoonotic disease through prevention efforts, raising public awareness, and diligent education methods.

GOALS

- Increase the positive public image of the duties performed by ACS in service to the community through increased measures of education

- Increase adoption rates and decrease euthanasia rates of surrendered animals
- Build an on-site spay/neuter facility and outdoor exercise/play area
- Assess and improve methods of rabies exposure prevention

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Animal Control Services experienced a barrage of head-liner cruelty cases in FY 00/01. Each case required hours of intensive

investigation and dedicated manpower to care for the numerous pets confiscated from the homes. In October 2000, 68 animals were seized from a residence on Rose Avenue. These 66 dogs and two cats remained at the shelter until a December court date and a final release to the Humane Society on January 2, 2001. The case was appealed from its original determination, but the offender chose to remand the case back to the original decision, when they were found harboring pets at a Brunswick County address.

A second problem was solved in January after months of collaboration with the NHC Sheriff's Department. Multiple wild dogs were removed from a home on Star Harbor in the southern portion of the county. This owner was allowed to keep two neutered dogs as personal pets. A third situation was handled in conjunction with the Wilmington Police Department. The Maides Avenue location was inside the city limits and was the home for multiple inbred, semi-wild dogs. ACS was able to capture the majority of these dogs and relocate several to a Brunswick County shelter.

Three positive rabies cases were identified in FY 00/01. Two occurred in October 2000, one of which involved a raccoon attacking an eight year old child. The third case, in April 2001, was particularly discouraging because the exposed individuals were nonchalant in their handling of a rabid fox. It was difficult to track them down to inform them that the fox was rabid, so that they could receive post-exposure vaccinations if they desired to do so. This emphasizes the continued need to raise public awareness of the danger associated with the life-threatening virus, as it continues to maintain a hold on our community.

The Chameleon software system continues to prove itself as a viable resource for upgrade and maintenance of the ACS licensing program. Service has been expanded through this package by enabling staff to send electronic reminders, pre-citation letters, citations, and consolidated files to a collection agency for people in noncompliance with the county ordinance. It has also given ACS the capability to place photos of pets available for adoption



Another unwanted stray kitten awaits a new home. More than 50 percent of the animals left at the shelter are owner surrendered.

on the internet (www.petharbor.com) for general public viewing without visiting the shelter. This served as a catalyst for staff to upgrade the ACS website, which was markedly improved in the last months of FY 00/01. A kiosk is available in the front office area of the shelter to review listings of the animals kennel in the facility. Staff enjoyed a week of training from a software representative, which has increased the ability to utilize additional portions of the system.

Despite numerous power and water failures due to construction on Division Drive for the months of March through May, ACS was able to sponsor a number of events at the shelter location. On March 17, 2001, an Open House was held from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., using a Saint Patrick's Day theme. April's *Public Health Month* activities included volunteer orientations, a free rabies clinic at the shelter on April 21, discounted rabies vaccinations offered at area veterinarians from April 23-28, and three WAAV radio spots. One of the WAAV spots was an hour long forum, which gave citizens an opportunity to call in to the station with questions. The annual *Pet Adopt-a-thon* was held the weekend of May 5-6, with the usual array of activities and displays.

Staff continues to raise public awareness of ACS activities and services by going into the community to conduct educational presentations. A display was available at the airport in February with information on general pet care and rabies. ACS was present at *Town Hall at the Mall* and the annual *Hurricane Expo* to showcase services. Several schools were visited for individual classes to tell the ACS story. A UNCW honors class met at the shelter seeking understanding of the human-animal bond. Hurricane Floyd relief workers met at Wal-Mart to advertise the availability of animals for adoption at the facility. June 2001 marked the end of one full year of biweekly morning radio spots on WAAV Radio. (These are continuing into



City of Wilmington police officer downed by two attacking pit bulls as he attempts to protect schoolchildren from the charging dogs.

Courtesy of the Wilmington Star-News

the next year.) 2000 marked the seventh year for the free *Inner City Rabies Clinic*, held in November. We experienced greater success with our annual *Paws to Recycle* campaign, possibly due to the lack of hurricanes during the September through November months of the event.

Staff participated in a weekend strategic planning retreat coordinated by the Board of Health and Health Department Management Team. This has served to focus staff on targeted channels of operation to improve functions of the division in identified areas. One area of direct improvement was the development of a Spanish manual of translations pertinent to our area of expertise. Clerical staff and officers in the field will be able to converse with our

culturally diverse community utilizing this tool.

ACS presented a Department Focal to the Board of Health in October 2000, which highlighted an update of ACS licensing activities. The entire process has been developed to a fine-tuned machine, from the initial reminder notices through the final outcome of the electronic file sent to the collection agency. A Hearings Examiner comes to the shelter about twice a month to hear appeals cases. This framework has instituted accountability and consequences to enforcement of the ordinance, which is necessary to provide a means of rabies prevention surveillance.

Child Health

The Child Health Division provides a variety of preventive health services in homes, child care facilities and weekly clinics. The Division is a multidisciplinary team of nurses, social workers, nursing assistants and administrative support staff.

GOALS

- Increase community awareness of children's preventive health, safety, and development
- Increase number of children receiving routine testing for lead poisoning with appropriate follow-up
- 80% participation in Health Check well screenings (Medicaid-eligible children)
- Early detection of health and developmental problems leading to early intervention and treatment
- Families are supported in parenting young children and in their utilization of community resources through case management and home visiting services

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Child Service Coordination (CSC), a statewide program since 1990, provides home visiting and coordination of services for families with children ranging from birth to five years of age identified through a referral process. Nurses and social workers provide health, safety and developmental follow-up to over 400 families in the county. The program receives approximately 50 referrals per month. Staff is trained in developmental screening, parent-child interaction assessment and the early intervention system. Latino families comprise 7% of the CSC caseload, which necessitates the use of an interpreter. The CSC program is supported by Medicaid billing. Parenting classes were also provided to the general community this year.

The **Health Check Clinic** provides well check-ups for Medicaid-eligible and Health Choice insured children, who re-

ceive a health history, immunizations, laboratory testing, developmental screening, measurements, hearing and vision screening, physical exams, education, counseling and referrals. The clinic provides kindergarten health screening, and Head Start and preschool/child care/sports physicals upon request. All Health Check screenings are shared with the child's physician.

Health Check Coordination, a Smart Start funded service, assists families with Medicaid-eligible children in making doctor and dental appointments, arranging transportation and making referrals for other health and social services. The Health Check Coordinator assists clients in the application process for enrollment or re-enrollment for Health Check or Health Choice child health insurance. The Health Check participation ratio increased from 54.8% (FY 1997/98) to 69% (FY 2000/01). The Health Check Coordinator works with physicians' offices to follow-up on no show appointments, chronic medical conditions and referrals. With her bilingual skills, she also assists many Latino families with accessing community resources.

The **Lead Program** is a coordinated effort of the Child Health, WIC, Laboratory and Environmental Health divisions. During FY 2000/01 there were 1,881 lead tests completed in the Laboratory. Child Health nurses are presently following 60 children with elevated blood lead levels, including providing home visits, education, additional testing, follow-up with doctors, assessment of hazards, developmental testing, school planning support, and referrals. New state guidelines have increased the numbers of children being followed, but the county continues to meet and exceed minimum requirements. Collaboration with local private providers and housing officials has improved through workshops and meetings. Lead histories and monthly statistics are more complete, up-to-date, and accessible, which has increased screenings ordered by other divisions and helped staff respond more quickly to inquiries from both in and out of the Health Department. A new local Lead Program protocol has been implemented, along with facilitating voluntary environmental investigations.

The **Child Care Nursing Program** is funded by Smart Start and a UNC Chapel Hill grant. The Child Care Nurses (Child Care Health Consultants) provide services to all child care facilities including preventive health services, health education, consultation and technical assistance upon request from directors, teachers, parents, Environmental Health staff, and regulatory consultants. The UNC grant-funded nurse performs assessments of a



Pamela Heath, Child Care Nurse, performs a hearing screen on a preschooler.

facility's needs, assists in applying for state money to improve the facility, and participates in research on the effectiveness of the Child Care Health Consultants. This year, a temporary Community Health Assistant performed 500 hearing screens on preschoolers in child care facilities. The nurses are continuing to follow children identified with problems during screenings.

The **NAVIGATOR Program** is a prenatal and early childhood nurse home visitation program. The program began accepting clients in November 1999. The target population for the program is first time moms at or below 100% of the federal poverty level. Funding for the program is through the state Division of Women's and Children's Health, Smart Start, Cape Fear Memorial Foundation, and Medicaid. The program is initiated during preg-

nancy and continues until the baby is two years of age. Nurses provide health assessments, education, life course guidance, and access to community resources through weekly or bimonthly home visits. Home visitors instruct moms in techniques to enhance their parenting skills, which leads to improvement in their child's development. The three nurses in the NAVIGATOR program have small caseloads to provide intense services.

The **Family Assessment Coordinator** is a new position in the NAVIGATOR program. The nurse has developed a universal screening tool for all pregnant women and new moms who deliver in New Hanover Regional Medical Center. The screening tool is being distributed at New Hanover Regional Medical Center and by local obstetric offices. This tool addresses topics ranging from financial needs, information about breastfeeding, domestic violence, and depression. Referrals to existing services are made for identified problems and requested information is given to moms with follow-up made if needed.

Organized in February 2000, the **New Hanover County Asthma Task Force (NHCATF)** strives to improve the quality of life for asthmatics in the community by engaging in activities that encourage the use of the National Institutes of Health Guidelines for Asthma Diagnosis and Management; increase the level of asthma education to families, health care personnel, and the general public; help identify and reduce environmental triggers; and assist in data collection to determine the extent of the problem in the community. Undiagnosed and under managed, asthma results in tremendous loss of productivity, school absenteeism, skyrocketing medical costs, and decreased quality of life. NHCATF has sponsored a variety of community events, most notably a health care providers' luncheon, asthma screenings, *Open Airways* classes for elementary school students, and a local asthma camp for 25 children. Other services have included home visiting to provide asthma education and environmental interventions to families, and coordination services and financial scholarships for seven children attending an asthma camp in Parkton, North Carolina. Although largely dependent on grant funding, NHCATF has also engaged in fundraising this year.

Communicable Disease

The mission of the Communicable Disease Division is to promote health and quality of life by preventing and controlling communicable diseases. Strategies to accomplish this are early identification and treatment, prompt reporting, contact investigations and partner notification, encouragement of healthy behaviors that prevent acquiring or transmitting disease, and providing preventive medication during incubation. Communicable disease control protects citizens by providing immunizations for children and adults to eliminate vaccine-preventable diseases, screening and treatment for early identification of certain illnesses, monitoring case reports, implementing outbreak control measures and

emphasizing prevention of disease transmission.

GOALS

- Minimize vaccine-preventable diseases by providing immunizations to children and adults
- Provide counseling and treatment for Sexually Transmitted Diseases, HIV testing, and use client encounters as opportunities to encourage prevention strategies
- Provide tuberculosis treatment (including preventive medications) to reduce tuberculosis in New Hanover County
- Ensure required reporting of communicable diseases and re-

spond appropriately to reduce transmission and prevent outbreaks

- Serve as community resource for prevention of communicable diseases

Immunizations should begin in infancy and continue as a lifelong practice to protect citizens from diseases which can seriously compromise individual and community health. Some vaccines are required by law (childhood vaccines), while others such as influenza, pneumonia, and tetanus boosters are recommended. Children and adults received 20,724 doses of vaccine during 15,533 visits. New Hanover County Health Department (NHCHD) monitors vaccine compliance for children up to 24 months of age. The Division provided the above in addition to immunizations required for specific employment such as Hepatitis B and rabies vaccines. Havrix protects against Hepatitis A and is recommended for food handlers and others. The *Senior Vaccination Season* campaign reached populations at high risk for complications, with 473 flu vaccines administered in 11 off-site locations. A total of 6,984 influenza and 500 pneumonia vaccines were given. Despite delays and shortages in influenza vaccine supplies, there was a 23% increase from last year.

Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease transmitted through the air that poses a public health threat, especially if active cases are not identified and treated early. All active TB cases in New Hanover County received directly observed treatment, requiring that staff be present when medications were taken. Early identification of TB infection by a positive tuberculin skin test (PPD) is critical to preventing new cases. Frequently, preventive medicine is recommended for individuals exposed to TB. Contact investigations, case follow-ups and home visits assure adequate treatment to prevent community outbreaks. Tuberculin skin tests, clinical evaluations, and tuberculosis medications are available at NHCHD. Of 5,693 PPDs administered, 262 indicated latent infection and 279 individuals were provided preventive therapy. HIV positive and foreign-born individuals receiving TB services are increasing.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) are a threat to individuals, their sexual partners and unborn children. The STD program provides counseling, testing, examination, treatment, and education about STDs including gonorrhea, syphilis, herpes, chlamydia, human papillomavirus (condyloma), and others. Prevention and risk reduction education are components of each clinical visit and condoms are available. There were 2,831 visits made for STD services during the year.

Testing for HIV antibodies provides an opportunity for early identification and referral for medical care before symptoms of HIV/AIDS appear. Medical advancements provide many treatment options which can prolong and improve quality of life. HIV antibody testing encourages individual risk assessment and behavior changes to reduce risk of transmission. There were 2,018 HIV tests done. It is noteworthy that reports of AIDS cases among African Americans indicates they are being diagnosed late in the

infection, rather than in the early stages when it is reported as HIV.

North Carolina requires 61 diseases and conditions to be reported. NHCHD monitors and responds to case reports to prevent further cases. In addition to the reportable illnesses, physicians and the general population are encouraged to be diligent about prompt reporting of unusual conditions which may pose a threat to public health. For the second consecutive year, there was an increase in the number of *Shigella* cases. There were 119 cases reported involving outbreaks at five local child care facilities. There was also an increase from two to six cases of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, a disease transmitted by ticks.

HEALTH EDUCATION AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Reportable Communicable Diseases

AIDS	25	Lyme Disease	5
Campylobacter	10	Rocky Mtn. Spotted Fever	6
Chlamydia	518	Salmonellosis	60
E. coli 0157:H7	1	Shigellosis	119
Gonorrhea	421	Streptococcal Group A Invasive	1
Hepatitis A	1	Syphilis	56
Hepatitis B (acute)	8	Tuberculosis	12
Hepatitis B (chronic carrier)	14	Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococci	6
HIV	34		

Effective communicable disease control requires an alert staff viewing potential outbreaks as opportunities to educate the public about prevention methods. Health education and outreach assure prevention messages and treatment reach the community.

Staff provides individual and group education in clinical and community settings. Two newsletters are written and distributed by the Communicable Disease Division. *EPI Information* is a bimonthly newsletter sent to all medical providers in the county and *Sexually Speaking* is a quarterly newsletter distributed to agencies working with populations at risk for STDs and HIV.

Targeted outreach services provided screenings, immunizations,



TAP peer educator leads discussion at Salute to Teens.

and education at various sites in the community. One of the highlights of the year was the *Salute to Teens* event designed to educate teens on various adolescent issues. Activities included immunization assessment, classes on healthy lifestyle choices, and discussions related to college preparedness. Hepatitis education and prevention was promoted with special events during May, *National Hepatitis Month*.

The Teen AIDS Prevention (TAP) program trains adolescents as peer educators to teach other young people the skills of HIV prevention, healthy decision-making, and how to resist peer pressure. TAP consists of 30 trained peer educators who give regular

presentations to teenagers at the Juvenile Detention Center, Wilmington Treatment Center, recreational centers of local housing developments, and other community settings. Four TAP educators won scholarships to attend the National Ryan White Youth Conference on HIV/AIDS in Denver, Colorado. By conducting small group presentations and one-on-one sessions with their friends, the TAP teens are showing their peers that it's "cool" to be healthy and safe. TAP, funded by the Cape Fear Memorial Foundation, has reached 8,927 adolescents through presentations, outreach events, and one-on-one outreach.

Community Health

The Community Health Division provides family oriented health promotion, disease and injury prevention and disease management services in clinics, homes, schools and other sites throughout the county. Services are provided throughout the lifespan.

GOALS

- Promote health and safety of individuals and families through the provision of preventive, curative and rehabilitative health services
- Enable individuals and families to access needed community resources through identification, referral and coordination with local, state and federal agencies
- Promote a healthy environment through identification, resolution and/or referral of conditions that threaten the health and safety of residents
- Promote public health and the Health Department's image in the community through: collaboration with other agencies; serving on local and state boards, committees and other related organizations; exercising media and public speaking opportunities; and coordination of care with other providers.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Newborn visits provided infant care assessment and information about normal growth and development, injury prevention, and the importance of well-child care and immunizations, poisoning prevention and referral to community resources. Public health nurses identified and coordinated services for health problems of other family members. Newborn visits declined by 69% due to the establishment of an appointment system, necessitated by societal changes and growth in other programs.

Well Baby Clinics provided services throughout the county. The clinics offered physical exams, developmental evaluations, immunizations, laboratory testing, TB screening, nutritional and injury prevention information and referral, and follow-up as needed. Clinic visits decreased 30% overall, with evening clinics being the

most utilized. This reduction in clinic attendance is attributed to increased Health Choice insurance, as families with Health Choice are now taking their children to private providers.

Child In-home Service visits increased 58% and provided health assessment, disease management, access to equipment and supplies, health promotion and injury prevention information and referral and follow-up as needed. Outreach on topics including health and safety was provided in churches, clubs and other community sites.

The **Kindergarten Health Assessment Clinic** provided physical examinations, laboratory testing, immunizations, TB screening, hearing and vision screening, counseling and referrals. The clinic served non-Medicaid patients, following the mandate that indigent have access to this service.

Statistics for the **School Health Program** reflected a 117% growth in the number of students screened during FY 2000/01. School Health services consist of: assessing and monitoring student health problems; physical assessments; development of emergency care plans; coordination of care; education for providers of care; consultation with personnel regarding health issues and the school environment; mass screening; health education for students and faculty; first aid; medication and treatment administration; monitoring delivery of care and medical supplies. Six new public health nurses were employed to accommodate the increased demand for services, enabling NHCHD to increase School Health hours and provide more comprehensive care in elementary, middle, high, and Lakeside schools. The most critical area of School Health, the development of emergency care plans, increased by 69% this year. Health education sessions increased 191%. Mass screenings for vision, scoliosis and lice infestation were completed.

Volunteers, including the American Association of University Women, played a major role in School Health accomplishments this year, assisting with scoliosis and vision screenings and infirmity duties. Special school activities included health displays, *Smoking is Not Your Friend*, Media Review Committee, Senior

Project Board, *Open Airways*, sports physicals, coordination of services with student nurses, and health education sessions for students and staff. A grant from New Hanover Regional Medical Center's CHIP Program enabled the Division to fund additional dental health services. A grant from the Cape Fear Memorial Foundation provided lice combs to needy students and educational materials to all elementary school students. Lens Crafters donated \$64,500 in vision care and glasses.

Orthopedic and Neurology Clinics provided diagnosis and treatment of related diseases, care coordination and healthy lifestyle counseling. Physicians volunteered their services or donated their payment to further program activities. The purpose of these clinics is to serve individuals unable to access services elsewhere. The Rotary Club of Wilmington established the Orthopedic Clinic and continued to support it both in funding and member volunteers. Funding by the Rotary Club increased this year due to cuts in state funding. Overall program activities increased by 22%.

ADULT HEALTH

Adult Health Clinics are located in areas of the county where there are large numbers of elderly individuals. The clinics offered health assessment and monitoring, care coordination, treatment, immunizations, disease management and healthy lifestyle counseling. Clinic attendance increased 7% during the year.

Changes in Medicare coverage, early hospital discharges and increased longevity create the need for taking health care to homebound adults. The **Adult In-home Services Program** provided health assessment, disease and disability management, environmental assessments, immunizations, treatment, care coordination and healthy lifestyle counseling. Administered by program staff, the Ministering Circle



Pat McSwain, PHN II, prepares medication for patients to enable them to manage their chronic diseases at

Chore Program was a valuable resource for homebound patients.

Adult Day Health Monitoring is a state mandated service for adult day health centers. Each center was evaluated on a quarterly basis for provision of health care. Public health nurses provided assistance with compliance issues. No new centers opened this year.

Diabetes Today, a state initiative to raise awareness about diabetes and promote mobilization in dealing with the disease, was funded again this year. The coalition activities consisted of: education of health care providers through sessions with Dr. Joseph Konen; distribution of *Patterns of Care* to providers; blood sugar, blood pressure and foot screenings in the community; and distribution of diabetes prevention and management information to the public.

NHCHD, through an agreement with the Sheriff's Department, is responsible for the health care of jail inmates. **Jail Medical Program** services included primary and preventive health care, dental health care, health education, consultation and training of jail personnel and consultation with the court system and other detention cen-

ters. Staff provided consultation and training to other jail health providers. Volunteer assistance was a valuable asset to program, and on-site staff was able to reduce care accessed outside the jail by 13% during FY 2000/01.

Disaster planning continues to be a year-round activity. The *Shelter Manual* was completed and will eliminate many concerns of the past, reduce confusion and misunderstandings, and expedite set-up and delivery of care. Full power generator hookups will reduce health and safety hazards for evacuees and staff. Requests for teaching and consultation throughout the state have continued. The UNC Office of Public Health Nursing's *Introduction to Public Health Nursing* includes a module on the public health nurse's role in disaster management, which is taught by Division staff.

Division awards this year included the *2000 Child Health Team Award*, *Class Act Award*, recognition by Glaxo Wellcome, national accreditation for the Jail Medical Program and the *Margaret B. Dolan Award*.

Dental Health

GOAL

- To promote, protect, and assure the optimal oral health of the citizens of New Hanover County.

The New Hanover County Dental Program continues to demonstrate the cooperative efforts of the North Carolina Oral Health Section, the New Hanover County Health Department, the Wilmington TriCounty Dental Society, the North Carolina Dental Society, Cape Fear Community College Dental Programs, the New Hanover Community Health Center and many other community groups. The Dental Health Division utilizes numerous strat-



Dental Health Education in the community.

egies to improve the oral health of our citizens which involve: increased use of Dental Sealants; periodic Dental Assessments with Referral; Dental Health Education; Community Water Fluoridation; School Fluoride Mouthrinse; and promotion of community efforts to improve access to dental care.

FY 2000/01 was an exciting and productive period for the Division. Approximately 10,000 children and adults received dental health education from staff. Additionally, over 3,200 children received dental

assessments and over 7,900 children participated in the weekly fluoride mouthrinse program.

During Spring 2001, the Division participated in a regional campaign entitled *Guard Your Smile 2001*, to increase awareness and use of mouthguards as an important part of injury prevention for children and young adults in New Hanover County. Local sponsors and partners were the North Carolina Oral Health Section, the Wilmington TriCounty Dental Society, the YMCA, and Cape Fear Community College Dental Programs. The results of the campaign were quite impressive. Over one thousand adults and children received information concerning orofacial injury prevention during athletic activities. The adults and children learned about the benefits of wearing a mouthguard during participation in athletic events. Additionally, on April 21, sixty young soccer participants were professionally fitted for mouthguards at no charge. In all, *Guard Your Smile 2001* was a tremendous success.

Exciting work occurred this year in the area of dental health education and prevention. During February, the New Hanover County Dental Staff celebrated *National Children's Dental Health Month* with various dental activities conducted throughout the community. Educational information concerning Dental Sealants was sent to all New Hanover County employees. Staff produced an interesting display located in the NHCHD clinic reception area entitled *Sport A Winning Smile*. In addition to the display, Staff answered patients' questions and distributed sealant literature. On numerous dates throughout February, the Dental Staff conducted educational sessions at preschools, daycare centers, and after school enrichment programs on various topics such as nutrition, brushing, flossing, and the benefits of sealants. Celebrating *National Children's Dental Health Month* is another important way to encourage both children and adults to keep a terrific smile.

Other programs and activities conducted by the Division during FY 2000/01 included: *Dental Health for a Lifetime* parenting programs; *Let's Talk Teeth* programs at Head Start, preschools, and daycare centers; *Don't Take a Vacation From Good Dental Health* after school and summer enrichment programs for at-risk children; and *Take a Look at Dentistry* Dental Careers Program for New Hanover County students.

Important work has occurred this year concerning improving access to dental care in the community. There are thousands of children and adults in New Hanover County who lack the resources to receive much needed dental treatment. On January 18, 2001, Dr. Wilson Jewell, Chairman of the NHC Board of Health, and Dr. David McDaniel, NHCHD Dental Health Director, met with the New Hanover Community Health Center Dental Advisory Committee to discuss the critical issue of access to dental care in New Hanover County. Ideas for building additional resources for providing dental care in the community were discussed. Suggestions considered ranged from hiring an additional dentist at the Community Health Center, expanding hours at the Tileston Dental Program, to establishing a Children's Restorative Dental Program at the Health Department. Continued discussions have resulted in the possibility of a volunteer program involving local dentists and the New Hanover Community Health Center Dental Program. Further work is proceeding in this area of access to dental care in New Hanover County.

The *Guard Your Smile 2001* Mouthguard Program and other dental health education, prevention, and access to care programs continue to demonstrate how the New Hanover County Dental Program collaborates with various community groups and organizations to assure optimal oral health for the citizens of our community.

Environmental Health

Many aspects of human well-being are influenced by the environment, and many diseases can be initiated, promoted, sustained, or stimulated by environmental factors. The interactions of people with their environment are critical components of public health. The Environmental Health Division (EHD) protects the public health and environment through the provision



Leigh Jackson, EH Specialist, evaluates a market to assure food safety standards are practiced.

of a diverse group of services in the community, including evaluation of: all types of food operations; body art establishments; child care facilities; foster care homes; institutions including hospitals, nursing homes and private and public schools; lodging facilities; public swimming pools; recreational waters; wastewater systems; and water supplies. The Division assesses air quality, identifies/mitigates environmental hazards including lead and applies control methodology for potential disease vectors such as mosquitoes and ticks. During disaster response and recovery, many services and supports are offered to facilitate the restoration of normalcy in the everyday lives of citizens.

FOOD SAFETY

Achieving a 100% coverage rate of establishments/facilities under inspection by EHD is critical to assuring food safety practices and reducing the risk of foodborne illness in the population. This translates as conducting an evaluation of each restaurant on at least a quarterly basis or four times yearly. A minimum frequency of inspection is established for the various types of establishments/facilities in the North Carolina General Statutes and Administrative Code. Increasing the coverage rate has been an ongoing objective, however, continuous growth in the local food service industry has had a major impact on the Division's capacity to accomplish this performance measure.

Through a joint venture with Cape Fear Community College (CFCC), EHD staff instructed five sessions (164 students) of the National Restaurant Association's *Serving Safe Food Certification Course*. More than 90%, 148 students, obtained the certification credential. Plaques were awarded to Elijah's Restaurant, the Pilot House Restaurant, Holiday Inn Sunspree Resort, Diamond Food Enterprises and the Dockside

Restaurant for having at least five certified employees in their operations. Representatives of these establishments were given special recognition by the Health Director and CFCC Dean of Continuing Education at New Hanover County Board of Health meetings.

PUBLIC SWIMMING POOLS

Like eateries, swimming pools have a strong presence throughout the county. Public swimming pools include virtually every kind of constructed recreational water facility except those found in residential backyards. Program growth in FY 2000/01 led to a record setting issue of 340 permits and

578 inspections.

To meet the same proficiency standard established for pool operators, EHD staff completes Certified Pool Operator training, consisting of formal classroom instruction and an acceptable score on written examination. Staff must also demonstrate application and knowledge in the field to obtain authorization from the North Carolina Department Of Environment and Natural Resources to enforce state laws and rules.

In October 2000, the *New Hanover County Board Of Health Rules Governing Private Pools* was revised to more comprehensively address safety. Prior to study by the Environmental Health Committee, staff conducted extensive research of practices and standards existing in other states. Requirements were expanded for fencing and securing above ground private swimming pools.

VECTOR CONTROL

Sentinel chicken flocks began to test positive for Eastern Equine Encephalitis virus by mid-July and continued into September 2000. Neighboring counties and coastal South Carolina documented record infection rates, but extremely limited morbidity. EHD staff generated the strongest mosquito adulticide effort in program history to minimize the risk of human exposure. An upgraded boat purchased in FY 1999/00 was used extensively for surveillance and application of larvicide on small dredge disposal islands in the Cape Fear River and Intracoastal Waterway, including the successful dewatering of 300 acres of Eagle Island mud. Heavy equipment excavated and maintained perimeter ditches to lessen the impact zone of these potential mosquito-breeding sites.

A \$400 million project to deepen the Wilmington Harbor again made Eagle Island a control focus by March 2001. Increased water depth including routine maintenance along the Cape Fear River and Intracoastal Waterway brought many chal-

lenges. Staff vigilantly monitored and treated 600 acres of the project's spoil deposition with larvicide product.

Enhanced collaboration with City of



Representatives of local restaurants accompanied by Isobel Charlton of CFCC display their awards from the NHC Board of Health for staff participation in food safety education.

Wilmington Code Enforcement officials reduced the number of tire piles serving as mosquito-breeding habitats. Businesses were enlisted to implement handling practices that minimize the potential for collection of stormwater in tires. Transplanting *Gambusia affinis*, a mosquito-eating fish, to low-lying areas still proves to be a desirable and effective biological control method. Newly constructed stormwater retention ponds and changes in the landscape that allow standing water are annually evaluated to verify the presence of *Gambusia*.

WASTEWATER-WATER QUALITY

A hallmark On-Site Wastewater Program in North Carolina, this EHD section continued the trend-setting pace in FY 00/01. Application of cutting edge technologies brought resolution to wastewater treatment issues. Experimental and innovative options address many of the limitations inherent to coastal geography for properly functioning septic systems. Components offering pretreatment of wastewater effluent prior to disposing into the soil is given strong consideration so as to better assure protection of groundwater resources.

Added efficiency and reduction of liability prompted implementation of a new per-

mitting procedure for on-site wastewater systems. Initiated by examining the requirements for developing new subdivisions in New Hanover County, including

state standards, the resulting process is a dramatic change from prior practice. The fee schedule was adjusted to shift focus from the Improvements Permit to the Authorization to Construct Permit. All forms underwent major design and layout changes. Collaboration with the NHC Inspections and Planning Departments were essential to this endeavor.

Throughout the year, a variety of individuals or

groups typically make contact with EHD to secure information about drinking water quality. A strong interest recently has been the availability of geologic data recorded by drillers as they construct drinking water wells. Local rules require submittal of a construction log upon completion of a well. In addition to valuable geo-

logic data, this documents materials and procedures used by the driller to develop a potable source of drinking water, all of which must be evaluated when degradation of an aquifer and loss of a valuable natural resource occurs. Saltwater intrusion has rendered many drinking water wells along the coastal edge of northeastern NHC unusable. As a long-term remedy, the county is planning construction of a well field to provide a community source of drinking water along Highway 17, north of the Ogden area. Construction methodology and geologic data relative to existing drinking water wells was sought as Dickson Engineering began to work with the NHC Engineering Department on a plan for this water system. Staff researched and supplied this information. Another contact was by a researcher at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute in Massachusetts, who was specifically interested in geologic data. Administrative support staff with the assistance of volunteers has subsequently compiled files of available well logs to be better prepared to respond to similar requests in the future.

Laboratory

The Laboratory provides technical support and testing for Health Department programs and serves as a support service to community health programs and private health care providers. The Laboratory has established written policies and procedures for a comprehensive Quality Assurance Program to monitor and evaluate the quality of the total testing process. The Program evaluates the effectiveness of policies and procedures, identifies and corrects problems, evaluates the accuracy, reliability and prompt reporting of test results, and assures competency of testing personnel. Proficiency testing, quality assurance programs, testing quality control and competent personnel enables the Division to continue to provide the best of services.

GOAL

- Provide quality assured medical and environmental laboratory services to public and private health care providers responsible for the protection of the health of the citizens of New Hanover County and surrounding areas.

LICENSING

The Laboratory is governed by the Federal Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) that place all medical laboratories under the control and licensing of the federal government. The North Carolina Department of Facility Services is the inspecting agency for the Health Depart-

ment Laboratory and issues the CLIA Laboratory Certificate of Compliance allowing the laboratory to perform testing. During the bi-annual inspection, the Laboratory received a report of no deficiencies. The Water Bacteriology Program is licensed by the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health to perform bacteriological testing of potable water samples and is subject to yearly on-site inspections. This year, as in the past 26 years, the Laboratory received no deficiencies on the inspection.

SERVICES

The Laboratory performed 119,585 procedures during FY 2000/01, including: 22,597 for the STD Program; 46,385 for Women's Preventive Health; 35,014 for the WIC Program; 1,443 for the Jail Clinic; 5,470 for Child Health Programs; 1,182 for the Neurology Clinic; 4,337 for the Tuberculosis (TB) Program and 491 for the Water Bacteriology Program. Testing included but was not limited to gonorrhea and wet smears; urine, throat and gonorrhea cultures; urinalysis and microscopic tests on urine; pregnancy tests; hematology profiles; glucose, cholesterol and liver panels in clinical chemistry; tests for the HIV virus, qualitative and quantitative tests for syphilis; lead testing on children; stool cultures to control shigella outbreak; and water coliform tests.

During FY 2000/01, the Laboratory staff volunteered for the NHCHD co-sponsored *Asthma Camp*, worked at the NHCHD booth at *HealthFest at RiverFest*, provided phlebotomy services for CURE AIDS at an *HIV/Syphilis Fair*, performed hemoglobin and lead testing at Well Baby Clinics, and provided the Laboratory portion of two *Lunch and Learn* programs. Once again, NHCHD monitored an on-going outbreak of shigella in local daycare facilities and the Laboratory processed the more than 600 stool cultures that were sent to the State Laboratory.

In October the Health Department Management Team and Board of Health participated in a Strategic Planning Retreat. The outcome of the meeting was a list of ten priorities that the Laboratory, along

with the other Divisions, has been working to fulfill. In August OSHA inspected the Health Department as part of a voluntary inspection of county facilities. The Laboratory and the Health Department had no deficiencies. In September the North Carolina Public Health Association *Annual Educational Conference* was held in Wilmington. The Laboratory staff helped plan the meeting and attended some of the educational sessions. During April the Laboratory celebrated *Public Health Month* by attending numerous *Lunch and Learn* programs to expand their knowledge and participated in the annual *Employee Appreciation Luncheon*. The Laboratory also celebrated *National Medical Laboratory Week* with shirts, pens, magnets, pads and posters displaying the theme of *Laboratory Professionals: Solving Today's Medical Mysteries*.



The Laboratory performed over 6,100 Hematology profiles in FY00/01.

Nutrition

The Nutrition Division provides a variety of services for the residents of New Hanover County. The programs within this division are the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and the General Nutrition program.

WIC PROGRAM

WIC services are provided to low-income prenatal, postpartum, and breastfeeding women; infants and children up to 5 years of age. WIC participants receive individual nutrition education and vouchers for nutritious foods to use at area grocery and drug stores. WIC nutritionists stay up-to-date in areas of nutrition important for women of childbearing age, infants and children. All WIC mothers are counseled on the importance of adequate folic acid intake during childbearing years to decrease the chance of an infant born with neural tube defects. Pregnant women are informed of the danger of listeriosis to the unborn baby, and are counseled on avoiding certain foods that may be contaminated with listeria.

The WIC Program encourages breastfeeding as the feeding of choice for infants. Breastfeeding equipment and supplies are available for breastfeeding mothers and their babies. During FY 00/01, more than 50 mother-baby pairs borrowed one of the program's electric breastpumps. Mothers with infants in the neonatal intensive care unit and mothers who want to continue to breastfeed their babies after returning to work benefit greatly from this service.

On-site printing of food vouchers began in November 2000. This change has allowed the staff to work more efficiently to serve the more than 3000 participants enrolled in the WIC Program.

Most participants are now issued vouchers to use for three months and only need to come to the WIC office four times a year for continuous WIC service.

The WIC Program collaborates with other programs within the health department and community. WIC staff refer children for lead testing and immunizations as needs



Nutrition Ambassadors from Blount Elementary School

are identified. Children without a medical home are referred to Health Check and Health Choice. Pregnant women are encouraged to seek prenatal care early in their pregnancies. WIC clients are referred to the Child Health Navigator Program, Child Service Coordination, and Maternity Care Coordination. Pregnant women interested in breastfeeding or new breastfeeding mothers are referred to the North Carolina Cooperative Extension In-Home Support Breastfeeding Program.

WIC clients without adequate food supplies are referred to Food Stamps and area food banks.

GENERAL NUTRITION

Two nutritionists in the General Nutrition Program provided individual nutrition counseling and presented nutrition programs to many groups throughout the community, including:

churches, senior centers, school classes from Pre-K through college, professional organizations, local businesses, child care facilities, and social service agencies. During FY 00/01 individual contacts included 317 sessions at Coastal OB/GYN prenatal clinics, 142 sessions at the NICU follow-up clinic, 38 sessions at community well baby clinics, and 185 sessions at the Health Department. Referrals for individual nutrition counseling come from other Health Department programs, area physicians, and

self-referrals. New Hanover County citizens call and ask questions about many different nutrition topics. Health department nutritionists must stay current on the latest nutrition research findings and nutrition recommendations for a wide variety of nutritional problems.

The Nutrition Division recognized 42 fourth graders at Blount Elementary School as "Nutrition Ambassadors". *Five A Day* is a national health campaign to encourage consumption of at least five fruits and vegetables each day for good nutrition. These students performed a *Five A Day* rap and dance program, complete with creative costumes, to the other classes at the school. They were also chosen to present this program at the *Best Foot Forward* program, which showcases innovative performances from all county schools.

The Nutrition Division is committed to serving the citizens of New Hanover County by promoting good nutrition throughout the life cycle. Good nutrition is the foundation for good health and a healthy community.

Women's Health Care

The Women's Health Care (WHC) Division is comprised of Women's Preventive Health, Maternal Health and Health Promotion.

GOALS

- Prevent unwanted pregnancies
- Improve pregnancy outcomes
- Reduce infant mortality
- Improve the health status of disadvantaged women and women of diverse cultures
- Provide health education for women in the community
- Provide breast and cervical cancer screening and referrals

WOMEN'S PREVENTIVE HEALTH

New Hanover County Health Department (NHCHD) provides women's preventive

health (WPH) services which include health screenings, comprehensive physicals, Pap smears, breast exams, mammograms, and health education. WPH services are the only source of preventive care for many women, and help prevent unwanted pregnancies, prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, provide valuable prevention education, reduce health care costs and save lives. For every \$1 spent on WPH services, an average of \$4.40 is saved in health, welfare and nutritional expenditures. WPH provided 4,155 clinic services to women during FY 00/01.

A priority goal of the WHC division is improved birth outcomes through early identification of pregnancy with timely referrals for prenatal care. Among the teen population in New Hanover County in 1999, there were 361 pregnancies in the 10-19 age range. Teenage mothers are more likely

to bear subsequent children more rapidly and to have more unwanted and out-of-wedlock births. Unplanned children are at greater risk for abuse and neglect, which increases with family size. Women who have unintended pregnancies are more likely to live in poverty. Teenagers are more likely to deliver low birth weight infants due to poor nutrition and inadequate prenatal care. Low birth weight infants are at greater risk for physical and developmental disabilities throughout childhood. The cost for this long-term care is insurmountable and is often funded by taxpayers. The Division provided 446 pregnancy tests among the teen population during the year and provided counseling and referrals for 352 positive pregnancy tests among teens and adults.

The WHC Division supports a nurse outposted to the NHC Department of Social

Services to reach young women seeking public assistance. The goal is to explain and offer contraceptive services and reduce the number of out-of-wedlock births in the county. This nurse, through outreach efforts, increased by 81 the number of unserved or underserved women who have received WPH services. Outreach efforts have also brought in donations of incentive items to encourage women to keep their appointments and follow-up with instructions. Over 2,000 phone contacts were made to remind patients of scheduled appointments.

Since 1960, breast cancer has claimed more American lives than World War II, Vietnam, and the Gulf Wars combined, and is the second leading cause of cancer deaths among women in North Carolina. Nationwide North Carolina ranks ninth for cervical deaths, fourth highest for African American women, and twelfth for white women. These cancers are preventable and curable. Routine breast exams and Pap smears lead to early diagnosis and treatment. Every woman is at risk, but some women are less likely to obtain screening services. NHCHD provides breast and cervical cancer screening free of charge to qualified women through the Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP). WPH conducted 132 mammograms (44 abnormal) and 132 Pap smears (16 abnormal). The Division also emphasizes outreach to Latino women in New Hanover County.

Male sterilization is the birth control method of choice for some couples. The Health Department provides education, counseling, and scheduling for vasectomies through arrangements with a local urological group and the Regional Vasectomy Program in Greensboro, NC. This service is provided free or at a reduced rate based on income. Services were provided to 19 men during FY 00/01.

MATERNAL HEALTH



Maternal Outreach Worker visits with mom and new baby.

Early and consistent use of prenatal care provides early identification of high-risk concerns, improves birth outcomes and decreases low-weight births and infant mortality. North Carolina's infant mortality rate continues to be among the top 10 in the nation. Prevention of one high-risk pregnancy can save over \$250,000. Adolescents and unmarried women have a greater likelihood of

poor birth outcomes. The Maternity Care Coordination program assists potentially eligible clients in applying for Medicaid, develops a strong referral network, and increases community awareness of expanded Medicaid coverage and benefits for pregnant women. The program determines clients' strengths and needs including psychosocial, nutritional, medical, educational, and financial fac-

tors. The goals are aimed at reducing infant mortality and improving the health status of women and their newborns. A new service, the Maternal Outreach Worker program, was added to provide intensive home visiting for pregnant women who are at risk for poor pregnancy outcomes. Recruitment of at-risk women through extensive community networking ensures early and continuous prenatal care. Reinforcement through health education assists participants in adopting healthful behaviors and lifestyles. The Maternal Health Team generated 6,050 contacts and provided counseling and referrals for 947 new prenatal patients.

Psychosocial assessment, clinical observation and counseling for at-risk pregnant women is essential in cases of domestic violence, emotional crisis, family dysfunction, impending incarceration, substance use/abuse, negative feelings about a current or previous pregnancy, and emotional stress associated with HIV/AIDS diagnosis during pregnancy. A licensed clinical social worker addresses these issues among this population and provides intensive counseling and referrals.

Mothers who deliver newborns in hospitals today receive little recuperation time or instruction prior to discharge. Issues such as breast-feeding and newborn care often need reinforcement to prevent problems. Postpartum home visiting provides in-home physical assessments, education and referrals for mother/infant pairs within 72 hours following discharge from the hospital, an opportune time for early problem identification and intervention. Last year Maternal Health provided nursing visits to 308 mother/infant pairs.

Women's Health Care provides quality options for women seeking contraceptive care, routine women's health care services, prenatal care and cancer screening. Services are provided free of charge or on a sliding fee scale based on income. Medicaid and private insurance are accepted. Protection of confidentiality is a priority. The Division has the opportunity and responsibility to provide factual, accurate and current information on topics such as sexuality, birth control, abstinence, sexually transmitted diseases and parental involvement, which are crucial to the health and maturity of young women and could save lives. Preventive education is provided on osteoporosis, folic acid's role in the prevention of neural tube defects in newborns, pre-conceptional health education, breast and cervical cancer screening and prevention, childhood obesity and depression. Staff invites opportunities to share information about services with parents, civic groups, churches, and other interested organizations.

HEALTH PROMOTION

Health Promotion strives to improve the community's health by providing educational programs to prevent disease and injury and to enhance the community's ability to solve health problems through informed decision making. The section provides programming in the areas of injury prevention and tobacco prevention and control, and promotes state initiatives to reduce chronic disease. Health Promotion provides health education consultation to all Divisions of NHCHD and coordinates events such as public awareness campaigns, outreach activities, community health

assessments, and corresponding media coverage. A highlight of FY 00/01 was the compilation of health status and service provision data for the *Board of Health Strategic Planning Retreat*.

The Project ASSIST Tobacco Prevention Coalition works to reduce death and disability related to tobacco use. Local coalition initiatives focus on youth prevention, youth and adult cessation, and clean indoor air. The coalition re-implemented the *Commit to Quit* cessation contest during FY 00/01. While registration numbers were not as high as in the past, the overall success rate of 27% was comparable to other campaigns. Another successful endeavor was the third annual *Tobacco Awareness Week*, which included presentations to approximately 1,400 students and the signing of tobacco-free pledges by 1,650 middle and high school students. The week was highlighted by the Mayor's attendance at the *Ugly Face Contest* at Bradley Creek

Elementary School, in which students made faces reflecting their interpretations of tobacco use and its effects.

The Injury Prevention program focuses on major risks for injury and coordinates the local Safe Communities/SAFE KIDS Coalition, partnering with local and state agencies, law enforcement and schools to encourage safe environments and behavior change. A primary focus was the Child Passenger Safety Program, which provided opportunities to increase and improve the use of child safety seats. Through the Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP), approximately 320 seats were distributed to low-income families and to agencies that serve them. Three Child Passenger Safety Training classes were offered, resulting in the certification of 30 people by the NC Department of Insurance. Ten child safety seat checks were held, with approximately 250 seats examined for proper installation, positioning and recall

status, revealing that 95% of seats examined were incorrectly used.

Parts of the Basics of Bicycling Program were implemented during FY00/01, with schools and agencies conducting bicycle rodeos and presentations that reached over 700 children in schools, churches, daycare and public housing. Another GHSP grant provided 200 bicycle helmets, which were distributed at these events. The coalition advocated for passage of the *Child Bicycle Safety Act* and to defeat the relaxation of motorcycle helmet laws in the state. Driver distraction became an issue during FY00/01, and at the request of the Board of Health a resolution was drafted to support action to reduce car crashes due to driver distraction or inattention. The coalition continues to address this issue, and developed a billboard to display current crash rates in NHC and a simple safe driving message.

Financial Management

The New Hanover County Health Department Amended Budget (Adopted Budget plus any amendments during the fiscal year) for FY 00/01 was \$10,763,762. The Health Department's budget is composed of 39 individual programs. Division Directors submit a line item budget for each program within the division. Budget requests are reviewed by the Health Director, Assistant Health Director and the Business Officer. Budget hearings are conducted and a Budget Workbook including all programs with line item narrative justifications is prepared and submitted to the Board of Health for approval.

Figure 1 illustrates how the expenditure budget is divided among Salaries/ Fringes, Operating and Capital Outlay items.

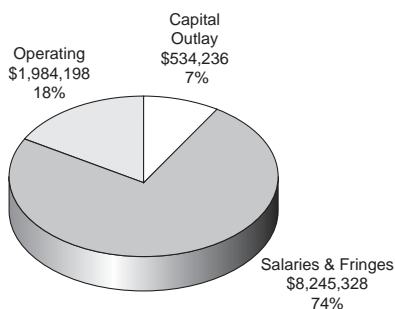
Figure 2 illustrates the breakdown of the Health Department's total revenue (\$4,700,506) through Health Fees, Medicaid, Environmental Health Fees, Animal Control Fees, and Other (including miscellaneous grants and school contributions). It also shows Federal and State Grants

through the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (\$1,337,583 which is included in the above total revenue figure) and County Appropriations (\$6,063,256).

The Health Department's Business Officer

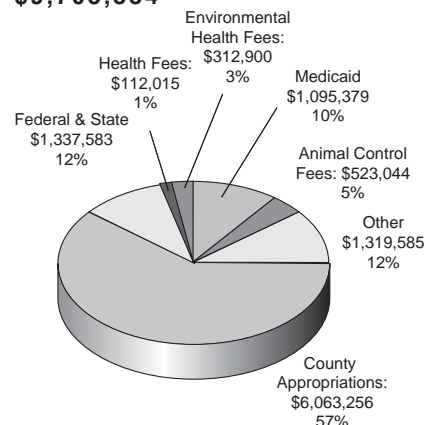
is responsible for preparing expenditure reports to ensure billing and receipt of the Health Department's state grant funds. The Health Department complies with New Hanover County Financial Policies and Procedures that includes an annual audit.

Fig. 1
Total Expenditures:
\$9,703,334



(Note: Of the \$1,095,379 Medicaid Revenue, \$153,479 is Medicaid Cost Settlement Funds.)

Fig. 2
Total Revenue:
\$9,703,334





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