



COUNTY'S HEALTH PRIORITIES SET FOR NEXT FOUR YEARS

HICKORY, NC – The health priorities of nutrition, physical activity and chronic disease will be at the forefront of efforts to improve the health of Catawba County for the next four years.

Priorities for 2016 to 2019 were set by the Catawba County Board of Health based on results of the 2015 Community Health Assessment (CHA), which notes cancer, heart disease, chronic lower respiratory disease, stroke, and unintentional injuries as the leading causes of death in Catawba County.

The CHA also shows physical inactivity and poor diet, along with tobacco use, are significant preventable causes of the county's four leading chronic diseases: cancer, heart disease/stroke, type 2 diabetes, and lung disease. These diseases are directly responsible for more than half of the county's deaths each year.

"Selecting priorities helps focus local efforts toward improving the most prevalent health concerns in the county," said Doug Urland, health director, Catawba County Public Health. "Nutrition, physical activity and chronic disease were chosen because they are inclusive and cross-cutting, which means gains in these areas can have a positive impact on multiple health issues in our community."

County health priorities are determined based on community input and local health data. The selection process involved reviewing CHA results and taking into account how many people are affected by each health issue in the community, the seriousness of disability or premature death from those issues, and how reasonably changes can be made to improve them.

Action plans outlining strategies to address the county's health priorities will be developed in the next several months. These will include efforts already under way by several community organizations, as well as new strategies facilitated by Catawba County Health Partners. Health Partners is a 501(c)3 nonprofit operated by Public Health that fosters collaborative community efforts to address health priorities.

The full CHA report, which is published every four years and features a comprehensive overview of the county's health status and health priorities, is available online at www.catawbacountyhealthpartners.org.

Catawba County Public Health promotes and protects the health of all Catawba County residents through preventive services, innovative partnerships, and community health improvement initiatives. For more information, please call (828) 695-5800 or visit www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth.

"Leading the Way to a Healthier Community"