ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Sentinel Communities Surveillance project, conducted by RTI International in collaboration with the RAND Corporation, is sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The project, which began in 2016, will monitor activities related to how a Culture of Health is developing in each of 30 diverse communities around the country for at least five years. This Community portrait follows from the initial Snapshot report for Granville County, N.C. and provides insights into drivers of a Culture of Health in the community. The report is not intended to comprehensively describe every action underway in Granville County, but rather focuses on key insights, opportunities, and challenges as a community advances on its journey toward health and well-being for all residents.

The information in this report was obtained using several data collection methods, including key informant telephone interviews, an environmental scan of online and published community-specific materials, review of existing population surveillance and monitoring data, and collection of local data or resources provided by community contacts or interview respondents. Interviews were conducted with individuals representing organizations working in a variety of sectors (for example, health, business, education, human services, youth development, and environment) in the community. Sector mapping was used to systematically identify respondents in a range of sectors that would have insights about community health and well-being to ensure organizational diversity across the community. We also asked original interviewees to recommend individuals to speak with in an effort to supplement important organizations or perspectives not included in the original sample.

A total of 11 unique respondents were interviewed during spring and summer 2018. All interviews (lasting 30–75 minutes each) were conducted using semi-structured interview guides tailored to the unique context and activities taking place in each community and to the role of the respondent in the community. Interviewers used probes to ensure that they obtained input on specific items of interest (for example, facilitators and barriers to improved population health, well-being, and equity) and open-ended questions to ensure that they fully addressed and captured participants’ responses and perceptions about influences on health and well-being in their communities. Individuals who participated in a key informant interview are not identified by name or organization to protect confidentiality, but they are identified as a “respondent.” Information collected through environmental scans includes program and organizational information available on internet websites, publicly available documents, and media reports. Population surveillance and monitoring data were compiled from publicly available datasets, including the American Community Survey; Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System; and other similar federal, state, and local data sources.

We will conduct ongoing surveillance and monitoring activities in these communities through 2020 and report updated information on their progress, challenges, and lessons learned in improving health and well-being for all residents.

Data collection and monitoring thus far has revealed common themes among otherwise distinct communities. The next phase of this project will be cross-community reports that will examine common themes across subgroups of the 30 communities (for example, rural communities, communities experiencing large demographic shifts, and communities leveraging local data for decision-making). These reports will also be posted on rwjf.org/cultureofhealth.
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Introduction

In our Snapshot report of Granville County, N.C., we described a racially diverse, rural community that offers a number of employment opportunities, yet struggles with high rates of chronic disease and significant health and economic disparities. We described key activities that aim to address these challenges—including programs for youth development; education initiatives; improvements to the built environment; access to mental health services; and the use of data by the local health department to identify and address the community’s pressing health needs.

In this report, we examine Granville County’s efforts to improve population health and build a healthier and more equitable community using the Culture of Health Action Framework to interpret and organize key findings. The Framework prioritizes four broad Action Areas: 1) Making Health a Shared Value; 2) Fostering Cross-Sector Collaboration to Improve Well-Being; 3) Creating Healthier, More Equitable Communities; and 4) Strengthening Integration of Health Services and Systems, within which activities and investments can advance population health, well-being, and equity in diverse community contexts. Using the Framework, we describe how stakeholders in Granville County are focused on reducing chronic disease and improving livability by promoting a healthy lifestyle and making changes to the built environment to encourage walking and outdoor...
recreation. Leaders across sectors are invested in child well-being and improving conditions that promote economic and population growth in this transforming rural community.

**CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS**

Granville County, N.C., is located north-northeast of the Research Triangle area of North Carolina (Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill), and is home to roughly 60,000 residents. The northern half of the county, bordering Virginia, is more rural, less developed, and less connected to nearby urban areas. Oxford is the county seat and is located in the center of Granville County. The southern half of the county, including municipalities such as Creedmoor, Butner, and Stem, has become a “bedroom community” for many who work in the Triangle, which is home to many of the state’s largest universities, health systems, and research organizations. As a result, Granville County is described as “two counties.” One respondent described, “On the southern end, we have urbanization issues. On the northern end, we have extreme rural issues. So Granville County has become a little microcosm of the state of North Carolina at the moment.”

Public life in Granville County is largely influenced by diffuse transportation networks and strong and prevalent faith communities. Granville County is bisected by a major highway (Interstate 85) with state roads running the length and width of the county. However, many commuters still rely on two-lane roads, many of which need repair. Transportation can be difficult for residents, especially low-income residents, who currently don’t have access to a public transportation system. Oxford and Creedmoor, the largest towns, have walkable areas but most of the county remains rural and hard to navigate on foot or bicycle. Churches offer a sense of community to residents of Granville County, with many respondents interviewed for this report indicating that faith is important, and churches are “trusted places” in the county.

The county is majority white (58% of the population) but is fairly diverse with an established black population (32%), and a growing Latino population (8%). Oxford in particular is 55 percent black, many of whom are descendants of black tobacco farmers. Despite this diversity, a respondent working in media noted, “There is not much public dialogue in Granville about [race]. In some pockets of the community, perhaps there are still some deep-seated biases.”

Granville County’s economy was founded in bright leaf tobacco farming after the Civil War, employing a community of farmers and professionals in Oxford. Oxford remains an economic hub due to state-level policy in the 1950s and 1960s focused on attracting new business and stimulating existing high-skill, high-technology industries. New business incentives in the 1990s also encouraged companies to locate in the region. Today, there are 900 companies within the county such as Revlon, as well as micro industries. Some high-tech companies are moving into the region and creating jobs that require advanced training. Additionally, the North Carolina Commerce Department certified Granville County’s 527-acre Triangle North Granville Industrial Park as eligible to be part of the Triangle North Network. This provides tax breaks and resources to develop and market industrial business parks like these. Granville Health System is also a major employer and operates an independent hospital in Oxford. The local health system receives high quality ratings and currently is in no danger of closing, unlike many hospitals in rural communities.

As a result of this economic activity, some of Granville County’s economic indicators (15.2% of residents below the poverty line) compare favorably to those of neighboring Vance County (24.2%) and Warren County (26.4%). Unemployment in the county (6.9%) is more in line with the more affluent and urbanized Durham (6.3%) and Wake (5.7%). Counties. Though unemployment is low, many jobs are low-paying. Most residents who work in industries with competitive wages travel out of county for work, and most of these residents reside in the southern half of the county.

Despite some positive economic indicators, the future of Granville County is threatened by low population growth. The county saw only a 3.5 percent increase in population overall between 2010–2017. Several respondents stated that it is difficult to entice young residents to return to Granville County once they leave to attend colleges and universities. It’s also challenging to recruit teachers and other professionals who did not grow up in the region. The public education system in the county is also experiencing rapid changes prompted by the state legislature allowing an increase in charter schools in 2011. Since then, many students in the county have moved out of the public school district. A respondent from the education sector estimated that “roughly” 1,000 students are in charters and 7,700 are still in district schools.

**“THERE IS NOT MUCH PUBLIC DIALOGUE IN GRANVILLE ABOUT [RACE]. IN SOME POCKETS OF THE COMMUNITY, PERHAPS THERE ARE STILL SOME DEEP-SEATED BIASES.”**

**MEDIA SECTOR RESPONDENT**

The county for work, and most of these residents reside in the southern half of the county.
Vance Public Health (GVPH) Department cites data indicating that the poverty rates for black residents (23.8%) and Hispanic residents (33.4%) are much higher than that of white residents (10.1%), but links between poverty and race were not explored in the report or explicitly described in interviews.7

“There’s still some deniers on the Granville side of our district that, ‘Oh well, that problem exists over in Vance, that’s not here in Granville.’ And they’re wrong about that.”

PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR RESPONDENT

The Snapshot report for Granville County describes the burden of chronic diseases, such as type 2 diabetes and obesity borne by county residents relative to others in North Carolina—in particular residents of color and with low incomes.7 As such, nutrition and physical activity have remained top priorities for GVPH. The county is also focused on increasing educational attainment and addressing substance use/mental health. Troubling indicators include suicide and overdose rates, particularly opioid-related.7 However, respondents describe that the opioid problem is perhaps less severe in Granville than in Durham or Vance County, a sentiment that may suppress efforts to address the issue locally, as described by a respondent working in public health: “There’s still some deniers on the Granville side of our district that, ‘Oh well, that problem exists over in Vance, that’s not here in Granville.’ And they’re wrong about that.” Some in the community are also concerned because there is anecdotal evidence that users come to Granville to purchase drugs at cheaper prices.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY TO PROMOTE HEALTH, EQUITY, AND WELL-BEING

Leadership for health through the health department and local health system, which are also well-connected to other sectors, provides a strong foundation for improving health in Granville County. These systems are also supported by partners working in education and economic development that implement initiatives separately and as part of coalitions. Built environment assets, undergoing improvements over the past decade, provide opportunity for physical activity and improve connectivity across the county.

Strong public health leadership collaborates across sectors. The Granville Vance Public Health Department, located in Oxford, has served Vance and Granville Counties for more than 40 years. GVPH provides primary care for individuals and children, as well as maternity care, and it acts as an important partner and leader of numerous wellness initiatives. GVPH is promoting community health through its leadership of the Working on Wellness (WOW) Coalition, which started with a $450,000 Duke Endowment grant in 2016. It seeks solutions to chronic diseases, such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease.8 The WOW Coalition is multisectoral, with representatives from the school district, Granville Health System, and Granville County Cooperative Extension playing major roles. Public health leadership extends outside of the walls of GVPH. The current mayor of Oxford, Jackie Sergent, was a GVPH employee for 27 years, most recently as the Health Promotion Coordinator and Health Education Supervisor. Mayor Sergent maintains a strong relationship with the organization and respondents describe that she has helped bring health and wellness into political conversations and decision-making.

Local health system serves community and participates in collaboratives. Granville Health System (GHS) is an independent provider of primary and specialty care in Granville County.10 Most facilities and providers are based at the GHS main campus in Oxford, but there are also two facilities in Creedmoor and one in Butner. The Granville County Board of Commissioners operates a community hospital (Granville Medical Center) at the main campus, with 62 beds and 650 employees, making it the county’s fifth largest employer.10 GHS is known for delivering quality care10 and also leads community health education programs, often in partnership with GVPH and local nonprofits. Programs include the Meal and More health and nutrition program, as well as Kids Living Healthy in partnership with Granville County Public Schools (GCPS). GHS is also a WOW participant and is considered critical to promoting well-being in the county and an important element of the local economy.

Public, philanthropic, and nonprofit entities provide education and youth supports. Granville County’s K–12 school system is comprised of 19 schools and operates under a school choice model, which allows families to choose between a set of “choice schools” located throughout the county, regardless of where they live.19 Choice schools include elementary, middle, and high schools, each with their own areas of focus, such as STEM, art, leadership, early college, life sciences, healthy lifestyles, and more. Independent, but supportive of GCPS is the Granville Education Foundation (GEF).23 A GEF has been in operation since 1986 and provides funding for grants, enrichment programs, initiatives, and other resources to support Granville County schools.

Youth supports extend outside of the education sector. The Juvenile Crime Prevention Council was established by the county in 2016 to connect multisector stakeholders in order to reduce criminal activity among Granville County youth.18 Community-based organizations are not very prevalent in a community as small as Granville County. However, the Granville Boys and Girls Club established a chapter in 2012 and offers support for youth that focuses on academic success, physical health and well-being, and citizenship by providing after-school and summer programming. Taken together, these organizations across public, philanthropic, and nonprofit sectors provide critical supports to children in and out of school to meet a wide variety of needs.

Stakeholders focus on economic and community development. A number of entities have been established to attract, sustain, and promote local businesses and workers to/in the county. The Granville County Economic Development Department collects and disseminates data on Granville County’s population and industry and runs incentive programs
Built environment assets improve walkability and activity opportunities. Granville County has a number of newly developed or improved built environment assets that contribute to its ability to promote healthy lifestyles and well-being in the community. A partnership and built environment assets improve walkability and activity opportunities. Granville Health System, the Cooperative Extension, and its neighbors in the region.

Granville County Center of the North Carolina State University Cooperative Extension—the local center of a statewide organization that supports agriculture; food and nutrition education; and youth programming mainly through 4-H clubs. The Cooperative Extension partners with many local organizations and participates in health-focused campaigns, notably WOW. Additionally, it partners with the faith-based group, Area Congregations in Ministry (ACIM)—on food distribution and placing local farmers’ produce in county stores. It also helps secure grants to run programs that support youth through community service.

Other community development efforts are led by the Granville County Center of the North Carolina State University Cooperative Extension—the local center of a statewide organization that supports agriculture; food and nutrition education; and youth programming mainly through 4-H clubs. The Cooperative Extension partners with many local organizations and participates in health-focused campaigns, notably WOW. Additionally, it partners with the faith-based group, Area Congregations in Ministry (ACIM)—on food distribution and placing local farmers’ produce in county stores. It also helps secure grants to run programs that support youth through community service.

Developing a Culture of Health

Coalitions in Granville County target the drivers of chronic disease with programming delivered across settings and age groups. These efforts are facilitated by changes to the built environment that encourage walkability and create a sense of place in this rural community. Stakeholders focus heavily on childhood well-being as a vehicle for tackling the impacts of economic disadvantage. Strong regional collaborations aim to promote the long-term growth of Granville County and its neighbors in the region.

**Stakeholders Collaborate for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity**

Due to persistent health problems (diabetes, obesity, heart disease and other preventable diseases) in Granville County, stakeholders are expanding their collaborations. They are hoping to create greater community awareness around the links between poor nutrition, a lack of physical activity, and disease. Leading these efforts is the WOW coalition, which seeks to improve the health of all Granville County children through promotion of healthy eating habits, nutritional education, and physical activity. Granville Health System, the Cooperative Extension, and other groups are also helping to make good food available to residents of all income levels.

A full-time GVPH employee with MPH training coordinates and supervises WOW, which currently includes 38 individuals representing 19 organizations. WOW’s primary responsibility is implementing the nationally recognized Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) program, which teaches students about healthy eating choices and pursues more physical activity opportunities in school. This is done in close collaboration with Granville County Public Schools. One elementary school has created a magnet program out of CATCH implementation: Stovall-Shaw Elementary School of Healthy Living and Learning is specifically operated in partnership with GVPH and GHS and uses the CATCH curriculum to focus on nutrition and physical activity.

“*There are a number of families that distrust particularly, social service programs ... but I think the WOW Coalition has been able to come in and say, ‘Okay. We’re here to help ... Your participation is voluntary, but we think this will do you some good.’*

*Health Care Sector Respondent*

CATCH implementation has expanded from three elementary schools to all elementary and middle schools in the county. The first three schools were considered a “proof of concept,” according to one school principal. To date, CATCH implementation has resulted in the collection of BMI data on 2,400 students. As CATCH expands to schools county-wide, respondents across sectors indicated that data collection and evaluation will be a focus.

Beyond CATCH implementation, WOW has had other positive impacts, such as increasing the visibility of social services available to county residents and boosting trust in those systems. According to one health care respondent, “There are a number of families that distrust particularly, social service programs ... But I think the WOW Coalition has been able to come in and say, ‘Okay. We’re here to help ... Your participation is voluntary, but we think this will do you some good.’” WOW has opened the door to other organizations interested in collaborating with the school district. GHS engages with schools through their Kids Living Healthy program, which brings providers into schools to provide seminars and engage students in an art competition themed around healthy living. Other efforts by GHS in the community...
Granville Greenways partnership sees a system of walking and biking trails as a community wellness enhancement, as well as a support for economic development. Though not yet a county-wide endeavor (most greenways have been created in larger municipalities), the coalition has been cited as a success story in taking a holistic approach to community health promotion.

In the beginning, they’re not too happy about [required nutrition education], but consistent evaluations have said that [once] people get through it, they have learned about food budgeting, ... shopping, ... reading labels, and they’re better able to stretch their food dollars.

ACADEMIC SECTOR RESPONDENT

While improving health and overall well-being for residents provided initial impetus, Granville Greenways is an important example of the county’s ability to demonstrate how promoting health and wellness can dovetail with economic development and overall community improvement. The Granville Greenways master plan cites data on average visitor spending on tourism, food, and local supplies as evidence of the all-around community benefit of greenways. A government respondent noted, “Companies that locate here want places for their folks to be able to walk at lunchtime or be able to recreate with their children or ride in a safe place.” Greenway development is particularly important as a relatively low-cost means of enhancing quality of local communities and built infrastructure, especially since most towns (notably Oxford) require extensive capital improvements, particularly for road repair, and lack funding for improvements.

Companies that locate here want places for their folks to be able to walk at lunchtime or be able to recreate with their children or ride in a safe place.

GOVERNMENT SECTOR RESPONDENT

While Granville Greenways is the most often cited example of built environment improvements, another new community amenity, Granville Athletic Park, was constructed in 2017 at the Jonesland Environmental Preserve in Oxford. The park includes ball fields, playgrounds, a spray park, an amphitheater, picnic areas, and paved walking trails. It was funded by state and federal grants and local bond financing, which is being repaid with tax revenues. Oxford and Butner also have their own smaller athletic facilities.

Butner is also the site of strategic planning around enhanced community cohesion and walkability. It is a municipality that is home to a federal correction facility (Federal Correctional Complex, Butner), but currently lacks a business district. Recently, the Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Governments created a new vision for economic development in the town: The Butner Gateway. The Gateway aims to “reclaim a sense of small-town life”—through the development of pedestrian-oriented,
mixed-use neighborhoods, rental properties, greenways, retail, and office space—within a 400-acre tract between the railroad line and two interchanges along I-85.

**“WE WIN WITH AIR QUALITY. ... WE GIVE KIDS EXERCISE, AND ... PEOPLE WHO ... MIGHT NOT OTHERWISE GET OUT AND EXERCISE A PLACE TO GO ... SO THERE’S A WIN ALL THE WAY AROUND.”**

*NONPROFIT SECTOR RESPONDENT*

Granville County has succeeded in using seed money from external investments to create lasting community amenities conferring a wide set of benefits. Says a respondent from the nonprofit sector, “We win with air quality. We win with reduction of fossil fuel. We give kids exercise, and we give people who might be at risk for disease that might not otherwise get out and exercise a place to go ... So there’s a win all the way around.”

**PROMOTING EQUITY THROUGH EDUCATION AND CHILD WELL-BEING**

Though improving economic conditions in the county have been raising standards of living, some stakeholders note that disparities in income may contribute to inequity and growing disparities in health outcomes, particularly among children from low-income families. A combination of education and services, provided within the school district, the health department, and affiliated nonprofits, are geared to help Granville County youth overcome trauma linked to poverty and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Currently, poverty is identified as the primary driver of trauma and inequity among county residents. “We look at poverty and health equity in everything we do and try to ensure that we have good access to care and are working on health equity at every turn,” notes a health care respondent. Racial equity is an issue that some stakeholders acknowledge, but respondents indicate that conversations around race are very challenging to initiate locally.

**“WE LOOK AT POVERTY AND HEALTH EQUITY IN EVERYTHING WE DO AND TRY TO ENSURE THAT WE HAVE GOOD ACCESS TO CARE AND ARE WORKING ON HEALTH EQUITY AT EVERY TURN.”**

*HEALTH CARE SECTOR RESPONDENT*

Examples of initiatives to promote equity within Granville County Public Schools include providing all students with some sort of technology (tablets, laptops); implementing a uniform curriculum (“common core and essential standards”) across schools to accommodate a transient student population; funneling tutoring and support money to schools with lower standardized test scores (e.g., through summer reading camps); and creating a grants coordinator and equity director position in 2018. This person focuses on equity practice across students and employees.

The county’s two charter schools are open to students of all backgrounds, but the schools have drained the school district budget and reduced the amount of funding available to the majority of the county’s students. Granville Education Foundation and other local organizations, such as the Oxford Orphanage, have offered support, as funding for charter schools has drawn money away from public schools. According to an education sector respondent, County Commissioners recently increased taxes to compensate for the redistribution of education funding in the county. Roughly $1 million extra was raised, though money was shared between charter and GCPS. Respondents are also concerned about charter schools siphoning off high-performing students without transportation or school nutrition needs, which charters are not required to address.

Several organizations in Granville County support students with special needs or disciplinary records. The Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) distributes county funding to address the risk factors for juvenile court-involved youth, supporting programs that provide mentoring, family counseling, trauma services, and more, including the Cooperative Extension’s Teen Court Program. Additionally, GCPS’ alternative school supports extensive collaborations, including Reins of Change, which helps students cope and regulate behavior through training and care of horses. Among other supportive services, the Boys and Girls Club offers hot meals to children, which has helped the organization to make inroads into communities whose residents were formerly unaware of or resistant to their services. A nonprofit respondent described that they were “becoming that safe place for them, and a place where they knew they were getting a meal ... That was our number one selling point for parents, as far as health and wellness.”

**“(GVPH IS) BECOMING MORE “FOCUSED ON ... STRATEGIC WORK AROUND ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND BECOMING A MORE TRAUMA-INFORMED HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND ... COMMUNITY.”**

*PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR RESPONDENT*

Beyond meeting immediate needs, stakeholders in Granville County also work to address the impact of chronic economic hardship on development over the life course by taking a trauma-informed approach. GVPH in particular works on trauma and addressing disparities through their work. For example, the Positive Parenting Program (PPP) collaborative effort with the school district works to engage parents, community members, and others “who are always influencing children” in order to build their skills to develop strong relationships with children. As a public health respondent described, in the context of PPP and beyond, they are becoming more “focused on and are doing some strategic work around adverse childhood experiences and becoming a more trauma-informed health department and ... community.” Additionally, two Teach for America employees at GCPS are examining the relationships between high ACE scores, trauma, and student performance to identify points of intervention.

Most of these initiatives will need time and data to determine their reach and effectiveness. However, several respondents across sectors
noted that a growing understanding of trauma and its relationship to economic and social disparities will help them better serve children in the county. “I think we’re just beginning to understand how to address trauma,” the health care respondent continues. “Instead of asking a person why they do what they do, you can ask a person, ‘What in your life makes you react that way? And how can I be helpful? What can we do together to make a better outcome happen here?’”

While most stakeholders in Granville County—notably GVPH and GCPS, take an income-based view of inequity in the county—select activities are ongoing to address disparities in health and well-being rooted in race and ethnicity. For example, GVPH translates community health assessments into Spanish, and is preparing greater engagement with the growing Latino community for the 2019 Community Health Assessment, something that was a challenge for previous assessments. The Minority Diabetes Prevention Program was designed to tackle the concern of black and Latino county residents experiencing higher rates of diabetes mortality than white residents. Granville County appears committed to addressing equity, starting with children, through targeted intervention within multiple sectors.

**REGIONAL COLLABORATIONS FOR HEALTH CARE, SUBSTANCE USE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Granville County is pursuing a number of strategies to secure its future as a vibrant and thriving community. In addition to addressing long-standing concerns with poor built infrastructure and economic inequity—the county is collaborating with its neighbors, large and small, to promote growth. Granville County’s proximity to health systems located in the Triangle region has provided GHS with opportunities to expand on its local services through partnerships and leveraging of telehealth, while remaining independently run. Additionally, the county government has pursued regional economic initiatives, with a particular focus on workforce development and job training for youth.

> "... AT THE VIRGINIA LINE, VERY RURAL, ... MENTAL HEALTH IS OUT OF THE QUESTION IN THOSE AREAS" ... WHILE THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE COUNTY IS ... “15 MINUTES FROM THE WORLD CENTER OF HEALTH.”

**EDUCATION SECTOR RESPONDENT**

While GHS provides a valuable service to many in the county, its facilities are largely limited to the bigger towns in the area, and even still, it does not provide many specialized services in-house. The problem of access to care, especially related to mental health, is more acute north of the county, as described by a respondent in the education sector: “at the Virginia line, very rural, ... mental health is out of the question in those areas” while the southern part of the county is “15 minutes from the world center of health.” The proximity to Durham and Chapel Hill has been a boon to GHS, which partners with the University of North Carolina (UNC) Health Alliance to provide tertiary services in network, a unique model for an independent health system in the region. GHS has also strategically partnered with other health systems. Starting in 2017, the Duke University School of Medicine’s Family Medicine Residency Program began rotating family physicians through GHS, which helped to meet the need for primary care providers. 24/7 teleneurology services are provided through a partnership with Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center and WakeMed. Beyond health care delivery, UNC offers public health expertise and capacity, such as a GVPH partnership with the Institute for Public Health and UNC at Chapel Hill to improve systematic resident data collection for the 2018-2019 Community Health Assessment.

The county is also collaborating regionally to curb opioid use and enhance mental health treatment capacity. High rates of opioid use in Henderson in neighboring Vance County and Durham to the south, coupled with the I-85 corridor running through Granville County have fueled regional efforts to address the issue. Multipronged approaches include working with a statewide opioid task force, reducing or completely ending opioid prescribing in area medical facilities, and working with law enforcement to curb drug transfer.

The Stepping Up initiative aims to reduce the number of people with mental illness who are subject to incarceration by reducing incarceration rates and jail stays, improving connection to treatment, and reducing recidivism. Stepping Up is implemented in 44 North Carolina counties. Granville County is one of five counties (Granville, Franklin, Halifax, Vance, and Warren) that are part of the interlocal agreement to implement Stepping Up as a regional network. Each county operates a partnership between county government and community leaders, such as public health departments. GVPH facilitates the regional network and is taking the lead on data collection, which government respondents note are critical to inform policy decisions, such as encouraging providers to serve the area and creating additional mental health beds.

Economic development stakeholders are also partnering regionally for job training as Granville County seeks to maintain its manufacturing workforce and grow its supply of high-skilled employees. The Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Government’s Workforce Solutions and Vance-Granville Community College create training programs geared toward providing skills needed by Granville companies. KTCOG not only convenes government officials from throughout the region, but also funnels federal and state grant funds into regional workforce development activities. The collaboration is able to obtain participation from key industries in Granville in developing curricula to train future, as well as current, employees through the community college system. GCPS also has programs that deliver in-demand skills to high school students and offer community college credit for courses completed during high school years.
SUMMARY OF GRANVILLE COUNTY’S EFFORTS TO BUILD A CULTURE OF HEALTH

Based on the Culture of Health Action Framework used to guide Sentinel Community data collection and monitoring in Granville County, evidence shows that the county is making progress toward aligning diverse stakeholders to address some of their most pressing health and well-being challenges. As the visibility of GVPH efforts in schools increases; public health leaders across sectors exert influence; and economic development—interested stakeholders begin to recognize opportunities for healthy living as critical to the future growth of the county—Granville County is showing positive signs of 

Emerging Community Themes

Granville County has a history of stubborn problems related to chronic disease and economic and racial inequity. However, motivated leaders from the government, health, education sectors, and beyond are working together to tackle the persistent challenges to health and well-being in the county. Attention is being paid to health promotion in schools; the built environment is improving; educational supports are targeted at the neediest schools; the criminal justice system is a target for intervention; and workforce development is being pursued by the school district in concert with local government and industry. All of this work is being done in collaboration across sectors and with regional partners, including linking local efforts with support from institutions located in the Triangle region south of the county. In particular, stakeholders recognize the value of evaluation for many of these efforts, including the CATCH curriculum and the Stepping Up initiative.

To deliver measurable improvements to community health, county stakeholders will need to continue to surmount challenges of chronic disease burden, being a rural community with limited resources, and a history of strained race relations that are not being directly addressed. Though a focus on economic inequity pervades local efforts, the direct consequences of racial segregation and a history of discrimination in this community may persist unless racial equity is addressed head-on. Stakeholders also strive to build on recent economic growth to encourage population growth.
What’s Next

Evaluations of current programs, such as CATCH and Stepping Up, will provide valuable information to assess the impact of many of Granville County’s most notable efforts to improve health and well-being, especially the burden of chronic disease in the county. Additionally, Granville Greenways is poised to continue its expansion throughout the county, though questions remain about its reach in to the county’s most rural communities. The impact of this and other investments in the built environment—in addition to investments and activity in economic development—on population growth will be valuable to track in this rural community that sees itself at a crossroads. Coupled with spillover effects from a growing, high-capacity region to the south, Granville County seems to be on the rise as a community known for its livability and quality of life. However, racial inequity, an issue that respondents note is rarely discussed in public forums in the county, may prove to be an impediment to health and well-being for all in Granville County. Finally, stakeholders disagree about the true impact of the opioid epidemic in Granville County relative to its neighbors and other pressing health issues, though efforts are underway to address it.
References


