



Submitted by the
Montgomery County
Health Department

STATE OF THE COUNTY HEALTH REPORT- MONTGOMERY COUNTY

December 2006

Demographics of Montgomery

Montgomery County is centrally located in the state and is approximately an hour's drive from the metropolitan areas of Greensboro, Charlotte, and Winston-Salem. A largely rural county, it is the 45th largest in the state but with a population estimate of 27,322 in 2005. Seven percent of the county population is made up of children under 5 years old, and twenty-five percent is comprised of persons less than 18 years old. Seniors 65 and older constitute only 13.6% of the county's population. The dominant ethnicity in the county is white (76.8%), followed by black (20.2%) and Hispanic (13.3%). Of particular interest is the fact that the Hispanic population is continually rising in the county. Indeed, data from the North Carolina State Demographics Office indicates that Montgomery County has the second highest percentage of Hispanic children ages 0-17 in the state. (Duplin-25.6%, Montgomery 22.9%,



Lee-20.9%, Sampson 19.8%, and Chatham-18.0%).

According to the US Census, the median household income for the county is \$31,428 which is considerably lower than the median household income for the state as a whole which is \$39,438.

The percentage of children in Montgomery County at poverty level is 22.5. Sixty-three percent of school meals in Montgomery County are subsidized. Additionally twenty percent of children and their families receive food stamps and more than eleven percent qualify for Health Choice. Just over 43 percent of children in Montgomery County qualify for Medicaid assistance. Additionally, twenty-two percent of children aged 0-5 in Montgomery County are in regulated child care and forty-one percent of those children are receiving subsidies for their care.

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Mortality in Montgomery

The top 5 leading causes of death in Montgomery are ranked from highest to lowest as follows: (1) Heart Disease, (2), Cancer, (3) Diabetes Mellitus, (4) Chronic Lower Respiratory and (5) Cerebrovascular Disease. The age-adjusted death rate for Montgomery County for the years 2001-2005 of 951.7 is higher than the state rate of 895.5 for the same time period. As seen in the table to the right, death rates for the county are higher for many of the leading causes of death including. Although the county rate is lower than the state rate for cancer as a whole, the rate is higher in the county than the state for colon/rectum/anal cancer (22.2-Mtg. and 18.6-state).

Leading Cause of Death Rates Per 100,000 (2001-2005)	North Carolina	Mont. County
Total Heart Disease	226.8	251.1
Cerebrovascular Disease	64.7	64.2
Cancer-All Sites	197.7	185.6
HIV	5.2	2.5
Septicemia	14.5	11.6
Diabetes Mellitus	27.6	40.8
Pneumonia/Influenza	23.3	33.7
Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	46.9	55.0
Chronic Liver Disease, Cirrhosis	8.8	10.0
Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome, & Nephrosis	17.9	18.5
Unintentional Motor Vehicle Injuries	19.3	28.0
All Other Unintentional	26.0	30.2
Suicide	11.6	11.3
Homicide	7.2	10.9
Alzheimer's	27.1	25.5
Total Deaths	895.5	951.7

Infant and Child Death



Results from the Safety Days survey indicate the following:

- 88% of fourth graders have a bicycle, but only 40% of bike owners own a helmet, and only half of those that own helmets wear them regularly
- 48% of 4th grade students in Montgomery County ride all terrain vehicles, but less than half of those ATV riders wear helmets

Eight children below the age of 18 died in Montgomery County during the year 2005. Six of those deaths occurred to children under the age of 1, one child was between the age of 1 and four, and one was between the ages of 15 and 17. Four deaths were due to perinatal conditions, one to birth defects, one to SIDS, one to a motor vehicle accident and one to suicide.

The Montgomery County Safe Kids Coalition continues to meet regularly to address the issues of child health and safety. The coalition distributes car seats to children residing in Montgomery County, meeting program requirements for a minimal co-pay. Unfortunately, the distribution program has been stalled during the year due to the certification expirations of many of the child passenger safety technicians. Currently, there are only two certified techs in the county, and

only one tech who is participating in the program. Additionally, the supply of available car seats to be distributed has also been a major challenge for the program.

Safe Kids continues to distribute bicycle helmets to children in the effort to protect them from accidents. With support from Safe Kids, many police vehicles in the county regularly carry helmets to distribute to children who aren't wearing them.

In September 2006, "Safety Days" was presented to all fourth grade students in the county. The program was a collaborative effort between the Safe Kids coalition and the Cooperative Extension Service. Educators with the program visited fourth grade classrooms to discuss relevant safety issues including bicycle/ATV safety, candle safety, food safety and various other topics.

Morbidity in Montgomery

CANCER INCIDENCE

	NC	Mont
Colon/Rectum	48.2	41.7
Lung/ Bronchus	69.3	65.4
Female Breast	147.3	140.1
Prostate	152.0	130.3
Total	444.0	403.9

Age-adjusted cancer incidence rates are lower in Montgomery County (403.9) than the state rates (444.0) for the 1999-2003 time period. As shown in the table below, this is true for all cancer sites.

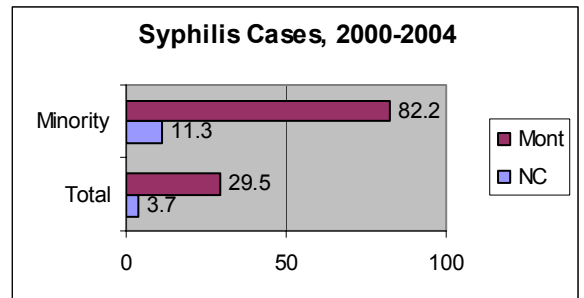
COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

During 2000-2004 there were a total of 9 AIDS cases reported in Montgomery County, with a case rate of 6.6— lower than the state rate of 11.4 for the same time period.

One hundred and forty-six cases of gonorrhea were reported in the county during the 2000-2004 time period, with a total case rate of 107.5. This number is considerably lower than the state rate of 193.2. However, it is important to note that of the 146 cases, 109 cases were

minority cases. The overall minority rate for gonorrhea is only 331.8, which is significantly lower than the overall minority state rate for gonorrhea of 635.3. However, Montgomery's minority rate is much higher than the total gonorrhea rate.

Data confirms that primary and secondary syphilis continues to be a health issue in Montgomery County, especially for minorities.



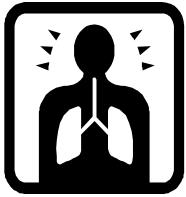
Teen Pregnancy



While there were fewer teen pregnancies in Montgomery County in 2005 than in 2004, (62 and 67, respectively), the pregnancy rate remains higher for the county than the state rate. Teen pregnancy has long been an issue in the county, and remains so. Statistics show that Montgomery currently ranks 28th in the state for total teen pregnancies, and 46th for repeat teen pregnancies.

In order to address this issue, a committee has been organized to develop a strategic plan to reduce this number. The committee consists of representatives from the Health Department, Montgomery County Schools, and the Cooperative Extension Office. Representatives from other groups are strongly encouraged to participate. The committee is planning to apply for grant funds to implement programs in the school setting to reduce the number of pregnancies.

Tuberculosis



Tuberculosis is a highly contagious airborne communicable disease. Montgomery County experienced 2

cases of TB in 2004, with a case rate of 7.2, with the state of North Carolina experiencing a case rate of 4.5 for the same time period. In 2005, Montgomery County experienced a tremendous increase in the number of active tuberculosis cases— eleven reportable cases, and

a case rate of 40.3. The case rate for North Carolina was only 3.8.

As of November 7, 2006, Montgomery County has 12 active cases. This means that, provided the state case rate remains at approximately 4.0, and no new cases are reported, Montgomery County will have an active case rate of 10-11 times higher than the state rate.

The Montgomery County Health Department keeps an average of 50-60 patients on medications for TB infection. This is the infection that leads to active TB disease.

These patients do not require Directly Observed Therapy, and self-medicate for 9 months. One of the goals of the Montgomery County Health Department is to provide education to citizens about the transmission of the disease to help prevent its spread. Information booths have been set up at health fairs, community outreach programs, and in employee break-rooms at manufacturing facilities. Written and verbal education is provided to citizens. Health Department staff continues to work closely with local primary care providers.

Tobacco

Results from the 2005 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System indicate that smoking and tobacco usage continues to be prevalent in Montgomery County. Results were reported for a region including the following counties: Anson, Hoke, Montgomery, Richmond, Scotland, and Stanly. Just under 50% of respondents reported having smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their entire life, and 42.7% smoke every day. However, more than 62% of respondents stopped smoking for one day or more because they were trying to quit.

There are several resources for smokers who are trying to quit in Montgomery County. The North

Carolina Tobacco Use Quitline (1-800-QUIT-NOW) is available toll-free to all North Carolinians, both youth and adults, and is staffed by trained tobacco cessation specialists to help users quit. Smoking cessation classes are also available at the Montgomery County Health Department as well as through the FirstQuit program offered at FirstHealth. FirstQuit helps individuals quit all forms of tobacco (pipes, cigars, spit tobacco and cigarettes). Upon program entrance, participants are assessed for their readiness to make a behavior change. Participants are seen on a one-to-one basis by a

health educator trained in tobacco cessation. Most individuals have 3-4 visits with some of the visits being phone calls to check on progress. In the past year, of the 622 total participants enrolled in the program, 9% were from Montgomery County. Almost all used some sort of medication to help them quit (gum, patch, lozenge, inhaler, bupropion).



First Quit, FirstHealth's quit tobacco program serving Montgomery and surrounding counties, has a 30% quit rate.

Overcoming Obesity



For many in Montgomery County, the number on the scales keeps climbing higher.

“Participating in Active for Life was a life-changing experience.”
-Christina Turbeville, participant

Adults need to be physically active at least five days per week for thirty to forty-five minutes .

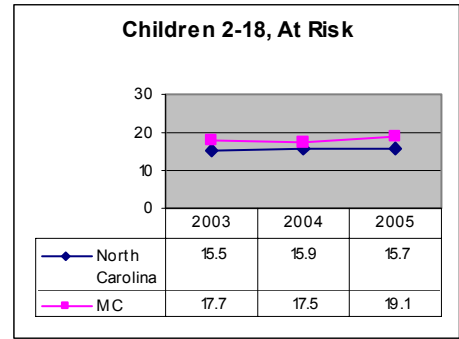
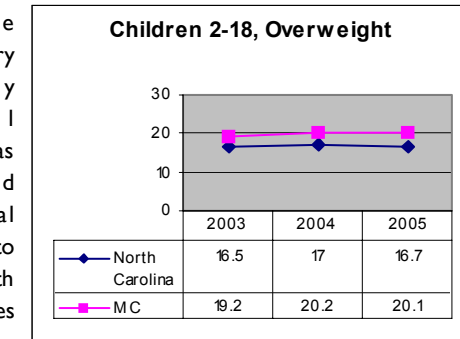


Montgomery County has not escaped the overweight and obesity epidemic facing North Carolinians and people all across the United States. Nor is the problem confined only to adults. Rather, Montgomery County is seeing an alarming trend in overweight and obesity in children, especially for children who are not currently classified as being overweight, but are at-risk for becoming so. As can be seen in the tables below, data from the North Carolina– Nutrition and Physical Activity Surveillance System (NC-NPASS), the percentage of children who are overweight or at-risk for becoming overweight is higher in Montgomery County than in North Carolina as a whole.

The Montgomery County School System has reassessed its meal program to comply with the changes mandated by

DPI. Students are no longer offered lemonade or iced tea in the middle or high schools. Juices are now at least 50% to 100% fruit juice and more bottled water (plain and flavored) has been added. All of the milk served is 1% fat or less, and all snacks on the a la carte line are 200 calories or less. Although the school system is still participating in the Winner’s Circle Program, it is often difficult to reconcile with the guidelines set by DPI concerning the calorie content necessary for school children. Discussions are taking place at the state level to remedy this discrepancy. Montgomery County was awarded, for the third consecutive year, a USDA Fruit and Vegetable grant at Candor Elementary School to provide numerous fruits and vegetables for the students. This grant is in addition to the standard amount of fruits and vegetables the cafeteria typically gets from USDA. Fruits and vegetables are used for teaching tools, snacks throughout the day, cooking demonstrations and tasting parties, in order to introduce as much variety as possible into the students’ diets.

Data released from the 2005 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System indicate that 66.3% of adults in the region including Montgomery County are either overweight or obese—ranking this region 9th highest in the state. Additionally, only 18% of respondents report consuming five or more servings of fruit or vegetables per day—ranking the region 6th lowest in the state for consumption of fruits and vegetables. Less than 50% of those surveyed report meeting the daily physical activity recommendation. (The recommendation states that a person should engage in moderate physical activity for 30 or more minutes per day, five or more days per week OR engage in vigorous physical activity for 20 or more minutes per day, three or more days per week).



In the past year, almost 50 people have enrolled in FirstHealth’s Active for Life classes in Montgomery County. Active for Life is a 12-week behavior change program encouraging adults 50 and older to become more physically active. The goal of the class is to encourage participants to be physically active on five, if not all, days of the week for 30 minutes at moderate intensity. If a participant achieves this goal, they are in the active phase of behavior change. Seventy-one percent of participants in the Active for Life program end the program in the active phase. The program was started through a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

(continued on next page)

(OVERCOMING OBESITY—Continued from page 4)

Seniors also have the opportunity to participate in a variety of exercise activities at the Troy/Montgomery Senior Center. The center regularly features exercise classes at the Troy Center and the Mt. Gilead center, as well as in Biscoe. Six-week long yoga classes are offered three times per year at the Senior Center, and Line Dancing is offered weekly. Walking is encouraged on a daily basis through the use of treadmills and the walking trail that surrounds the facility. Seniors can also take advantage of the semi-recumbent exercise bike, shuffleboard, ping-pong, ladder golf and the washer game, which are available daily.

In response to the marked increase in the obesity rates in Montgomery County, a new committee, Montgomery



Healthier Lifestyles Committee Members

Healthier Lifestyles, has been formed to help address the problem. The committee held a brainstorming session to assess the county's strengths and weaknesses as far as opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating are concerned. The committee plans to make information more readily available to the public, and will continue to plan and implement strategies that will hopefully move county citizens toward healthier eating and exercise habits. Since the committee organized in June 2006, members have participated in an awareness campaign through media and informational booths at local events.

*"The need for intervention is evident. A single program will not solve the obesity problem in our county. However, we believe that consistent messages being delivered through a variety of settings, programs and methods will positively impact the lives of the children and adults in Montgomery County that we all care about and work with."
-Montgomery Healthier Lifestyles*



Attacking Asthma

The Montgomery County Health Department received an EPA Tools for Schools grant from the NC Division of Public Health. These monies provided for the implementation of the Children's Environmental Health grant, which targeted homes, daycares and schools and helped to reduce asthma triggers in these settings. An Asthma Team consisting of a daycare representative, two members from the

school community, and two health department members worked together to provide trainings and educational materials to the community. The team's goal was to increase the knowledge of those coming into contact with asthmatic children in order to help them identify and develop intervention strategies to reduce indoor asthma triggers. As part of the requirements, five schools, ten daycares, and ten homes were assessed.

Public Health Preparedness

Due to the threat of biological, chemical, nuclear, and natural events, public health departments across the country have been classified as first responders. MCHD is preparing for this role by becoming NIMS (National Incident Management System) certified. Currently, all staff at the health department are ICS trained for 100, 200, 700, and 800. A Strategic National Stockpile committee has been formed, consisting of representatives from the health department, hospital, emergency management, business and industry, community agencies and schools. The committee has developed a standard operating guide for the handling of the Strategic National Stockpile. Eight-ball exercises have been held and some members of the committee and health department have been

GIS/GPS trained. The need to develop a local emergency planning committee has been identified. Along with the members of the SNS committee, representatives on the LEPC should include law enforcement, town officials, faith-based organizations, DSS, Mental Health, health care providers, home health care agencies, fire departments, and many others. A major struggle in both the SNS and LEPC continues to be gaining the buy-in and support of key decision makers in the county and community.



Planning for incidents protects all citizens of Montgomery

New Initiatives in Montgomery

2020 Vision- “Working together, first in quality, first in health”

Under the leadership of FirstHealth of the Carolinas, a “2020 Vision” committee has been established. The committee has adopted the following vivid description: Working together, we will improve the quality of human life. We pledge our leadership, talent and resources to meet the health needs in our communities for people of all ages through primary and secondary care, prevention, education, early detection, and intervention; we are uniting to reduce physical and mental disease and suffering. We will care for all people who need care and treat everyone individually. We will focus on patients and their families considering effectiveness, safety, efficiency, and timeliness and do all of these things with compassion and respect.” Nine categories included in the 2020 vision are:

- (1) Childhood Prevention and Primary Care
- (2) Economic, Social, and Educational Status
- (3) Adult Prevention and Primary Care
- (4) Mother and Child Health
- (5) Safety
- (6) Community Assets
- (7) Chronic Disease
- (8) Behavioral Health
- (9) Communicable Disease

A group consisting of representatives from FirstHealth of the Carolinas, Montgomery Community College, Department of Juvenile Justice, Montgomery County Health Department, Montgomery County Schools, and many businesses, agencies, and faith-based organizations has formed in Montgomery County to evaluate the 9 categories above. Indicators of health appear under each category. The group has been tasked with identifying the top 3 priority health areas on which to focus. Although not formally adopted, a general consensus of the group indicated the need to concentrate on the following: (1) decreasing child and adult obesity, and specifically targeting the percent of leisure time in which they engage in physical activity, (2) decreasing the unemployment rate, and (3) increasing the percent of the population earning a high school diploma or higher.

Communities in Schools

Communities in Schools (CIS) is a process (non-profit) that connects community resources with students and their families at the school site to ensure that youth stay in school, learn needed skills, and are prepared to enter the world of work or post-secondary education upon graduation. The high-school drop-out rate in Montgomery County (2004-2005) is 4.64% as compared to the NC drop-out rate of 4.74%. Communities in Schools brings the “Five Basics” into the school: (1) A Personal One-on-One Relationship with a Caring Adult,, (2) A Safe Place to Learn and Grow, (3) A Marketable Skill to Use Upon Graduation, (4) A Chance to Give Back to Peers and Community, and (5) A Healthy Start and a Healthy Future. CIS in Montgomery County was an initiative of the Educational Division of the 21st Century Committee. Currently, a Board of Directors has been established. The present CIS sites in Montgomery County are East Montgomery High School and Troy Elementary School. To date, seven mentors/volunteers have been trained. The committee is currently raising funds to hire an Executive Director. People interested in getting involved can become a lunch buddy, become a mentor, or make a tax-deductible, in-kind, or cash donation.

“Communities in Schools is a promising opportunity for the children in Montgomery County.”

*-Dr. Donna C. Peters,
Montgomery County Schools Superintendent*



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