



Partnering for Public Health

EPI Teams Training

Thank you to those of you who were able to attend the NENCPPH Epi Teams Training in May 2023. Sixty-seven people participated, representing eight local health departments from the region. Huge thanks to Amy Bellflower Thomas for doing an awesome job as lead facilitator. Thanks also to the other facilitators and planners: Bill Cleve, Carol Lynn Rose, Kelsey Belk, Sheila Davies, Wes Gray, and Julie Tunney. Below are some photographs from the day.



Inside this issue:

Board Corner: Reflection and Gratitude, Turn the Page	2-4
Farewell Bruce Robistow	3
Health Directors Panel	4
Tobacco Free Signage	5
Get Moving Challenge Coming	5
Harmful Algal Blooms Education	6
Mental Health & Addi- tion Counselors Roundtable	7
Northampton Communi- ty Health Events	8
Beaufort Community in Action and More	9-10
Public Health Champions Conference	10
Hyde Celebrates Senior Health and Fitness Day	11
Martin-Tyrrell- Washington Happenings	12-13
Halifax County Garden	14
Cooking with Fresh Herbs	15
Cheesy Zucchini Bites	16
Calendar of Events	17
What is the NENCPPH?	17

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NENCPPH Board Corner

Reflection and Gratitude, Turn the Page, By Bruce Robistow

Submitted by Bruce Robistow

August 3, 2023 marks 90 days until my retirement on November 1, 2023. What a long strange trip it's been.

Nothing in my 53-year career was ever planned or anticipated. I never really knew what I wanted to be when I grew up, and I still don't. Family challenges in my early life required that I start working young. I secured my first full time job on my 11th birthday, as a meat cutter apprentice, and have not been without at least one full time job since.

I did aspire to work in healthcare but college was not an option then. My girlfriend (now my wife) and I started an LPN vocational program in high school allowing us to sit the LPN test upon graduation. Plans changed however with the news that we had a family coming. I graduated high school, got married, and went to bootcamp all in one week. I wish I could say I joined due to a strong patriotic conviction

I share all of this, not to bore you, but to share my exceptional experience in the twilight of my career.

but the truth is that I needed health insurance. I was 17, she was 16. Kathy needed to stay home and finish her senior year, in a family way (that is how we said it back then).

I joined the Navy and became a Navy Corpsman, thinking that I would still work in hospitals. Not knowing at the time that the Marine Corps is a Department of the Navy, my first job was serving as a combat medic with the Marines. I wore their uniform for three years before returning to regular Navy where I worked in a hospital as a respiratory therapist and O.R. Tech, prior to going to sea onboard Navy ships. I experienced so much in my 8-year service, as well as becoming a driven, hardworking patriot.

The Vietnam War era GI Bill allowed me to go to college and become a Respiratory Therapist. I was great at this job and thought I would plateau. I did not.

Next, I started my own Respiratory Home Care company that flourished for 10 years, until I sold it. Then we ended up in Roanoke Rapids, started as a second shift Respiratory therapist, gained my undergrad and then graduate degree and moved up to vice president. None of which was ever a plan. After 18 years at the hospital I stopped, only to be called upon to consider becoming the Halifax County Health Director.

I share all of this, not to bore you, but to share my exceptional experience in the twilight of my career.

I left my executive position at the hospital as I was thoroughly disappointed in the direction that healthcare had taken. My frustration level was high, self esteem low, and this always happy guy became grumpy. All of these traits pointed out by my sweet wife 2-3 times per day. So, I decided it was time for a change but once again who knew what my next step would be. Out of the blue, someone reached out to me after giving my notice at the hospital and asked me if I would be interested in being the County Health Director. I thought, why not, nothing in my life was ever planned, so why start now.

I jumped in with both feet, making a dramatic shift in my career, at the young age of 60. *(continued page 3)*



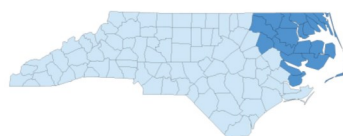
Farewell to Bruce Robistow, NENCPPH Board Member

The Northeastern North Carolina Partnership for Public Health (NENCPPH) says farewell to Bruce Robistow, Health Director for Halifax County Health Department and NENCPPH Board member. Bruce's enthusiasm, care, humor, and contributions to the Partnership will be missed. Bruce served as a Board member from 2018 to present and as Chair of the Board of Directors from January 2020 – December 2021. All the best, Bruce, from your friends in NENC Public Health; you will be missed. We look forward to working with the new Health Director for Halifax County after you retire.

Plans for Bruce after retirement include traveling around the country with his wife Kathy via Harley Davidson, or convertible Beetle. Bruce said, "We refer to them as hippie road trips (no interstates, no plans, and no chain restaurants). We have seen so much already but there is so much more." And when asked what he is most looking forward to in retirement, Bruce said, "After 47 years of marriage Kathy and I remain best friends and very close. We are both so excited to be able to do whatever we want, together."

The NENCPPH started in 1999, and continues to meet regularly to lead and support regional community health improvement through collaboration and collective impact. The NENCPPH comprises eighteen counties in northeastern North Carolina, including: Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Edgecombe, Gates, Halifax,

Hertford, Hyde, Martin, Northampton, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell, and Washington Counties. The Board of Directors



NENCPPH

Northeastern North Carolina Partnership for Public Health

includes the Health Directors of the Health Departments covering these counties plus representatives from the Division of Public Health in the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, the NC Institute of Public Health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the Department of Public Health in the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University. To learn more about the Northeastern North Carolina Partnership for Public Health you can visit the website here: <https://nencpph.net>.

Reflections and Gratitude *(continued from page 2)*

My first year was spent figuring out what a Health Director and Health Department did. I must say that I was nothing short of impressed, as well as a little freaked out due to the vast level of responsibility. In that first year, I attended North Carolina Association of Local Health Directors (NCALHD) meetings and got to know my colleagues. All of which had been welcoming and very helpful. I also learned that not all Health Departments are created equal. Then Julie Tunney popped into my office and introduced me to the Northeastern NC Partnership for Public Health (NENCPPH): an incredible regional team of like communities and Health Departments. All of which more than willing to not only help, but more importantly, to work together.

Although I never knew exactly what I was chasing in my career, I ended up finding it. Public Health is the most rewarding and fun job that I have ever had, all while being allowed to be me. *(continued on page 4)*

Reflections and Gratitude *(continued from page 3)*

No more acting like someone I am not, no false façade. Working with the finest, real people doing great, selfless things for the underserved and overall population. Everyday has provided me with pride and purpose, as well as restoring my identity. Something my wife and I are eternally grateful for. My only regret is that I did not get into Public Health sooner in my career. I often ponder what would have been if I discovered Public Health sooner. Now it is time to turn the page and start an entirely new direction in mine and my wife's life. The peace of mind that this career has provided me will make it a great experience.

It is up to all of us to ensure that we come out of the shadows and tell the world who we are and what we do, and how we do it. Thank each and every one of you for all that you do and for providing to me the highlight of my career. Y'all Rock!

Health Directors Panel at Preparedness and Response Symposium

Submitted by Misty Gibbs, Northampton County Health Department

Four out of the six Health Directors that shared their expertise on the Health Directors Panel during the Annual NC Public Health Preparedness and Response Symposium were from NENC. The symposium was held in Greensboro in May 2023. Speakers included: Joy Brock, Ashley Stoop, Albemarle Regional Services Director, Health Greene County Health Director, Janell Oc-tigan, Beaufort County Health Director, Megan Vick, Northampton County Health Director, Nina Oliver, Carteret County, and Wes Gray, Martin-Tyrell-Washington Health Director. Photos below and to the right.

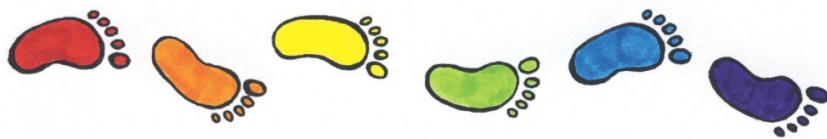


Tobacco Free Campus - Chowan County

Submitted by Wanda Stallings, Albemarle Regional Health Services

Shavonna Boone, ECU Community Health Improvement Health Coordinator, with ECU Health Chowan and Bertie partners with Wanda Stallings, Health Educator with Albemarle Regional Health Services to provide tobacco free campus signage at the ECU Health Chowan Hospital. (See screen shot at right)

For assistance on tobacco-free work within your Northeastern North Carolina County, contact Teresa Beardsley at Teresa.Beardsley@arhs-nc.org.



The Regional Get Moving Challenge is Coming Soon!

The Seventh (7th) annual NENCPPH Regional Get Moving Challenge (formerly the Regional Walking Challenge) is scheduled for October 2 through November 12, 2023. The six-week challenge is open to all local health department staff in the NENCPPH region, Board Members of the NENCPPH, and partnering agencies. Please sign up as a team of five with your Get Moving Challenge Coordinator, or you can participate as an individual. Check with your Health Director or Julie Tunney (jtunney@arhs-nc.org) if you do not know who your Get Moving Challenge Coordinator is.

The idea behind the challenge is to challenge yourselves to be more active, have some fun with your teammates and find new ways to be more active and at the same time do something good for your mental and physical health. Of course, we also want to see which health department, partnering agency, individual overall, and NENCPPH Board member can achieve the most steps in this six-week period. A traveling trophy is awarded to both the health department and partnering agency with the most steps for them to proudly display for the year. **Let's Get Moving!**





**The 7th annual
NENCPPH
Regional
Get Moving Challenge**

**Is coming again this fall
October 2—November 12, 2023**

Which Health Department team can get the most steps in 6 weeks?
Which LHD Partnering Agency team can get the most steps in 6 weeks?

Sign-up as a team, or as an individual, by September 25, 2023

Chance to Win Bragging Rights, Traveling Trophy and Photograph
in the newsletter/social media for the Winning Teams

For more information contact your LHD Get Moving Coordinator,
or Julie Tunney, Regional Get Moving Coordinator (tunney@arhs-nc.org)

Harmful Algal Blooms Education

Submitted by Ashley Stoop, Albemarle Regional Health Services Health Director

ARHS has been partnering with Duke University, UNC Chapel Hill, NC State, and local environmental groups to better understand climate change impacts on our region. One area of study and review is the presence and increase in the number of algal blooms in our region. Some studies have shown these blooms, specifically the ones testing positive for cyanobacteria, are attributed to cases of ALS. Our region has been impacted by unusually high numbers of ALS cases since at least the late 90s. In an effort to increase awareness about algal blooms in general, NC State's team has created educational material to not only show what to look for and the potential acute dangers, but also how to report. The files were shared with local health directors in the partnership and can be updated with your health department information if you are interested in sharing the information.




HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS

Stay out of the water if it appears discolored, to have surface scum, or floating or submerged clumps or mats.

<https://go.ncsu.edu/hab>

Scan here to learn more!

NORTH CAROLINA CLIMATE OFFICE ALBEMARLE REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES Partners in Public Health Climate Adaptation Partnerships Formerly RISA




HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS

Do you see water that appears discolored, to have surface scum, or floating or submerged clumps or mats? This may be a harmful algal bloom. Stay out of the water.

Help Albemarle Regional Health Services and the state of North Carolina by reporting algal blooms.

Scan the QR code or call the emergency hotline: 1-800-858-0368



<https://go.ncsu.edu/hab>

NORTH CAROLINA CLIMATE OFFICE ALBEMARLE REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES Partners in Public Health Climate Adaptation Partnerships Formerly RISA

HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS

Do you see water that appears discolored, to have surface scum, or floating or submerged clumps or mats? This may be a harmful algal bloom.



Stay out of the water, if you see what looks like an algal bloom.

Seek medical attention immediately if you, your child, or your pet seems ill after being in a pond, lake, or river.

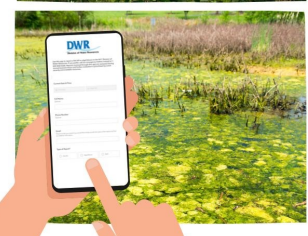
SEE AN ALGAL BLOOM?

Help Albemarle Regional Health Services and the state of North Carolina by making a report.



<https://go.ncsu.edu/hab>

Scan the QR code to report online or call the emergency hotline: 1-800-858-0368.



Mental Health and Addiction Counselors Roundtable Meets Regularly in Dare

By Michelle Wagner, Dare County Department of Health and Human Services

When evaluating the mental health needs of a community, there's perhaps no better resource to look to than the local counselors who are on the frontlines every day. That was the thought behind the creation of the Mental Health and Addictions Counselors Roundtable in Dare County, a quarterly gathering of local counselors and therapists being hosted and facilitated by the Dare County Department of Health & Human Services and Breaking Through Task Force.

Since the spring of 2022, all practicing counselors in Dare County have been invited to the roundtable discussions – held in March, June, September and December of each year. The meetings primarily focus on themes and observations counselors are seeing in their work, concerns among their patients and community members, as well as potential solutions to address issues related to mental health services in the county.

At its most recent meeting in June, the group formally adopted a charter that outlined the group's membership, its scope and a description of its duties. Along with local counselors, the chairs of the Breaking Through and Saving Lives task forces and the Dare County Health & Human Services Director are also members.

The group met initially by request of the Executive Committee of the Healthy Carolinians of the Outer Banks (HCOB) during the 2021-2022 Community Health Needs Assessment. Mental health and substance use have been identified as areas of concern in the most recent assessments, highlighting the importance of the creation of the roundtable. The initial meeting was so successful and helpful to attendees that the group elected to continue meeting quarterly.

The primary charge of the group is to make recommendations to the HCOB, the task forces, Dare County Department of Health & Human Services, Dare County Schools as well as other appropriate community groups. The group investigates opportunities to enhance or increase mental health and addictions services; explores ways to better support counselors in their work; and supports and enhances collaboration with partners such as Dare County Schools' counselors and social workers.

During recent roundtable discussions, the group heard from community leaders about a collaborative effort to apply for a grant so that more children, families and adults can receive the counseling they need regardless of financial barriers. Also discussed were potential training opportunities group members could offer one another.

In addition, counselors participating in the roundtable have also begun to provide DHHS and the Breaking Through Task Force with data on a monthly basis that includes metrics related to active clients, the number of sessions and the number of individuals who reached out but did not schedule an appointment. The information collected will assist DHHS in the CHNA process as well as help the Breaking Through Task Force in efforts to secure grants.

The next meeting of the roundtable will be held on September 19, 2023.

Northampton County Community Health Events

Submitted by Misty Gibbs, Northampton County Health Department

On May 18, 2023 Northampton County Health Department staff members Misty, Tina and Ellen were happy to attend the Lake Gaston Community Center Community Health and Wellness Awareness Seminar. Misty did a presentation on services offered by the Health Department; and gave out safe medication storage and disposal goodies. Ellen and Tina provided free blood pressure and glucose screenings. It is always a joy to serve our community. Photo-



Northampton County Health Department nurse Cynthia Everette provided blood pressure checks during the Elder Expo in June at Northampton Department of Social Services. Photo at left.



Northampton County Health Department Nurses Julia and Cynthia, plus Health Educator Kysha Gary enjoyed spending time with citizens this June at the Willow Oak Church Health Fair in Rich Square, NC. Photos at right.



Beaufort County Community in Action

Submitted by JaNell Octigan, Beaufort County Health Director

The one-year anniversary of Community in Action was held on June 26th. The event returned to Washington to celebrate its one-year anniversary. Community in Action is an outreach event that includes a diverse array of community stakeholders and partners. The purpose of the event is to bring resources about mental health and substance use disorder to underserved and unserved sub-groups of the community. The event rotates to different areas of the county quarterly. Residents are provided with educational materials, free lunch, health screenings, mental health assessments, food distribution, and personal hygiene products. The event includes 15-20 vendors. Part Two of Community in Action – Washington will be held on August 10th.



More from Beaufort County

Submitted by JaNell Octigan, Beaufort County Health Director

The BC 360 Behavioral Health Taskforce welcomed local officials and community members to Beaufort County Community College in June for a Special Public Engagement Meeting to discuss the county's use of opioid settlement funds. Beaufort County is set to receive approximately 3.1 million dollars from the Opioid Settlement over the next eighteen years. Leadership from the Behavioral Health Task Force reviewed the county's strategic plan for using those funds to combat the opioid crisis. They took questions from the participants about the process for selecting the strategies, and the additional efforts by the task force to combat the opioid epidemic.

In July, Beaufort County Health Department Kimberly Hough, RN provided CPR and First Aid training to the community outreach collaboration, HealthWon, with the option to become certified. Community Outreach workers are boots on the ground in their individual communities. A medical emergency could occur at any time. The training by the health department will enable these CHWs to be prepared to save lives.

NENCPPH Regional Public Health Champions Conference Coming This Fall!



PUBLIC HEALTH CHAMPIONS
...Inspiring Generations

NOVEMBER 1, 2023 NC
VERNON JAMES CENTER
PLYMOUTH, NC

- OR -

NOVEMBER 3, 2023 NC
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
CURRITUCK COUNTY CENTER
BARCO, NC

SAVE
the **DATE**

Hyde Health Department Celebrates Senior Health and Fitness Day

Submitted by Niki Waters

Hyde County Health Department celebrated Senior Health and Fitness Day with the local Mattamuskeet Senior Center on May 31st, in recognition of the importance of fitness activities for the older adult population. This year the theme was *"Move more, do more,"* a day that focused on getting seniors more active and healthy for staying independent.

During this event, local seniors socialized and participated in a variety of physical activities that can aid in gaining strength and vitality while warding off inactivity-related disease and cognitive decline. This included chair exercises, Zumba® Gold, Tai Chi, freestyle dancing, and mindfulness meditation.

Hyde County's Public Health team was on site instructing classes and providing blood pressure screenings to participants, along with some health education on the benefits that exercise and good health offer. Fun and fitness were had by all!



Martin-Tyrrell-Washington District Health Happenings

Submitted by Miranda Keel

The Safe Syringe Program (SSP), The Hope Exchange, has expanded into Washington and Tyrrell Counties. We are open every Wednesday in Martin County and alternating every other week in the other two counties. The Hope Exchange provides clean injection supplies, as well as hygiene products, a food pantry, and a clothing closet. For more information, please contact Yerlin Villegas at 252-793-1607, Brie Cowand at 252-793-1604, or call the SSP cell phone at 252-310-0017. (hope exchange banner attached)



Tyzie Morning, Tobacco Cessation Coordinator, has started offering Tobacco Cessation Counseling in the district. In addition, she is trained to facilitate CATCH My Breath and IN-DEPTH curriculums to schools as educational courses or an alternative to suspension. Tyzie has successfully been conducting outreach presentations in the three counties to school systems, libraries, and Boys and Girls Clubs. For more information on any of these programs, please contact Tyzie at 252-793-1638. (photo of Tyzie presenting at right)



If anyone is interested in taking free suicide prevention trainings, please reach out to MTW's coordinator, Nicoria Williams, at 252-793-1605! She can provide a link for an online training or provide in-person trainings. In addition, Samantha Combs is steadily adding classes for the Minority Diabetes Prevention Program in Region 9. Classes are currently being offered in Martin, Tyrrell, Washington, Bertie, Dare, and Pasquotank counties. Please reach out to her at 252-793-1768 if interested in joining or sending referrals.

More from MTW

MTW was able to update our signs and add some beautiful landscaping in Martin and Washington counties. "We are so excited with how they look and hope it provides a welcoming atmosphere for our clients," stated Miranda Keel. (See Photos below)



MTW is now offering Behavioral Health services through its very own Kimberly Clark, MSW, LCSW-A. Services are offered in-person in Martin County on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Clients can receive care in Washington County on Tuesday and Thursday. Currently, Tyrrell County clients are being seen via telehealth. Kim can be reached at 252-793-1646 for additional information.



NATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

join us

AUGUST 31, 2023

Moratoc Park | 5:30 pm
102 River Dr. Williamston, NC 27892

Narcan Training	Medication Drop Box
Health Screenings	Resource Tables
Syringe Service Program Panel	Memorial Alter

The 2nd Judicial District Opioid Coalition is hosting an Overdose Awareness Day event on August 31st from 5:30-8:00 at Moratoc Park in Williamston. Behavioral health and substance use vendors will be set-up at the event at 5:30, followed by a program beginning at 6:00. The program will consist of a free Georgia Deans boxed dinner, substance use speakers, and a Narcan training - all for FREE! There will also be a memorial alter to honor all loved ones lost to overdose. We would love to see you there! (flyer at left)

Halifax County Garden

Submitted by Laura Ellis, Halifax County Health Department

Halifax County Wellness Program, NC Cooperative Extension and Halifax County Health Department partnered together to encourage, educate, empower employees and community members to get outside and learn about gardening and enjoying the harvest, participating in cooking demonstrations, garden classes, fellowship and community involvement and enjoying healthy food options locally grown.



Cooking with Fresh Herbs in Halifax County

Submitted by Laura Ellis, Halifax County Health Department

Summer is the perfect time to enjoy the taste of fresh herbs. Halifax County Wellness Program partnered with NC Cooperative Extension to provide Eating Smart with Fresh Herbs program to all wellness participants. Wellness participants learned how to add great flavor to foods while using less added sugar and salt. Taste tests, recipes, hands on cooking demonstration and storage tips were provided.



Cheesy Zucchini Bites



Here's a tasty way to use in-season zucchini, tomatoes, and basil. Check out your local farmer's market if you don't grow these yourself.

Servings: 35

Ingredients

- 5 medium zucchini (about 6 inches long)
- 4 ounces blue cheese, crumbled
- 3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon pepper
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, thinly sliced

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400° F.
2. Cut zucchini into $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch slices. Using a melon baller or small spoon, scoop out some of the insides, leaving the bottom intact.
3. Place zucchini on an ungreased baking sheet; spoon $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon crumbled blue cheese into each.
4. In a bowl, combine the Parmesan cheese, basil, and pepper. Using half of the mixture, sprinkle some of the parmesan cheese mixture over the blue cheese.
5. Top each zucchini bite with a tomato slice; sprinkle with the remaining Parmesan mixture.
6. Bake at 400, °F until cheese is melted, approximately 5-7 minutes. Serve warm.

Credit: Ashley Kibutha, *DietToGo.com*

Viewed on: <https://fruitsandveggies.org/recipes/cheesy-zucchini-bites/>

Northeastern NC Partnership for Public Health



Bertie · Beaufort · Camden · Chowan · Currituck · Dare · Edgecombe
Gates · Halifax · Hertford · Hyde · Martin · Northampton · Pamlico
Pasquotank · Perquimans · Tyrrell · Washington

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"Healthy Communities Through Leadership and Collaboration"

www.nencpph.net



www.facebook.com/nencpph

Calendar of Events

Aug 25	NENCPPH Harm Reduction Training & Dialogue Part 2
Aug 31	NENCPPH Leadership Call
Aug 11	PICH Tobacco-Free Living and Healthy Foods Coalition Meetings
Sept 12	NENCPPH Regional Finance/Billing Idea Exchange
Sept 18	NENCPPH Finance Committee Conference Call
Sept 22	NENCPPH Annual Board Meeting
Sept 25	Sign-up Due for Get Moving Challenge
Oct 2–Nov 12	Get Moving Challenge
Oct 26	NENCPPH Leadership Call
Oct 31	NENCPPH Newsletter Items Due
Nov 1 and 3	PH Champions Conferences

For full calendar view: <https://www.nencpph.net/calendar>

Board of Directors

Luana Gibbs, NENCPPH Chair Director, Hyde County Health Department
Michelle Etheridge, NENCPPH Vice Chair Director, Edgecombe County Health Department
Megan Vick, NENCPPH Secretary-Treasurer Director, Northampton County Health
Melanie Campen, Director, Pamlico County Health Department
Sheila Davies, Director, Dare County Department of Health & Human Services
Wes Gray Director, Martin-Tyrrell-Washington District Health Department
Ruth Little Public Health Dept., East Carolina University
Janell Octigan Director, Beaufort County Health Department
Bruce Robistow, NENCPPH Board Director, Halifax County Public Health System
Stacie Saunders Division of Public Health, NC Dept of Health and Human Services
Ashley Stoop Director, Albemarle Regional Health Department
John Wiesman, NCIPH at Gillings Global School of Public Health, UNC at Chapel Hill

What is the Northeastern North Carolina Partnership for Public Health?

The Northeastern North Carolina Partnership for Public Health (NENCPPH) is a partnership of health departments in Northeastern NC which have come together with support from the Division of Public Health, East Carolina University, and the NC Institute of Public Health at UNC Chapel Hill, to collectively address the community's health by sharing best practices and resources. Currently the NENCPPH represents nine health departments and eighteen counties.