

Spring 2026

# Northeastern North Carolina Partnership for Public Health



## NENCPPH

Northeastern North Carolina Partnership for Public Health

## Partnering for Public Health

*A quarterly publication of public health activities in Northeastern NC*



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# NENCPPH

## BOARD CORNER

*Submitted by ~Ikisha Mullen,  
Coordinator NENCPPH, Director Region 9 PH Workforce*

### **Growing Stronger Together: Highlights from Public Health Champions in the Northeast**

As we step into a season of renewal, growth, and fresh energy and celebrate Public Health Month, we are excited to share the Spring 2026 edition of Partnering for Public Health, our quarterly publication highlighting the impactful work happening across Northeastern North Carolina.

This is a time to recognize and celebrate the incredible work of our public health workforce and the phenomenal Public Health Champions who serve our communities every day. Across our region, these dedicated professionals show up with purpose, passion, and commitment to improving lives. From health education and prevention to emergency preparedness, environmental health, and community outreach, their efforts, often behind the scenes make an impact in every corner of our counties.

In honor of Public Health Month, we are especially proud to spotlight our Public Health Champions, individuals and teams who are going above and beyond to make a difference. These champions exemplify collaboration, innovation, and resilience. Whether they are leading new initiatives, strengthening partnerships, or developing creative solutions to local challenges, their work represents the very best of public health in action.

By working together across counties, agencies, and disciplines, we are strengthening systems, supporting our workforce, and building healthier, more resilient communities

We invite you to explore this issue and celebrate our Champions. Thank you for your continued service and for being part of a network that truly makes a difference.

Together, we are Partnering for Public Health. *Kisha*

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The Northeastern North Carolina Partnership for Public Health (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 twenty counties in northeastern North Carolina, including: Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Edgecombe, Gates, Greene, Halifax, Hertford, Hyde, Martin, Northampton, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Tyrrell, and Washington Counties. The Board of Directors 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 Division of Child and Family Well-Being 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>.



**NENCPPH**

Northeastern North Carolina Partnership for Public Health



# HYDE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

*Submitted by Savannah Equils, Public Health Educator  
Hyde County Health Department*

## Hyde County Health in Action: Supporting Families Through Prevention and Education

With measles cases rising in our state, the Hyde County Health Department attended Mattamuskeet School's pre-K registration to promote immunization services. We used this opportunity to discuss with parents why immunization matters and how it protects individuals and the community.

The behavioral health team partnered with Hyde County Schools to provide substance use education for guardians. The program included a review of current trends in youth substance use, an examination of hiding places in a mock bedroom, and a review of some available resources. The program aims to help caregivers facilitate conversations about youth substance use.





# NORTHAMPTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Submitted by: Misty J. Gibbs,  
Emergency Preparedness Coordinator,  
Public Information Officer  
Northampton County Health Department



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 29, 2025  
**Media Contact:**  
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Northampton County Health Department  
Misty.gibbs@nhcnc.net

**NORTHAMPTON COUNTY HOME HEALTH AGENCY  
ACHIEVES ACCREDITATION WITH ACHC**

**JACKSON, NC,** The Northampton County Home Health Agency (NCHHA) proudly announces it has achieved accreditation through Accreditation Commission for Health Care (ACHC) for the services of skilled nursing care, physical therapy, and speech therapy. NCHHA's new accreditation cycle dates will be: January 1, 2026 - January 1, 2029.

Accreditation is a process through which healthcare organizations demonstrate compliance with national standards. Accreditation by ACHC reflects an organization's dedication and commitment to meeting standards that facilitate a higher level of performance and patient care.

ACHC is a nonprofit organization that has stood as a symbol of quality and excellence since 1986. ACHC is ISO 9001:2015 certified and has CMS deeming authority for Home Health, Hospice and DMEPOS.

Northampton County Home Health Agency has provided home care services to patients in Northampton County since 1976 and is housed in the Northampton County Health Department. Northampton County Home Health care is provided by highly trained staff working directly under the written orders of your doctor and provided to you in the comfort of your home. Home Health services through NCHHA are available to those who:

- Live in Northampton County or the surrounding area
- Are in need of home health services
- Are under the care of a doctor

Along with skilled nursing, physical therapy, and speech therapy services, NCHHA coordinates services with other health agencies in this area to assure the most comprehensive level of care to our patients including hospice, home delivered meals, durable medical equipment, and pharmacy consultation.

NCHHA is located at 9495 NC Hwy 305 in Jackson NC. The office hours are 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday. For more information on Northampton County Home Health services, please visit [northamptonhd.com](http://northamptonhd.com) or call (252) 534-1291.

# DARE COUNTY

## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES



*Submitted by Michelle Wagner, Public Health Educator  
Dare County Department of Health & Human Services*

### Together We Thrive: A New Movement for Health and Well-Being in Dare County



The Dare County Department of Health & Human Services has partnered with Outer Banks Health to create a local movement focused on individual and community well-being with the overall vision of creating a vibrant thriving community where every person lives their healthiest and fullest life.

Called ThriveOBX, this movement centers on the five pillars of Nourish, Focus, Engage, Purpose and Balance. ThriveOBX is founded on local strengths such as strong community spirit, fresh dining, natural peace, active lifestyles and opportunities to connect.

"We are excited to join Outer Banks Health in this endeavor to build a thriving community whose members know the value of and focus on their well-being all year long," said Dare County Department of Health & Human Services Director Sheila Davies. "This is just the beginning of a movement that is sure to make a positive impact in the lives of our residents and our community as a whole."

To kick off the new ThriveOBX movement, organizers held the first official Thrive Month in February of 2026. Thrive Month turned out to be a perfect way to introduce the community to the mission as well as the idea that personal well-being and longevity are closely connected.

Thrive Month featured more than 25 activities that centered on Thrive OBX's five pillars. From a Move-A-Thon on February 14 at three separate locations on the Outer Banks to a countywide Community Beach Clean Up on February 21, book discussions throughout the month and a winter picnic filled with healthy food at the Elizabethan Gardens, the month was packed with activities to improve well-being.

The month also featured a Thrive! Dinner with a Doc on February 10 at Jennette's Pier, an event that sold out and was a great success and focused on stress management.

Thrive Month participants enjoyed keeping track of their Thrive activities with a playbook to keep track of their progress. Local businesses, organizations and individuals throughout the county have also partnered with ThriveOBX to help create a community-wide sense of well-being and purpose.

While Thrive Month has wrapped up, Thrive OBX will continue to serve as a foundation for the local community in encouraging well-being focused on the five pillars. Whether residents want to join a Thrive Hive, attend an upcoming Thrive OBX event or practice new ways to improve their well-being, Thrive OBX serves as a hub for all the ways we can live happier and healthier lives here on the Outer Banks and is the beginning of a great partnership not only between Outer Banks Health and the Dare County Department of Health and Human Services, but partners across the county who share in a similar mission. We are excited to see all the ways we can THRIVE together in the future as we build healthy habits.



# MTW DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT



Submitted by Miranda Keel, Health Education Supervisor  
MTW District Health Department

## Prevention, Partnership, Progress: Building Healthier Communities Together



Several staff members had the opportunity to attend the Public Health Leaders Conference held March 12-13. This year's theme, Navigating Uncertainties: Balancing Priorities & Advancing Public Health in Times of Uncertainty, focused on equipping public health professionals with the tools and strategies needed to adapt in an ever-changing landscape.

Attendees participated in a variety of sessions covering emerging public health challenges, leadership development, and innovative approaches to serving communities. The conference also provided valuable opportunities to network with peers from across the state, share best practices, and bring back new ideas to strengthen the work being done within our district. (picture: phl conference)

Our Molar Express Dental Unit has been proudly serving students of Tyrrell County Schools and now we're excited to extend our stay to serve the entire community. From March 30 - April 9, the mobile dental unit will remain at Columbia High School and is now open to patients of all ages for cleanings and other dental services. The Molar Express will be moving back to Riverside Middle School on April 13th to continue serving the students of Martin County. (molar express, molar express tc, molar express patient)

The Partnership for Success (PFS) Grant focuses on the prevention of underage drinking and substance misuse through targeted education and community-based strategies. Key initiatives include NC Talk It Up! Lock It Up!, Lock Your Meds, and promotion of the 988 Crisis and Suicide Lifeline.

PFS Coordinators Brie Coward and Shakera Norfleet have been actively engaging the community by distributing medication lock boxes and pouches, medication disposal pouches, and alcohol locks to help reduce access to potentially harmful substances in the home.

# ALBEMARLE REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES



## SPEEDWAY TO HEALTHY

*Submitted by Wanda Stallings, Health Educator  
Albemarle Regional Health Department*

Speedway to Healthy is a 1,200 square foot interactive exhibit designed to teach children in K-fifth grade the impact of food choices on their health. The exhibit features 11 pit stops where children learn about various parts of the human body and the importance of health lifestyle choices. It aims to improve eating and health behaviors among North Carolina youth, addressing issues like childhood obesity. The program is part of the 4-H Youth Development Program at North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University. Volunteers are involved in creating and maintaining the exhibit, contributing to its educational mission. Speedway to Healthy was set up in DF Walker gym and enjoyed by DF Walker and White Oak Elementary Schools in Chowan County. As you can see from Gabi, after 800 kids go through the exhibit, you are just wore out!



# ALBEMARLE REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES



*Submitted by Wanda Stallings, Health Educator  
Albemarle Regional Health Department*

## Annual Community Day & Mental Health Awareness Event



Tina Brown and Wanda Stallings attended Victory Temple COGIC to be a part of their Annual Community Day & Mental Health Awareness Event that was held on Saturday, February 21, 2026, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. The event was designed to uplift and connect the community through outreach, education, and fellowship. Programs across our region were shared at the event such Triple P, Primary Care, Behavioral Health, Healthy Beginnings and our agency as a car seat checking station. The event was well attended and much appreciated by all who attended.

# ALBEMARLE REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES



*Submitted by Wanda Stallings, Health Educator  
Albemarle Regional Health Department*

## Annual Community Day & Mental Health Awareness Event




Tina Brown and Wanda Stallings participated at the Annual Community Day & Mental Health Awareness Event hosted by Victory Temple COGIC on Saturday, February 21, 2026. The event focused on uplifting and connecting the community through outreach, education, and fellowship.

During the event, a variety of programs available across our region were highlighted, including Triple P, Primary Care, Behavioral Health, and Healthy Beginnings. In addition, our agency served as a car seat checking station, providing important safety education and support to families.

The event was well attended and warmly received, reflecting the strong impact of community partnerships and the continued commitment to promoting health, wellness, and connection throughout our region.

# ALBEMARLE REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

Submitted by Molly Brown, Triple P  
Albemarle Regional Health Department

Triple P is an  evidenced based program, free for parents and caregivers in North Carolina that is providing solutions for everyday parenting issues. Whether taking the online program at your own pace or meeting one on one with a trained provider, parents are quickly seeing results to decrease stress and end parent-child battles.



## Success Story

Parents are seeing positive changes with their child's behavior.

*Triple P offers Baby, 0-12, Teen & Fear-Less (to decrease anxiety) programs.*

### For more information:

*in Northeastern NC  
molly.brown@arhs-nc.org  
252-340-4128*



[www.triplep-parenting.com](http://www.triplep-parenting.com)

IN ENGLISH & ESPANOL

# Tobacco Prevention and Education

Submitted by Teresa Beardsley,  
Tobacco Prevention Manager - Regions 9/10, ARHS

## Tobacco 21

Protect youth against vaping and nicotine addiction.



### Why?

- Protect developing brains.
- Reduce youth access.
- Save lives and prevent disease.
- Enforce a nonregulated industry.

### How?

- Raise the purchase age of vapes and tobacco products to 21.
- Establish a retailer permitting system to increase enforcement and retailer education.

### Impact!

- ✓ A decrease in the sale to underage youth.
- ✓ A decrease in the sale of illegal products.
- ✓ An increase in educated clerks and store owners.
- ✓ An increase in funding for ALE (Alcohol Law Enforcement)
- ✓ A system that identifies where retailers are located.
- ✓ Inspection authority for ALE with a tobacco retailer permitting system.

Will you support protecting our youth and our communities?



### Did you know?

- NC is one of 9 states with no tobacco retailer permitting system.
- ALE supports a regulated industry with enforceable statutes.
- Many of ALE enforcement efforts are complaint-driven because the industry is nonregulated.
- Vape/Tobacco shops have unknown locations.

### Law Enforcement Barriers with Current Law:

- Can be impossible to distinguish between legal and nonlegal products.
- Due to the lack of regulation, there has been no funding from the general assembly to combat underage sales and the sale of illegal products.
- ALE has no inspection authority when they enter a vape shop.

Sources:  
"Tobacco 21." North Carolina Public Health Association, ncpha.com/t21/. Accessed 12 Mar. 2026.  
03/12/2026, NC Department of Public Safety, Alcohol Law Enforcement Division

Updated as of 3/20/2026

If you have any questions about this program or training opportunities, please reach out to Teresa Beardsley at [Teresa.beardsley@arhs-nc.org](mailto:Teresa.beardsley@arhs-nc.org).

# PITT COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



*Submitted by Allison Swart, Public Information Officer  
Pitt County Health Department*



Pitt County Health Department partnered with ECU Health to support the community through a MedAssist over-the-counter medicine giveaway, helping increase access to essential health resources for residents.



Pitt County Health Department participated in Read Across America Day at Contentnea-Savannah K-8 School, where Triple P – Positive Parenting Program Educator, Steve Roman, had the opportunity to read to a very special group of students.



Pitt County Health Department staff attended Public Information in an All-Hazards Incident, a two-day training focused on effective emergency communication. Jennifer Hardee, Amanda Sparling, and Allison Swart joined partners from counties and municipalities across the state to strengthen their skills, share experiences, and enhance the delivery of timely, accurate information to their communities when it matters most.



Patti Columbe, Diabetes Educator, highlighted the Diabetes Support Group on WCTI NewsChannel 12, while support group member Curshenia Wilson joined Chris Young to share her personal experience and the impact of the program.



# BEAUFORT COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

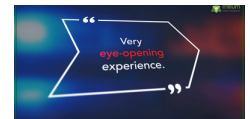


*Submitted by JaNell Octigan, Health Director,  
Beaufort County Health Department*



In recognition of Colon Cancer Awareness Month, Beaufort County Health Department staff proudly wore blue to help raise awareness about the importance of prevention, early detection, and regular screening. March serves as a reminder that while colon cancer is one of the most commonly diagnosed cancers in the United States, it is also one of the most preventable. Routine screenings can detect cancer early, when treatment is most effective, and even prevent it by identifying and removing precancerous polyps.

Beaufort County Health Department extended a huge thank you to Trillium Health Resources for hosting the Re-Entry Simulation, and to everyone who attended and actively participated in this impactful experience.



Beaufort County is proud to announce, Stacey Harris, as the 2026 Environmental Health Supervisor of Year awarded by the North Carolina Environmental Health Supervisors Association.

# PARTNERING FOR PUBLIC HEALTH



## NENCPPH

Northeastern North Carolina Partnership for Public Health

Explore two powerful resources designed to connect and empower our community:



### NENC Connect

If you or someone you know needs help with prevention, support, treatment, or recovery services related to substance use, visit [www.nencconnect.org](http://www.nencconnect.org).

Together, these platforms help build healthier communities—whether through career connections or compassionate care.



### Careers 2 Make a Difference

Whether you're a student, job seeker, or looking for a new path in public health or human services, Careers 2 Make a Difference is your starting point. Discover rewarding career opportunities that make a real impact right here in Northeastern North Carolina. [www.careers2makeadifference.com](http://www.careers2makeadifference.com)



# Hasselback Chicken Primavera

**Yield:** 4 servings

**Prep Time:** 15 mins

**Cook Time:** 20 mins

Hasselback Chicken Primavera is an easy high-protein sheet pan dinner with chicken stuffed with zucchini, tomato, and mozzarella for a fresh twist on the classic.

## Ingredients

- 4 boneless skinless chicken breasts (about 6 ounces each)
- 2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 ½ teaspoons kosher salt (divided)
- ½ teaspoon black pepper (divided)
- 1 medium zucchini (halved lengthwise and sliced into half moons)
- 1 vine tomato (sliced and cut into half moons)
- ½ red onion (thinly sliced)
- ½ cup mozzarella cheese (freshly grated )
- ¼ cup parmesan cheese (freshly grated )
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning (divided)
- Chopped basil (for garnish)

## Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 425° F and line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Using a sharp knife, cut the chicken breasts Hasselback-style by making evenly spaced crosswise slits along each breast. Take care not to cut all the way through, leaving about ¼ inch intact at the bottom so the chicken remains whole. Coat the chicken with 1 teaspoon of olive oil and season with 1 teaspoon of salt and ¼ teaspoon of pepper. Gently transfer to the prepared baking sheet and set aside.
3. Add the zucchini, tomato, and onion to a mixing bowl. Drizzle with the remaining teaspoon of olive oil, ½ teaspoon salt, ¼ teaspoon pepper, and the Italian seasoning. Gently toss to coat the vegetables evenly with the seasoning.
4. Slightly fan the chicken breasts open and nestle the vegetables into each cut, spacing everything evenly along the length of the chicken.
5. Top each chicken breast with the mozzarella and parmesan cheese. Transfer the baking sheet to the oven to roast until the chicken is cooked through and the cheese is melted, 15-20 minutes. Feel free to broil for the last minute to get the cheese a little browned.
6. Remove from the oven and garnish with basil before serving.

## Nutrition

Serving: 1 chicken breast, Calories: 307kcal, Carbohydrates: 5.2g, Protein: 44g, Fat: 11.5g, Saturated Fat: 4g, Cholesterol: 139.5mg, Sodium: 661mg, Fiber: 1g, Sugar: 2.5g  
- WW Points: 4

[https://www.skinnytaste.com/wprm\\_print/hasselback-chicken-primavera](https://www.skinnytaste.com/wprm_print/hasselback-chicken-primavera)



# Northeastern NC Partnership for Public Health



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

## Ikisha Mullen

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“Healthy Communities Through  
Leadership and Collaboration”



Visit Website



## Calendar of Events

Apr 30, 2026	Leadership Call
May 28, 2026	Leadership Call
Jun 26, 2026	Quarterly Board Meeting
Jul 30, 2026	Leadership Call
Aug 27, 2026	Leadership Call
Oct 28-29, 2026	NENCPPH Retreat
Dec 11, 2026	Annual Board Meeting

## Board of Directors

### Megan Vick, NENCPPH Chair

Director, Northampton County Health

### Ashley Stoop, NENCPPH Vice Chair

Director, Albemarle Regional Health Department

### Cheyenna James, NENCPPH Secretary-Treasurer

Director, Halifax County Public Health System

### Nicole Barnes

Director, Martin-Tyrrell-Washington District Health

### Joy Brock

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### Sheila Davies

Director, Dare County Department of  
Health & Human Services

### Melanie Dixon

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### Michelle Etheridge

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### Luana Gibbs

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### Wes Gray

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### Amy Joy Lanou

NCIPH at Gillings Global School of Public Health,  
UNC Chapel Hill

### Ruth Little

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### Janell Octigan

Director, Beaufort County Health Department

### Anne Odusanya

Assistant Director, Division of Child and Family  
Well-Being NC Dept of Health and Human Services

### Stacie Saunders

Deputy Director, Division of Public Health NC Dept of  
Health and Human Services

## 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, the Division of Children and Family Well-Being, 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 eleven health departments/districts and twenty counties. Learn more at <https://www.nencpph.net/>