



Prescription for a Healthy Community

By Pamela Josey Pope, Director of Resource Development, Catawba County United Way

What is your idea of healthy? Eating right and exercising? Excellent! What is your idea of a healthy community? That's a much bigger question with a much more complicated answer. Catawba County United Way focuses on the health of the community as one of its main impact areas. What does that mean for the community?

It's not all apple slices and exercise plans. Improving the health of people in our county means promoting healthy lifestyles. The prescription must include safe environments, healthy beginnings, healthy lifestyles, access to health care, and prevention. The plan for a healthy community requires many paths to improved health. It is important to be targeted and accountable.

Safe and secure environments include homes free from physical hazards and a support system to maintain it this also includes helping victims of abuse. Recovery and advocacy services must be provided for all ages. It also means support for seniors and those with disabilities so they have the ability to remain safe and independent for as long as possible.

Healthy beginnings include prenatal, well-baby and pediatric care for children up to six years of age. The outcome hopefully being increased birth weights and a decrease of infant mortality rates.

Healthy lifestyle choices including substance abuse can be reduced and prevented. Healthy weight for high school age students is important because it not only affects their high school performance but also weight issues may follow them into adulthood.

Extremely important is access to general health care services as well as mental, dental, vision and pharmaceutical care. We must find ways to serve the county population that cannot afford reliable health care. Children need up to date immunizations and should receive regular dental and vision exams. Preventative care is equally important to a long-term solution.

In the spring CCUW, the community investment panels and the board of directors will be reviewing applications for health grants available for allocation in 2018. These groups will also seek to determine any major gaps in services and suggest possible United Way driven initiatives focused on those gaps. Any



organization receiving funding is held accountable for their anticipated outcomes and use of the donor dollar.

The following programs received funding for Health programs for 2017:

ALFA (Aids Leadership Foothills Area Alliance): \$23,800 funded to provide HIV/AIDS counseling, prevention, education and testing. The mission of ALFA is to improve the lives and health of those affected by HIV/AIDS while preventing transmission through education and testing. Their vision is to be the most effective HIV/AIDS resource to all people in the ALFA service area.

Catawba County DSS Senior Nutrition Services-Meals on Wheels: \$16,612.50 funded to improve the quality of life of seniors by providing them the choice to remain at home through the provision of nutritious meals, education, socialization, health and wellness activities and community volunteer support.

Catawba Valley Chapter of American Red Cross: \$35,700 funded for emergency and disaster services. The Red Cross provides lifesaving education through Health and Safety and Disaster service departments. They continually respond to local disasters such as house fires and provide immediate services for those families as well as deploy local volunteers to assist with disasters wherever needed.

Children's Advocacy & Protection Center: \$30,377 funded for the child abuse and neglect prevention education through the Darkness to Light and Yellow Dino Program. The center works to raise awareness in the prevention of child abuse and neglect using evidence-based strategies and provide a comprehensive multi-disciplinary team approach.

Council on Adolescents of Catawba County: \$36,066.00 funded to provide healthy youth education programs for teens. The Council provides educational programming aimed at preventing adolescent pregnancy as well as prevention of suicide and other potentially harmful risk-taking behaviors. Programs are available to parents of adolescents as well.

Family Guidance Center: \$129,250.50 funded for the First Step Domestic Violence Shelter to serve victims of domestic violence and \$98,437.00 funded to the Individual & Family Counseling program to assist in providing crisis counseling. The center provides specialized services for individuals and families experiencing the negative effects of anxiety, depression, divorce, stress, financial problems, domestic violence, child abuse, and other problems that threaten the stability of families.



While Catawba County United Way in partnership with many members of our community have taken important steps to improve the health of our community, the County Health Rankings show there is more we can do to help Catawba County residents lead healthier lives.

Catawba County is ranked 41st in North Carolina out of the 100 counties in the 2017 County Health Rankings for overall health performance. Health behaviors and areas to explore include adult smoking, adult obesity and alcohol-impaired driving. For a full report visit www.countyhealthrankings.org and search by county . The Rankings, released every year by United Way in partnership with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, show us that where we live matters to our health and not everyone has the chance to reach their full health potential. The Rankings show us that good health is influenced by many factors beyond medical care including jobs, housing, education, poverty and more. In addition to the health impact area CCUW focuses on education and financial stability.

According to the recent State of the County Health Report (produced by Catawba County Health Department, www.catawbacountyhealthpartners.org), the emerging health issues for our county are opioid use, suicide and population/economic shifts such as a lowering population of young professionals and families and a 22% decrease in residents 24-35 years old.

CCUW understands that continued action is needed and that no single sector can tackle the barriers to health without leveraging the knowledge, talents, and resources of others. It takes everyone—nonprofits, businesses, policymakers and individuals—working together to improve health and ensure people in Catawba County thrive. To live better, we must live united.

About Catawba County United Way,

Catawba County United Way's mission is to increase the organized capacity of people to help others by mobilizing the caring power of our community. For more information, contact Pamela Pope, Director of Resource Development, at 828-327-6851 or ppope@ccunitedway.com

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3 Photos attached

Photo attached: Pamela Josey Pope



Logo attached



County Map ranking provided by County Health Rankings Report

www.countyhealthrankings.org



