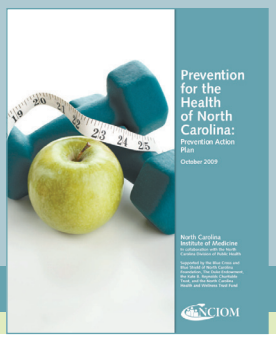


# Prevention Action Steps for Communities

## Prevention for the Health of North Carolina

http://www.nciom.org

Healthy communities support healthy individuals. Individual health is affected not only by the choices people make, but by the places where they work and go to school, the environment they live in, and public policies. Communities that promote healthy lifestyles and health in general can help people live longer and more productive lives. By following the Prevention Action Steps listed below, you can help North Carolinians lead healthier lives.

### Encourage all residents to be tobacco-free.

- ✓ Support campaigns that educate community members about the risks of tobacco use.
- ✓ Promote the NC Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) and encourage tobacco users to call for help in quitting.
- ✓ Ban smoking in public places including worksites (NCGS §130A-497).

### Encourage all residents to eat smart and move more.

- ✓ Encourage and support local school boards and schools to serve only healthy foods and beverages and to implement quality physical education programs.
- ✓ Encourage child care centers and after-school programs to incorporate healthy eating and physical activity into their practices.
- ✓ Promote menu labeling among restaurants so that nutrition information is readily available for consumers. Encourage farmers' markets or farm stands at worksites and meeting places of faith-based organizations.
- ✓ Build active communities by making sidewalks, greenways, and biking and hiking trails safe and easy to use. Create joint-use agreements between school recreational facilities and parks to provide all community members with more places to be active.
- ✓ Develop and implement an evidence-based obesity prevention plan.

### Promote safe sex, family planning, and address sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)/HIV.

- ✓ Provide access to family planning services and screenings for STDs and HIV. Increase use of rapid testing for HIV among high-risk populations.
- ✓ Provide opt-out HIV testing in county jails.
- ✓ Encourage local school boards to adopt an opt-out consent process for reproductive health and safety education.
- ✓ Expand adolescent pregnancy prevention programs.

### Prevent alcohol and drug abuse.

- ✓ Implement a comprehensive evidence-based substance abuse prevention plan targeting youth and their parents that includes early intervention activities.

### Ensure healthy home and school environments.

- ✓ Implement a HUD/CDC Healthy Homes Initiative to minimize risks associated with indoor air quality, mold and moisture, carbon monoxide, lead-based paint, radon, asbestos, drinking water, hazardous household products, pesticide exposure, pest management, and to promote general home safety.
- ✓ Encourage local boards of education and schools to use the EPA's Tools for Schools program to reduce environmental hazards.

## Prevent intentional and unintentional injuries.

- ✓ Make sure local law enforcement enforces all traffic safety laws such as those that address seatbelt use, speeding, and DWI.
- ✓ Educate community members and implement evidence-based programs to prevent intentional injury, such as family violence, and unintentional injuries, such as falls and motor vehicle injury.

## Promote recommended vaccines.

- ✓ Educate community members about the importance of getting vaccinations and publicize the availability of vaccines.

## Improve opportunities for all people to be healthy.

- ✓ Address the needs of low-income families by raising awareness about the state Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, and NC Health Choice.
- ✓ Help build affordable housing.
- ✓ Support the efforts of local school boards and schools to prevent drop-out and increase high school graduation rates.
- ✓ Expand opportunities for high-quality childhood education and health programs.
- ✓ Involve community leaders such as faith-based ministers and lay health advisors who can reach out to diverse groups and educate them about prevention and health promotion.

## Use evidence-based practices to keep your community healthy.

- ✓ Implement evidence-based strategies to improve the health of your community members by using the CDC's *Guide to Community Preventive Services*.

**STATE RESOURCES**

**Tobacco**

- NC Quitline. 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669). http://www.quitlinenc.org

**Nutrition and Physical Activity**

- Eat Smart, Move More North Carolina. Eat Smart, Move More: Plan to Prevent Overweight, Obesity, and Related Chronic Diseases. http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com

**Vaccinations**

- North Carolina Immunization Branch. http://www.immunizenc.com

**NATIONAL RESOURCES**

**Community Prevention Strategies**

- CDC Guide to Community Preventive Services. http://www.thecommunityguide.org/index.html
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Leadership for Healthy Communities. http://www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org

**Youth Risk Behaviors**

- CDC Adolescent Health Registries of Programs Effective in Reducing Youth Risk Behaviors. http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/AdolescentHealth/registries.htm

**Healthy Homes**

- CDC Healthy Homes Initiative. http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/Lead/healthyhomes.htm

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health**

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices. http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov

**Physical Activity**

- Active Living by Design. http://www.activelivingbydesign.org

The above Action Steps were excerpted from recommendations in *Prevention for the Health of North Carolina: Prevention Action Plan*, a collaborative project of the North Carolina Institute of Medicine and the North Carolina Division of Public Health, and have been modified for specific audiences. **The full report is available at http://www.nciom.org.** Generous support for this project was provided by the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation, The Duke Endowment, the North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund, and the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust. Any opinion, finding, conclusion, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view and policies of the North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund Commission, the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation, The Duke Endowment, or the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust.

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