

2025 Person County State of the County Health Report

Why Is This Important?

The state of North Carolina along with the North Carolina Local Health Department Accreditation Program requires local health departments to conduct a comprehensive Community Health Assessment (CHA) every 3-4 years. The most recent Person County Community Health Assessment was conducted in 2022 and submitted to the State in March/April 2023. Through this process, overweight/obesity and substance abuse were identified as health priorities. Within six months of the completion of the CHA, a workgroup, consisting of community leaders, providers, and partners, collaborated to develop Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIPs) to address the two health priorities. In September 2023, CHIPs were submitted to the State through the web-based Clear Impact Scorecard. The CHIPs follow the Results-Based Accountability framework. Results-Based Accountability is a disciplined way of thinking and taking action used by communities to improve the lives of children, families, and the community as a whole. It is also a framework used by agencies to improve the performance of their programs.

In the interim years between CHAs, local health departments are responsible for submitting a State of the County Health (SOTCH) Report. This is an abridged report that provides updates on progress made towards addressing health priorities, changes in morbidity and mortality data since the CHA, information on emerging issues, and details on any new/paused/discontinued initiatives. SOTCH Reports are also submitted to the State electronically through the Clear Impact Scorecard. Due to this submission requirement and format change from years past, the SOTCH Report will appear different to stakeholders, community partners, and the general public. Call Person County Health Department (PCHD) at 336-597-2204 with questions about this report, to learn about local public health services, or to get involved with addressing priority areas.

The next section of the 2025 SOTCH Report provides information about progress made on CHIPs.

Progress on CHIPs

Person County health priorities are addressed in the CHIPs. Click on the links below for Progress Made in 2025.

Note: For anyone viewing this report outside the realms of the Scorecard, information about the programs/activities below is provided through attachments.

For the priority area **Overweight and Obesity** see progress tabs for each program below.

[Diabetes Prevention Program](#)

[Med-South Lifestyle Program](#)

[Healthy Eating/Physical Activity/Weight Management Resource Guide](#)

For the priority area **Substance Abuse** see progress tabs for each program below.

[CATCH My Breath](#)

[Freedom From Smoking \(Cessation Program\)](#)

[Faith Community Education Initiative](#)

[Opioid Settlement Initiative](#)

Morbidity and Mortality Changes Since Last CHA

The most significant changes in Person County's morbidity and mortality data since the CHA are as follows:

- Person County's teen pregnancy rate for females ages 15-19 increased from 2020 (25.8) to 2023 (30.0), and remained above the comparable state rate (20.8).

- Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are the most common communicable diseases in Person County. The percentage of STIs accounting for communicable diseases decreased from 2021 (92%) to 2025 (85%). Chlamydia remained the most prevalent STI, followed by gonorrhea.
- The prevalence of diagnosed obesity in adults ages 20+ in Person County increased from 2019 (22.3%) to 2023 (31%).
- The percentage of Person County residents dispensed opioid pills decreased from 2021 (13.4) to 2024 (8.9).
- The overdose emergency department visit rate in Person County decreased from 2021 (182.3) to 2025 (109.6).
- Person County's estimated overdose death rate decreased from 2021 (33.2) to 2024 (29.9).
- The percentage of overdose deaths due to illicit opioids decreased from 2020 (63.6) to 2024 (58.3).
- The infant mortality rate was 9.5 in 2016-2020. In 2019-2023, the rate was not reported due to there being less than 20 cases.
- COVID-19 went from being the 14th leading cause of death in 2016-2020 to the 4th leading cause of death in 2019-2023.
- Deaths from unintentional motor vehicle injuries were not ranked among the top 10 leading causes of death in the CHA, but were ranked as the 9th leading cause of death in 2019-2023.
- The 2019-2023 data revealed that deaths from kidney disease and suicide were no longer among the top 10 leading causes of death, as they were in the CHA data.

Other notable mortality data for Person County includes the 10 leading causes of death for 2019-2023:

1. **Diseases of the heart** (1)
2. **Cancer** (2)
3. All other unintentional injuries (3)
4. **COVID-19** (14)
5. **Chronic lower respiratory diseases** (4)
6. Stroke (5)
7. **Diabetes** (6)
8. Alzheimer's disease (7)
9. **Unintentional Motor Vehicle Injuries** (11)
10. **Septicemia** (9)

NOTES: **Bold** - Person County's rate exceeded the comparable state rate for 2019-2023. (#) - Ranking cited in the CHA for 2016-2020.

Definitions:

- Morbidity - refers generally to the current presence of injury, sickness, or disease in the living population.
- Mortality - death, especially on a larger scale.
- Prevalence - refers to the number of existing cases of a disease or health condition in a population at a defined point in time or during a defined period. Prevalence is usually expressed as a proportion, not a rate.
- All other unintentional injuries - includes deaths without purposeful intent due to poisoning, falls, burns, choking, animal bites, drowning, and occupational and recreational injuries.
- Chronic lower respiratory diseases - chronic disease of the airways and other structures of the lung; some of the most common are asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, occupational lung diseases, and pulmonary hypertension.
- Septicemia - or sepsis - clinical name for blood poisoning by bacteria.

Data Sources:

- NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), NC State Center for Health Statistics - Statistics and Reports/Vital Statistics, NC Reported Pregnancies; 2022 and 2025 County Health Data Books
- County-Level Data: Risk Factors for Diabetes: Obesity. Centers for Disease Control National Diabetes Surveillance System
- NC Electronic Disease Surveillance System

Emerging Issues Since Last CHA

Emerging Issues in 2025

In 2025, there were eight animal rabies cases. Those cases involved raccoons, skunks, bats, a bobcat, and a coyote. PCHD partnered with Person County Animal Services, Person Memorial Hospital, Duke University Medical Center, UNC Medical Center, Roxboro Animal Hospital, and local medical providers to ensure that prophylactic measures were taken with any animal and human exposures. Person County Government's Public Information Officer collaborated with various partners to distribute information and advisements to the community.

Data Source: Person County Health Department

New/Paused/Discontinued Initiatives Since Last CHA

New/Paused/Discontinued Initiatives in 2025:

- PCHD collaborated with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina to offer the Freedom From Smoking (FFS) program. FFS, an eight-session smoking cessation program, utilizes a facilitator-led group setting to help participants quit using nicotine products.
- Person County Opioid Settlement funds supported the startup of a Post Overdose Response Team through Person County Emergency Management.
- PCHD began offering free Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Express Testing. STD Express Testing is for asymptomatic individuals who desire to be tested. The Health Department consults with its Duke Medical Director and the State Disease Intervention Specialist, as needed, to assure that patients get the care they need.
- Tuberculosis skin testing was reinstated by PCHD for a minimal fee of \$30. This service is primarily for individuals mandated by their employer to be tested upon hire or required to be tested upon entry to an educational institution.
- PCHD began collaborating with the University of Michigan's Adolescent Health Initiative to implement an Adolescent-Centered Environment Assessment Process (ACE-AP). ACE-AP is an 18 month, comprehensive self-assessment and guided process to foster improvements towards creating more adolescent friendly health care settings.
- Upon conducting an accessibility review with the North Carolina Office on Disability and Health, PCHD implemented facility/environmental changes to increase its capacity to serve individuals with access and functional needs. Such changes included: making room for mobility devices in waiting rooms, repositioning the exam table in the access and functional needs clinic room for easier entry from a mobility device, adding more accessible parking spaces in the Person County Human Services parking lot, adjusting the pressure on interior doors to the recommended level, and repairing a ramp at the Morgan Street Government Center (which houses Environmental Health).
- The Diabetes Prevention Program was paused after the July 2024 cohort concluded in June 2025. Numerous recruitment efforts by PCHD and Cooperative Extension partners did not yield enough participation to start a new cohort.
- After piloting the Med-South Lifestyle Program in 2024, Cooperative Extension and PCHD did not offer the program again in 2025. It is uncertain if this program will be continued.

Data Sources: Person County Health Department and Cooperative Extension

P Diabetes Prevention Program

What We Do

The Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) is a series of sessions over the course of a year. Trained Lifestyle Coaches (LCs) work with participants to optimize behavior change, to help them work towards a goal of 5-7% weight loss and a goal of 150 minutes of physical activity a week. LCs use strategies that focus on self-monitoring of diet and physical activity, building social support for maintaining lifestyle changes, etc. The local DPP is a collaborative effort of Person County Health Department and Cooperative Extension.

Who We Serve

Individuals ages 18+, with a BMI of 25 or higher, who are prediabetic (determined by a blood test or risk test), or who had gestational diabetes may be eligible for the DPP.

How We Impact

Lifestyle changes in DPP participants often result in weight loss, increased physical activity, increased mindfulness about behaviors, reduced A1C levels, etc.

Progress in 2023

See the 2023 Person County SOTCH Report for progress in 2023. Go to www.personcountync.gov (to find the Health Department's page and this report).

Progress in 2024

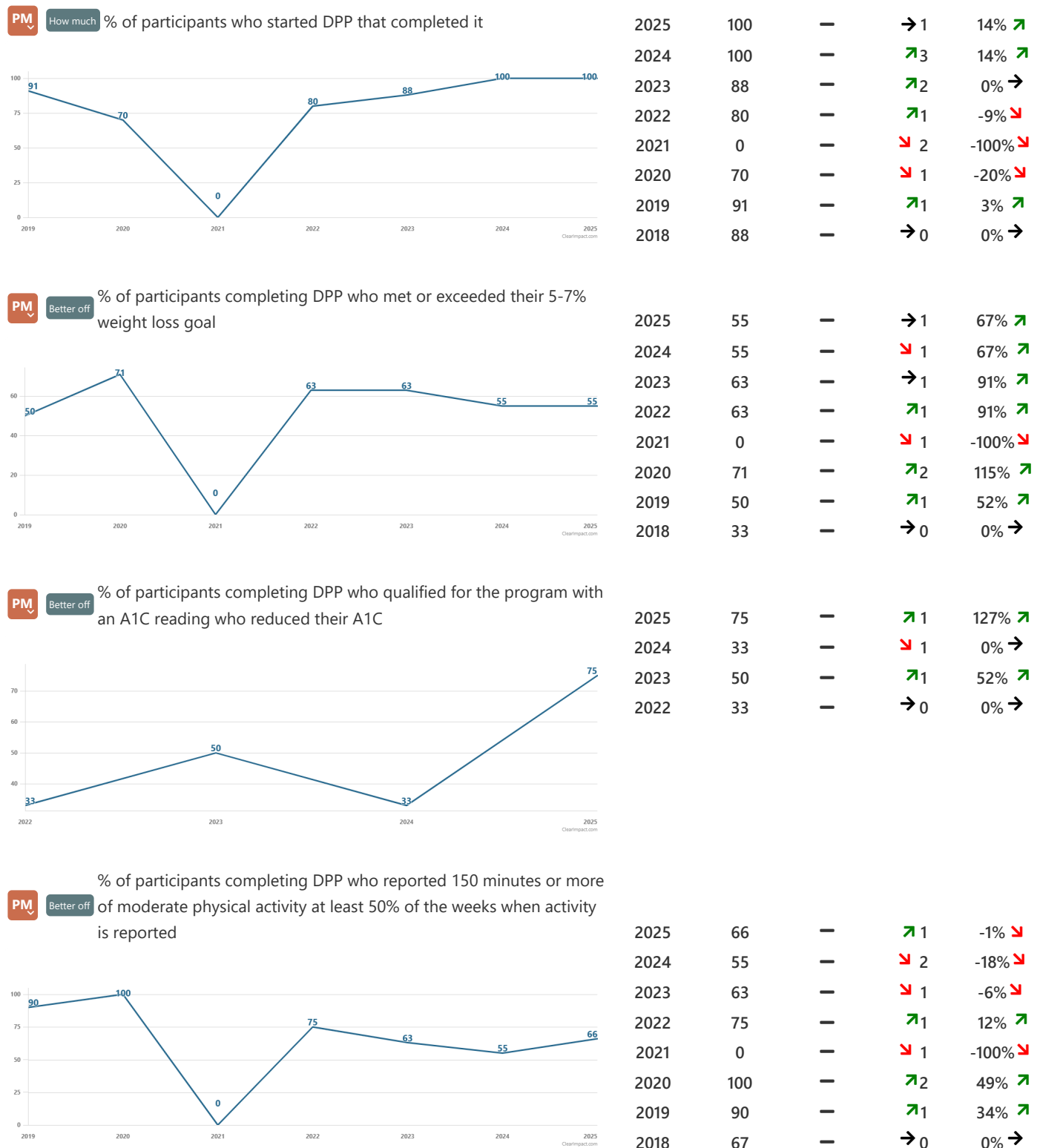
In May 2024, the DPP's seventh cohort concluded with 11 participants. The eighth cohort started in July with nine participants and will end in June 2025. Efforts to recruit participants for the eighth cohort included a Community Screening Event (offering free A1C testing, BMI measurements, a diabetes risk test, and testimonials from former participants), Facebook postings, newspaper ads, radio ads, church bulletin inserts, and information sessions. The data section of the scorecard reflects outcomes for the seventh cohort.

Progress in 2025

The eighth DPP cohort ended in June 2025. The program started and ended with the same nine participants. All nine participants were very dedicated to session attendance as well as attending make-up sessions if they were absent. There were three individuals with perfect attendance who did not require any make-up sessions. The data section of the scorecard reflects outcomes for the eighth cohort.

Efforts to recruit participants for the ninth cohort, scheduled to start in July 2025, included: numerous information sessions, a meeting with local medical providers to encourage referrals to DPP, newspaper advertisements, radio announcements, church bulletin inserts, flyer distributions, social media and website postings, meeting announcements, etc. Due to low registration, this cohort was postponed until 2026.

Measures



P Med-South Lifestyle Program

What We Do

The Med-South Lifestyle Program (MSLP) is the culmination of lifestyle interventions developed and tested by researchers at the University of North Carolina Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. This program can be implemented in a clinical or community setting. The MSLP is delivered in four monthly, individual or group sessions that last between 45-60 minutes. Each session includes a brief dietary assessment, background information, and goal-setting guidance. Sessions incorporate behavioral approaches targeting motivation, self-regulation, problem-solving, and self-monitoring skills to address challenges to making changes in eating habits and physical activity behaviors.

Who We Serve

The MSLP is for use in public health and clinical practice settings in hopes to reach people of color, rural residents, and medically underserved populations.

How We Impact

The MSLP works towards participant outcomes that may include: an increase in fruit and vegetable intake, a reduction in the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, an increase in the intake of nuts, and an increase in moderate-intensity physical activity.

Progress in 2023

The MSLP will not be implemented until 2024.

Progress in 2024

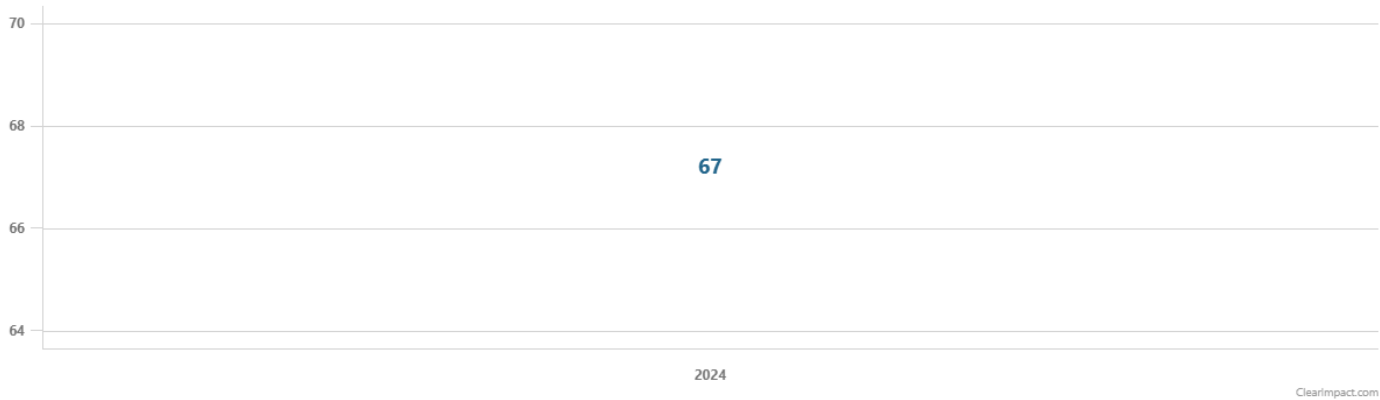
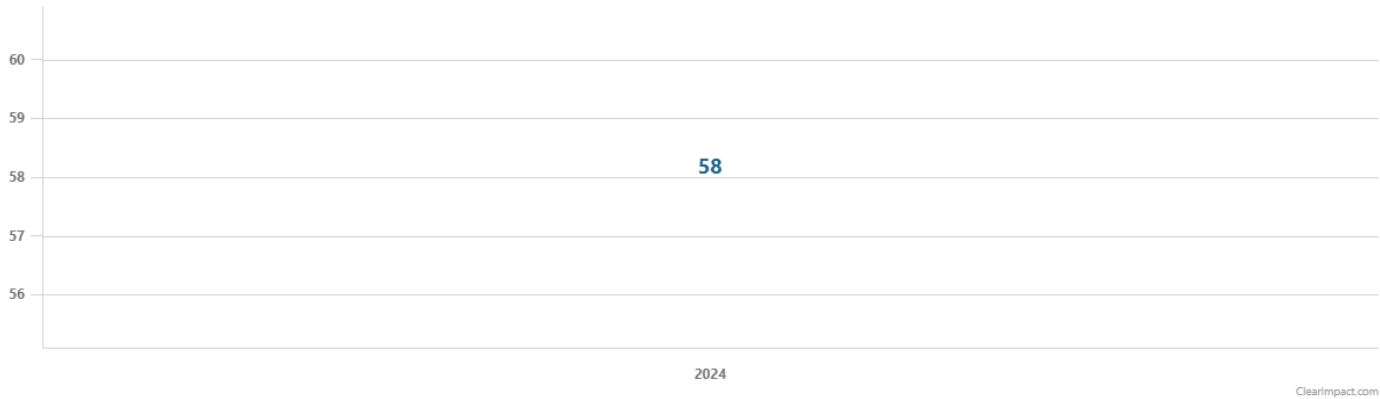
The MSLP was piloted in 2024. It was a collaborative effort of Cooperative Extension and Person County Health Department. Fourteen people initially registered for the program, while 12 actually completed it. Performance measure data is based on participants completing the program.

Progress in 2025

The MSLP was not offered in 2025. It is uncertain if program partners will continue to offer this program in the near future. This program was not as impactful as anticipated.

Measures

Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Target Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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PM

Better off

% of participants increasing their consumption of nuts

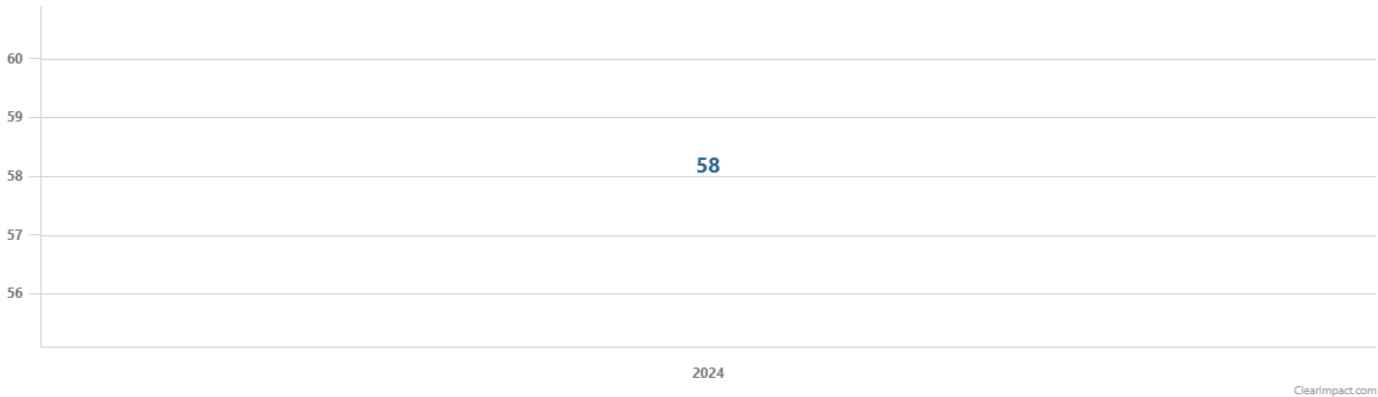
2024

58

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→ 0

0% →



PM

Better off

% of participants increasing moderate-intensity physical activity

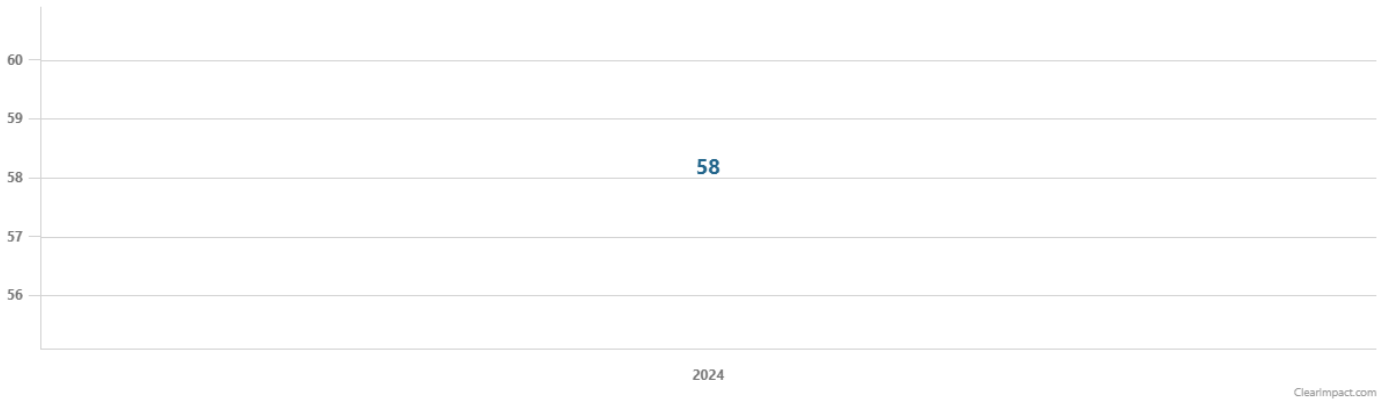
2024

58

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→ 0

0% →



A Healthy Eating/Physical Activity/Weight Management Resource Guide

Description

The *Move to a Healthier Weight in Person* resource guide provides a non-exhaustive list of Person County resources that can help Personians achieve and maintain a healthy weight. Resources highlighted focus on healthy eating, physical activity, and weight loss/management.

Progress in 2023

The *Move to a Healthier Weight in Person* resource guide was in the production phase in late 2023.

Progress in 2024

Healthy Personians' Chronic Disease Action Team produced the *Move to a Healthier Weight in Person* resource guide for distribution at community events, various programs, etc. In 2024, 804 guides were distributed and/or made available at public sites. Partners distributing the guide included Person County Health Department, Cooperative Extension, Person County Recreation, Arts and Parks, Person County Senior Center, and Person Memorial Hospital. This publication can also be found on the Health Department's website.

Progress in 2025

Partner agencies estimated that 575+ copies of the *Move to a Healthier Weight in Person* resource guide were distributed at various events and programs in 2025. This does not account for the number of times this guide might have been accessed from Person County Health Department's (PCHD) website. It is speculated that distribution efforts were underreported. In addition to PCHD, partners involved with distribution efforts included Cooperative Extension, Person County Senior Center, and Person Family Medical Center.

P CATCH My Breath

What We Do

CATCH My Breath is a youth vaping prevention program led by trained facilitators. Facilitators lead participants in four, 30 minute sessions. The sessions utilize social emotional learning, peer-facilitated cooperative learning groups, large group discussions, analysis of mass media, and goal setting.

Who We Serve

CATCH My Breath targets middle and high school students. The program will be piloted first in Person County middle schools.

How We Impact

CATCH My Breath's peer-led teaching approach empowers students with the knowledge and skills needed to make informed decisions about e-cigarettes and to resist social pressures to vape.

Progress in 2023

The anticipated initiation date for CATCH My Breath at Northern Middle School is March 2024.

Progress in 2024

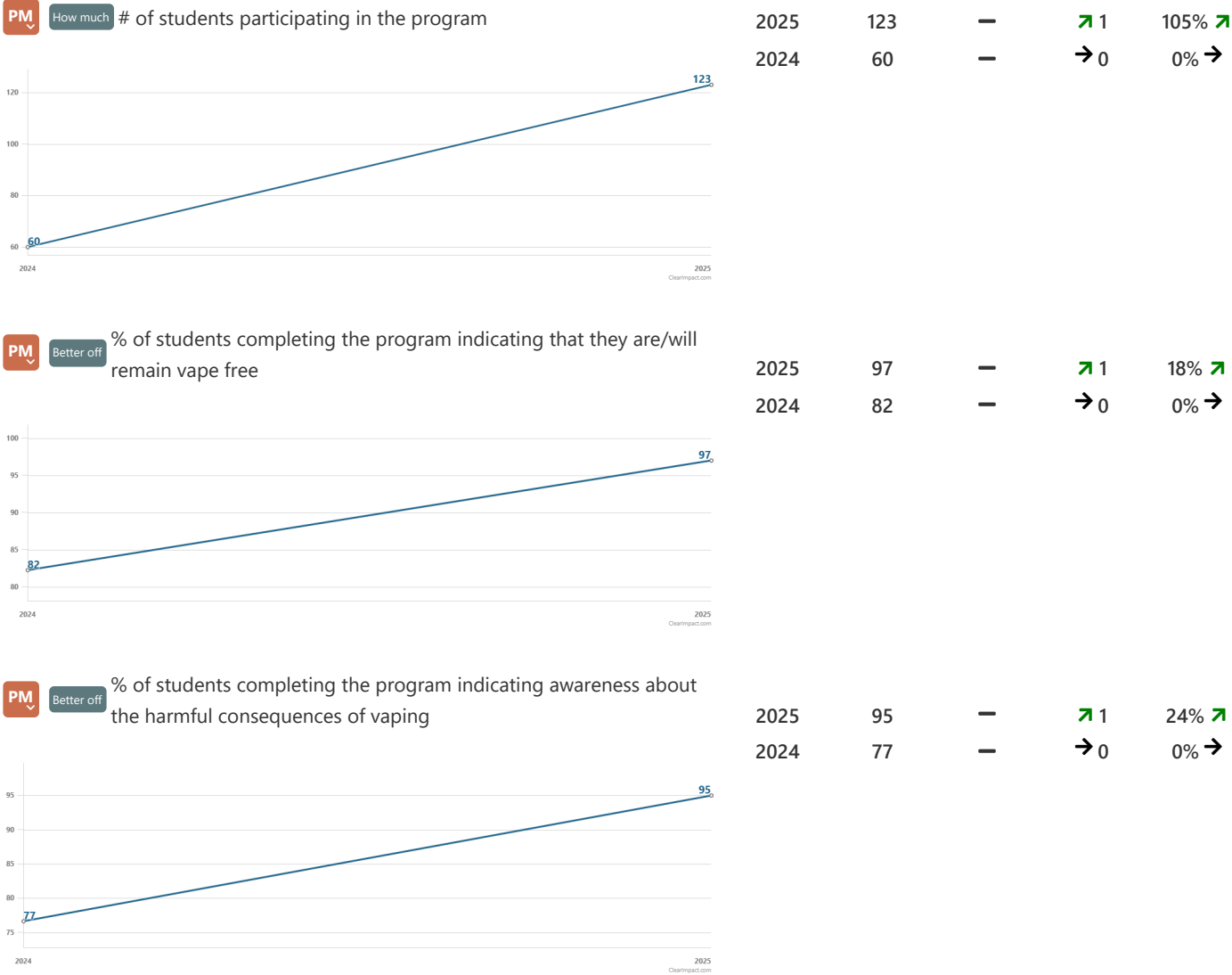
In March of 2024, CATCH My Breath was piloted at Northern Middle School. The program was delivered to 60 sixth-grade students. The data collected from this program's evaluation was used as the baseline. Person County Health Department's (PCHD) Public Health Educator presented Person County Schools' Nursing Supervisor and school administration with the results from the program's evaluation. PCHD received approval from Person County's Board of Education to implement the program with both Northern Middle School and Southern Middle School in the spring of 2025.

Progress in 2025

In March of 2025, CATCH My Breath was administered at Northern and Southern Middle Schools in Person County. The program was administered to 123 student participants. A post-evaluation of this program showed an increase of up to 27% in participants' knowledge of the dangers of vaping. A full report was forwarded to the Person County Schools' Nurse Supervisor.

Measures

Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Target Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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P Freedom From Smoking (Cessation Program)

What We Do

Freedom From Smoking (FFS) is an eight-session tobacco cessation program designed to help participants quit using tobacco products. FFS facilitators utilize the Stages of Change Model which focuses on the following stages: Precontemplation (not ready to quit), Contemplation (thinking about quitting), Preparation (preparing to quit), Action (quitting), Maintenance (staying quit), and Termination (living quit). The FFS program encourages participants to work on the process of quitting, both as individuals and as a group. Group interaction is a critical part of the program.

FFS focuses on assertive communication, coping skills, proper use of cessation medications, building and maintaining motivation, nicotine addiction, physical activity, recovery and grief, relapse prevention, self-monitoring, social support, stress management, and weight management.

Who We Serve

This program serves Person County residents ages 18 and over who want to quit tobacco products.

How We Impact

FFS aims to increase the number of non-smokers in Person County by providing residents with the tools and motivation to quit tobacco products for good.

Progress in 2023

Progress in 2024

Progress in 2025

In September 2025, FFS was initiated by Person County Health Department. Six participants attended the first session; however, four participants attended sessions two through eight. During week four of the program, all participants quit tobacco and nicotine products and remained quit through the remainder of the sessions. During the final session, the graduates completed a program evaluation. The graduates shared that the FFS program helped them feel empowered to take action to improve their health. The graduates also expressed a sense of pride in their ability to quit and remain tobacco and nicotine free. Finally, the participants stated that they would recommend the FFS program to family, friends, and coworkers.

Measures

Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Target Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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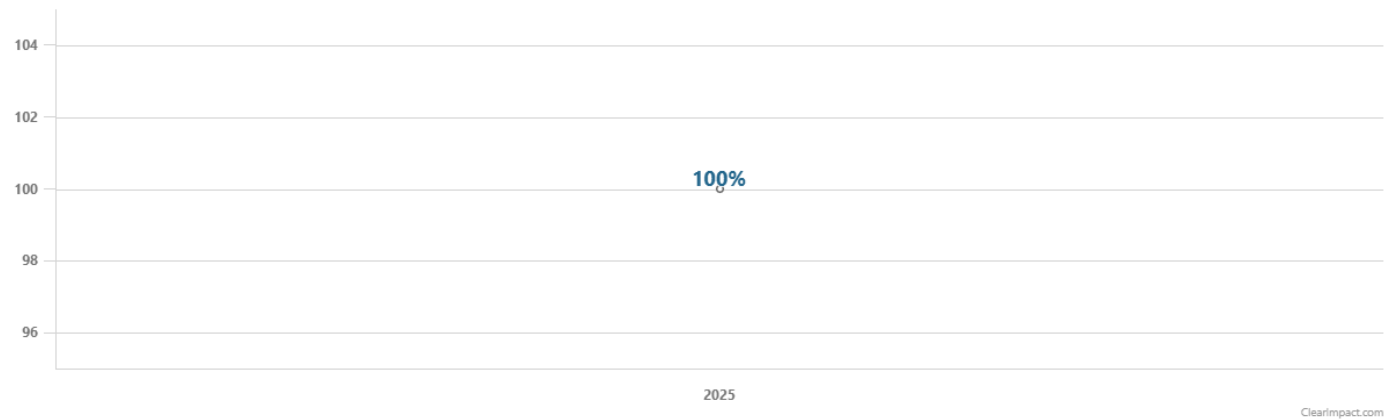
PM How much # of registered participants 2025 6 - → 0 0% →



PM How many # of registered participants completing program 2025 4 - → 0 0% →



PM Better off % of participants completing the program smoke-free 2025 100% - → 0 0% →



ST Faith Community Education Initiative

What We Do

The Faith Community Education Initiative (FCEI), a collaborative effort of the Substance Use Disorder Subcommittee (SUDS), provides educational materials and resources that address substance use disorder and mental health. This initiative hosts informational sessions and provides literature.

Who We Serve

The FCEI provides services to Person County faith-based organizations.

How We Impact

The FCEI aims to impact those served by providing them with information that may increase their knowledge of substance use disorders and mental health concerns, as well as local resources to which they can refer others. The impact can be felt countywide as more residents are getting assistance with substance use disorders and mental health concerns.

Progress in 2023

In August 2023, SUDS began planning to implement the FCEI in March of 2024.

Progress in 2024

In March 2024, SUDS hosted a resource event for Person County pastors. This event focused on identifying resources where Personians could find help with mental health and substance abuse issues. There were 13 pastors in attendance. A post event survey was conducted, and it was determined that the participants wanted more of these learning activities.

In response to the March 2024 event, SUDS hosted a second event in October 2024 for Person County pastors and community organizations. The event was an in-person suicide prevention training. There were 14 attendees who received Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR) Training and were awarded a QPR Gatekeeper Certificate indicating that all the requirements of the QPR Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Program were met. This certificate is valid for one year and is proof of two contact hours of continuing education credit. Certificate holders have received training on how to persuade individuals to seek help when having suicidal thoughts. There were seven attendees who received 988 suicide prevention flyers and brochures and agreed to display them in a visible location in their facilities. Participants taking 988 suicide prevention materials included pastors, a community college representative, and a representative from a group that mentors fathers. SUDS will plan for more events in 2025.

Progress in 2025

In June 2025, SUDS hosted an in-person suicide prevention training for community and faith-based organizations. This year, the invitation to participate was extended to community partners and the community at-large. There were nine participants who received Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR) training and were awarded a QPR Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper certificate. This certificate is valid for one year and is proof of two contact hours of continuing education credit. The QPR training participants consisted of pastors, a youth pastor, representatives from the Person County Department of Social Services, community outreach representatives from mental health agencies, and an administrative assistant from a local mortuary service. Four attendees received 988 suicide prevention flyers and brochures and agreed to display them in a visible location in their facilities.

Opioid Settlement Initiative

What We Do

Person County received a share of settlement funds derived from national lawsuits brought by state and local governments across the US against opioid manufacturers, marketers, distributors, and retailers. The Person County Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee (OSAC) was created to review needs in Person County and provide spending recommendations, in line with spending options provided in the NC Memorandum of Agreement. The committee's overall goal is to implement evidence-based programs and practices to reduce the negative impacts of opioid use. Two spending strategies were recommended by the OSAC and approved by the Person County Board of County Commissioners. The first strategy is a Post Overdose Response Team, which will provide resources and access to care to individuals who have experienced a non-fatal overdose. The second strategy is Early Intervention. Person County Schools personnel will be working to identify and intervene for Person County children and youth in need.

Who We Serve

The Post Overdose Response Team will aim to serve persons who have experienced non-fatal drug overdoses. Children and adolescents who are struggling with problematic use of drugs or mental health conditions or at-risk for problematic use of drugs or mental health conditions are the target audiences for the Early Intervention strategy.

How We Impact

The intention of the Post Overdose Response Team is to connect persons who have non-fatal drug overdoses to addiction treatment, recovery support, harm reduction services, primary healthcare, or other services or supports they need to improve their health or well-being.

The Early Intervention strategy will support identification and intervention for target audiences. Training programs will be offered targeting parents, family members, caregivers, teachers, school staff, peers, neighbors, health and human services professionals, or others in contact with potential target audiences.

Progress in 2023

In 2023, the OSAC expanded its membership and became more robust. An annual meeting was held in the spring to present plans to date and to gather input from the community. The OSAC conducted a community survey to assess how funds should be spent and what they should support. There were 177 responses to the survey.

Progress in 2024

The Person County Board of County Commissioners approved spending funds to support a Post Overdose Response Team and an Early Intervention strategy. Funding for the Post Overdose Response Team will support initial start up costs, recurring operating costs, recurring personnel costs, and an additional contingency fund. Funds will be managed by Person County's Emergency Management Department. Funds designated for the Early Intervention strategy will support salary/benefits for a position, additional materials, trainings, external referrals, and other related costs to advance qualifying activities and services. Personnel will be hired through Person County Schools. Funds will be managed by Person County Health Department.

In quarter four of FY 2024, a Substance Use Education Specialist (SUES) was onboarded through Person County Schools. The SUES began servicing students and making referrals shortly after the start of the new school year.

An annual meeting was held in the spring. The approved spending plan was presented and progress from FY 2024 was reviewed.

Progress in 2025

Person County Opioid Settlement funds supported the startup of a Post Overdose Response Team through Person County Emergency Management. The program became operational in September 2025. Funds designated for the Early Intervention strategy supported a Substance Use Education Specialist with Person County Schools, trainings for staff, and interventions with students. Additionally, the Person County Board of County Commissioners allocated funding to support a Recovery Housing Support strategy through Freedom House Recovery Center for startup operational funds for a Substance Use Halfway House. The FY25 annual meeting was held in June 2025. The Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee initiated a community survey to gather community input in October 2025. The results of the survey were shared at the FY26 annual community meeting in December 2025.