

# Community Health Implementation Strategy

FY 2022 -2025

# Executive Summary

ECU Health Roanoke Chowan Hospital (formally Vidant Roanoke Chowan Hospital) is a 114-bed hospital located in Ahoskie, North Carolina that provides a wide range of general and specialized healthcare services for approximately 44,000 community members in a four-county Roanoke-Chowan area including Hertford, Bertie, Gates, and Northampton Counties.

ECU Health Roanoke Chowan is one of nine hospitals that comprise ECU Health. ECU Health is a regional health system serving 1.4 million people in 29 counties throughout rural eastern North Carolina. Most of the counties served by ECU Health are listed in the top 40 most economically distressed areas in the state (67% of ECU Health Health's counties are classified as Tier 1 counties; 33% of the counties are classified as Tier 2 counties). The system consists of ECU Health Medical Center (an academic medical center), eight community hospitals, an ambulatory surgery center, wellness, and rehabilitation facilities, home health agencies and other independently operated health services. ECU Health is affiliated with the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University. The mission of ECU Health is to improve the health and well-being of eastern North Carolina. Our vision is to become a national model for rural health and wellness by creating a premier, trusted health care delivery and education system. Integral to our mission is our commitment to be responsive to our community's needs and to provide high quality, cost-effective health care services.

## Description of Community

As of 2019, the population of Hertford County was 23,667, nearly evenly divided by gender. Whites composed 35.1 % of the total population; Blacks/African Americans 59.4 %; and Hispanic or Latino of any race at 3.8%. Approximately 13% of county residents do not have health insurance. Almost 19% of residents are Medicaid eligible.

Hertford County is designated as a Tier 1 county, meaning it is one of the 40 most economically distressed counties in the state. Hertford County's median income per household is \$41,028, which is below North Carolina as a whole. Poverty levels in Hertford County for 2015 - 2019 are higher than the surrounding region with 22% of the population living below the poverty level. Approximately 80.8% of Bertie County's residents over the age of 25 years have a high school degree or higher, compared to the state rate of 87.8%. These factors contribute to the health challenges identified in the 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment.

## Participants

### Health ENC – 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment

Initiated in 2015 by the Office of Health Access at the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University, Health ENC grew out of conversations with health care leaders about improving the community health needs assessment (CHNA) process in eastern North Carolina. Health ENC, now a partnership among county health departments and hospitals in eastern NC, coordinates a regional CHNA in 33 counties of eastern North Carolina. In addition, the Health ENC Program Manager works to build coalitions and partnerships that will address health issues identified through the regional CHNA process.

As part of the assessment process, members of ECU Health Roanoke Chowan Hospital, Roanoke Chowan Community Health Center and several partner organizations worked collaboratively to distribute a community health opinion survey to various segments of the population in Hertford County. The survey was printed in English and Spanish and distributed to a broad range of people in the community, targeting different income levels, including underserved members of the community, the elderly, and the general population. In addition to the paper surveys, a web-based survey tool was developed by Health ENC and made available to the public through different email lists. The survey was also publicized through the local newspaper and social media. The survey was used to collect primary data from April – June, 2021. A total of 374 community members completed the survey. Due to the situation with COVID-19 in our counties, we did not hold focus groups for this cycle but focused our efforts to make sure surveys closely mirrored the population demographics.

### **Community Key Stakeholder Group – Hertford County**

The following community stakeholders/organizations were represented in the planning, data review and prioritization process for the 2022 Hertford County CHNA:

- ECU Health Roanoke-Chowan Hospital
- Albemarle Regional Health Services
- Hertford Health Maintenance Alliance
- ECU Health

## **ECU Health Roanoke Chowan Hospital Community Benefits Grants Program**

ECU Health is committed to improving the health and well-being of eastern North Carolina. We partner and serve community members throughout the continuum of care. With our mission at the forefront of our efforts, ECU Health Medical Center (formerly Vidant Medical Center) made a substantial donation to the ECU Health Foundation (formerly Vidant Health Foundation) in 1998 to establish the Community Benefit and Health Initiatives Grants program. In 2006, the program extended its outreach by establishing a Regional Community Benefits Grants program which works with ECU Health regional hospitals to distribute grants to their communities.

The goal of the program is to support outreach projects that focus on wellness and prevention strategies. The Community Benefit Grants program supports community partners to educate people about disease prevention and management, provide people with the knowledge and tools to be successful in their own health care and establish programs within communities, making them available and more accessible to community members who need these programs/services. ECU Health Roanoke Chowan Hospital distributes over \$100,000 annually to various agencies / organizations in its service area.

The committee's funding focus areas are based on the health priorities identified in the most recent CHNA.

## 2022 Community Health Priorities for Hertford County

The comprehensive 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment for Hertford County included significant input from community members, as well as a wealth of information from local, state, and national data sources. Key stakeholders reviewed primary and secondary data. Following an in-depth discussion of the assessment data and existing community resources, the key stakeholder group selected three health priorities for focus over the next three years.

These three health priorities are:

- Access to Care
- Chronic Disease
- Healthy Lifestyles
  - Emphasis on substance abuse

# Implementation Strategies

## Priority Health Need: Access to Care

**Goal: To improve community and provider knowledge of the health and human services and support structures available in Hertford County.**

**Strategies:**

- Implement the NCCARE 360 program at the hospital so care managers can access referral and resources to address social determinants of health.
- Provide continued grant funding for the Access Health network for indigent and uninsured community members in Hertford County.
- Continue the grant-funded pilot project for rural transportation called TRIP. Based at the community health center, TRIP provides transportation for community members with chronic disease to increase primary care visits, reduce ED visits, and show health improvement outcomes.
- Continue the hospital's pediatric asthma program that addresses social determinants of health for the pediatric patients served in this program.
- Promote the use of Telehealth/Vidant Now and Immediate Care to help community members receive services needed in a timely manner.

## Priority Health Need: Chronic Disease

**Goal: To reduce the rate of chronic disease in Hertford County through education and prevention efforts and early detection, along with improving the health and well-being of people living with chronic disease.**

**Strategies:**

- Promote preventative health screenings (cholesterol, glucose, blood pressure) for chronic disease.
- Offer transitional care services to connect patients with chronic conditions to community services.
- Host annual Men's Health, Pink Power (women's health), and Heart Health education and awareness events for Hertford County community members at no charge.
- Continue cancer initiatives with the Vidant Roanoke-Chowan Cancer Committee to increase awareness, education, screenings/prevention activities, and all around care of those battling disease.
- Offer stroke education/screenings to different businesses, churches, and community partners to raise awareness and prevention.
- Continue to provide specialty health care services in the Vidant Roanoke – Chowan Hospital Outpatient Specialty Clinic and other specialty offices in Ahoskie, reducing the need for community members to travel outside the community for these services.

## Priority Health Need: Healthy Lifestyles

**Goal:** To improve the health status of the community by promoting healthy lifestyle behaviors and treating whole self with “lifestyle medicine”. Emphasis in Substance Abuse prevention.

### Strategies:

- Serve on local regional council (PICH) to promote farmers’ markets and access to fresh vegetables and fruits in the Roanoke-Chowan area.
- Participate in the Hertford Health Maintenance Alliance initiatives, which promotes all around health education/awareness within Hertford County with collaborative community partners.
- Provide medical model wellness center individual and group fitness programs for community members.
- Provide “Exercise is Medicine” program for high-risk patients referred by primary care providers.
- Provide Healthy Neighbors faith-based health initiative to churches in Hertford County and partner with faith-based associations to deliver health education.
- Offer comprehensive child/adolescent health and fitness programs at the wellness center.
- Continue Infant Mortality initiatives with community partners and our Child Fatality Prevention Team to better the health and life of newborns and mothers.
- Host an annual Senior Health and Fitness Day.
- Provide free educational classes and seminars on health & fitness and healthy cooking at the wellness center throughout the year.
- Continue to serve as the lead agency for the Hertford Northampton Opioid Crisis Coalition – a collaborative to educate the public about the dangers of opioid drug overdose and prevent death by overdose of opioids.
- Provide annual educational events focused on behavioral health and substance abuse to increase awareness and knowledge of mental health and addiction disorders in the community.
- Collaborate with Trillium and Tobacco Living Coalition to align community health education and promotion efforts.
- Collaborate with Hertford County Public Schools to implement evidence based programming for middle and high school students focused on substance use/abuse called “Catch My Breath”.

## Approval

ECU Health Roanoke Chowan Hospital’s Implementation Strategy for 2022-2025 was approved by the ECU Health Community Hospitals’ Board of Directors on July 26, 2022.



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Chair, ECU Health Community Hospitals’ Board of Directors

7/26/22

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Date