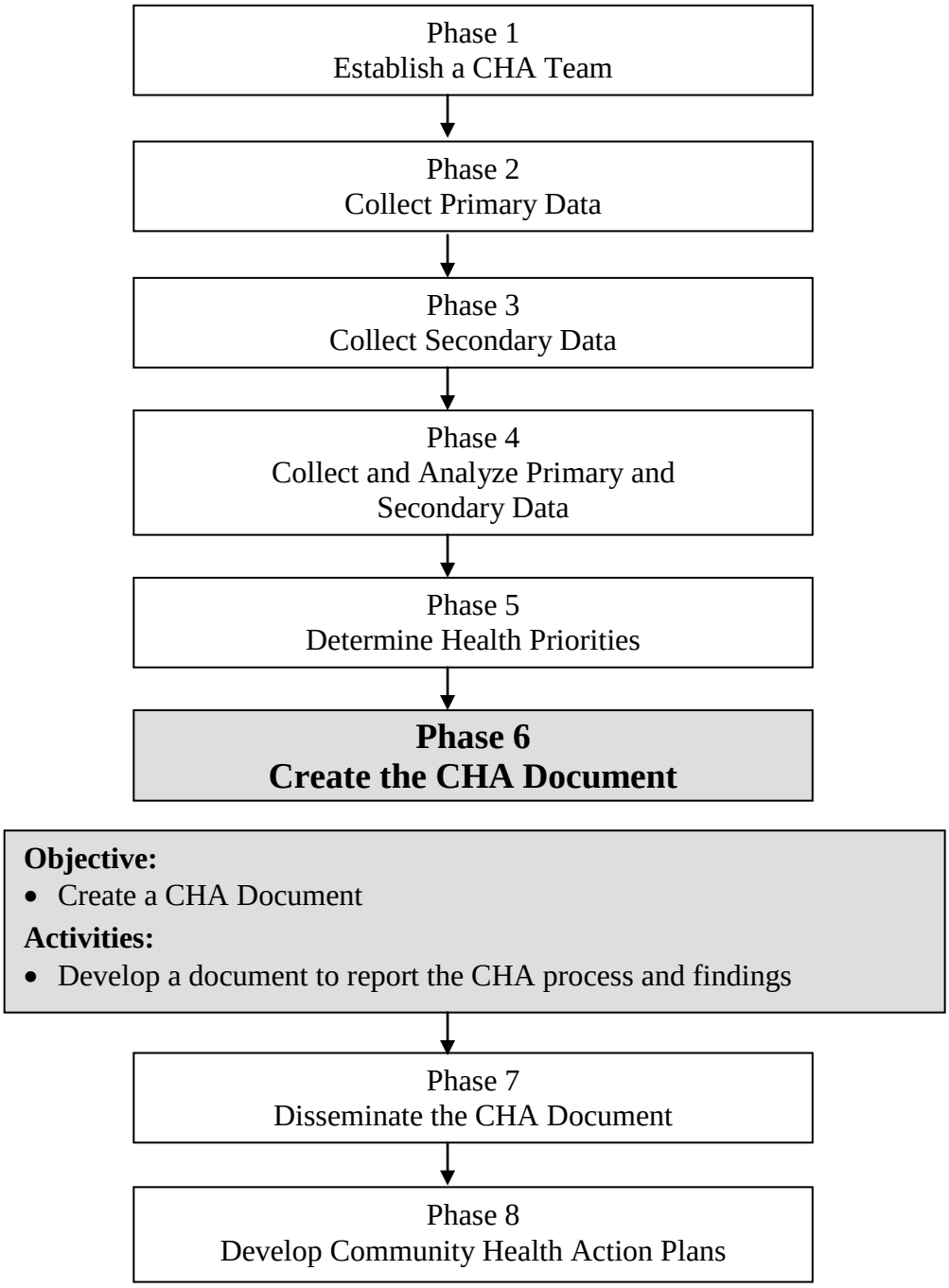
NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT PROCESS



Essential Services #3 Give people information they need to make healthy choices

Benchmark #1 LHD shall conduct and disseminate results of regular community health assessments

Accreditation Activity 1.1.k Identify leading community health problems

Consolidated Agreement Include a narrative of the assessment findings

Additional Accreditation Benchmarks may apply to the CHA (verify by Accreditation Site visit and LHD self-assessment instrument)

Phase 6: Create the CHA Document

Once the data report is presented to the community and health priorities determined, the information needs to be compiled into a CHA document. In this document, describe both the process including the individuals and organizations involved and the findings. The local board of health must review and approve the CHA document when completed. See the suggested outline below for details on information to include in the CHA document.

Some CHA Teams divide the writing responsibilities between several members – each person writes one section or chapter. This keeps the writing workload from being a burden on one person. If this method is used, one member of the CHA Team needs to review and edit the entire document after it is compiled to unify the formatting, writing style, and tone.

Write this document so that is easily understandable to a wide range of county residents. It is very important for the document to be accessible and understandable to people who do not have a background in health or a high level of education. Here are some tips to keep the document comprehensible to everyone:

- Avoid using jargon. Try to describe technical terms in simple everyday language (e.g., "asset mapping" can be described as "putting information together" about local programs and resources).
- Reference all acronyms the first time they are used. (e.g., "County X has rising numbers of people with cardiovascular disease (CVD)." If using the acronym many times throughout a long document, write out the full name at the beginning of each chapter.
- Break up the paragraphs in narrative sections. Shorter paragraphs are easier to read. Make sure each paragraph discusses just one topic.
- Use a charts, graphs, and tables to explain figures or numbers but introduce the topic and the data with a narrative.
- Streamline the document as much as possible. Much health information is available. Select only the most pertinent information. A document of several hundred pages is intimidating for even the most interested county residents.
- Cite data sources including the date the data was reported so that readers can find more information if they are interested in a particular issue.

Suggested CHA Document Outline

The following is a suggested outline of a CHA Document. Review community health assessments from other counties under County Profiles at www.healthycarolinians.org.

- **Title Page, Table of Contents, and Acknowledgements**

  List the CHA Team members and/or the organizations they represent, and their contributions including committee assignments and in-kind and financial contributions. This information can be included either in the acknowledgements or in Chapter 1 but include the complete list only once. A chart or table is a good way to display this information.

- **Executive Summary**

  Provide a brief overview and description of the county and a summary of the health, social, and environmental issues and resources found during the assessment. The Executive Summary should be brief enough so it can be easily reproduced for distribution to key individuals and groups in the county but long enough to present the important information clearly. Emphasize health priorities and emerging issues and the information that supports them. **The Executive Summary is very important as this may be the only part of the CHA document that many people read.**

- **Chapter 1 - Background and Introduction**

  Describe the importance of the CHA process to the health of the county residents. Comment on the relationship between community health assessment and public health department accreditation and program planning.

  Discuss the process used to establish the CHA Team including information on the recruitment process. If an established community group served as the CHA Team, describe that group and their roles in the CHA process. Describe how the CHA Team functioned during the process (subcommittees established, instruments used to collect community data, data analysis process, data report development, priorities setting process, and plans for action plan development). Discuss key partnerships (e.g., public health department and community partners) that were formed or strengthened as the result of this process.

- **Chapter 2 - Brief County Description**

  Geographic - Describe the area—list county and other district boundaries; include small area and county maps that describe roads, land features, development patterns, residential settlements, commercial locations, health facilities, and other key structures/facilities.

  Historical - Describe briefly how the county was founded, its traditions, practices, and stories including legends, beliefs, old wives tales, etc. that are part of the county's tradition and may influence certain health behaviors.

  Demographic - Describe the population by age, gender, race/ethnicity, urban vs. rural, year round vs. seasonal. Use maps, charts, and/or graphs to identify clusters or document growth. Develop a narrative to accompany the visual aids to explain the information.

  List data sources including date data was collected/reported.

➢ Chapter 3 - Health Data Collection Process

Describe the process used for collecting primary and secondary data and briefly review the tools used. Include the tools in the Appendices. Outline the process used for analyzing the data collected and discuss the method used to set priorities.

➢ Chapter 4 - Health Data Results

Overview - Describe the overall health status, opinions, and needs of county residents summarized from the data collected. Discuss socioeconomic factors that influence the health of county residents. Use maps, charts, and/or graphs with accompanying narratives. Suggested information:

- General health status/healthy days
- Health resources inventory
- Educational and socioeconomic factors
- Health problems and disabilities
- Barriers to health care
- Assistance with prescription/ medication needs

List data method/sources used including date data was collected.

Mortality - Describe the leading causes of death in the county and the infant mortality rate. Chart the leading causes of death by age, race/ethnicity, and gender. Compare this information to the information in the last CHA. Discuss reasons for the differences, if any. Use maps, charts, and/or graphs with accompanying narratives.

List data sources including date data was collected/reported.

Morbidity/Diseases – Describe the health problems or "disease burden" for the county and how county residents view these health problems. Compare this information to the information in the last CHA. Discuss reasons for the differences, if any. Use maps, charts, and/or graphs with accompanying narratives.

- Chronic disease rates
  - Cancer
  - Cardio vascular diseases
  - Diabetes
- Infectious disease rates
  - Influenza, pneumonia
- Injuries
- Obesity
- Oral Health
- Respiratory including tuberculosis
- STDs, HIV
- Maternal and Child Health
  - Prenatal care patterns including smoking behavior
  - Preterm birth
  - Low birth weight
  - Infant care practices including breastfeeding rates and "Back to Sleep" practices
  - Lead Poisoning

List data *sources including date data was collected/reported.*

Mental Health - Describe the mental health problems or "disease burden" for the county and how county residents view these health problems. Compare this information to the information in the last CHA document. Discuss reasons for the differences, if any. Use maps, charts, and/or graphs with accompanying narratives.

- Mental illness/developmental disabilities/substance abuse
- Access to counseling/referral services/case and crises management
- Treatment programs

List data *sources including date data was collected/reported.*

Health Care - Describe the health care needs and resources for the county and how county residents view these needs and resources. Compare this information to the information in the last CHA. Discuss reasons for the differences, if any. Use maps, charts, and/or graphs with accompanying narratives.

- Insurance coverage rates
- Hospital use
  - Barriers to access to healthcare
  - Causes of emergency room visits
  - Satisfaction with healthcare

List data sources including date data was collected/reported.

Determinants of Health – Provide an overview of the determinants of health and how these factors influence the health of county residents. Describe how county residents view these needs and resources. Compare this information to the information in the last CHA. Discuss reasons for the differences, if any. Use maps, charts, and/or graphs with accompanying narratives.

Social environment

- Education – attainment rates, dropout rates
- Families – child maltreatment and domestic violence rates, family composition, care for the elderly
- Religion
- Neighborhoods – organizations, facilities, unique identities, development patterns
- Crime/intentional injuries
- Social support/civic engagement

Financial/Economic Factors

- Income/poverty levels
- Employment rates
- Homeownership rates
- Food insecurity/access to healthy foods
- Financial assistance (Medicaid, Work First, Child Care subsidies, Food Stamps, etc)
- Transportation

Individual Behavior

- Substance use – tobacco, alcohol, illicit drugs
- Overweight/obesity rates
- Physical activity and nutrition
- Health screenings
- Family planning – contraception, pregnancy/abortion/fertility rates
- Motor vehicle injuries (seat belt usage, drinking and driving)

Physical environment

- Pollution
- Indoor and outdoor air quality
- Lead
- Water quality
- Recreation
- Transportation options

List data sources including date data was collected/reported.

- **Chapter 5 - Prevention and Health Promotion -** Provide an overview of the prevention and health promotion needs and resources and how these affect the health of county residents. Describe how county residents view these needs and use the resources. Compare this information to the information in the last CHA. Discuss reasons for the differences, if any. Use maps, charts, and/or graphs with accompanying narratives.
  - Screenings with educational/promotional programs
    - Cancer
    - Cholesterol/hypertension
    - Diabetes
    - HIV
    - Oral health
  - Educational/promotional programs and policies
    - Nutrition and physical activity
    - Tobacco cessation
    - Alcohol use
  - Community Support for Healthy Behaviors

  List data sources including date data was collected/reported.

- **Chapter 6 - Community Concerns/Priorities -** Summarize the results of data that describe the priority concerns of the community. Recount the procedures used to choose the community's health priorities. List the priorities that the community plans to work on.

Future Plans

CHA Document

After the CHA document is completed, it should be presented to the local board of health for approval and then disseminated to the residents of the county. (Phase 7 covers developing a Dissemination Plan.) The local public health department is responsible for submitting the community health assessment document by the **first Monday in December** of the year it is due. Send one hard copy and one electronic (PDF or Word) copy to:

Joy Reed, Branch Head
NC Community Assessment
Local Technical Assistance and Training branch
1916 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699–1916
Email: joy.reed@dhhs.nc.gov

State of the County's Health Report

The CHA Team must plan for completing an annual "State of the County's Health Report" (SOTCH) in each of the three years before the next CHA is due. The SOTCH report is a yearly update of health concerns and actions taken to address them and is part of the Consolidated Agreement between the NC Division of Public Health and local health departments. Collect and report data on the priority health issues in the county and progress made towards addressing these issues.

The State of the County's Health Report should include:

- Review of major morbidity and mortality data for the county

- Review of the health concerns selected as priorities
- Progress made in the past year on these priorities
- Review of any changes in the data that guided the selection of these priorities
- Changes in the county that affect health concerns (such as economic and/or political changes, new funds or grants available to address health problems)
- New and emerging issues that affect health status
- Ways community members can get involved with ongoing efforts

The report may include geography, history, demographic, social, economic, and political information. The format should be one that is useful to people interested in and/or involved in addressing and promoting community health.

The SOTCH is due by the **first Monday in December** (during years between health assessments). Send one hard copy and one electronic (PDF or Word) copy to:

Joy Reed, Branch Head
NC Community Assessment
Local Technical Assistance and Training Branch
1916 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699–1916
Email: joy.reed@dhhs.nc.gov

Community Health Action Plans

After developing and implementing a dissemination plan to introduce the CHA to residents across the county, the CHA Team will need to meet to develop the Community Health Action Plans. These plans are due by the **first Friday in June** following submitting the CHA document in December. Send an electronic (PDF or Word) copy. (Phase 8 covers developing Community Health Action Plans.)

Several months after the Community Health Action Plans have been initiated, the CHA Team will need to meet to review the progress that the county has made in implementing the actions outlined in the plans. At that time, the CHA Team may want to revisit health issues that lacked sufficient resources to be addressed earlier to see if resources are available. Assessment is an on-going process, as is working to improve and promote the health of residents in the county.

CHECKPOINT

Before leaving Phase 6, check to see if the following tasks are complete:

- ✓ Created a CHA Document summarizing the process and findings
- ✓ Submitted the CHA document and planned for development of community health action plans
- ✓ Planned for future assessments