



# Annual Report Fiscal Year 2012

# Dear Stakeholders,

In 1992, Buncombe County began the groundwork for an integrated Health and Human Services system. With the passage of HB 431 in June of 2012, the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners moved to formalize an integrated Health and Human Services Board structure. This board will provide experienced leadership as we continue our efforts to streamline and integrate across Health and Human Services.

We know that health, safety and well-being emerge through a multitude of factors which begin at conception, run throughout a person's lifetime, and affect all aspects of lifestyle and society.

Health, safety and wellbeing cannot be secured separate from one another, or through the work of just one agency. They are gained when a person makes good choices and can then find resources to support the success of those choices. And that takes community.

Research shows that we have to pay attention to where health and safety begin. We are setting aside the old silos that put health over here and safety over there. Instead we are searching out the connections between housing and health, education and employment, abusive childhoods and adult vulnerability.

Health and safety efforts must also be nested within the culture of the people they're attempting to reach. Assistance must be crafted within the cultural continuity—cultural preservation—cultural safety of community groups.

Health & Human Services serves as an anchor institution, modeling culturally competent approaches that honor our diverse experiences. We work to remove obstacles that stand in the way of individuals' ability to carry out their safe and healthy choices.

We do this through focusing on core County services

as a vital part of our community's continuum of support. To increase the effectiveness of our investments, we partner with others whose expertise, resources, and mission add strength to our own. As partners, we share a vision and understanding that change happens gradually and in a sustainable manner under this organizing framework.

As you read through this annual report, whether you are a consumer, taxpayer, or member of a community agency, we hope you will look for ways to work with us to put into action innovative strategies that help build a safe, healthy and thriving community.



**Mandy Stone, MSW**  
Assistant County Manager, Director of Health  
and Human Services

# Health & Human Services Annual Report

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# Leading the State in Service Integration

**Driving a process of integration** requires work at many levels. Fundamental to this integration is our ability to assess our resident's needs and connect them with supportive resources.

Toward this end, Buncombe County Commissioners made the commitment to co-locate like services and invest in integrated electronic systems that better connected clients with services.

**This vision was realized with the opening of the integrated HHS facility at 40 Coxe Avenue.**

When clients contact the Call Center or the Front Desk, or meet a greeter at the Coxe Avenue facility, our goal is to connect them to services and resources that meet their needs. Our integrated approach to customer service ensures that client needs are being addressed in an integrated and seamless fashion. Just asking "Is there something else we can help you with today?" or "Are your child's immunizations up to date" can make the difference in our efforts to support

the health and safety of our citizens.

Evidence-based practice shows that integration is key to lifting families out of poverty and into sustainable independence and healthy lifestyles.

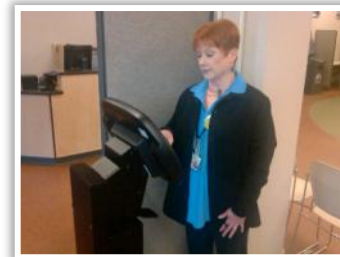
**Leading the nation in integrated technology:** A large component of the new integrated facility at Coxe Ave has been Q-Flow, an electronic system from ACF Technologies. This client routing system allows people who visit the integrated facility to check in at a kiosk with the option of multiple languages.

The kiosk then routes visitors to the correct area. Wait times and service times are tracked electronically in real-time, allowing the system to help route clients efficiently between multiple service areas. It also tracks staff productivity and customer service metrics, and performs important trend-analyses needed to more effectively manage staffing needs.

When we re-opened integrated services at Coxe Ave,

we also implemented Northwoods, a document imaging and management system. Economic Services staff now scan client documents into a linked system for easy retrieval and secure, paper-free file retention and archiving. The system has enabled us to:

- use more efficient work flow processes
- re-utilize space to better meet workspace needs and avoid further construction
- eliminate the creation of new paper files which will prevent future space and storage costs.



## SERVICE INTEGRATION: Using community input to improve our effectiveness

**Buncombe County Health and Human Services hired consultants** to engage community residents in a Community Listening Project to “Tell us what you think!”

Information from these sessions indicated the importance of understanding the unique assets of the different communities spread across Buncombe County. For different areas we learned about ease of access to services, natural community centers, and leaders in the community.

These sessions led to the hiring of local community navigators to continue the work of listening to residents, building off of the specific community assets, and connecting people to support services.

The PVA project is one example of how we can strengthen the ability of individuals to make good choices for themselves and their family.

### **PVA: People Valuing Advancements:**

What started as a grassroots effort in the Pisgah View Apartment community has now blossomed into a rich network of partners. Their mission is “...to empower people to be self-sufficient and develop a united community by reaching out to people and honoring their experiences in a holistic approach to enhance safety and wellbeing.”

The core objectives of this initiative were developed based on listening to the needs of the residents of the Pisgah View Neighborhood. Priorities were set based on the unique needs and characteristics of the community.

A summer community picnic brought neighbors together and rekindled a hope that collectively they could reclaim their neighborhood so children could grow up there strong and healthy.

Now going through this community you may hear the sounds of laughter from a “Cooking with Comedy” class or hear the pounding music from a Zumba class, or see girls sprinting “on the run” or boys being mentored in a “what my daddy taught me” class.



## SERVICE INTEGRATION: Two examples of how integrated HHS services can work



### **Integrating safety, health and self sufficiency:**

33 year-old Christina is a single mother of two children. Living with the trauma of domestic abuse, Christina made some poor decisions that led to a child neglect report against her. She lost custody of her children and was laid off from her job. She lived with her sister to escape her abusive boyfriend.

A social worker from Buncombe County HHS assisted Christina in applying for Food Assistance and Medicaid.

After Christina was approved for Medicaid, the social worker helped her access primary medical care at the Minnie Jones Clinic to follow up on an epileptic seizure she suffered last year. While there,

her doctor thought she might be suffering from symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder caused by her domestic abuse. Her doctor told her that exercise would help with her depression. So Christina's social worker arranged for her to begin walking on a greenway while having regular visits with her children at a local park.

This integrated approach to Christina's unique situation helped her establish a foundation strong enough to get her children back, gain stable employment, and to develop a healthier lifestyle.

### **Behavioral Health/Immunizations:**

The County's behavioral health initiatives invest in several programs to reduce homelessness. Until recently these

programs had little contact with Immunizations at Public Health. Now, we are targeting flu shot events for homeless persons, who are at high risk of spreading flu in shelters and the jail.



### **COORDINATING COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

was a shared vision when Social Work Services began a partnership with Bair Foundation in FY2012. Bair provides Kinship Care Coordination for those who provide care for children with whom they have a relationship (most often a relative's child). About 50 families per month got supportive services that kept kids out of foster care and in a familiar caring environment.

Bair Foundation has worked enthusiastically with the community to rally resources for these families. Help has taken many forms:

- finding child care openings,
- rebuilding front porches,
- providing transportation.

Bair has organized community drives to provide families with school supplies and

Christmas gifts. They have partnered with local churches to provide food boxes, clothing and mini-home makeovers. Last summer kinship families could participate in a community garden and have fresh vegetables all summer long. The Kinship Coordination program partnered with a local business to provide bicycles in the summer to help children stay active and healthy.

Kinship families may not need monetary help, but they still appreciate having a Kinship Care Coordinator who will lend an ear, answer questions, and suggest resources. The program has an on-going support group, with childcare and meals provided.

This innovative program saves money but more importantly improves the lives of children in our community.

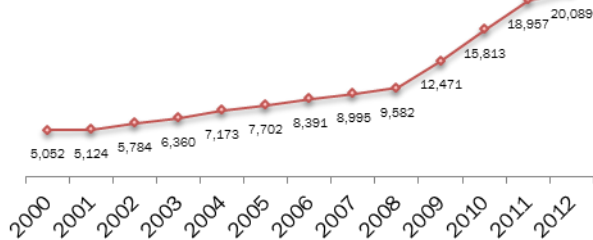
# WIC Nutrition • Food and Nutrition Services

food security and education on what's healthy

**WIC NUTRITION** provides education, nutritious foods, and breastfeeding support to improve the health and nutritional status of low-income women and children.

**FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES (FNS)** Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) provides a safety net, keeping food on the table in tough times of hardship and recovery. Of the 20,089 households served in FY12: 64% had some employment income; 47% had children or an elder adult. FNS also supports local jobs by bringing significant dollars into the local economy.

- Women, infants and children enrolled in WIC program in an average month **5,358**
- Value of 192,456 WIC vouchers issued for local businesses to purchase healthy foods **\$3.6 million**



**Number of Food Assistance Cases**

- County households receiving Food Assistance **20,089**
- Total value of Food Assistance benefits provided **\$58,870,256**
- Average monthly benefit per household **\$246**



# Work First • Emergency Assistance

independence gained through short-term supports

**WORK FIRST** helps families get back on their feet when parents have little or no income to support their children. It provides temporary cash support for the children, and job training and employment services for parents through a partnership with Goodwill Industries. Work First placed 21% more parents into jobs in FY12 than in FY11. We've seen a steady decrease in Work First recipients since the mid-1990s, despite the economic downturn.

- Work First cash recipients **648**
- Non-parental caretakers of children receiving cash assistance **250**
- Adults entering employment **127**
- Avg. Entry Wage for Newly Employed **\$8.04**



**EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE** is a County partnership with three community charities for one-time help to families in temporary financial crisis. Payments go directly to the utility or housing company owed money. Our charitable partnership realizes that working together to keep a family from losing their home through a one-time payment not only helps keep that family whole – it is also a more unified, effective, and less expensive community response to crisis and poverty.

- Families served **1,785**
- Average benefit per family **221.57**
- Total Emergency Assistance dollars **\$395,500**
- Additional funding sources and programs available through Crisis Intervention Program, Energy Neighbors, Family Preservation, and General Assistance **\$2,220,595**

# Medicaid • Health Choice

securing coverage for timely medical care

**MEDICAID** plays a vital role insuring low-income children, pregnant mothers, and disabled or aged adults with healthcare coverage. Medical costs can be crippling, so uninsured people often put off care. And if they become sick, their only option may be the Emergency Room, which drives up health costs for everyone.

- Buncombe County population enrolled in Medicaid **17.5%**
- Dollar benefit to the local economy from Medicaid clients **\$470M**
- Families and children covered by Medicaid programs **29,940**
- Elderly/blind/disabled adults receiving Medicaid **12,455**



**HEALTH CHOICE** offers low-cost children's insurance to many families who are just over the income limits for Medicaid. Together, these two programs reduce the high personal, social and economic costs of neglecting timely, preventive healthcare. They also bring in substantial dollars that compensate our medical providers and stimulate the local economy.

- Children with medical coverage through the Health Choice program **4,221**
- Yearly fee to cover child/children (depends on family income) **\$0 for very low income, or \$50/child with \$100 family max**

# Community Outreach

service gateways that work for you



## Outreach Locations:

- A HOPE Day Center
- Mission Health System
- Minnie Jones Health Center (WNCCHS)
- RHA/Families Together
- Health & Human Services West
- MAHEC OB/GYN Specialists
- Black Mountain United Methodist Church

Clients seen by out-posted  
Health & Human Services  
workers:

5,459

We all appreciate convenience, efficiency and choice. HHS designed Community Outreach to connect people with our Economic Services while they're being served by a community partner. That partner site is often closer to a person's home or work – or the outreach “location” may be an agency a resident calls on the phone during evening hours. It's where clients have come for help – where they're comfortable. Using new screening technology (Medicaider) partner organizations (such as MANNA, Care Partners, Council on Aging, MAHEC (Barnardsville), and United Way 2-1-1 fulfill their own missions more effectively, thereby strengthening our community continuum of support.

# Women's Health • Preventive Screening

staying healthy, saving money with an ounce of prevention

**WOMEN'S HEALTH** provided confidential family planning services to support women's health in the childbearing years and the best possible birth outcomes for our babies.

- Family Planning clients served **3,004**
- Family Planning visits **6,007**

**PREVENTIVE HEALTH SCREENING** and education for low-income, uninsured women is provided through the *Breast & Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP)* and the *WISEWOMAN* program (heart health screening).

- Women screened for heart disease risk **1,540**
- Women screened for breast and cervical cancer **1,851**
- Uninsured low-income women diagnosed with cancer and treated under BCCCP Medicaid **74**

During an annual BCCCP exam, a 55 year old single mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. At the time she was living with her high school age son, and she had no health insurance.

Because her cancer was detected through the BCCCP program, the diagnosis made her eligible for BCCCP Medicaid. This paid for her entire treatment, which included surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation. During the time she was on BCCCP Medicaid, her other medical and dental services were also covered. Today, this mother is doing well! She has stated "If not for this program, I would either be dead or bankrupt."

BCCCP - The Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program or BCCCP provides screening for individuals who would otherwise go without these routine services. When we detect cancer early, there are more treatment options and higher success rates.

# Preparedness • Immunizations & STD/HIV • Disease Control

## keeping our community safe

**PREPAREDNESS** focuses on response planning, to assure our agency and our citizens are ready for public health threats from natural and human-caused hazards.

- Number of required plans detailing our community's response in times of crisis **6**
- Percentage of required plans with local practice exercise **100%**

**IMMUNIZATION & STD/HIV** services prevent epidemics and the spread of communicable diseases through ongoing prevention activities, testing and treatment services and a rapid, effective response to urgent and emerging community outbreaks.

- Vaccines given to protect against communicable diseases (includes 2,957 seasonal flu shots) **16,164**
- Buncombe County children immunized at health department - fully immunized at age 2 **98%**
- HIV/STD services offered within timeframe **100%**

**DISEASE CONTROL** services prevent epidemics and the spread of communicable diseases through ongoing prevention activities, testing and treatment services and a rapid, effective response to urgent and emerging community outbreaks

- Communicable disease investigations **1,843**
- Confirmed reportable diseases **1,229**
- Communicable disease clinic visits monthly average (HIV, STD, TB) **459**
- Home visits to supervise treatment of individuals with tuberculosis or TB exposure **34**

In Spring 2012, Buncombe County had a Salmonella outbreak that sickened 89 persons from four states. BCDH Communicable Disease nurses investigated the cause and found that locally produced unpasteurized tempeh was the source of the outbreak.

Some Buncombe residents who got sick from Salmonella were food service or health care workers. They were kept off their jobs for several weeks to prevent further spread of the illness. Our Communicable Disease nurses knew that some were having a hard time making ends meet while off work, so they looked for help. The nurses connected them with HHS Economic Services who provided over \$5000 in emergency assistance to help with groceries, rent or mortgage, insurance, car payments and utilities.

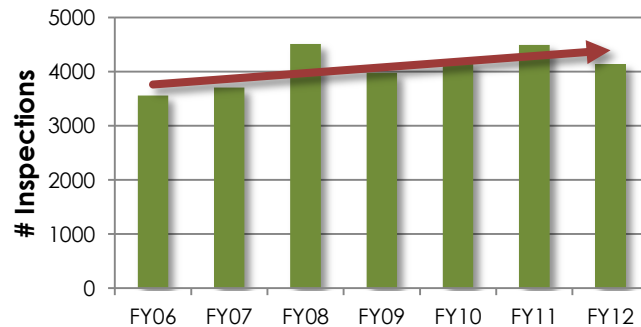
# Onsite Groundwater • Food & Lodging Services

ensuring safe food and water supply and supporting our local economy

**ONSITE GROUNDWATER** services assure protection of groundwater through properly installed septic systems and permitting of new wells.

- Number of septic permits issued: **1,134**
- Average days from the date clients are ready begin work to the date of initial visit by onsite staff: **1.3**
- Number of well permits issued: **279**

**Food and Lodging Inspections  
FY 2006 - 2012**



**FOOD AND LODGING** provides inspections of regulated food, lodging, nursing home, day care and summer camp facilities to protect residents and tourist populations.

- Facility inspections **4,139**
- Restaurants in compliance with inspection standards **91.6%**
- Restaurants receiving Grade "A" **99.6%**

# Health Promotion

making the healthy choice the easy choice

## Healthy Living

- Worked with local schools to monitor K-5 student obesity rates. School nurses provide support to kids at risk of obesity related illness.
- Worked with the School Health Advisory Council to establish wellness teams in all 55 city and county schools.
- Led efforts with the city and Healthy Buncombe to install sidewalks at Emma and Woodfin Elementary schools.
- Worked with ASAP to create more local produce markets accessed by low-income families and increased EBT card use.
- Helped City of Asheville adopt “Complete Streets Policy” to accommodate the needs of cars, buses, walkers and bikers on city streets.

## Tobacco Free

- Trained 114 health care providers on smoking cessation counseling and *NC Quitline*. Over 600 *Quitline* calls came from Buncombe during the last year.

- Along with Project ASSIST, youth advocates and the city council, led efforts to ban tobacco vendors at local festivals.
- Assisted the City of Black Mountain in the adoption of tobacco free public buildings, parks & sidewalks.

## Healthy Women & Babies

- Assisted in application of family planning “Quick Access” program where approx. 28 women per month access pregnancy prevention services.
- Started YEAH (Youth Education and Advocates for Health) teen advisory council promoting easier access to services for teens.
- Worked with partner network promoting women’s health & healthy pregnancy among Pisgah View residents.

## Disease Free Community

- Provided support to staff offering immunization clinics in every city and county school district.
- Support to immunization clinics at Black Mtn. and Leicester Hwy. WIC, providing an average of 75 vaccines

per month.

- Assisted the development of Express STD Clinic, giving faster access to tests and treatment for STD’s.
- Helped develop and implement Hepatitis C and HIV screening program for at risk people at accessible locations.

## Determining Health Priorities

*WNC Healthy Impact* is a collaboration between health departments and non-profit hospitals in the 16 WNC counties to determine health priorities. Using regional and local data, Buncombe County partnered with Mission Hospital to create our Community Health Assessment for 2012, forming health priorities, creating local health improvement plans, and aligning investments to improve health.

### Buncombe County's 2012 Community Health Priorities

- 1) Women's Preconception Health
- 2) Healthy Living and Healthy Weight
- 3) Early Child Development and Children's Health
- 4) Access to Primary and Mental Health Care

# School Health

healthy students build a strong workforce

**SCHOOL HEALTH** programs reduce health barriers that impact educational success. 24 School Nurses work in our County and City schools, prioritizing students with significant health needs and identifying those at risk for serious health concerns. Nurses develop individual care plans for these students in consultation with parents, physicians, and school staff. Key to this work is health promotion and education that supports a lifetime of healthy choices.

- School staff trained to give medications **778**
- School staff trained to provide health procedure **1,503**
- Student contacts **15,924**



Sick children, or those suffering from poorly managed health conditions like diabetes, cannot flourish in schools. School nurses support student success.



# Nurse Family Partnership

## getting the best start for moms and babies

**NURSE FAMILY PARTNERSHIP** is an evidence-based nurse home visiting program that targets low-income first-time parents. NFP partners with them from pregnancy through their child's second year. NFP's goal is to improve pregnancy outcomes, improve child health and development, and increase economic self-sufficiency.

- Number of babies born **30**
- Number of mothers served **138**
- Number of NFP home visits **1,669**
- Number of NFP nurses **4**

Early success of this program brought additional federal funding for another nurse expanding the program to reach an additional 25 first-time mothers.

**"EVERY MOM** wants to do the right thing for her kids, but so many don't know how," says Miriam Rollin, national director for *Fight Crime: Invest in Kids*.

One such mother was Stephanie, who talks about her success in graduating from Nurse Family Partnership (or NFP) in Buncombe County in November 2012. "I was scared" she says. The father of the baby was a repeat runaway who drank and did drugs. He was not in the picture, and Stephanie was living with her mother in a trailer they were getting ready to lose.

Stephanie credits her nurse home visitor from NFP with helping her get ready for the birth of her son. Her visiting nurse helped her quit smoking and enroll in a free counseling service. She also helped her enroll in WIC (Women Infants and Children's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance) and Food Assistance. Stephanie credits her nurse with teaching her about the right

foods to eat and how to stay healthy during pregnancy. Her baby was almost nine pounds at birth!

But, most importantly, the nurse taught this first time, low income mom how to keep her baby safe. Stephanie has mental health challenges and was put in the hospital when she could not afford to pay for her medicine. Social Work Services got involved, and Stephanie was afraid she would lose her baby. Her nurse home visitor worked with her and Child Protective Services (CPS) to come up with a safety plan. She also helped her budget enough money to pay for her medicines, so she would not run out again. CPS closed the case shortly after Stephanie was released from the hospital.

Stephanie now has a job, a safe place to live, and is a confident parent. Stephanie's future includes intentional family planning and a game plan to continue her education and stay employed.

# Foster Care ▪ Adoption Services

achieving timely permanence for kids in care

**PERMANENCY PLANNING** allows Social Work Services to partner with families and other community agencies to achieve timely permanence for children, whether that is safe reunification with their family, guardianship with a relative or kinship provider, or adoption.

- Children in Foster Care **303**

- Average number of children in custody with Social Work Services, per month **201**

**100%** of children were kept safe from maltreatment while in a foster home

**100%** of children who exited foster care to be reunified with their families remained safely in their home and did not re-enter Foster Care. (National Median is 85%)

**FOSTER PARENT TRAINING AND LICENSING:** Social Work Services trains, licenses, and supports families who open their home to children.

- Average number of licensed foster homes **89**

- New foster families **31**

- Families approved for adoptive placement **20**

**ADOPTION ASSISTANCE** helps children achieve permanency and may provide families with help when they adopt a child from foster care.

- Children receiving adoption assistance **577**

- Number of adoptions finalized **30**

In January, a mother surrendered her newborn baby boy to authorities through the Safe Surrender Program. With the child in foster care, a social worker diligently worked to locate the father. The mother could only provide his name and last employer. Through determined efforts he was found in another state. Dad began visiting with his child, expressing fear and joy at being an unexpected parent. After several visits and shared parenting with two amazing foster parents, the father gained custody of his child. Dad learned later that his son was blind and managed to find a family who has helped him with his son's care.

This amazing story of family reunification and a father's unconditional love is the result, in large part, of a social worker going above and beyond the call of duty.

# Parks, Greenways, & Recreation Services

**PARKS GREENWAYS & RECREATION SERVICES** seeks to improve the quality of life by promoting health and wellness in our community and providing an abundance of recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities.

Parks, Greenways & Recreation Services (PGRS) partnered with BC School Nutrition for the *Super Summer Meals Program*. Over 2,000 meals were provided to children at 4 of our outdoor pool sites. Overall, 53,309 meals were served to children in BC from June 11 – August 3, 2012. This program was open to all children under the age of 18. These meals were especially critical during this economic downturn.

Sandhill Community Garden, located at our Sports Park, was created this year. The gardeners, comprised of neighborhood volunteers, provided over 100 lbs. of fresh produce to MANNA food bank in addition to what they brought to their own tables

With assistance from the NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, PGRS purchased a 30 acre tract of land in Arden for a future park. The property has nearly 2 miles of hiking trails and will serve as a nature preserve where people can enjoy hiking, picnicking and nature. The park will be open to the public by 2015.

Nearly 1000 people participated in the ‘Greenways Please’ photo campaign during the public input phase of the County’s Greenway Master Plan through July 2012.

- Visitors to Lake Julian and Buncombe County Sports Park for outdoor activities and events **651,352**
- Participants in Special Olympic Spring Games **416**
- Visitors to County Swimming Pools **73,877**



# Child Care Subsidy • Child Support

support for children and working families in our community

**CHILD CARE SUBSIDY** helps low-income families overcome the barrier of affordable quality child care, so they can hold a job and become independent. County HHS partners with *Southwestern Child Development*, an experienced regional expert in this field. Southwestern's efficient operation has maximized our use of capped annual funding from the State. Allocations have been cut in recent years, despite increased community need in the face of a recession. As a result, the waiting list rose and has generally remained over 1,000 children since November 2010.

**CHILD SUPPORT** combines investigative and legal expertise to get children cash support and other benefits from their non-custodial parent. Secure child support payments can lift a family out of poverty and avoid future reliance on public assistance programs. The County partners with *MAXIMUS* for this service. Nationwide, the economic downturn has reduced child support compliance as fewer absent parents have the means to pay.

- Total child care subsidy dollars **\$9,591,210**
- Average number of children served monthly **1,916**
- Children on waiting list for Child Care Subsidy services **1,072**
- Average time on the child care waiting list in months **7.75**
- Percentage of need met **64%**
- Percentage of total child care subsidy dollars expended **100%**



- Unduplicated children receiving support in FY12 **47,084**
- Collection rate on past due support **66%**
- Total FY12 collections for Buncombe **\$14,659,441**

# Child Protective Services

weaving safety into the fabric of our community

**PREVENTION SERVICES** decrease the likelihood of child welfare involvement with the family, using resources wisely to strengthen families and our community.

- Total families served **192**
- Total referrals received **281**

**CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES** investigates and assesses all allegations of child abuse, neglect or dependency.

- Responses to reports of abuse, neglect, or dependency of children: **2268**
- Children involved: **4646**

**FAMILY IN-HOME SERVICES** allows Social Workers to partner with families to strengthen their ability to safely parent their child in their own home.

- Total number of families served **766**
- Total number of children served **1603**
- Children who remain at home or with kin while receiving In-Home services (thus avoiding foster care).

95%



# Adult Protective Services

keeping our elderly and disabled safe

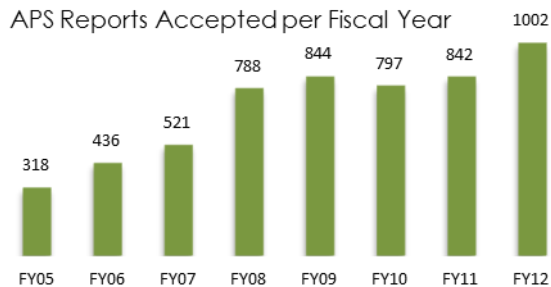
**ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES (APS) provides a timely, comprehensive and respectful response to the needs of elders and adults with disabilities who are victims of abuse, neglect or exploitation.**

Responses to reports of abuse, neglect or exploitation of elderly & disabled: **1002**

Percent of Evaluations with Mistreatment Confirmed: **44%**

Increase in APS reports accepted per year between FY05 and FY12: **215%**

Since the “economic bubble” began in 2005, we have seen a 188% rise in financial exploitation. APS works with our partners in Economic Services and in the community to assure safety and stability for this vulnerable population.



Dolores married a career soldier, and raised five children. Her husband was often deployed, but Dolores enjoyed feeling she could handle things on her own. When he died, she retired to Asheville.

Some years later, however, it became increasingly clear to her children that Dolores was struggling. Where was the capable mother they had always known? Late fees and overdrafts ate into her small income. Her driving was risky. Her diabetes was out of control. It was so hard to help when they all lived hours away.

Dolores agreed it was time to consider assisted living. But how could they manage such a move with Dolores' limited resources? An adult protective social worker guided the family as they gathered, completed, signed and delivered many papers to the Medicaid worker.

An APS social worker continues to visit Dolores in her new assisted living home. Her family is relieved to know she is getting regular medical care and medications, eats a healthy diet, and takes part in social activities. Adult Protective Services improved Dolores' life and brought peace of mind to her entire family.

# Adult Care Home Licensure & Monitoring



- Social Work Services monitored an average of **87** Adult Care Homes, with **1437** beds, in FY11 to ensure they are following state standards
  - Of the **156** facility complaint investigations **26%** were confirmed
  - An average of **29** adults per month utilized Adult Day Care Services, allowing them to remain living at home

**ADULT CARE HOME LICENSURE AND MONITORING** is responsible for responding to complaints related to compliance with regulations and issues of resident safety. Buncombe County Health and Human Services refers areas of concern to the Department of Health Services Regulation, the entity that has the authority for enforcement.

# Veterans' Services

connecting our Vets to resources that support their health and independence

**In Buncombe County**, we're answering the needs of our returning service members by connecting them to support services and providing guidance regarding employment, housing, retirement issues, and counseling.

Buncombe County works extensively with a network of community providers that assist our veterans. In 2012 the Veterans Service Office grew to include 3 Veterans Service Officers, supported by a veterans service accredited clerical staffer. The team made deliberate efforts to reach out into the community and moved to the ground-level on College Street for easier access. They also found a software solution that should

give better control and feedback on the work done for veterans.

The VA published that Buncombe County's roughly 21,000 veterans got \$58 Million in compensation and pensions in 2011.

Buncombe County Veterans Service Office activities account for part of that amount.

All veterans (and their families) have stories to tell. Some of those stories involve great pain and loss. The Veterans Service Officer has the unique privilege of meeting veterans where they are, and helping them find a path to ensure their safety, health and well-being.

## **Veteran's Service Office Averages:**

Office or Home visits :	<b>175</b>
Phone Calls:	<b>460</b>
Documents generated in support of Veterans claims and benefits:	<b>1,200 Approx.</b>





# Behavioral Health Services

creating access to essential service

**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES** include mental health and substance abuse service primarily funded by Western Highlands Network. However, the County funds a number of initiatives which address services gaps and areas of liability. The budget in FY12 was \$1.12 million, including \$600,000 of “maintenance of effort” funds (statutorily obligated) through Western Highlands Network.

Prevention dollars save money. This year, approximately 12% of the budget was allocated to prevention programs. Included in prevention are the Career Academy dropout prevention program in Buncombe County Schools (serving 115 students with 99% retention), and a dropout prevention program for at-risk youth by One Youth At A Time (serving 56 students with 99% retention).

A new initiative in FY12 was Developmental Assets training. Created by the Search Institute in Minneapolis, this is a powerful evidence-based approach for promoting development assets. Commonly agreed upon benchmarks include:

- Achieving in school
- Choosing “no” to drugs

- Graduating to post-high school education
- Staying out of the criminal justice system
- Nurturing healthy bodies

A Developmental Assets’ Coalition was formed in 2011 - led by the YMCA, United Way, and ARP/RHA Health Services. The County funded ARP to provide training on the assets approach; 311 persons were trained throughout the community. We have begun laying the foundation to institute a culture of positive youth development throughout our County.

**Chronic Homelessness** impacts community safety and drain limited community dollars unnecessarily. The Chronic Homeless Program is a workgroup of the Asheville-Buncombe Homeless Initiative Advisory Committee. Main participants are the Asheville Housing Authority, Homeward Bound, Western Highlands Network, and Buncombe County. The workgroup meets monthly and reviews high-need, high cost homeless persons, who typically cycle through the jail multiple times annually.

The Asheville Housing Authority applies the “disability preference” option to move eligible persons from this target group to the top of the waiting list for apartments in public housing or Housing Choice vouchers, which are used to access apartments in the private market.

**Continued...**

# Behavioral Health Services

A requirement for entering the Chronic Homeless Program is ongoing case management. By “working the list” of so-called high cost, high need homeless persons since April 2010, the Committee has placed 125 persons in housing, with a 91% success rate. On average, almost 3 chronically homeless persons are placed into supported housing each month.

Creating sustainable support for the disabled, the **SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) Program** at Pisgah Legal Services identifies homeless persons who may be eligible for disability benefits. SOAR attempts to fast-track their application. Buncombe County met the State’s “silver-level” of implementation and leads the State in successful applications. A total of 47 persons were approved for benefits in FY12, a 15% increase. The average time from application to approval was 174 days (about 6 months), compared to 2-3 years for most SSI/SSDI applications. The project leveraged \$9,898,812 in value of benefits. For every County \$1 invested in the project, \$110 are returned to the

County over the average timespan of entitlements.

**Crisis Services** - The Neil Dobbins Crisis Stabilization Unit is a local 16-bed detoxification and psychiatric crisis unit. The goal is to stabilize persons in their community and avoid hospitalization. The FY12 psychiatric census decreased from the previous year, 77% compared to 88%. However the detox census increased to 82% from 70%, resulting in a total census increase in FY12 of 1%.

**Justice Collaboration Programs** - This partnership with law enforcement and the Courts aims to divert persons from the criminal justice system, saving County dollars and reducing recidivism. This means fewer crime victims and a safer community.

Post-Booking Services at the Detention Facility - Case managers at the jail increased caseloads by 9%:

- Substance abuse case management = **527**
- Mental health case management = **562**
- Average detainees per month in a psycho-educational

group = **412** (a 16% increase from FY11)

- Average detainees per month attending AA/NA = **11**

The JUST Program, an alternative to a mental health court, had **23** successful graduates (55% success rate; down 12% from last year).

**Problem-Solving Courts** - State funding for Adult Drug Treatment Court and Family Drug Treatment Court (serving Social Work Services’ clients) was eliminated for FY12. The County worked with the judicial system to ensure a smooth transition of the services. The County has contracted to continue staffing and support of both courts—at a cost of nearly \$200,000. Drug Court averaged 29 participants per month; Family Treatment Court averaged 18. There were many challenges during the year to integrate the Courts into the County jail diversion services; however, RHA Health Services (the County contractor) successfully led this transition.

# BUNCOMBE COUNTY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES DIVISIONS

## Social Work Services

828-250-5000

### Angela Pittman, Director

Our mission in **Adult and Child Protective Services** is to partner with individuals, families, and communities to strengthen their efforts toward independence, safety, permanence and well-being.

#### We aim to:

- Prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable children and adults
- Provide interventions that ensure a safe, permanent home for children in Buncombe County

## Economic Services

828-250-5000

### Steve Garrison, Director

Buncombe County's Economic Services provides services that help low income families get and maintain work, support employment, promote quality health care coverage, food assistance, energy assistance and other economic supports for families.

#### We aim to:

- Promote self-reliance and self-sufficiency for individuals and families

## Public Health

828-250-5000

### Alma "Gibbie" Harris, Director

Our mission is to promote and protect the public's health and to assure through community partnerships that all people in Buncombe County have the opportunity to make healthy choices within a healthy environment by:

- Attaining high quality, longer lives free of preventable disease, disability, injury and premature death
- Achieving health equity, eliminating disparities, and improving health of all groups
- Fostering social and physical environments that promote good health for all
- Promoting quality of life, healthy development and healthy behaviors throughout all stages of life

## Parks, Greenways & Recreation

828-250-4260

### Fran Thigpen, Director

Parks & Recreation: Our mission is to maintain and improve the quality of life for residents and visitors through recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities.

## Child Care Services

828-250-6700

Our mission is to improve the quality of life for children and families by providing:

- Funding for child care
- High quality child care programs & referrals
- Training and consultation for child care providers
- A resource library for programs and parents

We appreciate the guidance and support of the FY2012 County Commissioners, County Manager, and our Governing Boards.

County Commissioners FY12: David Ganff, Chair; Bill Stanley, Vice Chair; K. Ray Bailey, Holly Jones, Carol Peterson, County Manager; Wanda Greene

Board of Health FY12: Richard Oliver, Chair; \*David McClain; Bart Martin; \*Bill McElrath; Linda Morgan; Carol Peterson; \*L.C. Ray; \*Susanne Swanger; John Whitener; Winnie Ziegler

Board of Social Services FY12: \*Bill McElrath, Chair; \*David McClain, Vice Chair; Travis Durham; \*L.C. Ray; \*Susanne Swanger

*\*cross-appointed members*

We are very grateful to Travis Durham and Rev. L.C. Ray for their years of service on the Board of Social Services

# 3 Easy Ways to Connect To Services

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**SURF**

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**(828) 250-5000**

**[buncombecounty.org](http://buncombecounty.org)**



**Scan This!** Puzzled by this image?

It's a QR Code. Here's how to use it:

1. Open a 'barcode scanner' application on your Smartphone (such as RedLaser)
2. Point your phone's camera at the code and scan
3. The code will take you to Buncombe County's website where you can access more information

**One of our offices:**

**40 Coxe Ave**

**35 Woodfin St**

**339 New Leicester Hwy**

**Outpost locations (see p.10)**