



# News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Department of Public Health

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## **Public Health Partnership Receives \$1.5 Million Grant To Improve Infant and Children's Health**

FAYETTEVILLE – A collaborative partnership between the public health departments of Cumberland, Hoke, Montgomery and Richmond counties has been awarded a \$1.5 million grant from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. The grant money will fund the implementation of evidence-based strategies proven to lower infant mortality, improve birth outcomes, and improve the overall health of children from birth to age 5. The four-county partnership will receive \$500,000 each year from June 2016 through May 2019.

Based on responses to community surveys in the four counties, the following strategies have been established for each program goal:

- **Reduced infant mortality:** The health departments will use the Ten Steps for Successful Breastfeeding strategy to combat infant mortality. Funding will be used to expand or implement the Peer Breastfeeding Counselor and Lactation Consulting services at each health department, work with local breastfeeding coalitions to convene community support for breastfeeding, deliver education to local health department staff and community partners on the Ten Steps for Successful Breastfeeding, and establish partnerships with local birthing centers to support the process for achieving a Baby Friendly designation.
- **Improved Birth Outcomes:** The Long Active Reversible Contraceptives (LARCs) program, already in place at the health departments, will be expanded as a strategy to improve birth outcomes.
- **Improved Health Status of Children from birth to age 5:** The Clinical Effort Against Secondhand Smoke Exposure (CEASE) program will be implemented initially in all child health clinics at each health department and the MCM Pediatric & Adolescent Home Practice, P.A. in Richmond County, which does not have a child health clinic within their local health department. CEASE will be expanded to child health care providers external to each local health department in years two and three of the project. The strategy's goal is parental smoking cessation and reducing secondhand/thirdhand smoke exposure to children using the three-step Ask, Assist, Refer method.

“We are excited about this opportunity to collaborate with Hoke, Montgomery, and Richmond to implement evidence-based strategies across our communities,” said Buck Wilson, Cumberland County Public Health Director.

The grant was awarded based on a previous \$20,000 grant from the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services to fund planning and capacity-building activities for implementing evidence-based strategies to lower infant mortality and improve birth outcomes as well as the overall health of children from birth to age 5. Cumberland County's infant mortality rate of 9 per 1,000 births is above the state average of 7.2 per 1,000 births.

*If you would like more information about the Cumberland County Department of Public Health's programs and services, health-related data, or community resources, please call 910-433-3600 or visit with someone at the information desk, or visit our website at [co.cumberland.nc.us/health.aspx#](http://co.cumberland.nc.us/health.aspx#). Comments are welcome and can be submitted on our website at [co.cumberland.nc.us/health/commentsform.aspx](http://co.cumberland.nc.us/health/commentsform.aspx). The Health Department is located at 1235 Ramsey St. Fayetteville.*