



Cumberland County

Public Health Department

C-FORT Minutes October 2025

Agenda Item 1. Introductions

- Sign-in options:
 - Online attendees: Use the chat box to sign in with your name and agency affiliation.
 - In-person attendees: Use the signing sheets.
 - Meeting minutes from the last meeting are not available.
 - They will be sent via email for approval.

Aricia Hall	Shanhong Luo
Alvin Chestnut	Shanon Drumond
Alyssa Festa	Taylor Blount
Serna Gunn	Brittany Borders
Jennifer Green	Louis Leake
Diane Covington	Lisa Mack
Elijah Bazemore	Nicole Beckwith
Ivan Pride	Alyson Davis
Jason	Charlton Roberson
Jelissa Thomas	John Russell
Kellie Ross	Jay Higgins
Kendle Holman	Lisa Mack
Leona Smith	Alyson Davis
Marcus Boyd	Charlton Wilson
Robert McLean	Naiomi Marshall
Nicole Beckwith	Regina Williams
Phyllis Babrove	
Sanquis Graham	
Greg Berry	
Malcome Little	
Jesse Garner	

Agenda Item 2. Data & Partner Updates

Louis Leake, Review of Overdose Data, ED Visits Data, Fentanyl Report

- Data presented is from September:
 - Year-to-date: 135 overdoses vs. 146 at the same time last year.
 - Increase of six reported ED visits between August and September.
 - Fentanyl overdoses reported in ED were less than in the previous month.
 - Age range of 45 to 54 has increased in reported overdose and ED visits.
 - Previously, the 25 to 45 age range was more common.
 - Opioid ED visits are lower compared to other counties.
 - Emergency room visits of overdose involving medications or other drugs with dependency are ahead of a lot of counties in comparison.
 - Includes cocaine, THC, or Kratom-related overdoses.
 - High rate of ED visits for overdoses for substances other than fentanyl or opioids.
 - Compared to the rest of the state, the county is at a much higher rate, close to being in the top 10 listing.
 - Synthetic opiates and other synthetic drugs are contributing to these ED visits.
 - Through August, there were 48 deaths versus 63 last year, but the speaker anticipates an increase in deaths for the next month.

Lisa Mack, SDOH

- From January through October, 42 clients have been financially assisted, with 13 being assisted twice.
- Assistance was provided:
 - Fresh Start Housing (34 times)
 - Oxford House (13 times)
 - On Track Wellness (4 times)
 - Private landlords/hotels (3 times)

Tara Tucker, Cape Fear Valley Community Paramedic

- No update

Louis Leeke, CTC Opioid Settlement

- September closed out the opioid settlement for this round, with the next round starting in January.
- Remaining supplies are available for unhoused individuals, including tents, tarps, hoodies, MREs, and personal hygiene items.
- There are about 20 bus passes available for those with transportation issues.
- There are five Straight Talk phone cards available for the community.

Courtney McCollum, CCJS Opioid Settlement

- A new opioid statute coordinator will be starting soon.

Sanquis Graham, Healing from Within

- Alliance Health is working to establish a difference within the detention center.
- Heather Soroka (licensed clinical social worker) and Greg Jackson (peer support specialist) provide services to individuals at the detention center.
 - They are working with Alliance Health to establish two new provider roles and an additional peer support specialist role to connect individuals to outside resources.
- There is a gap where people are sharing resources while in the detention center, but then not being able to connect due to various reasons, such as not having permanent addresses or phones, and not knowing how to navigate the system.
 - Public Health, Heather, and Alliance meet bi-weekly to discuss the workflow for the positions and where the gaps are.
- Heather shared with the SIM task force how individuals can get connected with the detention center for professional visits.

Barbara White, Mid-Carolina Regional Council

- No update

Ivan Pride, Myrover Reece Opioid Settlement

- YTD served a total of 27 individuals (13 male, 14 female).
- There have been nine successful discharges YTD.
- Currently have 3 men in the program.
- Men's beds are full.
- 5 open beds for females.
- Accepting individuals using medication seizure treatment.

Charlton Roberson, NCHRC Opioid Settlement /SIM Taskforce

- Outreach efforts: syringe services, post-overdose response, wound care distribution, and overdose prevention initiatives.
- Employing two outreach workers.
- SSP continues to be the cornerstone of harm reduction efforts.
- Activities show steady participant engagement with increased return visits and new enrollments through peer referrals.
- Maintained active collaboration with local emergency services and post-overdose response teams.
 - Outreach workers conducted follow-ups with individuals revived from overdose events.

- Provided immediate support, harm reduction education, and linkages to care.
 - Reported several successful re-engagements into treatment for peer support services.
- Emphasis on ensuring continuity of care and addressing barriers (transportation, identification, and insurance).
- Pharmacy collaboration with SSP to support pharmacy-based syringe service access.
- Kits emphasized infection prevention and education about proper wound management.
 - This proactive approach helps reduce the incidence of abscesses and other injection-related infections while encouraging individuals to seek early medical care.
- Naloxone distribution remains a core component of the outreach model.
- NCHRC is partnering with Carolina Infectious Disease to provide low-barrier wound care access, set to launch in November.
 - This collaboration will integrate clinical expertise with community outreach, establishing second-tier monitoring for communicable diseases among intravenous drug users.
 - If your organization comes across individuals that you think might benefit from receiving healthcare or getting connected to primary care, please make a referral over to NCHRC and they will touch base to try to get that person connected to healthcare.
 - Carolina Infectious Disease has agreed to a maximum 3-day turnaround for appointments.
 - The program will cover the initial visit and logistical needs (e.g., a phone for contact).
 - Carolina Infectious Disease will handle the medical aspects and further referrals if needed.

Regina Williams, Recovery Resource Center

- Total clients 258
- Services provided:
 - Syringe services: 198 participants
 - Peer support (housing, etc.): 11 participants
 - Help with electricity bill: 1 participant
 - Recovery Dharma: 7 participants
 - Women's Wellness Program: 27 participants
 - Smart Recovery Class: 11 participants
 - Mid Carolina Kinship Care: 2 participants
- Social Determinants of Health:
 - Issued 10 bus passes
 - Scheduled 31 Uber rides
 - Distributed 36 packages of Narcan

- The center's one-year anniversary is on October 29th.
- There will be an article in the Cumberland Connection newsletter with updates.

Naiomi Marshall, RI

- RI supported 179 community members in August.
- There has been a recent decline in numbers, possibly due to being short-staffed.
- RI has a retreat side and a living room for mental health stabilization and detox (3-5 day stays).
- RI has had success getting people into treatment programs like Wilmington Treatment and TROSA, working with Myrover Reese. They transport up to 3-3.5 hours for transportation.

Dr. Luo, FSU Xylazine Research

- Initial results are available from the survey part and drug lab analysis (757 samples).
- 701 surveys have been received from People Who Use Drugs (PWUD), with a goal of 900.
- Key survey findings:
 - 77% of eligible participants knew about Xylazine.
 - 73% of those who knew about it reported having used it.
 - 23% reported multiple overdoses, and 41% had one overdose.
 - 11% reported easy to reverse, 25% reported moderate to reverse difficulty and then 22% difference to reverse and another 2% report reported CODUS was not reversed.
 - 40% of those who reported using Z had wounds.
 - 36% described the wound as mild, 47% as moderate, and 17% as severe.
- Demographic differences (race, sex, gender, age) did not show overwhelming evidence as predictors of overdose.
- Heroin as the primary substance was associated with a lower likelihood of overdose, easier reversal, and fewer wounds.
- Injection as the method of administration was associated with a higher risk of overdose.
- No distinguishing demographics were observed, which may speak to the prevalence of Xylazine in the drug supply.
- Narcan may restore breathing but not reverse sedation due to Xylazine.
- Females are more likely to report having a wound.
- About half of those exposed to Xylazine develop wounds.
 - About half of those with wounds have moderate to severe wounds.
 - Individual estimates of wound development vary, but the median stays around 50%.

Agenda Item 3. Feedback & Discussion

Greg Berry, CFORT-C

- How being trauma-informed improved criminal justice system responses
 - Next training Jan 13, 2026 at 8:30 am
 - Feedback indicated that the training should be longer.
 - Registration link was sent out via CFORT email.
 - They want partners from various areas and first responders to be present.
 - The training is designed around the model of the intercept, applicable to anyone whose agency or work falls into any of the intercepts.

Sanquis Graham, LPHA

- ARP Prevention Program
 - A new program launched in July with Cumberland County Schools.
 - Providing prevention education to students.
 - Providing orientation recognition training to parents and guardians.
 - Health educator Selena Wilkinson is implementing the program in schools.
 - Interviewing and onboarding a peer support specialist for the project.
 - Teachers were receptive and filled pages with contact information, ready to commit.
- SAMHSA expansion of naloxone distribution
 - Thurman Kearney is the peer support specialist and is in training this week. He will connect with individuals in less accessible communities.
 - Expanding naloxone distribution with a new box in Spring Lake.
 - It will be filled with naloxone, fentanyl test strips, and resource guides.
 - Considering adding vending machines that track access times, noting high usage at 2-3 AM in other counties.
- Cohen Military Family Clinic at Centerstone, Letter of commitment & Letter of Support
 - They are applying for a grant to provide substance use treatment and recovery support services within Cumberland County, focusing on the military population.
 - A letter of support was signed for C4, and Dr. Green signed the letter of commitment for the Health Department.
 - If they are awarded, more information on the links and services will be shared.

Agenda Item 4. Next Steps

Greg Berry, CFORT-C

- Community development housing stability program
 - The Community Development Housing Stability Program is on pause due to a large influx of requests.
 - Resources are still available for housing support through the Recovery Resource Center, SIM, and harm reduction.

Sanquis Graham, LPHA

- Strategic planning: End of Year Wrap-Up
 - A strategic planning report will be shared before the meeting for review.
 - Findings will be discussed during the end-of-year wrap-up, along with questions and comments.

- Healthy Start referral
 - The program is still accepting referrals for people in preconception and individuals who have had children and need additional support.
 - There is a fatherhood coordinator to help get fathers engaged and provide support.
 - Prepared childbirth classes for specialized populations were offered at a recovery center earlier in the year.
 - If there is a need, it will be planned again, especially for individuals in recovery and with substance use disorders.

- Perinatal Task Force meeting scheduled for October 28 at 2pm
- Representatives from Mecklenburg County attended the meeting.

Meeting Adjourned

Next meeting: November 18, 2025, 10am -11:30am