



the  
**HEALTH**  
collaborative

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Health for All

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# letter from THE HEALTH COLLABORATIVE

Dear Community Members,

The Health Collaborative is pleased to present the first *Health for All Action Plan*. This plan is the culmination of nearly two year's worth of research, collaboration and innovation by numerous hardworking individuals and organizations from Caswell County, NC; the City of Danville, VA and Pittsylvania County, VA.

**...join the movement to help the  
Dan River Region THRIVE!**

The Dan River Region is a great place to live. It includes charming small towns and neighborhoods, urban centers and historic downtowns, scenic river views and farmland, and a rich and vibrant history. Yet, our region's greatest asset is our people, and a healthy population is key to our social, economic and physical vitality. Currently, Dan River Region children and families are burdened with high rates of poverty, obesity and chronic disease. This situation is not unique to us. This is an unprecedented public health crisis that is affecting many communities across the country. **What is unique to us, however, is the dedication and passion of the many organizations, individuals and community groups working to improve health in our region.**

**Our region's greatest asset is OUR PEOPLE,  
and a healthy population is key to our social,  
economic and physical vitality.**

A group of passionate professionals from different sectors came together to discuss how to address our region's health challenges. It was apparent that the challenges we face are too complex for any one organization to tackle alone. The group, now known as the Health Collaborative, agreed to create a set of shared goals, strategies and actionable steps that are sustainable and can positively influence the health behaviors and outcomes of residents in the region.

The following document is the result of this work — a 10-year regional plan to create an environment that supports health for all residents and promotes healthy lifestyles in the Dan River Region. The plan is a true community effort, and we want to thank the more than 400 individuals who shared their ideas, talents, time and commitment. This plan is a blueprint for ACTION, and to be successful, we need support from all sectors of our community, including local government, civic organizations, businesses, faith leaders and residents. Please consider what you or your organization can do to help us achieve the goals outlined in this plan and join the movement to help the Dan River Region THRIVE!

Sincerely,



## Mission

To improve the health of the region through a shared vision of wellness that drives a framework of sustainable solutions.

## Impact Statement

Indicators reflect a healthy, active, engaged, and educated region where everyone lives in an environment in which they can thrive.



# Taking Action

In the spring of 2014, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation released its annual County Health Rankings. The city and counties in the Dan River Region again fell lower on the list. Stunned by the continued decline, a group of concerned organizations gathered to discuss the challenge and how to take action. The common link between all of the organizations was the desire to prevent the region's most prevalent chronic diseases, including obesity, heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer. Healthy eating, active living and access to healthcare became the focus. The group understood that while residents face a wide variety of health concerns, a more narrowly defined effort was needed to create the greatest impact. Over time, the Health Collaborative grew to more than 90 individuals, representing more than 50 organizations, including county and city government, nonprofit, education, healthcare and business sectors, all who believed that together we can make a difference.

**The Health Collaborative recognized early in the process that in order to have a lasting impact on the health of the community they would have to take a long term approach, focusing on policies, systems, and environment change (PSE).**

The Health Collaborative recognized early in the process that in order to have a lasting impact on the health of the community they would have to take a long term approach, focusing on policies, systems, and environmental changes (PSE). The Health Collaborative spent most of 2015 learning about, identifying and choosing promising practices that align with this approach. With the help of Active Living By Design (ALBD), collaborative members participated in idea-generating activities, reviewed existing data, evidence and case studies, went on site visits to other communities, conducted focus groups and prioritized strategies.

A Health Summit was held in September 2015 to gain additional insight into the needs and desires of community members. After narrowing and refining the goals and strategies, action teams were formed to develop specific actionable steps and lead implementation in each goal area.

**The common link between all of the organizations was the desire to prevent the region's most prevalent chronic diseases, including obesity, heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer.**

## Policy, systems and environmental

changes make healthier choices an option for all community members by looking at the laws, rules and environments that impact our behavior. By changing policy and shaping physical landscapes, a longer term impact can be sustained with greater efficiency. Changes do not have to be at the governmental level to have an impact. You can help make changes to improve health in community organizations, schools, worksites and other local settings.

## Active Living By Design (ALBD)

creates community-led change by working with partners to build a culture of health. ALBD delivers multidisciplinary expertise in public health, public policy, urban planning and design, community development, communications, nutrition, architecture and social work.





# Our Approach

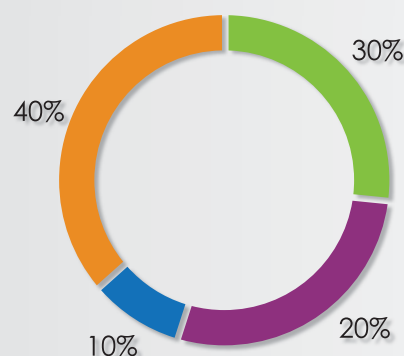
Historically, health programs have focused on individual behavior, assuming that if you teach people what will make them healthy, they will find a way to do it. Unfortunately, being healthy is about much more than our individual choices. Where you live matters – you simply cannot make healthy choices if healthy options are not readily available to you. Fifty percent of our health outcomes are determined by access to physical, social and economic opportunities. Health starts in our homes, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods and communities. In order to have a healthy Dan River Region, all residents must have easy access to social and economic opportunities, as well as healthy food, physical activity and quality healthcare.

Over the past few decades, many cities and counties across the country have unintentionally built communities where healthy choices are unavailable. Unfortunately, these decisions have contributed to a dramatic increase in rates of many chronic diseases and poor health, which effect low income and minority populations at higher rates. Many experts believe that the current generation of young people could be the first to live sicker and die younger than their parents. The Dan River Region is not immune to this trend, it has taken years to build health out of our daily lives. And it will take years and considerable effort, commitment and investment on behalf of many partners, businesses, nonprofits, governments, schools and community organizations, to reverse this. Decisions made at every level can influence our health behaviors.



“When building a thriving community, it is paramount to ensure that people have access to healthy food, physical activity and affordable healthcare. We have to dig deeper. Hearing and learning from community members.”

## Factors that Influence Health



- Health Behaviors
- Socio/Economic
- Environment
- Clinical Care

In the Dan River Region, there is great work already happening, and the Health Collaborative is supporting this work and building upon it to make it more sustainable. We aim to take an integrated approach, complementing existing initiatives with policy, systems and environmental changes. In order for our region to thrive, we must continue to create environments where current and future residents have access to opportunities to live healthy. This includes neighborhoods and communities where all residents can safely walk, bike and play, purchase affordable and healthy food and access medical care within close proximity to where they live. It also includes neighborhoods and communities that support positive social and economic environments, and addresses the root causes of poor health, including unemployment, housing, transportation and food insecurity.

# Our Approach

Throughout the planning process, the Health Collaborative made decisions using the following guiding principles:

- **HEALTH IMPACT**

Will the strategy influence a greater number of people over a longer period of time in order to create a healthier population in the Dan River Region? Can we demonstrate this impact and show our success over time?

- **FEASIBILITY**

Is the strategy likely to happen based on current capacity, available resources and political will? Do we have the leadership in place to sustain this effort, and/or can we engage and support new leaders?

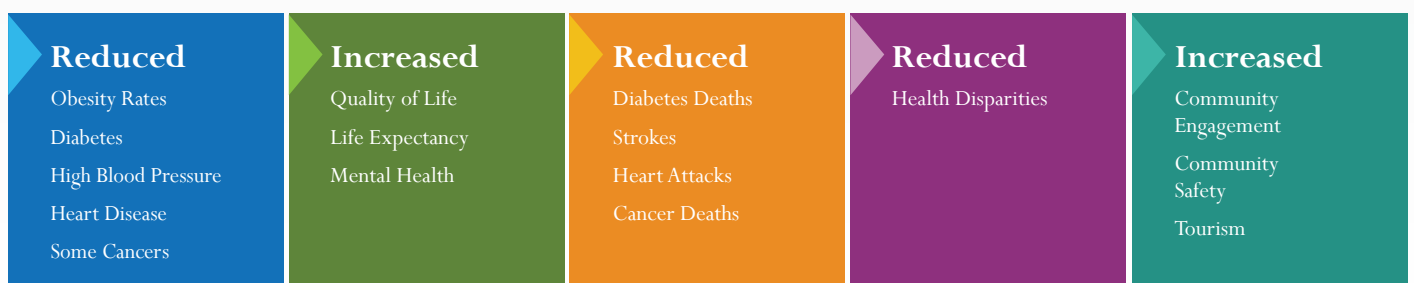
- **HEALTH EQUITY**

Is the strategy likely to directly serve individuals most in need? Does it create opportunities for neighborhood and community residents to design, lead and implement initiatives to improve their own health and the health of their neighbors?

These three principles established clear parameters for the Health Collaborative to filter out less promising ideas, while lifting up those that may lead to significant changes in population health. The Health Collaborative considered evidence-based approaches, promising practices and new and innovative models, with the understanding that the unique context within the Dan River Region may require some risk taking. The Health Collaborative members include many professionals throughout the region who work either directly or indirectly in areas that impact the health and well-being of Dan River Region residents. Yet, we do not represent the voice of all residents within the region, which is why feedback and continual involvement from you is vital; engaging as many people as possible will be a key component of the implementation for each strategy.

“Lofty goals do not come to fruition by simply dreaming. They require the collaborative effort of stakeholders who are willing to build capacity, identify champions, develop inclusive leaders, and engage the community. This work is not accidental. It must be strategic and intentional.”

## Long Term Outcomes



# Active Living

Create equitable access to opportunities to be physically active

1

- ▶ All residents have access to parks, trails or open space within a reasonable distance.
- ▶ Schools, places of worship and other community facilities that provide opportunities for unstructured physical activity are open to the public after hours.
- ▶ Walking and bicycling routes connect neighborhoods to destinations.
- ▶ Public and private development guidelines and policies promote healthy community design, including walking and bicycling infrastructure and access to public transportation.

## ▶ ACTIVITIES

Identify areas with limited access to physical activity

Improve the built environment in and around schools, worksites and other institutions to promote biking and walking

Advocate for projects that support health equity

Establish joint use agreements between community organizations and local governments

Create a platform for sharing physical activity opportunities

Create new neighborhood and community parks

Revitalize existing neighborhood and community parks

Adopt and implement Complete Streets and active transportation plans

## ▶ OUTPUTS

Maps of play deserts created and/or updated

Policies proposed that support active transportation

Funds and other resources proposed for active transportation

Funds and other resources proposed for new and revitalized parks and open spaces

New and revitalized parks and open spaces prioritized

Community organizations identified for joint use agreements and agreements are drafted

Advocacy efforts conducted by the Health Collaborative and residents

Language within city, county and regional plans that emphasize health and focus on prioritizing areas with highest need is proposed

Design improvements proposed around schools, worksites and other institutions that promote physical activity





## ▶ OUTCOMES

### SHORT TERM

Increased number of miles of sidewalks, greenways and bike lanes ✓

Increased resources committed to new and revitalized parks and open spaces

Increased resources invested in bike/ped infrastructure

Increased number of policies adopted that support active living

Increased number of government plans (city, county and region) that focus on and emphasize health

Increased number of parks and open spaces

Increased number of joint use agreements adopted

New or improved infrastructure is in place that promotes physical activity at schools, worksites and other institutions

### INTERMEDIATE

Increased number of residents living within 0.5 mile (urban) or 2 miles (rural) of a park or open space ✓

Increased percent of residents getting recommended amounts of physical activity ✓

Decreased number of play deserts in communities at highest risk for poor health outcomes

Increased resident access to active transportation infrastructure

Increased number of residents using parks, open space and active transportation





# 2

## Healthy Eating

Provide equitable access to local, fresh and healthy food

- ▶ The local food system promotes vibrant farms, healthy people, strong communities and a thriving local economy.
- ▶ Restaurants, convenience stores and grocery stores provide healthy and fresh food at an affordable price and are accessible to all.
- ▶ Public and private policies incentivize healthy food retail and support farmers' markets and other fresh food outlets.

### ▶ ACTIVITIES

Identify areas with limited access to healthy food and high risks for poor health

Engage communities with limited access to healthy food to help create ways to bring healthy food to their neighborhoods

Build awareness and support for local, healthy food through community events and targeted institutional trainings

Create healthy food systems trainings for relevant organizations

Advocate for projects that support health equity

Develop a mechanism for aggregation, storage, distribution and marketing of local food products

Develop sustainable programs for youth to encourage growing, cooking and marketing fresh food, exploring the food system and building food justice

Identify strategies to increase SNAP/EBT, SFMNP and WIC usage at farmers' markets

### ▶ OUTPUTS

Policies proposed that support healthy eating

Funds and other resources proposed to coordinate local food production and activities

Maps of food deserts are created and/or updated

Outreach campaigns and events that promote local, fresh healthy food are proposed

Advocacy efforts conducted by the Collaborate and residents

Outreach strategies proposed for SNAP/EBT, SFMNP and WIC recipients to increase utilization at farmers' markets

New and expanded programs for youth related to food systems proposed and implemented

Healthy food trainings that target at-risk populations are designed





# 2

## ▶ OUTCOMES

### SHORT TERM

Increased number of policies adopted that encourage and support healthy food access

Increased number of SNAP/EBT, SFMNP and WIC redemptions and recipients at farmers' markets

Stronger knowledge and attitudes about healthy food access among community leaders and policy makers

Increased resources committed to healthy food systems infrastructure

Increased number of governmental plans (city, county and region) that encourage and support healthy food access

### INTERMEDIATE

Increased number of residents living within 0.5 mile (urban) or 2 miles (rural) of healthy food outlets

Increased percent of residents consuming fruits and vegetables

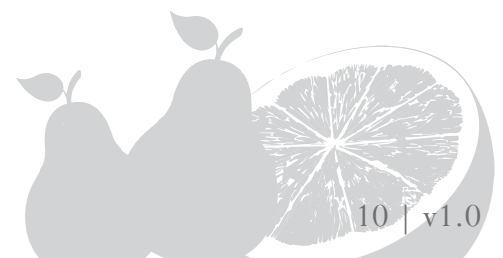
Increased number of healthy food outlets

Increased resident access to healthy food choices

Increased access to programs, facilities and financing that supports food entrepreneurship and new and expanding farmers, growers and producers

Increased number of residents engaged in healthy food system advocacy

Decreased number of food deserts in communities at highest risk for poor health outcomes



# 3

## Access to Healthcare

Increase access to healthcare, resources and education for low income, minority and other underserved populations

- ▶ Healthcare providers deliver consistent prevention recommendations and work together with community partners to connect patients with community resources.
- ▶ All residents have a primary care provider, receive clinical preventive services, such as screenings and immunizations and have access to resources that support healthy decisions.

### ▶ ACTIVITIES

Implement sustainable community health worker (CHW) programs in low income neighborhoods at high risk for chronic disease and other poor health outcomes

Implement an evidence-based and sustainable program that addresses weight management

Train and orient clinical practices and other healthcare facilities to address healthy weight management

Advocate for Medicaid expansion

Develop system to provide 24-hour access to medical advice outside of the emergency room

Create a taskforce with key leaders focused on chronic disease prevention

### ▶ OUTPUTS

Maps of areas with uninsured, underinsured and “super users” created

Access to healthcare standards and metrics are consistent

Healthcare and community partners identified and invited to participate in CHW training

Clinical practices and other healthcare facilities identified for training in order to address healthy weight management

Advocacy efforts conducted by the Health Collaborative and residents

Resources and organization(s) identified to support a 24-hour advice system

Taskforce members invited and action steps and goals are created





## ▶ OUTCOMES

### SHORT TERM

Increased number of CHWs trained and engaged to lead community-based programs ✓

New and sustainable CHW initiative is in place that strengthens connections between healthcare systems and underserved residents

Increased number of uninsured and underinsured residents connected to CHW initiative

Increased knowledge and awareness of community health resources among participants of CHW initiative

Increased opportunities for entry level healthcare workers to advance in and residents to enter the healthcare field

Increased number of policies within clinical practices and healthcare facilities that encourage and support healthy living

Increased number of clinical practices and healthcare facilities addressing healthy weight management

Increased number of taskforce meetings and activities

### INTERMEDIATE

Reduced number of inappropriate visits to the Emergency Department ✓

Increased number of residents with a designated primary care provider (PCP) ✓

Reduced number of uninsured residents

Increased number of compliant patients among those with chronic disease

Increased access to clinical practices and healthcare facilities



# 4

## Cross-Cutting Approaches

Local institutions and community organizations encourage healthy living and create policies, programs and environments that support health

- ▶ Healthy food is available and incentivized during the school day and routine physical activity is provided through physical education, classroom activities and safe routes to school.
- ▶ Worksites support physical activity and healthy eating; the environment at and around worksites supports physical activity and access to healthy food.
- ▶ Community programs and local institutions follow evidence-based standards for healthy eating and physical activity

### ▶ ACTIVITIES

Implement healthy eating and physical activity standards for schools, worksites and other settings where the public is served

Develop, adopt and implement healthy living curriculum in all schools

Establish joint use agreements between schools, worksites and local governments

Offer resources for organizations adopting and implementing wellness policies that assure individuals have access to healthy food and physical activity opportunities

Expand farm to institution programs across the region

Advocate for policies that require healthy food in venues where the public is served

### ▶ OUTPUTS

Current healthy eating and physical activity standards, policies and curriculum are identified in schools, worksites and other public settings

Best practices for schools, worksites and other public venues identified

Process created to support organizations interested in implementing best practices, curriculum and policies for healthy eating and physical activity

Healthy eating and physical activity standards proposed at area schools

Healthy eating and physical activity standards proposed at area worksites

Schools and worksites identified for joint use agreements and agreements are drafted

Model healthy vending policies identified and drafted for venues where the public is served







## ▶ OUTCOMES

### SHORT TERM

Increased number of standards and policies within settings where the public is served that support healthy living ✓

Increased number of programs within schools and worksites that promote healthy eating and physical activity ✓

Increased number of healthy living curriculum implemented in schools

Increased number of joint use agreements adopted

Increased number of healthy vending policies at public venues where food is offered

Increased number of farm to institution programs

New or improved system(s) is in place to support and promote schools, worksites and other venues that adopt best practices

New or improved systems are in place to track health data within schools and worksites

### INTERMEDIATE

Reduced childhood obesity rates, absenteeism and disciplinary incidents in participating schools ✓

Increased infrastructure changes that promote healthy eating and physical activity at participating schools and worksites ✓

Increased health status and reduced absenteeism rates among participating worksites

Increased percent of students getting recommended amounts of physical activity and fruits and vegetables

Increased community access to joint use facilities



# 5

## Leadership and Capacity Building

Maintain and build a strong and active collaborative structure with broad ownership and leadership opportunities, representing the diversity of the Dan River Region

- ▶ Residents design and lead place-based initiatives, participate in leadership opportunities and build the skills necessary to advocate for healthy living opportunities where they live, work and play.
- ▶ Local government entities take a “Health in all Policies” approach, systematically taking into account the health implications of all decisions in order to improve health and healthy equity.

### ▶ ACTIVITIES

Conduct a regular regional health needs assessment and create a regional health equity report

Identify and work to address public transportation needs as a key to greater access to healthy living opportunities and healthcare

Engage and help neighborhood and community residents lead events and programs to support healthy lifestyles

Collect and share social determinants of health data to evaluate goals and strategies

Garner formal and informal support from key community leaders and organizations for collaborative efforts

Increase advocacy at the local government level for policy changes that support healthy living

### ▶ OUTPUTS

Maps created to identify areas with limited access to physical activity, healthy food and healthcare

Health equity measures prioritized for projects that support healthy living

An interactive online platform is created that shares resources, metrics, successes and challenges for each locality in the region

Collaborative resources shared with community residents that support health through advocacy and trainings offered to build advocacy skills

Comprehensive and coordinated communication plans and messaging campaign developed

Memorandums of understanding and other options for engagement proposed to key community leaders and organizations

Collaborative efforts shared, presented and policy ideas proposed at city and county government meetings





## ▶ OUTCOMES

### SHORT TERM

Increased traffic to an interactive online platform that shares resources, data and upcoming regional events ✓

Increased understanding of healthy living concepts and strategies among residents and government officials ✓

Increased number of governmental plans (city, county and region) that intentionally encourage and support healthy living ✓

Increased number of health-promoting events, programs and policies focused on neighborhoods with greatest need

Increased number of community residents affiliated and aligned with Health Collaborative efforts

Increased understanding of healthy living metrics among residents and goals are straightforward and understandable

Signed (or completed) memorandums of understanding for securing the engagement of key community leaders and organizations in proposed efforts

### INTERMEDIATE

Increase number of government policies (city, county and region) and infrastructure projects that incorporate and prioritize healthy living ✓

Increased awareness of health metrics among residents and government officials and health trends show improvement

Increased access to health opportunities in neighborhoods with greatest need

Increased community resident and collaborative member representation in decision making processes

Increase government and business funding support for healthy living



# Our Members

Active Living By Design

American Heart Association

American National Bank and Trust

Averett University

Balanced Health Chiropractic

Better Together

Boys and Girls Club

Cancer Research and Resource Center of Southern Virginia/Danville

Caswell County

Caswell County Cooperative Extension

Caswell County Health Department

Caswell County EMS

Caswell County Local Foods Council, Inc.

Caswell County Senior Services

Caswell Family Medical

Centra

City of Danville

Dan River Basin Association

Dan River Partnership for a Healthy Community

Danville Community College

Danville Community Market

Danville Family YMCA

Danville Free Clinic

Danville Life Saving Crew

Danville Pittsylvania Community Services

Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce

Danville Public Schools

Danville Redevelopment and Housing Authority

Danville Regional Foundation

Danville Regional Medical Center

Danville VA Girl Scout Troop 152

Disability Rights and Resource Center

Gateway Health

God's Storehouse

Grace and Main Fellowship

Healing Race Foundation

History United

Optima Health Family Care

Middle Border Forward

Piedmont Access to Health Services (PATHS)

Piedmont Community College

Pittsylvania County

Pittsylvania County Office of Agribusiness Development

Pittsylvania County Schools

Pittsylvania Danville Health District

Regional Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention

Riverside Roof and Truss

Smart Beginnings Danville Pittsylvania

Smart Beginnings for Southside Families

United Way of Danville Pittsylvania County

Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Department of Health

Virginia Tech