



2020
Yancey County
State of the County
Health (SOTCH) Report



2020 State of the County's Health Report - Yancey County



Yancey County CHA Overview Video

The 2018 Community Health Assessment priority areas are:

- **Substance Abuse and Increasing Availability/Access of Mental Health Services**
- **Healthy Living Behaviors/Lifestyles and Chronic Disease Prevention**
- **Access to Healthcare/Social Determinants**

The following SOTCH Scorecard was created and submitted **March 1st, 2020** in order to meet the requirements for the **2020 State of the County's Health Report** for Yancey County.

Clear Impact Scorecard™ is a strategy and performance management software that is accessible through a web browser and designed to support collaboration both inside and outside organizations. WNC Healthy Impact is using Clear Impact Scorecard™ to support the development of electronic CHIPs, SOTCH Reports and Hospital Implementation Strategy scorecards in communities across the region.

Scorecard helps communities organize their community health improvement efforts:

- Develop and communicate shared vision
- Define clear measures of progress
- Share data internally or with partners
- Simplify the way you collect, monitor and report data on your results

The following resources were used/reviewed in order to complete the SOTCH:

- [WNC Healthy Impact Data Workbook](#)
- [NC DHHS County Health Data Book](#)
- Local County Discussions with Partners
- Local County Newspaper Articles
- [NC DHHS/ DPH CHA Data Tools](#)

Substance Abuse and Increasing Availability/ Access of Mental Health Services - Long Term CHIP

R **SOTCH** Yancey County is free from substance abuse, and residents have access to mental health services.

Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change

Progress Made in 2020

The following progress was made in 2020 on our CHIP interventions for Substance Abuse Prevention and Increasing Availability/ Access of Mental Health Services in Yancey County.

- **Naloxone Initiative** - This service is provided by the Yancey County Sheriff's Office and the Burnsville Police Department in partnership with the regional tobacco coordinator and medical providers. The overall goal of this program is to reduce the opioid overdoses experienced by county citizens by 3% in the next three years. Progress has been made in the county by placing a Naloxone kit and AED in approximately ten law enforcement vehicles. Each officer was also provided the proper training to administer the Naloxone kit to an individual who may have overdosed. As of 2020 this initiative is still going on in the Yancey County Sheriff's office.

- **Marketing Strategies to Increase Awareness and Education on Dangers of Substance Abuse** - The Cures Prevention grant recently started to provide funds for education and awareness strategies in Yancey County. The Cures Prevention staff organized work groups for programs such as Youth to Youth which is a school based program, Lock Your Meds, which is a media campaign to educate Yancey County residents about locking prescribed medications in a lock box, and Chronic Pain Management programs in Yancey County. The Cures grant recently started providing funding for educational opportunities and media campaigns. They are providing education and advertising via radio commercials and billboards to educate the public about the risks of substance abuse, ways to help family members who are using substances and how to properly dispose and lock prescribed medications. As of 2019 the Cures Prevention grant has billboards in Yancey County and has produced flyers, handouts and other various sources of information that have been distributed to the community. Handouts have been provided at community events about the Lock Your Meds campaign. The Cures Prevention grant has helped facilitate the expansion of the Youth to Youth program expanding into the community high school. The Cures grant has funded chronic pain management programming for Yancey County residents. The programming provides mindfulness education and training for residents who experience chronic pain. The programming has been advertised via flyers, email and newspaper ads.
- **Safe Needle Disposal Program** - This program is provided by the Mitchell Yancey Substance Abuse Task Force. Through the Mission Community Grant, the Task Force has funds to establish safe needle disposal sites in Mitchell County. Working with Toe River Health, Blue Ridge Regional Hospital and Law Enforcement worked together to determine the best strategy.
- **Increase Behavioral Health Care** - Celo Community Health Care Center offers a wide variety of substance abuse services. They have a substance abuse counselor who is currently working with substance abuse patients. This counselor is available to provide counseling to individuals who are suffering from addiction.
- **Prevent Substance Use (Tobacco Mainly) Initiation among youth and young adults** - Youth to Youth Initiative- The Youth to Youth Initiative is an initiative through the Mitchell Yancey Substance Abuse Task Force. Targeted towards the schools of both counties this initiative does things such as creating safe disposal videos made by children within the school system, take field trips to local sheriff departments to watch the proper disposal of sharps, and for the younger generation they do fun activities such as Samantha Skunk videos. As of 2020 this initiative is still thriving within Yancey County although obvious circumstances have changed. Youth to Youth is still an incredible resource for children in the area and will get back on track as the community recovers from COVID.
- **Eliminate Exposure to Secondhand Smoke** - No progress has been made toward this action plan.
- **Promote quitting among adults and youth** - No progress has been made toward this action plan.

Additionally, the following progress was made in 2020 on Substance Abuse Prevention and Increasing Availability/ Access of Mental Health Services in Yancey County.

Mitchell Yancey Substance Abuse Task Force (MYSATF) - The Mitchell-Yancey Substance Abuse Task Force (MYSATF) was established in 2009 by approximately 50 local healthcare professionals and community members concerned about the increasing rate of unintentional deaths by prescription drug poisonings. Since then, the Task Force has continued to grow including a wide range of stakeholders from both counties including: law enforcement, schools, civic organizations, medical and mental health providers, faith-based organizations, media professionals, businesses, youth and parents. MYSATF is recognized in the community as the lead convener for our counties' substance abuse prevention efforts, and recognized statewide for the strength and breadth of two-county relationships and innovative approaches. (The following are programs and things that have happened under MYSATF)

After School Programs

- **Youth to Youth (Y2Y)** - Youth-led/adult-guided groups meet in all four middle schools in Mitchell and Yancey Counties to build leadership skills and advocate for positive change in schools and the community. In the fall of 2019, the program was expanded to Mitchell High School. Participating students address issues that most teens are likely to experience, helping them to become leaders and role models amongst their peers. The skills students develop in Y2Y will serve them not only throughout their school career, but later in life as well.
- **Cougar Fit Club** - Mountain Heritage High School students who have been identified by school counselors as being pre-disposed for developing risky lifestyle behaviors meet at the Blue Ridge Regional Fitness Center in Burnsville, with educators, mentors and fitness experts, to nurture their physical, mental, social and emotional well-being. The over-arching goal of the program is to decrease the potential for risky behaviors (specifically substance use), increase physical activity, increase school attendance, and dropout prevention.

Drug Safety Initiatives

- Distributed free drug lock boxes so that community members can secure and safely store personal medications.
- Provided life-saving Narcan (opioid reversal treatment) kits to the community, including local law enforcement and school personnel.
- Promoted safe disposal of prescription medications through community education, permanent drug drop boxes and the distribution of free drug deactivation kits.

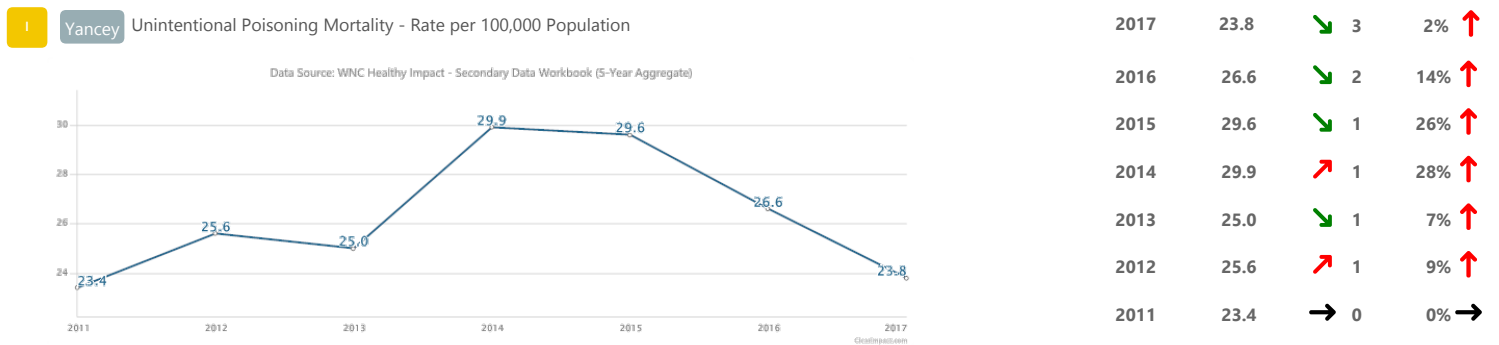
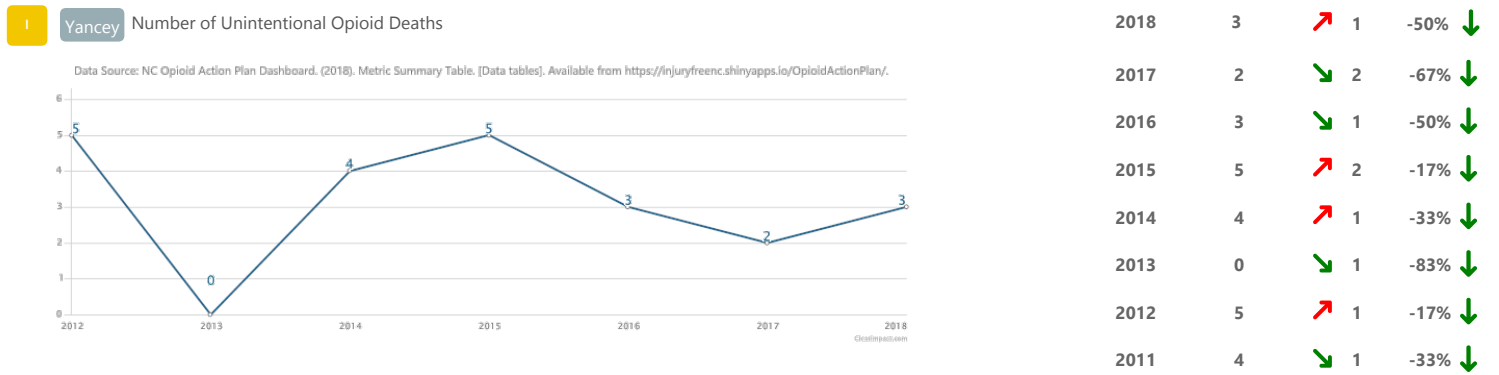
Public Education

- 2021 Summer Resource Guide listing free and low cost summer activities distributed to children and families in the community.
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Resource Guides distributed to all healthcare providers, law enforcement, and the community at large listing current prevention, treatment and recovery resources in our community.

Home Remedies: Community Options Addressing Pain and Stress (COAPS)

- Provides education and services around alternatives to opioids for pain management by promoting alternative approaches, such as meditation, acupuncture, chiropractic, massage, physical therapy, mindful movement, resiliency skills, and more.

Yancey County Lockboxes - Medication lockboxes continue to be distributed in Yancey County through events such as Child Fest (with attendees from Yancey, Mitchell and Avery Counties), the Back to School expos, and through distribution through Partners Aligned Toward Health. The Substance Abuse Task Force graduated from CADCA academy (Community Anti-Drug Coalition of America). This academy helps the task force be able to attack the war on drugs within the county. Currently in 2020 the task force still distributes these boxes wherever needed, and people can call and pick up a medication lockbox. COVID-19 created a lack of events to distribute too but these events will continue being in the future plan of distribution for Yancey County Lockboxes.



P	Expansion of Youth to Youth into the High School	Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
PM	Number of high school students reached - no new data	2019	10	→ 0	0% →
P	Educate the community and professionals through events and initiatives (community and partner strategy)	Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
PM	Number of events hosted - no new data	2019	7	→ 0	0% →

Healthy Living Behaviors/ Lifestyles and Chronic Disease Prevention - Long Term CHIP

Progress Made in 2020

The following progress was made in 2020 on our CHIP interventions for Healthy Living Behaviors/ Lifestyles and Chronic Disease Prevention in Yancey County.

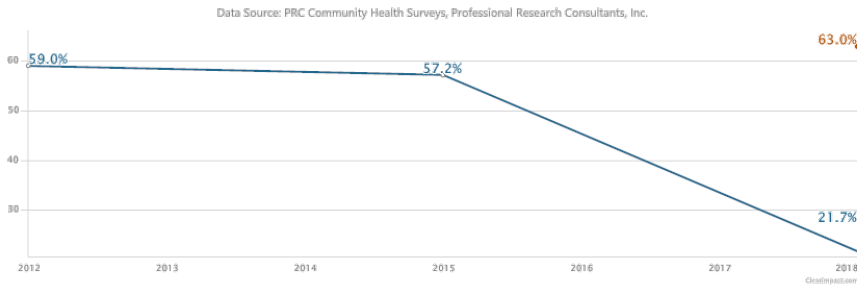
- **Cougar Fir Club** - Mountain Heritage High School students who have been identified by school counselors as being pre-disposed for developing risky lifestyle behaviors meet at the Blue Ridge Regional Fitness Center with educators, mentors and fitness experts to nurture their physical, mental, social and emotional well-being. The over-arching goal of the program is to decrease the potential for risky behaviors (specifically substance use), increase physical activity, increase school attendance, and dropout prevention. An update to 2020 is that although school being dismissed due to COVID-19 slowed down the progression of this club there is still the plan of continuing this club once things get back to normal with children meeting at the facility.
- **Sizzlin' Summer Series** - The Sizzlin Summer Series is hosted through PATH and is open to both the Yancey and Mitchell County communities. This series offers outdoor activities in Burnsville Town Square that are organized and provided by volunteer organizations. An example of the activities that are provided is a Zipline, an inflatable slip and slide, a community art day and a yoga day. This event had many volunteers from Toe River Health District which included Yancey County Health Department. Overall, there were 1,020 participants at the Sizzlin' Summer Series in 2019 which is the largest turnout to date. Parents also attend these events and are presented with organizational information and education about services. Although 2019's turnout was incredible due to COVID-19 in 2020 the events for the summer had to be postponed, however the future purpose of this event hasn't changed and it will look to rebound and continue its strong growth.
- **Dig In! Gardening Program** - Dig In! is a community garden grown in Burnsville, NC. This program started in 2010. This garden has provided 50,000 pounds of vegetables. Volunteers do most of the work with help from two staff members. The crops are distributed to families who are identified as food insecure. The Dig In! Gardening Program partners with Yancey Extension Service, Yancey Schools, Reconciliation House, Partners Aligned Toward Health, MY Parish Tipton Hill Food Pantry, Feed My Sheep Food Ministry, and many more. As of 2019 this program is still ongoing in Yancey County and also now works with TRACTOR, a local farming initiative. This program continues to be a resource for the community in 2020.
- **Summer Tennis Camp** - PATH sponsors a free summer tennis camp in Yancey County. This camp provides a racquet that the children get to take home and keep after the camp. Resources are provided so that smaller players receive the correct equipment and also larger players get the equipment they need. The program goal is to promote physical activity among kids in the community. As of 2020 this event still exists within the future plans of PATH, but due to COVID-19 the event had to be postponed.

Additionally, the following progress was made in 2020 on Healthy Living Behaviors/ Lifestyles and Chronic Disease Prevention in Yancey County.

TRACTOR- TRACTOR is a local organization that supports local farmers and puts fresh produce from these farmers on the plates of people throughout the community. As of 2020 TRACTOR is still working within Yancey County and working in partnership with other organizations. The number of farmers who work with TRACTOR is growing in Yancey County. They are expanding their services into Mitchell and Avery Counties as well. Tractor is still progressing and running strong within the Yancey County Community having obtained new area for food services and delivering over 26 tons of local food to area food pantries and prepared 3,955 locally sourced produce bags for food insecure families.

Cane River Park - Cane River Park was created a few years ago and it is currently open to the public as of 2019. It offers a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile path, exercise equipment, playground, river frontage with path, and baseball/softball fields. Cane River Park helps with Little League games, and is a great place for the community to become physically active with a total body workout outdoor gym available. The park has experienced recent flooding and is going through some renovations. In 2020 the park is still in the community although it is undergoing renovations. This park will continue to be available to the public to promote healthy living behaviors.

I	Yancey Residents who meet physical activity recommendations	2018	21.7%	↘ 2	-63%	↓
		2015	57.2%	↘ 1	-3%	↓
		2012	59.0%	→ 0	0%	→



P	Expand strategies to focus more on youth healthy living behaviors in the area	Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
PM	Number of Yancey County residents reached - no new data	2019	60	→ 0	0% →
P	Educate the community on the benefits of a healthy lifestyle	Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
PM	Number of healthy diet educational materials disseminated into the community - no new data	2019	800	→ 0	0% →
PM	Number of physical activity educational materials disseminated into the community - no new data	2019	800	→ 0	0% →

Access to Healthcare/ Social Determinants - Long Term CHIP

R	SOTCH Yancey County residents are educated, gainfully employed, food secure, and have health insurance coverage.	Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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Progress Made in 2020

The following progress was made in 2020 on our CHIP interventions for Social Determinants of Health in Yancey County.

- Summer Food Program** - This program is a collaborative effort that provides the community with locally grown food, cookbooks, children's books, and listings of community resources to families whose children receive free or reduced lunch. Volunteers pack and deliver these items to the homes of the people in the program. The produce is donated by Dig In! and TRACTOR Food and Farms and other local farmers. Currently, this food program is still going on in Yancey County.
- Establish a System for countywide adverse childhood experience (ACE) assessments and education for families and providers- No progress has been made toward this action plan
- Toe River Project Access and Federal Qualified Health Center** - Mountain Community Health Partnership has expanded their services. Services include the following:
 - Family Practice** - All of the physicians at Bakersville Community Health Center are board certified in family practice. They provide comprehensive health care for the individual and family across all ages and genders, emphasizing preventative care while managing chronic illness. In an age of increasing specialization in medicine, the physicians at BCHC provide personal, primary, continuing care in a patient-friendly atmosphere.
 - OB/Pregnancy Care** - MCHP offers care before, during, and after pregnancy. Local mothers-to-be still have the option of being seen locally, for their pregnancy care.
 - Hospital Care** - Physicians at BCHC admit and treat patients at Blue Ridge Regional Hospital. Inpatient services provided include medical, ICU.
 - Behavioral Health** - Patient centered holistic care involves behavioral health. As part of integrated health, MCHP offers behavioral health services and counseling to their patients. This is part of our commitment to provide a comprehensive medical home to their patients.
 - Dental Clinic opened in Bakersville but available to surrounding community in 2020
- Utilizing Outreach Opportunities to Assist Citizens of Yancey County** - Outreach opportunities were limited in 2020 due to social distancing requirements for COVID-19. As facilities open and vaccinations are given out new outreach opportunities will happen again.

- Harvest Tables** - This DIG IN! event where partners share food without using money. So far Harvest Tables have been established in four different neighborhoods throughout Yancey County. The set-up looks like a farmer's market, with food displayed and people are free to choose what they and their families want to eat. At Harvest Tables people have conversations about growing food, share cooking tips and recipes, and talk about what our families like (and don't like!) to eat. The food is gathered from the many gardens and farms in Yancey County, big and small. Harvest Tables do not take the place of vegetable stands and farmer's markets. As of 2020 the harvest tables are still present in the county. People share, take what they need, leave enough for others, and give what they can whether that be skills, tools, ideas, or even money.

Additionally, the following progress was made in 2020 on Social Determinants in Yancey County.

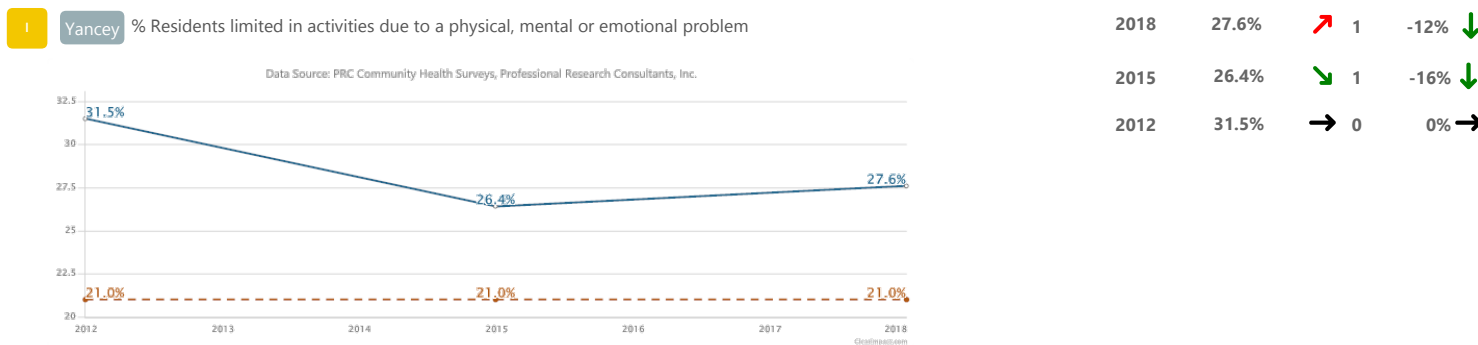
MAGIC After School Program - Making Academic Growth in Children (MAGIC) is an afterschool program that operates in Yancey County Schools. The program started on September 19th for the 2017-2018 school year and is currently still going on through 2019. The program is funded through the U.S. Department of Education and N.C. Department of Public Instruction. Students have to meet certain guidelines of the program but the program is free of charge if the child meets these guidelines. The mission of the program is to provide a variety of activities that will enrich the lives of Yancey County School's at-risk students and help them achieve academic success and personal growth. Through tutoring the children, providing physical activity and providing an afterschool snack free of charge this program helps local children. In 2020 MAGIC moved their afterschool program virtually and was able to continue helping students.

Mountain Heritage Mock Interviews - Toe River Health District staff participated in mock interviews for Mountain Heritage High School. Approximately 15 mock job interviews were done with Health Occupation upper classmen students in 2019. This has grown in 2020 to now doing two sets of interviews (one each semester) and doing around 10-12 students per set.

Meals on Wheels - Meals on Wheels partners with multiple organizations in Yancey County to provide meals, including local produce, to residents. Local churches, along with TRACTOR, Dig In!, and local volunteers, partner to supply residents with food. The Meals on Wheels program was awarded \$30,000 grant from Blue Cross and Blue Shield to support this program and its endeavors. The program is currently run by Yancey County Commissioners who took the program over from the Yancey County Senior Center.

TRACTOR & Mountain Community Health Partnership - TRACTOR is a nonprofit food hub that works with small family farms in Yancey, Mitchell and Avery Counties. This program helps support local agriculture and provides local area restaurants and local grocery stores with fresh produce. The program is showing incredible growth and new partnerships as they are now partnering with Toe River Health District and Mountain Community Health Partnership. Currently food is being delivered to Mission Hospital in Marion, Blue Ridge Medical Center in Spruce Pine, Mayland Community College, and the Yancey County Community Center.

Project Lifesaver - The main goal of Project Lifesaver is to be able to quickly and safely locate adults and children who have an inclination to wander due to an array of cognitive conditions. This program is designed to assist a specially trained team in tracking the transmitters, which participants of the program wear either on their wrist or ankle. As of 2020 this program is available to the public. It will help with elderly individuals and possibly individuals suffering from mental disability.



P	Create mapping guide of resources in the community	Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
P	Continue expansion of meals on wheels to reach more individuals in the county/ try to provide more food to those in need	Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
PM	Number of food insecure families reached - no new data	2019	100	→ 0	0% →
P	Expand services available to individuals at their local health department	Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
PM	Number of new families who received health services - no new data	2019	25	→ 0	0% →

Notes

These are the new or emerging issues in our community in 2020 that were not identified as priorities in our CHA.

- **COVID-19** - An obvious issue for Yancey County the past year has been the Coronavirus pandemic. COVID-19 had a drastic effect on Yancey County, and the world during the year 2020. This pandemic halted most community events in Yancey County, severely impacted schools, job sites, restaurants, local businesses, and the community at large. This doesn't mention the lives that COVID-19 individually impacted within our community and the families that it affected. Yancey County Health Department along with Yancey County organizations had to focus most of their resources towards fighting this pandemic within our community, and the fight continues. Countless hours have been put in toward testing positive patients, quarantining patients and contacts, issuing safety and protocol advice, and partnering with our community leaders and other organizations to impact the virus within our county. Vaccination has picked up toward the end of 2020 and will continue in 2021. This vaccination effort along with continued testing positive patients and quarantining as necessary will help the continued recovery from this pandemic. COVID-19 has brought together many resources and organizations within the community and allowed for partnerships to continue to make a difference for the individuals who live here. Drive through testing sites and community testing sites have been implemented throughout Yancey County with an eye toward vaccination sites being implemented in 2021. Nonprofits around the community had to be creative due to the cancellations that COVID-19 caused example of these activities were a drive thru santa event by the BRPFC. Below are some local events and ways that this issue has been handled, and adapted to:
 - Yancey County Mask Makers Helping Supply Masks- Community members made over 500 masks to help the local healthcare organizations and donated them to places such as the local hospital (Blue Ridge Regional Hospital).
 - Food given by the Local Reconciliation House and Packed at TRACTOR- Reconciliation House received over 20,000 pounds of food from the MANNA food bank and along with volunteers from their organization, TRACTOR, Dig In! Community Garden they packed the food into boxes and distributed it to approximately 476 households.
 - Yancey County Partnership with EDC to create Yancey COVID-19 Small Business Relief Fund- Yancey County Board of Commissioners approved a partnership with the Yancey Economic Development Commission to create a Yancey County COVID relief fund. The fund came with a possible loan of up to \$5,000 and the small businesses had to meet certain criteria to receive the loan.
 - Yancey County Received \$543,988 in recovery funds for the pandemic- This helped with recovery efforts for the county.
 - Numerous drive through testing sites held throughout the county with different health organizations such as YCHD and MCHP
 - Mountain Air Country Club donated \$70,000 to help with COVID-19 relief efforts in Yancey County
 - Yancey County School Bus Drivers Delivered Meals to the Children in 2020
- **Vaping** - Yancey County is experiencing a substantial rise in vaping among the middle and high school students. Health professionals have voiced their concern over this issue. Ideas have been discussed about the best methods to disseminate information to the public.
- **Cane River Park Renovations** - Cane River Park had to undergo renovations in 2020 due to severe flooding. The county has given recovery effort of \$927,000 to renovate and fix the flooding issues.
- **Sewer Treatment Water Failure** - The town of Burnsville's treatment plant failed and will have to be replaced. This issue could possibly take years. Individuals who live on or near the river are affected along with area fishermen. The US Fish and Wildlife officials are recommending stocking of the river be postponed. This is still an issue in 2020 as the town council approved a remedy to this problem in 2020.

Notes

The following are new initiatives or changes in our community in 2020:

- **Renovation of Ray Court Park** - Ray Court Park is being renovated to better serve the community. The Yancey Government wants children and elderly to be able to not only have a place to participate in physical activity but be able to communicate and bond with one another no matter the age of the individual. This renovation will continue to help the community grow and serve it as a positive health outcome.
 - **Mountain Community Health Partnership Purchased Medical Office** - MCHP purchased a new medical office in 2020 that is currently being used for a COVID-19 testing sight but has plans to become a way to increase their services outreach in primary care to the community. This will allow MCHP to open a clinic in the long-term within the community.
 - **Multi-Million Dollar Water/Sewer Projects** - Yancey County will begin attempting to acquire funding to help innovate the county's aging infrastructure and renovate the water and sewer system in the county.
 - **New Farmers Market** - Yancey County Board of Commissioners approved the demolition of an old derelict building to create a new, larger space for a new Farmer's Market. This project started in 2019 and demolition is occurring now. This space will allow more farmers to attend the market and also provide more accessibility for customers. The project is still ongoing.
 - **Yancey County Reconciliation House Expansion** - The Yancey County Reconciliation House is expanding in hopes to address food insecurity. A statement from the Reconciliation House executive director stated in 2019 "with over 70 volunteers providing 600 hours of service a month, we have the manpower to provide food and other goods and services to those in need in the community. This includes increasing access to healthy food for insecure individuals, providing nutrition education, and increasing the amount of healthy food in our community." This is still an ongoing initiative in the community that will continue to create great change.
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