

Outstanding Board of Health Award 2024

The Association of NC Boards of Health presented the 2024 Outstanding Board of Health award to the Guilford County Board of County Commissioners/Board of Health!

Being chosen for the Outstanding BOH award means that these boards have shown leadership and support for public health priorities with documented results. Guilford's intense focus on Infant Mortality Reduction and naming this as a strategic priority is evident of their commitment to addressing infant mortality head-on and providing the necessary resources to move the needle! This four-year process has resulted in a replicable approach for other counties to adopt.

Data shows that for several decades, Guilford County's infant mortality rates remained higher than the state and national rates, with glaring racial disparities. Historically, Guilford remained one of the bottom five counties in our state for infant mortality rates. Determined to create a meaningful approach to disrupt these longstanding disparities, the Guilford County division of public health and board of health began a collective action strategic planning process to identify community-driven solutions for system-level change. The boards and department worked with local nonprofits, public agencies, healthcare systems, families, and philanthropies to achieve their goals while advancing racial equity and justice.

Their work identified five key drivers of infant mortality in their area: environmental and life stressors; barriers to service; lack of knowledge about resources; women not feeling empowered; and healthcare systems being only narrowly defined.