

Association of North Carolina Boards of Health (ANCBH) Provides Community-Based High Blood Pressure Screening, Education and Referrals at 12 Triad Sites

Hypertension is the second leading cause of death in Guilford County, NC, and a key risk factor in the cause of heart disease and stroke, attributing to 890 deaths in 2019. Chronic diseases, such as high blood pressure can often be prevented by a healthy lifestyle, which includes diets rich in fruits and vegetables, lean proteins and whole grains, and regular physical activity. The access to healthy, affordable foods contributes to a person's diet and risk of related chronic diseases. People with healthy eating habits live longer and are at lower risk for serious health problems such as heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. For people with chronic diseases, healthy eating can help manage these conditions and prevent complications.



The American Heart Association and the Association of North Carolina Boards of Health (ANCBH) established in September 2022 a community-based blood pressure screening, education, and referral program in collaboration with local health departments in Guilford and Forsyth counties (Triad) to provide cardiovascular self-management options due to the lack of community education and wellness centers in communities. This effort addresses access to health promotion and cardiovascular disease prevention services in lower income and under resourced communities. Nearly one in six adults in NC do not know that they have high blood pressure, and on a regular basis, faith-based congregations request educational health fairs and onsite CVD exercise classes, but due to their smaller numbers, larger health care institutions are sometimes hesitant to offer disease prevention education in these locations. The local wellness centers are in place at nine sites across the Triad. Each site has BP cuffs, educational materials, exercise equipment (including resistance bands, jump ropes, step benches, exercise mats or yoga mats, hand weights, balance (or stability) balls, ankle weights, American Heart Association literature, kettle bells, and weight scales), an assigned Lay Health Advisor and site volunteer who provides education, screening, and facilitates the referral process for referring participants to the local health departments when needed.

The trained Lay Health Advisors and site leaders utilize evidence-based practices and programs to assist with educating participants on health and wellness for improving health. They receive training from the ANCBH staff, specifically the executive director who is also a former health director and North Carolina Central University nursing students. A protocol is set in place to refer all participants needing further evaluation due to high blood pressure readings to the Guilford or Forsyth health department.

The targeted sites include Rainbow 66, Greater Church at Reynolda Road, National Community Development Center, Community Development Center #2, Wellness Center and COVID Testing Site on Martin Luther King Drive Greensboro, Crystal Towers, Spartan Elite Wrestling Club, CCBB Lab, Carolina Community Behavioral Services, Akachi Solutions, Goler Manor Apartments, and Akachi Solutions targeting 1,000+ community members.

The ANCBH is a unique organization serving North Carolina's local boards of health and their members. Their goal is to pursue excellence in public health in North Carolina by providing leadership and support for local Boards of Health in their efforts to protect and promote the public's health.

The American Heart Association supports this newly established program by providing funding for the wellness centers blood pressure stations, exercise equipment, other educational materials and resources.

