Why do we do it?
CHA is a best practice and a requirement for state funding and accreditation. ESSENTIAL SERVICE 1 of the Ten Essential Services of Public Health is to monitor health status to identify community health problems. This is accomplished through routine surveillance, tracking, monthly and annual reports and every four years, a Community Health Assessment.

What is it used for?
Monitoring indicators, identifying populations at risk, planning, designing and funding interventions.

How is it done?
The process is detailed by the NC Department of Public Health: Review data→ Prioritize findings→ Communicate findings→ Action planning→ Implement action plans

What issues are Included in the assessment?
The assessment covers 9 topic areas: Access to Care, Chronic Disease, Environmental Health, HIV & STDs, Healthy Pregnancy, Injury Prevention, Mental Health, Substance Use and Violence with Health Disparities highlighted in each specific issue.

What was the priority setting methodology?
1. Community Survey: Summer 2017
Over 1,800 residents participated in paper and online surveys, offered in both English and Spanish. They were polled on health behaviors and asked to rank 9 health focus areas.

2. Community Meetings: October - December 2017
CHA presentations were given to a variety of community groups throughout the county. After the presentation, participants were given a ranking sheet to rank the 9 health issues. Nearly 300 community members participated in these meetings.

3. Priority Setting Event: December 8, 2017
125 community members gathered to hear presentations on each of the 9 health issues included in the assessment. Presentations were followed by table discussion and finally each participant ranked each area with regard to magnitude, severity, intervention effectiveness, public concern and urgency.

What’s next?
Community action planning for 4 top priority health areas will begin soon.
About the Top 4 Priority Health Issues

Issue 1: Mental Health
- Mind and body are inseparable. Mental health is fundamental to total health.
- Mental disorders are the leading cause of disability in the U.S. for ages 15-44 (NIMH).
- A range of treatments exists for most mental disorders but nearly half of all Americans who have a severe mental illness do not seek treatment. Stigma and cost are two major barriers to care (NIMH).
- In 2015, 15% of Mecklenburg high school students reported making a suicide plan (YRBS).
- In 2016, when asked about mental health—stress, depression, and problems with emotions—almost 10% of adults said their mental health had not been good for 8-29 days in the past month (BRFSS).

Issue 2: Chronic Disease
- Chronic diseases are the leading cause of death and disability. Nationally and locally, cancer, heart disease and stroke account for almost half of all deaths. Other chronic diseases, including chronic lower respiratory disease, Alzheimer’s disease, diabetes and kidney disease are also leading contributors to death and disability.
- 61% of adults in Mecklenburg are overweight or obese; 30% have high blood pressure; and 16% report current smoking—all conditions that can contribute to chronic disease (2016 BRFSS).
- Healthy behaviors such as physical activity, eating nutritious foods including a diet rich in fruits & vegetables, and avoiding tobacco can prevent or reduce the impact of many chronic conditions.

Issue 3: Access to Care
- Being uninsured can have a profound negative impact on health and financial well-being.
- 11% of all Mecklenburg County residents are uninsured (2016 US Census) and 19% of adults report not being able to see a doctor due to cost (2016 BRFSS).
- Of people ages 18-64 who are employed, 13% have no insurance (2016 US Census).
- The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has helped to make insurance more affordable and has lowered the rate of uninsured in the county. However, this law has faced continued efforts to repeal.
- NC chose not to expand Medicaid coverage to individuals making less than 100% of federal poverty level; people in this group will not be eligible for subsidies in the Healthcare.gov insurance marketplace and will continue to be dependent on free and low-cost clinics or emergency departments.

Issue 4: Violence
- Violence affects all ages, races and ethnicities causing death, injury and disability.
- Deaths resulting from firearms, other assault and child abuse represent the physical aspect of homicide. However, exposure to violent behaviors such as bullying and domestic violence can cause emotional harm leading to injury or death.
- There were 85 homicides in 2017, compared to a total of 68 in 2016. Domestic violence continues to be a contributing factor to many of these homicides (CMPD).
- In 2015, 11% of Mecklenburg high school students, reported being electronically bullied or cyberbullied (YRBS).

For more information visit www.meckhealth.org/CHA.