

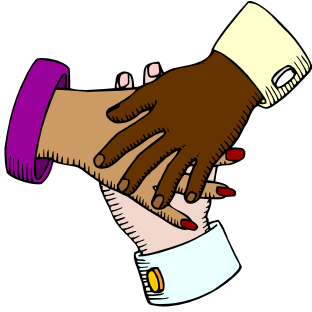


# Person County 2009 State of the County Health Report

Prepared by:  
Person County Health Department  
December 2009



*For additional copies of this report go to: <http://health.personcounty.net> (Health Data link)  
or contact Person County Health Department's Health Education Division at 597-2204 x2277.*



## Progress Made Towards Addressing Health Priorities is Attributed to Partners

The identification of health priorities for Person County back in 2007 through the Community Health Assessment process was definitely a team effort. It goes without saying that the progress that has been made towards addressing those priorities can also be attributed to the collaborative efforts of many partners working with the Health Department, Healthy Personians, the HIV Task Force, the Person County Fitness And Nutrition (FAN) Club, the Chronic Disease Action Team, and the Person County Wellness Team. This portion of the report re-introduces the county's health priorities and acknowledges what has been accomplished since the 2008 State of the County Health Report (SOTCH) to address them.

The health priorities identified through the 2007 Community Health Assessment for Person County include:

- ◆ Chronic Disease (*Heart Disease, Cancer, Stroke, Diabetes, Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases*)
- ◆ Health Promotion (*Obesity/Overweight, Physical Activity, Nutrition, Smoking/Tobacco use, Unsafe Sex, Drug/Alcohol Abuse*)
- ◆ Adolescent Health (*Teen Pregnancy, Sexually Transmitted Diseases/HIV*)
- ◆ Community Issues (*Gang Activity, Suicide*)
- ◆ Access to Health Resources (*Physical Health, Mental Health, Preventive Health, Treatment*)

Since the publication of the last SOTCH in December 2008, the following initiatives were implemented to address many of the health priorities.

- ❖ *The Give Your Heart a Healthy Beat series was offered to the community.*
- ❖ *A Chronic Disease Action Team was formed under the Healthy Personians partnership to address diabetes.*
- ❖ *A Diabetes Education Pilot Study was implemented in the community.*
- ❖ *Be Proud, Be Responsible (HIV/STD prevention program) was conducted at 4 sites.*
- ❖ *A World AIDS Day campaign was held, which included a media component.*
- ❖ *National HIV Testing Day outreach events were conducted at 3 sites.*
- ❖ *An HIV testing incentive program was offered.*
- ❖ *A mock HIV testing event was conducted for high school students.*
- ❖ *The Physical Activity and Nutrition Prescription Pad program continued to be offered at 2 sites.*
- ❖ *A School Gatekeeper (suicide prevention) training was offered for school personnel and other partners.*
- ❖ *A free PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen) Screening program was implemented for eligible men.*
- ❖ *Education was provided in schools on adolescent development, teen pregnancy prevention, and STD/HIV.*
- ❖ *The Healthy Choice Award program was developed for county employees.*
- ❖ *Read Me a Story, a program focusing on nutrition and activity, was implemented in 5 day care centers.*

- ❖ *A **Healthy Concessions Project** was implemented at 2 sites.*
- ❖ *Health messages and resources were relayed through a **Community Service Radio Spot Campaign**.*
- ❖ *Web based wellness resources were added to the county website ([www.personcounty.net](http://www.personcounty.net); wellness link).*
- ❖ *Links were added to the **Healthy Personians** section on the Health Department’s website (<http://health.personcounty.net>) to make information about the partnership and its efforts more accessible.*
- ❖ *The Health Department’s **Accent Health Message System** features weekly Eat Smart, Move More tips.*
- ❖ *Efforts towards developing a **Diabetes Social Marketing Campaign** began.*
- ❖ *A **Family Health Campaign** called “Show Me the Money: Taking Care of Your Family on a Budget” was published in the local newspaper. It was a series of ads that focused on the economic benefits of practicing healthy behaviors like eating meals at home, rethinking your drink, breastfeeding, not smoking, etc.*
- ❖ *Four eating establishments participated in the **North Carolina Smoke-Free Dining Campaign**.*
- ❖ *A **Here’s Your Sign** program was developed to recognize county employees for healthy and safe behaviors.*



### Cancer Exceeds Heart Disease As Leading Cause of Death

This table shows the leading causes of death for Person County, listed in descending order according to number of deaths. It is based on combined mortality data for the years 2003-2007 and 2002-2006. Rates reflected for both Person County and North Carolina are age-adjusted mortality rates which are the best ones to use when making comparisons. Figures in **boldface type** indicate causes of death for which the Person County rate exceeds the comparable rate for North Carolina.

| Cause of Death                               | 2003-2007               |                       |            | 2002-2006                                    |                       |              |       |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|-------|
|  | Person County<br>Number | Person County<br>Rate | NC<br>Rate | Person County<br>Number                      | Person County<br>Rate | NC<br>Rate   |       |
| <b>1. Cancer (all sites)</b>                 | 473                     | <b>228.4</b>          | 194.9      | <b>1. Heart Disease</b>                      | 464                   | <b>231.1</b> | 217.9 |
| <b>2. Heart Disease</b>                      | 460                     | <b>227</b>            | 210.7      | <b>2. Cancer (all sites)</b>                 | 426                   | <b>208.6</b> | 196.4 |
| <b>3. Cerebrovascular Disease</b>            | 181                     | <b>91.7</b>           | 57.6       | <b>3. Cerebrovascular Disease</b>            | 184                   | <b>94.4</b>  | 61.1  |
| <b>4. Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases</b> | 107                     | <b>52.6</b>           | 47.5       | <b>4. Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases</b> | 114                   | <b>56.7</b>  | 47.1  |
| <b>5. All Other Unintentional Injuries</b>   | 67                      | <b>35.6</b>           | 27.8       | <b>5. Pneumonia/ Influenza</b>               | 66                    | <b>33.9</b>  | 22.5  |

## Person County Ranked #28 in North Carolina for Teen Pregnancies in 2008

The number of teen pregnancies among girls ages 15-19 in Person County has increased from 2007, which was the last data reported in the 2008 SOTCH. Person County’s teen pregnancy rate in girls ages 15-19 continues to exceed the state’s rate. Data from the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Campaign of North Carolina is reflected in the following tables for 2007 and 2008.

| 2008                                     |               |                |
|--|---------------|----------------|
|  | Person County | North Carolina |
| Teen pregnancies among girls ages 15-19  | 93            | 19,398         |
| Rate per 1,000 girls aged 15-19          | 70.7          | 58.6           |
| Repeat pregnancies in girls ages 15-19   | 23            | 5,512          |
| % of total pregnancies that were repeats | 24.7%         | 28.4%          |

| 2007                                     |               |                |
|--|---------------|----------------|
|  | Person County | North Carolina |
| Teen pregnancies among girls ages 15-19  | 87            | 19,615         |
| Rate per 1,000 girls ages 15-19          | 76.0          | 63.0           |
| Repeat pregnancies in girls ages 15-19   | 22            | 5,759          |
| % of total pregnancies that were repeats | 25.3          | 29.4           |

Each year counties are ranked according to teen pregnancy rate among girls ages 15-19. The lower the county is ranked, the higher the teen pregnancy rate is compared to other counties. Person County was ranked #28 for teen pregnancy in 2008 and #33 in 2007.

There were 2 pregnancies among girls ages 10-14 in 2008. In 2007, there was 1 pregnancy among this age group. Pregnancy rates for this age group are not calculated for Person County due to such low numbers.

### Oh Well, Look What’s Been Happening in Person County

The following section identifies new and emerging public health issues since the publication of the 2008 SOTCH.

**Contaminated Wells** - It was reported in the 2008 SOTCH that 17 private wells northeast of Roxboro (known as the “Halifax/Virgilina Road” site) were contaminated with chlorinated solvents and/or petroleum. Once the contaminated wells were discovered, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began providing drinking water to the affected homes. Additionally, the EPA had whole-house water filtration systems installed on five of the homes due to excessively high levels of chlorinated solvents. The North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NC DENR) Underground Storage Tank Division installed whole-house water filtration systems on two additional homes as a result of high levels of petroleum contamination. Approximately 30 wells in the affected area have been repeatedly sampled in order to identify the extent of the contamination and to monitor possible changes in contaminate concentrations over time. The EPA now refers to this as the GMH Site, reflecting the suspected source of the chlorinated solvents. Soon after the contamination was discovered, the EPA and Person County initiated the engineering design of a water line expansion to serve the affected residents. The EPA has now obtained funding for the project which is expected to begin in December 2009 and completed by the end of July 2010. At some



point in the future, site remediation will begin in order to remove, or contain contaminants that are present.

In 2009, four chlorinated solvent contaminated wells were identified on Country Club Road, which is north of Roxboro. The levels of contamination were significantly less than the GMH site. Since the contaminated wells were first identified, NC DENR and the EPA have studied the site in greater detail and provided the three of the affected residences with drinking water. The EPA will soon have filtration systems installed at these homes and will then explore long term solutions and/or remediation.



**H1N1 Influenza** - In April 2009, the Person County Health Department (PCHD) began monitoring the rapidly spreading Influenza A (H1N1). PCHD has maintained an informational telephone line and a website dedicated to the dissemination of influenza information. Staff continues to distribute information to local medical providers and other partners. Early in June, the number of individuals with Influenza-like illness (ILI) rapidly increased, and Person County received confirmation of the presence of H1N1 on June 11, 2009. PCHD partnered with the Person County Schools to provide information to parents at the beginning of the school year to help prevent the spread of H1N1. PCHD held a joint meeting with various community partners in August to provide an update on response efforts. Beginning September 2009, local medical providers and the public school system have submitted weekly data on the number of ILI cases that present and the absenteeism numbers, respectively. This data indicated a tremendous increase in the number of cases at the beginning of October. PCHD began providing H1N1 vaccinations in October 2009. PCHD continues to work with various media outlets and other organizations to educate the community on the symptoms of H1N1 and ways to prevent the spread of H1N1. In November, a newspaper insert was distributed and the local radio station aired radio ads about H1N1 prevention and vaccinations. Hand sanitizers will be distributed in mid-January to all schools.

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## *Calling All Personians!*



Person County Health Department and the Healthy Personians partnership invite Personians to get involved in addressing the health priorities in Person County.

Opportunities for involvement are available through service on the Healthy Personians Advisory Board and/or a sub-committee (nominating committee, planning committee, resource development committee, mini-grant committee); the HIV Task Force; the Person County Fitness And Nutrition (FAN) Club; and the Chronic Disease Action Team. In 2010, there will be additional opportunities for Personians to serve their county. Community volunteers and representatives from county organizations will be needed to serve on a Durham-Person Collaborative Team (to coordinate efforts of a Diabetes Today grant program) and a Community Health Assessment Team. For more information on any of these opportunities contact: LeighAnn Creson (Healthy Personians Coordinator) at 336-597-2204 x2277 or [lcreson.pchd@personcounty.net](mailto:lcreson.pchd@personcounty.net).

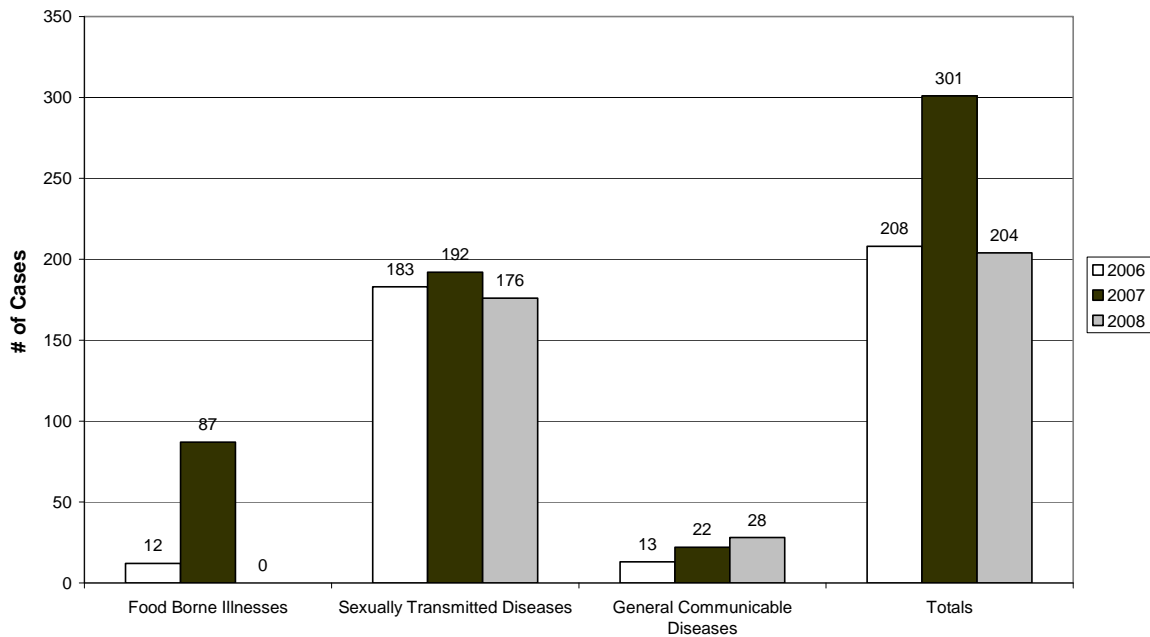
Visit <http://health.personcounty.net> for information on the Health Department and/or Healthy Personians. The Healthy Personians link provides meeting minutes from the advisory board as well as from the partner groups (HIV Task Force and FAN Club); a monthly calendar of partnership and partner group meetings and events; the history of Healthy Personians; bylaws; the partnership's brochure; etc.

## Communicable Disease Morbidity

Since the last Community Health Assessment (CHA) Person County Health Department has increased its capacity to more accurately track communicable diseases through the North Carolina Electronic Disease Detection Surveillance System. Clinical staff also maintains in-house tracking documents.

The following graph shows that in 2006 there were 208 reported cases of communicable diseases in Person County. Eighty-eight percent of those cases (183) were attributed to Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) while only 6% of cases (12) were from Food Borne Illnesses (FBI) and another 6% of cases (13) were from General Communicable Diseases (GCD). In 2007, 192 of Person County's 301 cases of communicable diseases were from STD; however the percentage of cases (64%) was much lower than the previous year. The percentage of FBI cases (29%) was significantly higher than it was in 2006. This was due to contaminated food that was served at a catered luncheon at the opening of a new industry. The source of contamination was not identified nor was the specific organism. Only 7% of communicable diseases in 2007 were from GCD. There were 204 reported communicable diseases in 2008, 176 cases were from STD and 28 cases were from GCD. *Note: The General Communicable Diseases category includes diseases like Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Tuberculosis, Lyme Disease, Meningitis, etc.*

**2006-2008 Communicable Disease Comparison**



The remainder of this section will focus on STD morbidity data, as this is a priority area identified though the last CHA and continues to account for most of Person County's cases of communicable diseases. Data was obtained from the 2008 Community Health Data Book and 2009 Community Health Data Book at [www.schs.state.nc.us](http://www.schs.state.nc.us). The following tables show the number of Syphilis cases, Gonorrhea cases and AIDS cases for 2002-2006, and 2003-2007. Incidence rates for Person County and North Carolina are also presented in order to make comparisons.

**Syphilis (primary & secondary) Cases and Rates per 100,000**

|                | 2003-2007 |      | 2002-2006 |      |
|----------------|-----------|------|-----------|------|
|                | # Cases   | Rate | # Cases   | Rate |
| Person County  | 4         | 2.1  | 4         | 2.2  |
| North Carolina | 1,247     | 2.9  | 1,195     | 2.8  |

**Gonorrhea Cases and Rates per 100,000**

|                | 2003-2007 |       | 2002-2006 |       |
|----------------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
|                | # Cases   | Rate  | # Cases   | Rate  |
| Person County  | 217       | 116.6 | 196       | 105.8 |
| North Carolina | 79,244    | 181.9 | 77,948    | 182.0 |

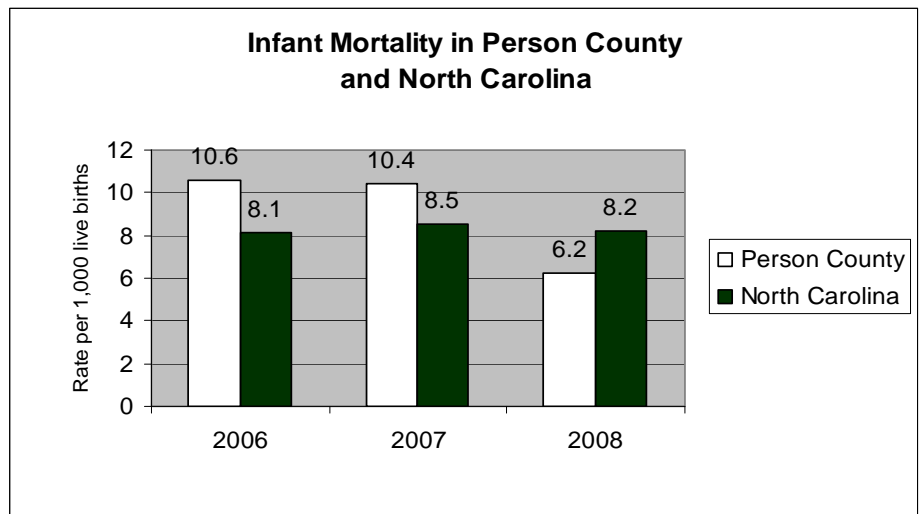
**AIDS Cases and Rates per 100,000**

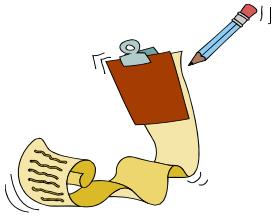
|                | 2003-2007 |      | 2002-2006 |      |
|----------------|-----------|------|-----------|------|
|                | # Cases   | Rate | # Cases   | Rate |
| Person County  | 12        | 6.4  | 12        | 6.5  |
| North Carolina | 5,238     | 12.0 | 5,310     | 12.4 |

In summary, the tables show that from 2002-2006 to 2003-2007 the actual number of Syphilis remained the same in the county. The greatest increase was in the number of Gonorrhea cases while cases of AIDS remained the same. Person County’s incidence rates for Syphilis, Gonorrhea, and AIDS remained under the state’s rates for both time periods.

**Good News! County Infant Mortality Rate Is Under the NC Rate**

The infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) in Person County has been on the decline since what was reported in the last CHA. Even though the county’s rate has been decreasing since 2005 it has still remained above the state’s infant mortality rate until recently. In 2008, Person County’s infant mortality rate was not only down from 2007 and 2006; it also fell below the North Carolina rate. The following table provides a visual of the decline in these rates.





## Other Health Priorities Tracked

Throughout this report data has been presented on many of Person County's identified health priorities as well as a few additional areas of concern. Person County Health Department has also tracked data on some of the other health priorities that have not been mentioned elsewhere in this report. This data is briefly summarized in this section.

**Diabetes** - Diabetes was the 7<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the county for 2003-2007 and 2002-2006. In 2003-2007, 56 deaths in the county were attributed to diabetes compared to 54 deaths in 2002-2006. The age-adjusted death rate slightly increased from 26.5 in 2002-2006 to 27.3 in 2003-2007. Person County's rate in 2003-2007 was above the state's rate (26.4).

*The following health priorities are behavior related and data is not collected on most of them locally in the interim years between Community Health Assessments. While some data is from local sources, other data has been tracked through the North Carolina – Nutrition and Physical Activity Surveillance System (NC-NPASS) and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). Data sources have been cited for each area.*

**Obesity/Overweight** - Child care Body Mass Index (BMI) data was collected on children ages 2-5 in 9 child care centers in May 2009 by the Health Department/Person County Partnership for Children's Community Service Team Nurse. Of the 205 children measured, 15% (31 children) fell into the overweight category and 12% (24 children) were classified as obese.

Person County Schools' Screening Report for 2008-2009 indicated that 1,413 pre-Kindergarten, first grade, third grade, and fifth grade students at 7 elementary schools and 2 pre-schools were measured for BMI. Nineteen percent of students were identified as "at risk for obesity" while 22% were in the obese category.

According to NC-NPASS data for 2008, 447 children ages 2-18 were measured, 18.8% (84 children) were overweight and 15.9% (71) were obese. In 2007, measurements were taken on 544 children in the same age range and 17.6% (96 children) were identified as overweight and 18.6% (101 children) were obese.

*Note: NC-NPASS is limited to data on children seen in NC public health sponsored WIC and Child Health Clinics and some school based health centers.*

In 2008, 65.2% of adult respondents to the BRFSS for the Piedmont North Carolina region had a BMI over 25, which puts them in either the overweight or obese category. This percentage was up a little from 2007 when 63.7% of respondents indicated they had a BMI over 25.

*Note: BRFSS is a random survey of state residents aged 18 and older in households with telephones. Interviews are conducted monthly and data are analyzed annually. Person County is one of the 30+ counties included in the Piedmont North Carolina region.*

**Physical Activity** - When asked, "during the past month, other than your regular job, did you participate in any physical activities or exercises such as running, calisthenics, golf, gardening or walking exercises?", 76.9% of the 7,610 BRFSS respondents for 2008 in the Piedmont NC region said "yes". This was about the same response (76.5% of 7,095 respondents said "yes") in 2007.

**Smoking** - The 2008 BRFSS revealed that 19.3% of the 7,581 respondents in the Piedmont NC region were current smokers. This percentage was actually down from the previous year as 21.5% of respondents (7,081) said they smoked.

**Alcohol Abuse** - In 2008, 3.9% of the 7,442 BRFSS respondents in the Piedmont NC region were classified as heavy drinkers. This was about the same for 2007 as 3.7% of the 6,980 respondents were heavy drinkers.

*Note: Heavy drinking is defined by this system as adult men having more than 2 drinks per day and adult women having more than 1 drink per day.*

**Gang Activity** - The last CHA revealed that there were 3 gangs reported in Person County in 2002. Information obtained from the Person County Sheriff's Department in December 2009 shows that there are now affiliations with 6-7 types of gangs and various "sets" of gangs under each type. It was also stated that an alarming number of adolescents are being approached by gang members about getting involved in gang activity.

**Suicide** - Deaths from suicide in Person County were lower in 2003-2007 (21 deaths) than in 2002-2006 (28 deaths). The county's age-adjusted mortality rate for suicide in 2003-2007 was under the state's rate unlike in 2002-2006.

### **Change Felt in Person County Too**

Over the past year, Person County has faced its share of changes which have had the potential to directly or indirectly impact the health of Personians. The most significant economic changes in 2009 were the expansion of North American Aerodynamics (NAA) and the closing of Loxcreen Company, Inc. NAA has gone from 55 employees to about 220 as of December and has plans to expand further in 2010. Loxcreen's closing resulted in laying off 104 workers. Other employers, including county government and the local school system, had to resort to dissolving positions, reducing benefits, implementing furlough days and in some cases ceasing some operations. Person County's unemployment rate for October 2009 was 10.2%, which was an increase from 7.4% just 12 months ago. The county's rate is below the state's rate (11.0%) as of October 2009.

Three and a half positions (all but 1 was vacant) within the Health Department fell victim to the budget crisis in the 2009-2010 fiscal year. The loss of these positions has resulted in reduced services and programs in the areas of environmental health and health education. It has also impacted the workload for staff in these areas as well as Home Health and Hospice and other disciplines within the department. In spite of these changes, staff continues to work hard to offer quality services and programs to the community. However in the midst of this loss the Health Department's capacity to address public health preparedness issues, like HINI influenza, has increased. Person County Health Department collaborated with the Orange County Health Department to hire a Public Health Preparedness Coordinator to be shared with both counties. Neither county had the resources to hire a coordinator exclusively for their county. State grants have allowed both counties to stay on top of the situation with HINI influenza as well as other public health preparedness concerns. Home Health and Hospice of Person County, a division of the Health Department, employed a full-time Physical Therapy Assistant and Chaplain over the past year. Both positions provide services that are required for maintaining accreditation.

In December 2008, access to health care increased with the opening of Roxboro MedAccess. This urgent care center is open 7 days a week and has an emergency physician on duty at all times. Roxboro MedAccess has convenient hours which extend into the evening. The Health Department has already collaborated with Roxboro MedAccess on several occasions. Person County Government works with this facility on workmen's compensation cases. There have been several other medical facilities in the county that have opened or expanded staff and services within the past year.

