

**Turning Point:
North Carolina's Blueprint for Public Health
in the 21st Century**

The Turning Point Vision

The vision for North Carolina's Turning Point has been to create new partnerships and coalitions to strengthen and transform the public health system for the 21st Century.

The Turning Point Process

A statewide Turning Point Steering Committee gathered information about health and quality of life issues of concern to North Carolinians through a survey of 1700 health-focused organizations and individuals, a 12-site grassroots videoconference, and a town meeting of local health improvement coalitions.

The Turning Point Findings

The survey revealed ten priority health issues:

- Abuse and neglect
- Cardiovascular disease
- Clean water
- Cost of medications
- Education (e.g., illiteracy)
- Health insurance (e.g., under-, un-insured)
- Parenting skills
- Preventive health services
- Primary care (e.g., access to care)
- Substance abuse

The multi-site videoconference identified three major contributing factors:

- Cultural and diversity issues (language barriers, cultural biases)
- Health care access (cost, affordability, transportation, fragmented delivery systems, inconvenient hours)
- Lack of focus on prevention (knowledge, health promotion services, covered benefits)

The town meetings identified nine community systems crucial to improving health and well being:

- Community of faith
- Business and/or worksite
- Education
- Community coalitions
- Public health
- Health care
- Policy development
- Transportation
- Public awareness

Turning Point Recommendations for Action

North Carolina's Turning Point has resulted in a series of ten recommendations that address the major health issues affecting the health status of all North Carolinians.

- 1. Improve health communications by implementing social marketing and strategic communication initiatives.**
 - Increase public awareness of public health issues.
 - Increase public knowledge of behavior changes that can improve health.
 - Increase awareness of health services and how to access them.
 - Increase public knowledge about the role of public health.
- 2. Develop performance standards and an accreditation system for local health departments to help assure available, accessible, and high quality primary and preventive health services for all North Carolina citizens.**
- 3. Expand opportunities for leadership development among community lay persons, leaders of health-related nonprofits, and health professionals from the public and private sectors.**
- 4. Expand statewide, strategic partnerships among crucial community systems for improving health**
 - Establish a broad-based group of representatives from governmental and non-governmental health-focused organizations to advise the state Health Director.
 - Expand and institutionalize working partnerships with other agencies in state government.
 - Expand and institutionalize working partnerships among community systems.
- 5. Secure adequate funding for public health core functions.**
 - Insure an adequate infrastructure for local delivery of essential public health services.
 - Provide funding for local community health improvement coalitions.
 - Provide funding for periodic, comprehensive local community health assessment.

- Develop and implement an automated, multi-agency system for collecting and reporting health information.
 - Seek support from the North Carolina Public Health Study Commission.
- 6. Strengthen the Community Health Improvement Process (Healthy Carolinians).**
- Ensure that every North Carolina county establishes a Healthy Carolinians Coalition.
 - Develop and disseminate Year 2010 Health Objectives for North Carolina.
 - Strengthen the community assessment process.
- 7. Initiate action in the Division of Public Health to improve partnerships with local public health agencies.**
- Increase leadership, support and flexibility.
 - Consolidate funding streams.
 - Evaluate annually all aspects of the system and its programs.
 - Enable and promote inter-jurisdictional collaborations among health departments and districts.
 - Provide assistance to local boards of health in recruiting and retaining well-trained local health directors.
- 8. Eliminate health disparities among North Carolinians.**
- Improve client access to services.
 - Increase recruitment and education of minorities in health careers.
 - Provide interpreter services within the health system.
 - Develop health education materials in languages other than English.
 - Increase staff training in cultural sensitivity.
 - Expand leadership capability within minority communities.
- 9. Address financial barriers to health care.**
- Ensure affordable health care.
 - Promote provision of affordable insurance.
 - Promote insurance coverage for medications and preventive health services.
- 10. Implement the recommendations of the North Carolina Task Force on Dental Health.**

North Carolina Turning Point Partners

Association of North Carolina Boards of Health
 Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research
 East Carolina University
 Forsyth County Health Department
 LeeCAN
 Medical Review of North Carolina, Inc.

North Carolina Area Health Education Centers
North Carolina Association of County Commissioners
North Carolina Association of Local Health Directors
North Carolina Dental Society
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
North Carolina Department of Insurance
North Carolina Hospital Association
North Carolina Institute of Government
North Carolina Medical Society
North Carolina Nurses Association
North Carolina Primary Care Association
North Carolina Public Health Association
The North Carolina Public Health Awareness Program
North Carolina Society for Public Health Education, Inc.
Office of Healthy Carolinians
Onslow County Community Health Improvement Process
United Way of North Carolina
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Office of the Provost, School of
Dentistry, School of Medicine, School of Public Health, North Carolina Institute
for Public Health
Wake Forest University School of Medicine
Wellness Council of North Carolina