



NEWS RELEASE

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Board Creates Task Force to Improve Health in Wake County

The Wake County Board of Commissioners today established a Population Health Task Force that will create a plan to improve the county's overall health and well-being. The plan will focus on policies and strategies to support healthy communities, active lifestyles and thriving residents.

"We're working to improve the health and well-being of all of our residents by building a culture of health in Wake County," said Chairman Sig Hutchinson, who will serve as chair of the task force. "Our health is influenced by so many social factors. This task force will focus on those factors and develop a plan to make the healthy choice the easy choice for our residents."

While Wake County was named the healthiest county in North Carolina by County Health Rankings in 2016, there is still work to be done. Several measures that impact the health of Wake County residents need to be improved, including:

- **Physical Inactivity:** 18 percent of adults over the age of 20 report they do not incorporate physical activity into their leisure time.
- **Children in Poverty:** 14 percent of children under age 18 live in poverty.
- **Unemployment Rate:** 4.8 percent of Wake County residents age 16 and older are unemployed, but seeking work.

The task force will be given the following charge:

- Review existing methodologies, philosophies, systems and models to develop a common understanding of how other communities are currently impacting population health;
- Collaboratively develop holistic recommendations that utilize existing models, strategies and systems, as well as new approaches, to address health disparities, create healthy communities, impact the built environment and make the healthy choice the easy choice; and
- Recommend a system of outreach to impact all residents through community engagement, land use and transportation policies, employer programs, clubs

and organization enrollment, communication with the faith community and government programs.

The commissioners will appoint up to 25 community leaders to the task force. It will meet monthly for one year to deliver a tactical report to the board before May 2018.

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