

County of Buncombe Proclamation

NATIONAL HEALTH WEEK

APRIL 7 - 13, 2025

WHEREAS, on this 30th year of celebrating National Public Health Week, the theme is “It Starts Here” - highlighting the importance of making a difference in our home, community and state. In the past 30 years significant strides have been made in public health, such as:

- (1) deaths due to HIV/AIDS in the U.S., which peaked in 1994, have dropped significantly with Antiretroviral therapy ensuring most people with HIV can live normal lifespans, and prevention tools like PrEP significantly reduce transmission; and
- (2) smoking rates, which were as high as 25.5% among U.S. adults in 1994, have fallen to 11.4% due to comprehensive smoke-free policies, public awareness campaigns, and taxation of tobacco products; and
- (3) childhood mortality, which was 13.8 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1994, has now fallen to 5.4 deaths per 1,000 live births due to vaccines, better healthcare access and nutrition; and
- (4) mental health awareness and treatment, with 40% of people with mental health conditions being untreated in 1994, has progressed with increased awareness, parity laws and integration into primary care, which have expanded access to mental health services and reduced treatment gaps; and
- (5) lead poisoning, with 4.4% of U.S. children having elevated blood lead levels in 1994, has fallen to less than 0.5% due to policies banning leaded gasoline and reducing lead in paint, pipes, and water systems; and
- (6) health impacts of climate change such as rising heat-related deaths were under-recognized in 1994, but are now mitigated by actions such as public health campaigns, local adaptation plans including cooling centers and other preparedness plans to protect the public from extreme weather, wildfires and other regional threats and global frameworks like the Paris Agreement; and
- (7) pandemic preparedness, which was in its infancy in 1994, has grown, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, spurring significant advancements in mRNA technology, global vaccine deployment, and increased investments in infrastructure, stockpiles and global surveillance.

WHEREAS, public health professionals help communities prevent, prepare for, withstand and recover from the impact of a full range of health threats, ranging from infectious disease outbreaks to natural disaster preparedness; and

WHEREAS, efforts to support public health and the prevention of disease and injury can continue to transform a health system focused on treating illness into a health system focused on preventing disease and injury and promoting wellness.

NOW THEREFORE, the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners hereby proclaim **April 7-13, 2025**, as **National Public Health Week** in Buncombe County and encourage the people of Buncombe County to observe this week by helping our families, friends, neighbors, co-workers and leaders to recognize the contribution of public health.

This 1st day of April, 2025.



Amanda Edwards, Chair
Buncombe County Board of Commissioners