

# Stokes County Health Department

## Stokes Family Health Center

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PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Stokes County Health Department/Family Health Center awarded State Accreditation Designation**

Stokes County Health Department has been awarded the status of accreditation by the North Carolina Local Health Department Accreditation Board as of May 25, 2012.

“Obtaining accreditation should reinforce the knowledge that the Public Health Department services provided to the citizens of Stokes County are among North Carolina’s best. The Health Department staff should be very proud of their dedication to Public Health service” said Scott D. Lenhart, Stokes County Health Department Director.

According to Scott D. Lenhart “the accreditation process looks at 148 benchmarks that must be met. Evidence must be produced for each benchmark, which consists of different areas, such as: training of the staff; OSHA and HIPAA programs; clinical services offered; management of clinical services; types of required programs; compliance within each program’s contracts; North Carolina General Statutes; Administrative Code; the overall cleanliness and professionalism of the health department; along with partnerships and collaborative efforts with community partners. Many individuals put in long hours to achieve this accreditation status. Normally, the accreditation process can take at least 18 months to prepare, but Stokes County Health Department Staff accomplished this task in eight months. Seeing how the staff came together to organize and assemble the evidence was a great example of teamwork and collaboration with other agencies, and departments within Stokes County. It makes be proud to be a citizen of Stokes County and that we all can say we have a state accredited health department”.

North Carolina is the first state to mandate accreditation for its local health departments in the country. The purpose of the accreditation program is to assure a basic level of capacity and services in each of the local health departments across the state.

Since the pilot program involving six local health departments began in 2004, sixty nine health departments have been accredited. The process of accreditation includes three major components – a self-assessment completed by the agency, a site visit by a multidisciplinary team of peers to review certain performance standards, and determination of accreditation status by an independent Accreditation Board comprised of state and local public health officials, Board of Health members, County Commissioners and public members.

The accreditation process is a collaboration of the North Carolina Division of Public Health, part of the Department of Health and Human Services and the North Carolina Institute for Public Health of the Gillings School of Global Public Health at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill with input from the North Carolina Association of Local Health Directors.

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