



Extent of public concern: *high*

- On the Community Opinion Survey, 48.1% of residents stated affordable healthcare as “a big problem,” ranking it #3 behind jobs and obesity. It was also ranked #2 on the list when residents selected the top 3 problems in the county. Affordable healthcare was mentioned frequently in the CHA interviews.
 - One community member describes the financial burden in addressing chronic diseases: “The population is aging and the population is growing. So, I think the chronic issues have probably increased in volume...But access to the care, the financial ability to [access] the care is probably worse now because everything is more expensive.”¹
- The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was recently signed into law.

Resources available:

- Free or sliding scale medical services: Chatham County Public Health Department, Piedmont Health Services, Chatham Cares Pharmacy
- The Affordable Healthcare Taskforce compiled a resource guide that covers a wide range of Chatham County health and medical services.
- Preventive health programs to stop illness before it starts: Chatham County Public Health Department, Chatham Social Health Council

Effective, multi-level health strategies:

- Focus on prevention to reduce the economic burden in treating disease.²
- Streamline administrative procedures to bolster efficiency and lower costs.²
- Establish a coordinated system of care will treat the whole person, not just the disease, and help save costs in the long run.³
- Provide education, monitoring, and support for chronic diseases via telephone.³

Challenges in addressing this issue:

- Most of the changes in health care from the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act do not take place until 2014.
- Health services, such as Piedmont, do not have enough funding to respond to the high demand for their services.¹

1 Key informant interviews

2 National Association of Community Health Centers, <http://www.nachc.com/hc-info-financial-operations.cfm>; Center for Health Transformation

3 Center for Health Transformation, http://www.healthtransformation.net/cs/wyoming/medicaid_best_practices