

January has arrived, a month where so many have made New Year resolutions that are soon to be broken. This year, the Anson County Health Department encourages every woman to make a well-women exam the one resolution to keep.

The American Social Health Association (ASHA) and the National Cervical Cancer Coalition (NCCC) has named January Cervical Health Awareness Month. This is a special month where women are encouraged to get screened for cervical cancer and receive the human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccine if they are eligible.

Cervical cancer is the 3rd leading cause of death amongst women in the United States and affects nearly 12,000 women a year in the U.S. alone. All women are at risk for cancer, however it occurs more often in women 30 and older. According to the statistics presented in 2014 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Hispanic women had the highest rate of cervical cancer followed by black, white, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaskan Native women. Reports also revealed that black women are more likely to die from cervical cancer. According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), in 2018 about 13,240 new cases of aggressive cervical cancer will be diagnosed and about 4,170 women will die from it.

Most cervical cancer is caused by the human papilloma virus (HPV). HPV is a group of 150 or more related viruses and is usually contracted through sexual intercourse. Some types of HPV can cause genital warts while some other, different types are linked to cervical cell changes that, if not detected early, can increase a woman's risk for cervical cancer. HPV vaccines can help prevent infection from both high risk HPV types that can lead to cervical cancer and low risk types that cause genital warts. The CDC recommends all boys and girls get the HPV vaccine by age 11 or 12, but vaccination is available through age 26.

To prevent and detect cervical cancer, a Pap test is recommended every 3 years for women between the ages of 21-60. A Pap test can find cell changes to the cervix caused by HPV. HPV tests find the virus and help healthcare providers know which women are at highest risk for cervical cancer. An abnormal Pap test may require a detailed follow-up.

The Anson County Health Department provides the HPV vaccine to both boys and girls between the ages of 9 and 26 and accepts most major insurances. Young uninsured women under the age of 19 can receive the vaccine free of charge. The Health Department also provides the Pap test.

The Health Department is located at 110 Ashe Street in Wadesboro. For more information about the HPV vaccination please call (704) 694-5188. For overall information, contact Dinikia Savage at the Anson County Health Department at (704) 994-3342.

Blessing Boxes are Catching on Across the US

Take what you need. Leave what you can.

A blessing box is a miniature food pantry. It is placed in a location that is accessible by anyone, at anytime. Food items are placed in the box by donors, to be shared with anyone who has a need. In a CNN article it explains, "At the heart of the blessing box program is the idea that small acts of generosity can make a huge difference, especially when done anonymously."

In that article a man built a blessing box on his lawn and it changed the heart of his whole town.

Reverend Tracy Schumpert of Smyrna/Wingate United Methodist Church recently installed a blessing box at the church. "I pray that the blessing box at the church changes the heart of Wingate. As it says on the box, 'Take what you need. Leave what you can.'"

If you would like to donate to that blessing box, or see one in case you are considering doing one, the church is located at 111 Hinson Street in Wingate.



Fire Deaths on the Rise as a Result of Cold Weather

Eleven people have died in fires in North Carolina so far in 2018. Last year, nine people lost their lives as a result of fire during the entire month of January.

"One life lost in fire is one life too many," said Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey, who also serves as the state fire marshal. "It is imperative citizens know of the dangers associated with home heating and carbon monoxide so they can take extra precautions during the blast of winter weather," Causey said.

Each year during December, January, and February there is an increase in the number of home fires related to heating. According to the National Fire Protection Association, heating is the second leading cause of home fires, deaths and injuries in the U.S.

In 2017 83 people lost their lives in North Carolina because of fire. That is 14 more people from the year before in 2016.

In addition to fires, winter weather increases the chances of carbon monoxide poisonings. Carbon monoxide is often referred to as the silent killer because the gas released is colorless and odorless. Vehicles, generators and home heating can produce dangerous levels in your home in a short amount of time, enough to cause illness or even death. Carbon monoxide poisoning mimics common illness such as the flu or food poisoning with symptoms to include shortness of breath, nausea, dizziness, light headedness or headaches.

The North Carolina Department of Insurance, Office of State Fire Marshal and Safe Kids NC recommends the following NFPA safety tips to prevent fire, injury or poisonings.

- Heating**
- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment.
 - Have a three-foot "kid-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
 - Never use your oven to heat your home.
 - Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
 - Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel burning space heaters.
 - Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container, placed on a non-combustible area and stored a safe distance away from your home.
 - Test smoke alarms at least once a month.

- Portable Generators**
- Generators should be operated in well ventilated locations outdoors away from all doors, windows and vent openings.
 - Never use a generator in an attached garage, even with the door open.
 - Place generators so that exhaust fumes can't enter the home through windows, doors or other openings in the building.
 - Turn off generators and let them cool down before refueling. Never refuel a generator while it is running.
 - Store fuel for the generator in a container that is intended for the purpose and is correctly labeled as such. Store the container outside of living areas.

- Fireplace Safety**
- A portable ethanol burning fireplace, and the fuel, should only be used by adults.
 - Clean up any fuel spillage and be sure all liquid has evaporated before lighting the fireplace.
 - Light the fireplace using a utility lighter or long match.
 - An adult should always be present when a portable fireplace is burning.
 - Place the portable fireplace on a sturdy surface.
 - Never try to move a lit fireplace or one that is still hot.
 - Don't pour ethanol fuel in a fireplace that is lit or still warm. It may result in a fire or injury.
 - Extinguish the flame in a portable or permanent fireplace when you leave the room, home or go to sleep.

- Carbon Monoxide**
- Carbon monoxide alarms should be installed in a central location outside each sleeping area on every level of the home and in other locations required by law or code. For the best protection, interconnect all CO alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
 - Follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height.
 - Choose a carbon monoxide alarm that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
 - Test CO alarms at least once a month; replace them according to the manufacturer's instructions.
 - If the audible trouble signal sounds, check for low batteries. If the battery is low, replace it. If it still sounds, call the fire department.
 - If the carbon monoxide alarm sounds, immediately move to a fresh air location. Make sure everyone inside the home is accounted for.
 - If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Do not run a vehicle or other fueled engines or motors indoors, even if garage doors are open. Make sure the exhaust pipe of a running vehicle is not covered with snow.
 - During and after a snowstorm, make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove, and fireplace are clear of snow build-up.
 - Use gas or charcoal grills outside.

For more information, contact Injury Prevention Deputy Director Shannon Bullock at 919.218.3396 or Shannon.Bullock@ncdoi.gov.

Storytime Every Tuesday at the Library

The Hampton B. Allen Library features Storytime for children every Tuesday at 10 a.m. This program is free and an enjoyable learning experience for children. For more information call 704-694-5177.

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COMMUNITY MEDICAL, PA OF MARSHVILLE

Community Medical, PA of Marshville and Dr. Gary Henry would like to announce the addition of Brandi Thomas, FNP-C, Family Nurse Practitioner to the practice.

As a Union County native, Brandi looks forward to meeting the healthcare needs of her community. Dr. Henry will continue to serve his community, providing the same quality care he has for over 26 years.

Brandi's background is in primary care, chronic disease management, diabetes management/education, hypertension, long term care and aesthetics. She is a Business Management graduate of Wingate University, and has a Masters in Nursing, Family Nurse Practitioner from UNCC.

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Both providers are Federally Certified Medical Examiners and perform DOT exams and Urine/Hair drug testing on-site five days a week.



Dr. Gary Henry



Brandi S. Thomas, FNP-C

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