

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our UNC Capstone team* is collaborating with the Durham County Department of Public Health to assess the Board of Health Smoking Rule, hereafter referred to as the Rule. Since August 2015, our team has conducted formative research that will inform our recommendations to strengthen the Rule and its implementation. As part of our formative research, our team conducted a literature review, seven interviews with stakeholders in Durham, and three interviews with staff in health departments in other counties in NC.

The literature showed that smoke-free air (SFA) policies have a proven record of reducing secondhand smoke exposure. We learned that tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable deaths in NC and that use of electronic cigarettes among NC teens is increasing. Additionally, we learned that local NC communities gained more authority to pass and implement SFA policies in 2010.

Our team spoke with stakeholders in Durham about the development and implementation of the Rule. Most stakeholders voiced that they observed people smoking in areas prohibited by the Rule. They noted that government employees appear uncomfortable approaching people who were not complying with the Rule. There were differing opinions among stakeholders about whether there were too many or too few “No Smoking” signs educating the public about where smoking is not permitted. Stakeholders also described tension between the City and County government regarding sign installation. They also recommended more ongoing community education programs to increase compliance.

Our team also interviewed staff from the health departments of Orange, Mecklenburg, and Wake Counties. We identified key themes, including how public support influences which areas are included in policies and that controversial areas are often excluded from policies. Our interviews also revealed variations in the levels of police support and engagement. However, no counties utilized police officers for enforcement, but relied on community education to create compliance.

Finally, this formative research will inform the surveys that our team develops and conducts with Durham City and County government employees, as well as members of the Durham public. We will be using results from the survey to further explore knowledge and challenges with implementing the Rule in focus groups in the Spring.



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