

Organization: Ashe Memorial Hospital**County:** Ashe**Address:** 200 Hospital Ave.
Jefferson, N.C. 28640**Phone:** 336-846-0781**Website:** <http://www.ashememorial.org/>**Project:** Event/ Health Fair*****Below are excerpts from their final report*****

About the Project: In partnership with several of our key agencies (Ashe Memorial Hospital, Ashe County Health Department, and Ashe Partnership for Children), we held a Women's Health Fair at an indoor mall in West Jefferson, N.C. on March 21, 2009. Focusing on the major stages of life for women, we identified basic factors that influence the health of women and their families. These basic factors are access to medical care, nutrition, physical activity, family-care and self-care.

The Appalachian District Health Department in Ashe County drew blood and provided free cholesterol, blood sugar and blood pressure readings. Anecdotal information reached us that several women received cholesterol readings that immediately sent them to their doctors for further consultation. For the first time at a public event in Ashe County, we offered Body Mass Index (BMI) readings. The number of medical screenings performed that day were as follows: Cholesterol – 76; Blood Sugar – 76; Blood Pressure – 76; Body Mass Index (BMI) – 45; Heel Density – 80. All the screenings were aimed at raising awareness of the obesity and diabetes problems of women in Ashe County.

Two local Ashe County physicians, in two separate sessions, answered questions town-hall style from the audience. Both sessions were well attended and the participants and the physicians were pleased with the results.

Our outreach into the community of Ashe County for this event was broad. We wanted to reach all the women in Ashe County, not any one demographic. Our two local newspapers printed articles about the upcoming Ashe County Women's Health Fair and included listings in their community calendars. We sent church program inserts to all the local churches, posted flyers in public places and distributed them to our seven key partners to post in their facilities. We appeared on the local morning radio "Happy Time Show" giving all the details and encouraging women to attend. At every meeting we attended for a month prior to the Fair, we talked about the event and handed out flyers.

In addition to the women of Ashe County, we wanted to engage other members of the community as much as possible. We mailed letters to community businesses asking for door prizes, mailed brochures asking the healthcare community to set up booths, and we had 30 tables at the fair. The services we provided ranged from medical screenings to massage therapy.



Successes: The effects of this project were numerous and included the following: increased awareness in Ashe County about women's health issues; increased awareness that in hard economic times we do have resources in Ashe County that can help get and keep women and their families healthy; exposed women to the resources that are available for themselves and their families; screenings that uncovered medical problems; and an event in which 90% of survey respondents said they had learned something, and 96% said that the Women's Health Fair was worth their time.

This N.C. Healthy Start Grant enabled Ashe County Healthy Carolinians to offer services to the women of Ashe County that are underexposed and underused in our community. We were able to provide information and facilitate personal contacts between women and health providers in a focused, relaxed, woman-oriented atmosphere designed to remove barriers to learning and acceptance. We presented health and healthy behavior in an atmosphere of fun and excitement.