EAT SMART NORTH CAROLINA:

Guidelines for Healthy Foods and Beverages at Meetings, Gatherings and Events

Eat Smart Move More NORTH CAROLINA™

Eat Smart North Carolina: *Guidelines for Healthy Foods and Beverages at Meetings, Gatherings, and Events*

Eating is one of life's greatest pleasures. There are many foods from which to choose, and many ways to build a healthy lifestyle. This leaves a lot of room for choice. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans[1] were designed to help people enjoy a variety of foods while ensuring good health. These Guidelines encourage eating a variety of foods and balancing food with physical activity. Having healthy foods and drinks available at events makes sense and supports good health.

Imagine a North Carolina where:

- children and adults can choose from a variety of tasty foods and drinks at community events, schools, civic, professional and religious centers. This includes fruits, vegetables and lower-fat, lower-calorie options. Water is always available to drink.
- caterers, restaurant owners, and other food and drink companies provide healthy foods and drinks in healthy amounts for customers.
- employees can buy healthy snacks in vending machines at work and can choose healthy foods in meetings and classes.
- foods and beverages are served in smaller portions.
- healthy foods are offered at potlucks, meetings, health fairs, religious functions and other community events.

Eat Smart, Move More...North Carolina is a statewide movement that encourages people to eat healthy and be physically active wherever they live, learn, earn, play and pray. We need your help to create a North Carolina where people view Eating Smart and Moving More as a normal part of everyday living! Think healthy eating is boring? Doesn't taste good? Costs more? Think again! Try colorful fruits and vegetables, tasty whole grain breads, and pastas seasoned with delicious herbs and spices. You can eat and serve these tasty foods without blowing your budget. "Eating Smart" does not mean every single food you eat (or serve) has to be low in fat or high in fiber. It does mean balancing less-healthy foods and drinks with healthier ones. It also means serving helpings that support good nutrition without too many calories.

EAT SMART NORTH CAROLINA: Guidelines for Healthy Foods and Beverages at Meetings, Gatherings, and Events is a tool for anyone who is in charge of food-related events. Making simple changes to foods and drinks you offer at group and community events gives North Carolinians disease-fighting foods and the energy boost they may need without worries about too many calories or too much unhealthy fat.

Why Should We Be Worried?

Our food choices, lifestyle and surroundings all affect our health. We know that choosing the right foods can prevent diseases and help us live better lives. Most North Carolinian's diets are low in fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and are high in fat, saturated fat and sugars. Eating a steady diet of unhealthy foods and drinks is associated with four of the 10 leading causes of death: heart disease, some types of cancer, stroke and type II diabetes. Health problems related to poor nutrition and physical inactivity cost North Carolinians about $24.1 billion each year in medical care costs, lost productivity and workers' compensation.[2]

The N.C. Division of Public Health developed the following guidelines because the link between diet and health is so strong. Health experts are also seeing growing numbers of people at an unhealthy weight in our state. The guidelines will help meeting planners choose lower-fat, lower-calorie foods and drinks for events. As users of this guide, we can model our commitment to good health by making our meetings and events healthier, and sharing that vision with others across our state. Most importantly, by following these guidelines, you can improve your own health and the quality of your life. You may also reduce your risk for long-term diseases such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes. So think about all of the food-related events you are involved in (meetings, trainings, church suppers, fundraisers, luncheons, receptions, etc.) and promote good health by using some of the suggestions listed in this guide.

**Eat Smart North Carolina: Guidelines for Healthy Foods and Beverages at Meetings, Gatherings, and Events* was adapted from: *Guidelines for Offering Healthy Foods at Meetings, Seminars, and Catered Events* developed by the Public Health Nutrition faculty, staff, and students; Division of Epidemiology, School of Public Health, University of Minnesota, 2003. *Meeting Well—A Tool for Planning Healthy Meetings and Events*, American Cancer Society, 2000; and *Eat Smart, Move More...North Carolina*, N.C. Division of Public Health–Physical Activity and Nutrition Branch.

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, 2005. 6th Edition, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Available at: http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines/.
2. Chenoweth & Associates, Inc. *The Economic Cost of Unhealthy Lifestyles in North Carolina*. 2005. Available at: http://www.beactivenc.org/mediacenter/Summary%20Report.pdf.
3. North Carolina Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (NC-BRFSS), North Carolina Center for Health Statistics, 2004. Available at: http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/brfss/.
4. North Carolina Nutrition and Physical Activity Surveillance System (NC-NPASS), North Carolina Division of Public Health, 2004. Available at: http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/data/index.htm.

FIVE GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE 1

Offer healthy food choices at breakfasts, lunches, dinners, potlucks and receptions.

There are many healthy and tasty options for foods and beverages. Fruits and vegetables are low in calories and high in vitamins, minerals and fiber. Portion sizes are important, too. Portion sizes have grown over the years. Larger helpings of high-calorie, high-fat foods contribute to overweight in adults and children. Offer smaller portions of foods and beverages. Offer lower-calorie beverages—water, low-fat milk, and unsweetened teas. Offer baked, roasted or grilled meats and fish, served with vegetables prepared without added fat.

GUIDELINE 2

Offer only healthy foods at mid-morning or mid-afternoon meeting breaks.

Food is everywhere we go, all day, every day. Mid-morning and mid-afternoon meeting breaks often involve eating food. With many of us struggling to control our weight in our food-filled surroundings, it's good to think twice about whether or not it's necessary to offer food at meetings, presentations and seminars, especially mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Help create a norm that food does not have to be everywhere. Food does not have to be the way we get people to attend. If you do provide food, offer only fruits, vegetables and/or other healthy foods. Or, offer a physical activity break instead. Turn on some music and get people to dance or move around.

GUIDELINE 3

Identify and promote healthier food and beverage providers.

Healthy food and beverage options for meetings, gatherings and events can be purchased in many places: restaurants, grocery stores, farmer's markets, caterers, food distributors, just to name a few. Once you have identified the businesses that are willing to provide high quality, healthier foods at a reasonable price, compile and share that information with others in your community. For example, if you have worked with a caterer who has been willing to alter their menu offerings or adjust their recipes to decrease fat or increase fruit options, share that caterers name with others. By promoting these businesses with friends and colleagues, it not only helps the business grow, but it sends a message into the community that healthy foods and beverages are a priority. In turn, this may mean that vendors begin to carry more items and be able to provide them at a lower cost. It's a win-win situation.

GUIDELINE 4

Keep food safe to eat.

Foods that are safe from harmful bacteria and viruses are vital for healthy eating. From farm to table, everyone shares the responsibility of keeping food as safe as possible by washing hands and surfaces often; separating raw, cooked, and ready-to-eat foods while shopping, preparing, and storing; cooking and chilling foods to a safe temperature; and serving foods safely. Your local health department or cooperative extension agency can provide you with more suggestions.

GUIDELINE 5

Lead by example.

When group leaders role-model healthy eating and physical activity, it makes a powerful statement. Show your members or employees that you are concerned about their health and well-being. Sign a formal or informal **Eat Smart North Carolina** Healthy Foods policy (see page 11.) Share this document with other leaders in your community. Challenge them to lead by example too. Buy healthy foods when you dine out. Prepare and eat healthy meals at home. Do not forget to build physical activity into your events as well. Encourage physical activity in your organization and "walk the talk" yourself. Visit the **Eat Smart Move More...North Carolina** Web site for other ways to promote healthy eating and physical activity wherever you live, learn, earn, play and pray: **http://www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com**.

Tips for stocking a healthy vending machine

Ask your vendor about including some of these:

- Baked chips
- Reduced-fat cookies and crackers
- Reduced-fat chips
- Fig bars
- Pretzels
- Canned fruit (lite or packed in own juice)
- Animal crackers
- Popcorn (lite or low-fat—5g fat or less/serving)
- Graham crackers
- Reduced-fat crackers
- Granola bars/cereal bars

FOR REFRIGERATED UNITS

- 100% fruit or vegetable juices
- Yogurt (flavored, low-fat, non-fat or fat-free)
- Milk (skim or 1%)
- Reduced-fat cottage cheese or pudding
- Fresh fruit
- Mini carrots or other prepackaged vegetables
- Salads with low-fat/non-fat dressing choices
- Bottled water

Tips for selecting foods lower in fat and calories

- Ask the caterer to use lower-fat or fat-free preparation methods, to serve added fats like dressings or condiments on the side, and to provide you with the number of calories and fat grams in entrées if available.
- Select lower fat entrées—approximately 12 to 15 grams of fat or less.
- Select items that are broiled, baked, grilled, or steamed rather than fried or sautéed.
- Include whole grain breads—skip the butter or margarine.
- Choose entrées in tomato-based sauces rather than cream, butter, or cheese sauces.
- Include fresh fruit.
- Include at least one vegetable—fresh or cooked, with no butter or cream sauces added.
- Choose lower-fat/lower-calorie desserts, such as cut-up fresh fruit with low-fat fruit yogurt dip, low-fat ice cream or frozen yogurt, sherbet or sorbet, or angel food cake with fruit topping.

Suggestions for Foods and Beverages

BEVERAGES

- Ice water
- Bottled spring or sparkling water—regular or flavored, with no added sugar
- 100% fruit or vegetable juices—avoid large-size bottles
- Skim or 1% milk (regular or lactose-free)
- Coffee—regular and decaffeinated
- Tea—regular and herb teas—hot or cold; unsweetened
- Soy beverage

SNACKS

- Fresh fruit—cut up and offered with low-fat yogurt dip
- Raw vegetables—cut up and offered with fat-free or low-fat dressing or salsa dip
- Pretzels—served with mustard dip
- Tortilla chips—baked and offered with salsa dip
- Popcorn—lower-fat (5g fat or less/serving)
- Whole-grain crackers—(5g fat or less/serving)
- Angel food cake with fruit topping
- Beverages from "Beverages" list

Tips for food preparation to cut fat and calories

- Serve salad dressings on the side, and offer low-fat or fat-free dressings.
- Consider serving baked, broiled, or oven-fried chicken or grilled fish.
- Season greens, cabbage, and string beans with smoked turkey instead of fatback or salt pork.
- When making potato salad, macaroni salad, and chicken salad, use less mayonnaise and substitute a lower-fat dressing in your recipe.
- Select leaner cuts of meat. Remove the skin from chicken before you cook it.
- Skim fat from gravies before serving.

BREAKFAST MEETINGS

- Fresh fruit
- Yogurt—flavored non-fat or fat-free
- Bagels—3-1/2" diameter or less; serve with low-fat cream cheese, jam or jelly
- Muffins—small or mini (5g fat or less/muffin)
- Fruit bread (5g fat or less/1 oz slice)
- Granola bars—low-fat (5g fat or less/bar)
- Beverages from "Beverages" list

CATERED LUNCHES & DINNERS

- Select an entrée with no more than 12 to 15 grams fat
- Always offer a vegetarian entrée
- Avoid fried foods or cream sauces
- Include fresh fruit
- Include at least one vegetable—fresh or cooked, with no butter or cream sauces

- Serve salads with dressing on the side—offer at least one low-fat or fat-free dressing
- Include whole-grain breads
- Choose lower-fat/lower-calorie desserts: cut up fresh fruit with low-fat fruit yogurt dip; low-fat ice cream or frozen yogurt; sherbet or sorbet; angel food cake with fruit topping
- Include beverages from "Beverages" list

Box Lunch Sandwich Ideas

- Offer a vegetarian option
- Whole-grain breads or pita wraps—prepared without butter/margarine, mayonnaise/salad dressing
- Meats, poultry or marinated tofu—low-fat (3g fat/oz)
- Cheese—1 oz
- Toppings of lettuce, sprouts, tomatoes, onions, pickles, mustard, catsup, low-fat mayonnaise
- Pretzels or baked chips (7g fat or less/oz)
- Fresh fruit

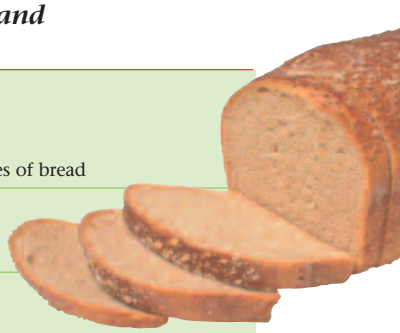
CATERED RECEPTIONS

- Fresh fruit—cut up and offered with low-fat yogurt dip
- Raw vegetables—cut up and offered with fat-free or low-fat dressing, salsa or tofu dip
- Raw vegetable salads marinated in fat-free or low-fat Italian dressing
- Pasta, tofu, and vegetable salads with fat-free or low-fat dressing
- Cheese—cut into 3/4" squares or smaller
- Whole grain crackers—5g fat or less/serving
- Fish—not fried
- Lean beef or turkey—1 oz. slices
- Cake—cut into small 2" squares
- Angel food cake slices with fruit topping
- Beverages from "Beverages" list

CALORIES & FAT IN POPULAR FOOD & BEVERAGE ITEMS

All amounts given for calories and grams of fat are approximate.

FOOD ITEM		CALORIES	GRAMS OF FAT
Beverages			
Coffee Creamer (1 tablespoon)	Fat-free—skim milk	6	0
	Half & half	20	1.7
Milk (8 oz carton)	Fat-free—skim milk	86	Trace
	Low-fat—1% milk	102	2.5
	Reduced fat—2% milk	121	5
	Whole milk	150	8
Regular Soft Drink	12 oz can	150	42g sugar
	20 oz bottle	250	70g sugar*
			*This is more than 17 tsp. sugar
Breakfasts	*Total recommended calories and fat for breakfast = 300-400 calories and 13g fat or less (based on 2000 calories/day)*		
Bagels	3-1/2"	180	1
	4-1/2"	330*	3
		*This is the equivalent of 4 slices of bread	
Cream Cheese (2 tablespoons)	Low-fat	60	2.5
	Regular	100	10
Blueberry Muffins	Small: 2-1/2"	160	4
	Large: 3-1/2"	250	9
Croissant	Regular size	230	12
Apple Danish	Regular size	260	13
Glazed Doughnut	Regular size	240	14
Snacks			
Chips (1 oz, about 12 chips)	Baked or low-fat potato	130	5
	Regular potato	150	10
	Baked or low-fat tortilla	125	4
	Regular tortilla	140	7
Pretzels	Regular size	110	1
Cookies (chocolate chip)	Small: 2-1/2"	50	2
	Large: 4"	280	14
Carrots, Baby	10	50	0
Apple	1 medium (1 cup)	65	0
Orange	1 medium (1 cup)	85	0
Yogurt (8 oz)	Nonfat with fruit	230	0
	Lowfat with fruit and low-calorie sweeteners	238	3
	Nonfat with low-calorie sweeteners	125	0



CALORIES & FAT IN POPULAR FOOD & BEVERAGE ITEMS

Lunches & Dinners

Total recommended calories and fat for lunch = 600-700 calories and 23g fat or less (based on 2000 calories/day)
Total recommended calories and fat for dinner = 700-800 calories and 27g fat or less (based on 2000 calories/day)

FOOD ITEM		CALORIES	GRAMS OF FAT
Sauces (1/2 cup)	Marinara (tomato-based)	50	2
	Alfredo (cream-based)	200	15
Salad Dressings (2 tablespoons)	Fat-free	50	0
	Regular	150	16
Submarine Sandwich (with cold cuts)	~6 inch sub	456	19
Tossed Salad without dressing	1½ cups	33	0
Pasta with Meatballs in Tomato Sauce	9 oz (~1½ cups)	309	12
Beef Stir Fry with White Rice	9 oz (~2 cups)	433	5
Cheesecake (1/10 slice of 12" cake)	Bakery style	460	30* *This is more than 7 tsp. of fat
Ice Cream (1/2 cup)	Regular vanilla	140	7

Receptions

Salad Dressings (2 tablespoons)	Fat-free	50	0
	Regular	150	16
Pasta Salads (2 tablespoons)	Low-fat Italian dressing	190	2
	Regular creamy dressing	350	22
Egg Rolls (1 3-1/2 oz)	Chicken	215	10
Spring Rolls (1 3-1/2 oz)	Vegetable, fresh—not fried	80	3
Buffalo Wings (1 mini chicken wing)	Barbecued	85	6
Chicken Drummette (1 mini drumstick)	Barbecued	85	6
Snack Crackers (approx. 8 crackers)	Reduced fat whole grain	120	3
	Regular butter-flavored	130	7
Cake (3" x 2-1/4" piece)	Angel	130	Trace
	White	190	5
	Chocolate	200	8
	Carrot	240	11

COMPARISONS OF FOOD & BEVERAGE OPTIONS

CHOOSE. . .	INSTEAD OF . . .
For Beverages	
carbonated (with no sugar), coffees or teas, 100% fruit or vegetable juices	flavored soft drinks or fruit-flavored drinks or sweet tea
1% low-fat or skim milk	whole or 2% milk
For Breakfasts	
fresh fruits, dried fruits, unsweetened juices	sweetened canned fruits and juices
low-fat yogurt	regular yogurt
small bagels—3-1/2" or smaller	regular or large bagels
small or mini muffins—2-1/2" or smaller	regular or large muffins
small lowfat muffins or low-fat granola bars	muffins, croissants, doughnuts, sweet rolls, pastries
toppings of light margarine, low-fat cream cheese, jam or jelly	regular butter, cream cheese, peanut butter
unsweetened cereals	sweetened cereals
whole-grain waffles and French toast	waffles or French toast made from white bread
whole-grain bread or English muffin	white bread or English muffin
For Lunches or Dinners	
salads with dressings on the side	salads with added dressing
low-fat or fat-free salad dressings	regular salad dressings
soups made with vegetable puree or skim milk	soups made with cream or half-and-half
pasta salads with low-fat dressing	pasta salads made with mayonnaise or cream dressing
sandwiches on whole-grain breads	sandwiches on croissants or white bread
lean meats, poultry, fish, tofu (3g fat/oz)	high-fat and fried meats, bacon, poultry with skin, cold cuts, oil-packed or fried fish
baked potatoes with low-fat or vegetable toppings	baked potatoes with butter, sour cream, and bacon bits
steamed vegetables	vegetables in cream sauce or butter
whole-grain bread or rolls	croissants or white rolls
margarine without trans-fatty acids	butter
lower-fat/lower-calorie desserts: fresh fruit, low-fat ice cream, low-fat frozen yogurt, sherbet, sorbet, angel food cake with fruit topping	higher-fat and higher-calorie desserts: ice cream, cheese cake, pie, cream puffs, large slices of cake

COMPARISONS OF FOOD & BEVERAGE OPTIONS

CHOOSE. . .	INSTEAD OF . . .
For Receptions	
fresh vegetables, cut up and served with low-fat dressing, salsa or tofu dip	tempura or deep-fat fried vegetables
cut-up fresh fruits	fruit tarts, pie, cobbler
grilled or broiled chicken without skin	fried chicken, chicken with skin
miniature meatballs made with lean meat	large meatballs made of high-fat meat, meatballs served in gravy or high-fat sauces
broiled or poached seafood: shrimp, fish, scallops, oysters, clams	deep-fat fried seafood, seafood in high-fat sauces
mushroom caps with low-fat cheese	stuffed mushrooms with high-fat cheese stuffing or mushrooms marinated in oil
miniature pizzas made with English muffins, tomato sauce, mozzarella cheese, and mushrooms	pizza with pepperoni, Italian sausage or other high-fat meats
vegetable spring rolls—fresh, not fried	egg rolls
small cubes of cheese (3/4" squares or smaller)	large slices of cheese
whole grain crackers (5g fat or less/serving)	regular crackers
low-fat, “lite” popcorn (5g fat or less/serving)	regular popcorn
baked or low-fat chips, pretzels	regular chips
dips made of salsa, low-fat cottage cheese, hummus or low-fat salad dressings	dips made from regular mayonnaise, sour cream, cream cheese or cheese sauce
small slices of cake (2" square)	large slices of cake
For Snacks	
cut-up fresh fruits and/or vegetables	chips or cookies
whole-grain crackers (5g fat or less/serving)	regular crackers
low-fat, “lite” popcorn (5g fat or less/serving)	regular popcorn or buttered popcorn
baked or low-fat chips, pretzels	regular chips
small slices of cake (2" square)	large slices of cake

SAMPLE MENUS

Sample Breakfast Menu

- Assorted mini-bagels or muffins (some whole-grain or bran)
- Assorted reduced-fat cream cheese (plain, vegetable, strawberry, honey nut, etc.)
- Assorted fresh fruit (sliced honeydew and cantaloupe, grapes, bananas, sliced oranges)
- Peanut butter
- Assorted 100% juices (orange, grapefruit, tomato, apple)
- Low-fat milk (1% or less), soy beverage
- Coffee (regular and decaf), tea (regular and herbal), hot chocolate (made with skim milk), and non-fat creamer
- Water

Healthy Break

Consider replacing a food break with a physical activity break! Or, include a physical activity break with the following:

- Assorted whole fruit and fruit skewers
- Trail mix, granola bars
- Low-fat yogurt
- Assorted fruit juice (100%), vegetable juices, and bottled water
- Coffee (regular and decaf), tea (regular and herbal), hot chocolate (made with skim milk), and non-fat creamer

Sample Lunch and/or Dinner Menus

Grilled (or baked) chicken sandwich on whole-grain bread with lettuce, tomato and pickle Sliced seasonal fruit Pretzels/baked potato chips Low-fat ice cream or frozen yogurt Low-fat milk (1% or less), soy beverage, (regular and decaf), tea (regular and herbal), hot chocolate (made with skim milk), non-fat creamer, and bottled water	Mixed green salad with a variety of fresh raw vegetables (low-fat dressing on the side) Baked potato with salsa and/or vegetable topping or Pasta Primavera in light sauce Fresh fruit salad with yogurt topping Low-fat milk (1% or less), soy beverage, (regular and decaf), tea (regular and herbal), hot chocolate (made with skim milk), non-fat creamer, and bottled water
Mixed green salad with cherry tomatoes and low-fat dressing on the side Italian baked chicken or seasoned baked chicken Brown rice Steamed green beans Whole-grain rolls, margarine Angel food cake with fresh strawberries and light whipped topping Low-fat milk (1% or less), soy beverage, (regular and decaf), tea (regular and herbal), hot chocolate (made with skim milk), non-fat creamer, and bottled water	Baby spinach salad with fresh strawberries and seasoned pecans (low-fat raspberry dressing on the side) Baked pork chops with peach salsa or Barbecue baked pork chops Baked sweet potato Garden peas Whole-grain rolls, margarine Cupcake Low-fat milk (1% or less), soy beverage, (regular and decaf), tea (regular and herbal), hot chocolate (made with skim milk), non-fat creamer, and bottled water

Eat Smart North Carolina *Sample Healthy Foods Policy*

For use within any organization/agency or community group where foods or beverages are served.

Whereas:

_____*(fill in your worksite, churches, etc., name here)*

is concerned about the health of our _____ *(employees, members);*

Whereas:
People have become more and more interested in eating smart and moving more;

Whereas:
Heart disease, cancer and stroke—the top three causes of death in North Carolina—are largely affected by what we eat and how active we are;

Whereas:
Foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grain breads and pastas, and low-fat dairy products are better choices for preventing many diseases;

Therefore:
Effective _____*(today's date)*, it is the policy of _____*(fill in your organization's name)* that all activities and events (*examples of events may include: meetings, potluck events, catered events, community-sponsored events, like health fairs, etc.*) sponsored or supported by this organization will always include opportunities for healthy foods and beverages by:

- **Purchasing and serving one or more of these healthier items:**

  Fruits and/or vegetables—Examples include fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruits (such as grapefruit, oranges, apples, raisins or 100% fruit juices), and fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables

  Low-fat milk and dairy products—Examples include skim/non-fat or 1% milk (also lactose-free); low-fat and fat-free yogurt; cheese and ice cream; and calcium-fortified soy beverages

  Foods made from grains (like wheat, rice, and oats), especially whole grains—Examples include low-fat whole-wheat crackers, bread and pasta; whole-grain ready-to-eat cereal; low-fat baked tortilla chips; pita bread

  Water

- **Identifying healthy eating opportunities**
  Examples include identification of restaurants, caterers and farmer's markets, where healthy food choices are readily available.

- **Providing encouragement from group leadership to enjoy healthy foods**
  Examples include community promotion of healthy lifestyles, group leadership being role models for healthy food choices.

_____

Signature Title

_____

Name of Organization, Church, Community Group, Worksite, School, Health Care Facility Date

Chronic Disease and Injury Section
Division of Public Health
N.C. Department of Health and Human Services
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