

CASE STUDY

Danville, VA

The Team

In 2014, the City of Danville, Virginia, combined forces with numerous agencies and community representatives to help address the City's health rankings. The specific Active Living team comprised of the Danville Regional Foundation, the City Manager's office, Danville Parks and Recreation Department, Pittsylvania County Community Development Department, and The Health Collaborative.

The Health Collaborative was created as part of the ongoing efforts in Danville to improve the health and well-being of the Dan River Region. The Collaborative is supported by numerous stakeholders within the region. With the early support of the Danville Regional Foundation, they have led a Health Summit, created a Health Equity Plan (with more updates to come soon), and led coordination between the numerous agencies. The Health Collaborative's approach - focusing on policy, systems, and the environment - provides a holistic and unique outlook to improving public health in the Dan River Region. Figure 1 points to the social determinant of health that The Health Collaborative has laid out in their Health Equity Report.

The Collaboration

When Danville ranked 132 out of 134 from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in 2014, indicating a very poor health score, there was a strong push to change this fact. Figure 2 shows where the Dan River Region ranked in one aspect of health - physical activity. To do so, over 90 organizations were brought together to discuss how health could be improved for the Dan River residents by changing the policies, systems, and environments that currently make it difficult to be healthy. This collaboration sought to address healthy eating, active living, access to healthcare, and healthy spaces. The group created two goals: increase park access and amount of open space, and improve

walking trails and general walkability. Some of their work included improvements to the downtown Danville River Walk Trail, implementation of Complete Streets, prioritization of trail and sidewalk improvements that provided access to grocery stores and health care, and an on-going pursuit to implement Health in All Policies for the City.



Figure 1. Health Collaborative Social Determinants of Health

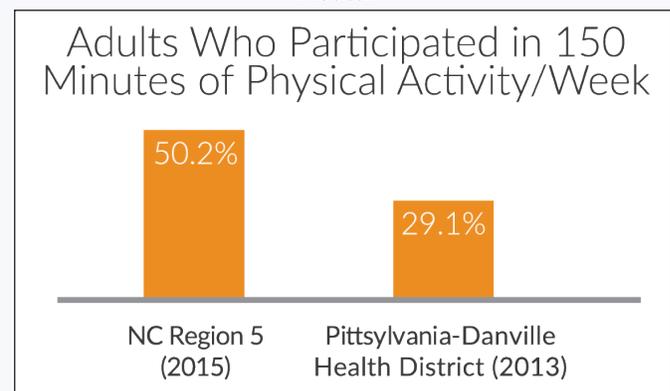


Figure 2. Danville Region Health Rankings



For more information, please contact:
Maggie Richardson, Regional Coordinator
The Health Collaborative
maggie@thehealthcollab.com

PATHS is part of the collaboration between the Virginia Department of Transportation and Virginia Department of Health State Engagement Model Active Communities initiative.

On-Going Initiatives:

Listed below are ongoing projects and collaborative efforts in the City of Danville:

- ▶ Health in All Policies
- ▶ Neighborhood Parks Plan/Parks Master Plan
- ▶ Complete Streets Policy Implementation
- ▶ Health Equity Report
- ▶ City of Danville Comprehensive Plan Updates

Challenges Faced:

Below are some challenging items the team faced in starting this work:

- ▶ Funding across various localities
- ▶ Project messaging and overall community support
- ▶ Gathering data to support more walkable streets
- ▶ Coordination of multiple agencies

Lessons Learned

When asked what advice they might give to other cities, they offered the following insights:

- ▶ Community Health Worker Groups can be an effective way of outreach. These groups communicated concerns and thoughts from the community when it came to trail updates and connectivity to neighborhoods.
- ▶ Have the data to support your initiatives, and use it when speaking to local officials.
- ▶ Bring everyone to the table to have honest conversations.

Long Term Outcomes



Figure 3. Health For All Action Plan, Long Term Outcomes

Figure depicts various long term benefits of improved health for communities.

To Read More:



[Dan River Region 2017 Health Equity Report](#)



[The Health Collaborative Health For All Action Plan](#)



[Park Equity Report, City of Danville, Virginia](#)

Resources

1. The Health Collaborative (2017). "Dan River Region Health Equity Report." Last accessed June 16, 2021. https://www.thehealthcollab.com/content/thehealthcollab/uploads/PDF/2017_health_equity_report/2017-health-equity-report-hr.pdf
2. The Health Collaborative. (YEAR). "Health For All." Last accessed June 16, 2021. https://www.thehealthcollab.com/content/thehealthcollab/uploads/PDF/action_plan/health_for_all.pdf

