

This section of Chapter 4 of the Comprehensive Plan outlines the currently available services in the following areas:

1. Health Services;
2. Provisions for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities;
3. Other Social Services Programs; and
4. Housing.

In addition a 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph provides for the development of a Comprehensive Community Health, Housing and Social Services Plan as a complementary plan to this Comprehensive Plan.

### **1. Health Services**

The County has a number of residents who are at or below federal poverty levels and/or unemployed and a disproportionate number of the population who are over sixty-five and are a burden on the local health care system. Currently approximately 25% of the population is over 65 years of age and by 2010 the number is expected to exceed 30%

Northumberland County has no medical facilities other than the services of the Northumberland County Health Department which is a component of the ten-county Three Rivers Health District. These limited services are available to the citizens of the County, with fees based on a sliding scale based on income. Northumberland County is one of nine counties in the District that is designated as “Medically Under Served”.

Services outside the County are provided by Rappahannock General Hospital, RGH, in Lancaster County which provides significant health care to the county and is linked to Chesapeake Medical Group in Heathsville. Also, Riverside Tappahannock Hospital provides support from Essex County and is linked to Dr. Lewis’s clinic in Burgess. Because of high medical liability costs and a relatively small number of patients, RGH has recently discontinued its maternity ward activities.

## **2. Provisions for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities**

The County has an aging population and it is expected to continue as more retired persons move into the area. This section describes the services available.

### a. Auxiliary Grant Program

Financial assistance is available for certain needy aged, blind or disabled persons who reside in adult care residences or adult family care homes. The money received, plus other income, is used by the person to pay for care provided by the home. Individuals who get money from the Auxiliary Grant Program also get a Medicaid card to use for medical bills.

### b. Adult Services of the Northumberland Department of Social Services

#### (1) Adult Protective Services

This program receives and investigates complaints and reports concerning the abuse, neglect, or exploitation of those over age 60, disabled individuals over age 18, and their families, when necessary. Intervention may involve in-home services, counseling, transportation, day care, sheltered employment, legal proceedings, and meal provision.

#### (2) Home-Based Services

The Home-Based Service provides home-based services for those over age 60, disabled individuals over age 18, and their families when necessary. The goals include the maximization of self-sufficiency, the prevention of abuse and neglect, a reduction and delay in premature or unnecessary institutionalization, and aid (when such a placement is appropriate).

#### (3) Screenings

This service provides screenings for nursing home and adult home residential placements and for community-based home care.

### c. Bay Aging

Bay Aging is a non-profit organization that works at the community level to assure the delivery of efficient and appropriate services to older persons. Bay Aging's goal is to provide support to help older citizens remain as independent as possible -- for as long as possible. The organization serves 10 counties in the area including the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula. It is funded by a combination of Federal, State, and Local governments and by donations.

monitoring. The latter involves the use of trained nurses to help families understand health care needs and identify conditions that need medical attention. Meals and transportation are provided.

Adult Day Services is operated by Bay Aging and provides a variety of services for impaired adults in a secure environment. A registered nurse is in attendance and a caring specially trained staff helps the attendee enjoy each day; and works with the family to provide advice and assistance in understanding health care needs and identifying conditions that need medical attention.

Meals on Wheels uses dedicated volunteers to deliver hot lunches to individuals age 60 and over who are homebound due to illness or disability and are unable to prepare nutritious meals.

Bay Transit is a public transportation system for all people of all ages that serves the entire Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula. It is a “dial-a-ride” system that operates from 6 am to 6 pm Monday through Friday.

The Housing Program works through the Department of Social Services who provides space one day per week for a representative of Bay Aging to meet with applicants from Northumberland County for their housing assistance services. Primary assistant is through the Indoor Plumbing and Rehabilitation Program, the Virginia Water Project and the emergency Home Repair Project. This complements the Section 8 housing assistance offered through the Northumberland Social Services.

#### d. Northern Neck Disabilities Services Board

Formed on September 21, 1999, the Northern Neck Disability Services Board (NNDSB) is a partnership of disabled consumers, local governments and businesses working to extend existing services and create new services for individuals of the Northern Neck with physical and/or sensory disabilities through administration of the Rehabilitative Services Incentive Fund.

The NNDSB provides disabled consumers with increased transportation, education and employment opportunities, accessible and affordable housing and medical services. The NNDSB also continues to improve awareness of existing and new programs through quarterly meetings, local media, related organizations and direct contact with individuals in need.

#### Duties

- Develop and make available for public comment an assessment of local needs and priorities of people with physical and/or sensory disabilities, updated every three years;
- Provide information and resource referral to local governments regarding the American

allocated by the Department of Rehabilitative Services to promote investment in meeting the needs of individuals with physical and/or sensory disabilities. The RSIF grant is used to increase service capacity through expanding existing services or creating new services.

Through the NNDSB and the County match, local service providers (SAIF Water Committee and Bay Aging) have provided home repairs and modifications for accessible housing, emergency services, education on disability issues and increased awareness of existing and new programs for disabled consumers.

The NNDSB performed a Triennial Needs Assessment in 2003 for the Northern Neck..

The NNDSB shall support the needs assessment described in Section 5 below by providing input on needs and priorities of people with physical and/or sensory disabilities in Northumberland County. These data should be a comprehensive update of the Triennial Needs Assessment performed in 2003 but following the methodology of Appendix B and provide and input as required to support the planning described in Section 5 below.

#### e. Emergency Services

With an aging population it will be increasingly difficult for the volunteer emergency services to meet the needs of the citizens of the County. See Section F.1 for a discussion of this issue.

### **3. Other Social Services Programs**

Below is a listing of other programs administered by the Northumberland Department of Social Services. Some of these also assist the elderly and persons with disabilities but that is not necessarily their primary focus. The Northumberland Department of Social Services provides a broad range of services to the citizens of the County,

#### (a). TANF - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program and TANF-UP

TANF provides temporary financial assistance to families with children who have financial need. The TANF program is the cornerstone of Virginia's Welfare Reform initiative. The TANF program initiative has time limited benefits, a strong work requirement, and a social contract that sets out the responsibilities of and expectations for recipients of public assistance and the government.

#### (b). Aid to Dependent Children - Foster Care (AFDC-FC)

Financial aid is provided for the care of children eligible for assistance that have been removed from their homes and placed in custody of the Department of Social Services.

not qualify for Medicaid and who are unable to pay for required medical services. The payments are limited to the total of the County's funding allocation from the State. This program will pay for limited hospitalization, outpatient surgery, and emergency room visits. Inpatient and outpatient doctor visits are not covered.

(e). Medical Assistance (Medicaid)

The federal/state-financed Medicaid program provides medical care for specified needy persons. The Social Services Department determines eligibility for Medicaid, according to criteria established by the Department of Medical Assistance Services, which administers the program.

Medicaid makes direct payments to health care service providers for eligible individuals and families who are unable to pay for needed medical services. Medicaid pays for a variety of medical services including prescription drugs, doctor visits, nursing facility care, and hospital care.

(f). Family Access to Medical Insurance Security (FAMIS)

The FAMIS program provides health insurance for eligible low-income children who are not eligible for Medicaid. The eligibility determination for this program was transferred in August, 2002, to a State Central Processing Unit. However, the option for applicants again to go through the local departments of social services was reinstated to better facilitate the process, and the program has been renamed Family Access to Medical Insurance Security (FAMIS).

(g). Food Stamp Program

The federal Food Stamp Program supplements the food budgets of low-income households to help assure needy persons a nutritionally adequate diet. Eligibility is determined by financial need, household size, and non-financial criteria such as student and work registration.

(h). Fuel/Cooling Assistance Program

Eligible low-income households receive federal assistance with their home heating bills.

Faulty or hazardous heating systems may also be repaired in households eligible for fuel assistance. Eligible low-income households that also have a member meeting age or medical vulnerability criteria may receive assistance with home cooling bills. Air conditioners or fans may be repaired or provided under certain conditions.

(i). Child Protective Services

This program receives and investigates complaints and reports concerning the abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children, and provides preventive action where there is a threat of harm. Services are available 24 hours a day to handle emergency situations.

(j). Foster Care Services for Children

(l). Day Care Services for Children

This program provides services of day care in approved facilities for a defined portion of a 24-hour day, to enable parents to be employed or to provide services when they must be away due to an emergency. Services may also be provided for children needing protection.

(m). Other Social Work Services

- 1) Adoption Services - provides services and registries to bring together children and families for permanent placements.
- 2) Family Services - provides counseling, educational information, monitoring (for protective services cases), and referrals to other resources for families with special needs.
- 3) Interstate foster care - provides monitoring and supportive services for foster children placed in our locality by another state.
- 4) Home Studies - provides assessments of suitability of homes for placement of children when ordered by the court.
- 5) Emergency Services - provides assistance with food, shelter, utilities, and clothing in crisis situations; assists the Red Cross in the operation of shelters.
- 6) Other Social Services Programs

(n) Child Abuse and Sexual Assault Investigation Team

A unique program in Northumberland County is the Child Abuse Sexual Assault Investigation Team that consists of the Office of the Sheriff, the Office of the Commonwealth Attorney and the Department of Social Services. These three organizations have put together a team of trained investigators and social workers that work together to investigate and resolve claims of child abuse.

(o). Community Support

Northumberland County is very fortunate to have a strong network of support for a variety of emergency services and human services from non-profit organizations and volunteers. Some of the support comes from individuals and small informal groups, some is from individual churches or other structured community organizations, and some is from networks of churches, such as the Interfaith Service Council and Church Resource Services.

Some of the emergency services provide individuals in crisis in the community assistance with utility bills, food, clothing, or rent. The Department of Social Services relies heavily on collaboration with community organizations to assist with these services when the individuals do not qualify for government funded programs for such assistance.

who operate emergency shelters for the County in addition to other types of disaster assistance. In addition, the County's emergency services response for fire and rescue is provided by all volunteer groups.

#### **4. Housing**

Housing is a major issue in the County. There is a shortage of safe, healthy living places for low income persons in our area. There are still a large number of homes in the County without indoor plumbing and a number of homes where the houses are literally falling down around the people living in them. While not all are in poor repair, over a third of the 8,000 houses in the County are over 40 years old.

Currently there are limited resources available to assist low income persons with housing problems. There are various volunteer groups that help with repairs, the Bay Aging Agency provides an indoor plumbing program, the SAIF Water Program helps with wells and water; Habitat for Humanity helps build new homes and the Northumberland Department of Social Services provides "Section 8" housing assistance.

The Section 8 program consists of two elements: rental housing subsidies for eligible low-income families within the allotment of vouchers provided to the locality by the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA); and self-sufficiency services which provide assistance in developing and achieving plans of self-sufficiency that include goals of transitioning from subsidy assistance to financially independent housing.

A needs assessment of the adequacy of the housing in the County should be performed in order to quantify the problem as a first step in establishing a more comprehensive community plan to address the problem. (See paragraph 5. below.) Once the needs assessment is complete, the County may qualify for a Virginia Community Development Block Grant, VCDBG, for housing rehabilitation. Housing activities are eligible for VCDBG assistance to improve the living conditions of low- to moderate-income (LMI) persons. VCDBG funding may be used to rehabilitate LMI-occupied housing units or in support of the development of new housing units which will be occupied by LMI persons.

In addition, once the housing needs analysis is complete, the Board of Supervisors should establish an affordable housing policy, strategies and implementation program. The objectives should be to support affordable housing for those who live and/or work in the County. In particular, the County should provide guidance, resources and incentives to the nonprofit and for-profit development and financing communities to increase the supply of

Northumberland County Housing Committee or equivalent organization to be established after completion of the needs assessment.

## **5. Comprehensive Community Health, Housing and Social Services Plan and Implementation Strategy**

The Comprehensive Plan, of which this is Chapter 4, focuses on Land Use, Public Facilities and Services and Water Quality and Supply with only this summary of Health and Social Services and Housing activities.

The topics described in paragraphs 1 - 4 above (Health Services; Provisions for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities; Other Social Services Programs; and Housing) all relate to the “community” and the needs of the people as opposed to the physical attributes of the County and how the County develops and uses its physical assets.

As such, a *Comprehensive Community Health, Housing and Social Services Plan and Implementation Strategy* (Community Plan) needs to be developed as a complementary Plan to the Comprehensive Plan and follow a similar public hearing and community involvement process as was used for this Comprehensive Plan, but with a more proactive community involvement as discussed in Appendix B. The Community Plan, when approved by the Planning Commission and by the Board of Supervisors would be appended to the Comprehensive Plan as an amendment..

The Community Plan is based on a typical community assessment process used nationwide that identifies resources, services, and gaps in services. It includes “well-being” factors (when compared to other localities) to determine the community’s relative health and welfare. Finally it determines what additional or reinforced services are needed, what should be the priorities and a plan of action to improve the situation.

The typical community assessment process is a lengthy process, and it is expected to take several months to carry out the process correctly. The usual approach is to assign responsibility to the Community Policy and Management Team (CPMT) or for the Board of Supervisors to name a Primary Contact Person, PCP. It should be noted that this task is broader than the normal duties of the Director of Social Services which is why the Chair of the CPMT or a PCP is recommended.

support the community needs assessment program that is proposed. Alternatively, the same process using all volunteer labor reporting to a County or Social Services official such as the process currently used to update this Comprehensive Plan can be used.

Appendix B to this Comprehensive Plan presents in more detail the proposed process for developing the Community Plan.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS<sup>1</sup>  
FOR A  
COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY HEALTH, HOUSING AND SOCIAL SERVICES PLAN AND  
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

It is important that community health, housing and social services are planned and implemented in a manner that reflects a community-based, comprehensive approach that best meets the needs of citizens. A comprehensive planning process represents a collaborative approach involving people from all sectors of the community. It assumes that all forms of diversity are represented and that the process is a very public, deliberative one.

There are many models for comprehensive community planning. Many grant funded programs in the Commonwealth of Virginia require such a plan. These include, but are not limited to: Family Preservation Plans, Community Services Prevention Plans, Youth Violence Reduction Plans, and Virginia Juvenile Community Crime Control Act Plans. The Community Development Block Grant Program supplies funds for such planning as do many of the mentioned plans.

In some communities these planning requirements have been approached by separate ad hoc planning efforts for each grant client. The intent of most models is to assist communities in developing a comprehensive long-term approach to prevention and early intervention services and to resolve current health, housing and social services problems. Individual grant programs should be sought to be a part of the funding of this specific community comprehensive plan to preclude duplicate planning for the purpose of receiving any individual grant program monies. Northumberland County should perform the planning and implementation in a manner consistent with existing local problems, processes and structures.

## 1. PLANNING GROUP

*The role of the Board of Supervisors* is to convene a planning group. It may appoint a transition group or designate an existing group to identify and convene stakeholders. The County should define the appropriate stakeholders with an emphasis on inclusion rather than exclusion. The diversity of this group should reflect the ethnic origin/race, gender, age, disability, income levels, viewpoints, youth and parents, public and private sector and geographic characteristics of the County.

Within the planning group or supporting the planning group subgroups may be established focusing on the following suggested categories:

- Business and employment

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<sup>1</sup> This Appendix is based on the model of community assessment and planning recommended by the State of Virginia Department of Social Services and is similar to models used throughout the US.

more than one of the subgroups.

## 2. COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

The group would develop a *Vision for the Community* that involves the community in the process. This vision would be developed around the concept of healthy children, healthy families and healthy communities. A starting place is the State social services vision which is: *A Commonwealth in which individuals and families have access to adequate, affordable, high-quality human/social services that enable them to be the best they can.*

**Once the broader County health, housing and social services vision is developed, the group would do a *community assessment* including the following;**

- The group should identify assets that support the vision. Assets may include people, community and religious organizations, programs and activities (regardless of source of funding), other planning groups, nonprofit organizations, community events, etc.
- The group should engage the community in an examination of the significant data indicators for multiple risk factors for families, youth, school and the community.
- The group should also review the demographic, social, political and economic systems that may impact families and youth, both positively and negatively.
- The group should identify and review the community assets against factors known to lead to the development of protective factors and resilience in youth, families and communities. From this comparison the group would identify local duplications and gaps.
- The group should develop a plan to reduce identified risk factors and to enhance the community's assets that would include developing and promoting additional programs, activities and services to support the vision. If there are community assets that are being under-utilized or not being utilized effectively by the community, the group would also decide how best to reorganize/redirect these more effectively.

## 3. SETTING PRIORITIES

- The group should use a *priority setting process* to set goals for the work of the group. This would include targeting efforts and making choices to support implementation of the community's vision.

## 4. DEVELOP THE PLAN: SETTING GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

- Goals, measurable objectives and strategies should be selected for priority areas.
- Strategies would include resource allocation, funding, staffing, support, evaluation, marketing, public relations as well as the possible development of new community assets, i.e., programs and activities.

- The plan should be *implemented* as approved with various and numerous groups/individuals taking responsibility for the various parts as identified in the Implementation Section.

## 7. EVALUATION

- *Process evaluation* - monitoring implementation of program as designed.
- *Outcome evaluation* - collecting and analyzing data to demonstrate the effects the program or activity has had on the participants.
- *Impact evaluation* - analyzing the effect of the programs on community level indicators.

Information from these three types of evaluation activities is used to make adjustments in plans and to develop new plans. The evaluation contributes in a meaningful way to ongoing service planning and operation.

## 8. REPORTING

- *Reporting evaluation results* (both process and outcome) to appropriate entities, e.g., funding sources, public, key officials (both BOS and state where relevant), etc. is a critical ongoing responsibility that will maintain focus on and support for the plan among stakeholders.
- Use the same time frame as the Comprehensive Plan for reviewing and revising the Comprehensive Community Health, Housing And Social Services Plan and Implementation Strategy.