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# Knowledge of Stroke, Experiences in Health Care, & Barriers to Healthy Living: Lessons from Focus Groups and Surveys Conducted with Residents in Rural Southeastern NC

**Coverdell Stroke Program**

Novant Health New Hanover Regional Medical Center

# Project Overview

**To better understand the disparities in two referral counties with elevated stroke risk factors**

- 1. Survey**
- 2. Focus Groups**

## **Collaborative Partnerships**

- 1. University of North Carolina at Wilmington**
- 2. Faith Health Network**



# Counties of Focus

**Brunswick and Pender Counties**

**Stroke mortalities**

**Vulnerability**

**Barriers to healthcare access**

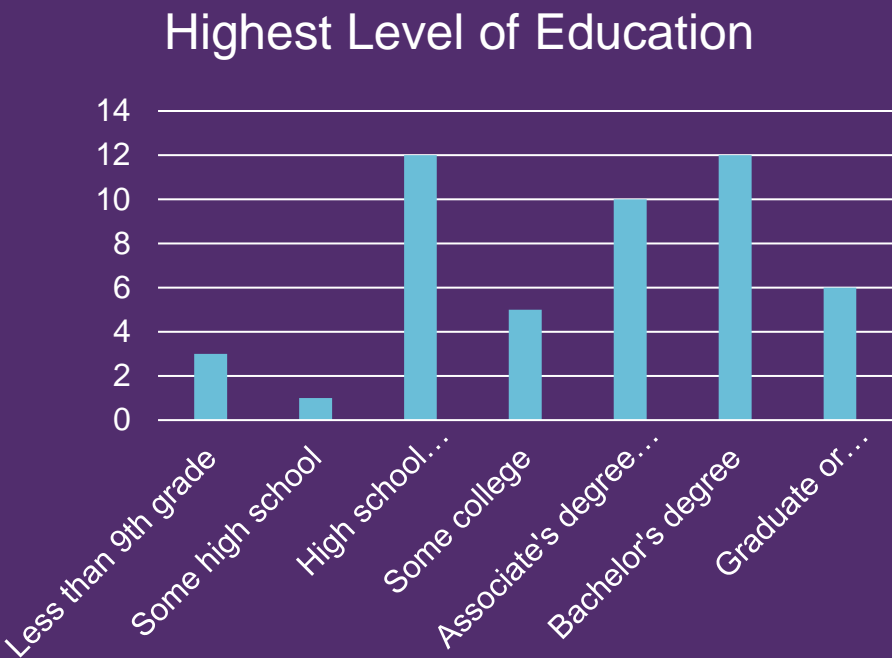
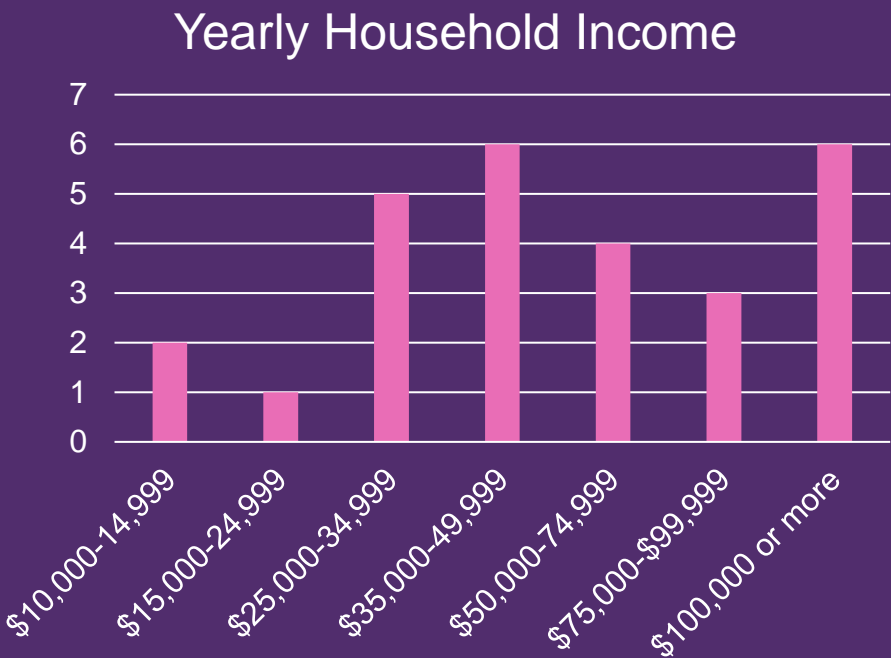
**Race**

**Cape Fear Collective Link**



<https://waywelivednc.com/maps/eastern.htm>

# Survey (54 respondents)



Race	Participants
Black or African American	34
White or Caucasian	18
Other race not listed	1

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# Survey Results

# Risk Factor Knowledge

Diabetes

Blood  
Pressure  
Cholesterol

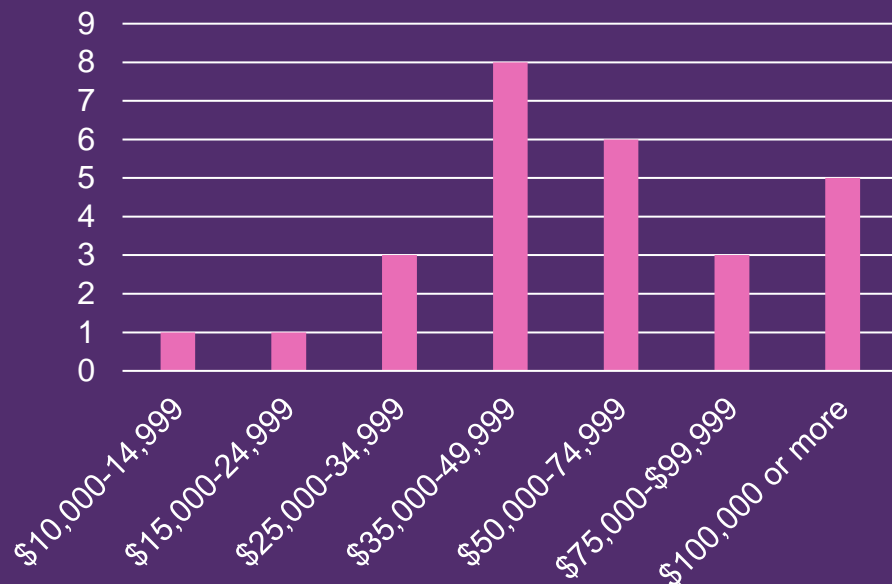
Body Mass  
Index (BMI)

Sleep apnea

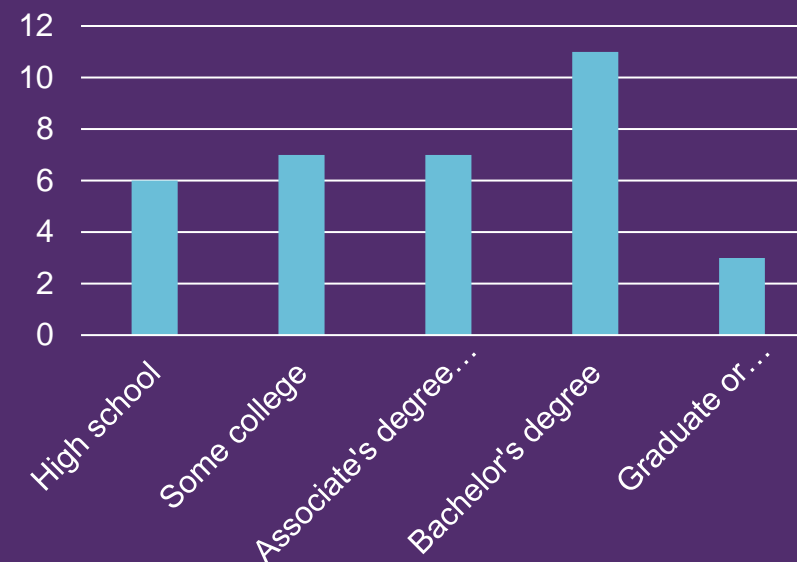
Tobacco use

# Focus Groups (3 groups, 40 total participants)

## Yearly Household Income

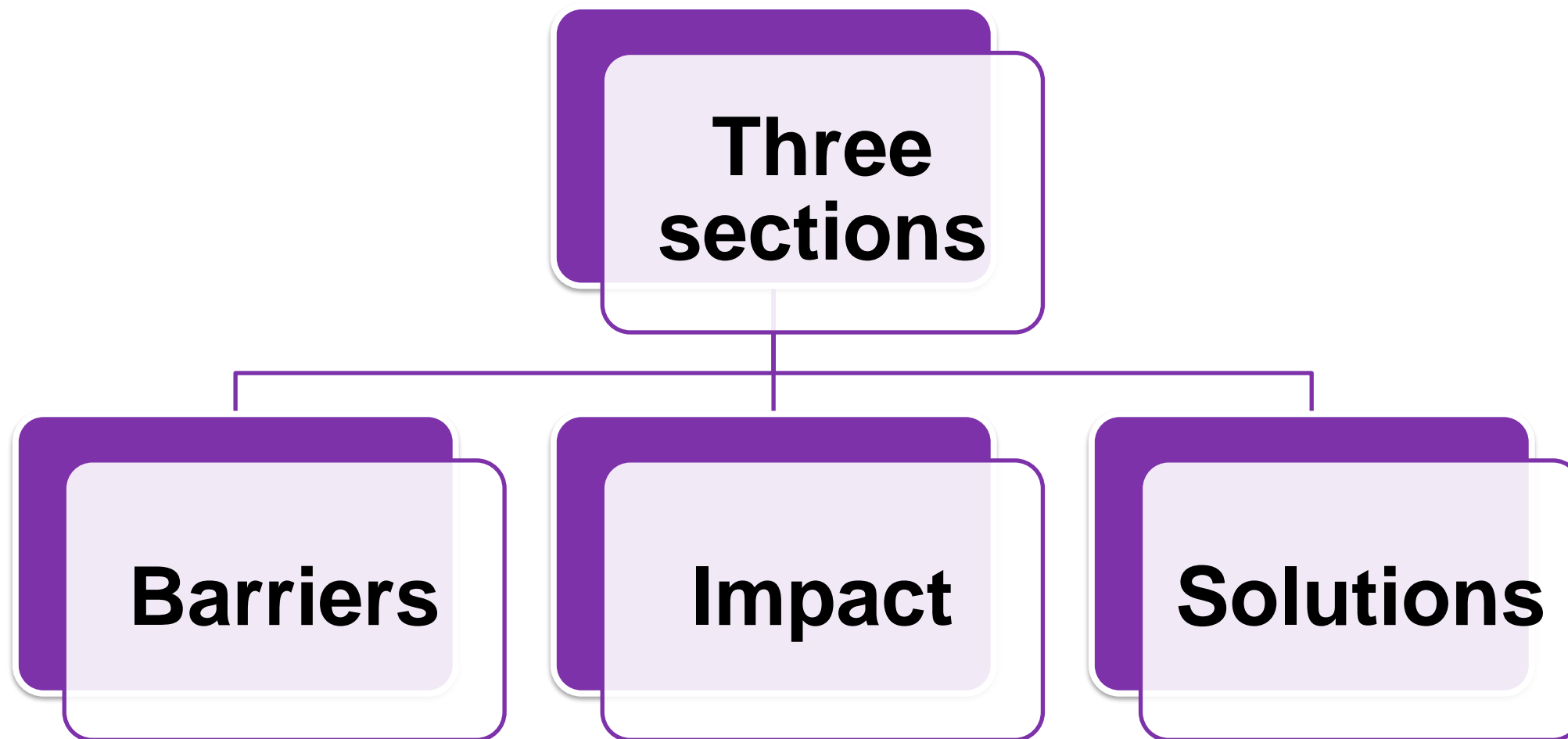


## Highest Level of Education



Experience with Stroke	
Stroke survivor	11
Loved one with a stroke	24
Caregiver	9
No experience	4

# Focus Groups





# Barriers



## Lifestyle

Diet/Access to healthy foods

Culture/Tradition

Race/Medical issues & genetics

Stress/Lack of motivation & time

Income

Impacts of Covid-19



## Access

Limited access to healthcare

Distance to facilities

Transportation issues

Lack of insurance

Technology



## Advocacy

Lack of health education

Lack of caregiver support

Mistrust of medicine & doctors

Feelings of not being heard

Lack of representation

# Impact



## Mental Health

Overwhelm

Caregiver burnout

Feeling like a burden



## Access

Distance to care

Racial care inequities

Delays in care

Misdiagnosis

Good experiences



## Advocacy

Provider communication

Feelings of not being heard

Lack of post-acute support

Medical mistrust re:race and  
doctors

Impact of therapy

# Solutions



## Health Education

Diet

Health/Medicine

Signs & symptoms

Insurance

Technology



## Lifestyle

Lifestyle changes

Motivation

Cooking classes

Fitness classes

Holistic approach



## Advocacy

Knowledge & action

Sharing information

Sensitivity training

Self-advocacy

Social/support groups



## Access

Rehab center

Walk-in clinic

Community wellness center

Pharmacy programs

Food pantry

Better quality care

# Utilizing the results

Create a new referral heat map

Facilitate outreach

Train local individuals to facilitate education

Strengthen partnerships

- Faith Health Network

- Local resources & agencies

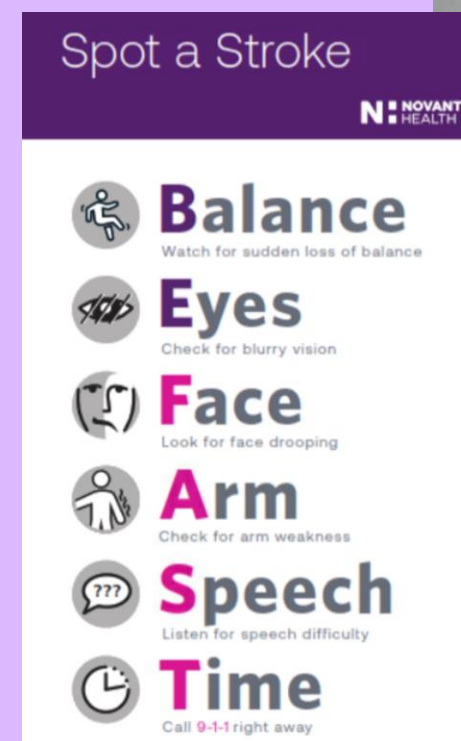
- Community centers

- Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program

Improve referral process

Advanced Stroke Life Support

Magnets & Vial of Life



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# Open Discussion

# Thank you!