

2020 Person County State of the County Health Report



Person County's State of the County Health (SOTCH) Report looks a little different this year. Person County Health Department has transitioned to providing this report through the Clear Impact Scorecard. This is a cloud-based performance management and reporting system. The Scorecard helps to simplify data collection, standardize reporting, improve performance, measure outcomes, and communicate with stakeholders.

What does this mean? It means that the look and format of this report is different. The report is loaded into an online Scorecard and is exported as a .PDF document (which is attached). It is a very brief report compared to what has been produced in previous years.

Why transition to using the Clear Impact Scorecard for the SOTCH Report? The State has adopted the use of this tool and has encouraged local health departments to do the same.

The components of the SOTCH Report continue to be in alignment with the North Carolina Local Health Department Accreditation requirements.



To access this report, go to www.personcountync.gov
(Departments & Services, click on Health Department)
or call (336) 597-2204.

Definitions that might be helpful when reading this report:

Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease - chronic diseases of the airways and other structures of the lung; some of the most common are asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, occupational lung diseases, and pulmonary hypertension.

All Other Unintentional Injury - includes death without purposeful intent due to poisoning, falls, burns, choking, animal bites, drowning, and occupational or recreational injuries.

Kidney Disease - includes a composite set of kidney disorders like nephritis, nephrotic syndrome, and nephrosis.

Mortality Data - death data.

Incidence - population-based rate at which new cases of a disease occur and are diagnosed.

Progress on CHIPs

Person County's Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIPs) focus on the health priorities identified in the 2018 Community Health Assessment (CHA). Those priorities are chronic disease (diabetes, heart disease, and cancer) and overweight/obesity. It goes without saying that 2020 was a challenging year. While much public health work and that of community partners was disrupted, paused, or redirected to COVID-19 response, some progress was made towards these priorities. The following is a brief description of that progress.

Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) – The June 2019 cohort of the DPP was completed in May 2020. COVID restrictions had minimal impact on finishing this program as there were only four final sessions that were transitioned to a virtual delivery mode. Seven of nine participants completed the program. Of the seven participants, five reached and succeeded their 5-7% weight loss goals. The 2020 DPP cohort was put on hold because of COVID restrictions and inability to recruit enough participants to merit starting a new program.

Several health care and human service providers have been committed to referring patients/clients to local evidence-based programs like the DPP. A more structured referral process is forthcoming.

Educational initiatives continued to be offered in 2020 through the local Cooperative Extension Service. These initiatives transitioned to a virtual platform, which actually generated more participation. Collectively, these initiatives reached over 575 people (which included populations targeted in the CHIPs such as African-Americans, people with chronic illness, people at-risk for or already diagnosed with diabetes, and people of lower socio-economic status). Initiatives offered included Lunch N' Learns, Take Control, Dining with Diabetes, and Med Instead of Meds. Evaluation measures showed that participants adopted healthy practices, made positive lifestyle changes, and were more confident about managing their chronic conditions. More detailed information about program results is available upon request.

Person County Health Department has taken baby steps towards the adoption of using Results-Based Accountability (RBA) in its work. RBA is "a disciplined way of thinking and taking action that can be used to improve the quality of life in communities, cities, counties, states, and nations. RBA can also be used to improve the performance of programs, agencies and service systems." More training on RBA for PCHD staff and partners is anticipated in 2021-2022. For more information on RBA go to <https://clearimpact.com/results-based-accountability/>.

Person County Health Department invites anyone who is interested in helping address county health priorities or being involved in the community health assessment process in 2022, to call (336) 597-2204 x2277.

Morbidity and Mortality Changes Since Last CHA

Data used in this section reflects the most recent data available compared to data reported in the 2018 CHA.

Mortality Data

At the time this report was prepared (May 2021), the most current aggregate data for leading causes of death for Person County was 2014-2018. It has been compared to the latest data cited in the 2018 CHA, which was aggregate data from 2012-2016. Key findings from the comparison are as follows:

- In 2014-2018, the leading causes of death for Person County were (1) cancer, (2) heart disease, (3) chronic lower respiratory disease, (4) all other unintentional injury, (5) stroke, (6) diabetes, (7) Alzheimer's disease, (8) unintentional motor vehicle injury, (9) kidney disease, and (10) pneumonia/influenza.
- Deaths from cancer, heart disease, Alzheimer's disease, and unintentional motor vehicle injury remained the same in ranking for both 2014-2018 and 2012-2016. However, in the most recent data, deaths from chronic lower respiratory disease, all other unintentional injury, and kidney disease increased in ranking. The ranking for deaths from stroke, diabetes, and pneumonia/influenza decreased. The most noteworthy change in these rankings is kidney disease, which moved from the twelfth to ninth leading cause of death in the latter time.
- For 2014-2018, the county's mortality rates for stroke, Alzheimer's disease, and pneumonia/ influenza were below the state's comparable rates. County mortality rates for cancer, heart disease, chronic lower respiratory disease, all other unintentional injury, diabetes, unintentional motor vehicle injury, and kidney disease were above the state's rates.
- Person County's mortality rates for cancer, stroke, unintentional motor vehicle injury, and pneumonia/influenza decreased in 2014-2018 when compared to county rates for 2012-2016. However, county rates for heart disease, chronic lower respiratory disease, all other unintentional injury, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, and kidney disease had increased.

More specific data regarding rates is available upon request. *Data Sources: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics (NCSCSHS), 2018 and 2020 County Health Data Books*

Infant Mortality Data

Person County's infant mortality rate increased from 7.4 (2012-2016) to 10.1 (2014-2018). The county rate remained above the state's comparable rate for both times. *Data Sources: NCDHHS, NCSCSHS, 2016 and 2018 NC Infant Mortality Reports*

Teen Pregnancy Data

The pregnancy rate for females ages 15-19 slightly decreased from 42.9 (2016) to 41.1 (2019) in Person County. The county rate was above the state's rate for both years. There were no reported pregnancies in females ages 14 or younger for either year. *Data Sources: NCDHHS, NCSCSHS, 2016 and 2019 NC Resident Pregnancy Rates Reports*

Communicable Disease Data

Person County experienced an increase in overall cases of communicable diseases from 2017 to 2020 as well as an increase in each of these three categories: Foodborne Illnesses (FIs), Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), and General Communicable Diseases (GCDs). In 2020, 92% of the county's communicable diseases were STIs, 4% were FIs, and 4% were GCDs. In 2019, the breakdown was 94% STIs, 3% FIs, and 3% GCDs. For both years, most cases of STIs were attributed to chlamydia. *Data Source: North Carolina Electronic Disease Surveillance System*

Diabetes Data

Diabetes was Person County's sixth leading cause of death in 2014-2018 and fifth in 2012-2016. For both times, the county's diabetes mortality rate exceeded that of the state. According to data submitted in the CHA from 2013, the estimated prevalence of adult diagnosed diabetes was 10.6%. In 2017, that had decreased to 9.5%. *Data Source: Centers for Disease Control Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (CDC BRFSS)*

Obesity Data

CHA data cites that in Person County the estimated prevalence of diagnosed diabetes in adults was 33% in 2013. More recent, yet still somewhat outdated, data shows a slight increase to 34% in 2017. *Data Source: CDC BRFSS*

The CHA cited data for 2015 as the most current for children in several age categories. However, the only data available for this report to make a valid comparison was that for children ages 2-4. Data revealed that the percentage of children ages 2-4 that were obese had increased from 15.2% (2015) to 17.2% (2018). It is important to note that this data is not necessarily representative of the countywide population of children, as it is based on small numbers. It also reflects children, ages 2-4, served through the Women, Infants and Children Program and Child Health Clinics (which Person County Health Department has not had for several years) as well as some school-based health centers. *Data Source: North Carolina Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System*

Site-Specific Cancer Mortality and Incidence Data

In both 2012-2016 and 2014-2018, Person County's leading cancer deaths by site were lung cancer followed by colon cancer and breast cancer. Cancer incidence data for 2015-2019 was available for this report. It revealed that female breast cancer and prostate cancer had the highest incidence rates in Person County. This was no change from the 2012-2016 data reported in the CHA. *Data Sources: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics (NCSCSHS), 2018 and 2020 County Health Data Books, NC Central Cancer Registry*

COVID-19 Data

Person County's first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported on March 24, 2020. The County's first death occurred on April 27, 2020. From the start of this event through May 27, 2021, there have been 3,437 cases of COVID-19 in Person County and 71 deaths. At the time this report was being prepared, the percent positive rate was at 6.1%, which was a significant decrease over time and even from earlier in May. As of May 27, 2021, 14,562 people in Person County (36.9% of the population) had been fully vaccinated and 15,975 people (40.5% of the population) had been vaccinated with at least one dose.

Demographic breakdowns for morbidity and mortality data are typically not included in State of the County Health Reports. However, an exception to this practice has been made in this report by providing some brief demographic data for Person County's COVID-19 cases, deaths, and vaccinations.

Explanation of Suppressed Data from NCDHHS: When a county has a population of fewer than 500 individuals for a specific demographic group or fewer than three cases occurred in week, some data is suppressed to protect patient privacy.

Person County COVID-19 Case Demographic Data (March 1, 2020 through May 22, 2021):

- Cases by Race – 61% of cases were in Whites; 8% in Other; and 30% of the data was suppressed. Some data was missing.
- Cases by Ethnicity – 92% of cases were in Non-Hispanics; 8% in Hispanics; and some data was missing.
- Cases by Age – right under 60% of cases were in individuals 25-64 years of age.
- Cases by Gender – 55% of cases were in females while 45% were in males.

Person County COVID-19 Death Demographic Data (March 1, 2020 through May 22, 2021):

- Deaths by Race – 48% of deaths were in Whites; 52% of the data was suppressed.
- Deaths by Ethnicity – 61% of deaths were in Non-Hispanics while 2% were in Hispanics; 38% of the data was suppressed.
- Deaths by Age – 51% of deaths were in individuals 75+ years of age; 36% of the data was suppressed.
- Deaths by Gender – 33% of deaths were in females while 31% were in males; 36% of the data was suppressed.

Person County COVID-19 Vaccination Demographic Data for People Fully Vaccinated (December 14, 2020 through May 26, 2021):

- Fully Vaccinated by Race – 66% White; 25.9% Black or African-American; 3.9% Other; 1.3% of the data was suppressed; and 2.9% of the data was missing or undisclosed.
- Fully Vaccinated by Ethnicity – 88.6% Non-Hispanic; 3.7% Hispanic; 7.7% of the data was missing or undisclosed.
- Fully Vaccinated by Age – over 50% of people were in the 25-64 age range; 24.4% were 65-74 years of age; 16.2% individuals 75+; and the remainder in individuals 24 or younger.

- Fully Vaccinated by Gender – 56.8% female; 42.7% male; 0.5% missing or undisclosed data.

Data Sources: NCDHHS COVID-19 Dashboard

Emerging Issues Since Last CHA

On March 16, 2020, Person County Government issued a Declaration of Emergency and increased its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to “operations level” to respond to the new Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the United States and State of North Carolina. Local public health response efforts began even prior to this declaration. Person County Government and local public health operations were considerably impacted by the pandemic. Local government operations were altered through building closures; employees transitioning to teleworking or altered schedules; providing some services virtually and limiting in-person services; providing COVID leave to employees; adapting physical environments to protect employees and the people served; instituting screenings before allowing entry into county buildings; following state orders in regards to face coverings, gathering limits, and social distancing; etc. The Health Department established a Joint Information Center with community partners to communicate information to each other as well as the public. Many partnerships, both traditional and non-traditional, were established for local response efforts. The Health Department contracted with the NC Public Health Alliance and Community Care of NC to hire staff to help with case investigation, contact tracing, and vaccination efforts. Person County Medical Reserve Corps volunteers as well as spontaneous volunteers were utilized to help with vaccination efforts. Additionally, Person County was impacted by COVID-19 through school closures (virtual and hybrid learning); the cancellation of various functions; church closures and that of many other organizations; business closures and restriction; etc.

In May 2020, Person County Government experienced a cyber-incident. For the immediate weeks following the incident, there was limited technological capacity. Person County’s Information Technology Department enlisted assistance from federal, state, and local partners to ensure continuity of operations as much as possible in the following months. Priority was given to local public health and provisions were made to minimize disruption to COVID-19 response efforts. Several public health staff members involved in the local COVID-19 response efforts were recruited to assist with the cyber-incident.

(The following information was provided by Person County’s Economic Development Department.)

At the start of FY20, Person County was experiencing steady employment with a record low unemployment rate of 3.6% going into the COVID-19 pandemic. Average annual wages for Person County rose from \$40,698 in 2019 to \$42,249 in 2020. The mandated shutdown from the pandemic affected all industries, but most impacted was the retail sector, which is Person County’s top employment sector. However, many workers who typically commuted out of the county began to work from home and shop locally or online for purchases that would normally take place in surrounding areas. This caused an increase in local sales tax revenues. The ED Department’s focus shifted sharply from marketing and recruitment to business support services, including emergency loans for small businesses. The County’s average unemployment rate as of June 30, 2020 was 7.7%, an increase of 2.7 percentage points from the previous year’s rate of 5.0%, but only 0.1 percentage point over the statewide average of 7.6%.

New/Paused/Discontinued Initiatives Since Last CHA

In 2019, Person County Health Department experienced budget reductions, the elimination of positions, a high staff turnover rate, and paused some clinic services. However, in spite of the challenges that came in 2020 due to COVID-19 and a cyber-incident, it was a year of restoration and rebuilding for the department. Positions were reinstated and filled thus giving the department the capacity to restore several clinics. In fall 2020, services for Family Planning, Sexually Transmitted Infections, and Maternal Health services resumed.

In spring 2020, the Diabetes Prevention Program offered through the Health Department and NC Cooperative Extension transitioned to providing its last 4 sessions using a virtual platform. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, a new cohort was put on pause. It is anticipated that a new cohort will start in spring 2021.

As of March 2020, WIC services transitioned to remote and curbside delivery. It is anticipated that in-person services will resume in the summer of 2021.

Most new initiatives implemented in 2020 were in response to the pandemic. Such initiatives included the establishment of a Joint Information Center and online portal; COVID-19 testing, case investigation, contact tracing, vaccination events and clinics; and guidance for the faith community, businesses, industries, restaurants, educational institutions, farmworkers, and more.

Community programs offered through the Health Department, Healthy Personians Partnership, and many of their partners were paused most of 2020 and into 2021.