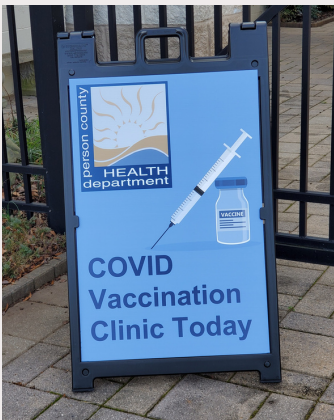




# 2021 Person County State of the County Health Report



To access this report, go to [www.personcountync.gov](http://www.personcountync.gov)  
(find the Health Department by using the Government tab)  
or call (336) 597-2204.



The components of the SOTCH Report are in alignment with the North Carolina Local Health Department Accreditation requirements. This report compares data from the last Community Health Assessment (2018) to the most current data available.

Definitions that might be helpful when reading this report:

Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases - chronic disease 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 Injuries - 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 - death, especially on a large scale.

Morbidity - refers generally to the current presence of injury, sickness or disease in the living population.

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



## Progress on CHIPs

In 2021, it was a challenge to implement the Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIPs) due to the continued COVID-19 local response efforts, various restrictions, etc. Person County's CHIPs focus on the health priorities identified in the 2018 Community Health Assessment (CHA), which are chronic disease (cancer, heart disease, and diabetes) and obesity. In spite of the challenges in 2021, some progress was made towards addressing health priorities.

A new Diabetes Prevention Program cohort was implemented in 2021 after the program was paused for a year. The 2021 cohort enrolled 10 participants (the maximum number of participants for this program is 15). This cohort will continue through May 2022. Lifestyle Coaches attribute low participation partially to COVID-19 restrictions. Under normal circumstances, much of the program promotion and recruitment is conducted through the distribution of information in church bulletin inserts. At the time that coaches were promoting the program and attempting to recruit participation, many local churches were not meeting in-person. The same held true for other local organizations through which the program was routinely promoted. COVID-19 protocols were put into place in order for the existing cohort to meet in-person. Most participants have been very committed to class attendance and engagement.

Even though a structured process has not been established to refer individuals to evidence-based programs, several local providers have been referring their patients/clients to programs. The NC Cooperative Extension - Person County Center is listed on the NCCARE360 networking website, advertising local programs that are available. One referral was received in 2021 through this network. It is anticipated that the Health Department will onboard NCCARE360 in 2022.

It is understood that tobacco use increases the risk of developing many chronic diseases. Tobacco users are more at risk for getting infected with COVID-19 and having more complications from the virus. Treatment of COVID-19 in tobacco users can also be more challenging. In 2021, there were several efforts to increase QuitlineNC use by providers and individuals. QuitlineNC is a valuable resource that provides free cessation services to any North Carolina resident who needs help quitting commercial tobacco use. Person County Health Department registered to become a user of QuitlineNC's new web portal for patient eReferrals. This is a more efficient method of referring patients to the QuitlineNC than the former fax referral system. Clinic staff were trained on the new web portal. They also received training on the You Quit, Two Quit Program. This program supports comprehensive tobacco use screening and cessation counseling for women of reproductive age. Additionally, the Health Department made it a practice to routinely implement media messaging campaigns to promote the QuitlineNC.

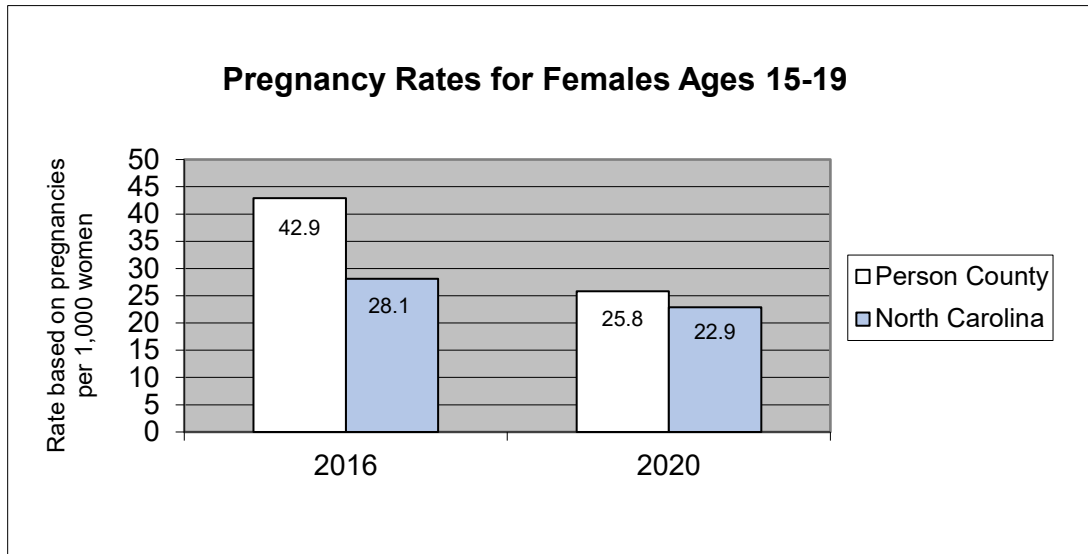
In 2021, evidence-based programs such as Take Control, Dining with Diabetes, and Med Instead of Meds continued to be offered by NC Cooperative Extension – Person County Center. These programs were offered virtually and participation either increased or stayed about the same as compared to the previous year. Numerous Lunch N' Learn sessions were offered throughout the year addressing various topics relative to chronic disease. Most sessions were offered virtually. As more individuals discontinued teleworking and returned to the workplace, participation in Lunch N' Learns slightly decreased. A 4-H Winter Cooking Series was added to Extension's list of programming as well as a Walk-A-Weigh program, which participants did on their own. Concerted efforts were made to promote the majority of these programs to populations identified in the CHA as being more at-risk for poor health outcomes (i.e. people who are economically disadvantaged, individuals who are uninsured, minorities, etc.).

Anyone interested in helping to address county health priorities should call (336) 597-2204 x2277.

## Morbidity and Mortality Changes Since Last CHA

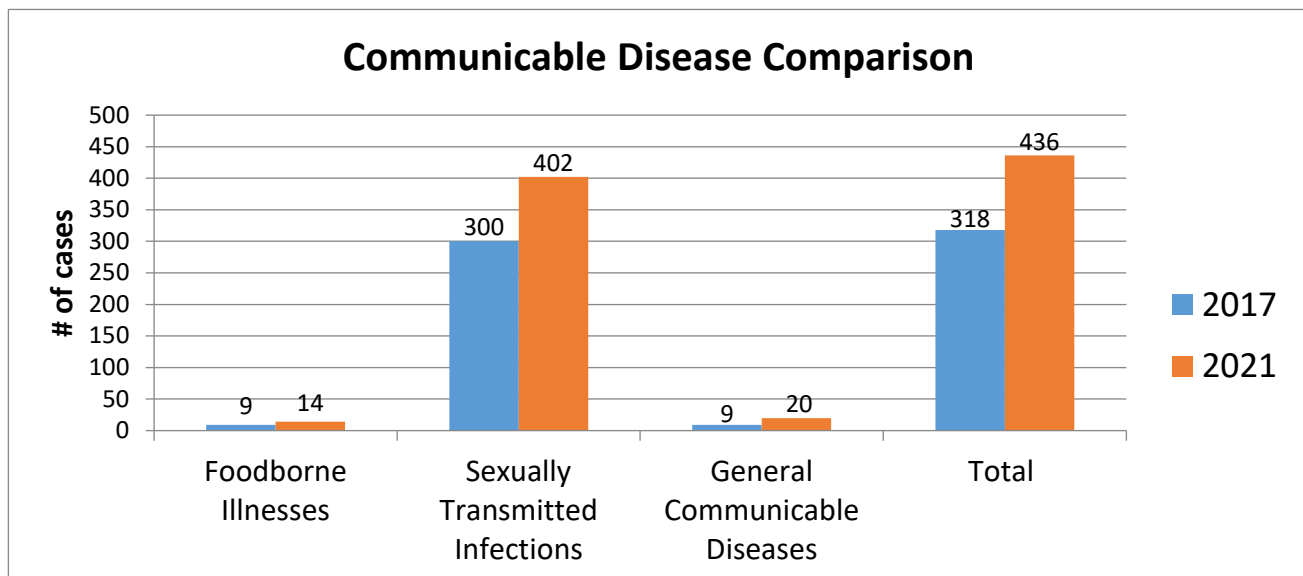
### Teen Pregnancy Data

The most current pregnancy rate for females ages 15-19 in Person County shows a decrease, as compared to figures presented in the CHA. (Sources: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics (NCSCHS), 2016 and 2020 NC Resident Pregnancy Rates Reports)



### Communicable Disease Data

Person County Health Department is responsible for tracking cases of communicable diseases. The following chart compares the number of communicable diseases identified in the last CHA and the most current year for which data is available. In 2021, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) accounted for 92% of communicable diseases in Person County (65% of STIs were Chlamydia cases, 31% Gonorrhea cases, 4% Syphilis cases), as compared to 94% in 2017. Salmonellosis was the most reported foodborne illness (43% of cases) while Hepatitis C – Chronic accounted for 90% of the general communicable diseases in 2021. (Source: North Carolina Electronic Disease Surveillance System)



## Site-Specific Cancer Mortality and Incidence Data

Person County's leading cancer deaths by site for both 2012-2016 and 2015-2019 were attributed to lung cancer and colon cancer. In 2012-2016, breast cancer was the third leading cancer death by site but that changed in the latter time period to prostate cancer. The most current cancer incidence data found for this report was from 2016-2020. It revealed that the highest incidence rates of cancer in the county were from female breast cancer, prostate cancer, and lung cancer. This was no change from the cancer incidence data cited in the CHA. (Sources: NCDHHS, NCSCHS, 2018 and 2021 County Health Data Books, NC Central Cancer Registry)

## Diabetes Data

Person County's mortality rate from diabetes decreased from 2012-2016 to 2015-2019. This ranked diabetes as the sixth, instead of fifth, leading cause of death. For both periods of time, the county's mortality rate exceeded that of the state. The age-adjusted percentage of diagnosed diabetes in Person County adults ages 20+ was 9.4% in 2013 and 8.1% in 2019.

*Note: Datasets available for diagnosed diabetes and obesity for this report are for adults ages 20+. This varies from what was presented in the CHA. These most current datasets are used in this report to make comparisons that are more accurate. (Source: U.S. Diabetes Surveillance System)*

## Obesity Data

The age-adjusted percentage of diagnosed obesity in Person County adults ages 20+ was 27.7% in 2013 and 22.3% in 2019. According to the CHA, 15.2% of children ages 2-4 were in the obese category in 2015. In 2018, this had increased to 17.2%. Data for other age groups was not available. It is important to note that the data presented is for children served through the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and may not be representative of the general children population in the state or county. (Source: NC Pediatric Nutrition and Epidemiology Surveillance System, CY2018 Crossroads WIC Management Information System)

## COVID-19 Data

Person County's first confirmed case of COVID-19 was on March 24, 2020. Since that time through March 2, 2022, there have been 9,110 reported cases. The first COVID-19 death in the county was on April 27, 2020. As of March 2, 2022, there have been 104 deaths. Person County Health Department's priority for much of 2021, along with other local providers, was administering COVID-19 vaccinations. According to the state dashboard, from December 2020 through March 2, 2022:

- 59% (23,277 individuals) of Person County's *total population* had been vaccinated with at least one dose; 62% of Person County's *population 5+ years of age* had been vaccinated with at least one dose.
- 56% (22,133 individuals) of Person County's *total population* had been vaccinated with two doses or one dose of the J&J vaccine; 59% of Person County's *population 5+ years of age* had been vaccinated with two doses or one dose of the J&J vaccine.
- 11,156 individuals 5+ years of age had been vaccinated with at least one booster/additional dose.

Note: At the time that this report was prepared, individuals ages 5-11 years of age were not eligible for a booster. However, if they were immunocompromised then they would have been eligible for an additional dose. Additionally, individuals under the age of five were not yet eligible for the vaccine. (Source: NCDHHS COVID-19 NC Dashboard)

## Person County Mortality Data

The chart below compares Person County mortality data from the last CHA to the most current data.

2012-2016		2015-2019	
Cause of Death	PC Rate	Cause of Death	PC Rate
1. Cancer	195.8	1. Cancer	174.5
2. Heart Disease	166.9	2. Heart Disease	165.5
3. Cerebrovascular Disease	48.0	3. Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	46.9
4. Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	40.6	4. All Other Unintentional Injuries	43.8
5. Diabetes	31.9	5. Cerebrovascular Disease	34.6
6. All Other Unintentional Injuries	25.8	6. Diabetes	30.6
7. Alzheimer's Disease	23.1	7. Alzheimer's Disease	23.0
8. Unintentional Motor Vehicle Injuries	21.9	8. Kidney Disease	21.0
9. Pneumonia/Influenza	21.2	9. Septicemia	17.9
10. Septicemia	15.7	10. Suicide	15.7

(Sources: NCDHHS, NCSCHS, 2018 and 2021 County Health Data Books, figures in red indicate those rates, which are higher than the comparable state rates)

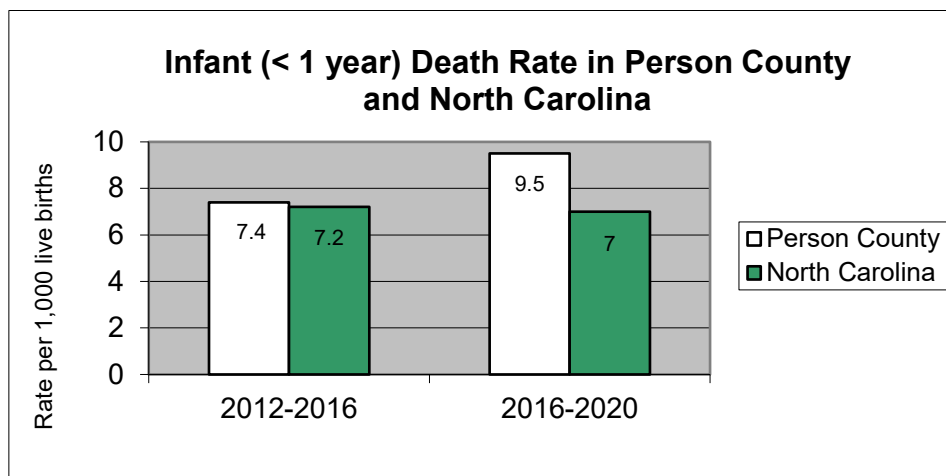
When comparing the two data periods:

- Deaths from cancer, heart disease, and Alzheimer's disease ranked the same.
- Deaths from cerebrovascular disease, diabetes, unintentional motor vehicle injuries, and pneumonia/influenza moved down in ranking.
- Deaths from chronic lower respiratory diseases, all other unintentional injuries, kidney disease, septicemia, and suicide moved up in ranking.
- Person County's rates for cancer, heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, diabetes, and Alzheimer's disease had decreased from 2012-2016 to 2015-2019, while rates for chronic lower respiratory diseases, all other unintentional injuries, kidney disease, septicemia, and suicide had increased.

## Infant Mortality Data

Since the data presented in the CHA, Person County has seen the infant mortality rate increase.

(Sources: NCDHHS, NCSCHS, 2016 and 2020 NC Infant Mortality Reports)



## **Emerging Issues Since Last CHA**

In 2021, Person County's local COVID-19 response efforts continued to focus on case investigation, contact tracing, testing, media/messaging campaigns around preventive measures, and providing guidance to community partners. While all of these efforts were extremely important, the priority for the year was providing vaccinations to anyone eligible. Planning, preparing for, and operating vaccination clinics was very labor intensive for public health staff and community partners. It was necessary to seek assistance from Community Care of North Carolina, Person County Medical Reserve Corps volunteers, the Green Rural Renewal Organization, and other community volunteers. With the emergence of the Delta variant, the demand for testing drastically increased. Person Memorial Hospital's Emergency Department was overwhelmed with individuals seeking COVID-19 testing. In efforts to reserve ED services for true emergencies, Person County Health Department collaborated with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, OptumServe, and Person Memorial Hospital to establish a community testing site.

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

Prior to COVID-19, Person County was experiencing steady employment with a record low unemployment rate of 3.6%. At the height of the impacts, that rate rose to 14.1%. As of the midpoint of FY22, Person County surpassed the previous record low with an unemployment rate of 3.3%. Average annual wages for Person County rose from \$42,446 in 2020 to \$44,066 in 2021. Person County has seen job contractions in the automotive, power generation, and business services sectors, while seeing increases in distribution, textiles, and knowledge creation sectors. Development within the City and County has increased. In 2021, the City of Roxboro permitted 28 businesses moving into existing buildings and 5 commercial new construction/addition/expansions. Building permits in Person County are up nearly 500% over this time last year, as of January 31, 2022. Another direct reflection of the volume in increased development in the area is the 38% boost in occupancy tax over this time last year, as local hotels house construction crews. This is expected to continue as large economic development announcements are made across the Triangle and Triad regions, adding thousands of jobs within a 60-minute drive time.

## **New/Paused/Discontinued Initiatives Since Last CHA**

The most significant new initiative since the last CHA has been COVID-19 response efforts. Much of 2021 focused on vaccination clinics. In January 2021, a mass drive through vaccination clinic occurred in the parking lot of a local multiplex entertainment facility. In order to vaccinate a greater number of individuals at a time, the majority of clinics were held off-site at larger facilities. Vaccination clinics required collaboration with many partners, both traditional and non-traditional to public health.

As referenced in the previous section, a COVID-19 community testing site was established to alleviate some of the burden on Person Memorial Hospital's Emergency Department.

After being paused for a year due to COVID-19, a new Diabetes Prevention Program cohort started in June 2021. Details about this program are in the first section of this report.

Local services provided through the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) continued to be offered remotely and by curbside delivery. It is anticipated that in-person services may resume in the summer of 2022.

In September 2021, Person County Health Department implemented a new initiative to advance health equity and address COVID-19 related health disparities. An internal equity workgroup and an external equity council will work towards specified deliverables over the span of two fiscal years.

The Healthy Personians Partnership's Substance Use Disorder Subcommittee (SUDS) remained active in 2021. Advertisements, using messaging from the Lock Your Meds Campaign, were placed on two Person Area Transportation System vehicles for six months. SUDS collaborated with the NC Region 5 Tobacco Program, Community Impact North Carolina, and Insight Human Services to offer virtual education sessions on vaping as well as safety around alcohol and medication storage.