

The State of the County Health Report is a yearly update on the Chatham County Community Health Improvement Priorities. The state government requires this report each year that local health departments do not produce a Community Health Assessment. While the Chatham County Public Health Department (CCPHD) and Chatham Health Alliance (CHA) produced a community assessment in 2022, this report provides an update from work done by the CCPHD and CHA during the year. CCPHD updates are provided by division, while CHA updates are organized by Subcommittee.

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CHATHAM COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Leadership Team

Michael Zelek, *Public Health Director*

Anne Lowry, *Environmental Health Director*

Zach Deaton, *Clinical & Community Health Services Director*

Dorothy Rawleigh, *Health Promotion & Policy Director*

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www.chathamcountync.gov/publichealth
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CHATHAM HEALTH ALLIANCE

Leadership Team

Julie Wilkerson, *Executive Director*
Lara Kehle, *Board Chair*

Eric Wolak, *Chatham Hospital Representative*

Michael Zelek, *Chatham County Public Health Department Representative*

Sara Martin, *Board Vice Chair (through June)*

Alexa Moberley, *Access Subcommittee Chair*

Karinda Roebuck, *Equity Subcommittee Chair*

Tara Gregory, *Healthy Eating, Active Living Subcommittee Chair*

Travis Patterson & Liz Mauney, *Economic Resilience Subcommittee Co-Chairs*

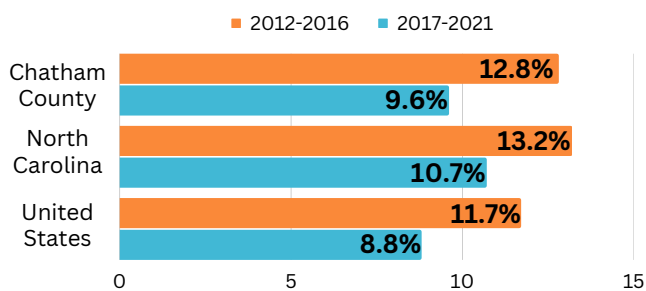
www.chathamhealthalliancenc.org

Every three years, the Chatham Health Alliance selects three priorities Community Health Impact Priorities to focus efforts on. In 2018, the CHA chose Access to Comprehensive Health Care, Poverty (later titled "Economic Resilience"), and Obesity (later titled "Healthy Eating, Active Living"). These topics were chosen as priorities again in 2021, in addition to three new focus areas: Mental Health & Substance Use, Employment/Income, and Transportation. The below information represents the most recent available Chatham County data in these topic areas.

ACCESS TO COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH SERVICES

Access to comprehensive health services, including physical health services, mental health services, and other support services and resources, are hugely impactful on the health of an individual and the community as a whole. Lack of access due to cost, insurance status, language, or other barriers ranging from complex referral systems to lack of available services altogether can prevent many from attaining their best health.

Percent of Residents That Do Not Have Health Insurance, by Region

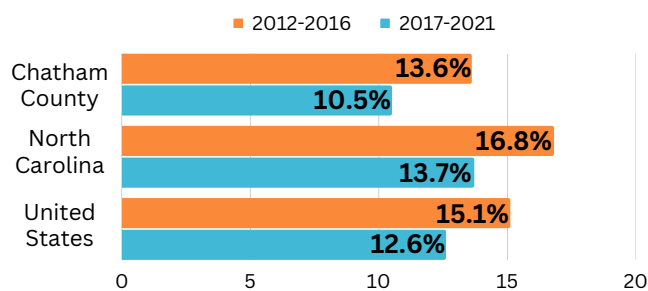


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

Poverty is an issue that underlies many health outcomes. Since the 2018 Community Assessment process, the Chatham Health Alliance re-titled their Poverty priority and corresponding subcommittee to Economic Resilience. When shifting its focus from Poverty to Economic Resilience, the Chatham Health Alliance considered the factors facing Chatham County and worked on practical solutions.

Percent of Residents Living in Poverty, by Region

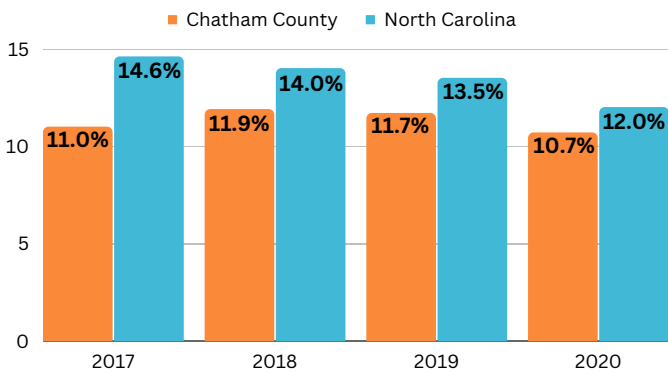


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

HEALTHY EATING, ACTIVE LIVING

The Chatham Health Alliance re-framed the previously-named priority "Obesity" as Healthy Eating, Active Living (HEAL), in recognition of the many complex factors that affect an individual's diet, physical activity, and lifestyle. All of these are in turn far more impacted by structural elements such as environmental, economic, and societal factors, including racism, sexism, and others, than individual-level choice.

Food Insecurity Percentage by Region

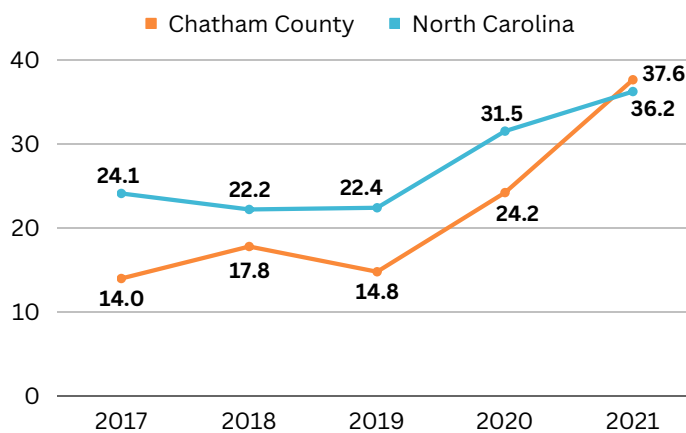


Source: Feeding America

MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE USE

Named as a new priority area in the 2021 Chatham County Community Assessment, mental health and substance use have become serious issues in Chatham over the last few years, with rising numbers of poor mental health and drug overdose deaths.

Drug Overdose Deaths per 100,000 Residents by Year, by Region



Source: NC Department of Health & Human Services

EMPLOYMENT/INCOME

Overall, Chatham County's employment and income indicators are strong. The county has a low unemployment rate and relatively high median income. Despite these strong overall measures, there are notable disparities in employment and income. Additionally, the availability of jobs in the county itself and lower than average wages are causes of concern for many residents.

Average Weekly Wage by Year in Dollars, By Region

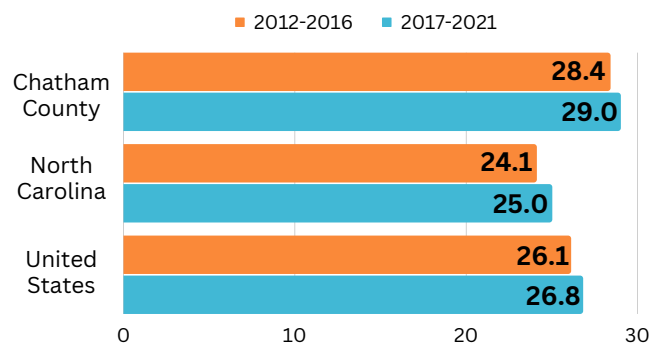
Year	Chatham County	North Carolina
2017	\$716	\$941
2018	\$731	\$976
2019	\$750	\$1,008
2020	\$808	\$1,082
2021	\$852	\$1,146

Source: NC Department of Commerce

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is a crucial element in daily life, including accessing necessities such as groceries, health care services, or going to work. Lack of safe, convenient, affordable transportation options, including vehicles, walking, or biking, and public transportation, can be a barrier to health and well-being for many. More than half of all working adults in Chatham are employed outside the county.

Average Travel Time to Work, in Minutes, by Region



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

CHATHAM COUNTY LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH, 2016-2020

Rank	Cause of Death	Rate per 100K Population
1	Cancer - All Sites	232.5
2	Diseases of the Heart	192.7
3	Cerebrovascular Disease	63.4
4	Alzheimer's Disease	45.8
5	Other Unintentional Injuries	44.2

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics

CHATHAM COUNTY POPULATION



77,889

Estimated Chatham County Population, July 2021

Chatham County Population, By Race/Ethnicity, 2021

White, non-Hispanic/Latino	72.1%
Black/African American	12.0%
Hispanic/Latino	12.2%
All other	3.7%

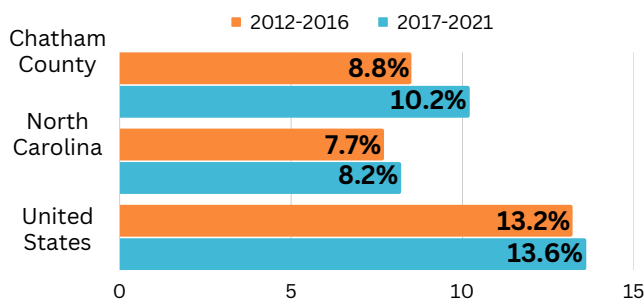
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

CHATHAM COUNTY RESIDENTS BORN OUTSIDE THE U.S.



Chatham County is becoming more and more international, with around 1 in 10 Chatham residents having been born outside the U.S. from 2017-2021.

Percent of Residents Born Outside the U.S., by Region



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

INFANT MORTALITY

Healthy moms and babies are a primary reproductive health goal and an area where the United States is not performing well. Chatham County's infant health outcomes are relatively poor. The infant mortality rate in Chatham County from 2016-2020 was 9.4 per 1,000 live births, which was higher than North Carolina's rate of 7 per 1,000 live births.

Infant Mortality (Deaths per 1,000 Live Births), by Region

Year	Chatham County	North Carolina
2016	14.1	7.2
2017	6.0	7.1
2018	7.7	6.8
2019	6.6	6.8
2020	12.4	6.9

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics

Access to Comprehensive Health Services

SUBCOMMITTEE PROGRAM UPDATES

- Began work on the NCCARE360 Pilot Project
- Created and launched a Chatham County events calendar
- Surveyed providers on use of Social Determinant of Health Screenings at health visits

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

NCCARE360 is the first statewide coordinated care network that better connects individuals to local services and resources. In the NCCARE360 network, providers and organizations can electronically connect individuals and families who have unmet social needs to community resources. The CHA's Access Subcommittee has been working on **piloting the program in Chatham County**, with several nonprofits, government agencies, and healthcare providers. You can learn more about the program online at www.nccare360.org.



Economic Resilience

- Developed a policy agenda for the Chatham Health Alliance
- Implemented a county wide youth council: Youth Voices of Chatham
- Continued implementation & evaluation of the Community Resource Hub



The **Chatham Community Resource Hub** is a mobile, co-located effort of many Chatham Health Alliance partner agencies. Hubs are held across Chatham County to safely provide community with free resources. Within the last year, the Hub has distributed more than 1,500 free hot meals, more than 400 medication lockboxes, more than 1,000 medication disposal packets, and resources on youth mental health, free Pre-K, domestic violence services and more.

Equity

- Instituted Equity Ambassadors for each Alliance Subcommittee
- Developed and released an Alliance member demographic survey
- Reviewed and Updated Alliance Bylaws
- Offered a workshop on racial equity fundamentals to member organizations



Equity Ambassadors are Equity Subcommittee members embedded within all Alliance Subcommittees to encourage the use of equity principles in the development and implementation of all publications, policies, procedures, and programs. Equity Ambassadors work with all Health Alliance Subcommittees on:

- Building equitable representation
- Understanding a shared language for health equity
- Developing a plan for advancing equity
- Facilitating discussions on incorporating equity into the work

Healthy Eating, Active Living

- Began planning SNAP/EBT programs at Chatham County Farmers Markets
- Developed a mobile physical activity trailer plan and began implementation
- Implemented a Track Trails program at Southwest District Park

Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) allows customers to use Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits from a government-issued debit card at **Chatham-based farmers markets**.

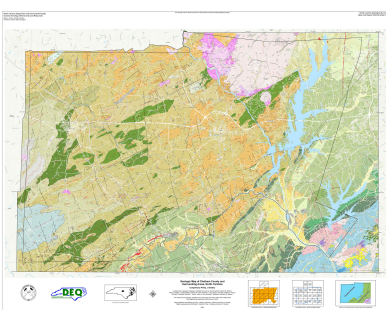


Implementing SNAP/EBT systems at farmers markets allows local food vendors to play an important role in increasing access to fresh produce for community members, thus allowing all Chatham residents to shop local and get nutritious foods for their family. The Subcommittee is currently exploring other related programs like double bucks and recipe sharing.



In November 2022, the Chatham County Public Health Department received word that it had been approved for re-accreditation with honors by the NC Local Health Department Accreditation Board. Every local public health department in North Carolina is required to go through an accreditation process every four years to ensure capacity and quality of services. CCPHD was last accredited in 2016, but re-accreditation was delayed two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Being re-accredited with honors means that CCPHD met nearly all of the process' 150 standards for excellence. The accreditation lasts until 2026.

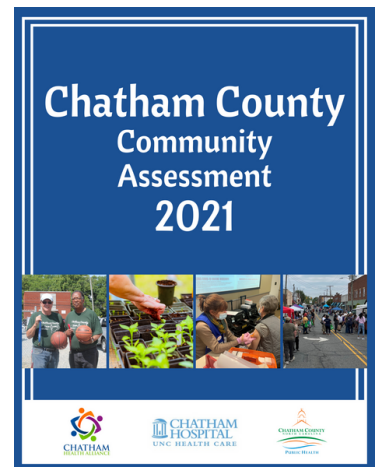
In 2022, the **Clinical & Community Health Services** division embarked on two new or reimagined programs to serve Chatham County's youngest. The *Newborn Postpartum Home Visiting Program* was relaunched and offers all mothers and newborns who live in Chatham County a home visit by a public health nurse, health assessment for the mother and newborn, discussion of family planning options, and other important education and resources. The *Safe Kids Chatham Car Seat Program*, new to the department, increases accessibility of child passenger safety education, check-ups, and car seats/booster seats with the goal of reducing the number of childhood injuries and fatalities due to motor vehicle accidents in the county.



The **Environmental Health** division initiated a partnership with the Chatham County Planning Department, Chatham County GIS, the North Carolina Geological Society, and NCSU to complete a long-term project with a goal to produce a map that indicates the depth and yield of all known wells in Chatham County. This map will also be used to develop predictive modeling for potential naturally occurring water quality concerns based upon the geology of the area. The division also continued its work with the Childhood Lead Poisoning

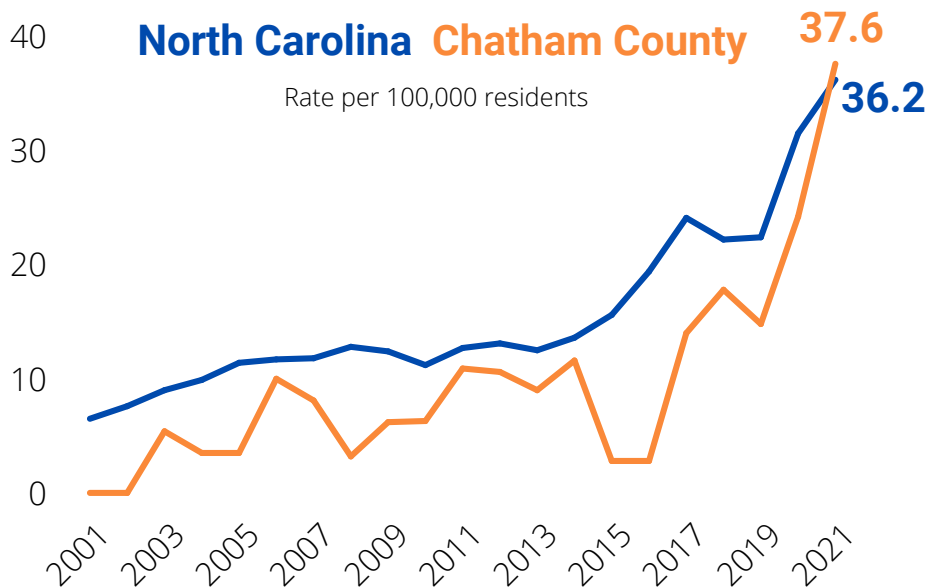
Prevention Program in response to new rules from the Chatham County Board of Health lowering the blood lead level requiring follow-up action, with the goal of preventing ongoing lead exposure, and making others aware of the recently installed PFAS treatment at the Town of Pittsboro water plant that is already reducing the levels of PFAS by 95%.

The **Health Promotion & Policy** division dedicated much of 2022 to the 2021 Chatham County Community Assessment (CA) report, which was published in the summer of 2022. The report was based on data collected in 2021 on community health strengths and needs. The CA process is a collaborative effort of several community organizations, including the Chatham Health Alliance and Chatham Hospital, with assistance from the NC Institute for Public Health. The CA was used to inform the selection of Community Health Impact Priorities and drive a continued focus on understanding and addressing health inequities. Throughout the summer and fall of 2022, this data was shared with community partners, public officials, and others, and is available at www.chathamcountync.gov/healthreports. A new community cohort survey was conducted in late 2022 and data will be available in early 2023.



HARM REDUCTION & SUBSTANCE USE

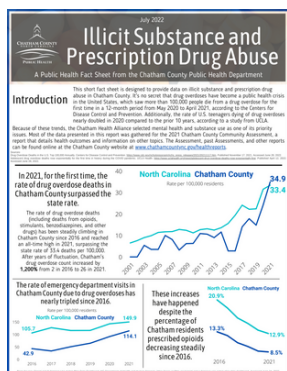
DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS PER 100,000 POPULATION



Source: Opioid and Substance Use Action Plan Data Dashboard. NC Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/opioid-and-substance-use-action-plan-data-dashboard>. Accessed June 24, 2022.

It's no secret that drug overdoses have become a public health crisis in the United States, which saw more than 100,000 people die from a drug overdose for the first time in a 12-month period from May 2020 to April 2021, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2021 also marked the first time that Chatham County's drug overdose death rate per 100,000 population eclipsed North Carolina's rate (see chart to the left). Considering this data, the Emerging Issue for 2022 is Harm Reduction and Substance Use.

After naming this issue as a priority for the next 5 years, the Chatham County Public Health Department began a multi-pronged approach to harm reduction and lowering the number of drug overdose deaths in the county. That work began in early 2022 with a public education campaign, including producing a brochure titled "What Is Harm Reduction?" explaining the concept of harm reduction and what it looks like. Additionally, the department produced a rack card called "All About Naloxone," with the basics of the life-saving overdose reversal drug and a list of places where people can get it. These materials were released in English and Spanish and are available for community organizations and at many public events.



In conjunction with the release of the 2021 Chatham County Community Assessment, the Public Health Department also published a topical data report on illicit substance and prescription drug abuse. This report was designed to raise awareness of the issue and guide decision-makers with the most recent available data. Using data from the NC Department of Health and Human Services, the report presents the above data on overdose deaths along with other data, like:

- Although the percentage of Chatham residents being prescribed opioids has decreased steadily since 2016, the rate of emergency department visits due to drug overdoses in Chatham has tripled since that year.
- Nearly 1 in 5 Chatham County high schoolers reported in 2019 that they have ever taken prescription pain medicine without a prescription or differently than how a doctor told them to use it.

The Chatham County Public Health Department has also taken other steps related to harm reduction and substance use:

- Creating a Substance Use Prevention and Harm Reduction Action Team
- Creating and facilitating an advisory/outreach committee with community members with lived experience to guide CCPHD's strategic plan
- Participating in the Sheriff's Prevention Partnership on Controlled Substances, particularly on development of post-overdose response team
- Collaborating with National Harm Reduction Coalition and NC Harm Reduction Coalition to bring training to CCPHD staff, community partners

OPIOID SETTLEMENT IN CHATHAM

Chatham County will receive around \$26 million between 2022 and 2038 as part of a national settlement between state and local governments and drug companies related to the opioid crisis. The county will use the money to hire a new Opioid Overdose Prevention Coordinator within the Chatham County Public Health Department, establish a post-overdose and jail response program, implement training and education focused on intervention and early identification with young people, along with many other initiatives with numerous community partners.