



Introduction

The North Carolina Division of Public Health requires local health departments to conduct a comprehensive Community Health Assessment (CHA) every three to four years. The purpose of a CHA is to examine the health issues and status of communities within the county and to identify health priorities. Priorities identified during the 2018 CHA are as follows: Access to Care, Behavioral Health, Chronic Disease Prevention. Upon completion of the CHA, community stakeholders in Craven County work together to create a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The CHIP and initiatives proposed within it are used as a tool to improve the health of the community. Progress on the CHIP is reported annually through the State of the County Health (SOTCH) report. This report provides a review of the health of the community, tracks progress in addressing priority health issues, and identifies new initiatives and emerging issues that affect the health status of county residents. The Craven County Health Department is pleased to publish the 2020 SOTCH Report.

On March 14, 2020, the first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported in Craven County. This was the beginning of a journey that we are still on today. Over the course of last year, public health, private practice, community leaders, local business, and residents of our county learned the value of partnerships, flexibility, and patience. We have struggled to maintain programs that address population health and foster a culture of self-efficacy. Many things had to change due to COVID-19 such as pausing face to face meetings with staff and community partners, reducing appointment slots for patients, increased wait time for diagnostic services for patients, unemployment, virtual learning for students, pausing group classes, lack of community services, and removing staff from regular job duties to work COVID-19 case investigation, contact tracing, community testing and then vaccine clinics. It has been 14 months, and only in the past few weeks have our staff been able to immerse themselves back into their regular job duties. Some though are still working to input positive case information while others are doing weekly COVID-19 reports and still others are working the vaccine clinics each week.

Progress on CHIP

While we had many challenges in 2020, we also had many successes and were able to make progress in the following areas:

Access to Care

- Craven Area Rural Transit System (CARTS) had a total of 6,056 usage stops on the Yellow loop and 5,962 usage stops on the Red loop for FY 2019-2020. These loops have stops for health services to include but not limited to hospital, primary care, dental, and pharmacy services. CARTS was awarded a grant at the end of 2020 that allowed them to provide free services to individuals from January 1 through June 30, 2021. CARTS is the public transit system covering the rural counties of Craven, Jones, and Pamlico as well as the New Bern urbanized area. CARTS has played a key role in bringing elderly and underserved individuals to their COVID-19 vaccination appointments.
- Trillium Health Resources served a total of 4,588 Craven County residents through the Trillium Provider Network. Residents were seen as follows: 3,402 for mental health, 1,004 for substance use and 469 for intellectual development disorder (numbers may reflect services for dual diagnosed).
- From March 8, 2020 through December 31, 2020 over 56,000 COVID-19 tests were administered in Craven County. This was accomplished through partnership with community medical providers, CarolinaEast Health System, Craven County Health Department, City of New Bern and Greene County Health Care, Inc. The health department held community testing events twice a week from April of 2020 through February 2021. Greene County Health Care, Inc. played a vital role in providing community testing in underserved areas by partnering with the City of New Bern and area churches. When the health department had to transition staff into working vaccine clinics, Green County Health Care Inc. stepped up and took over community testing for the health department. All testing provided during community testing events was provided at no cost to individuals.

- Craven County medical providers implemented tele-health and curbside services to ensure equitable access to essential health services.

Behavioral Health (Mental Health and Substance Use)

- During 2020, a total of 155 nasal naloxone kits were distributed to local law enforcement agencies. The receiving agencies were the Craven County Sheriff's Office, Riverbend Police Department, and Bridgeton Police Department.
- The Craven County Health Department provided a total of 22 naloxone kits to patients. These kits were provided at no charge.
- The New Bern Police Department held a Drug Take Back event in October of 2020 at Realo Discount Drugs. This event provided the public with an opportunity to dispose of unused and expired medications safely and properly. The Craven County Health Department and Craven County Opioid Task Force was on site to provide educational materials. The police department collected 239.27 pounds of medication at this event.
- The Community Collaborative for Craven County Children (C5) held an Embrace Recovery Facebook Live Panel Discussion. This community discussion featured guest speakers from recovery, education, and community resource programs. Participants that tuned into this event were able to ask questions, in real time, through Facebook comments and then the panelists answered them. The reach for this event was approximately 800 people. This discussion was held in place of the annual Embrace Recovery Rally that normally takes place at Union Point Park. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, C5 was unable to hold a traditional rally in 2020.
- OD Map is an overdose tracking system used nationwide by many law enforcement and first responder agencies. Agencies use this system to input data on overdoses as they happen. From January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020, a total of 213 naloxone administrations were logged by Craven County agencies that use the OD Map system. This is a 64% increase from 2019 when a total of 130 naloxone administrations were logged. **Data is provisional and subject to change.*

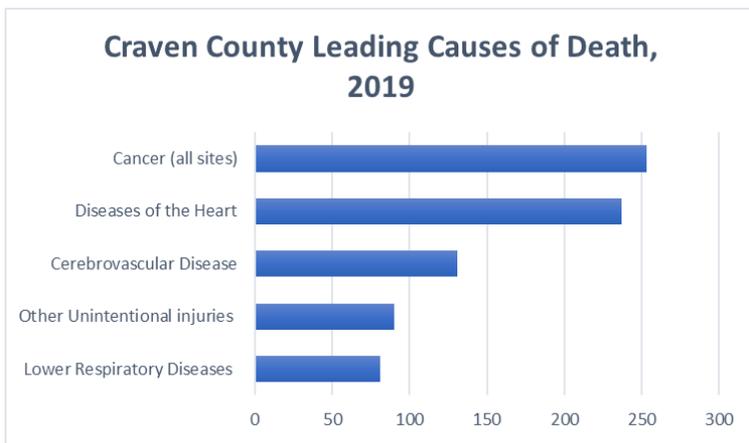
Chronic Disease Prevention

- The NC Minority Diabetes Prevention Program is an evidence-based CDC-recognized 12-month lifestyle change program designed to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. This program uses the Prevent T2 curriculum to promote weight loss through healthy eating and increased physical activity. Participants actively engage in weekly lessons and learn things such as tracking food and physical activity, stress management and coping skills. The program is taught by a Health Educator from the Health Department that has been certified as a Lifestyle Coach. The FY 2019-2020 class ended in September 2020 with 6 participants completing the class. The FY 2020-2021 class started in November 2020 with 7 individuals enrolled. A total of 18 class sessions were held in 2020. The Craven County Health Department earned full recognition from the CDC for implementing the National Diabetes Prevention Program.
- A mass media messaging campaign providing awareness and prevention information about COVID-19 was launched throughout Craven County. The campaign topics included: 3Ws, How and Where to Get Tested, Symptom Check, Get Behind the Mask, Slow the Spread, How to Clean, COVID-19 vs. Flu, Holiday messages, COVID-19 Isolation and Mental Health. This campaign was accomplished through radio spots that reached approximately 65,000 individuals, social media posts that reached approximately 100,000 individuals, and billboards that reached approximately 75,000 individuals.

The Craven County Health Department has also adopted the Results-Based Accountability (RBA) approach to improving community health. RBA is a disciplined way of thinking and taking action used by communities to improve the lives of children, families, and the community as a whole. The health department is also transitioning the CHA, CHIP, and SOTCH from a paper-based to web-based document. ClearImpact Scorecard is the platform that will be used to produce and publish the web-based documents. We will also be able to set up results, indicators, programs, and performance measures within the scorecard.

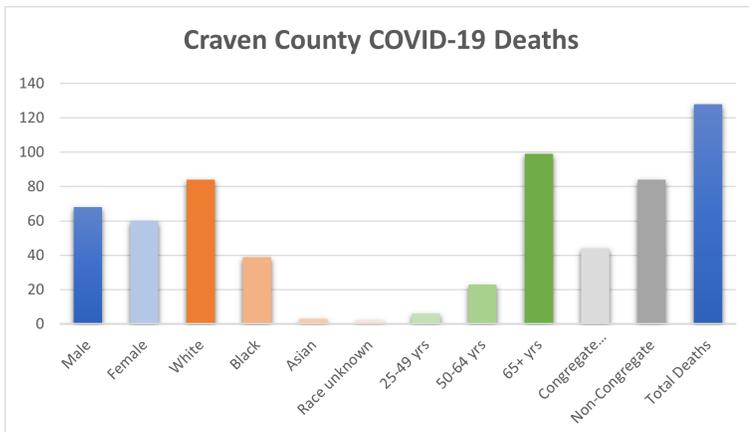
Morbidity and Mortality Changes Since Last CHA

Cancer remains the leading cause of death in Craven County. Other leading causes of death include diseases of the heart, cerebrovascular diseases, other unintentional injuries (including overdose), and lower respiratory diseases. When the 2018 CHA was released the top 5 leading causes of death were ranked as follows: 1)Cancer (all sites), 2)Diseases of the Heart, 3)Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease, 4)Other Intentional Injuries, 5)Cerebrovascular Disease. The figure below contains raw counts and is subject to change.



The category of other unintentional injuries includes accidents and overdoses. While the ranking is the same as when the 2018 CHA was published there was a significant increase in overdose deaths from 2019 to 2020. In 2019 there were a total of 6 fatal overdoses compared to 18 fatal overdoses in 2020.

As of May 31, 2021, there have been 9,413 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Craven County. Of the confirmed cases 64% are White, 26% are Black/African American, 4% are Asian or Pacific Islander, and 5% Other. The largest age group of individuals with confirmed cases are 25-49 years of age (37%); followed by individuals 50-64 years of age (20%), and then individuals 18-24 years of age (14%). There have been 128 deaths related to COVID-19. Most deaths have been in individuals that are white, over 65 years of age, and do not live in a congregate facility. Gender death trends have been consistent throughout the pandemic and currently stand at 47% female deaths and 53% male deaths.



Emerging Issues Since Last CHA

COVID-19 has impacted many aspects of our community. In February of 2020, the unemployment rate in Craven County was 3.8%. It peaked in May of 2020 at 11.1% and has been a slow fall over the past year. From October of 2020 through March of 2021 the rate has averaged 5.5%. Job loss and unemployment can impact mental and physical health leading to depression and anxiety. The Behavioral Health Clinic at the Craven County Health Department saw an uptick in appointments for anxiety related issues during 2020 and Trillium Health Services also saw an increase in referrals through their provider network.

After a slight downward slope in 2018, opioid-related overdose deaths among Craven County residents have been on the rise. Craven County is currently ranked as one of the highest counties for overdose deaths in North Carolina. The overdose death rate in 2019 for Craven County was 35.2 per 100,000 residents. That is double the state's rate of 17.2 per 100,000 in 2019. According to the NCDHHS Opioid Dashboard, 2020 opioid death data has been delayed due to COVID-19, but 2020 emergency department (ED) data suggests overdoses may have increased during COVID-19. In 2019, the rate of opioid overdose ED visits among residents of Craven County was 114.5 per 100,000 compared to the state rate of 50.6 per 100,000. In 2020 the rate of opioid overdose ED visits for Craven County increased to 145.9 per 100,000 while the state rate slightly increased to 61.9 per 100,000.

Opioid overdose deaths

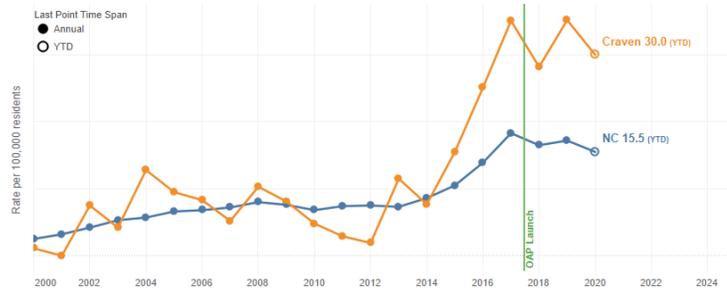
Unintentional opioid-related overdose deaths occurring among North Carolina residents have been on the rise. This metric includes deaths involving all types of opioids: commonly prescribed opioids, heroin, and synthetic narcotics like fentanyl and fentanyl-analogues. As a key OAP metric, a goal was set to reduce the expected number of deaths by 20% by the end of 2021. While 2020 death data is delayed due to COVID-19, 2020 ED data suggests overdoses may have increased during COVID-19.

Deaths in Craven

The rate of unintentional overdose deaths among residents of Craven in 2019 (Annual) was **35.2**.
(Rate per 100,000 residents. Number of deaths: 36)

Place Rank
Highest
Compared to other Counties*

Rank Groups	Percentage
Lowest	0-20%
Low	20-40%
Middle	40-60%
High	60-80%
Highest	80-100%



Opioid overdose ED visits

In 2018, for every 1 opioid overdose death there were nearly 4 Emergency Department (ED) visits due to opioid overdose in North Carolina. These visits include all intents: unintentional, intentional, and visits of unknown intent. As a key OAP metric, a goal was set to reduce the expected number of overdose ED visits by 20% by the end of 2021.

ED Visits in Craven

The rate of opioid overdose ED visits among residents of Craven in 2020 (Annual) was **145.9**.
(Rate per 100,000 residents. Number of ED visits: 149)

Place Rank
Highest
Compared to other Counties*

Rank Groups	Percentage
Lowest	0-20%
Low	20-40%
Middle	40-60%
High	60-80%
Highest	80-100%



Sources used to complete this SOTCH are the 2018 Craven County CHA, OD Map, NCDHHS Opioid Dashboard, NC State Center for Health Statistics, NCDHHS COVID-19 Dashboard, US Bureau of Labor Statistics

New/Paused/Discontinued Initiatives Since Last CHA

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Craven County Health Department collaborated with many community organizations to hold suicide prevention and mental health awareness trainings. QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) is a training that teaches people to identify warning signs of suicide and how to get help for someone in crisis. Mental Health First Aid is a public education program that helps participants identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. In 2019, eleven training sessions were held in Craven County. Due to COVID-19, these trainings were put on pause in 2020 and no classes were held. The Craven County Health Department aims to resume these trainings by the fall of 2021.

A presentation of this SOTCH report is made to the Craven County Board of Health. This report is also shared with key stakeholders, community partners, and the general public. A link to this report will be posted on the Craven County Health Department's website at <https://www.cravencountync.gov/153/Health> .

If you have questions about the information in this report, please contact: Amber Tabarrini, Public Information Officer, Craven County Health Department, 252-636-4920.