

CRAVEN COUNTY

State of The County Health Report (SOTCH)



OVERVIEW

The North Carolina Division of Public Health requires local health departments to conduct a comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every three to four years. The purpose of a CHNA is to examine the health issues of communities within the county and to identify health priorities that will be the focus for community health improvement for the next three years (2022-2024). Upon completion of the CHNA, community stakeholders in Craven County worked 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 2023 SOTCH Report.

Health Priorities



CHIP Results Statements

Craven County residents are free of substance misuse.

Craven County residents experience improved mental health and overall well-being.

Craven County residents are living an active and healthy lifestyle.

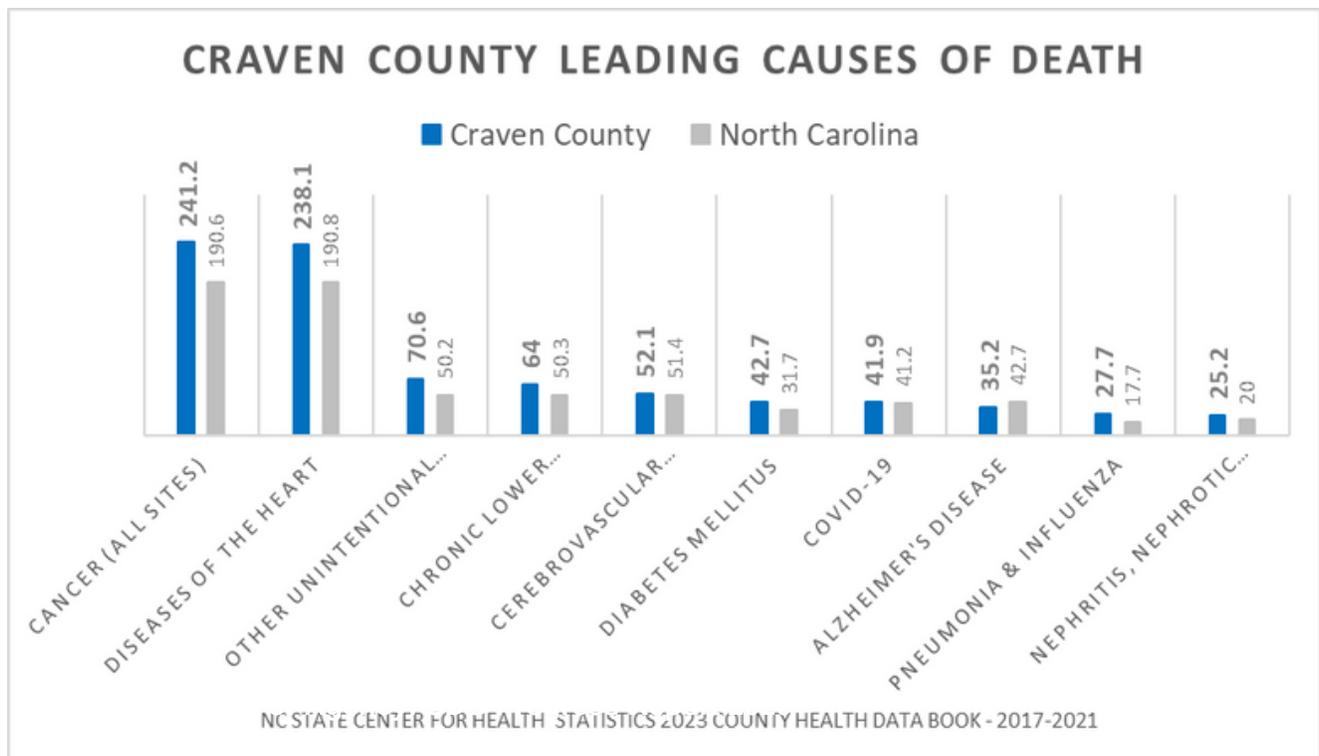
Craven County working age individuals are gainfully employed.

DEMOGRAPHICS

| Demographics | Craven County | North Carolina |
|---|-----------------|-------------------|
| Population, 2022 estimate | 100,874 | 10,695,965 |
| Race, 2022 estimate | | |
| White | 72% | 70% |
| Black or African American | 21% | 22% |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 1% | 2% |
| Asian | 3% | 4% |
| Ethnicity, 2022 estimate | | |
| Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin | 8% | 10% |
| Veterans | 11% | 6% |
| Median Household Income, 2018-2022 | \$61,676 | \$66,186 |
| Per Capita Income, 2022 | \$33,968 | \$37,641 |
| Persons in poverty, 2022 | 14% | 13% |

Quick Facts, US Census Bureau

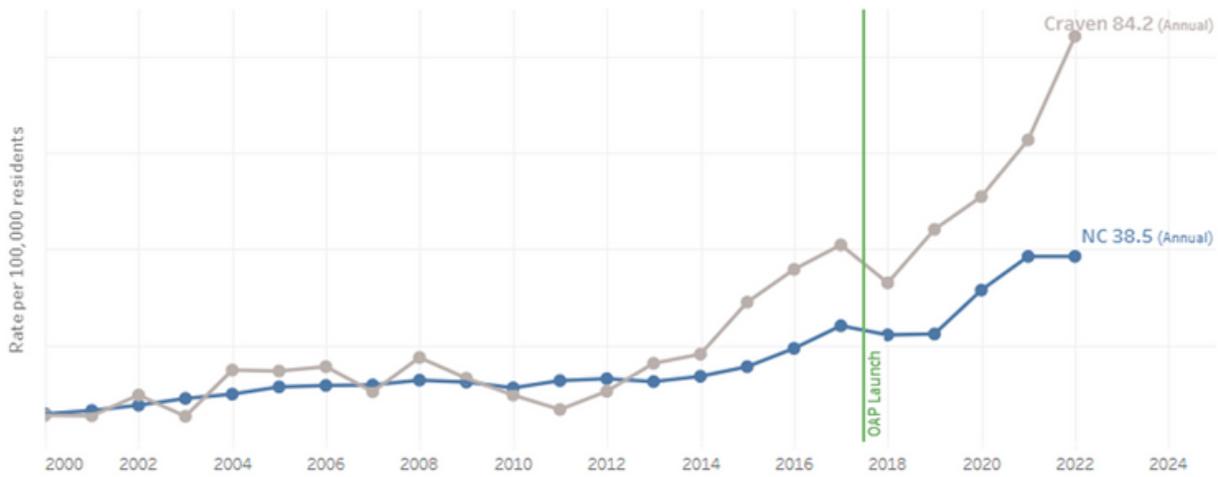
LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH



Cancer and Heart Disease are still the top two leading causes of death among Craven County residents. The third leading cause of death is Other Unintentional Injuries, which includes drug overdose deaths. The drug overdose death rate for Craven County is 84.2, which ranks as one of the highest counties in North Carolina for overdose deaths. Fentanyl-positive deaths are on the rise and Craven County is ranked fifth for fentanyl-positive deaths in the state.

Deaths in Craven

The rate of overdose deaths among residents of Craven in 2022 (Annual) was **84.2**.
(Rate per 100,000 residents. Number of deaths: 86)



NC Opioid Dashboard

Cancer has been the leading cause of death in Craven County for over 10 years. According to the 2023 County Health Data Book, Trachea, Bronchus, and Lung cancers are the leading cause of cancer deaths in Craven County. Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths while prostate cancer is third. The prostate cancer death rate for Black or African American males (52.0) is disproportionate when compared to White males (11.7).

| Cancer Age-Adjusted Death Rates, 2017-2021 | Craven County | North Carolina |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|
| All Cancers | 174.2↓ | 154.5↓ |
| Trachea, Bronchus, and Lung | 46↓ | 38.8↓ |
| Breast | 22.3 | 20.3 |
| Prostate | 17.4 | 19.7 |
| Colon, Rectum, Anus | 13.5 | 12.9 |
| Pancreas | 10.9 | 11.1 |
| ↓ Indicates a reduction since the previous year | | |

PROGRESS - COMMUNITY WELLNESS

The Craven County Health Department participated in 56 partner-sponsored community events in 2023. When participating in events the booth display covers topics such as heart health, physical activity, healthy eating, diabetes prevention, COVID-19, mental health, and smoking cessation. Health education is provided for civic clubs, churches, organizations, businesses, youth groups, and non-profit organizations. The Health Education staff reached over 2,000 community members during these events.



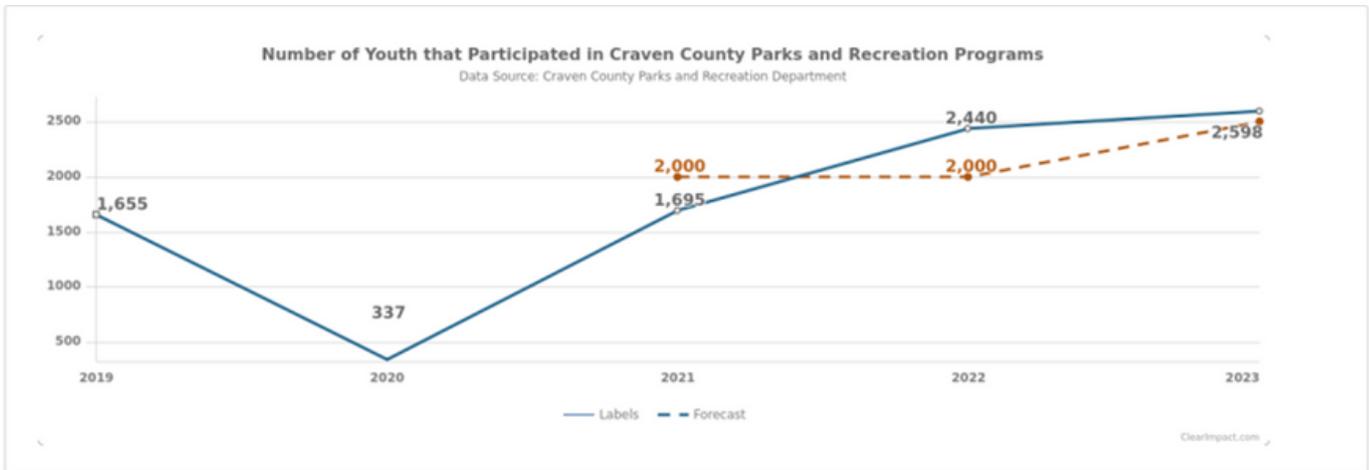
At-home COVID-19 tests kits were provided to the public at no cost. Throughout 2023, over 1,000 kits were provided to the public through community events and walk-in services at the health department.

The Prevent T2 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 and reducing A1C 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. This program continues to be offered to Craven County residents through the Craven County Health Department and Realo Drugs. A new class starts annually.

Throughout 2023, there were various media campaigns to provide awareness about the importance of cancer screenings, HIV screenings, COVID-19, lead poisoning prevention, flu prevention, mental health, and preventing child abuse.

PROGRESS - COMMUNITY WELLNESS

Craven County Recreation and Parks continue to see an uptick in program participation after a decrease due to COVID-19. Programs include youth basketball, baseball, volleyball, tennis, outdoor and summer camps. Adult programs include softball, golf, pickleball, kickball, beach volleyball, and special outdoor programs.



PROGRESS - BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (Substance Use)

Progress has been slow in reducing drug overdose deaths. The drug overdose death rate for Craven County is 84.2, which ranks as one of the highest counties in North Carolina for overdose deaths. Fentanyl-positive deaths are on the rise and Craven County is ranked fifth for fentanyl-positive deaths in the state. In 2022, Craven County organizations joined forces to create a Recovery Alliance Initiative (RAI). This work continued in 2023 to not only address the prevention of overdoses and deaths but also the needs related to a post overdose. RAI discussions also exposed the need to address social determinates of health. As a result, a transportation program was created to assist those in recovery, and it continues to be a valuable resource. Craven County Government and community partners are working with RAI to develop a strategic plan. This plan will lay out priorities and strategies for utilizing opioid settlement funds for years to come.

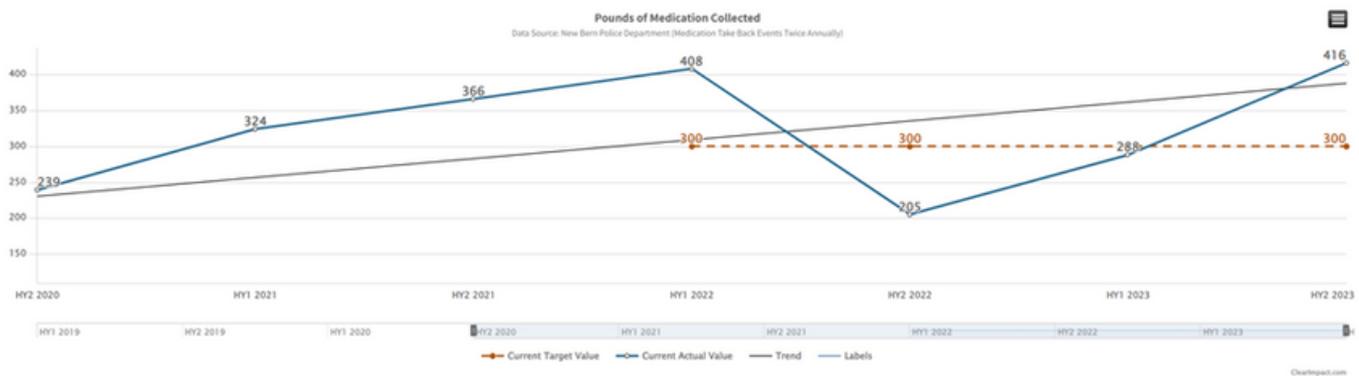


In the fall of 2023, the newly formed Craven County Opioid Epidemic Response office collaborated with the Craven County Health Department to provide community and organizational trainings. Opioid Epidemic Response staff provided overdose and Narcan training while Health Department staff taught Hands Only CPR. A total of eight training sessions were completed.

Through a partnership with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, the health department can provide nasal naloxone to the community at large through the in-house pharmacy at the health department and community events. In 2023, the health department distributed over 250 naloxone kits due to this partnership.

PROGRESS - BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (Substance Use)

The New Bern Police Department held two Drug Take Back events at Realo Discount Drugs. These events are opportunities for the public to dispose of unused and expired medications safely and properly. The Craven County Health Department was on site to provide educational materials. In April, the police department collected 288 pounds of medication and in October they collected 416 pounds of medication at the Drug Take Back events. Over 700 pounds of medication was safely disposed of in 2023 through this initiative.



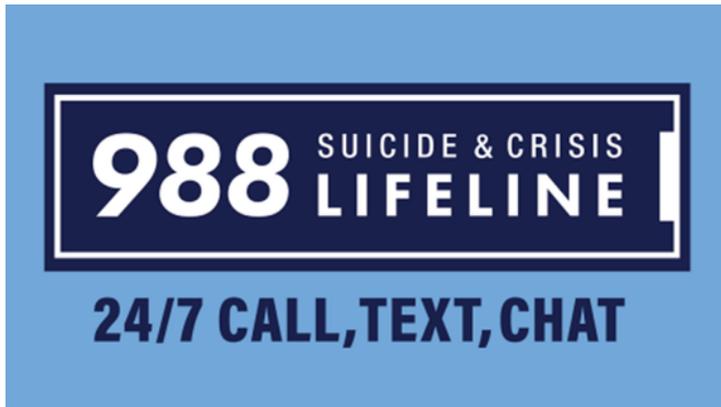
PROGRESS - BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (Mental Health)

Craven, Jones, and Pamlico County Health Departments collaborated to bring a Mental Health Town Hall to New Bern in March 2023. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services sponsored the event that was held at the Riverfront Convention Center. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kisley along with other esteemed panelists were available to answer questions and listen to citizens' concerns about the state of mental health services in and around our tri-county area. Over 150 individuals attended.



PROGRESS - BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (Mental Health)

A Walk for Recovery was held in downtown New Bern in September 2023. September is National Recovery Month, and this event brought forth awareness about recovery from substance use and mental health disorders. With over 50 people in attendance, the group walked two square blocks and then visited vendor booths. Vendors included health care, sober living, mental health providers, opioid awareness, job readiness, and education.



The 988 Lifeline is a national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. During 2023, Craven County residents called the 988 Lifeline 723 times.

PROGRESS - WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Craven Community College Career Coaches continue to be on-site at different locations within the county throughout the year. The coach is dedicated to helping individuals explore a career path that matches their interests. They offer several resources that can help in making this important decision, including career-planning tools, information about college programs, and career readiness classes and seminars.

In the fall of 2023, the Craven Community College Volt Center announced a partnership with the North Carolina Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to develop a pilot program for justice-involved individuals in Craven County. The program will offer training and employment opportunities. Programs of study include welding, carpentry, electrical, construction, and diesel mechanics. Classes will be provided for students at no cost. The pilot program will run through the fall of 2026.

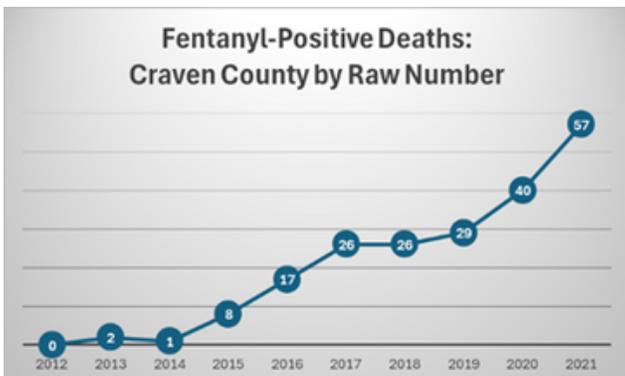
NEW INITIATIVE



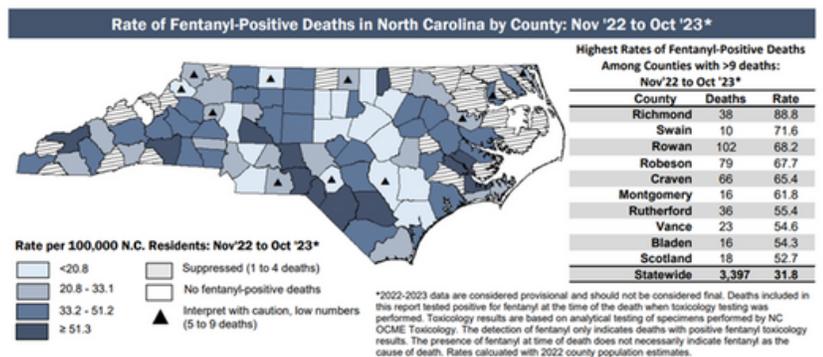
Craven County Government established the Craven County Opioid Epidemic Response department. The Opioid Epidemic Response was established to reduce opioid-related overdoses and deaths in Craven County through prevention, collaboration, harm reduction, treatment, short-term and long-term recovery, and recovery support services. In addition to the newly formed department, Craven County Commissioners continue to fund initiatives to address substance misuse and overdose prevention. Those initiatives include increasing enforcement through funding the Craven County Sheriff’s Office for additional narcotics investigators, School Resource Officers to provide Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE), a K-9 program, and a Jail Navigator in the Craven County Detention Center to coordinate services designed to reduce recidivism.

EMERGING ISSUES

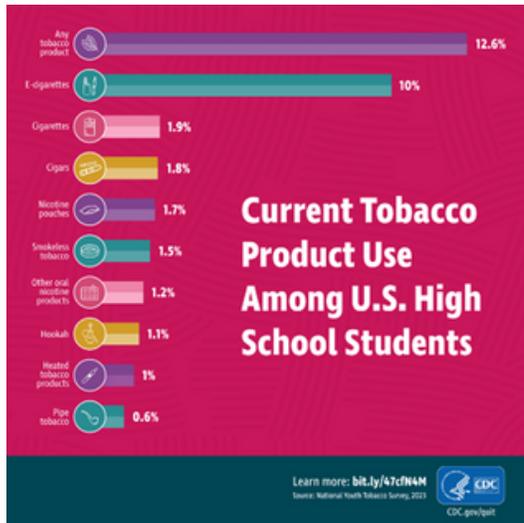
According to the CDC, pharmaceutical fentanyl is a synthetic opioid approved for treating severe pain, typically advanced cancer pain. However, most recent cases of fentanyl-related harm, overdose, and death in the U.S. are linked to illegally made fentanyl. Deaths involving illicitly manufactured fentanyl are on the rise. Nationally, rates of overdose deaths involving synthetic opioids other than methadone, which includes fentanyl and fentanyl analogs, increased over 22% from 2020 to 2021. Fentanyl-positive deaths in Craven County have increased over 100% in the past 5 years. Craven County is currently ranked 5th in the state for fentanyl-positive deaths.



NC Injury Branch, Overdose Data



Youth use of tobacco products in any form is unsafe. E-cigarettes or vape devices are still the most used tobacco product among youth nationally. According to the CDC, in 2023, about 1 out of every 22 middle school students (4.6%) reported that they had used electronic cigarettes in the past 30 days, while 1 of every 10 high school students (10.0%) reported that they had used electronic cigarettes in the past 30 days.



Craven County parents are reporting high school students are now trying nicotine pouches. Nicotine pouches are microfiber pouches with flavored nicotine powder that users dissolve in the mouth without spitting. The CDC reports that in 2023 about 1 of every 100 high school students (1.7%) reported using nicotine pouches in the past 30 days. Any form of nicotine during adolescence can impact learning, attention span, proneness to addiction, and be harmful to adolescent brain development.

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 other agencies. A link to the report will be posted on the Craven County Health Department's website at www.cravencountync.gov.

If you have any questions about the information in this report, please contact:

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