

# STATE OF THE COUNTY HEALTH REPORT

The State of the County Health Report is an update on the Chatham County Community Health Improvement Priorities and it is produced during years where the health department does not do a Community Health Assessment. These updates are from the Chatham County Public Health Department (CCPHD) and the Chatham Health Alliance (CHA).

## Chatham County Public Health Department Leadership Team



- Michael Zelek, Public Health Director
- Anne Lowry, Environmental Health Director
- Zach Deaton, Clinical & Community Health Director
- Dorothy Rawleigh, Health Promotion and Policy Director
- Gary Thomas, Finance Officer
- Danielle White, Administrative and Personnel Officer
- Bianca Sahota, Policy & Quality Improvement Officer
- Sara Green, Strategic Planning and Development Officer

## Chatham Health Alliance Leadership Team



- Julie Wilkerson, Executive Director
- Sara Martin, Social and Community Services Manager
- Michael Zelek, Public Health Representative
- Erick Wolak, Hospital Representative
- Karinda Roebuck, Equity Subcommittee Co-Chair
- Maia Fulton-Black, Equity Subcommittee Co-Chair
- Tara Gregory, HEAL Subcommittee Co-Chair
- Mallory Peterson, HEAL Subcommittee Co-Chair
- Donna Smith, Resilience Subcommittee Co-Chair
- Travis Patterson, Resilience Subcommittee Co-Chair
- Vacant, Access Subcommittee Co-Chair

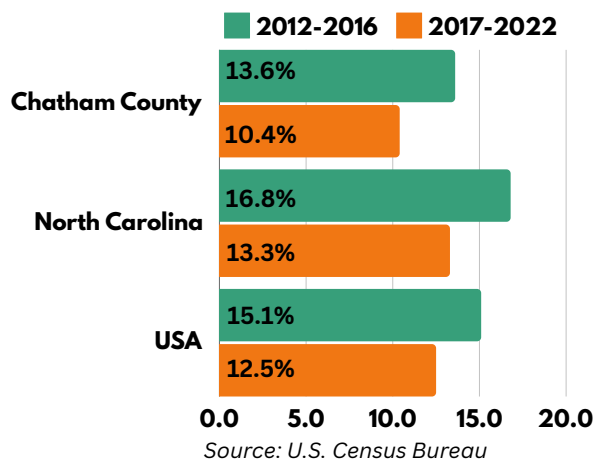
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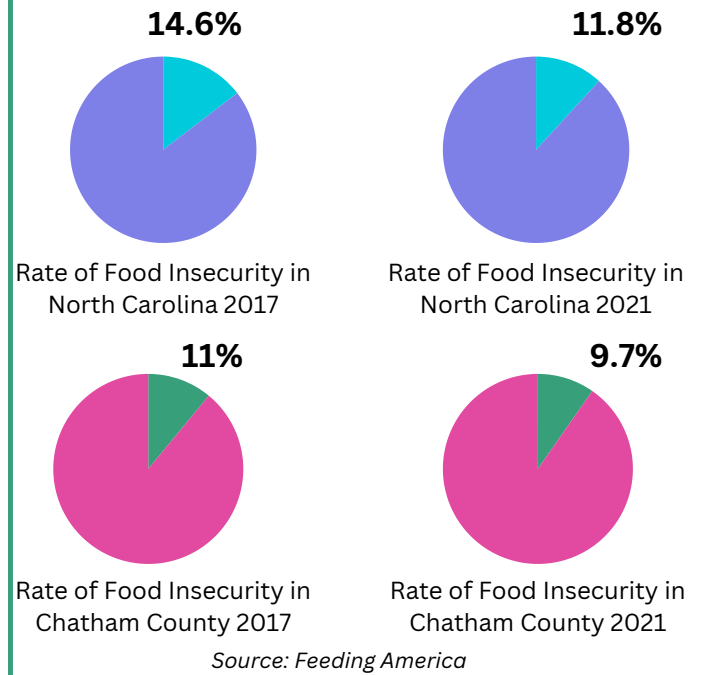
# PRIORITY AREAS DATA

Every three years the Chatham Health Alliance chooses three Community Health Impact Priorities for its subcommittees to focus on based on Chatham County Community Health Assessment. In 2021, the three priorities were: Access to Comprehensive Health Care, Economic Resilience (“Poverty,”) and Healthy Eating, Active Living (“Obesity.”). In addition, the Alliance identified three strategic priorities within these overarching priorities: Mental Health & Substance Use, Transportation, and Employment. Below are key data points from these areas and others impacting Chatham County residents and their health.

## Percent of Residents in Poverty

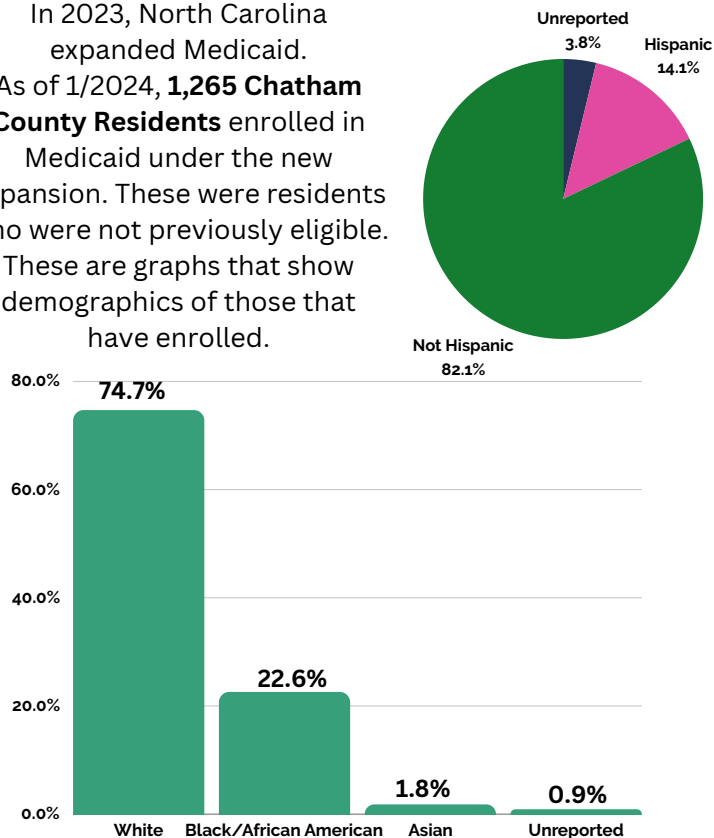


## Residents Experiencing Food Insecurity

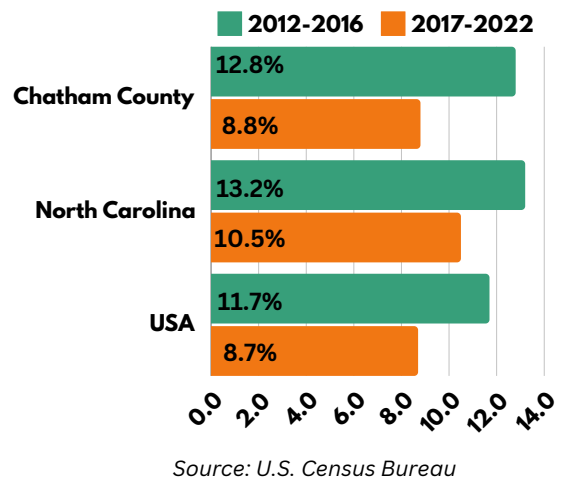


## Medicaid Expansion in North Carolina

In 2023, North Carolina expanded Medicaid. As of 1/2024, **1,265 Chatham County Residents** enrolled in Medicaid under the new expansion. These were residents who were not previously eligible. These are graphs that show demographics of those that have enrolled.



## Percent of Residents without Health Insurance (prior to NC Medicaid Expansion)



# PRIORITY AREAS DATA

## Leading Causes of Death in Chatham County

2012-2016 Death Rate per 100,000 Population

2017-2021 Death Rate per 100,000 Population

Rank	Cause	Rate	Rank	Cause	Rate
1	Cancer	220.1	1	Cancer	227.2
2	Diseases of the Heart	179.7	2	Diseases of the Heart	193.1
3	Cerebro-vascular diseases	63.1	3	Cerebro-vascular diseases	64.3
4	Chronic lower respiratory disease	38.4	4	Other Unintentional Injuries*	51.7
5	Alzheimer's Disease	33.4	5	Alzheimer's Disease	47.1

\*e.g. drowning, falls, etc.

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics

## Chatham County Population

2020  
76,270



2022  
79,864

### Population, by Race/Ethnicity, 2022

White, non-Hispanic/Latino	72.3%
Black/African American	11.7%
Hispanic/Latino	12.1%
All other	3.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Infant Mortality, 2017-2021 Deaths per 1,000 live births

North Carolina	6.9
Chatham County	7.9
White, non-Hispanic/Latino	6.5
Black/African American	18.8*
Hispanic/Latino	8.2*

\*Technical Note: Rates based on small numbers (fewer than 10 deaths) are unstable & should be interpreted with caution.

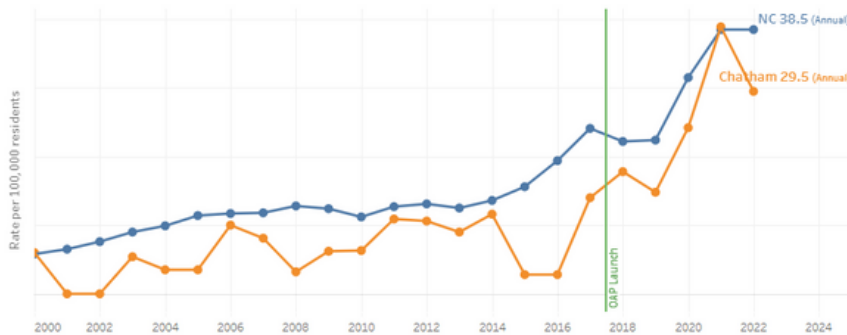
Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics

## Chatham County Overdose Deaths, 2000-2022

### Deaths in Chatham

The rate of overdose deaths among residents of Chatham in 2022 (Annual) was **29.5**.

(Rate per 100,000 residents. Number of deaths: 22)



Source: NC DHHS

### Average Weekly Wages

	2019	2022
North Carolina	\$1007	\$1216
Chatham County	\$922	\$1089

Source: NC Department of Commerce

# CHATHAM COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT UPDATES

## Environmental Health Division

- On-Site Wastewater Section (OSWW) provided the first Annual Septic Contractors, Inspectors, and Operator Workshop since the pandemic. The workshop was an all-day event that has been hosted by OSWW Staff in various forms since 2001. This year the workshop agenda included installing septic systems on a slope, new legislative updates, and an attendee favorite, State Trooper Skinner from NC Highway Patrol. The 50 contractors were all pleased with the class with one contractor commenting "this was the best class [they] have ever attended"!!
- Environmental Health (EH) participated in a year long project with North Carolina Office of Recovery and Resiliency and Triangle J Council of Governments to evaluate the top concerns related to climate in the region and to develop the Climate Resilience Project Portfolio for the Triangle J Region which details projects that are ready to be implemented as funding becomes available. Chatham County was tasked with development of a Heat Wave Response Toolkit. In FY 23 EH developed external partnerships with the NC Climate Office and NCORR as well as internal partnerships with Emergency Management, Chatham County Public Libraries, and Parks and Rec to include all perspectives in the plan
- The Food, Lodging, and Institution (FLI) Section hosted the Annual Chatham-Lee Food Safety Summit. This class is a Chatham County and Lee County partnership and provides updates about food safety to food establishment owners/operators/ workers. This class is also included as a good practice in the FDA Retail Food Program Standards.



## Clinical and Community Health Services Division

- In partnership with UNC Health Chatham's Maternity Care Center, Alicia Doran and Nicole Hanner began childbirth classes in the fall. These were the first Childbirth classes in Chatham since the 90's!
- The division continues efforts to prevent and manage chronic disease in Chatham County. Ann Clark and Laura Hearn offer individual and group-based clinical nutrition services, such as Medical Nutrition Therapy, Diabetes Self-Management Education, and Diabetes Prevention Programming. And through supportive and collaborative partnerships with community partners, including, but not limited to: Center for Active Living, Chatham Libraries, Chatham County Sheriff's Office, Emergency Communications, and local churches, nutrition and wellness programming has been extended beyond the department's clinic walls.



## Health Promotion and Policy Division

A full-time Opioid Overdose Prevention Coordinator joined the Health Promotion and Policy Division to coordinate the Sheriff's Prevention Partnership on Controlled Substances. This position is funded with Opioid Settlement funds received by the County. The Partnership includes agencies across Chatham and includes representation from public health services, first responders, law enforcement, recovery and treatment, public schools, and social services. The collaborative is organized into four subcommittees: Prevention, Harm Reduction, Treatment Access, and Recovery. These subcommittees are responsible for the hands-on planning and implementation of interventions like naloxone education and distribution, early intervention for youth at risk for substance use, evidence-based addiction treatment, and support for people in recovery and their families. In 2023, four CCPHD staff completed a Community Education Trainer program that enables them to offer trainings on substance use disorder, opioid overdose and prevention, and naloxone administration for organizations, agencies, and community members. CCPHD held its first Naloxone Administration training where staff across the department received information on the basics of harm reduction, including when and how to administer naloxone, a life-saving emergency medication for persons experiencing an opioid overdose. This partnership building and training has laid the foundation for educating more agencies and community members in Chatham about the opioid overdose crisis and what strategies we can implement in Chatham to save lives.





## Access to Comprehensive Health Services

1. Initial contact made to providers in Chatham County about Social Determinant of Health Screenings
2. HIV testing held at Community Resource Hub events throughout 2023 provided by Alliance of AIDS Services
3. Monarch now provides 24/7 365 Mobile Mental Health Crisis Services in Chatham and is operating a behavioral health outpatient clinic in Pittsboro that opened in November 2023.

## Economic Stability and Resilience

1. A Living Wage Program exploratory committee has been formed to look into the feasibility of a Chatham County Living Wage Program
2. A collaboration of agencies partnering with Chatham County Schools and Central Carolina Community College on the College and Career Promise Program and the Chatham Promise Program

## Health Eating and Active Living

1. Pittsboro becomes the first Chatham County Farmer's Market to accept SNAP/EBT
2. Chatham MOVES Physical Activity trailer gets outfitted, launch date anticipated for Spring 2024

## Alliance Standing Subcommittee: Equity

1. Serving as the equity advisory board for the Community Assessment
2. Supported the development of the Community Action Team, continues to support the CAT through capacity and planning

## 2024 Community Assessment

The Community Assessment is a collaboration between the Chatham Health Alliance, Chatham County Public Health Department, Chatham Hospital, and community members and organizations. The Community Assessment gathers data, analyzes the data, and prioritizes focus areas using that data. The results are used to identify areas for funding and resources, to create community programs, projects, and policies, and is a place for community members to share their experiences and opinions.

For more information and to find out ways to get involved, visit:  
<https://www.chathamhealthalliancenc.org/community-assessment>

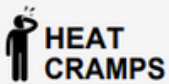


### THE ISSUE

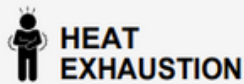
Extreme Heat: summertime temperatures that are much hotter and/or humid than average (CDC,2023). During the 2023 season, there were 3,925 emergency department visits for heat-related illness in North Carolina, a 5% increase from 2022 (3,739 visits) and 27% increase from 2020 (3,099 visits) (<https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/oeec/climate/heat.html>).

Future: North Carolina is expected to experience warmer temperatures and more extreme heat events (Heat Action Plan, 2024). This will increase the risk for heat related illnesses, especially for vulnerable groups.

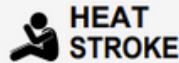
### HEAT RELATED ILLNESSES



**HEAT CRAMPS**  
Painful muscle cramps in the abdomen (belly), arms, or legs following strenuous activity and typically caused by a loss of fluids and electrolytes from excessive sweating. Additional symptoms include moist and cool skin, and normal or slightly raised pulse.



**HEAT EXHAUSTION**  
A more severe heat illness whose symptoms can include: increased thirst, body cramps, fainting, rapid pulse, nausea and/or vomiting, heavy sweating, cool/clammy skin, headache, and a raised body temperature (but less than 104°F).



**HEAT STROKE**  
The body cannot regulate its own temperature and medical care is needed. Symptoms include high fever, cessation of sweating, hot dry skin, severe headache, and, in severe cases, collapse, and convulsions or coma.

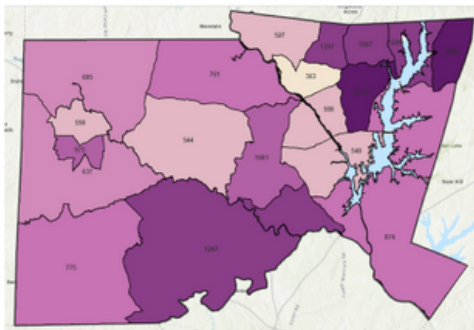
Source: Heat Action Plan, 2024

### Who is Vulnerable?

Groups: Infants and Children, Older Adults 65+, Pregnant People, Athletes and Outdoor Workers, those with Chronic Conditions, Persons taking Certain Medications, Low income folks (Heat Action Plan, 2024)

## CHATHAM COUNTY

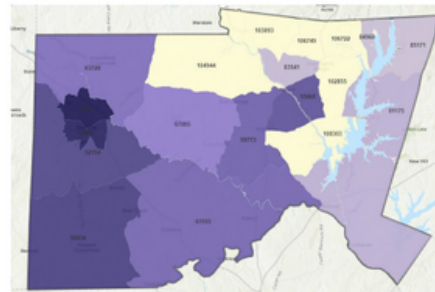
Persons 65 Years or Older across Chatham County



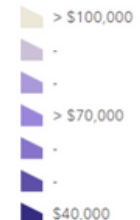
Population 65 years and over



Median Incomes across Chatham County



2022 Median Household Income (Esri)



Source: Heat Action Plan, 2024

As shown on the maps above, the northeast section of Chatham County has the highest proportion of residents aged 65 years or older, while median incomes on the west side of Chatham County are lower than in other parts of the county. Both of these groups are more vulnerable to extreme heat.



Chatham County  
Heat Action Plan

### THE PLAN

Working with partners, the health department has written a Health Action Plan to address this issue. It includes plans for seasonal readiness and interventions for excessive heat watches and warnings, including identifying respite centers in the county. [You can find it here.](#)