



Nash County
North Carolina



State of the County Health Report 2020

Nash County Health Department

Locations:

214 South Barnes Street
Nashville, NC 27856
252-459-9819

322 South Franklin Street
Rocky Mount, NC 27804
252-446-0027

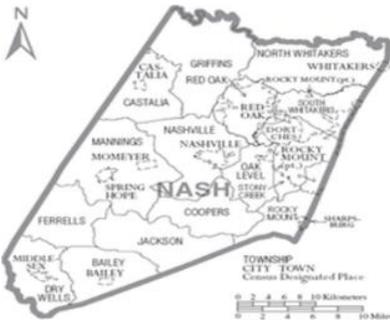
William W. Hill, Jr., MPH
Health and Human Services Director



TOP THREE HEALTH PRIORTIES

- ❖ Exercise, Nutrition & Weight
- ❖ Heart Disease & Stroke
- ❖ Respiratory Disease

Overview



Nash County was formed in 1777 from the western part of Edgecombe County, NC. The county was named for General Francis Nash (1742-1777), of Hillsborough. General Nash was a soldier who was mortally wounded while fighting under General George Washington at Germantown during the American Revolution. Nash County is located in the northeast section of the state, bounded by Edgecombe, Wilson, Johnston, Franklin and Halifax Counties. The county encompasses a total of 542.71 square miles in area (land and water) with 540.33 square miles in land area. Most of the county is rural in population with the exception of the City of Rocky Mount, which is located in both Nash and Edgecombe counties. The county has eleven municipalities within five quadrants that include: (1) County Seat (Nashville); (2) Eastern Area (Rocky Mount and Sharpburg); (3) Northern Area (Dortches, Castalia, Red Oak and Whitakers); (4) Southern Area (Middlesex and Bailey); and (5) Western Area (Momeyer and Spring Hope).

Nash County Human Services Board

Nash County Health Department is governed by the consolidated human service board, which is comprised of twenty appointed members.

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Overview	2
Demographics and Profile Data	3
Health Profile	4
Leading Causes of Death	5
Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)	6
Health Priorities	7-8
New Initiatives	9-10
Emerging Issues	11
References	12

Board Members

Dr. Mike Johnson, O.D.
Board Chairman

Dr. Doris K. Thorne, DDS
Dr. Chandra Meachem Tucker, DVM

Dr. Mark Abel, MD
Dr. Tony Coats, Psy.D.

Mickey League, R.Ph
Sarah Thurman, RN

Mike Stocks

Dan Cone

Dan Davis

Danny Tyson

Bert Daniel

Jeannette Pittman

Dorothy Battle

Agnes Moore

Yvonne Moore

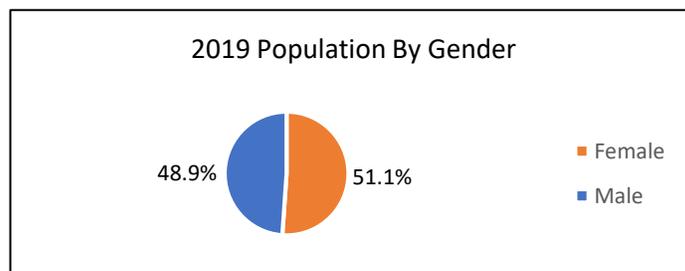
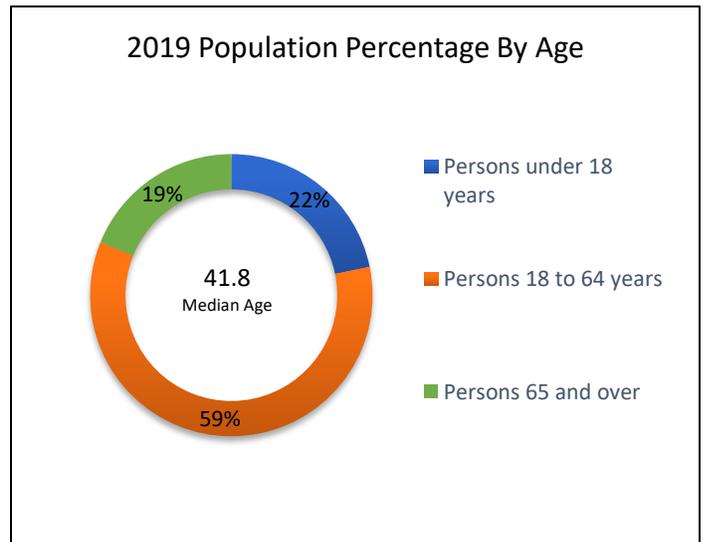
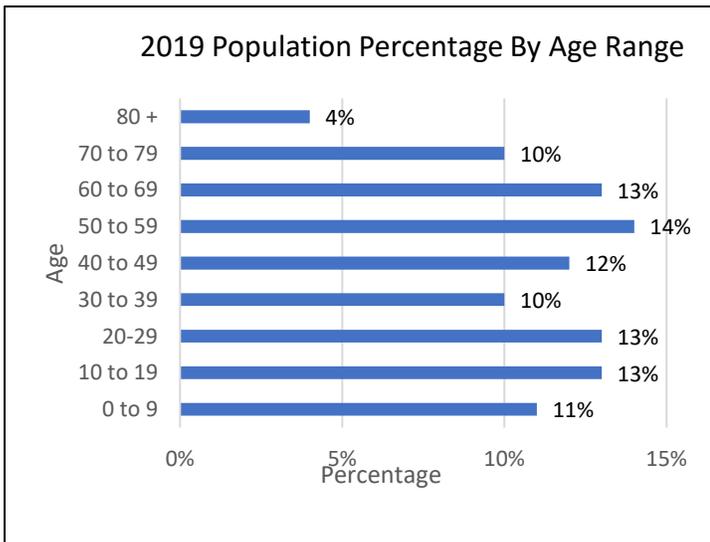
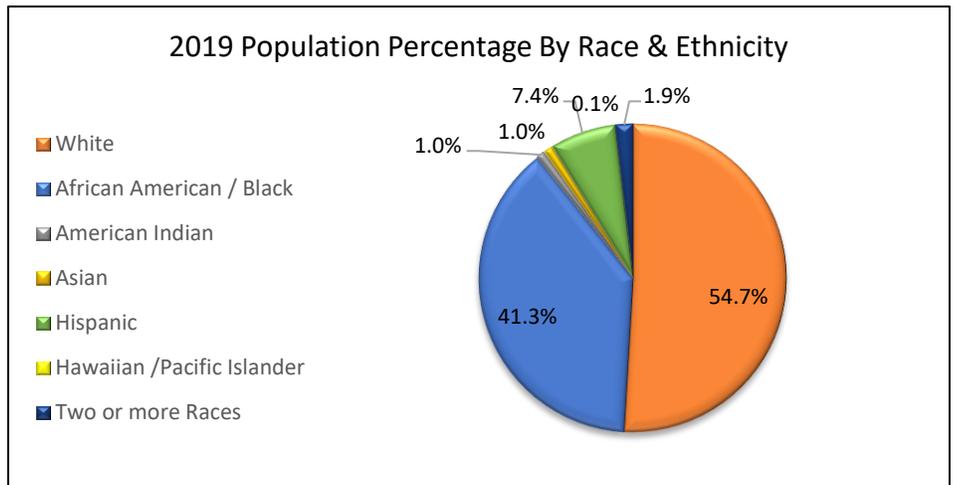
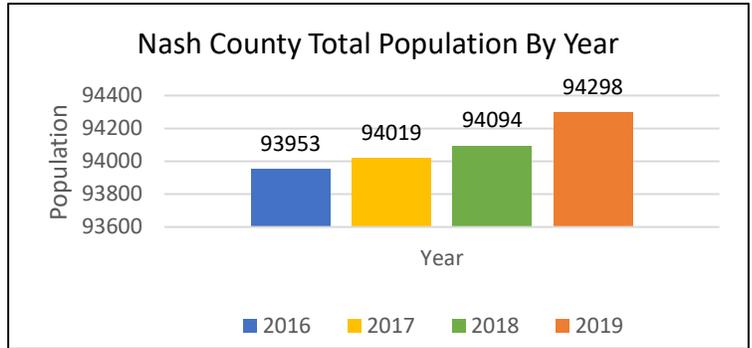
** four vacant positions**

The State of the County Health Report is a supplementary annual report to the Nash County 2019 Community Health Assessment. It highlights the current data of the county's leading health concerns and well-being of Nash County residents. The report includes current demographics, leading causes of death, the County's top three health priorities and efforts to address these issues. It provides an update on the health of Nash County residents to serve as a resource for grant writing, local policies, budgets, program planning and implementation.

Demographics

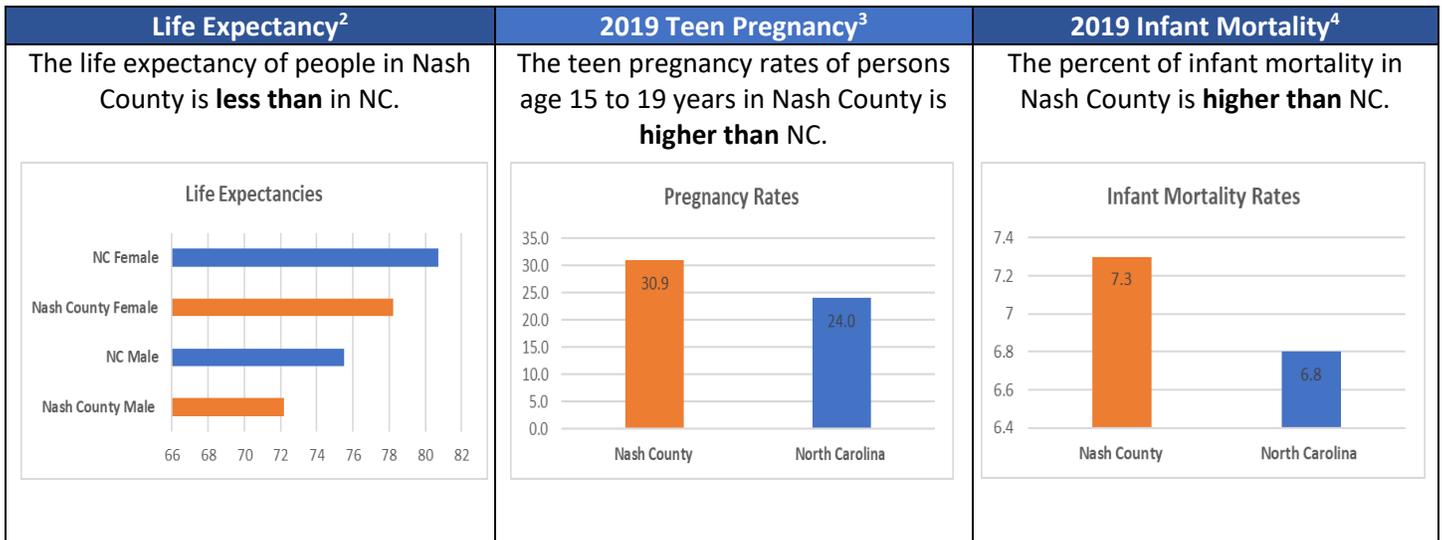
According to the 2019 US Census estimates, Nash County has a population of 94,298, a slight increase from the prior three years (2016 through 2019).

Females (51.1%) of all race groups and Whites (54.7%) represented majority of the population. The median age was 41.8 years and there is a growing aging population with the largest age bracket 50 to 59 years old.



Source:
US Census Bureau¹

Health Profile Data



Improving life expectancy from birth is a selected priority for Nash County. There are significant differences among African American and White populations for infant mortality and teen pregnancy.

2019 Infant Mortality and Pregnancy Data⁴

	White	African American
Infant Mortality Rate	4.9	11.3
Teen Pregnancy Rate (age 15-19)	15.0	34.4

African American infant mortality rates were two times higher than White (11.3 to 4.9), respectively. Also, disparity among African American teen pregnancy rates was two times higher than White, 34.4 to 15.0. The minority population is more likely to be uninsured and have lower levels of access to prenatal care, especially for high-risk pregnancies that contribute to health inequalities.

Persons in Poverty¹

Nash County	16.4%
North Carolina	13.6%

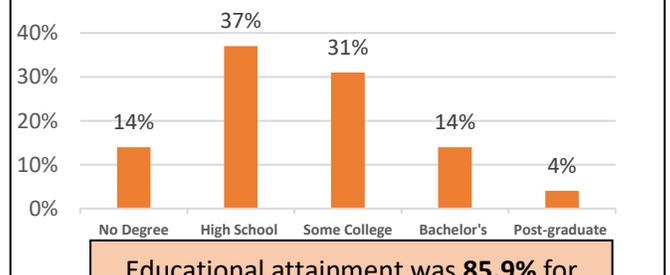
Unemployment Rate⁵

	2019	2020
Nash County	4.7	8.4
North Carolina	3.7	6.2

Median Household Income¹

Nash County	\$49,537
North Carolina	\$54,602

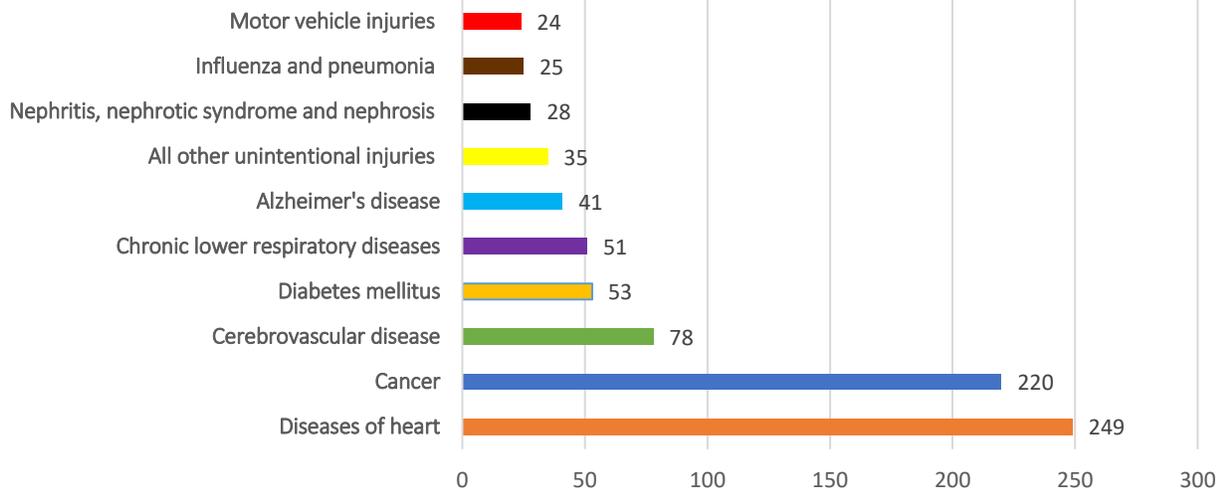
2019 Educational Attainment⁶



Educational attainment was **85.9%** for High School graduate and higher.

Leading Causes of Death

2019 Age-Adjusted Leading Causes of Death in Nash County⁷



In Nash County, heart disease is the leading cause of death followed by cancer among all races.

2019 Leading Causes of Death by Race⁸

Ranking	White	Minorities
1	Diseases of heart	Cancer
2	Cancer	Disease of heart
3	Cerebrovascular disease	Diabetes mellitus
4	Chronic lower respiratory disease	Cerebrovascular disease
5	Alzheimer's disease	All other unintended injuries
6	Diabetes mellitus	Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis
7	All other unintentional injuries	Chronic lower respiratory diseases
8	Motor vehicle injuries	Influenza and pneumonia
9	Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis	Alzheimer's disease
10	Influenza and pneumonia	Assault (homicide)

2019 Top 3 Leading Causes of Death by Age Group⁹

Ages 0-19	Ages 20-39	Ages 40-64	Ages 65 and older
Certain conditions originating in the perinatal period	Motor vehicle injuries	Cancer	Diseases of heart
Motor vehicle injuries	Intentional self-harm (suicide)	Diseases of heart	Cancer
All other unintentional injuries	Assault (homicide)	All other unintentional injuries	Cerebrovascular diseases

Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)

Social determinants of health (SDOH) are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.

Social determinants of health (SDOH) have a major impact on people's health, well-being, and quality of life.

Examples of SDOH include:

- Safe housing, transportation, and neighborhoods
- Racism, discrimination, and violence
- Education, job opportunities, and income
- Access to nutritious foods and activity opportunities
- Polluted air and water
- Language and literacy skills



SDOH also contributes to widening health disparities and inequities. People who don't have access to grocery stores with healthy foods are less likely to have good nutrition. It raises the risk of health conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and obesity — and even lowers life expectancy relative to people who do have access to healthy foods. The COVID-19 rates among the minority population indicated the need for addressing disparities of low-income communities and marginalized populations. Through program planning, Nash County Health Department is collaborating with county officials and policy-makers to align policies and interventions to improve a healthier built environment. This work helps reduce health disparities and improve health and well-being for all people. Nash County Health Department participates in a myriad of programs and workgroups to address the underlying causes that contribute to SDOH. Workgroups include:

- Twin Counties Partnership for Healthier Communities
- Twin Counties Sugar Run
- Nash and Edgecombe Council of Community Services (CCS)
- Edgecombe – Nash Local Action Network (LAN)
- Nash Edgecombe Economic Development Board (NEED)
- Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC)
- Nash County Child Fatality Task Force
- Region 8 Network for HIV Prevention and Care
- Domestic Violence Task Force
- Early Childhood Community Partners
- Healthy Kids Collaborative
- Ready Schools Committee
- Nash County Health Department Child Health Community Advisory Group
- Nurse Family Partnership Community Advisory Board
- Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R)
- Nash County Local Emergency Preparedness Committee
- Project GRACE
- School Health Advisory Committee
- NCCare360
- NEW Council Meeting

Health Priorities

Selected Priority Areas

During the 2019 Community Health Assessment process, Nash County Health Department, Nash UNC Health Care System and community partners selected county-specific priorities. The three chosen priorities include¹⁰:

- Exercise, Nutrition and Weight
- Heart Disease and Stroke
- Respiratory Disease

These priorities were selected based on: 1) the greatest needs in Nash County, and 2) the ability to impact those needs with resources available to the health organizations involved in this assessment. Secondary data was gathered from the NC State Center for Health Statistics to identify two of the three health priorities for Heart Disease and Stroke as well as Respiratory Diseases. The third priority (exercise, nutrition & weight) was selected based on citizens' feedback on diabetes risk factors and the need for improving wellness and lifestyle behaviors.

Priority 1: Exercise, Nutrition and Weight



Overweight and obesity pose significant health concerns for both children and adults. Both overweight and obesity are generally defined by BMI ranges that are associated with an increased likelihood of certain diseases and other health problems. (Table 1: shows how BMI is used to

Body Mass Index (BMI)	Weight Status
Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5 to 24.9	Healthy weight
25.0 to 29.9	Overweight
30.0 or higher	Obese

classify weight status for adults¹¹). According to the 2019 Community Health Assessment, 47% of respondents reported being told by a health professional that they were overweight or obese. Also, 26% of respondents said they do not engage in any form of physical activity during the week that lasts at least 30 minutes. Among respondents that exercise, 59% reported exercising or engaging in physical activity at home, while 43% do so at a YMCA, followed by a park (25%) and worksite (17%). Many residents choose to visit fast-food restaurants because of economic challenges and convenience to their homes compared to a healthier alternative. These behaviors can increase the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, certain cancers, and stroke. The 2019 County Health Rankings and Roadmaps data reported Nash County's overweight percent was 37%, which was higher than the state's average of 30%. This data indicated a need to improve access to healthier foods and physical activity to assist citizens in making personal lifestyle changes.

Progress:

- Monthly community collaboration meetings with Twin County Partnership establish and promote nutrition and physical activity programs for children and adults in Nash and Edgecombe counties.
- Established partnership with the Harrison YMCA to offer a 6-session virtual diabetes program two times per year with over 50 participants. Two health educators trained in Prevent Type-2 Diabetes National Diabetes Program lead the classes.
- Nash County Senior Services offered weekly virtual physical activity classes.
- Nash County Parks and Recreation offered various outdoor sports and opened "The Nash County Miracle Park at Coopers," located in the Elm City area.

Health Priorities continue...

Priority 2: Heart Disease and Stroke



Heart disease is the leading cause of death in Nash County. Health officials believe that people in Nash County are at their best when they do activities daily such as working, playing inside/outside, and exercising. In return, it helps individuals maintain a healthy lifestyle and prevent heart disease and stroke. According to the 2019 Community Health Assessment, 39% of primary data respondents reported being told by a health professional that they had high blood pressure, and 35% had high cholesterol. When asked about challenges in accessing health services for themselves or a family member, 12% indicated they had issues in the past 12 months. In addition, respondents rated eating well, going to the doctor for annual checkups and screenings, and managing weight reduce their risk for heart disease and stroke.

Progress:

- Ongoing collaboration with Project GRACE led by UNC-Chapel Hill SHEPS Center to assist in planning efforts of “Heart Matters”, a research-based initiative targeting African Americans to reduce heart disease and stroke.
- Harrison Family YMCA offered high blood pressure prevention classes and blood pressure screenings.
- Down East Partnership conducted virtual Faithful Families programs at local faith organizations.
- Nash County Parks and Recreation increased opportunities for exercise in the community by promoting local community parks.
- Nash County Health Department promoted local farmer markets and increased awareness of the importance of fresh fruits and vegetables via social media and outreach.
- Social Workers at the health department promoted Health Insurance Market Place during counseling and referral sessions to increase the number of residents with health insurance.

Priority 3: Respiratory Disease



Respiratory disease is among the ten leading health concerns in Nash County. Individual behaviors such as tobacco use or e-cigarettes can increase a person's risk for respiratory illnesses and have surpassed conventional cigarettes. Also, exposure to influenza, pneumonia and COVID-19 can put individuals at risk of major health complications. In 2020, the promotion of the state-wide initiative on Know Your 3 Ws (*Wear, Wait, Wash*) helped reduce the transmission of respiratory illnesses such as influenza, pneumonia, and COVID-19 for Nash County residents.

Progress:

- Promote the 1-800 Quitline campaign through area radio stations on the danger of tobacco use and e-cigarettes.
- Nursing staff conducted tobacco prevention risk assessment during family planning and maternity appointments to increase the number of individuals in smoking cessations programs.
- Distributed health education literature to barbershops, beauty salons, and substance abuse centers on dangers of tobacco use and e-cigarettes.
- Implemented a 12-month social media campaign on COVID-19 prevention and the 3 Ws.
- Implemented a 12-month billboard campaign on COVID-19 prevention and the 3 Ws.
- Established partnerships with various health organizations, schools, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations to assist in COVID-19 prevention and promotion of testing services.

New Initiatives



➤ Child Car Seat Safety Program

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among children ages 2 to 14 years old. This program aims to educate parents on car seat safety and proper usage to reduce the rates of child injuries and child fatalities. The overall goal is to work with parents to ensure every child is properly secured and safe while traveling.

Progress: Nash County Health Department has two trained staff that completed and received Child Passenger Safety Certification. They are partnering with Nashville Fire Department and Rocky Mount Fire Department to offer car seat safety checks. The program teaches parents and caregivers how to properly install child safety seats into their vehicles. Over 50 car seats were installed by Nash County Health Department staff and area fire departments.

➤ Result Based Accountability (RBA)



RBA framework is an evidence-based, action-oriented, and data-informed approach. RBA helps individuals and agencies describe the contribution of their work to the community's health and well-being. The RBA goal is to help individuals and agencies to move from talk to action.

Progress: In 2020, three Nash County Health Department staff attended a RBA training to learn how to implement the process. The health department plans to adopt the RBA framework to strengthen the Community Health Needs Assessment process and the Community Health Improvement Plan.

➤ Diabetes Awareness Program



Overweight and obesity present significant health concerns for both adults and children. Excess weight increases an individual's risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes. Individuals who have been told they were pre-diabetic should focus on their weight and proper nutrition. The program goal is to educate individuals about healthy eating and increasing physical activity to decrease diabetes rates.

Progress: Nash County Health Department has partnered with the Harrison YMCA to implement a Diabetes Awareness program to pre-diabetics and individuals diagnosed with diabetes. The health department has two Certified Lifestyle coaches on staff. The Lifestyle Coaches facilitate the sessions on various topics along with guest speakers. Monthly virtual classes were held on the 2nd Mondays and over 50 participants attended.

➤ "Be Smart" Family Planning Medicaid Program



Family Planning services support people's decisions about when, or if, they would like to have children by offering education, counseling and birth control methods. The "Be Smart" Family Planning Medicaid program is a health insurance for family planning/reproductive health and contraceptive services for eligible men and women of all ages. The program's goal is to reduce unplanned pregnancies and improve the well-being of our citizens.

Progress: Nash County Health Department has two representatives on the NC "Be Smart" strategic plan. Representatives from the health department promoted the "Be Smart" program to various nonprofit health organizations and social services clients. They also assisted in establishing a Train the Trainer toolkit and serving on the Male Outreach Team.

New Initiatives continue...



➤ **Baby Love Plus Program – Expanded Clinical Support Services**

NC Department of Health and Human Services awarded Nash County Health Department supplemental funds of \$40,000 to hire a part-time mid-level medical provider trained in obstetric care to provide prenatal and well-women care inclusive of family planning services for postpartum women. The Baby Love Plus Program currently provides outreach, case management/care coordination, preconception, prenatal, and interconception health education and support to women and infants who reside in Nash County. With the expanded clinical support services, a provider will enroll more program participants.

Progress: Nash County Health Department hired a part-time nurse practitioner in mid-October 2020 and immediately began providing expanded clinical support to the Baby Love Plus Program.

➤ **Certified Rabies Vaccinator (CRV) Program**



For the past four years, Nash County has maintained a low number of new rabies cases. In 2019, only one new case was reported in the county. The Nash County Animal Shelter is continuing to make strives to prevent and control new cases of rabies. Nash County Animal Shelter has implemented a Certified Rabies Vaccinator Program to administrator a one-year rabies vaccine to dogs, cats, and ferrets. North Carolina law requires rabies vaccination of owned domestic dogs, cats, and ferrets by four months of age. The rabies vaccine can only be administered by a veterinarian, registered veterinary technician under the direct supervision of a veterinarian, or certified rabies vaccinator. Nash County Animal Shelter is now credentialed to administer the rabies vaccine to all dogs, cats and ferrets within fourteen days of being housed at the shelter.

Progress: Nash County trained three animal control officers as CRV. In 2020, the Animal Shelter administered over 500 vaccinations to dogs and cats during a community vaccination clinic and in-house shelter animals.



Nash County, NC

Emerging Issues

Nash County is ranked 76th overall in health outcomes and health behaviors out of 100 counties in North Carolina by the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps¹². The county ranking is among the least healthy counties in the 0% to 25% percentile compared to other counties. Various situations impact the health and well-being of our community, such as low social and economic factors, lack of access to care, lack of health insurance, and poor health behaviors. Nash County continues to address the top three priorities and focus on emerging health issues such as:

➤ **Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

COVID-19 is an outbreak of a respiratory disease caused by a novel coronavirus that was first detected in China and has been detected in various places, including the United States. It is an infectious disease that causes respiratory illness (like the flu) with symptoms such as a cough, fever and in more severe cases, difficulty breathing. The coronavirus pandemic had a significant impact on the well-being of our community. It shifted the way our county addressed the 2019 Community Health Assessment priorities. Some programs expanded while others stopped and there were various new initiatives established in response to the virus. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted Nash County in various ways, especially the economy. With businesses closing, thousands of individuals were affected by job reduction and loss, increasing the unemployment rate from 4.7 to 8.4 in 2020. The impact of COVID-19 caused the increase request for assistance in housing and shelter (36.5%), utilities (23.1%), and food (8.6%) according to NC211 count on economic impact¹³.



Nash County confirmed its first case of COVID-19 in March 2020. The health department and various community partners hosted approximately nine COVID-19 testing sites throughout the county. A total of ten staff were designated as contract tracers to investigate and refer potential patients for testing to slow the spread of the virus. As of December 31, 2020, a total of 6,073 confirmed positive cases and 124 deaths were reported. Also, the health department collaborated with Nash County Emergency Services and Nash UNC Health Care System to develop a vaccination rollout plan in mid-December. Various frontline healthcare workers with Nash UNC Health Care System, Nash County Emergency Services, and Nash County Health Department were the first to start receiving the vaccine by the end of December 2020. Lastly, health officials begin establishing plans to offer community COVID-19 vaccination sites starting January 7, 2021 to prevent and control new coronavirus cases.

➤ **Youth Tobacco and E-Cigarette Use**

Tobacco and e-cigarette product use among youth is steadily increasing. Data shows that e-cigarettes are commonly used among today's youth. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 1 in 4 high school students and 1 in 14 middle school students in 2018 had used a tobacco product in the past 30 days. Many e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive. In 2020, multiple media campaigns were implemented in Nash County on tobacco prevention and the danger of tobacco use. Nash County is continuing to promote Quitline NC referrals within our clinics and receive updated training in You Quit, Two Quit to incorporate evidence-based NC Quitline referrals for patients who want to quit.

1-800-QUIT-NOW
1-800-784-8669

**North Carolina
Tobacco Use Quitline**

It's Free & It Works.
You Can Quit. We Can Help!



References

1. Bureau. U.S. (2019). Quick Facts. Nash County, North Carolina. United States. Retrieved from: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/nashcountynorthcarolina/PST045219>
2. North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics. (2019). Life Expectancies 2017-2019 Life Expectancies by Age, Race and Sex. Retrieved from: <https://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/data/lifexpectancy/2017-2019/Nash%20County%202017-2019%20Life%20Expectancies.html>
3. North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics. (2019). Teen Pregnancy 2019 NC Residents Pregnancy Rates: Female Age 15-19 by Race/Ethnicity. Retrieved from: <https://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/data/vital/pregnancies/2019/preg1519.pdf>
4. North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics. (2019). 2019 North Carolina Infant Mortality Report. Retrieved from: <https://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/data/vital/ims/2019/2019rpt.html>
5. North Carolina Department of Commerce. (2020). Unemployment Data. Retrieved from: <https://www.nccommerce.com/news/press-releases/north-carolina%E2%80%99s-december-employment-figures-released-0#:~:text=The%20state's%20seasonally%20adjusted%20December,unchanged%20from%20a%20year%20ago.>
6. Census Report. (2019). Census Report Nash County, NC. Retrieved from: <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/04000US37-north-carolina/>
7. North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics. (2019). Leading Causes of Death in Nash County. Retrieved from: <https://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/interactive/query/lcd/lcd.cfm>
8. North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics. (2019). Leading Causes of Death in Nash County by Race. Retrieved from: <https://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/interactive/query/lcd/getleadcauses.cfm>
9. North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics. (2019). Leading Causes of Death in Nash County by Age. Retrieved from: <https://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/interactive/query/lcd/lcd.cfm>
10. Nash County 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment. Retrieved from: <https://nashcountync.gov/DocumentCenter/View/5416/2019-Community-Health-Assessment>
11. Community and Clinic Connections Prevention and Health Branch. NC Division of Public Health. Overweight and Obesity Among Adults Fact Sheet. Retrieved from: https://www.communityclinicalconnections.com/wp-content/themes/cccp/assets/downloads/0619/CCCPHB_FactSheet_Obesity_AdultObesity_FINAL_March2019.pdf
12. County Health Ranking and Roadmap. Nash County, NC. Retrieved from: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/north-carolina/2019/rankings/nash/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>
13. Health Communication Research Laboratory. NC211counts. Nash County, North Carolina. Retrieved from: <https://nc.211counts.org/>

We Need Your Support!

Get Involved with our Community Health Needs Assessment Process and Activities

Community Health is about improving the health and lives of all persons in Nash County. We are always open to new ideas, feedback and assistance from citizens who want to make a healthier Nash County where families can live, play and have a healthy quality of life.

For more information about the Community Health Needs Assessment process, call Nash County Health Department at 252-459-9819.



Electronic copies of this document are located at <https://nashcountync.gov/377/County-Health-Reports>

Updated: May 2021