

# 2021

## *State of the County Health (SOTCH) Report Pender County, North Carolina*

The 2021 State of the County Health (SOTCH) Report presents an update on the current health status of Pender County residents. The SOTCH provides health information that is intended to augment the 2018 Community Health Assessment (CHA) that is conducted every four years and includes a more comprehensive analysis of the overall health status of the county. The main priorities identified from the 2018 Community Health Assessment were:

- 1- Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders**
- 2- Nutrition and Physical Activity**
- 3- Cancer Education and Prevention**

This report demonstrates progress made in the last year as it relates to these health priorities, recent health statistics, new initiatives and emerging issues that may impact the health status of residents in Pender County. The 2018 CHA and previous SOTCH reports may be found at the county libraries, the health department, or online at: <http://health.pendercountync.gov>



**“Building a Healthier Tomorrow...”**

**Pender County Health  
Department**

**803 S. Walker Street  
Burgaw, NC 28425**

**910-259-1230**

# Pender County Snapshot

Population (2019 est.)	63,060	Percent White	75.4%
Est. Percent Change of Population (2010-2020, Census)	15.5%	Percent African American	14.7%
Population Projection 2030	69,689	Percent Hispanic/Latino	7.5%
Population Projection 2040	79,163	Median Household Income (2015-2019)	\$57,240
Percent Female	50.2%	Median Family Income (2019)	\$67,061
Percent Male	49.8%	Per Capita Income (2015-2019)	\$29,266
Percent Under 18 Years Old	22.2%	Population Living Below Poverty	12.3%
Percent Under 5 Years Old	5.7%	Under Age 18 Below Poverty (2019)	22.0%
Percent 65 Years and Older	18.6%	Percent of Population that are Veterans (219)	10.3%
Median Age (2019)	42.7	Average Life Expectancy at Birth (2017-2019)	77.3

(U.S Census Bureau, 2019 Quick Facts; N.C Institute of Medicine)



## Maternal and Child Health

The NC State Center for Health Statistics shows the Pender County birth rate for teens ages 15-19 years old was 22.2 compared to 22.0 for North Carolina (2015-2019). Approximately 12% of pregnant women had less than a high school education while 33% had a college or post-graduate degree. The percentage of women that smoked during their pregnancy was 10.6 compared to a state rate of 8.6%. Eighty-five percent of mothers had chosen to breastfeed at the time of hospital discharge. About 68.5% of women sought prenatal care in the first trimester. Only two percent of pregnant women received no prenatal care prior to delivery. Women receiving early prenatal care have lower rates for poor pregnancy outcomes such as low birth weight and infant death.

A brief look at the health of Pender County children showed that there was a 7.6% five-year infant mortality rate (2015-2019) compared to the state rate of 7.0. The child death rate was 8.2% with 43 child deaths under the age of 17 years during this five-year period.

One of the most important long-term factors that can affect a child’s health and development is poverty. Twenty percent of children less than 18 years of age are living in poverty. In addition, 19.4% of children are living in households that experience food insecurity.

Access to care means timely use of comprehensive, quality health care services that promote and maintain health; prevent and manage diseases; and reduce unnecessary disability and premature death. Health care access is a concern in Pender County, a designated “provider shortage area.” In 2019, there were 4.1 dentists per 10,000 residents compared to the state rate of 5.0 per 10,000 population. The rate for medical providers was much lower: 2.8 primary care providers per 10,000 residents and the state rate was 7.0 per 10,000 people.

## *10 Leading Causes of Death in Pender County, 2015-2019 Age-adjusted Death Rates*

	<b>Cause of Death</b>	<b>Pender County Rate</b>	<b>N.C. Rate</b>
1	Cancer, All Sites	166.1	158.0
2	Heart Disease	157.7	157.3
3	Cerebrovascular Disease	53.5	42.7
4	Other Unintentional Injuries	43.4	39.3
5	Chronic Lower Respiratory	36.0	44.0
6	Alzheimer’s Disease		36.9
7	Motor Vehicle Injuries	24.4	14.7
8	Diabetes	23.9	23.8
9	Suicide	22.9	13.4
10	Nephritis and Renal Diseases	19.8	16.5
	<b>All Causes</b>	<b>807.6</b>	<b>780.0</b>

*(2021 County Health Data Book, N.C. State Center for Health Statistics)*




As noted on page three, the highlighted death rates for Pender County are greater than the state rates for 2015-2019. In addition, the overall death rate for the county exceeds the state rate. Many of these causes of death are preventable. Our prevention efforts face many challenges when trying to promote healthy lifestyles through physical activity, healthy nutrition, injury prevention and avoidance of tobacco and other substances. Progress toward many of the community health improvement activities are found in this document. However, residents must assess their own personal choices and behaviors and how their decisions may negatively impact their health outcomes.

From 2017-2019, the average life expectancy for Pender County residents at birth was 77.3 years of age. Life expectancy for women was 80.3 years compared to 74.4 years for men. Aside from gender, disparities are also found among whites with an average life expectancy of 77.9 years compared to 73.8 years for African Americans.

## *Changes in Data for 2021*

The leading causes of death in Pender County for 2015-2019 compared to 2014-2018 revealed few changes. Deaths due to diabetes have dropped from 7th to 8th position. Unfortunately, unintentional motor vehicle injuries moved to the 7<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death. Concern continues for resident deaths due to other unintentional injuries and suicide.

# Tracking Progress of Pender County Health Priorities

Mental Health & Substance Use Disorders	Progress
<p>Identify available resources for mental health and substance use prevention and increase awareness among Pender County residents.</p> <hr/>  <p><b>1-800-QUIT-NOW</b> 1 - 8 0 0 - 7 8 4 - 8 6 6 9</p> <p><b>Se Habla Español</b> 1-800-Déjelo-Ya</p> <p><b>www.quitlinenc.com</b></p>  <p><b>NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE</b> <b>1-800-273-TALK (8255)</b> suicidepreventionlifeline.org</p> <p>Opioid Overdose: Understanding the Epidemic Pender County Website Page: <a href="http://www.pendercountync.gov/hhs/notices-base/opioid-overdose-understanding-the-epidemic/">http://www.pendercountync.gov/hhs/notices-base/opioid-overdose-understanding-the-epidemic/</a></p>  <p><b>Integrated Family Services</b> PLLC (910)-444-4191 <a href="http://www.integratedfamilyservices.net/">http://www.integratedfamilyservices.net/</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ On-going promotion of Quitline NC via community events, brochures, and social media.</li> <li>✓ On-going multi-disciplinary <i>Substance Use Prevention Partnership</i> meetings and action planning/implementation to target mental health and substance use prevention efforts             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Meetings held virtually due to COVID-19</li> <li>○ Regular assessment of state and local data on unintentional poisoning, drug overdose deaths, opioid prescribing rates, and current interventions</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Continued participation in state and regional activities for the promotion of smoke-free/tobacco-free policies</li> <li>✓ On-going promotion of <i>National Suicide Prevention Lifeline</i> and <i>Crisis Text Line</i></li> <li>✓ Current standing order for Naloxone Kit onsite and staff trained to administer</li> <li>✓ Website and Facebook up-to-date postings on Opioid Epidemic             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fewer postings because focus shifted to updates/awareness of COVID-19 pandemic</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Promotion of county-wide “Drug Take Back Day” events and locations</li> <li>✓ Partnered with Pender County Parks &amp; Rec to provide Medication Safety through Summer Camp Education.</li> <li>✓ Promotion of <i>Integrated Family Services Mobile Crisis</i> team with patients and community</li> <li>✓ On-going referrals to/promotion of Coastal Horizon’s Substance Use Prevention Programs via brochures, flyers, community events, social media, and website</li> <li>✓ Continues to maintain an up-to-date Resource Guide of mental health providers in Pender County for community members</li> </ul>



# Tracking Progress of Pender County Health Priorities



Empowering Youth and Families Program



## Pender County Billboard Designs-Hampstead, NC



- ✓ Monthly Reproductive Life Planning Education Classes at Pender County Department of Social Services that includes the topic of Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome
  - Program resumed virtually in 2021 due to pandemic
- ✓ Partnered with Pender County Cooperative Extension to implement the *Empowering Youth and Families (EYFP)* Program to resident families
  - Training was completed

## Community Outreach/Education



# Tracking Progress of Pender County Health Priorities

## Physical Activity & Nutrition

Increase public awareness and promote opportunities for increasing physical activity and nutrition.



Playground at Pender Memorial Park in Pender County  
Learn about other opportunities by visiting:

<https://penderpr.recdesk.com/Community/Page?pagelid=21114>



Diabetes Self-Management Education Program

Learn more: <http://www.pendercountync.gov/hhs/health-human-services/health-department/diabetes-self-management-education/>



## Progress

- ✓ On-going collaboration with *Pender County Parks and Recreation* to promote activities held at county parks
- ✓ Partnership with *Pender County Public Schools* to promote National Walk to School, Bike to School, and the Safe Routes to School Program events
  - Effort halted due to pandemic
- ✓ Partnered with local Law Enforcement to host the 5th Annual Burgaw Bike Rodeo
- ✓ On-going promotion of physical activity programs, community events, and opportunities across the county, via brochures, local newspapers, social media (Facebook, health department and county websites)
  - Fewer than normal due to pandemic
- ✓ Conduct *Diabetes Self-Management Education (DSME)* classes at the health department
- ✓ Conduct *Matter of Balance (MOB)* classes in the community. Classes focus on falls-prevention, a common injury for older adults.
  - Halted due to pandemic
- ✓ Promotion of various nutritional programs to health care providers and community partners through Lunch and Learn events
  - Fewer due to pandemic
- ✓ Continued health presentations with *after school groups and community groups* to promote MyPlate and importance of physical activity
  - Implemented following CDC guidelines
- ✓ Active participation in regional diabetes awareness campaigns
- ✓ Facebook page posts on events that promote physical activity and good nutrition
  - Fewer than normal due to shift to promote awareness/information about COVID-19
- ✓ Collaboration with *WIC* to promote *World Breastfeeding Day*
- ✓ Promotion of *National Nutrition Month* through bulletin board displays and social media



# Tracking Progress of Pender County Health Priorities

## Cancer Prevention & Education

Identify available resources for cancer screenings and provide the community with educational outreach events/programs to promote awareness.



Pender County Breast & Cervical Cancer Control Program

**To learn more:**

<http://www.pendercountync.gov/hhs/health-human-services/health-department/breast-cervical-cancer-control-program-bcccp/>



## Progress

- ✓ Monthly promotions to increase awareness in the prevention of many types of cancers
  - Fewer events held due to pandemic
- ✓ Educational displays made and set up at all county departments
- ✓ Facebook posts to promote awareness of many types of cancers
  - Fewer postings due to pandemic
- ✓ Billboard designs displayed in the county to promote cancer screening awareness
- ✓ Promotion of the Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program to allow uninsured, low-income women the opportunity for breast and cervical screenings
- ✓ Implementation of the CATCH My Breath program to decrease risk of teens engaging in tobacco and e-cigarette use
  - Halted due to pandemic





# *New Initiatives*

**Substance Use Prevention-** Members of the Pender County Opioid Action Team have resumed regular committee meetings of the Substance Use Prevention Partnership (SUPP). It is comprised of a variety of public agency leaders. Through a coordinated effort, priorities of the partnership are to raise community awareness of substance use and addiction, increase provider knowledge of CDC's recommended policies and procedures for prescribing, decrease substance use/opioid overdoses and deaths and raise awareness of community resources, i.e., diversion programs, therapy, treatment, and linkage to support services. The committee monitors data, assesses resources for county residents and identifies unmet needs. Opioid abuse increased slightly in the past year as did most counties across the state. Much of this increase has been attributed to COVID and the limited options for socialization.

The health department collaborates with the Department of Social Services to offer Reproductive Life Planning Education classes that address Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome for babies born addicted to opioids and other substances. Attempts were made to utilize virtual means for this educational program that did not prove as effective as in-person training. The health department has resumed these classes in person.

**Health and Human Services Facility-** Efforts have begun to design and construct a new health and human services facility. The new building will include the health department and the Department of Social Services.

**2022 Community Health Assessment (CHA)-** The community health assessment is to be conducted every four years and staff is planning for this nine-month process. Staff will be requesting members of the community to consider assisting with this endeavor. As noted earlier, the CHA helps identify important health topics in Pender County and establishes three main priorities to focus on in the coming years.

**Local Health Department Re-Accreditation-** The COVID response led to a pause in statewide reaccreditation efforts. The last re-accreditation for Pender County was in 2016. This requirement resumes for 2022 and staff is working to identify the documentation for the 41 benchmarks comprising of 147 activities. Re-accreditation is scheduled for August 2022. This program allows health departments to assess how well the department is meeting national and state-specific standards for public health practice and to address any gaps in service delivery.

## *Emerging Issues*

**North Carolina Medicaid Transformation-** The North Carolina Medicaid program moved to a managed care system beginning with FY 21/22. Medicaid revenue streams into the health department are posing uncertainties as staff must bill five different health plans for the care provided to patients. The health department has contracted with them to provide services. Staff is learning how to implement new ways of doing business which will include a greater emphasis on the impact of social determinants of health as well as meeting the identified health indicators for the various health plans.

**National Opioid Settlement-** North Carolina has developed strategies for counties to address the opioid epidemic. In order to develop a strong response plan that will benefit Pender County residents, a work group of community stakeholders will be needed to help identify the most effective programs and prevention strategies.

**Aging Public Health Workforce-** A recent North Carolina Public Health Worker survey revealed that a significant portion of local health department employees are over the age of 40. Thirty-two percent of senior leaders and 27% of supervisors and managers plan to retire in the next five years. Nationally, public health is comprised of insufficient numbers of young public health professionals. A strong, well-trained public health workforce is an important part of overall community health.

**Public Health Workforce Initiative-** As part of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), the North Carolina Division of Public Health has distributed funds to ten regions in the state. Pender County is part of the Southeast region. A workforce grant work plan will be developed to focus on public health staff recruitment and hiring; a regional training plan and a regional coordination plan to engage a regional leadership team. A main focus of the initiative will be to identify strategies to strengthen the local public health workforce and response to community health issues.

## *Want to do something? Get involved*

Community members can get involved by participating on the Advisory Board of Health; participating in the upcoming 2022 community assessment; attending meetings, forums, community coalitions and outreach events. Join us in our efforts to help support your family, friends, and neighbors as we work on “Building a Healthier Tomorrow.”