Welcome!

Thanks for your interest in learning about 2021 NC data on child deaths and infant mortality.

Note: 2021 data is the most recently finalized data from the NC State Center for Health Statistics. 2022 data is not expected to be finalized and available until late 2023.
NC Department of Health and Human Services
North Carolina Infant & Child Deaths: 2021 Data Update
Kathleen Jones-Vessey
Division of Public Health
Title V Office
February 27, 2023
Infant Mortality Rates declined 38% since the Child Fatality Task Force & Prevention System were established in 1991

*Infant Deaths per 1,000 Live Births, North Carolina Residents 1991-2021*

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics
Child Death Rates declined 45% since the Child Fatality Task Force & Prevention System were established in 1991

Child Deaths per 100,000 Children Ages 0 to 17, North Carolina Residents 1991-2021

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics
1,360 Child Deaths = 76 classrooms of children* lost in North Carolina in 2021

* Estimated 18 children per class: https://www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/pdf/bysection/chapter_115c/gs_115c-301.pdf
Trends in North Carolina Resident Births
Over the last two decades, North Carolina’s birth rates mirrored national rates, with both declining since 2002.

Live Birth Rates per 1,000 Population, US & NC 2002-2021

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics & CDC/National Center for Health Statistics
Teen birth rates have declined significantly over the last 20 years in both the US & NC (> 65% decrease)
North Carolina’s low birth weight rates have remained higher than the US average throughout the last two decades.

*Percent of Births that are Low Birthweight (< 5 lbs 8 ozs), US & NC 2002-2021*

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics & CDC/National Center for Health Statistics
Preterm rates increased in North Carolina & the US over the last decade

Percent of Births that are Preterm (< 37 weeks gestation): US & NC 2012-2021

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<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>9.6</td>
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<td>9.8</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>10.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>N.C.</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>10.4</td>
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<td>10.4</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics & CDC/National Center for Health Statistics
Disparities in preterm and low birth weight persist among North Carolina births

**Percent of Births that are Low Birthweight and Preterm by Race/Ethnicity, NC Residents 2021**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>% Preterm (&lt; 37 weeks gestation)</th>
<th>% Low Birth Weight (&lt; 5 lbs 8 ozs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NH White</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH Black or African American</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH Asian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH Multirace Hispanic</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: SCHS has implemented a new race reporting methodology. Race figures presented here are not comparable with earlier reports.

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics (SCHS)
Trends in Infant & Child Death Rates
North Carolina infant mortality rates are consistently higher than US rates and have declined at a slower pace.

**Infant deaths per 1,000 live births: US & NC 2002-2021**

2002-2021:
- US rate decreased **23%**
- NC rate decreased **17%**

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics & CDC/National Center for Health Statistics
North Carolina’s neonatal death rates are decreasing at a faster pace than postneonatal death rates.

Neonatal & Postneonatal* Mortality Rates, NC Residents 2002-2021

2002 to 2021:
- Neonatal decreased 23%
- Postneonatal decreased 4%

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics

* Neonatal=< 28 days   Postneonatal= >=28 days
Infant mortality rates are higher among North Carolina’s NH Black, NH American Indian, & Multi-racial populations

Infant Death Rates by Race/Ethnicity, NC Residents 2014-2021

* Rates with an asterisk are based on a small number of deaths (<10 deaths) and may be statistically unreliable – interpret with caution.

Caution: Racial categories have changed from prior years and now reflect single race categories & multi-race. Comparisons with prior reports are not advised.

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics

* NH = Non-Hispanic.
Non-Hispanic Black Infants continue to die at rates more than two times higher than Non-Hispanic White Infants

Infant Mortality Disparity Ratios*, NC Residents 2014-2021

NC Perinatal Health Equity Collective Goal: 1.90
Healthy NC 2030 Target: 1.50

Caution: Racial categories have changed from prior years and now reflect single race categories & multi-race. Comparisons with prior reports are not advised.

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics
* Ratio of Non-Hispanic Black to Non-Hispanic White (Single Race) Infant Mortality Rates
North Carolina’s Child Death rates remain consistently higher than US rates over the last two decades

Child Death Rates, NC & US 2002-2021

- **US**: 2002: 63.9, 2021: 48.5
- **NC**: 2002: 73.8, 2021: 59.1

**2002 – 2021:**
- NC rate declined 20%
- US rate declined 24%

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics & National Center for Health Statistics
Among non-infant children, adolescents ages 15 to 17 have the highest mortality rates over the last decade.

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics
Non-Hispanic Black & American Indian children consistently have higher mortality rates compared to other groups

Child Death Rates by Race/Ethnicity: NC 2014-2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>NH White</th>
<th>NH Black</th>
<th>NH Am. Ind.</th>
<th>NH Asian/P.I.</th>
<th>NH Multiracial</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>98.1</td>
<td>77.0</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>42.4</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>39.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>101.2</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.8</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>95.3</td>
<td>98.3</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>99.0</td>
<td>106.4</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>44.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>98.5</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>106.5</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: NH=Non-Hispanic. P.I.=Pacific Islander. Am.Ind. includes American Indian & Alaskan Native.
Caution: Racial categories have changed from prior years and now reflect single race categories & multi-race. Comparisons with prior reports are not advised.

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics
Characteristics of Infant and Child Mortality in North Carolina
Infants comprise the largest proportion of child deaths in North Carolina

*Child Deaths by Age Group, NC Residents 2021 (N=1,360 deaths)*

- Infants: 60%
- 1 to 4: 9%
- 5 to 9: 5%
- 10 to 14: 9%
- 15 to 17: 17%

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics
Birth Defects are the leading cause of infant death in North Carolina in 2021, followed by deaths of undetermined cause.

Leading Causes of Death Among Infants: Number of Deaths by Cause, NC 2021
(N=820 Total Deaths)

- Birth Defects: 149 deaths
- Other Ill-Defined and unknown causes of death: 146 deaths
- Other conditions originating in the perinatal period: 121 deaths
- Prematurity & Low Birth Weight: 106 deaths
- Newborn affected by maternal factors/complications: 78 deaths
- Respiratory Distress & other Respiratory conditions: 44 deaths
- Infections & Parasitic Diseases: 42 deaths
- Accidental Suffocation and Strangulation in Bed: 29 deaths
- Diseases of the circulatory system: 19 deaths
- Unintentional Injuries/Accidents: 13 deaths
- Diseases of the respiratory system: 13 deaths
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS): 6 deaths
- Homicide/Assault: 4 deaths

* Residual (all other causes) = 50 deaths

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics
In 2021, injuries are the leading cause of death among North Carolina children ages 1 to 17 - comprising 61% of all (non-infant) child deaths.

Leading Causes of Death Among Children Ages 1 to 17: Number of Deaths by Cause, NC 2021
(N=540 Total Deaths)

- Motor vehicle injuries: 104 deaths
- Homicide: 89 deaths
- Other Unintentional injuries: 72 deaths
- Suicide: 62 deaths
- Cancer: 41 deaths
- Congenital anomalies (birth defects): 25 deaths
- Diseases of the heart: 16 deaths
- COVID-19: 14 deaths
- Chronic lower respiratory diseases: 6 deaths
- Pneumonia & influenza: 5 deaths

* Residual (all other causes) = 106 deaths

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics
Over the last decade, child death rates associated with homicides, suicides & unintentional (non-MVA) injuries have increased

*Trends in Child Death Rates* for Selected Causes of Death, NC 2012-2021

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<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth Defects</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perinatal Conditions</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>16.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical Conditions/Ilnesses</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>10.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motor Vehicle Injuries</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Unintentional Injuries</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
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<td>Homicide</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suicide</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics

*Deaths per 100,000 Resident Children Ages 0 to 17*
Among children ages 10 to 17, suicide rates increased in both the US and NC over the last two decades.

*Suicides include the following ICD mortality codes: X60-X84 (Intentional self-harm; Y87.0 (Sequelae of intentional self-harm), U03 (Suicide Terrorism)*

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics & National Center for Health Statistics
Suicides have been rising among NC children ages 10 to 17 over the last decade, with older teens experiencing the largest increase.

*Suicides include the following ICD mortality codes: X60-X84 (Intentional self-harm); Y87.0 (Sequelae of intentional self-harm), U03 (Suicide Terrorism)*

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics
North Carolina Child Homicide rates remain high in 2020 and 2021

Child Homicide Rates, Ages 0 to 17: US & NC, 2012-2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>US</th>
<th>NC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
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<td>2014</td>
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<td>2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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<td>2018</td>
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<td>2019</td>
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<td>2020</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Homicide includes the following ICD mortality codes: X85-Y09 (Assault), Y87.1 (Sequelae of assault), U01 (Terrorism Assault)

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics & National Center for Health Statistics
Among children, older teens (ages 15 to 17) account for the largest increase in homicides over the last decade.

*Homicide includes the following ICD mortality codes: X85-Y09 (Assault), Y87.1 (Sequelae of assault), U01 (Terrorism Assault)
Firearm-related death rates have increased substantially in North Carolina in the last two years.

Firearm-related Mortality Rates*, Children Ages 0 to 17: NC & US, 2012-2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>US</th>
<th>NC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
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<td>2015</td>
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<td>2016</td>
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<td>2018</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<td>2019</td>
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<td>2020</td>
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<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
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*Firearm deaths include the following ICD mortality codes: W32-W34 (Unintentional), X72-X74 (Suicide), X93-X95 (Homicide), U014 (Terrorism), & Y22-Y24 (Undetermined Intent)
Adolescents ages 15 to 17 have experienced large increases in firearm-related mortality rates in both 2020 & 2021.

*Firearm deaths include the following ICD mortality codes: W32-W34 (Unintentional), X72-X74 (Suicide), X93-X95 (Homicide), U014 (Terrorism), & Y22-Y24 (Undetermined Intent)

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics & National Center for Health Statistics
Geographic Patterns in Infant & Child Mortality
North Carolina
Infant Mortality Rates by Perinatal Care Regions (PCR)
2017 - 2021

PCR II Northwestern
N = 974

PCR IV Northeastern
N = 817

PCR VI Eastern
N = 690

PCR I Western
N = 214

PCR III Southwestern
N = 709

PCR V Southeastern
N = 687

Rate per 1,000 Live Births
- 5.6
- 5.7 - 6.2
- 6.3 - 7.8
- 7.9 - 8.0

County Boundary

State Center for Health Statistics
North Carolina Infant Mortality Racial Disparities Between Non-Hispanic Whites and Non-Hispanic African Americans by Perinatal Care Regions (PCR) 2017 - 2021

Disparity Ratio
- 2.0
- 2.1 - 2.6
- 2.7 - 2.9
- 3.0 - 3.5

State Center for Health Statistics
Geographic Patterns Among North Carolina Resident Births
North Carolina 2021 Percent Preterm Births by Perinatal Care Regions (PCR)

PCR II Northwestern N = 2,894
PCR IV Northeastern N = 2,668
PCR VI Eastern N = 1,984
PCR I Western N = 792
PCR III Southwestern N = 2,700
PCR V Southeastern N = 2,001

Percent
- 9.7
- 9.8 - 10.4
- 10.5 - 11.1
- 11.2 - 11.7
- County Boundary

State Center for Health Statistics
North Carolina
2021 Percent Low Birthweight Births
by Perinatal Care Regions (PCR)

PCR I Western
N = 589

PCR II Northwestern
N = 2,471

PCR III Southwestern
N = 2,490

PCR IV Northeastern
N = 2,374

PCR V Southeastern
N = 1,748

PCR VI Eastern
N = 1,733

Percent
- 8.2 - 8.6
- 8.7 - 9.7
- 9.8 - 9.9
- 10.0 - 10.2

County Boundary
North Carolina
2021 Percent Very Low Birthweight Births
by Perinatal Care Regions (PCR)

PCR II Northwestern
N = 389

PCR IV Northeastern
N = 472

PCR VI Eastern
N = 330

PCR I Western
N = 80

PCR III Southwestern
N = 380

PCR V Southeastern
N = 322

Percent
- 1.1
- 1.2 - 1.5
- 1.6 - 1.7
- 1.8 - 1.9

County Boundary
North Carolina
2021 Percent Births to Mothers with Late Prenatal Care by Perinatal Care Regions (PCR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PCR Region</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Number of Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PCR II Northwestern</td>
<td>14.5 - 23.5</td>
<td>5,845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCR IV Northeastern</td>
<td>23.6 - 26.7</td>
<td>6,981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCR VI Eastern</td>
<td>26.8 - 29.5</td>
<td>4,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCR III Southwestern</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>6,913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCR V Southeastern</td>
<td>14.5 - 23.5</td>
<td>5,308</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State Center for Health Statistics
North Carolina
2021 Percent Births Not Breastfeeding at Discharge
by Perinatal Care Regions (PCR)

PCR II Northwestern
N = 5,875

PCR IV Northeastern
N = 3,156

PCR VI Eastern
N = 4,273

PCR I Western
N = 1,179

PCR III Southwestern
N = 3,963

PCR V Southeastern
N = 4,606

Percent
- 11.5
- 11.6 - 16.5
- 16.6 - 23.6
- 23.7 - 25.6
- County Boundary

State Center for Health Statistics
North Carolina
2021 Percent Births to Mothers Overweight or Obese by Perinatal Care Regions (PCR)

PCR II Northwestern
N = 15,356

PCR IV Northeastern
N = 14,671

PCR VI Eastern
N = 10,811

PCR I Western
N = 3,952

PCR III Southwestern
N = 14,331

PCR V Southeastern
N = 10,493

Percent
- 17.3
- 17.4 - 19.5
- 19.6 - 20.4
- 20.5 - 22.3
- County Boundary

State Center for Health Statistics
Geographic Patterns in Social Determinants of Health in North Carolina
North Carolina
2020 Estimated Percent Population Below Poverty by Perinatal Care Regions (PCR)

Percent
- 11.2 - 11.3
- 11.4 - 13.3
- 13.4 - 15.1
- 15.2 - 17.7
- County Boundary

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey
2020, 5-Year Estimates (2016-2020)
North Carolina
2020 Estimated Percent Children Ages 0 to 17 Below Poverty by Perinatal Care Regions (PCR)

Percent
- 15.3 - 16.1
- 16.2 - 16.9
- 17.0 - 22.1
- 22.2 - 25.8

County Boundary

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey
2020, 5-Year Estimates (2016-2020)
North Carolina
2020 Estimated Percent Females Ages 15 to 44 Below Poverty by Perinatal Care Regions (PCR)

PCR I Western
PCR II Northwestern
PCR III Southwestern
PCR IV Northeastern
PCR V Southeastern
PCR VI Eastern

Percent
- 13.1 - 14.4
- 14.5 - 17.3
- 17.4 - 19.7
- 19.8 - 22.6

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey
2020, 5-Year Estimates (2016-2020)
North Carolina
2020 Estimated Percent Population Unemployed by Perinatal Care Regions (PCR)

Percent
- 4.2 - 4.6
- 4.7 - 5.0
- 5.1 - 5.6
- 5.7 - 7.1

County Boundary

Population = Age 16 and over in the Labor Force

State Center for Health Statistics
North Carolina
2020 Estimated Percent Females Ages 18 to 44 with No High School Diploma by Perinatal Care Regions (PCR)

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey
2020, 5-Year Estimates (2016-2020)
North Carolina
2020 Estimated Percent Renters Spending Greater Than 30% of Household Income on Rent by Perinatal Care Regions (PCR)

Percent
- 45.3
- 45.4 - 46.1
- 46.2 - 48.0
- 48.1 - 49.8

County Boundary

North Carolina
2020 Estimated Percent Females Ages 19 to 44 with No Health Insurance by Perinatal Care Regions (PCR)

Summary

- North Carolina infant death rates were down slightly in 2021
- Child Death rates rose slightly in 2021
- Despite slight fluctuations, infant and child death rates have stagnated in recent years
- US & NC overall birth rates & teen births have both declined over the last two decades
- North Carolina infant mortality, prematurity, and low birthweight rates are consistently higher than US rates
Summary (continued)

• Racial disparities in NC infant mortality, prematurity, and low birthweight persist in 2021

• In 2021, injuries were the leading cause of death among North Carolina children ages 1 to 17

• Over the last decade, child death rates associated with homicides, suicides & unintentional (non-MVA) injuries have increased

• Eastern regions of NC experience the highest rates of infant & child death, as well as social determinant risk factors (e.g., poverty, unemployment, etc.)
Infant Mortality & Child Death Reports available at the State Center for Health Statistics:


Questions?

Contact:

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The 2023 Child Fatality Task Force Annual Report was released today!

Report includes some of the 2021 child death data and 11 legislative recommendations to prevent child death and promote child well-being.

These slides will be posted on the CFTF website under reports and data, child fatality data reports.

Child Fatality Task Force Website: https://sites.ncleg.gov/nccftf/