

2023

CABARRUS COUNTY STATE OF THE COUNTY HEALTH REPORT

- Progress on Community Health Improvement Plans
- Data Indicators
- Emerging Issues
- New Initiatives



CABARRUS
HEALTH
ALLIANCE

Healthy Cabarrus
Partnerships for Life

Executive Summary

Dear Cabarrus County Community,

We are delighted to present the **2023 State of the County Health (SOTCH) Report**. This annual publication highlights the progress made by our community on priority needs while maintaining a focus on areas that continue to be challenging for individuals, organizations, and the community as a whole.

This year, we celebrate much progress in all three of our priority areas: Housing & Homelessness, Behavioral Health, and Early Childhood Education.

Housing & Homelessness: Cabarrus County partners have been working diligently to address this priority need. Cooperative Christian Ministry, We Build Concord, and Aya House all shared progress on major new initiatives, including new physical infrastructure, referral processes, and programmatic support for program participants.

Behavioral Health: While Behavioral Health continues to be a growing need in our community, we have seen progress towards the development of a Regional Mental Health Facility in Concord, integrated behavioral health services in the jail, enormous American Rescue Plan investments in 12 organizations, and funding from United Way to support six local agencies.

Early Childhood Education: Focusing on the youngest members of our community has always been a top priority in Cabarrus. In 2023, several initiatives aimed to support early learners, including programs like Childcare Wage\$, Early Education Liaison, reading initiatives, and a generous NC General Assembly allocation of \$2 million to further support early childhood programs in our community.

The Chamber, Leading Business in Cabarrus: The local Chamber of Commerce included several community priorities in their legislative agenda this year: childcare tax credits, scholarships for childhood education, childcare subsidies, and pilot programs to identify solutions to the childcare shortage.

We appreciate the continued focus of community partners to work together to address these critical needs. We understand that progress is achieved through collective efforts. We are closely watching two emerging issues, including the growing aging population and Human Sex and Labor Trafficking.

We are proud to share these new initiatives began in 2023:

- The Cabarrus Community Free Clinic expanded eligibility criteria to now include those with higher income levels
- The addition of a 24/7 Narcan vending machine in the Cabarrus County Detention Center
- Expanded Funds for Residents in Crisis
- New online food pantry resources

We would like to thank our partners who provided updates for this report. Cabarrus County is an amazing place to live, work, pray, and play because of those who live here!

Sincerely,

Erin Shoe
Public Health Director

Sandra Torres
Healthy Cabarrus Program Coordinator

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2023 Cabarrus County State of the County Health Report

Overview

State of the County Health Report 2023

Conducting a community health assessment is an ongoing and collaborative effort engaging various agencies, providers, and individuals to identify community assets, strengths, and unmet needs. The Cabarrus Health Alliance (CHA) provides leadership for this collaborative process through [Healthy Cabarrus](#). The following State of the County Health (SOTCH) Report provides updates and documents progress following the 2020 Community Health Needs Assessment findings. The 2023 Cabarrus County SOTCH was submitted to the North Carolina Department of Human Services (NCDHHS) on March 4, 2024.

This report provides information specific to the identified priority health issues, including housing, behavioral health, and early childhood education and development. The report also offers updated data and information regarding mortality and morbidity rates in Cabarrus County, along with updates on emerging issues, new initiatives, paused initiatives, and discontinued initiatives.

Keeping stakeholders and community members informed about the identified community health priorities and progress to date is a crucial element of community health improvement. After the Cabarrus County Public Health Authority Board of Commissioners and Healthy Cabarrus Executive Committee review the report, the 2023 State of the County Health Report will be sent to the Healthy Cabarrus Advisory Board. The Advisory Board will be requested to identify ways that they can assist with public and partner awareness of the report and its findings. In addition, hard copies of the report will be distributed to various community locations, including local libraries, community centers, park and recreation departments, federally qualified health centers, and other sites with high community member presence. The 2023 State of the County Health Report will also be translated into Spanish to inform our Hispanic neighbors about the progress made since the previous Community Health Assessment.

Cabarrus County Profile

Cabarrus County has been experiencing a consistent annual population growth of 2% or more since 2010. Based on the 2022 ACS 1 Year Estimate, Cabarrus County's population has increased significantly to 235,797, indicating a 32.1% boost from the 178,564 residents recorded in 2010. The US population grew by 7.7% during the same period, while North Carolina's population grew by 11.9%.

Concord, the largest city and county seat of Cabarrus County, is now the tenth-largest city in North Carolina and is one of the fastest-growing cities in the state and region. Rapid population growth poses significant challenges to agencies and organizations that serve their communities. These challenges can be attributed to limitations in capacity and staffing, which can result in inadequate resources and support. Furthermore, communities may experience a shortage of housing and schools, increased levels of pollution, insufficient water availability, and waste-disposal problems.

Often, these challenges can disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, including persons with disabilities, those with limited English proficiency, children under 5, and persons over 65.

Total Cabarrus County Population: 235,797



Persons in Poverty	
Cabarrus	7.5%
North Carolina	12.8%



Unemployment Rate	
Cabarrus	3.5%
North Carolina	3.9%



Median Household Income	
Cabarrus	\$79,672
North Carolina	\$61,972



Educational Attainment	
Persons 25 and older	
No High School Diploma	4.8%
High School Graduate or Equivalent	28.5%
Some College, No Degree	15.5%
Associate's Degree	10.9%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	40.3%

Sources:
U.S. Census, American Community Survey 1-Year 2022

Progress on Community Health Improvement Plans

For data updates and progress specific to additional strategies outlined in the Community Health Improvement Plan for the Mental and Behavioral Health (Short Term) and Housing (Long Term) priorities, please visit each respective Scorecard [here](#).

Housing and Homelessness

Cooperative Christian Ministry

The Rebuilders College @ Brown Mill Commons – This project aims to create new transitional housing capacity to help individuals and families experiencing homelessness and housing crises achieve stable housing. In addition to the 48 initial transitional housing units, the project will provide nutritional support and access to resources that support positive outcomes such as adult and child education, healthy habits and activities, connection to vital resources, access to public and other transportation, job training, career coaching, and employment opportunities.



In June 2023, CCM acquired the property and launched a community-wide capital fundraising campaign. Following the completion of the engineering and architectural design stages, the construction of the initial phase has commenced, while design and fundraising efforts remain underway. Cabarrus Health Alliance has committed to establishing a significant presence on the campus.



Grace Place @ Caremoor - Grace Place is an asset-based program originally designed to meet the basic needs of food, housing, and community for senior individuals experiencing extreme poverty. The program aims to create an environment that enables these individuals to establish stability while simultaneously promoting personal responsibility and community engagement.

In December 2023 CCM purchased Caremoor Retirement Community with the help of ARP funding from the city of Kannapolis. The recent purchase will greatly increase the capacity for transitional housing and expand the population to include families with children.

My Father's House Annex @ Memorial Baptist Church -The program's facilities were renovated in 2023 and will open early in 2024. The program will offer support to expectant mothers in MAT care (Medication-Assisted Treatment for women with substance use disorders), as well as other single mothers through CCM's Path to

Stability model. The transitional housing program is a joint effort between CCM, Cabarrus Health Alliance-SUN Clinic, and Memorial Baptist Church of Kannapolis.

[HelpwithHousing.net](https://www.helpwithhousing.net) - HelpwithHousing.net is a digital platform readily available to assist the homeless population or those serving others who need housing in our community. The platform connects people in need to the appropriate resources that best fit their needs. Additionally, the site aggregates data to provide community leaders with insight into the real housing needs in our community. Since its launch in November 2022, the site has received over three hundred inquiries, providing significant insight into our local population in a housing crisis.

WeBuild Concord

WeBuild Concord is a collective impact and advocacy model for accessible housing and community development. It builds permanent homes through public and private partnerships. They provide residents ownership and rental opportunities in single-family, multi-family, and mixed-use developments. The organization uses deed restrictions, a community land trust, and donated equity strategies to ensure long-term affordability, neighborhood stability, and wealth creation.

In 2023, WeBuild built and rehabilitated eleven (11) homes. An additional seventy-one (71) permanent dwellings are under construction or in the development phases in neighborhoods with less than forty percent (40%) ownership rates and low affordability as of December 31, 2023. These projects include multi-family developments targeting low to moderate-income homebuyers, mature adults, and other opportunity populations such as veterans and returning residents. WeBuild developments such as the Lincoln Street Townhomes (26 units), Corban Street Village for 55+ (11 units), Malvern Townhomes (8-10 units), and new mixed-income developments are part of the total.

WeBuild projects account for approximately \$15 million in permanent housing development in collaboration with the City of Concord, Cabarrus County, U.S. Housing and Urban Development, 12th District Congressional Office, and private foundations such as the Atrium Health Foundation, Wells Fargo Foundation, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, and dozens of individual donors and industry representatives.



AYA House

AYA House provides transitional housing with holistic, wrap-around services to the Cabarrus County Community Reentry Program participants. Their focus is on individuals who are justice-involved, in recovery from substance use, or experiencing chronic homelessness. The goal of AYA House is to remove the barriers and root causes that prevent our participants from advancing to independent, stable housing and help them become healthy, productive citizens of Cabarrus County by providing them with all the necessary resources.

AYA is able to carry out its mission effectively thanks to the extensive partnerships it has established within the community. Cabarrus Health Alliance provides mental health counselling, wellness education, and resources, as well as grants for dental care. Assurance Life Learning Center offers outpatient substance use treatment, while the Community Free Clinic provides primary care for those who are uninsured. Genesis-A New Beginning provides mental health and life skills groups, and the Lions Club provides vouchers for vision care. Rowan Cabarrus Community College (RCCC) is a valuable partner, providing vocational certification courses and employment services. Cooperative Christian Ministries offers educational and housing support, while CK Rider Transit provides transportation assistance. Finally, Concord Housing Department, WeBuild Concord, Prosperity Unlimited, and Habitat for Humanity are housing assistance partners.

In 2023, AYA House and the Reentry Program received 177 new referrals, and a total of 254 individuals were seen throughout the year. The Peer Support Specialist worked with 29 individuals from correctional facilities, 124 from CCDC, 14 from Probation, 27 from chronic homelessness, 39 from treatment, 2 from self-referrals, and 19 from other sources (such as hospitals, outpatient treatments, friends, etc.) They provided assistance to 40 individuals in identifying documents, 15 with connecting to the Social Security office for benefits, 48 with obtaining Food and Nutrition Services, 14 with obtaining government phone services, 60 with services from Rowan Cabarrus Community College, 17 with housing resources or placement, and 35 with connection to NC Works/employment. Additionally, we made 133 referrals to medical care, 63 to mental health, 40 to inpatient or outpatient SU treatment, 41 to vision care, and 41 to dental care.

Behavioral Health

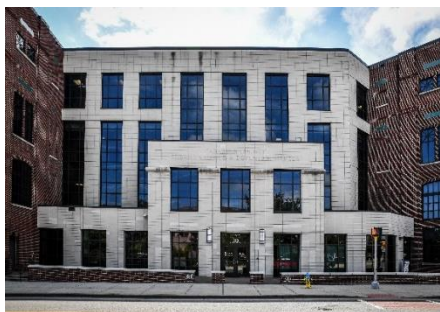
Regional Mental Health Facilities

In 2023, Cabarrus County continued to make progress toward opening a regional behavioral health center. The center is designed to expand the crisis continuum in the community and to divert individuals from hospitalization and emergency departments when appropriate. As noted previously, the facility will be newly constructed and located in Cabarrus County, serving Cabarrus residents and residents in surrounding areas. One major development in 2023 was the selection of the operator for the center: Monarch. Monarch is a non-profit organization with a longstanding history of providing an array of publicly funded behavioral health services to NC residents. Cabarrus County also created an internal Behavioral Health Department (BHD). The BHD will work alongside Monarch to ensure the center provides evidence-based care in a trauma-informed setting.

The design concepts and programming of the center were finalized in 2023. Specifically, the center will include a Behavioral Health Urgent Care (BHUC), a pediatric Facility-Based Crisis (FBC), and psychiatric residential treatment services for children and adolescents. The combination of programs is intended to provide an umbrella of services and supports in one setting to ensure residents receive appropriate assessments, stabilization, and treatment services. The BHUC will provide triage, crisis risk assessment, evaluation, and intervention to individuals with urgent or emergent crisis needs. The BHUC will serve children/adolescents and adults. The FBC will provide intensive, short-term, medically supervised services to children and adolescents who require treatment in a facility. The typical FBC stay will be less than two weeks. The psychiatric residential treatment services will provide inpatient psychiatric care to children and adolescents. The shift toward a center primarily serving children and adolescents is due to the severity and magnitude of behavioral health conditions affecting children and adolescents, as reported by local healthcare systems, social services, and other community partners.

Jail-Based Integrated Behavioral Health Services

During FY23, Cabarrus Health Alliance partnered with the Cabarrus County Sheriff's Office to expand behavioral health services for incarcerated individuals in Cabarrus County. The program was designed to align with the Stepping Up Program and expand its services. It now includes Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW) who provide crisis assessments, comprehensive clinical assessments, and ongoing therapy. Coordinated Certified Peer Support Specialist services and case management during and after incarceration are also available. The program is fully integrated within the detention facility and serves clients seven days a week. The collaboration aims to further the vision of CHA's Behavioral Health Division, which is to ensure that all residents of Cabarrus County have access to high-quality behavioral health services. The program focuses on three core pillars: stabilization, treatment, and connection to services, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of life for patients and reducing recidivism rates.



From July 1 to January 31, there were 632 referrals for clinical behavioral health services, resulting in 631 assessments. One hundred and thirteen clients have received ongoing behavioral health services. One-hundred and seventy-five case

management intakes were completed, resulting in 90 individuals receiving case management follow-up. One-hundred and sixty-eight Peer Support services were provided.

ARPA Funding Behavioral Health Services

Cabarrus County has made a noteworthy commitment to addressing the issue of behavioral health within its jurisdiction. To this end, in 2021, \$11,393,731 was awarded to twelve organizations that provide mental health services to residents of Cabarrus County.



The following organizations are part of this effort: Amazing Grace Advocacy, Cabarrus Healthcare Foundation, Cabarrus Public Health Interest, Clarkinetics & Associates, Camino Health Center, Cano Family Services, Genesis A New Beginning, Rise 2 Thrive Family Resource Center, Kannapolis Head Start, Vida Wellness Center, Mental Health America, and Silver Linings for Seniors. Each of these organizations offers a variety of services and caters to a diverse clientele.

These funds have enabled various organizations to provide mental health treatment to an average of 572 clients per month, with an average of 26 mental health providers receiving funding. The client demographics indicate a growing number of African-American clients, while Hispanic and white clients continue to make up the majority. It is worth noting that mental health treatment has a higher proportion of recurring clients (75%) than new ones, indicating that providers can continue to provide care to their patients.

United Way Mental Health Collaborative

In 2023, the United Way of Greater Charlotte invested \$354,901 towards promoting mental wellness in Cabarrus County. The agency disbursed grants to six local organizations that join forces to form a Mental Wellness Collaborative. The goal of this collaborative is to reduce the stigma that surrounds discussions about mental health and to shift the focus to promoting mental wellness.

A key factor in United Way's selection of the Cabarrus agencies was their strong relationships with young people, particularly those in African American and Latino communities.

Members of the collaborative include Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Carolinas, El Puente Hispano, Firm Foundations, Girl Scouts Hornets' Nest Council, Mental Health America of Central Carolinas, and The S.T.U.D.I.O. Each of these organizations offers unique services related to mental wellness. As a group, one of their primary focuses was to provide QPR training. They organized a total of seven training sessions and trained 80 community members.

Early Childhood Education

Cabarrus Partnership for Children

The Cabarrus Partnership for Children continues to lead the way by identifying and addressing needs of local childcare providers and families with children from birth to five years old.

Childcare Wage\$ Program

Individual childcare programs often face challenges in rewarding or encouraging teacher education through salaries due to the lack of resources and the need to maintain affordability for parents. As a result, many teachers leave the field or never even consider the profession an option.

The Cabarrus County Partnership for Children (CCPC) offers the WAGE\$ program to address this issue. The program provides education-based salary supplements to low-paid teachers and family childcare educators working with children

aged birth to five.

Previously, the Partnership's board had decided to provide full funding to WAGE\$ participants at a Tier II stipend. However, in January, the board also voted to fund WAGE\$ participants at a Tier III stipend to reduce the waiting list in childcare programs as much as possible. The goal of WAGE\$ is to provide preschool children with more stable relationships with better-educated teachers by rewarding teacher education and continuity of care.

Early Education Liaison Program

In partnership with Rowan Cabarrus Community College (RCCC), the Cabarrus Partnership for Children created the Early Education Teacher Liaisons program to address childcare centers' needs and strengthen Cabarrus County's workforce. The liaisons serve as a bridge between the college and local childcare centers, offering academic support such as referrals for tutoring and scholarships for further education.

In 2023, The Partnership continued collaborating with RCCC and supported the Early Education Teacher Liaisons in teaching the introductory course on early childhood education (EDU 119) in Spanish. This initiative aimed to extend the course material to the Latino community, enabling them to become teachers in childcare facilities.



Reach Out and Read & Dolly Parton Imagination Library

in FY 22-23, the Partnership distributed 100,269 books to children in Cabarrus County through the Reach Out and Read & Dolly Parton Imagination Library programs.

The Read Out and Read is a book gifting program that gives free books to children when they attend a Well Child Check at Cabarrus County Pediatrics/Family Practice Clinics. The Dolly Parton Imagination Library is a book-giving program that mails books to children's homes every month until they are five years old and ready for kindergarten.

NC General Assembly allocation of \$2 million

The North Carolina General Assembly granted the Cabarrus Partnership for Children a \$2 million allowance in July 2023 for early childhood programs, particularly for child care.

The Early Childhood Task Force and the Cabarrus County Partnership for Children Board of Directors have approved a list of programs to be funded using the allocated budget. The Partnership aims to fund all the approved programs, but the funding may vary depending on the implementation cost.

Below are the top priority programs that the Partnership plans to fund:

- *Child Care Wage\$ Program*

The program provides education-based salary supplements to low-paid teachers and family childcare educators working with children aged birth to five.

- *Conscious Discipline*

An evidence-based, trauma-informed approach that emphasizes self-regulation, empathy, and problem-solving skills for both educators and students. The approach aims to create a safe, connected environment where children can develop emotional intelligence, resilience, and positive relationships.

- *Cabarrus Teacher On-Call (Childcare Substitute Service)*

A program designed to create a pool of qualified substitute teachers who are available to work with childcare centers in Cabarrus County. The program will recruit, train, and equip these substitute teachers to ensure that childcare facilities have adequate staff to cover staff absences.

- *Tri Share in Cabarrus County*

Tri-Share aims to provide affordable and accessible high-quality childcare to working families. It is a public/private partnership in which the cost of childcare is shared equally between employers, eligible employees, and the Partnership. This program also helps employers retain and attract employees while stabilizing the childcare businesses.

– *Parent As Teachers (PAT)*

PAT is a voluntary early childhood development home visiting program offering research-based curricula that help families raise children to be healthy, safe, and ready to learn in school.

The Chamber, Leading Business in Cabarrus - Legislative Agenda

The Chamber, Leading Business in Cabarrus, is committed to promoting legislative action that supports the development and welfare of the workforce. Over the years, The Chamber has collaborated with legislators and local and state partners to address the issue of affordable, available, and high-quality childcare. They understand that this is crucial to the workforce and that the high costs of childcare are deterring potential workers from participating in the labor force. The Chamber continues working on the following items within its Legislative Agenda to address increased access to childcare for workers:

- Providing tax credits to businesses that provide childcare support for their employees.
- Expanding the current Opportunity Scholarship program to include early childhood education.
- Revising existing childcare subsidy income limits to phase out subsidies rather than provide a hard income ceiling in order to encourage workers to seek higher-paying opportunities.
- Investing in additional childcare subsidies to help address the current worker shortage until long-term solutions can be implemented.
- Invest in pilot programs that seek innovative solutions to the current childcare shortage.

Mortality and Morbidity Changes

Mortality and Morbidity Data

Two measures commonly used for public health surveillance are mortality and morbidity. These measures can help describe and understand the progression and severity of a health event. Monitoring causes of death or rates of illnesses helps public health professionals and epidemiologists recognize cases or clusters of cases to trigger interventions to prevent transmission or reduce morbidity and mortality. Both are useful tools to learn about disease risk factors, compare and contrast health events between different populations, and identify appropriate health interventions.

The data within this section comes from the State Center for Health Statistics 2023 County Health Data Book and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation – County Health Rankings. The 2023 County Health Data Book data spans 5 years, either 2017-2021, and is considered current for community health assessments and state of the county health reports due March 2023.

Source: <https://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/data/databook/>

Mortality

NC State Center for Health Statistics – County Health Data Book

Infant and Child Death Data	Cabarrus		North Carolina	
Fetal Death Rate per 1,000 Deliveries	6.2	▼	6.4	▼
Neonatal (<28 days) Death Rate per 1,00 Live Births	3.3	▼	4.6	▼
Post-neonatal (28 days – 1 year) Death Rate per 1,000 Live Births	1.9	▼	2.3	=
Infant Mortality Disparity Ratio	2.09	▲	2.63	▲
Infant Death Rate per 1,000 Live Births	5.1	▼	6.9	▼
Unadjusted Child (0-17) Death Rate per 100,000 population	38.3	▼	56.2	=

Infant and Child Death

Disparity ratios are used to assess the likelihood of a particular event occurring in one population compared to another. To calculate the disparity ratio, the rate for a population is divided by the best rate for a selected health indicator. The table above compares the infant mortality rates of white and African American babies in the state and Cabarrus County. In Cabarrus County, African American babies are 2.09 times more likely to die before turning one year old when compared to white babies. The red arrow indicates the data is worse than the previous reporting period. The green arrow indicates health improvements since the previous reporting period.

NC State Center for Health Statistics – County Health Data Book

Leading Causes of Death <i>*Unadjusted Death Rates per 100,000 Population, Ranking by Geographic Area</i>	Cabarrus		North Carolina	
Total Deaths – All Causes	798.1		979.7	
Diseases of the heart	156.0	1	190.8	1
Cancer – All Sites	148.0	2	190.6	2
Alzheimer’s disease	55.9	3	42.7	6
Other Unintentional Injuries	51.8	4	50.2	5
Chronic lower respiratory diseases	38.3	6	50.3	4
COVID	36.7	7	41.2	7
Cerebrovascular Disease (Stroke)	39.1	5	51.4	3
Diabetes mellitus	19.4	8	31.7	8
Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome & nephrosis (kidney disorder)	18.3	9	20.0	9
Pneumonia & Influenza	16.7	10	17.7	10

Leading Causes of Death by Age (2017-2021)
Ages 0—19 1 Conditions Originating in Prenatal Period 2 Congenital anomalies (birth defects) 3 Homicide
Ages 20—39 1 Other Unintentional Injuries 2 Motor Vehicle Injuries 3 Suicide
Ages 40—64 1 Cancer—All Sites 2 Diseases of the heart 3 Other Unintentional Injuries
Ages 65—84 1 Cancer—All Sites 2 Disease of the heart 3 Chronic lower respiratory disease
Ages 85+ 1 Disease of the heart 2 Cancer - All Sites 3 Alzheimer’s disease

Leading Causes of Death

Data available for leading cause of death shows that diseases of the heart have remained the number one leading cause of death among Cabarrus County residents. It is also important to note that data from 2017-2021 is the second reporting period where deaths caused by COVID-19 are reported. As a result, COVID-19 has jumped from being the 10th to the 7th leading cause of death, surpassing Diabetes mellitus in the previous reporting period.

Other unintentional injuries remain in fourth place. The most common unintentional injuries result from motor vehicle crashes, falls, fires and burns, drowning, poisonings, and aspirations. Falls have been identified as the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related deaths among North Carolinians of all ages from 1999 to 2019. Cerebrovascular disease has moved up from sixth place to fifth. This may indicate the impact of heart disease not only as a leading cause of death but also as a significant risk factor for cerebrovascular disease.

Leading Causes of Death by Age

There have been two changes in the top three Leading Causes of Death by Age (2017-2021) among Cabarrus County residents. The first is within the 0-19 age category. Homicide now replaces Suicide/Motor vehicle injuries as the third leading cause of death. Within the 20-39 age category, suicide is now the third leading cause of death, replaced by Motor vehicle injuries, which is now second.

2017-2021 NC Resident Race/Ethnicity and Sex-Specific Age-Adjusted Death Rate Disparities

- African Americans, both males and females, have higher rates of death associated with Disease of the Heart compared to White, non-Hispanic residents and two times higher rate for nephritis/nephrosis (kidney disease)
- African American females consistently have the highest rates of death caused by Breast Cancer and close to two times rate for Diabetes
- African American males have over two times the rate of Diabetes
- Females, both African American and White, have a much higher rate of Alzheimer’s disease than their male counterparts
- Suicide is highest among white males. All other races, and sexes are too small a number to calculate the rate

Life Expectancy

Life Expectancy	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
North Carolina	77.4	77	77.6	76.7	76.4	**	**
Cabarrus	78.5	78	78.4	78.5	78.3	**	**
Rowan	75.3	75.1	75.2	75.4	74.9		
Stanly	76.3	75.8	75.9	75.5	75.3		
Union	79.5	79.6	79.7	80.0	80.0		
Iredell	77.6	77.3	77.5	77.9	77.9		
Mecklenburg	80.2	80.3	80.4	80.6	80.1		

*** Data pertaining to life expectancy was not available at the time of the report's completion. We will update the report as soon as the required data is obtainable.*

Morbidity

Morbidity is a term used to describe illness, medical conditions, or being unhealthy as a result of a disease. It is often used to refer to the presence of a disease or a symptom of a disease within a population. Public health professionals can estimate morbidity by using the prevalence or incidence of a disease or illness. Common examples of morbidities include heart disease, diabetes, and obesity, but they can range from Alzheimer's disease to cancer to traumatic brain injury. When a person has more than one morbidity at the same time, it is referred to as co-morbidity. It's important to note that morbidity does not refer to deaths but rather to the presence of illness or disease.

Terms:

- **Prevalence** describes the proportion of the population with a given symptom or quality.
- **Incidence** shows the frequency at which individuals within a specific population develop a given symptom or quality

Category		2022 Cabarrus County Data	2023 Cabarrus County Data	North Carolina Data	Benchmark	Recent Data Source Year	
Length of Life	Premature Death	6,800	6,800	8,000	4,800	2018-2020	
	Poor or Fair Health	18%	12%	14%	10%	2020	
Quality of Life	Poor Physical Health Days	3.6	2.9	3	2.5	2020	
	Poor Mental Health Days	4.2	4.3	4.1	3.9	2020	
	Low Birthweight	9%	9%	9%	6%	2014-2020	
	Adult Smoking	17%	16%	17%	12%	2020	
Health Behaviors	Adult Obesity	36%	31%	34%	27%	2020	
	Food Environment Index	7.9	7.9	6.5	5.7	2019-2020	
	Physical Inactivity	25%	22%	22%	16%	2020	
	Access to Exercise Opportunities	68%	61%	75%	100%	2020 & 2022	
	Excessive Drinking	18%	17%	17%	14%	2020	
	Alcohol-Impaired Driving Deaths	25%	25%	26%	10%	2016-2020	
	Sexually Transmitted Infections	542.8	544.2	616.3	124.7	2020	
	Teen births	17	17	21	4	2014-2020	
	Clinical Care	Uninsured	11%	12%	13%	9%	2020
		Primary Care Physicians	1,160 : 1	1,200 : 1	1,410 : 1	1,010 : 1	2020
		Dentists	2,050 : 1	2,060 : 1	1,660 : 1	1,210 : 1	2021
		Mental Health Providers	350 : 1	340 : 1	340 : 1	250 : 1	2022
Preventable Hospital Stays		4,989	3,734	2,809	2,233	2020	
Mammography Screenings		49%	44%	43%	52%	2020	
Flu Vaccinations		52%	54%	51%	55%	2020	
Social and Economic Factors	High School Graduation	91%	91%	89%	94%	2017-2021	
	Some College	70%	70%	69%	74%	2017-2021	
	Unemployment	7.0%	4.4%	4.8%	4.0%	2021	
	Children in Poverty	11%	13%	18%	9%	2021	
	Income Inequality	4.1	4.1	4.7	3.7	2017-2021	
	Children in Single-parent Households	21%	21%	27%	14%	2017-2021	
	Social Associations	10.4	10	11.1	18.1	2020	
	Violent Crime	117	117	351	63	2014 & 2016	
	Injury Deaths	75	75	82	61	2016-2020	
Physical Environment	Air Pollution	9.1	9.5	7.8	5.9	2019	
	Severe Housing Problems	13%	13%	14%	9%	2015-2019	
	Driving Alone to Work	80%	77%	77%	72%	2017-2021	
	Long Commute – Driving Alone	45%	44%	34%	16%	2017-2021	

*Items shaded in **yellow** indicate that Cabarrus County is doing better than or the same as the state of North Carolina, but not as good as Benchmark Counties or Top Performers in the U.S.

*Items shaded in **red** indicated that Cabarrus County is doing worse than the state of North Carolina and Top Performers.

To learn more about the County Health Rankings or to see how other counties across North Carolina are performing [click here](#):

Emerging Issues

Aging and Older Adults



It is projected that by the year 2030, 90% of the 100 counties in NC will have a larger population of older adults than young individuals.

The immigrant populations residing in Cabarrus County, which have traditionally comprised young and active members of the workforce, such as the Latino community, are now beginning to age. This presents a new challenge, as a significant proportion of this population segment will not meet the eligibility criteria for Medicare.

As a result, it is crucial for policymakers and healthcare professionals to take proactive measures to develop sustainable, systems-level solutions that will help avoid adverse outcomes in terms of social, financial, and health issues among this aging population. Healthy aging requires interdisciplinary efforts

that promote physical activity, proper nutrition, safe housing, regular social interaction, and mental well-being.

Atrium Health Cabarrus

Atrium Health Cabarrus has been experiencing a large number of octogenarians and Medicare discharges with limited post-acute care options for people aged 50 and above. To better address the needs of the growing older population, the hospital has developed a Roadmap for Advancing Acute Age-Friendly Care. The trailblazing approach includes interventions such as having a specialized geriatric pharmacist, creating a designated geriatric cohort unit, and obtaining the southeast's first Atrium geriatric designation. The healthcare organization has made significant strides in these areas, focusing on delivering comprehensive, patient-centered care to enhance outcomes and the quality of life for older adults. Below are some of the highlights of this initiative.



Inpatient Cohort Unit

- The unit has been named Age-Friendly.
- It has won Level 2 IHI/AHA Age-Friendly Committed to Care Excellence for Older Adults Recognition in 2023.
- A Geriatric Program Coordinator has been hired.
- Four Unit Leaders have been enrolled in the NICHE Leadership Program (Nurses Improving Care of HealthSystem Elders).
- A bay area has been transformed into a recreational space with new furniture, artwork, and tables.

4M Framework

- What Matters: Their focus this year is on educating the team.
- Medications: They hired a full-time Geriatric Pharmacist.
- Mobility: They hired three Exercise Physiologists and saw a reduction in falls by 52% in 2023. Their goal is to help patients move three times per day.
- Mentation: Geriatric Nurse Practitioners provide consultations on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Geriatric Friendly ED

- What Matters: Their focus this year is on educating the team.
- Medications: They hired a full-time Geriatric Pharmacist.
- Mobility: They hired three Exercise Physiologists and saw a reduction in falls by 52% in 2023. Their goal is to help patients move three times per day.
- Mentation: Geriatric Nurse Practitioners provide consultations on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Human Sex and Labor Trafficking

The North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation has reported that North Carolina ranks ninth in the United States in terms of the prevalence of human trafficking. Neighboring Charlotte is considered a hotspot for activity, and that puts Cabarrus at a much higher risk for incidents to occur, according to Cabarrus County Sheriff Van Shaw.

In North Carolina, the Human Trafficking Hotline has received 8,875 reports since its launch in 2007. Out of these reports, the program has been able to identify 2,050 cases of human trafficking, and as a result, 5,896 victims have been identified. In Cabarrus County, 275 cases of sexual assault were reported to the Sheriff's Office, Concord, and Kannapolis Police Departments in 2022.



In January 2023, the Cabarrus County Sheriff's Office received a \$1 million grant from the State to address Human Sex and Labor Trafficking. This grant will be used to create and equip two positions within the Criminal Investigations Division with the sole purpose of combating human trafficking and sexual exploitation of children. The individuals in these positions underwent more than 150 hours of specialized training in North Carolina and Florida, specifically in conducting this type of investigations. They also trained additional detectives to assist in the investigations.

During 2023, the Sheriff's office conducted several human trafficking investigations of groups operating in multiple southeastern states. One human trafficking organization based in Charlotte was traveling weekly to Atlanta and transporting young females to the Cabarrus County region. Several arrests have been made this year involving this group, and this investigation is still ongoing.

The detectives, funded through this grant, have arrested over 25 men traveling to and from Cabarrus County to meet what they believed to be children, both male and female, between the ages of 11-15, for sex. These investigations included hours of chats online by these detectives in undercover communications with these predators. More than 45 search warrants have been issued in 2023 from social media accounts to cellular devices. Thanks to the work of the Sheriff's Office, six victims were rescued from their traffickers and reunited with their families.

New, Paused or Discontinued Initiatives

Community Free Clinic Raising Service to 300% Federal Poverty Level

In July 2023, the Community Free Clinic's Board of Directors voted unanimously to increase the Clinic's income threshold to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). With this change, adults in Cabarrus County without insurance and earning less than \$43,740 are eligible for free healthcare and medication at the Clinic. The FPL is calculated based on the number of people in the household and their total income. The goal is to reduce barriers to vulnerable populations' access to healthcare.

The Community Free Clinic has provided free care and medications to adults suffering from acute and chronic illnesses in Cabarrus County since 1994. The Clinic is the Cabarrus County Healthnet hub and serves over 900 patients every year. In 2023, the Clinic provided services worth \$8 for every \$1 received and saved the area's emergency rooms \$1.96 million in costs.

Increased Narcan Access

The Behavioral Health- Prevention & Education Department at Cabarrus Health Alliance now provides nasal Narcan to the public, at no cost, through a vending machine located in the Cabarrus County Detention Center at 30 Corban Ave. The vending machine is located in the hallway across from the magistrate's office and is accessible 24/7 to the general public. Since August 2023, more than 450 kits have been distributed to the public through this vending machine. Part of the Naloxone Distribution Plan under the Prevent Drug Overdose Grant is to provide Cabarrus County residents with free nasal Narcan & decrease the number of Emergency Department visits. While Naloxone/Narcan has been available for residents and community partners at the Cabarrus Health Alliance for several years, the addition of the vending machine is assisting with increasing access across the county.

As part of the Naloxone Education Plan aimed at preventing overdoses and reducing the number of Emergency Department visits, Naloxone/Narcan training is offered along with a distribution plan. Anyone in the community can

request training for themselves or a group, either in-person or virtually. Each attendee is given the opportunity to create their own "Community Wellness Kit" consisting of various prevention supplies, including nasal Narcan, medication lock boxes, Rx Destroyer, locking pill bottles, locking pouches, alcohol bottle locks, and more.

Expanded Funding for Residents in Crisis

In 2023, Cabarrus County launched an initiative aimed at preventing eviction, utility disconnection, and other short-term crises. This initiative provides up to \$1,000 to assist families experiencing non-recurring crises or episodes of need. The program, known as Work First Emergency Assistance, is designed to help families resolve their situation and prevent dependence on ongoing Work First cash assistance. The Cabarrus County Department of Human Services (DHS) administers the funds.

The program guidelines state that short-term services and benefits must be "preventative or transitional in nature." The Cabarrus County Department of Human Services (DHS) administers the funds.

The application requires information such as household occupants, landlord, on-hand resources (cash), checking/savings account balances, income, and monthly expenses, and it is available online or on paper. To date, this program has approved 52 applications and provided over \$46,000 in funding for rent, utilities, and car repairs.

New Online Food Pantry Resource

Members of the Cabarrus County Hunger Task Force envisioned the idea and provided support for the development of a Food Resource Map. The map, housed on the Cooperative Christian Ministry website, was made available to our community on October 26, 2023.

This platform features resources from Cabarrus community partners that provide any form of food relief for the community. It serves as a one-stop informational hub that identifies where an individual can access food pantries, mobile and/or open market offerings, meal delivery options, prepared meal possibilities, and blessing box locations. Additionally, for residents who may face transportation challenges in getting to or from these resources, a link within the platform will help with public or ride transit opportunities. The platform also has a built-in translating tool for the Spanish-speaking population.