

# Wayne County

## State of the County Health Report

### CHILD FATALITIES

- Death from perinatal conditions & birth defects have the highest detrimental affects upon Wayne County's children.
- The total number of child fatalities have decreased by approximately 9% since 1995.
- An increasing trend is observed for child fatalities among children under the age of 1, (during years 1995-2005).
- 15% more children under the age of 1, died in years 2000-05 than during the years 1995-1999.

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## Minority Health

"Educating people about the difference will help people come together and offer a solution. Up until this time, no one really has discussed health disparities in Wayne County and the remarkable differences that we have." states the local health director, James Roosen.

The Wayne County Health Department held numerous minority health forums in communities throughout Wayne County, addressing concerns regarding health among the minority population. The Health Department received a grant to address health disparities, among minorities, mostly in the African American population in Wayne County.

Health officials are tracking the difference in health between African-Americans and whites in Wayne County and throughout North Carolina.

Forums included discussions about HIV/AIDS, and chronic disease among minorities, which also included teen pregnancy rates among minorities in Wayne County.

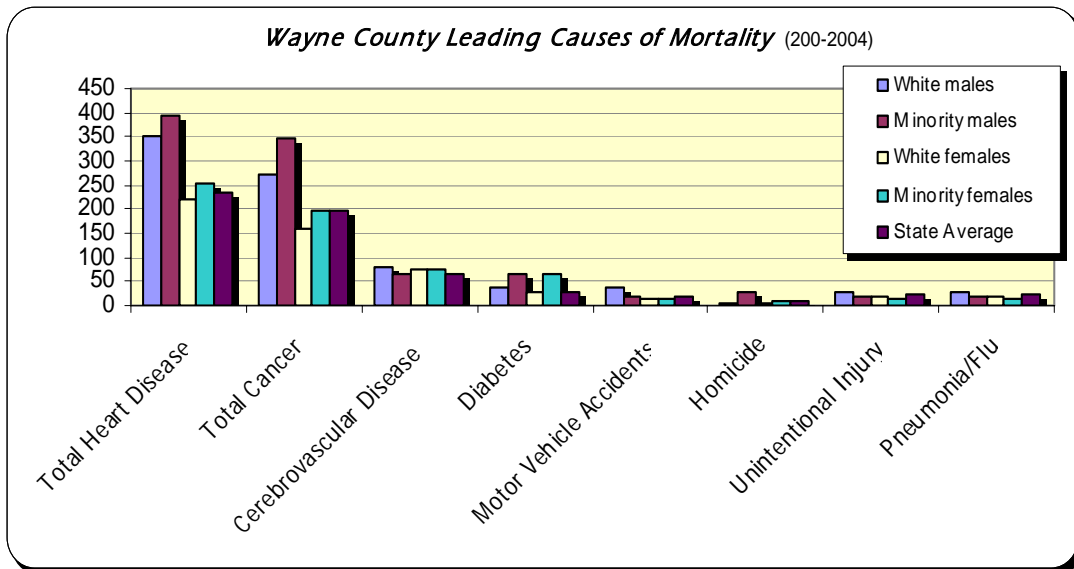


Why are minority health initiatives important?

- Over the last 5 years, 8-% of new HIV infections in Wayne County have been among African-Americans.
- African American males die from prostate cancer at a rate that is 4 times that of white males.
- Black females die from breast cancer at a rate twice that of white females.
- African-Americans account for 34% of births, but 63% of infant deaths in Wayne County.

This initiative was implemented in Wayne County due to the fact that disparities continue to occur in the 21st century. Many minority populations are growing in eastern North Carolina, as throughout the nation, "minority health will soon be the nation's health".

## Heart Disease & Cancer Lead in the Major Causes of Death



Death rates statewide are declining for two significant reasons: (1) advances in medical science, and (2) a better understanding by our population of lifestyle changes that lead to good health. An individual's decision to not smoke, exercise, eat a reasonable diet, avoid drug use and moderate to no alcohol consumption, are lifestyle decisions that dramatically affect health.

Among the leading causes of preventable death of North Carolinians were tobacco use, unhealthy diet/physical inactivity, alcohol misuse, firearms, sexual behavior, motor vehicles, and illicit drug use. The two most pervasive factors that contribute to mortality in North Carolina are cigarette smoking and high blood pressure.

On another note, approximately 30% of all cancer deaths are attributable to cigarettes. High blood pressure is associated with death from all cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, renal failure and stroke. Both of these factors are controllable, either through abstinence from tobacco products or controlling hypertension with lifestyle changes or drugs.

### Demographic Information:

#### STICK IT TO THE FLU

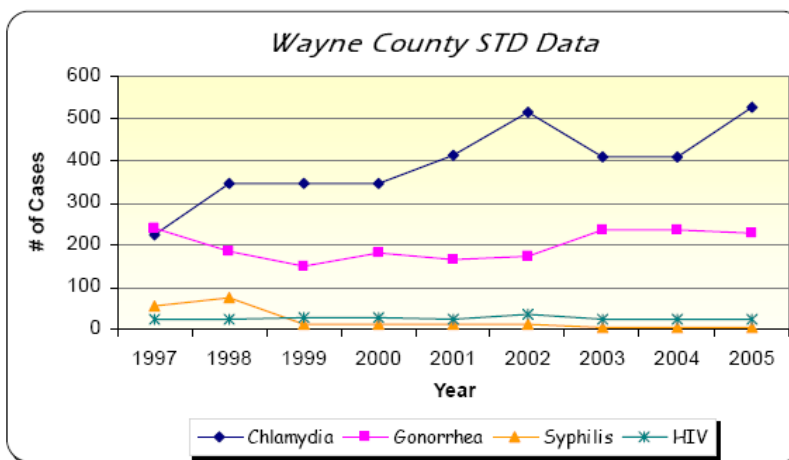
- More than 200,000 people are hospitalized from the flu & its complications. The best way to reduce your risk is to get a flu shot.
- **Wayne Co. Health Dept. held 2 flu clinics, and over 750 people were immunized.**

Population, 2004 estimate	115,110
Median family income, 2004	\$45,400
% of persons below poverty, 2000	13.8 %
Children in poverty (%), 2005	21.3 %
Unemployment Rate, 2005	5.5 %
High school completion rate, 2004	58.5 %
Rate of substantiated child abuse/ neglect (per 1,000 population)	19.0
Violent crime rate (per 100,000 population)	457.8

## Sexually transmitted diseases among Wayne County residents

In the graph, shown to the right, Wayne County's the number of chlamydia cases have almost doubled since 1997. When compared with state rates and number of cases, Wayne County's rates continue to be higher than the state rate.

Chlamydia infections are the most prevalent of all sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). In women, these infections often result in serious reproductive consequences. NC's rates (per 100,000 population), for the year 2004, is approximately 2 1/2 times higher in African Americans versus White populations.



state rate since 2003.

The rates of chlamydia and gonorrheal infections tend to be highest among the adolescent population. A heavy focus on STD prevention is key in reducing the rates among this particular

age group. For gonorrheal infection among Wayne County residents, overall the rate has not had much of a change in the 9-year trend. (1999-2005). Wayne County has had gonorrhea rates below the state rate, for years 1997-2002; but have been above the

age group.

HIV and syphilis rates in Wayne County have leveled off since 1999, and have maintained a steady level, below the NC rate.

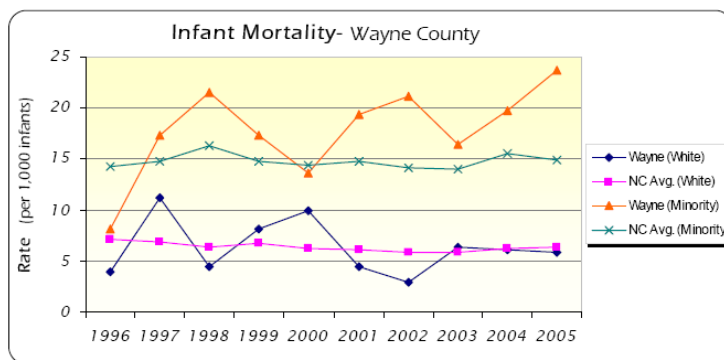
## Infant Mortality still a problem

Infant mortality data are used to compare the health and well-being of populations across the U.S. and across other countries. The national (U.S.) infant mortality rate, the rate at which babies less than one year of age die, has continued to steadily decline over the past several decades, but has increased in Wayne County.

Infant mortality rates are due in part to disparities which continue to exist among various racial and ethnic groups in this country, particularly African-Americans.

Leading causes of infant death include congenital abnormalities, pre-term/low-birth weight, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), problems related to complications of pregnancy, and respiratory distress syndrome.

Promoting access to early and continuous prenatal care helps identify conditions and behavior that can result in low birth-weight babies, such as smoking, drug and alcohol abuse, poor nutrition and in-



adequate weight gain during pregnancy, and repeat pregnancy within six months or less of previous pregnancy.

The above graph shows how the trend of fetal deaths across NC and Wayne County for a 10-year period. With the increased prevalence of fetal deaths, health agencies across Wayne Co. & NC continue its efforts to reduce the numbers of infant deaths.

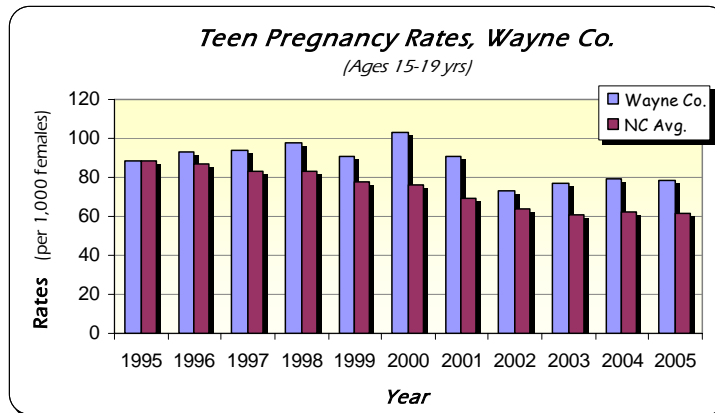
# Teen pregnancy rates remain steady

Teen pregnancy rates in Wayne County have remained steady for the past few years. Overall, Wayne County has observed a decreasing trend in the rates of teen pregnancies.

Wayne County is not the only one who is seeing a decrease in the rates of teen pregnancies, the state rate is also on a decreasing trend.

Declines in teenage pregnancies can be achieved through two mechanisms – changes in sexual behavior and changes in contraceptive use. Some research has claimed that the declines are the result of an increase in teenagers choosing abstinence.

The fear of contracting a sexually transmitted



disease (STD), changing attitudes about sexuality and the availability of new contraceptives may affect sexual activity among adolescents.

Teen pregnancy is a complex problem with no easy answer. Many health agencies have addressed the issue of teen pregnancy for many years, and con-

tinue to battle with the “roller-coaster” effects of teen pregnancy rates, each year. Each community should take a hold of the issue and assist in the work towards reducing the rates of teenage pregnancy. As the saying goes, “it takes a village to raise a child”. Public health agencies also utilize this motto in trying to reduce the teen pregnancy rates and other risky behaviors fore taken by members of its community.



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Visit us online!

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*The Wayne County Health Department mission is to serve all citizens in the prevention of disease and injury through protection, promotion, and delivery of quality, cost-effective services for community, personal and environmental health.*

### HOURS

Monday–Friday  
8:00 am–5:00 pm