

# IREDELL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
Iredell County Health Department

The Mission of the Iredell County Health Department is to promote and protect community, personal and environmental health. Below is a timeline concerning how and when Iredell County Health Department became aware that the observed number of thyroid cancer cases were higher than expected in the 28117 and 28115 zip codes. Iredell County became aware of this issue as a result of a separate Central Cancer Registry (CCR) report that Jane Hinson, Iredell County Health Director, received as the result of a request from a resident of the 28677 zip code.

10/20/17- Iredell County Health Director receives a copy of a report from the CCR that was requested by someone from the 28677 zip code. The Health Director followed up on the same day with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS). NCDHHS felt that the report warranted requesting 20 years of data for breast and endocrine (thyroid cancer is an endocrine) cancer.

10/27/17- NCDHHS received data from the State Center for Health Statistics (SCHS). There were two sets of data. Cancer diagnosis from 2010-2014 and 1995-2015. Both of these data sets included breast and endocrine cancer. Iredell County had the 12<sup>th</sup> highest breast cancer cases and the 5<sup>th</sup> highest endocrine cases in North Carolina during this time. Iredell County is the 15<sup>th</sup> largest county according to the North Carolina State Demographer. DHHS requested the SCHS study the 28677 zip code to see if increased cases are a concern.

11/8/17- Iredell Health Director in consultation with NCDHHS, requested additional data related specifically to zip code 28677. Iredell Health Director is told that the observed increase in endocrine cases is related to thyroid cancer.

1/29/18- Iredell Health Department receives data from DHHS. Iredell County thyroid cancer rate is higher than expected. SCHS states that he cannot break out thyroid cancer rates by zip code.

2/1/18- Iredell Health Director emails DHHS to get thyroid cancer rate for 28677 zip code. At this point, the focus shifts to other areas of Iredell County as Iredell Health Director sees that only 2% of thyroid cancer cases are in the 28677 zip code. The small number of thyroid cases in 28677 leads the Iredell Health Director to believe that thyroid cancer must be elevated somewhere else in Iredell County.

3/16/18- Iredell County Health Director was told by NC CCR that information related to addresses of cases could not be shared with Health Director as it was protected health information but they were able to develop a report that was shared with the Health Director regarding the number of Iredell County cases by zip code ranging from 1996-2015. The CCR sends Iredell Health Director data for thyroid cancer cases by zip code. Data showed that cases in 28115 and 28117 zip codes are higher than the rest of the county. Iredell Health Director emails DHHS for expert opinion on data. DHHS wants to study data before making a determination.

3/23/18 DHHS completes the review of the data and internally recommends that the CCR should do a Standardized Incidence Ratio Analysis (SIR) to see if there are more cases in that area because more people live in that area.

4/2/18- DHHS and Iredell County agree that a Standardized Incidence Ratio Analysis should be done to see if there are more cases of thyroid cancer than expected in the 28115 and 28117 zip codes.

4/13/18- A business partner contacted the Iredell County Health Director to see if the Iredell County Health Department was involved in an investigation regarding Thyroid cancers in the Brawley School Road area. Iredell Director Health Director informed the business partner that Iredell County was currently waiting on a Standardized Incidence Ratio report from the Central Cancer Registry because of concerns the Iredell County Health Director had identified when

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Environmental Health  
349 N. Center Street  
Statesville, NC 28677  
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recently reviewing the number of thyroid cancer cases by zip code within the county. The Iredell County Health Director also shared that the Iredell County Health department had not received any citizen complaints regarding thyroid cancer cases within the Mooresville zip code. The Iredell County Health Director requested that the business partner share any information they had regarding media attention related to this issue for review.

4/16/18 – The business partner shares with Iredell County Health Director a clip of WSOC news story. Iredell County Health Director is able to identify concerned citizen from media.

4/17/18- Iredell County Manager approves for Iredell Health Department to reach out to the concerned citizen by letter, per the Iredell County Health Director's request.

4/23/18- Iredell Health Director has telephone conversation with concerned citizen to hear information regarding the citizen's concerns related to the thyroid cancer rates in the Mooresville area. The concerned citizen informed Iredell County Health Director that they have been busy securing resources to fund a research study with Duke University regarding thyroid cancer incidents in the Mooresville area. The Health Director informed the concerned citizen that Iredell County was waiting on a Standardized Incidence Ratio report from the Central Cancer Registry. Iredell County requested this information as a result of continued follow-up to a report the Iredell County Health Department had received last fall from the Central Cancer Registry from a Statesville citizen inquiry about cancer rates in their zip code. The Health Director informed the concerned citizen that Iredell County would be glad to share this report once it is received and will assist the citizen in thoroughly investigating these concerns. The concerned citizen stated that they had turned in paperwork to the CCR requesting a geospatial analysis of diagnosed thyroid cases for 28115 and 28117.

5/29/18- Iredell Health Director receives requested SIR from CCR. Iredell Health Director holds a conference call with DHHS and CCR to discuss findings.

6/6/18- Iredell Health Department again holds a conference call with DHHS and CCR to get more detail on SIR so that the Iredell Health Director could communicate that to the concerned citizen. Iredell County Health Director also coordinated a meeting with the concerned citizen and the concerned citizen's researchers as well as the CCR and DHHS. The meeting was scheduled for 6/19/18

6/19/18- The group previously mentioned meets to discuss findings and for Iredell County and DHHS to learn about the concerned citizens work.

6/20/18- Iredell County Health Department sends out a press release regarding the SIR and thyroid cancer in 28115 and 28117.

As you can see from this timeline, the Iredell County Health Department became aware of the increased incidence of thyroid cancer in the 28115 and 28117 zip codes because of the diligence of the staff at the Iredell County Health Department. As soon as information was collected and given credence by accepted scientific practices and NCDHHS, both the media and the general public were made aware of the findings. Iredell County became aware of the increased incidence of thyroid cancer in the 28115 and 28117 zip codes on 3/16/18. On the same day, the Iredell County Health Director requested further study from DHHS. Iredell County Health Department became aware of citizen concerns through communication with a business partner on 4/13/18. Data regarding cancer diagnoses are not sent directly to counties. That information is available to counties if there is a request for the data. The NC General Statutes require cancer diagnosis to be reported to the NC CCR, not the local Health Departments.