

# Iredell County

## State of the County Health Report

# 2016

The Iredell County Healthy Carolinians Taskforce is pleased to present the 2016 State of The County Health Report (SOTCH). This document focuses on the County's top health issues and details work that has been accomplished during the last year to address these selected health priorities.

The most recent Iredell County Community Health Assessment was completed in 2015. Healthy Eating and Active Living, Chronic Conditions, and Risky Behaviors were determined to be the top health priorities during the 2015 assessment process. During the Community Health Assessment process, many different types of data were compared and analyzed to provide the Healthy Carolinians Taskforce with a better understanding of the current health climate of the County. In North Carolina, the state requires that each local health department conduct a Community Health Assessment every four years as part of its consolidated contract and accreditation. During the years between the assessments, counties are required to release a State of the County Health Report. This annual report educates Iredell County residents about various health issues in their community, as well as give updates on how we are working within the community and with our local, regional and state partners to address certain priority health issues. The Public Health Development & Promotion Section of the Iredell County Health Department focuses on environmental, policy, and process changes because they are more sustainable over time and make a greater health impact. Recent morbidity and mortality statistics are highlighted within this report, as well as some of our recent projects, initiatives, and accomplishments.

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**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

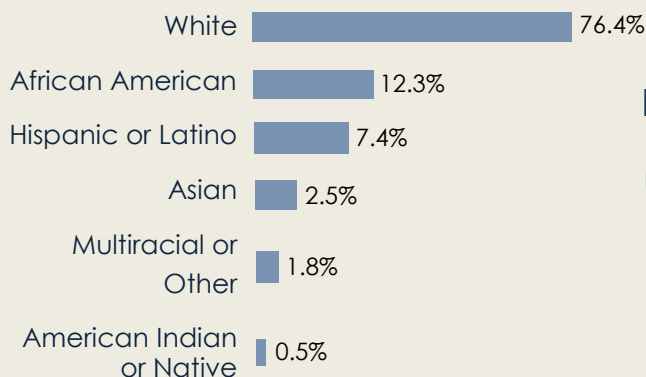
Iredell County Health Department

February 28th, 2017

# Iredell County 2016 State of the County Health Report

## Iredell County Demographics At a Glance

### Racial Demographics



### 2015 Population

Total number of people living in Iredell County. The Iredell County population has increased 6.5% since 2010

**169,866**

### Median Household Income

The Iredell County median household income is higher than State by more than \$5,000

Iredell: \$52,306  
NC: \$46,868

### Unemployment Rate

The Iredell County unemployment rate is slightly better than that of the State

Iredell: 4.5%  
NC: 5.1%

### Percent Uninsured

Percent of people under the age of 65 that do not have health insurance

Iredell: 14.7%  
NC: 13.1%

### Median Age

The average age of Iredell County residents is a little more than 2 years beyond North Carolina's

Iredell 39.9  
NC: 37.4

### Poverty

The poverty level is defined as an annual income of \$23,283 or less for a family of four and \$11,945 for an individual. The Iredell County poverty percentage is 2% less than NC.

Iredell: 14.2%  
NC: 16.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, State and County QuickFacts 2015

## Vulnerable Populations

Individuals that have not been well integrated into health care systems due to cultural, economical, geographical or various health characteristics are considered vulnerable members of the population. These populations are often at a higher risk for chronic conditions. Those impacted by health disparities are often at higher risk during disasters. The following table includes examples of vulnerable populations in Iredell County.

Vulnerable Group Characteristic	Estimated Persons	% of Population
Disabled	20,748	12.7%
Limited English Proficiency	5,137	3.3%
No High School Diploma	14,232	12.8%
Children Less Than 5 Years	9,476	5.7%
Persons 85 Years and Older	2,413	1.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015

## Social Determinants of Health

During all stages of life, health is determined by complex interactions between social and economic factors, environment, and individual behavior. The social conditions we face each day, where we are born, live, work, and play have a greater impact on our health and life expectancy than the healthcare we receive. In summation, a persons residential location may be more important to their health than their genetic makeup.

## Mortality and Morbidity Data

### Leading Causes of Death

For the past three years, cancer, diseases of the heart and chronic lower respiratory disease have been the top three leading causes of death in both Iredell County and the state of North Carolina. These conditions alone make up nearly half of all deaths in the county. The chart to the right depicts the overall leading causes of death. Of the top ten causes, seven of them are related to chronic conditions. As individuals age, the leading causes of death shift toward chronic conditions and many individuals suffer from more than just one chronic condition at a time. The most effective way of preventing or delaying the onset of chronic conditions is by maintaining a healthy diet, getting enough physical activity, and refraining from tobacco use.

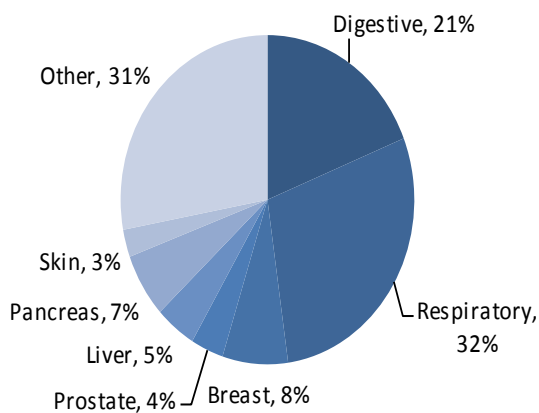
2015 Leading Causes of Death

	Iredell	NC
Cancer—All Sites	21.9%	21.7%
Diseases of the Heart	17.9%	20.7%
Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	7.2%	5.9%
Cerebrovascular Disease	7.2%	5.6%
Alzheimer's Disease	4.4%	4.3%
Other Unintentional Injuries	4.1%	3.9%
Diabetes Mellitus	3.4%	3.1%
Pneumonia & Influenza	2.7%	2.4%
Nephritis Nephrotic Syndrome, & Nephrosis	2.5%	2.0%
Septicemia	2.5%	1.7%

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, 2015 Leading Causes of Death

### Cancer

Cancer Deaths by Location, 2015



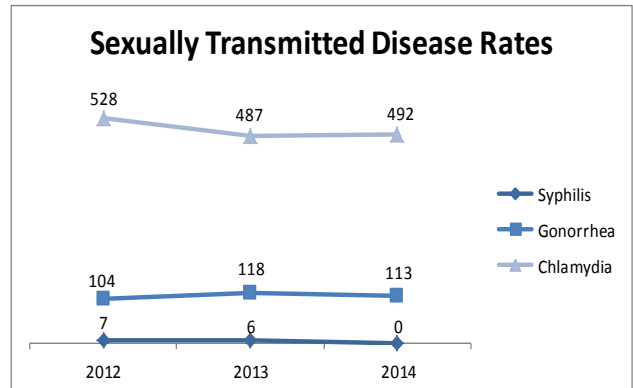
In 2015, there were 330 cancer related deaths in Iredell County. Cancer deaths alone make up nearly a quarter of all deaths in Iredell County. Since 2013, overall cancer deaths have decreased by nearly 2%, and digestive and respiratory organ cancers have decreased by nearly 5%. An increase in early detection and healthy lifestyles are both related to the decline in cancer deaths.

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, Detailed Mortality Statistics Report, 2015 Iredell County Deaths

## Reproductive Health

### Sexually Transmitted Diseases

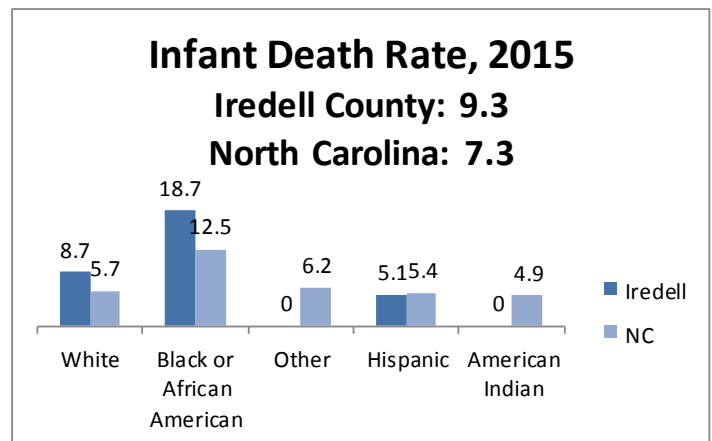
The most prevalent sexually transmitted diseases in Iredell County are chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis. While they are the three most prevalent in Iredell County, their rates are lower than those of North Carolina and have been for nearly a decade. Chlamydia is the most prevalent of the three, with around 500 residents diagnosed annually. Over the past few years, all three rates have remained fairly stable. This stability could be linked to the increase in reproductive health education provided to youth and adolescents by various agencies as well as the accessibility of affordable testing.



Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, NC HIV/STD Surveillance Report 2015

### Birth Outcomes & Highlights

In 2015, there were a total of 1,935 Births and 18 infant deaths in Iredell County. The total Infant mortality rate in Iredell County is 9.3, up from 8.7 in 2013. The Infant mortality rate for North Carolina is 7.3. Since 2013, the infant mortality rate in Iredell County has been higher than that of the state. Not only is infant mortality on the rise, but there continues to be a statistically significant racial disparity. African Americans have the highest infant mortality rate among all races, leading Iredell County to have a significantly larger disparity rate than that of the state average.



Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, 2015 NC Infant Mortality Report

Risk Factor or Characteristic	Iredell	NC
Teenage Pregnancy	1.7%	1.8%
Mother Less than High School Education	13.8%	15.1%
Late or No Prenatal Care	7.8%	7.5%
Mother Overweight or Obese	50.5%	50.5%
Mother Smoked	12.2%	9.3%
Not Breastfed Upon Discharge	27.7%	19.6%

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, 2015 Birth Risks & Characteristics

Many risk factors, such as smoking during pregnancy and not obtaining prenatal care play a significant role in birth outcomes. In Iredell County, more than half of expectant mothers are overweight or obese and nearly 30% chose not to breastfeed their infant. Over 12% of mothers smoke during their pregnancy which can lead to a multitude of poor birth outcomes, such as preterm delivery, low birth weight, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

# Iredell County 2016 State of the County Health Report

## Health Priorities and Action Plans

The top three selected health priorities have been found to be chronic disease, healthy eating and active living, and risky behaviors.

Chronic disease was selected as our first health priority. Chronic disease was selected as the top health concern due to the fact that half of all the leading causes of premature death in Iredell County are a result of chronic conditions. Four of the top ten health concerns of the community health survey respondents were cancer, heart disease, stroke, and diabetes, which are nearly all chronic conditions.

Selected as our second health priority was healthy eating and active living. Healthy eating and active living directly correlate with six of the top ten health concerns of the community and four of the leading causes of preventable death in Iredell County. Healthy eating and active living play a crucial role in mitigating risk factors such as obesity, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol that impact overall health.

Selected as our third health priority was risky behaviors. Risky behaviors include drug use, prescription drug misuse, tobacco use, and unsafe driving practices. Three of the top ten health concerns selected by the community survey respondents are directly related to risky behaviors, and two of the leading preventable causes of death are linked to risky behaviors. These were clustered together as "risky behaviors" because while substance use is the primary focus, addressing them collectively to targeted populations and the general community is efficient and effective.

### Chronic Disease

Reach 10% of the target population within the next three years with educational material about colorectal cancer and offer free colorectal cancer screenings to those qualified.

Offer free diabetes self-management classes once a quarter for the next three years.

Iredell County Health Department will increase its social media presence by 20% annually through March of 2019 and share chronic disease related education and information at a rapid pace.

### Healthy Eating & Active Living

Assist three local businesses and industries in adopting a worksite wellness policy by March 2019.

By March 2019, expand the Share the Harvest Program by 10% annually and market both the Share the Harvest Program and Iredell County Farmer's Markets in order to increase participation.

Increase access to places or facilities for physical activity by updating the Get Fit Iredell community calendar and holding one physical activity event annually sponsored by the Iredell County Health Department, as other partners will do the same.

### Risky Behaviors

Expand the current youth substance-use prevention and leadership program into five partnering organizations and host at least one train-the-trainer program by March 2019.

Implement a technology-based substance use prevention program in two of the most at-risk schools in Iredell county (one school from each district) by March 2019.

Iredell County Health Department will increase its social media presence by 15% annually through March of 2019 and share substance abuse and risky behavior related education and information instantaneously.

## Chronic Disease

Chronic conditions make up over half of all preventable deaths, and account for seven of the top ten leading causes of death in Iredell County. Chronic conditions are among the most common, costly and preventable of all health problems. Because of this, the Iredell County Commissioners developed a Public Health and Well-being Chronic Disease Subcommittee



that joined forces with the Iredell County Healthy Carolinians Chronic Disease Subcommittee to develop plans and implement strategies to address these persistent conditions. By joining forces with Iredell Memorial Hospital, the Chronic Disease Subcommittee will be able to tackle tough issues like diabetes and colorectal cancer from many angles.

### Death Rates per 100,000 Residents

21.8	Diabetes
16.1	Colorectal Cancer
170.1	Heart Disease

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, County Trends & Key Health Indicators, 2015

### Colorectal Cancer Awareness Initiatives

The most effective way of combating colorectal cancer is maintaining a healthy diet and getting the proper amount of physical activity. Because these strategies often fall short when social determinants and environmental factors are present, regular screenings and early detection are vital in diagnosing cancer in it's earliest stages to decrease the impact it will have on lives. During this past year, the Iredell County Health Department has strived to increase community awareness of the benefits of cancer screenings and early detection. Five businesses and industries have been provided with colorectal cancer educational information along with approximately 10,000 members of the community through various outreach initiatives.

### Diabetes Initiatives

In Iredell County, more than 3% of all deaths are related to diabetes. Diabetes is one of the most prominent chronic conditions that Iredell County residents face, but thankfully most cases can be prevented through maintaining a healthy diet and getting enough physical activity. The Iredell County Health Department has teamed up with nine other counties in the region to participate in the Minority Diabetes Prevention Program. This program screens residents for pre-diabetes using a CDC paper-test and various blood tests and holds healthy lifestyle classes for those that meet the eligibility requirements. The class focuses on healthy eating, active living, and stress management strategies in order to reduce ones risk for developing Type 2 Diabetes. The Iredell County Health Department screened nearly 50 individuals in various clinics and within the faith community.



## Healthy Eating & Active Living

Maintaining a healthy diet is one of the most vital parts of living a healthy life, yet for many Iredell County residents this is not attainable. The cost of health foods are rising, access to healthy foods is becoming limited and the availability of unhealthy options, such as fast food restaurants, are increasing.

Residents getting the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables	13.5%
Residents getting the recommended amount of physical activity	47.9%
Residents strongly agreeing that there are healthy food options in their neighborhood	36.4%

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, BRFSS 2015

### Healthy Food Access Initiatives



The Share The Harvest Program has increased access to fresh produce among low-income residents with limited access to fresh produce in Iredell County since 2013. Just last year, over 10,000 pounds of produce was dropped-off by local growers and dispensed to residents in need at Iredell Christian Ministry, Mooresville Christian Mission, and Matthew 25. To assist these agencies in their efforts, the Iredell County Health Department provided shelving to Matthew 25 and Iredell Christian Ministry in an effort to build capacity to house produce and make their produce display more functional. Point-of-service signage was provided to all locations, and promotional signage was provided to Iredell Christian Ministry to be displayed on their vehicle while they are traveling around town collecting produce for Share the Harvest promotional purposes.

While most produce for Share the Harvest is provided by local growers, it is important to foster gardening knowledge within the community. Because of this, the Iredell County Health Department gives out seeds to the community in an effort to increase the number of backyard gardens and number of farmers who plant extra rows to donate. The Iredell County Health Department is also a supporter of the community garden managed by Iredell Christian Ministry. This community garden produces nearly 500 pounds of produce annually and is kept up by Iredell Christian Ministry, Grace Baptist Church and members of the general community. To make this community garden more visible within the Community, the Iredell County Health Department facilitated the development and installation of permanent signage that will remain in their environment.



### Active Living Initiatives

Get Fit Iredell was collaboratively developed and continuously supported by the Iredell County Health Department, United Way, City of Statesville Recreation and Parks, and Iredell County Parks and Recreation. During the programs first 2 seasons, over 500 residents participated in various events such as kickball, dodgeball, yoga, and dancing. The program aims to increase physical activity opportunities throughout the county for all ages by hosting events and supporting local initiatives by promoting them on a unified community activity calendar.



## Risky Behaviors & Substance Use

### Youth Initiatives

Targeting efforts specifically toward the youth population is a known best-practice to change social norms and behaviors. Because of this, the Iredell County Health Department has acquired a full-time Health Educator charged with the task of developing and implementing youth-based programming aimed at preventing substance use, reducing child fatality, and emphasizing healthy living.

During the summer of 2016, the Iredell County Health Department brought a youth-based substance-use prevention program to 60 teens at the Boys & Girls Club. The program discussed the harmful effects that tobacco, alcohol, illicit drugs, and prescription medications can have on one's body, while also using leadership building projects to combat peer pressure and promote substance-free living. During the summer of 2017, the Iredell County Health Department Public Development & Promotion Division has plans to offer an extended version of the program to the Boys & Girls Club. There are also plans to bring the program to various other youth development centers and the school systems, allowing many youth to gain knowledge, skills, and abilities.



### Substance Use Initiatives

The recent rise in substance use in Iredell County is alarming. In 2016 there were 558 admittances to local emergency departments related to medication and drug overdoses, compared to just 425 in 2011 (NC DETECT). To combat this rising issue, the Iredell County Health Department joined forces with the Drug Abuse Free Iredell Coalition to strategically plan a course of action. As a result of these plans, subcommittees were formed and met regularly to bring drug abuse prevention efforts to fruition. To tackle tough issues like unsafe prescribing practices and inform the community about Naloxone, the Iredell County Health Department and Drug Abuse Free Iredell Coalition teamed up with Partners Behavioral Health Management and the Governor's Institute to present the *Opioid Epidemic in Iredell County: Guidance for Healthcare Providers* Event in February 2017. This event focused on safe prescribing practices, the Naloxone standing order, and the controlled substance reporting system. Dr. Omar Manejwala, a nationally recognized author and addiction psychiatrist, was the keynote speaker. The event was attended by nearly 150 individuals.

### Tobacco Free Living Initiatives



According to 2015 data, 12% of adults in Iredell County currently smoke every day, and 12.2% of pregnant mothers are current smokers. To increase awareness among community members, the Iredell County Health Department Public Health Promotion & Development Division hosted an informational *Tobacco Prevention Champions* event in March 2017. This event was geared toward people that provide direct services to new and expectant mothers, such as medical professionals, social workers, and those within the school system. Approximately 45 individuals attended the training and learned about the current state of tobacco and various resources available within Iredell County. The primary goal of the Tobacco Prevention Champions Event was to infuse the community with individuals in various settings who have at least baseline knowledge and an understanding of resources related to tobacco-free living.



## Emerging Issues

### Zika Virus

During the summer of 2016, Zika Virus became a top public health concern. Zika is an infectious disease that is spread by the bite of an infected Aedes species mosquito. Symptoms may include fever, skin rash, muscle and joint pain, headache, and red eyes. Symptoms generally last less than seven days. Infection during pregnancy causes microcephaly and other harmful birth defects. To combat the growing concern of Zika here in Iredell County, the Board of Health passed a mosquito ordinance making it unlawful to abed a mosquito breeding ground on your premises. Mosquito Borne Illness information and educational outreach was distributed to the community at-large, medical providers, and at risk populations.

### Health Disparities

There is a significant disparity rate between Whites and African Americans in terms of many health risks and various health conditions. It is important that all Iredell County residents attain their full health potential and that no one is disadvantaged from achieving this potential due to social position or other socially determined circumstances.

### Infant Mortality

The infant mortality rate for Iredell County is higher than the State average overall, and among most racial categories. A majority of infant deaths in Iredell County occur during the perinatal period, which is defined as the 20th week of a woman's pregnancy through the 28th week of an infant's life. Common barriers to a healthy pregnancy and birth include lack of access to appropriate healthcare before, during, and after pregnancy, as well as environmental factors such as smoking and substance use. To address these issues, a child fatality subcommittee is being formed to dive deeper into infant mortality related concerns.

## New Initiatives

### Youth Initiatives

To better reach the youth population of Iredell County, the Public Health Development & Promotion Division of the Iredell County Health Department acquired a Health Educator. This position will allow for increased programming within the school system and local youth development centers. This position is in place to primarily promote prevention efforts to the youth population.

### Minority Diabetes Prevention Program

The Iredell County Health Department, in partnership with many other counties within region 4, has joined the Minority Diabetes Program. The program is funded by the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities. The program screens Iredell County residents for pre-diabetes and offers healthy lifestyle classes to eligible participants

### Drug Abuse Free Iredell Coalition

As a result of the combination of the County Commissioner Public Health and Well-being Taskforce and the Drug Abuse Free Iredell Coalition, the Iredell County Health Department has become strong stakeholders in the Coalition. After a 3 month Strategic Planning period, the Coalition is ready to begin implementing action plans and gaining momentum to combat the substance use epidemic in Iredell County. A barrier to this is the time it will take to accomplish goals. A new substance use prevention specialist is needed to make the action plans a reality.

### No Smoking Policy

During the last year, The Iredell County Government went completely smoke-free. This rule prohibits smoking, including e-cigarettes, and applies to all government owned buildings, properties, and vehicles. Reactions to this rule have been positive and will likely increase the health and productivity of employees.

# Iredell County 2016 State of the County Health Report

The Iredell County Healthy Carolinians Task Force is a group of Iredell County residents working together to emphasize public health and preventive health practices to improve the quality of life and health status of all Iredell County residents. Iredell County Healthy Carolinians was established in 2004 and is made up of community members, leaders, and organizations who are committed to improving the health of Iredell County residents.

## Iredell County Public Health Department Facilitation Team

Megan Redford, Healthy Carolinians Coordinator

Norma Rife, Director of Public Health Development & Promotion

Jane Hinson, Health Director

## Healthy Carolinians Taskforce

Liz Burns, United Way of Iredell County

Jennifer Griffith, Iredell County Partnership for Young Children

Richard Griggs, Statesville Recreation and Parks Department

Melissa Jablonski, Iredell County Partnership for Young Children

Karen Kerley, Iredell-Statesville Schools

Marta Koesling, Iredell County Partnership for Young Children

Brett Eckerman, United Way of Iredell County

Regina Propst, Insight Human Services

Lisa Warren, Iredell Health System

Caroline Hager, Iredell County Health Department

Brady Johnson, Iredell-Statesville School System

Kim McCall, Mooresville Graded School District

Mitzie McCurdy, Lake Norman Regional Medical Center

Grady Mills, Community Member, Past Board of Health Member

Amy Naylor, Mitchell Community College

Jackie Negley, Iredell Council on Aging

Amanda Peters, Iredell-Statesville School System

Ann Simmons, Iredell County Cooperative Extension

John Snow, Iredell Health System

Janie Stikeleather, Davis Regional Medical Center

Blake Blakley, YMCA

Anna Rice, Iredell Council on Aging

Sylvester Reed, Mt. Nebo Baptist Church, Community Member

## How To Get Involved

Iredell County Health Department continuously partners with local agencies, organizations, and individuals to assess the community to improve overall health.

Help us work toward a healthier Iredell County.

Please join the Iredell County Healthy Carolinians Task Force! 704-924-4089

This SOTCH has been disseminated to Iredell County Health Department's stakeholders, community partners, internal staff, and the general population.

Electronic copies of this report and other Iredell County health data can be found on our website:  
<https://www.co.iredell.nc.us/164/Community-Health-Data>

