

| 2022 | Leading Causes of Death Data Brief



Key Findings from 2020 Mortality Data

A note on the data in this report: The processing requirements for birth and death certificate records result in a delay in public availability of the data.

- COVID-19 was the third leading cause of death in 2020, causing the deaths of 346 Guilford County residents.
- Cancer and heart disease, the two top leading causes of death, comprised about a third of all deaths in Guilford County in 2020.
- Males had more deaths due to cancer, heart disease, unintentional injuries, chronic liver disease, Parkinson's Disease, suicide, and homicide. Females had more deaths due to dementia, Alzheimer's Disease, and strokes.
- African Americans had higher age-adjusted death rates than Whites for heart disease, cancers, stroke, diabetes, and homicide, while Whites had higher age-adjusted death rates due to chronic lower respiratory disease, chronic liver disease, and cirrhosis, and unintentional injuries.
- Lung cancer is the leading type of cancer mortality, followed by breast, prostate, and colorectal cancers.

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For more information about Guilford County health statistics, visit:

www.guilfordcountync.gov/our-county/human-services/health-department/health-statistics.

Selected Leading Causes of Death, All Residents, Guilford County, 2020

	Cause of Death	Deaths	Mortality Rate per 100,000
1	Cancer	891	164.6
2	Heart Disease	867	160.2
3	COVID-19	346	63.9
4	Dementia	341	63.0
5	Unintentional Injuries/External Causes*	295	54.5
6	Stroke	266	49.1
7	Alzheimer's Disease	253	46.7
8	Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	187	34.5
9	Diabetes	160	29.6
10	Kidney Disease	122	22.5
11	Flu and Pneumonia	91	16.8
12	Parkinson's Disease	76	14.0
13	Motor Vehicle Injuries	74	13.7
14	Homicide	73	13.5
15	Suicide	65	12.0
16	Septicemia	64	11.8
17	Liver Disease	60	11.1
18	Essential Hypertension	56	10.3
19	Perinatal Conditions	27	5.0
20	Congenital Malformations	17	3.1
	Other Causes	877	NA
	Total 2020 Deaths from all Causes	5,208	962.1
	2020 Guilford County Population	541,299	

*Unintentional Injuries/External Causes includes deaths primarily due to unintentional poisonings, falls, and other external causes of injury.

Deaths from Cancer by Type, All Residents, Guilford County, 2020

Cancer Cause of Death	Deaths	Rate per 100,000
Lung Cancer	198	36.6
Colorectal Cancer	80	14.8
Breast Cancer	69	24.6
Pancreatic Cancer	64	11.8
Prostate Cancer	48	17.8
Liver Cancer	45	8.3
Leukemia	28	5.2
Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma	26	4.8
Bladder Cancer	25	4.6
Oral Cancer	20	3.7
Stomach Cancer	17	3.1
Brain Cancer	17	3.1
Ovarian Cancer	16	5.7
Skin Cancer	10	1.8
Cervical Cancer	9	3.2

Source: NC Mortality File, Center for Health Statistics; NCHS Bridged Population Estimates.

Note: Rates for Breast, Ovarian, Cervical and Prostate cancer are based on the population of females and males in Guilford County, respectively.

Leading Causes of Death by Sex

Deaths and Mortality Rates per 100,000, Guilford County, 2020

Cause of Death	Females		Males	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Cancer	421	150.1	470	186.2
Heart Disease	386	137.6	481	190.5
COVID-19	161	57.4	185	73.3
Unintentional Injuries/External Causes*	139	49.6	156	61.8
Dementia	242	86.3	99	39.2
Stroke	161	57.4	105	41.6
Alzheimer's Disease	174	62.0	79	31.3
Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	96	34.2	91	36.0
Diabetes	75	26.7	85	33.7
Kidney Disease	56	20.0	66	26.1
Pneumonia and Flu	43	15.3	48	19.0
Liver Disease	20	7.1	40	15.8
Motor Vehicle Crash Deaths	14	5.0	60	23.8
Essential Hypertension	28	10.0	28	11.1
Homicide	13	4.6	60	23.8
Septicemia	33	11.8	31	12.3
Suicide	10	3.6	55	21.8
Parkinson's Disease	25	8.9	51	20.2
Perinatal Conditions	13	4.6	14	5.5
Congenital Malformations	6	2.1	11	4.4
HIV Disease	5	1.8	8	3.2
Other Causes of Death	410	--	453	--
Total Deaths All Causes	2,541	905.9	2,676	1,060
2020 Total Population by Sex**	280,499		252,457	

Source: NC Mortality File, Center for Health Statistics.

Note: Use caution when interpreting rates based on small numbers, i.e., less than 10.

*Unintentional Injuries/External Causes includes deaths primarily due to unintentional poisonings, falls, and other external causes of injury.

**Population estimates from 2020 Census, American Community Survey.

Selected Leading Causes of Death, by Race and Ethnicity

Deaths and Mortality Rates per 100,000, Guilford County, 2020

Cause of Death	White		Black/African American		Asian		Hispanic	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Cancer	586	222.5	274	150.7	17	58.8	14	32.3
Heart Disease	579	219.8	274	150.7	11	38.0	5	11.5
COVID-19	200	75.9	111	61.0	21	72.6	19	43.8
Unintentional Injuries/External Causes*	210	79.7	71	39.0	4	13.8	3	6.9
Dementia	249	94.5	90	49.5	1	3.5	3	6.9
Stroke	165	62.6	91	50.0	6	20.7	4	9.2
Alzheimer's Disease	200	75.9	46	25.3	3	10.4	6	13.8
Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	142	53.9	42	23.1	0	0.0	1	2.3
Diabetes	81	30.7	72	39.6	3	10.4	6	13.8
Kidney Disease	57	21.6	60	33.0	2	6.9	4	9.2
Pneumonia and Flu	54	20.5	35	19.2	1	3.5	2	4.6
Liver Disease	40	15.2	16	8.8	1	3.5	3	6.9
Essential Hypertension	28	10.6	27	14.8	1	3.5	0	0.0
Motor Vehicle Crash Deaths	25	9.5	43	23.6	0	0.0	6	13.8
Homicide	11	4.2	56	30.8	2	6.9	2	4.6
Septicemia	33	12.5	30	16.5	1	3.5	2	4.6
Suicide	55	20.9	8	4.4	2	6.9	1	2.3
Parkinson's Disease	64	24.3	11	6.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Perinatal Conditions	8	3.0	18	9.9	1	3.5	6	13.8
Congenital Malformations	8	3.0	7	3.8	2	6.9	0	0.0
HIV Disease	3	1.1	10	5.5	0	0.0	1	2.3
Other Causes	557	--	276	--	17	--	14	--
Total Deaths—All Causes	3,355	1273.6	1,668	917.2	96	331.9	109	251.3
2020 Population by Race and Ethnicity**	263,428		181,848		28,922		43,379	

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics.

*Unintentional Injuries/External Causes includes deaths primarily due to unintentional poisonings, falls, and other external causes of injury.

Note: Rates are not adjusted for differences in age distributions among racial and ethnic groups.

** Population estimates from 2020 Census, American Community Survey.

Selected Leading Causes of Death, by Race

5-Year Age-Adjusted Mortality Rates per 100,000, Guilford County, 2016-2020

Cause of Death	White		Black/African American		Guilford County Overall	
	Deaths 2016-2020	Rate per 100,000	Deaths 2016-2020	Rate per 100,000	Deaths 2016-2020	Rate per 100,000
Diseases of Heart	2,861	129.0	1,223	161.4	1,940	105.3
Cerebrovascular Disease	878	39.0	403	56.8	1,326	43.3
Cancer	3,073	144.0	1,359	169.5	4,623	148.5
Colon, Rectum, and Anus	246	11.9	136	16.5	393	12.6
Pancreas	213	9.7	114	14.9	343	11.0
Trachea, Bronchus, and Lung	794	36.8	313	38.8	1,152	36.7
Breast	220	19.1	122	24.7	360	20.9
Prostate	147	15.9	98	39.6	252	20.3
Diabetes Mellitus	392	18.6	334	42.2	757	24.5
Pneumonia and Influenza	399	17.9	144	19.8	552	18.1
Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	777	35.1	189	24.8	980	31.3
Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis	258	14.0	79	8.3	356	11.5
Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome, and	302	13.8	285	38.8	612	20.0
Unintentional Motor Vehicle Injuries	148	10.5	158	17.0	348	12.9
Unintentional Injuries and External Causes	957	59.7	265	31.1	1,272	45.5
Suicide	250	17.5	44	4.6	315	11.5
Homicide	36	2.7	223	22.0	281	10.7
Alzheimer's disease	944	40.2	251	43.2	1,218	39.9
All Causes	15,717	750.0	6,955	911.1	23,526	776.2

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, County Health Databook.

*Unintentional Injuries/External Causes includes deaths primarily due to unintentional poisonings, falls, and other external causes of injury.

Note on Age-Adjustment: When comparing mortality rates of age-related conditions—i.e., when the mortality risk increases with age, as with chronic diseases—across groups that have different age distributions, it can be misleading to use crude or unadjusted rates. In such situations, it is advisable to use age-adjusted rates that control for differences in age distribution. In Guilford County, Whites and African Americans have substantially different age distribution, with Whites having an older age distribution than African Americans.

Detailed Causes of Death for Infants, Birth through Age One Guilford County, 2020

ICD-10 Codes	Cause of Death	Number of Deaths
A419	Sepsis, unspecified organism	1
E722	Disorders of urea cycle metabolism	1
I272	Adrenal gland disorder	2
I740	Atrial embolism and thrombosis	1
J980	Other respiratory disorder	1
J984	Other disorders of lungs	1
Conditions Originating in the Perinatal Period		
P008	Newborn affected by maternal conditions unrelated to pregnancy	1
P010	Newborn affected by complications of pregnancy, labor, and delivery	1
P011	Newborn (suspected to be) affected by premature rupture of membranes	2
P021	Newborn affected by other forms of placental separation and hemorrhage	2
P038	Complications of labor and delivery	2
P059	Newborn affected by slow intrauterine growth	1
P072	Extreme immaturity of newborn	4
P219	Respiratory distress of newborn	2
P220	Respiratory distress syndrome of newborn	1
P269	Pulmonary hemorrhage originating in the perinatal period	2
P293	Persistent fetal circulation	1
P369	Bacterial sepsis of newborn, unspecified	2
P524	Intracerebral (non-traumatic) hemorrhage	1
P701	Syndrome of infant of a diabetic mother	1
P832	Hydrops fetalis not due to hemolytic disease	1
P912	Neonatal cerebral leukomalacia	1
P916	Hypoxic ischemic encephalopathy	1
Congenital Malformations and Chromosomal Abnormalities		
Q249	Congenital malformation of heart, unspecified	1
Q250	Congenital malformations of great arteries	1
Q255	Atresia of pulmonary artery	1
Q336	Congenital hypoplasia and dysplasia of lung	1
Q349	Congenital malformations of respiratory system	1
Q613	Polycystic kidney	1
Q614	Renal dysplasia	1
Ill-defined and Unknown Cause of Mortality		
R99	Ill-defined and unspecified causes of mortality	4
Y09	Assault by unspecified means	1
Total Infant Deaths		45

Source: NC Mortality File, NC State Center for Health Statistics.

Leading Causes of Death, by Age Group

Deaths and Rates per 100,000, Guilford County, 2020

Cause of Death	Ages 0-19		Ages 20-39		Ages 40-59		Ages 60-79		Ages 80 and Over	
	Deaths	Rate	Deaths	Rate	Deaths	Rate	Deaths	Rate	Deaths	Rate
Cancer	2	1.4	12	8.3	130	94.3	494	536.2	253	1,246.0
Heart Disease	2	1.4	18	12.5	202	146.5	358	388.6	387	1,905.9
COVID-19	0	0.0	7	4.9	37	26.8	136	147.6	166	817.5
Unintentional Injuries/External Causes*	6	4.3	85	59.0	78	56.6	48	52.1	78	384.1
Dementia	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	54	58.6	278	1,369.1
Stroke	0	0.0	2	1.4	29	21.0	85	92.3	150	738.7
Alzheimer's Disease	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	45	48.8	208	1,024.4
Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	0	0.0	0	0.0	19	13.8	88	95.5	80	394.0
Diabetes	2	1.4	2	1.4	37	26.8	69	74.9	50	246.2
Kidney Disease	0	0.0	2	1.4	19	13.8	65	70.6	37	182.2
Pneumonia and Flu	0	0.0	5	3.5	12	8.7	33	35.8	47	231.5
Liver Disease	0	0.0	2	1.4	28	20.3	25	27.1	5	24.6
Motor Vehicle Crash Deaths	11	7.9	27	18.7	25	18.1	9	9.8	2	9.8
Essential Hypertension	0	0.0	1	0.7	8	5.8	23	25.0	24	118.2
Homicide	8	5.8	50	34.7	11	8.0	4	4.3	0	0.0
Septicemia	2	1.4	0	0.0	12	8.7	26	28.2	24	118.2
Suicide	6	4.3	23	16.0	16	11.6	18	19.5	2	9.8
Parkinson's Disease	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	25	27.1	51	251.2
Perinatal Conditions	27	19.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Congenital Malformations	8	5.8	1	0.7	3	2.2	4	4.3	1	4.9
HIV Disease	0	0.0	5	3.5	5	3.6	3	3.3	0	0.0
Other Causes of Death	13	9.4	51	35.4	147	106.6	337	365.8	314	1,546.4
Total Deaths	88	63.5	294	204.0	718	520.7	1,948	2,114.4	2160	10,637.8
2020 Guilford County Population Estimate	138,495		144,136		137,892		92,128		20,305	

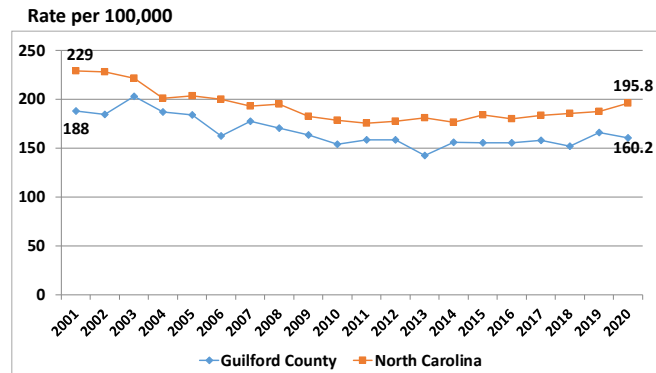
Source: NC Mortality File, Center for Health Statistics.

Note: Use caution when interpreting rates based on small numbers, i.e., less than 10.

*Unintentional Injuries/External Causes includes deaths primarily due to unintentional poisonings, falls, and other external causes of injury.

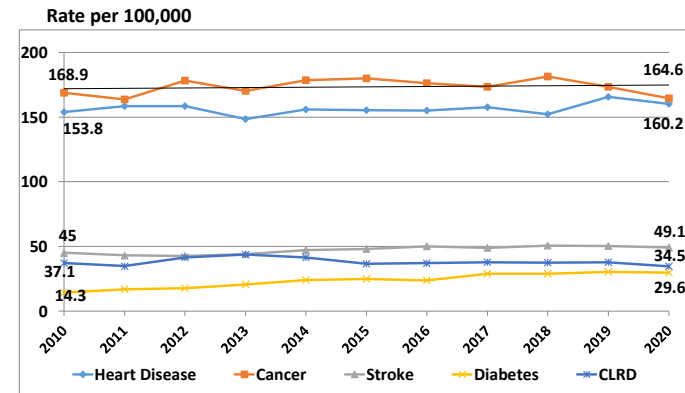
Trends in Select Leading Causes of Death

Heart Disease Mortality Guilford County and NC, 2001-2020



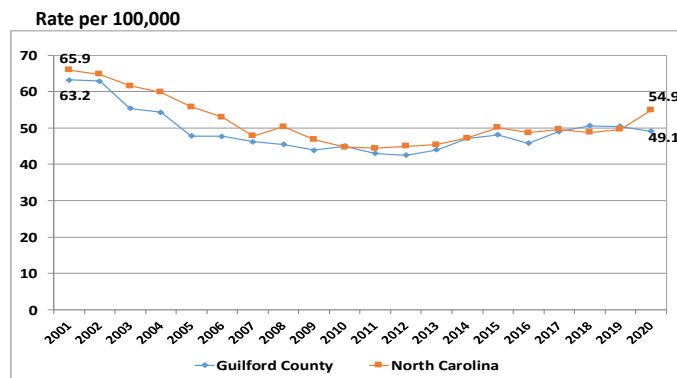
Note: Rates are not age-adjusted.
Source: Data provided by the NC Center for Health Statistics.
Chart prepared by the GCDHHS, Division of Public Health.

Trends in Chronic Disease Mortality Guilford County, 2010-2020



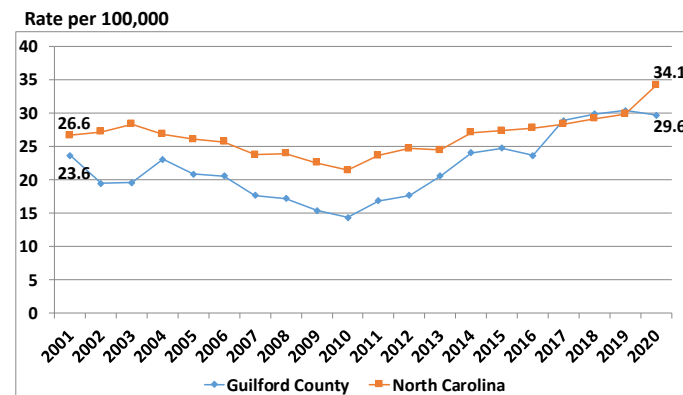
Notes: CLRD (Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease) is also known as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). Rates not age-adjusted.
Source: Data provided by the NC Center for Health Statistics.
Chart prepared by the GCDHHS, Division of Public Health.

Cerebrovascular Disease (Stroke) Mortality Guilford County and NC, 2001-2020



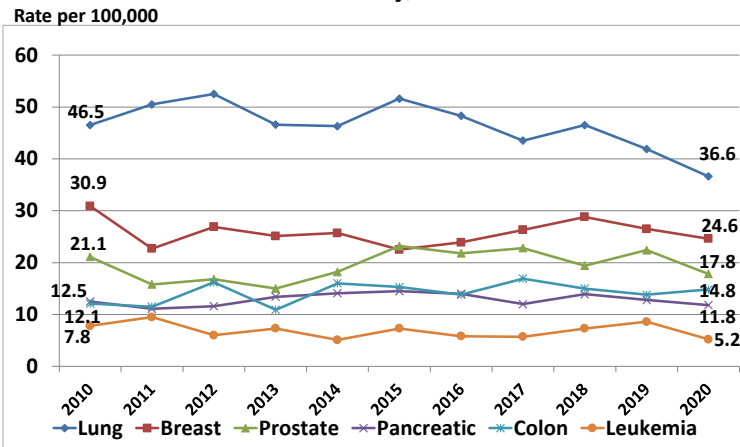
Note: Rates are not age-adjusted.
Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics.
Chart prepared by the GCDHHS, Division of Public Health.

Diabetes Mortality Guilford County and NC, 2001-2020



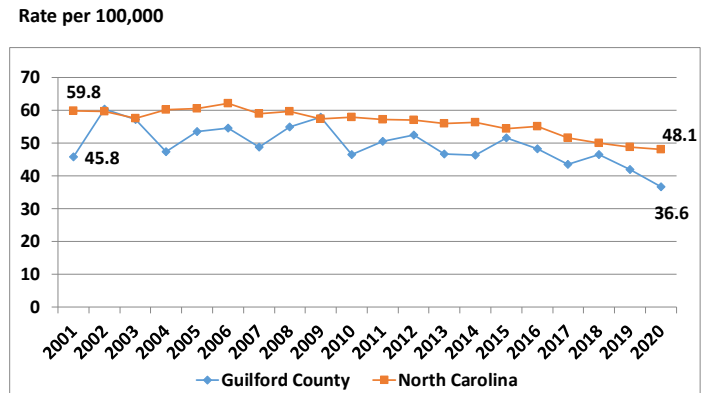
Note: Rates are not age-adjusted.
Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics.
Chart prepared by the GCDHHS, Division of Public Health.

Leading Causes of Death: Cancer Types Guilford County, 2010-2020



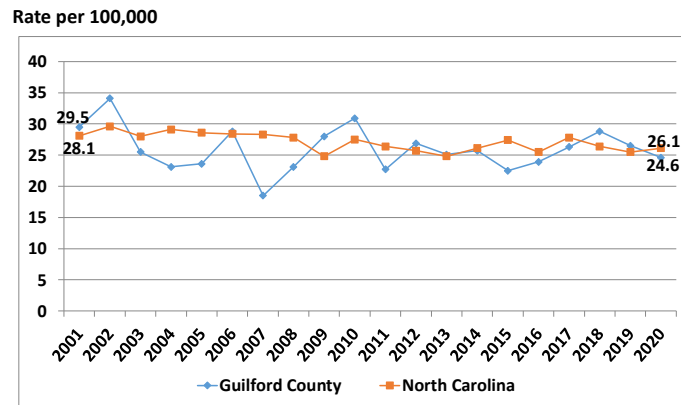
Note: Rates are not age-adjusted.
Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics.
Chart prepared by the GCDHHS, Division of Public Health.

Lung Cancer Mortality Guilford County and NC, 2001-2020



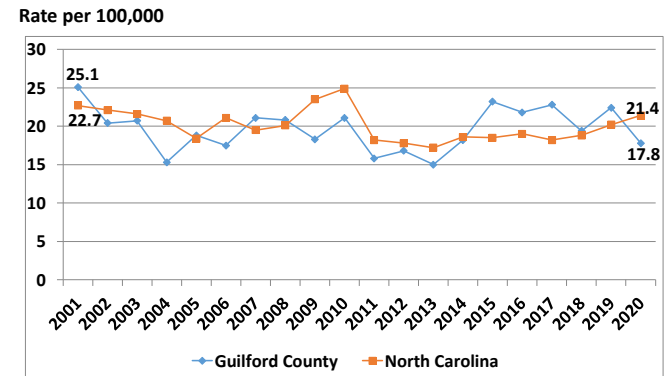
Note: Lung cancer includes cancers of the trachea, bronchus and lungs. Rates are not age-adjusted.
Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics.
Chart prepared by the GCDHHS, Division of Public Health.

Breast Cancer Mortality Guilford County and NC, 2001-2020



Note: Rates are not age-adjusted.
Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics.
Chart prepared by the GCDHHS, Division of Public Health.

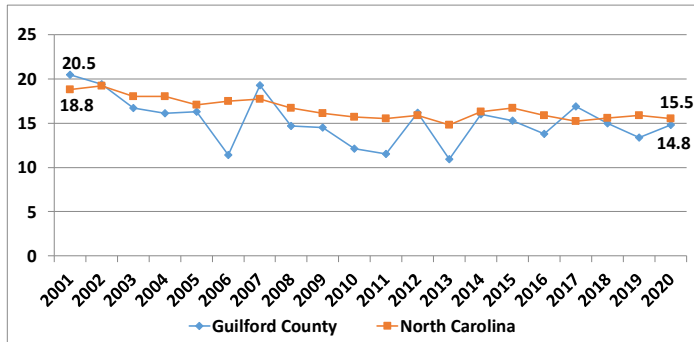
Prostate Cancer Mortality Guilford County and NC, 2001-2020



Note: Rates are not age-adjusted.
Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics.
Chart prepared by the GCDHHS, Division of Public Health.

Colorectal Cancer Mortality Guilford County and NC, 2001-2020

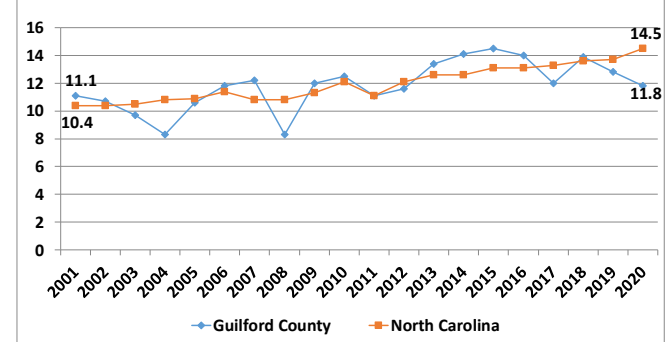
Rate per 100,000



Note: Rates are not age-adjusted.
Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics.
Chart prepared by the GCDHHS, Division of Public Health.

Pancreatic Cancer Mortality Guilford County and NC, 2001-2020

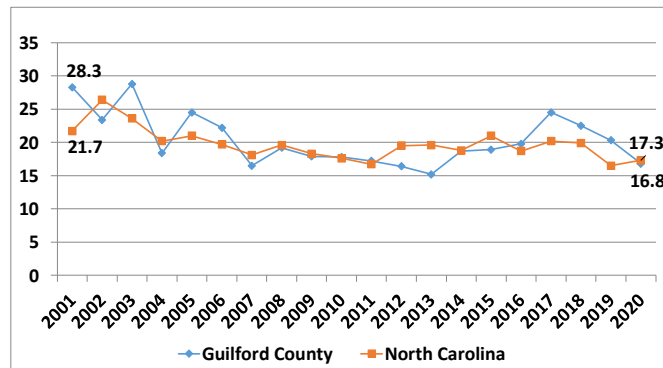
Rate per 100,000



Note: Rates are not age-adjusted.
Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics.
Chart prepared by the GCDHHS, Division of Public Health.

Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality Guilford County and NC, 2001-2020

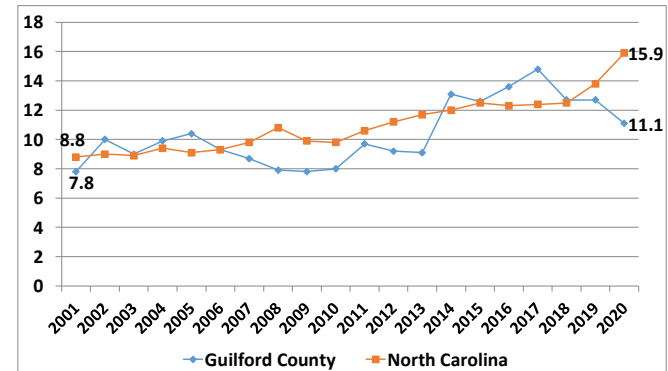
Rate per 100,000



Note: Rates are not age-adjusted.
Source: Data provided by the NC Center for Health Statistics.
Chart prepared by the GCDHHS, Division of Public Health.

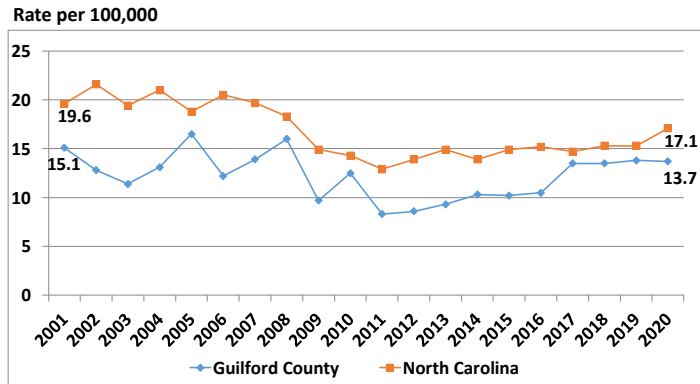
Chronic Liver Disease/Cirrhosis Mortality Guilford County and NC, 2001-2020

Rate per 100,000



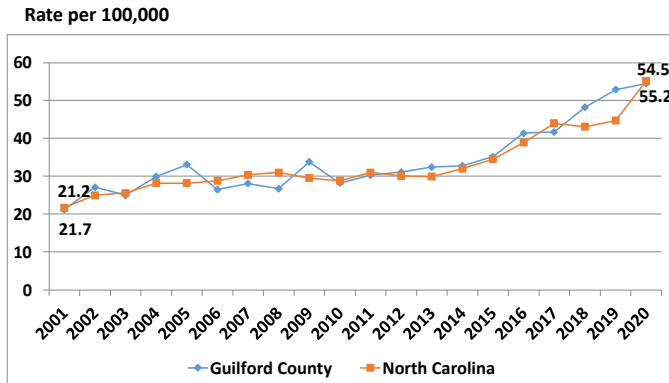
Note: Rates are not age-adjusted.
Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics.
Chart prepared by the GCDHHS, Division of Public Health.

Motor Vehicle Injury Mortality Guilford County and NC, 2001-2020



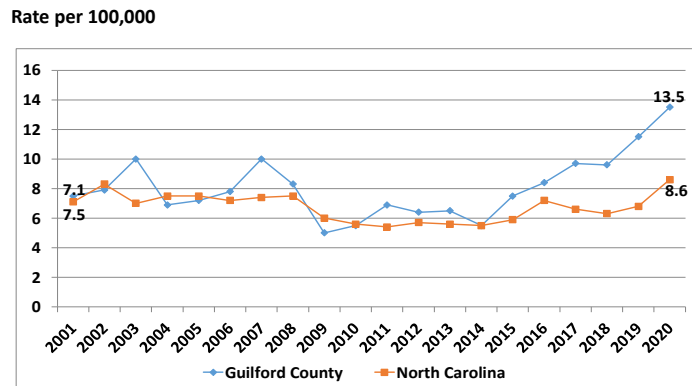
Note: Rates are not age-adjusted.
Source: Data provided by the NC Center for Health Statistics.
Chart prepared by the GCDHHS, Division of Public Health.

Mortality Due to Unintentional Injuries and External Causes Guilford County and NC, 2001-2020



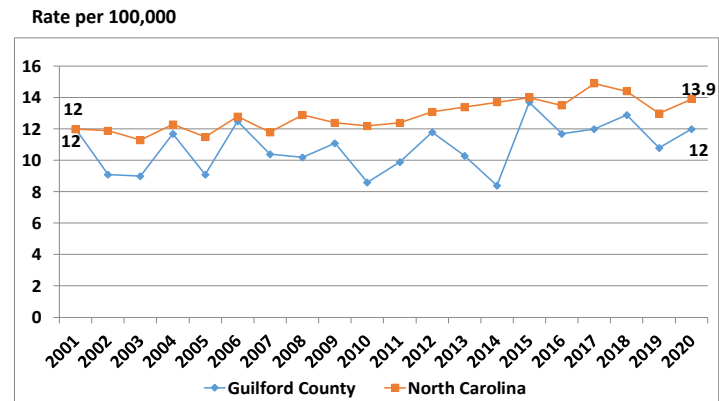
Note: Rates are not age-adjusted. Unintentional Injuries/External Causes includes deaths primarily due to unintentional poisonings, falls, and other external causes of injury.
Source: Data provided by the NC Center for Health Statistics.
Chart prepared by the GCDHHS, Division of Public Health.

Homicide Mortality Guilford County and NC, 2001-2020



Note: Rates are not age-adjusted.
Source: Data provided by the NC Center for Health Statistics.
Chart prepared by the GCDHHS, Division of Public Health.

Suicide Mortality Guilford County and NC, 2001-2020



Note: Rates are not age-adjusted.
Source: Data provided by the NC Center for Health Statistics.
Chart prepared by the GCDHHS, Division of Public Health.