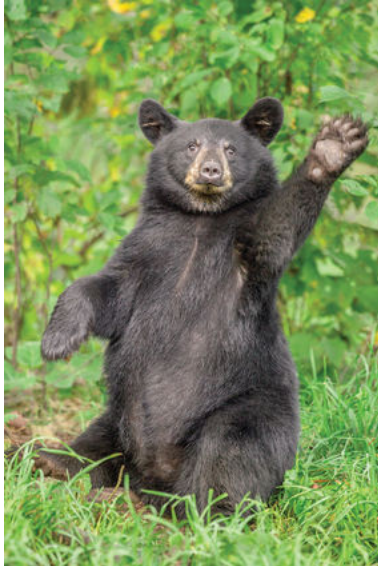

2020 SOTCH

Martin-Tyrrell-Washington District Health Department



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Introduction

by Kirsten S. Beasley, MPH

The 2020 Martin-Tyrrell-Washington District Health Department (MTWDH) State of the County (SOTCH) Report contains a review of progress made on priority health indicators for residents of Martin, Tyrrell and Washington counties.

The annual report serves a purpose to educate and inform community members, community leaders, agencies and organizations about progress made within the past year on identified priority health issues.

This report can be accessed electronically on www.mtwdistricthealth.org.

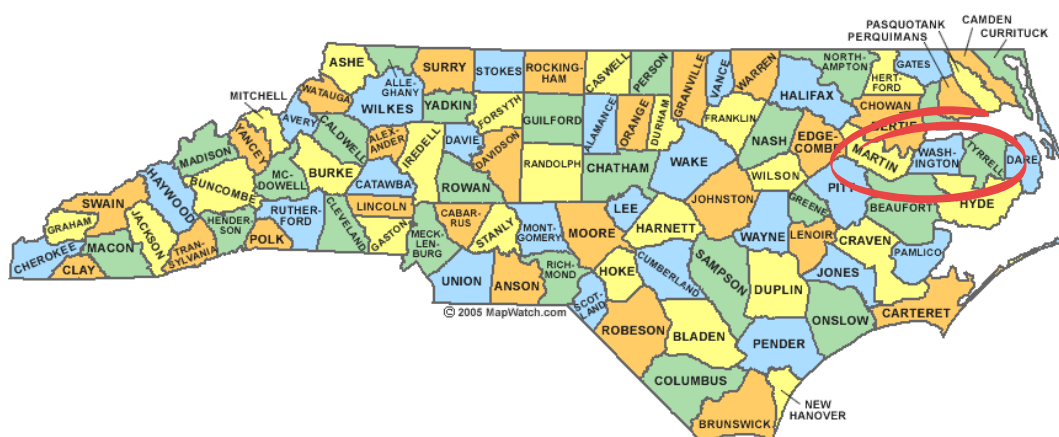
If you have questions regarding this report or would like additional copies, please contact:

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MTW AT A GLANCE

Demographics	Martin County	Tyrrell County	Washington County	North Carolina
Population, 2019 estimate	22,440	4,016	11,580	10,488,084
Race				
White	55.3%	56.7%	47.7%	70.6%
Black	42.1%	38.1%	48.9%	22.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.6%	0.9%	0.9%	1.6%
Asian	0.5%	1.9%	0.4%	3.2%
Ethnicity				
Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin	4.1%	9.4%	5.6%	9.8%
Median Household Income	\$40,090	\$35,300	\$35,979	\$54,602
Per Capita Income	\$23,575	\$19,743	\$23,431	\$30,783
Persons below poverty level, percent	20.6%	25.4%	21.3%	13.6%

Source: U.S. Census



LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH

Leading Causes of Death	Martin County	Tyrrell County	Washington County	North Carolina
Cancer	191.8	177.4	191.6	189.7
Diseases of the Heart	201.1	159.9	185	185.4
Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	35	-	41.6	51.7
Cerebrovascular Disease	55.6	-	47	48.8
Alzheimer's Disease	49.5	-	37.7	43.4
All Other Unintentional Injuries	50.1	-	62.2	43.1
Diabetes Mellitus	39.1	-	14	29.1

Source: CHNA 2018

2018 CHNA SUMMARY

Social and health indicators both influence community health, which is why the CHNA assesses both. However, in developing an action plan from the CHNA findings, social and health indicators were merged to prioritize the following focus areas for 2018 to 2021: 1) substance misuse, 2) chronic disease, 3) communicable disease and 4) physical activity.

MTW has developed community health improvement plans to address each focus area where progress is tracked over time with an online data system called Scorecard.

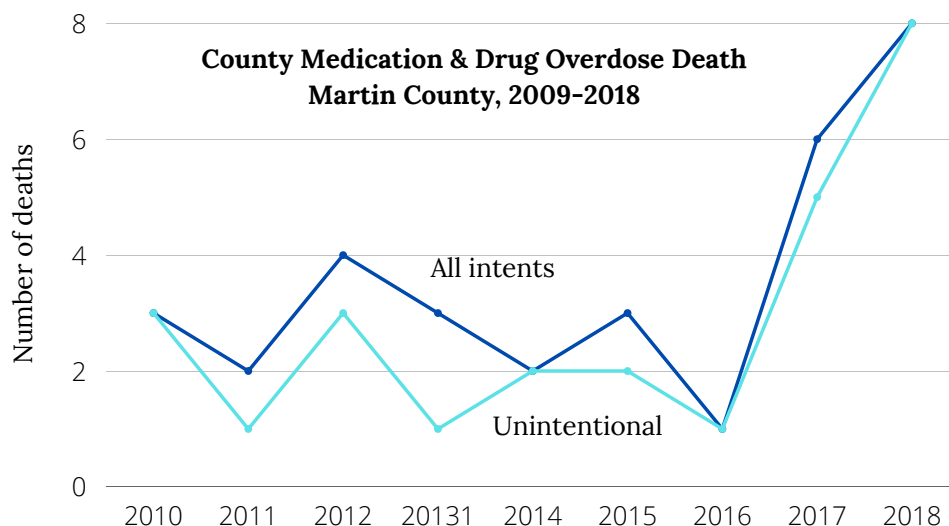
PRIORITY ISSUES

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

1

Deaths, hospitalizations, and emergency department (ED) visits due to poisoning, particularly medication and drug poisoning, have become a growing public health concern. Historically, prescription opioids have been a major driver of this epidemic. However, illicit drugs are now contributing to this problem in increasing numbers. The majority of unintentional opioid overdose deaths now involve heroin or other synthetic narcotics (like fentanyl). The number of overdose deaths involving stimulants is also on the rise.

In August 2020, MTW established a syringe service program in Martin County that served a total of 173 unique individuals, distributed 204 overdose reversal kits and reported 25 overdose reversals.



Source: Injury Free NC

16% of Martin County survey participants reported currently using tobacco products (42% of those people reported that they would go to a doctor for help quitting, 18% said they didn't know where to go and 13% said they did not want to quit). 49% of survey participants reported being exposed to secondhand smoke in the last year (39% reported being exposed at home, 24% reported being exposed in the workplace and 28% reported being exposed at "other" locations).

MTW has developed a partnership with the Tobacco Free Living Coalition that meets monthly to develop strategies to work on tobacco use for Martin County. One action plan item is to establish a tobacco-free policy for the Martin County government campus. In order to complete this task, MTW is prepared to hire an additional health educator dedicated to tobacco-free strategy work for all three counties.

In 2020, billboard spaces were purchased in three different locations in Martin County. These billboards reached a total of 946,467 people. Local WITN commercials promoting the NC Quit Line were also aired during the months of June and July reaching a total number of 299,963 people.

CHRONIC DISEASE

2

Heart disease and diabetes are two of the leading causes of death in Martin, Tyrrell and Washington counties. The rates of hypertension in each of our counties are: 1) 69.5 in Martin County, 2) 159.1 in Tyrrell County and 3) 185 in Washington County.

For Martin County, 44% of survey participants reported being told by a health care professional that they had high blood pressure and 40% had been told they have high cholesterol.

Out of the adult participants who took the CHNA survey in Martin County, 22% reported being told by a medical professional that they had diabetes and 45% had been told they were overweight or obese. The rate of adults 20+ living with diabetes are: 1) 14.9 in Martin County, 2) 13.2 in Tyrrell County and 3) 14.7 in Washington County.

Rate of heart disease and diabetes continue to be higher in Martin, Tyrrell and Washington counties compared to the state.

MTW District Health offers a Minority Diabetes Prevention Program intended for residents who are at risk for developing diabetes. In 2019, MDPP had 19 classes (two in Spanish) and served 146 people.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

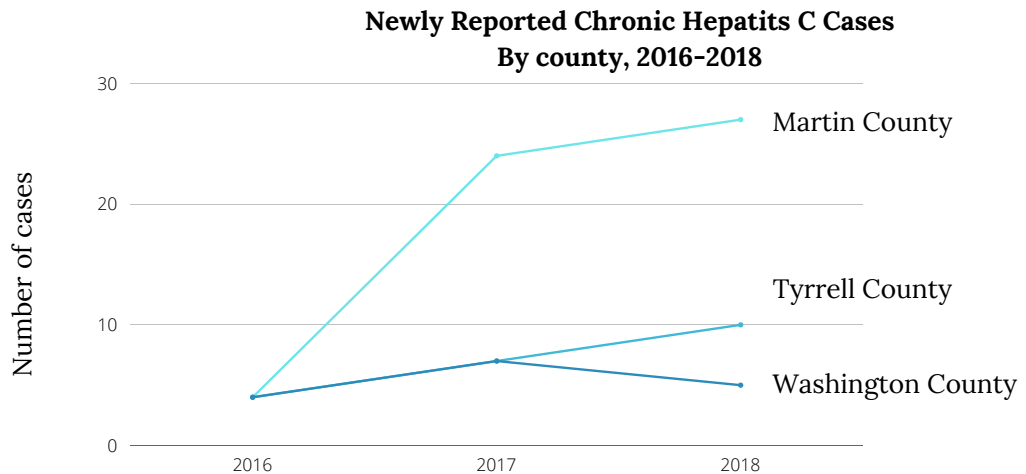
3

Communicable diseases are transmitted from person to person by direct contact with an infected individual or indirectly through a vector. An example of three communicable diseases that MTWDH reports are chlamydia, gonorrhea and HIV.

HIV stands for human immunodeficiency virus. It weakens a person's immune system by destroying important cells that fight disease and infection. Although there is no cure for HIV, there are methods to control spread and treat symptoms.

The rate of HIV diagnosis is 11.7 in Martin County, 18.6 in Tyrrell County and 19 in Washington County in comparison to 16.1 in the state of North Carolina. Martin County also has a higher age-adjusted death rate due to HIV than the state (3.4 versus 2.2).

The incidence rate of chlamydia (a sexually-transmitted disease) is 565.3 in Martin County, 688.8 in Washington County and 386.4 in Tyrrell County in comparison to 572.4 for the state of North Carolina.



Source: NCDHHS

Hepatitis C is a liver infection caused by the hepatitis C virus (HCV). Hepatitis C is spread through contact with blood from an infected person. Today, most people become infected with the hepatitis C virus by sharing needles or other equipment used to prepare and inject drugs.

In August of 2020, MTWDH established a syringe service program in Martin County that aims to reduce the number of newly diagnosed Hepatitis C infections and STIs. Since opening in August, the syringe service program has distributed 9,290 unused syringes and collected 1,470. The program also distributed 432 condoms to active participants to aid in decreasing the spread of STIs.

PHYSICAL EXERCISE

4

Regular physical activity lowers blood pressure and improves cholesterol levels. It can also reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome.

Data from the community survey participants show that an average of 39.6% of community members in the district do not engage in any physical activity or exercise during the week that lasts at least 30 minutes.

In the fall of 2020, MTWDH hosted a walking challenge amongst staff members. There were a total of 30 staff members that participated in the challenge and walked a total of 5,400 miles.

MTW also offers a Minority Diabetes Prevention Program that is an evidence-based, year-long program that teaches how to maintain a healthy weight through diet and exercise.

At the Washington County health department location, there is a community walking trail with solar lights that is open to the public.

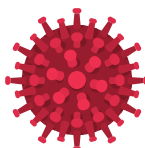
COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS

Each year, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation releases the County Health Rankings for the state (out of 100 counties, where "1" is the best rank).

	Martin County	Tyrrell County	Washington County
Health Outcomes	89	40	87
Length of Life	83	24	78
Quality of Life	93	73	90
Health Factors	80	90	91
Health Behaviors	81	89	83
Clinical Care	55	87	70
Social & Economic	86	94	97
Physical Environment	25	6	55

NEW AND EMERGING ISSUES

COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Beginning in January 2020, the first few cases of coronavirus started to appear in Wuhan, China. By January 21, the CDC confirmed its first case in the United States followed by the WHO issuing a global health emergency. The chain of events since have included global air travel restrictions, declaration of public health emergency and reaching pandemic status, stay-at-home orders and shutdowns, free COVID testing sites, social distancing and facial covering mandates, overwhelming use of hospital beds, vaccine trials, relief packages and finally vaccine distribution.

Because of this global pandemic, priorities shifted to preventing spread of the virus in our communities and protecting our friends and family. Stay-at-home orders forced closures of conferences, restriction to travel and discontinuing in-person meetings. The WIC program shifted to meeting with patients virtually.

2020 was a year where we were all challenged to shift our work into "pandemic mode" and to think on our feet. MTW gave daily case reports to the community that included new daily cases, total case count, recoveries and COVID-related deaths.

Because majority of staff were required to focus primarily on the pandemic, this created a major barrier for completing health strategies for the counties. Majority of program activities were either pushed back, paused or moved to virtual. Many employees risked suffering burnout and compassion fatigue from working overtime and being pulled into several different directions.

As of December 31st, 2020, the total number of COVID-19 cases per county were:

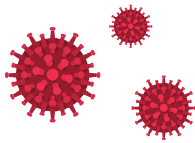
- 1327 (28 deaths) in Martin County
- 179 (3 deaths) in Tyrrell County
- 493 (11 deaths) in Washington County

The COVID-19 pandemic challenged the health department in many ways to serve the community during a time of uncertainty and fear.

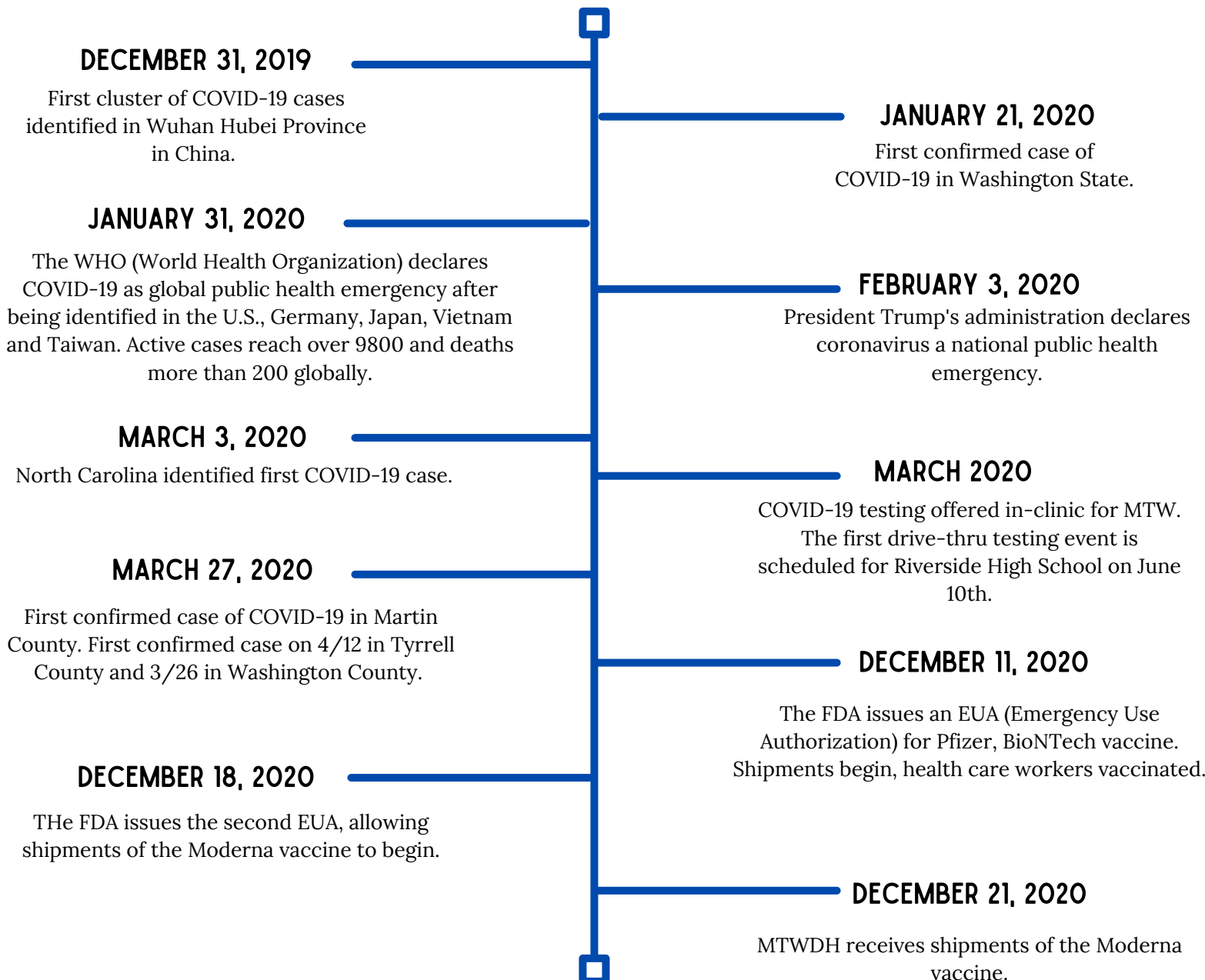
RISE IN OVERDOSES

There continues to be an increasing trend in overdose deaths, especially in Martin County, due to loss of employment, stress, isolation, grief from loss of family members and friends from COVID, and shortage of mental health care providers in the area.

2020 IN REVIEW



CORONAVIRUS TIMELINE



COVID-19 TESTING SITES

MTW District Health partnered with the following organizations to offer free COVID-19 testing throughout the county:

- Williamston Lions Club
- East End Elementary
- Washington Regional Medical Center
- West Martin Community Center
- Health department site locations



IMPACT FROM COVID-19

- OSHA changed respiratory FIT testing guidelines to temporarily suspend annual fit testing requirements.
- Diabetes prevention classes were temporarily suspended and moved to virtual.
- Women, Infant and Children (WIC) services waived the requirement for clients to be in-person, "visits" were moved to over the phone.
- Behavioral health moved to telehealth services.
- All employees were shifted to COVID-19 response.
- Masks were mandates for all staff to wear outside of their office, cleaning protocols, travel restrictions, social distancing, cancellation of in-person meetings to decrease the transmission of COVID-19 were implemented.
- Dental services were temporarily suspended.
- Clinic schedules were shifted to allow high-risk individuals to come in on different days than those who were scheduled for sick visits or being tested for COVID-19.

Mission of MTW

The mission of Public Health in Martin, Tyrrell and Washington Counties is to strive to promote healthier lifestyles, reduce risks, disabilities, and years-of-life lost by providing personal and environmental health services. This mission will be accomplished through collaborative team work and commitment to quality of life with the communities under the leadership of competent health professionals.

