

Providers

Mitchell County has 18 physicians per 10,000 people & Yancey County has only 8 physicians per 10,000 people; the average NC county has 28 physicians per 10,000 people. The patchwork network of healthcare services currently available locally may not be sufficient for a population which suffers disproportionately from heart disease, cancer, & respiratory diseases. Successfully meeting the challenges of provider recruitment and retention requires ongoing collaborative community efforts among individuals and groups in the area engaged in healthcare delivery.

Awareness

Mitchell & Yancey Counties have abundant agencies, nonprofits, & institutions, each focused on some aspect of healthcare. The recent pandemic saw them working together & learning from each other in new ways. But the local community, particularly those new to the area, may not be aware of the resources available to them. Promoting telemedicine, maintaining accurate information on websites, & building capacity for patient advocacy could help ensure that citizens of all ages in the SEARCH region can access the healthcare they need.

To learn more about the needs assessment process, the dataset collected & other related reporting products, please visit the SEARCH website.

WHAT'S HELPING PEOPLE OF ALL AGES IN OUR AREA?

- A centrally located 25-bed critical access hospital.
- A Federally Qualified Health Clinic with locations in each county.
- Several agencies dedicated to the health & well-being of children.
- A number of providers in private practice.
- In each county:
 - A hospice and palliative care agency
 - Ambulance and Emergency Medical Services
 - A senior center
 - A public health department
 - A robust transportation system
 - A mental health service agency
 - Nursing homes and adult care centers
 - Physical therapy, rehabilitation and wellness centers
- Agencies dedicated to serving needs such as:
 - Education for Alzheimer's caregivers
 - Activities for children being raised by grandparents
 - Transportation for those without it
 - In-school healthcare via telehealth
 - Assistance with medical bills

This list of local assets available to advance good health outcomes is encouraging. Success will come when they work together.

Contact Us

www.searchwnc.org
searchwnc@gmail.com
 Facebook: S E A R C H w n c
 PO Box 1626
 Burnsville NC 28714

ACCESS TO CARE

Needs Assessment for Mitchell & Yancey Counties



Mothers & Young Children



Women of childbearing age (15-44) & children under age 5 account for 20% of the population in Mitchell and Yancey counties.

% of children under 5 living in poverty (2020)



% of pregnancies receiving prenatal care in the first trimester



Pregnancy rates are lower in Mitchell County than NC

Pregnancy rates are higher in Yancey County than NC

76% of Mitchell County births are physician attended & 97% happen in hospitals.

82% of Yancey County births are physician attended & 94% happen in hospitals.

No OB/GYN practices full-time in either Mitchell or Yancey county & women must travel out of the area to give birth at a hospital.

Families must travel out of the county to access a licensed pediatrician or pediatric-specific practice, or inpatient hospital services for children.

▶▶▶▶▶ With this segment of population projected to increase, the demand for pediatric, women's care, & labor & delivery services will also increase.

Youths



Young people aged 5 to 19 make up 15% of the population

% of children under 18 living in poverty (2020)



Graduation rates in Mitchell County are lower than NC

Graduation rates in Yancey County are similar to NC

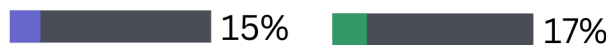
▶▶▶▶▶ The lack of local pediatric specialists & the limited network of mental health providers leaves the youth population vulnerable.

Adults



Working-age adults (ages 18 to 64) make up 55% of the population

% of adults aged 18-64 without health insurance



Median household income in Mitchell County is \$7,800 lower than the state average.

Median household income in Yancey County is \$12,000 lower than the state average.

▶▶▶▶▶ The lack of local specialists & the burden of traveling out of the county for healthcare adds cost & stress to a medical system that is already unaffordable for many in our communities.

Seniors

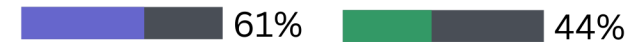


Adults age 65 & older make up 25% of the population. The 85+ age group is projected to grow by 2050.

% of those with a disability aged 65+ (2020)



% of households with no vehicle access with householders aged 65+ (2020)



Retirement income is higher in Mitchell County compared to NC

Retirement income is lower in Yancey County compared to NC

Heart disease, cancer, chronic lower respiratory diseases, & Alzheimer's disease are the leading causes of death for seniors.

More than 50% of passenger miles driven by Mitchell County Transportation were for the elderly in 2021-2022.

More than 40% of passenger miles driven by Yancey County Transportation were for the elderly in 2021-2022.

◀◀◀◀◀ The lack of local specialists is compounded by an aging healthcare workforce: 24% of physicians in Mitchell County and 36% in Yancey County are over the age of 65. As with other age groups, the need to travel to access healthcare remains a barrier for seniors.