



2019

Avery County State of the County Health (SOTCH) Report



2019 State of the County's Health Report

Scorecard - Avery County



The following SOTCH Scorecard was created and submitted on **March 2nd, 2020** in order to meet the requirements for the Annual State of the County's Health (SOTCH) Report for Avery County.

The 2016 Community Health Assessment priority areas are:

Priority 1: Substance Abuse Prevention & Increasing Ability/Access to Mental Health Care

Priority 2: Unhealthy Living Behaviors/ Lifestyle Habits

Priority 3: Cancer

The following SOTCH Scorecard was created and submitted **March 2nd, 2020** in order to meet the requirements for the **2019 County State of the County's Health Report** for Avery County.

Clear Impact Scorecard™ is a strategy and performance management software that is accessible through a web browser and designed to support collaboration both inside and outside organizations. WNC Healthy Impact is using Clear Impact Scorecard™ to support the development of electronic CHIPs, SOTCH Reports and Hospital Implementation Strategy scorecards in communities across the region.

Scorecard helps communities organize their community health improvement efforts:

- Develop and communicate shared vision
- Define clear measures of progress
- Share data internally or with partners
- Simplify the way you collect, monitor and report data on your results

The following resources were used/reviewed in order to complete the SOTCH:

- [WNC Healthy Impact](#)
- [WNC Healthy Impact Data Workbook](#)
- [NC DHHS CHA Tools](#)
- [NC DHHS County Health Data Book](#)
- [NC DHHS/ DPH CHA Data Tools](#)
- [National Institute of Drug Abuse](#)

Substance Abuse Prevention & Increasing Ability/ Access to Mental Health Care

R	Avery	Residents of Avery County are not misusing or abusing illegal & legal substances	Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
---	-------	--	--------------------	----------------------	---------------	-------------------

Progress Made in 2019










The following progress was made in 2019 on our action plan interventions for Substance Misuse and Abuse in Avery County.

- **Youth Risk Behavior Survey** - The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) was implemented throughout the Avery County School System. These surveys target risky behaviors of youth so that we, as the local health department, the school system, law enforcement, and other agencies, can take preventive measures and respond to the needs of our children quicker. In 2017 there were low turnouts for the YRBS and the school system brainstormed on how to improve turnout as it didn't reflect the student body as a whole. The school system will be partnering with the Western Youth Network, who received a new grant to spearhead a youth movement in Avery County, together Tiffany Moon. School supervisors will be implementing a new YRBS in the school system during the next school year (2020-2021).
- **Lock Your Meds Campaign** - Includes a strong partnership with Western Youth Network The personal medication lockboxes

are purchased using state grant funds and they are routinely distributed throughout the area. The lockboxes allow people to store their medications safely in their home in order to prevent the medications from being stolen. Over 200 lockboxes have been distributed throughout the Avery County community during 2019. Recent successes include continued promotion of the permanent medication drop box location at the Avery County Sheriff's office, Lock Your Meds campaign, personal medication lock box distribution, and the new Strategic Prevention Framework-Partnerships for Success grant that Western Youth Network received for Avery County.

Additionally, the following progress was made in 2019 on Substance Misuse and Abuse in Avery County.

- Partnership for Success Grant** - Avery County was one of ten communities in North Carolina selected to receive a Partnership for Success (PFS) grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Over the next four years, dedicated staff in Avery County will focus on preventing the onset and progression of underage alcohol use and e-cigarette use/vaping. The PFS grant is managed by the Division of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services (DMHDDAS) in collaboration with Addiction Professionals of North Carolina (APNC). By utilizing the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) model, Western Youth Network (WYN) staff will be able to advance efforts to prevent the onset and reduce progression of underage alcohol use and e-cigarette use/vaping by youth ages 9 to 20. Working collaboratively with community partners to improve overall health, WYN hopes to increase the capacity of Avery County to achieve the following: address youth substance use; improve social connectedness; reduce health disparities; and reduce the negative impacts of alcohol and related consequences within the community.
- State of the Child Forum** - the goal is to promote a better quality of life for children and families through a trauma informed and resilient community. This forum includes people from local police officers, public health experts, school system administrators and employees, etc. The mission of this group is to "promote a better quality of life for children and families through a trauma-informed and resilient community." The event had its first public forum in 2018 that hosted approximately 125 to 150 people. The event will be held yearly and is growing with support in the county. Meetings are held monthly with healthcare professionals that help coordinate the events. Currently the school system has joined the planning group. The 2020 event is planning on focusing on the school system and educate teachers and administrators on ACES and educate participants on childhood trauma. This event is scheduled for April 28th, 2020.
- Avery County Incarceration Programs** - Law enforcement launched intervention programs for inmates while they are incarcerated. The programs range from parenting, alcohol/drug abuse, to job attainment. As of 2019 inmates still have access to these intervention programs.
- Celebrate Recovery at Heaton Church** - Celebrate Recovery is a faith based program geared toward recovering addicts. This recovery program has recently been implemented in Avery County and is helping people recover from drug addiction through their faith based initiatives. (Also implemented in Mitchell County)
- Avery Cares** - This new Avery County task force focuses on finding solutions for the substance abuse issues in the county. The task force consists of local professionals who share events, funding and other opportunities to help the county while discussing issues that they are seeing throughout the county. Currently Phillip Barrier (County Manager) leads the task force meetings.
- Updated Online Access** - The county manager updated the Avery County website to make it easier for people to find needed resources for substance abuse/misuse. This updated website should make it easier for citizens to find resources for substance abuse issues.

	Avery % Self-report use of illicit drugs	2015	3.1%	→ 1	0%	→
	Avery Current Smokers	2016	19.0%	↘ 1	-10%	↓
	Avery Meth Labs	2017	#17	↗ 1	55%	↑
	Avery Number unintentional poisonings	2016	#17	↗ 1	-39%	↓
	Avery % Self-report sharing of prescription medications	2015	7.1%	→ 0	0%	→
	Avery Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)	Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change	
	Avery Convenient Store Checks with Undercover Kids	Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change	
	Avery Health Priority 3 - Program/Intervention/Strategy 3	Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change	
	Avery Media Ready Curriculum	Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change	

P	Avery	Celebrate Recovery Program	Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
P	Avery	Naloxone and Defibrillators Training	Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
P	Avery	Law enforcement Intervention Programs while incarcerated	Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
P	Avery	Triple P Positive Parenting Program	Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
P	Avery	Cannon Memorial Hospital Expanding Behavioral Health Department	Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change

Unhealthy Living Behaviors/Lifestyle Habits

R	Avery	Residents of Avery county adopt healthy living behaviors and lifestyle habits	Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
---	-------	---	--------------------	----------------------	---------------	-------------------

Progress Made in 2019

The following progress was made in 2019 on our action plan interventions for Unhealthy Behaviors and/ or Lifestyles in Avery County.

- **Blood Pressure Self** - Monitoring Programs: This program has been implemented by the local YMCA. The program offers personalized support as participants develop the habit of monitoring their blood pressure. This program provides several services for the people who participate including, recording their blood pressure at least two times per month, providing two consultations a month with a Healthy Heart Ambassador, and providing monthly nutrition education seminars. Updated information shows that there are two service locations in Avery County. These locations are the Avery County Senior Center and Williams YMCA of Avery County. There are currently 124 participants in the Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring Program.
- **Senior Wellness Enhanced Fitness Program** - This program is offered seasonally and is an evidence based senior fitness and arthritis management program. The program focuses on cardiovascular endurance; strength, flexibility, and balance which can help reduce the severity of arthritis symptoms, in an atmosphere that encourages social interaction. It is nationally recognized by the CDC, Dept. of Health & Human Services, Department on Aging, and the National Council of Aging. Updated information shows that Avery County has 48 total participants who have improved their strength by 76%, their balance by 68%, and their agility by 80%.

Additionally, the following progress was made in 2019 on Unhealthy Behaviors and/ or Lifestyles in Avery County.

- **ChildFest** - 558 people (parents and children) attended the event from Avery, Mitchell and Yancey Counties. This event provides parents with educational information from a wide variety of agencies from Avery, Mitchell and Yancey Counties. Agencies provide fun and educational activities for the children who attend.
- **YMCA Kid's Day** - This annual event is held in April in Avery County. In 2019 there were approximately 93 attendees. . This national initiative to improve the health and well-being of kids is free to the Avery County Community.
- **Senior Graduation Bags** - A number of community agencies gathered to distributed Graduation Bags for Avery High School Seniors. Approximately 150 bags were given to the graduates. Volunteers distribute the Graduation Bags annually for this project.
- **Healthy Halloween** - This event centers around sharing health information with approximately 892 children and family members. This event has more than 30 local agencies/vendors providing various incentives for parents and their children. This program continues to grow every year and is supported by the local school system.
- **Car Seat Program** - Avery County Health Department offers a no cost car seat and booster seat program for infants and children; serving 166 (62 car seats specifically in Avery County) children in 2019. The car seats that have been replaced were in terrible condition or expired.
- **WIC Visits** - WIC had 1,174 participants from January 2019 and October 2019 in Avery, Mitchell and Yancey Counties. This is an average participation rate for the three counties.
- **Newland Public Playground/ Pool** - Avery County recently constructed a play site that g children to engage in physical activity. The playground was finished in 2017, but had renovations added in 2019. There is great participation within the county at this public playground. Update on the public playground is that it is complete and also has a public pool that has been made available to the public. Avery County constructed a playground to encourage children to engage in physical activity. The playground was finished in 2017, but additions were made in 2019. The playground is now complete. Avery County built a

playground was finished in 2017, but additions were made in 2019. The playground is now complete. Avery County built a wonderful new public swimming pool in 2019. The infinity pool attracts visitors from all surrounding counties and is a very popular attraction.

- **Pop-Up Markets (MANNA)** - Avery County has a substantial number of pop up markets that are open to the community. These markets allow the public to buy fresh produce along with other food items and are very popular with the community.
- **Feeding Avery Pantry** - Feeding Avery is a program that provides food and clothing items to community members. The Feeding Avery Pantry also travels to five area schools to provide food pantry services to those areas of the county.
- **Feeding Avery Families Coat and Backpack Project** - Feeding Avery also has another program focusing on children and community members called Coat and Backpack project. This project provides coats and backpacks to children in need during the winter and before school starts.

I	Avery	Diabetes Prevalence	2015	10.6%	→ 0	0%	→
I	Avery	Obesity Rate	2015	25.9%	→ 0	0%	→
I	Avery	Access to Fresh Fruits and Vegetables	2015	37.0%	→ 0	0%	→
P	Avery	Expansion of YMCA	Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change	
P	Avery	Playground Project at Old Public Pool Site	Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change	
P	Avery	Senior Wellness Enhanced Fitness Program	Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change	
P	Avery	Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring Program	Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change	
P	Avery	Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP)	Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change	
P	Avery	MANNA Backpack Program for Students of ACS	Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change	

Cancer

R	Avery	Residents of Avery County adopt healthy behaviors to prevent cancer	Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
---	-------	---	--------------------	----------------------	---------------	-------------------

Progress Made in 2019

The following progress was made in 2019 on our action plan interventions for Cancer in Avery County.

- **Fresh Start Tobacco Cessation Program** - This program was offered to citizens of Avery County. The program was held in the Oak Room in the Sloop Medical Office Plaza. The program targeted anyone who wants to quit or has tried to quit using tobacco. This 4 week program started in June, 2017 at the local YMCA and was developed by the American Cancer Society. It was provided free of charge to anyone interested. The program is geared toward improving health, communicating with others who have successfully quit, gain helpful tips for quitting, and taking control of cravings and temptations. Despite advertising the program, the YMCA was not able to get any participation so they discontinued the program this past year. They will try to get some participation next year.
- **LIVESTRONG Program** - Livestrong is a 12-week, evidence-based program that uses small groups to help survivors improve their fitness levels, diminish the severity of therapy side effects and develop relationships to improve their quality of life. The participants attend two 90-minute sessions per week. Instructors are trained in cancer survivorship, post-rehabilitation exercise and supportive cancer care. Recent research from the Yale Cancer Center and Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Institute confirmed that LIVESTRONG participants experience improved fitness and quality of life and significant decreases in cancer-related fatigue. Updated information shows that currently the LIVESTRONG program has a total of 17 participants in 2019. The types of cancer that people in this program have are Breast Cancer (8), Myeloma (2), Prostate (1), Melanoma (1), Head and Neck (1), Ovarian (1), Bladder (1), Colon (1) and Renal Carcinoma (1). This program recently received a check for \$20,000 from a local fundraiser.

Additionally, the following activities focused on Cancer happened in 2019 in Avery County.

- **Pink Day at Cannon Memorial Hospital** – Appalachian Regional Healthcare System employees, volunteers and community members gathered at Cannon Memorial Hospital and Watauga Medical Center on Friday, October 11 for the 16th Annual Pink Day celebration. Participants were encouraged to wear pink, purchase raffle tickets, schedule a mammogram, and hear remarks

Day celebration. Participants were encouraged to wear pink, purchase raffle tickets, schedule a mammogram, and hear remarks from a breast cancer survivor. This year Cannon Memorial introduced Bras for a Cause and had 11 entries. Harmony Center for Women won with the bra "Every Woman is a Wonder woman". Pink Day raised \$2,155 through raffle items, donations and Bras for a Cause. 100 percent of the money raised supports the Cancer Resource Alliance to help purchase Thanksgiving meals for cancer patients and their families.

- **Together We Fight Collaborative Event** - For the second year, Appalachian Regional Healthcare System (ARHS), along with many other High Country businesses and organizations, adopted a Together We Fight approach to breast cancer. The collaborative approach took shape after several community organizations discussed ways to join forces to support breast cancer patients on a local level. The Together We Fight collaborative included the following community events and fundraisers, which raised over \$90,132 for local breast cancer patients.
- **Doc's Rocks Gem Mine "Mining for a Purpose"** - On October 31, Randy and Trina McCoy, long-time owners of Doc's Rocks Gem Mine, along with their son, D'Artagnan, presented Seby B. Jones Regional Cancer Center, with a check for \$23,319 for the Cancer Patient Emergency Fund. The donation is the result of their year-long fundraising efforts, as well as from their "Mining for a Purpose" event, held in October. The McCoy's donate 100 percent of the proceeds from the event. Since 2014, the McCoy's have donated more than \$104,900 to support the Cancer Center.
- **High Country Walk/Run for Breast Cancer** - The second annual High Country Walk/Run for Breast Cancer took place on October 26 in Blowing Rock, NC. The event is hosted by the High Country Breast Cancer Foundation and raised over \$60,000, 100 percent of the funds raised were used to provide for the needs of breast cancer patients, survivors and their families in the High Country.
- **Pretty in Pink 15th Annual event** - In 2019 at Linville Ridge Country Club. Nearly 200 women from the surrounding areas gathered for a luncheon and fashion show in support of providing free, first-time mammograms to uninsured women in Avery County. These funds directly impact the lives of women living in Avery County to help aid early breast cancer detection. The luncheon has a guest speaker and also has a fashion type show where clothes are modeled and bought. The event sold out at \$50 per ticket and the special speaker for the 15th annual event was Mrs. Irene Sawyer.
- **Quitline Avery County** - a free cessation service offered to anyone in Avery County who needs help quitting tobacco use. The Quitline also offers free nicotine replacement therapy. Coaching is available as well and can be used separately or together, to help any tobacco user give up the cravings. The Avery County Quitline is still up and running for the community.
- **Lung Cancer Screening Program** - In June 2017 Appalachian Regional Healthcare System (ARHS) launched a lung cancer screening program for patients who qualify. For patients to be considered they must complete the low dose DCT Lung Screening referral form with their primary care provider, participate in a shared decision-making visit at Appalachian Regional Internal Medicine Specialists, Schedule a LDCT scan, and discuss results with ARHS's Pulmonology Navigator. As of 2019 this program is still available to the community and has actually been expanded its ability to see patients based on insurance. In 2019 there were approximately 75 lung cancer screenings provided to the community.
- **Breast Cancer Program (Wilma Redmond)** - The Wilma Redmond Breast Center of ARHS is located in the recently renovated Outpatient Imaging and Lab Center. The Breast Center offers Hologic 3D Mammography for breast cancer screening. 3D mammography produces a three-dimensional view of the breast tissue that helps radiologists identify and characterize individual breast structures without the confusion of overlapping tissue. This program is still available to the public and is accessible through Appalachian Regional Health Care System. On October 12, CrossFit Boone, Seven Seals CrossFit, Ashe CrossFit and CrossFit Postal worked together to support the cause through a new program called Kilograms for Mammograms. This fitness oriented fundraiser celebrated survivors and helped remove the cost barrier for those in need of a mammogram by raising \$4,658 for the Wilma Redmond Mammography Fund.

	Avery	Total Cases of Cancer	2016	948		1	-1%	
	Avery	Cancer Rate	2016	456.6		1	-4%	
	Avery	LIVESTRONG Program	Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend		Baseline % Change	
	Avery	FreshStart Tobacco Cessation Program	Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend		Baseline % Change	
	Avery	Comprehensive Cancer Prevention Media Campaign	Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend		Baseline % Change	

Notes

These are the new or emerging issues in our community in 2019 that were not identified as priorities in our Community Health Assessment.

- **Vaping** - Avery County is seeing a substantial rise in vaping among the youth. Multiple meetings geared toward the health of Avery County have brought to light the rise in prevalence of vaping among the middle and high school students. This issue has gained national attention lately and Avery County is no different. Multiple health professionals have voiced their concern over this issue.
- **Increase in Drug Use** - Avery County health professionals have also seen a consistent problem with drug use. Multiple professionals have even claimed that a rise in drug use has occurred. Although data is currently lacking, health officials have voiced concerns and stated that this is an emerging issue worth monitoring.
- **Child Services Need** - Avery County has seen an increasing need in children's services. An increase of children in need has shown that the resources in Avery County are lacking and therefore more child service resources are needed. These areas of need include mental health, developmental delays, pediatricians, family supports, etc. Again this was brought forth in community partnership meetings by child service professionals.
- **Youth Mental Health** - Avery County has seen an emerging issue with youth mental health. Health professionals have become aware of mental health problems facing the youth and they are concerned about detecting/helping these issues among the youth. Multiple health professionals in meetings held to discuss emerging issues mentioned mental health among the youth in the county. Avery County has seen an emerging issue with mental health in our youth. Health professionals have become aware of mental health problems, including depression, facing the youth, especially middle and high school youth.

Notes

The following are new initiatives or changes in our community in 2019:

- **Avery County Williams YMCA** - received a \$20,000 check to go towards the LIVESTRONG cancer program and cancer progress(?) in general. This check was raised during a local golf tournament and was presented to the YMCA.
- **Partnership with Avery County Health Department (ACHD) and Crossnore School and Children's Home** - The Avery County Health Department has partnered with Crossnore School and Children's Home to be their health care provider. Children who are in Foster Care and have been exposed to toxic stress need more frequent and in depth care. Children 2 and up are seen for well child visits every 6 months. Children under 2 are seen more frequently. ACHD has a strong relationship with Crossnore School and Children's Home. This partnership is still strong. There are 84 children at Crossnore School and Children's Home that ACHD currently serves.
- **Avery County School Influenza Clinics** - In 2019 Avery County Health Department provided over 430 flu shots to students in all of the county schools. About 50 staff received flu shots in the school system. This was approximately 30 more flu shots than were given in 2018.
- **Crossnore School Influenza Clinic** - 100% of the children at Crossnore School and Children's Home were vaccinated for the flu. The student body is 84.
- **Triple P Parenting Programming** - Avery County Health Department has several providers trained in Triple P Parenting Program. They have assisted approximately 40 families using the positive parenting approach. This program is continuing to grow in Avery County as more employees within healthcare setting are receiving the training by the certified employee at Blue Ridge Partnership for Children.
- **Money Donated to Appalachian Regional Healthcare Center** - Pretty In Pink at Beech Mountain Club and Giving Tuesday raised \$32,541 for Paxman Scalp Cooling. Blowing Rock LGA, Grover Robbins Golf Tournament at Linville Ridge Country Club and Six Pence Pub raised \$60,290 for the Cancer Patient Emergency Fund. Grandfather Golf and Country Club LGA and Land Harbor LGA raised \$41,410 for the Avery County Cancer Emergency Fund. Pink Day, Bras for a Cause and Mining for a Purpose raised \$25,474 for the Cancer Resource Alliance. Blue Ridge Energy raised \$4,459 for the Cancer Resource Alliance Breast Cancer Fund. Kilograms for Mammograms raised \$4,658 for the Wilma Redmond Mammography Fund. Lighting of the Tree and ARHS Employee Giving raised \$1,888.87 for the Cancer Center. Together, these organizations and events raised \$170,720.87.

- **Beech Mountain Flu Shots** - 46 flu shots were provided to community members at Beech Mountain in Avery County.
 - **Avery County Senior Center** - Avery County Health Department provided 20 flu shots in the Avery County Senior Center.
 - **Avery County HeadStart** - Avery County Health Department provided 14 flu shots to Avery County Headstart. These flu shots were given to the children at Headstart.
 - **Grandfather Home for Children Influenza Clinic** - Provided flu shots to approximately 20 children in 2019.
 - **Elk Park Apartments** - Provided flu shots to approximately 6 residents in 2019.
 - **AMY Wee Trade Fundraiser for Imagination Library** - The most recent consignment sale for the AMY Wee Trade fundraiser raised approximately \$18,000. \$12,000 of this money went back to the consigners and \$6,000 went to the Imagination Library to buy kid's books. Currently there are approximately 1,800 books sent each month to children in Mitchell, Yancey, and Avery Counties.
 - **CURES Grant Funding received** - Avery County recently received these monies as an opportunity to expand and try to decrease the abuse of opiates through education for prescribers, educational material to the community, publicity of the medication lockbox program, and general information via billboards, radio, etc. Currently, this grant is still going on within Avery County and the grant is funding new resources for the citizens of Avery County.
 - **Parent to Parent** - This new initiative is geared towards educating new parents on ways to help their child during the adolescent years. This program teaches and coaches willing parents on the best practices of raising children. Currently there are classes going on in Avery County that parents attend and the program is growing.
 - **Healthy Family America** - This program is new to Avery County Health Department and will be housed in the facility. The program will be a home visiting program geared toward making families in the area healthier and living a higher quality of life.
 - **Health Page in Avery County** - Avery County started a new health page in the Avery Post. The health page is developed by the Avery County Health Department and Healthy Carolinians of Avery County. Each month different organizations send in submissions regarding public health and education.
-