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# Rocky Mount TELEGRAM

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## Report finds drop in area health rates

**BY AMELIA HARPER**  
Staff Writer

Sunday, April 7, 2019

Nash County ranks 76 out of 100 North Carolina counties in terms of health outcomes, according to a recent report released by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute.

This number represents a 10-place drop from 2018 when Nash County was ranked 66th in the state and an 18-place drop from 2015 when it was ranked at 58th place in the state. That was the highest ranking for the county since 2011, when the annual reports began.

Larissa Mills, coordinator of health services for the Nash County Health Department, said budget cuts are partially to blame.

“Over the last decade, there have been state and federal budget cuts or elimination of funding for health initiatives and programs,” Mills said.

For the report, health outcomes are calculated on expected length of life and quality of life. While Nash County’s quality of life ranks 54th in the state, near the center of the pack, length of life ranks 82 out of 100 counties. Length of life is calculated based on years of potential life lost before age 75 per 100,000 population.

For Nash County, that measure is 10,000, compared to an average of 7,600 in the rest of the state.

Though it is not calculated as a factor in the study, the average life expectancy of a Nash County resident is 75.3 compared to age 78 for the state. Higher rates of infant mortality and other health factors in the community contribute to the increased number of premature deaths in the county.

In terms of health factors, Nash County ranked 74 out of 100 in the 2019 report, the county’s lowest ranking since the reports began in 2011. Health factors are rated according to measures of health behavior, clinical care, social and economic factors and physical environment.

Nash County ranks about average for access to clinical care (49 out of 100 counties) and physical environment (50 out of 100 counties). But it ranked 68 out of 100 for health behaviors such as smoking, excessive drinking, obesity, teen births and sexually transmitted diseases.

Nash County ranked 79 out of 100 counties in the state in terms of social and economic factors such as education rates, unemployment, percentage of single parent families, violent crime and injury deaths.

“Nash County has rated low on the social and economic factors for years,” Mills said. “Our rates on unemployment, income inequalities, family and support as well as community safety are higher than the state’s rate and nationally.”

Mills said there are agencies and partnerships in place that are working to address these health factors and outcomes in Nash County.

“There are several governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations and federally qualified health centers that are working on initiatives that strive to improve the overall health outcomes of our citizens, such as Twin County Partnership for Healthier Communities, Healthy Places NC and others,” Mills said.

But Mills said it will take a concerted effort to improve these outcomes over the long term.

“There are some things that can be done to improve the health of Nash County residents, she said. “Agencies, organizations and health care practices can advocate to local, state and federal agencies on policies, strategies and/or funding to work on improving the overall health of our communities. Also, more agencies and organizations can engage more citizens in the health improvement process as well as finding solutions to the root causes of poor health outcomes, such as low rates of social determinants of health, access to health care and health behaviors.”

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According to the 2019 rankings, the five healthiest counties in North Carolina are Wake County, followed by Orange County, Union County, Mecklenburg County and Camden County. The five counties in the poorest health are Robeson County, which ranks lowest, Scotland County, Vance County, Edgecombe County and Northampton County.

For more information about the Nash County Health Rankings, go to <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/north-carolina/2019/rankings/nash/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>.

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## LOCAL NEWS

# Some Orange County services offline as county combats virus

Tags: [Orange County](#), [cyber security](#)

Posted March 19

By **Deborah Strange**, WRAL digital journalist

**HILLSBOROUGH, N.C.** — Online services in Orange County were down as the county fought an encryption virus detected Monday morning.

The county said that the virus was found on the countywide network. To stop the virus, the county shut down all of its internal servers.

As they are unable to send or receive emails, county employees can be contacted by phone. A directory is available [online](#).

The following services are temporarily unavailable during the outage:

- Public WiFi at all Orange County facilities
- Public computers at the Orange County Main Library
- Online reservations for Orange County facilities
- Online reservations for classes and programs at the Department of Environment, Agriculture, Parks and Recreation and the Department of Aging.
- The Register of Deeds cannot process real estate closings or issue marriage licenses. A marriage license can be obtained from a Register in another county.
- Housing vouchers cannot be processed.
- The Tax Office can not verify tax bills to determine amount owed.
- The Planning Department cannot process fees or close out permits.
- Some pet adoptions in Animal Services may be delayed.
- While the Health Department's clinics are operating as normal, some services could be affected if the disruption continues for a few days.

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