

2025



# COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Prepared By Carr, Riggs & Ingram

# Table of Contents

Our Commitment to Community Health .....	4
Message From Our President and CEO .....	4
About Us .....	5
2025 CHNA Executive Summary .....	6
CHNA Leadership .....	6
Our Research Partner .....	6
Methodology and Community Engagement .....	7
Community Health Priorities .....	8
Board Approval .....	8
Primary Service Area Description .....	10
Social Determinates of Health .....	11
Background .....	11
Understanding Health Equity .....	12
Area Deprivation Index .....	12
Social Vulnerability Index .....	12
Distressed Communities Index .....	13
Vizient Vulnerability Index .....	14
Priority Health Needs .....	15
Community Overview and Trends .....	15
Priority #1: Community Health Education .....	16
Priority #2: Best Living Habits for Choctaw County .....	16
Priority #3: Community Resource Guide .....	16
Service Area Population Trends .....	17
Demographics .....	17
Income and Work .....	19
Food Insecurity .....	21
Education .....	22
Housing .....	24
A Closer Look at Health Statistics .....	26
Access to Healthcare .....	26
Uncompensated Care Cost .....	28

Health Risk Factors and Chronic Diseases .....	30
Heart Disease .....	30
Cancer .....	32
COPD / Emphysema .....	34
Alzheimer's.....	35
Stroke.....	36
Community Health Needs Assessment.....	38
Background and Distribution .....	38
Survey Findings .....	38
2022 Community Health Improvement Plan Progress.....	41
Priority #1: Best Living Habits for Choctaw County.....	41
Plan of Action .....	41
Response to Stated Strategies.....	42
Priority #2: Alzheimer's .....	43
Plan of Action .....	43
Response to Stated Strategies.....	43
Priority #3: Patient/Provider Trust.....	44
Plan of Action .....	44
Response to Stated Strategies.....	45
2025-2028 Community Health Improvement Plan .....	47
Priority #1: Community Health Education.....	47
Plan of Action .....	47
Priority #2: Best Living Habits for Choctaw County.....	47
Plan of Action .....	47
Priority #3: Community Resource Guide .....	47
Plan of Action .....	47
References .....	48

# Our Commitment to Community Health

## Message From Our President and CEO

At Choctaw Regional Medical Center, we are deeply committed to improving health outcomes and advancing equity for all members of our community. Our passion for care extends far beyond our hospital walls, reflected in the work we do through our Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). This vital effort, conducted in collaboration with community stakeholders, focuses on identifying and addressing the unmet needs of our region's most vulnerable and underserved populations. With input from local leaders, public health officials, chronically ill patients, and underserved groups, we've formed a diverse coalition that represents the full spectrum of the community we serve. Together, we strive to break down barriers to care, strengthen support systems, and empower individuals and families to live healthier, more fulfilling lives.

The CHNA is more than a requirement of the Affordable Care Act—it is a shared mission. Guided by Carr, Riggs and Ingram (CRI) and supported by a dedicated Steering Committee, the assessment process began in June 2025 and will continue as we identify, implement, and evaluate community-driven health initiatives. These initiatives, grounded in meaningful data and real community voices, are reviewed annually and reassessed every three years to ensure relevance and impact. We are honored to be woven into the fabric of Choctaw County and surrounding areas, and we invite you to reflect on how you, too, can contribute to improving health and well-being in our community. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our community partners, the Steering Committee, and CRI for their invaluable contributions. United in purpose, we look forward to continuing our work as a trusted healthcare leader, delivering compassionate, patient-centered care to all we serve.

**Steve Marinelli**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Choctaw Regional Medical Center**



## About Us

Choctaw Regional Medical Center (CRMC), located in Ackerman, Mississippi, was established in 2013 through the shared vision and dedication of the Board of Supervisors, Board of Aldermen, Board of Trustees, county leadership, hospital management, and our community members. Rooted in the belief that every individual deserves access to high-quality healthcare close to home, CRMC has grown into a trusted leader in regional health services.

CRMC features a 15-bed Acute Care Unit, specializing in Swing Bed care. All patient rooms are private and designed for comfort, featuring spacious, accessible restrooms. Our comprehensive therapy services—including physical, occupational, and speech therapy—are available seven days a week. A multidisciplinary team, including a licensed social worker, nutritionist, and discharge planner, works closely with each patient to develop individualized care plans that meet both immediate and long-term health needs. With 24/7 nursing care, dedicated hospitalists, and access to a wide range of medical specialists, we are committed to delivering not just exceptional medical treatment, but also an outstanding patient experience.

Additional services offered at CRMC include:

- Chronic Care Management
- Emergency Department
- Infusion Services
- Intensive Outpatient Program
- Laboratory Services
- Long-Term Care
- Outpatient Specialist Services
- Primary Care Clinics
- Radiology
- Rehabilitation
- Respiratory Therapy
- Swing Bed Program
- Telehealth
- Wound Care



# 2025 CHNA Executive Summary

## CHNA Leadership

The 2025 CHNA was guided by a steering committee composed of CRMC representatives, with meaningful contributions from community stakeholders. These individuals acted as liaisons, bridging the hospital and the communities it serves.

### CHNA Steering Committee Members:

- Lacey Eaves, Nursing Home Administrator
- Bailey Griffin, Social Services
- Vaughan Hill, Community Education/Marketing
- Shelby Edwards, DON Choctaw Medical Clinic
- Kim Thomas, DON CRMC
- Megan Snow, Quality Dept
- Steve Marinelli, CEO

## Our Research Partner

Choctaw Regional Medical Center (CRMC) partnered with Carr, Riggs & Ingram (CRI) to conduct its Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). CRI is a nationally recognized, full-service accounting and advisory firm, ranked among the top 25 firms in the United States. With offices stretching from New Mexico to North Carolina, CRI serves more than 100,000 clients across the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and U.S. military bases overseas.

For over 25 years, CRI has provided a comprehensive range of services—from traditional accounting and financial reporting to advanced consulting and technology solutions—helping clients in more than 20 industries gain a competitive edge.



CRI's Healthcare Advisory team supports hundreds of hospitals and health systems across the southern U.S. Their services include financial audits, reimbursement consulting, cost reporting, and strategic advisory work. The team also collaborates with hospital associations and advocacy groups to strengthen healthcare delivery throughout CRI's regional network.

Key services offered by CRI's Healthcare Advisory team include:

- Accounting
- Agreed-Upon Procedures (AUPs)
- Audit and Single Audit
- Compilation
- Cost Reporting
- Cybersecurity
- DSH and Supplemental Payment Programs (Medicare and Medicaid)
- Employee Benefit Plans
- Fraud & Forensics
- HIPAA & IT Risk Assessments
- HITRUST Certification

- Review Services
- Strategic Advisory Services, ***including CHNAs for numerous hospitals and health systems***
- Transaction Advisory Services
- Valuations

At CRI, we're focused on the future—committed to innovation and redefining what's possible in the accounting and advisory space. Whether you're a long-time client or new to our services, we welcome the opportunity to shape the future together. To learn more about our services and impact, visit [www.criadv.com](http://www.criadv.com).

## Methodology and Community Engagement

The 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) combined quantitative data with community input to identify health trends and disparities across Choctaw County. Through the analysis of key health indicators and feedback from local stakeholders, the assessment established priority areas that will inform healthcare delivery, support health improvement strategies, and guide the planning of health and social service programs.

Community engagement played a central role in the CHNA process. Input was collected from individuals representing a broad and diverse segment of the population, including underserved, low-income, and minority groups. These voices provided valuable insight into local health challenges, existing resources, and critical service gaps contributing to disparities and inequities.

To assess the county's health needs, the following research methods were employed:

- Statistical analysis of demographic, socioeconomic, and health-related data
- Online Community Health Needs Survey to gather residents' perspectives on pressing health concerns and improvement opportunities
- Focus group discussions with key community representatives to explore healthcare barriers and community preferences in greater depth

### CHNA Focus Group Members:

- Martha Carradine – Chief of Police
- Juliette Ashford – Election Commission
- Christopher Coleman – Coroner
- Glen Blaine – Assistant Superintendent, Choctaw County School District
- Cristin Chandler – Choctaw County Library
- Randy Loper – Choctaw County Economic Development District
- Nancy Carr – CrossRoads Behavioral Health
- Judy Blaine – Choctaw Medical Foundation
- Amber Vowell – Principal, French Camp Elementary
- Tori McCool & Alyssa Hawes – Mississippi HomeCare of Eupora
- Lacey Eaves – Administrator, Choctaw Nursing and Rehabilitation Center
- Wanda Johns – Director of Nursing, Choctaw Nursing and Rehabilitation Center
- Kim McDill – Clinic Manager, Louisville Medical Clinic

- Dr. Weston Eldridge – Louisville Medical Clinic
- Shelby Edwards – Director of Nursing, Choctaw Medical Clinic
- Susan Wells – Clinic Manager, Choctaw Medical Clinic
- Maegan Summers – Community Member
- Patty Draper – Community Member
- Samantha Cabaniss – Community Member
- Melissa Edwards – Community Member
- John Summers – Community Member
- Joanna Summers – Community Member
- Ashley Martin – Community Member
- Issac Newman – Community Member
- Trella Long – Community Member
- Dinah Bryan – Community Member
- Renee Morgan – Community Member
- Steve Marinelli – CEO, Choctaw Regional Medical Center
- Tracie Box – Choctaw Regional Medical Center Board of Trustees
- Elizabeth Rester – Choctaw Regional Medical Center Board of Trustees
- Alander Neal – IT Director, Choctaw Regional Medical Center
- Kim Thomas – Director of Nursing, Choctaw Regional Medical Center
- Megan Snow – Quality/Infection Control Nurse, Choctaw Regional Medical Center
- Bailey Griffin – Social Worker, Choctaw Regional Medical Center
- Derrick Mason – CRI, Consultant

## Community Health Priorities

To advance health equity, it is essential to direct resources and initiatives toward the community's most urgent health needs. Guided by input from community partners and an evaluation of the hospital's capabilities and assets, the leadership at Choctaw Regional Medical Center has identified the following priority areas for focus in the 2025–2028 Community Health Implementation Plan:

1. Community Health Education
2. Best Living Habits for Choctaw County
3. Community Resource Guide

## Board Approval

Section 501(r)(3)(A) of the Internal Revenue Code mandates that tax-exempt hospitals conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every three years in collaboration with the communities they serve. Following the assessment, hospitals are also required to develop an implementation strategy to address the identified health needs.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) specifies the following steps that must be completed when conducting a CHNA:

1. Define the community served by the hospital.
2. Evaluate the health needs of that community.
3. Gather input from individuals representing the broad interests of the community, including those with specialized knowledge or expertise in public health.
4. Prepare a written CHNA report, approved by an authorized governing body of the hospital.
5. Ensure public access by making the CHNA report widely available.

Noncompliance with these requirements may result in a \$50,000 IRS penalty and could jeopardize the hospital's tax-exempt status.

In alignment with these regulations, Choctaw Regional Medical Center (CRMC) must complete and receive board approval for its CHNA by the end of its fiscal year—September 30, 2025.

The 2025 CHNA report and the accompanying Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) were presented to CRMC's Board of Directors and formally approved on September 17, 2025. Following board approval, both documents were made available online at [www.choctawregional.com](http://www.choctawregional.com), and printed copies are also accessible through the hospital's administrative office.



## Primary Service Area Description

Choctaw County is located in the central region of Mississippi. Its northern boundary is defined by the Big Black River, which flows southwest and eventually joins the Mississippi River south of Vicksburg. The county seat is Ackerman, and the county itself is named in honor of the Choctaw Nation, whose ancestral lands include this area—long inhabited by the tribe prior to European settlement. Covering a total area of approximately 420 square miles, Choctaw County consists of 418 square miles of land and 1.7 square miles of water. The county is home to two nationally protected areas: the Natchez Trace Parkway and the Tombigbee National Forest, both of which contribute to the county's natural beauty and ecological significance. Choctaw Regional Medical Center is proud to serve Choctaw County and the surrounding region.



# Social Determinates of Health

## Background

Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, learn, play, and age—factors that significantly shape their health, daily life, and overall well-being. These conditions are influenced by broader systems and policies, including economic trends, social norms, and political structures. Essentially, these are key areas where targeted investment and public health efforts can have a major impact.

SDOH are generally grouped into five key domains:

1. Economic Stability
2. Education Access and Quality
3. Health Care Access and Quality
4. Neighborhood and Built Environment
5. Social and Community Context

Addressing disparities in these areas is essential for achieving health equity—the fair opportunity for everyone to reach their highest level of health. Research shows that SDOH have a greater influence on health outcomes than genetics or access to medical care. These social and economic conditions are deeply embedded in society and often lead to unequal access to resources like housing, education, employment, and income—factors that increase the risk of poor health.

Encouraging healthy behaviors alone isn't enough to overcome the health disparities rooted in SDOH. To make meaningful progress, public health agencies must work in partnership with sectors like education, transportation, and housing to build environments that support health and well-being for all.



## Understanding Health Equity

### Area Deprivation Index

Living in under-resourced neighborhoods is linked to a range of health challenges, including elevated rates of diabetes and heart disease, greater reliance on healthcare services, and shorter life expectancy. Public health strategies that fail to address the role of neighborhood disadvantage may fall short of their goals.

The Area Deprivation Index (ADI), originally developed over 30 years ago by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), has since been enhanced by Dr. Amy Kind and her team at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. This tool ranks neighborhoods based on socioeconomic disadvantage, incorporating factors such as income, education, employment, and housing quality. It supports more effective healthcare planning and policymaking for underserved communities.

Within each state, ADI scores are ranked from lowest to highest and sorted into ten deciles—where a score of 1 represents the least disadvantaged neighborhoods and 10 the most disadvantaged. **In 2023, Choctaw County recorded an ADI score of 7.78, highlighting a substantial level of socioeconomic hardship compared to the average community.**

Area Deprivation Index (ADI) 2023	
	Choctaw County, MS
Overall	7.78

### Social Vulnerability Index

Social vulnerability refers to the social and economic conditions that make certain communities more prone to adverse outcomes during public health crises and other emergencies that can lead to illness or injury. Factors such as poverty, limited transportation access, and overcrowded housing can reduce a community’s ability to respond to and recover from these challenges.

The CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) is a tool designed to identify communities that may require additional support before, during, or after disasters. It provides data and mapping resources that highlight a range of vulnerability-related factors. These are grouped into four key themes, which are then combined to produce an overall social vulnerability score for each area.

The SVI uses a percentile ranking system, with scores ranging from 0 (least vulnerable) to 1 (most vulnerable). **In Choctaw County, the overall SVI score was 0.1975, indicating relatively low vulnerability. While most indicators fall within the “low” range, two themes—socioeconomic status and household composition—registered “low to medium” vulnerability, with scores of 0.3457 and 0.3951, respectively.**

The following elements comprise the socioeconomic status-sub indicator:

- Below 150% Poverty
- Unemployed
- Housing Cost Burden

- No High School Diploma
- No Health Insurance

The following elements comprise the household characteristics sub-indicator:

- Individuals aged 65 and older
- Individuals aged 17 and younger
- Civilians with a disability
- Single-parent households
- Proficiency in the English language

**Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) 2023**

	Choctaw County, MS
<b>Overall</b>	<b>0.1975</b>
Socioeconomic Status	0.3457
Household Characteristics	0.3951
Racial and Ethnic Minority Status	0.2346
Housing Type/Transportation	0.0864

## Distressed Communities Index

The Distressed Communities Index (DCI) reveals substantial differences in economic well-being across communities in the United States. Drawing on seven key socioeconomic indicators from the most recent Census data, the DCI categorizes areas into five tiers: prosperous, comfortable, mid-tier, at risk, and distressed.

The index operates on a percentile-based scale, enabling comparisons of economic disparity both within and between cities and states. Distress Scores range from 0 (most prosperous) to 100 (most distressed). **Choctaw County, Mississippi is classified as "at risk," with a Distress Score of 72.11, placing it 27th among the state's 82 counties.**

**Distressed Communities Index (DCI) 2025**

	Choctaw County, MS
<b>Overall</b>	<b>72.11</b>
No high school diploma	13.1%
Poverty rate	19.1%
Adults not working	30.0%
Housing vacancy rate	14.4%
Median income ratio	79.1%
Change in employment	5.4%
Change in establishments	4.9%

## Vizient Vulnerability Index

The Vizient Vulnerability Index (VVI) is designed to identify social needs and barriers that affect access to healthcare in different neighborhoods, which can impact overall health outcomes. The VVI provides data across nine domains of vulnerability, covering all five categories of Social Determinants of Health (SDOH).

VVI scores range from -3.000 (indicating low vulnerability) to 3.000 (indicating high vulnerability). An overall score above 1 suggests "high vulnerability," meaning the community faces significantly greater challenges compared to the national average. **Choctaw County has an overall VVI score of 1.210, placing it in the high vulnerability category. Among the sub-domains, the county's highest vulnerability is in economic conditions, with a score of 0.937.**

The following elements comprise this sub-indicator:

- Individuals below 200% of poverty rate
- Unemployment
- Lower median income

**Vizient Vulnerability Index (VVI) 2025**

	Choctaw County, MS
Overall	1.210
Economic	0.937
Education	0.277
Health Care Access	0.457
Neighborhood	0.073
Housing	-0.257
Clean Environment	0.170
Social	0.157
Transportation	0.007
Public Safety	-0.167

## Priority Health Needs

As noted in the previous section, Choctaw County faces multiple areas of vulnerability and socioeconomic hardship that warrant attention. However, to make the most effective use of resources, it is essential to focus on the most urgent health concerns impacting our community. To determine these priorities for the next three years, CRMC gathered input from community partners and stakeholders. Based on their feedback, CRMC has identified three key health needs and will concentrate its efforts on these priorities for 2025–2028:

1. Community Health Education
2. Best Living Habits for Choctaw County
3. Community Resource Guide



Strategies to address these priority areas will be informed by population trends and insights gathered from community stakeholders, as detailed in the sections that follow.

## Community Overview and Trends

Although CRMC provides services to several counties throughout central Mississippi, its primary focus is on the residents of Choctaw County. The county's demographic, socioeconomic, and public health patterns closely align with statewide trends, indicating that surrounding counties likely face similar challenges.

As of the 2023 Census, Choctaw County has a population of 8,172, representing a decline of approximately -3.18% since 2013. While Mississippi as a whole has also experienced population loss, the rate of decline in Choctaw County is somewhat more pronounced. Over two-thirds of the county's population identifies as White. However, the multiracial population has grown significantly in the past decade, with some groups more than doubling or even tripling since 2013.

Choctaw County has a rapidly aging population, with 22.8% of residents aged 65 and older—well above the state and national average of 16.8%. This demographic has increased by 23.1% since 2013, largely due to the aging baby boomer generation. At the same time, 21.3% of the population is under the age of 18. However, the youth population has declined by -13.2% over the past decade. This demographic shift poses both challenges and opportunities for healthcare providers, who must respond to the increasing demands of senior care while also advancing preventive care efforts for younger populations.

Poverty remains a notable issue in Choctaw County, where approximately one in six residents lives below the poverty line, compared to one in eight nationwide. Food insecurity affects nearly one fifth of the county's population. These issues, though particularly prominent in Choctaw County, reflect a broader pattern across the southern United States, where poverty and food insecurity are deeply

interconnected. Still, there are promising signs: the county has seen a -34.0% reduction in overall poverty since 2013, including a significant -46.0% decrease in poverty among older adults.

In terms of housing, homeownership is significantly more common in Choctaw County than in many other regions, with 80.3% of residents living in owner-occupied homes—well above both state and national averages. The renter population is comparatively smaller; however, over one-third of renters are classified as cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing. Additionally, internet access continues to be a challenge. Choctaw County residents are slightly less likely to have internet subscriptions compared to state and national averages, highlighting persistent disparities in access to digital resources and essential services.

## Priority #1: Community Health Education

The findings from our CHNA, along with insights gathered from our community survey, revealed the extensive range of health issues affecting Choctaw County and the surrounding region. These concerns include, but are not limited to, high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, substance abuse, heart disease, and Alzheimer's. The diversity and prevalence of these health challenges underscore the urgent need for CRMC to enhance health education and awareness efforts throughout the community. In response, we are committed to implementing a variety of outreach strategies to ensure that individuals have access to the information and resources they need to make informed health decisions.

## Priority #2: Best Living Habits for Choctaw County

The leading causes of death in Choctaw County—heart disease, cancer, COPD, Alzheimer's, and stroke—share many common risk factors. Health issues such as obesity, substance abuse, high blood pressure, and elevated cholesterol not only contribute to these conditions but also exacerbate other prevalent illnesses in the community, such as diabetes. In response, CRMC is committed to improving community health through a variety of preventive services and educational initiatives that encourage healthier living. We will continue offering annual heart health screenings, providing vaccinations to local businesses and schools, and participating in health fairs and community events. These events allow us to engage directly with residents, promote health education, and distribute resources highlighting the importance of nutrition and physical activity.

## Priority #3: Community Resource Guide

CRMC understands that to reach the most vulnerable members of our community, we must combat barriers to healthcare access and overall wellness. As part of our commitment to building a healthier, better-informed Choctaw County, we will partner with local agencies to create a comprehensive community resource guide. This guide will connect residents with vital support services, including assistance with healthcare, housing, food security, and other essential needs. Once completed, it will be widely distributed to ensure individuals and families have easy access to the resources needed to improve their health and quality of life.

**A comprehensive summary of the CHNA data findings for the CRMC service area—along with comparisons to state and national data—is provided in the following sections.**

# Service Area Population Trends

## Demographics

Choctaw County has a population of 8,172, while the total population of Mississippi stands at 2,951,438. Over the last decade, Choctaw County and the state saw modest declines in population, with decreases of -3.18% and -0.85%, respectively. Meanwhile, the overall population of the United States grew by about 6.69%.

**2023 Total Population**

	Total Population	% Change Since 2013
Choctaw County	8,172	-3.18%
Mississippi	2,951,438	-0.85%
United States	332,387,540	6.69%

According to Census data, Choctaw County is less racially and ethnically diverse than Mississippi as a whole. The county's non-White population stands at 32.4%, noticeably lower than the state's. Approximately 67.6% of Choctaw County residents identify as White, compared to 56.3% in Mississippi and 63.4% nationwide. Ethnic diversity is also more limited in Choctaw County, with only 1.8% of the population identifying as Hispanic or Latino—below the state average of 3.6% and significantly lower than the national figure of 19.0%.

Since 2013, all three areas—Choctaw County, Mississippi, and the United States—have experienced declines in their White populations, with decreases ranging from 3.1% to 8.6%. In Choctaw County, population growth occurred solely among non-White groups. Although the Black or African American population declined, there were notable increases among individuals identifying as American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, some other race, and those of two or more races, with growth ranging from 141.9% to as high as 9,100%. The county also became more ethnically diverse, driven by a 414.3% rise in its Hispanic population.

**2023 Population by Race and Ethnicity**

	White	Black or African American	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Some Other Race	Two or More Races	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
Choctaw County	67.6%	29.3%	0.2%	0.5%	0.0%	1.1%	1.3%	1.8%
Mississippi	56.3%	37.0%	0.4%	1.0%	0.0%	1.7%	3.6%	3.6%
United States	63.4%	12.4%	0.9%	5.8%	0.2%	6.6%	10.7%	19.0%

### Population Change by Race and Ethnicity, 2013 to 2023

	White	Black or African American	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Some Other Race	Two or More Races	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
Choctaw County	-3.1%	-11.0%	1200.0%	450.0%	0.0%	9100.0%	141.9%	414.3%
Mississippi	-6.1%	-1.5%	1.2%	4.6%	415.0%	99.1%	207.7%	30.3%
United States	-8.6%	4.9%	15.1%	27.1%	19.6%	48.8%	307.6%	21.9%

Census data shows that Choctaw County’s population is nearly evenly split by gender, with 49.0% male and 51.0% female—closely mirroring Mississippi’s averages of 48.5% male and 51.5% female. The county’s median age is 43.0 years, slightly older than the state median of 38.4 years. Overall, Choctaw County’s age distribution is similar to that of Mississippi. More than one-third of residents fall into dependent age categories, with 21.3% under 18 and 22.8% aged 65 and older. This demographic profile creates a dual responsibility for healthcare providers: addressing the immediate care needs of older adults while also prioritizing preventative services for younger populations. For Choctaw Regional Medical Center, this represents a key opportunity to expand preventative care offerings and support long-term community health.

Over the past decade, Choctaw County has experienced steady growth in its senior population, reflecting broader state and national trends largely driven by the aging baby boomer generation. At the same time, the number of residents under 18 has declined at all levels—county, state, and national—with Choctaw County seeing the sharpest drop at -13.2%. While the increase in the 65+ age group is significant locally, it is somewhat less pronounced than in Mississippi and the nation overall: 23.1% in Choctaw County compared to 26.0% statewide and 33.7% nationally.

### Population by Sex

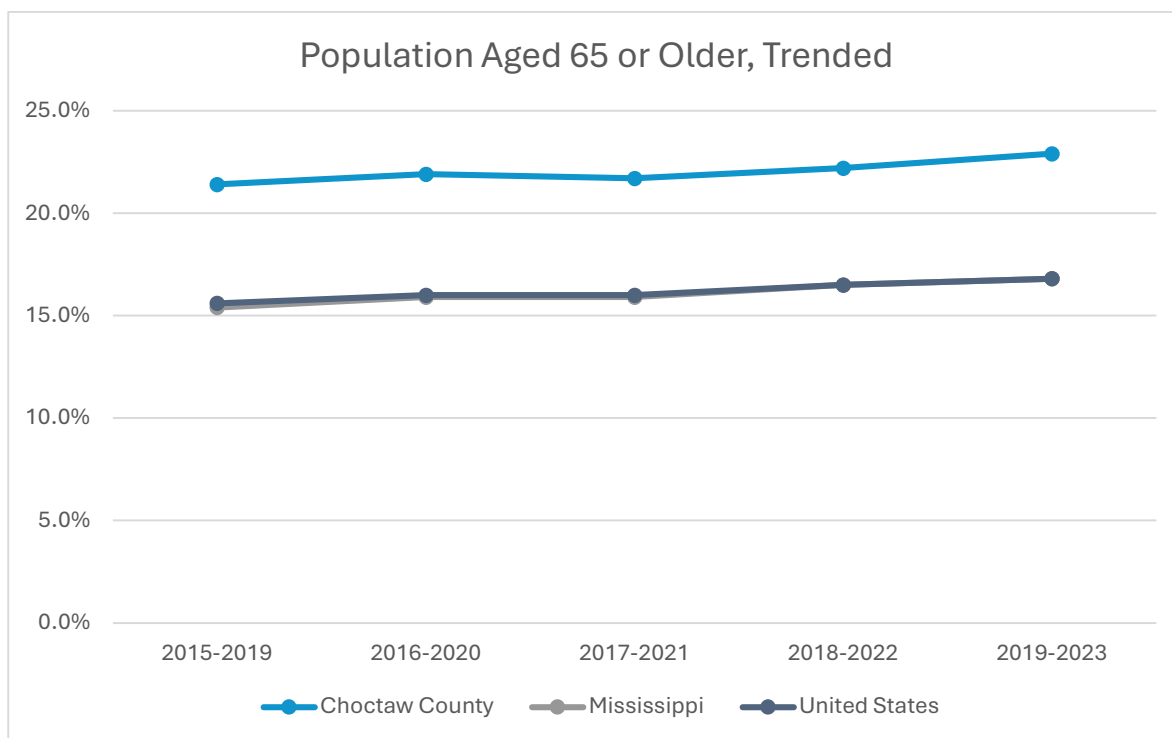
	Male	Female
Choctaw County	49.00%	51.00%
Mississippi	48.50%	51.50%
United States	49.50%	50.50%

### 2019-2023 Population by Age

	Under 18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+ years	Median Age
Choctaw County	21.3%	8.5%	10.3%	11.9%	10.9%	14.3%	22.8%	43.0
Mississippi	23.5%	9.6%	12.6%	12.6%	12.1%	12.8%	16.8%	38.4
United States	22.2%	9.1%	13.7%	13.1%	12.3%	12.8%	16.8%	38.7

**Population Change by Age, 2013 to 2023**

	Under 18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+ years	Median Age
Choctaw County	-13.2%	-5.4%	17.4%	-7.7%	-28.9%	0.3%	23.1%	0.5%
Mississippi	-7.5%	-6.9%	-4.0%	-0.9%	-12.6%	5.6%	26.0%	6.1%
United States	-0.3%	-2.5%	9.1%	6.4%	-8.2%	13.2%	33.7%	3.8%



## Income and Work

Choctaw County's median household income is slightly below the Mississippi state average. Despite this, the county reports lower poverty rates across all age groups compared to state figures—though still higher than national averages. Interestingly, unemployment is more common in Choctaw County than across the rest of Mississippi, even though the county experiences relatively lower poverty levels. Currently, 15.9% of Choctaw County residents live in poverty, compared to 19.1% statewide. Among seniors aged 65 and older, 12.8% live in poverty, slightly under the state's 14.3%. Children are the most impacted demographic, with 21.9% living in poverty in the county, versus 26.4% across Mississippi. Although poverty levels in Choctaw County have generally remained steady over the past five years, there was a slight decrease in 2023.

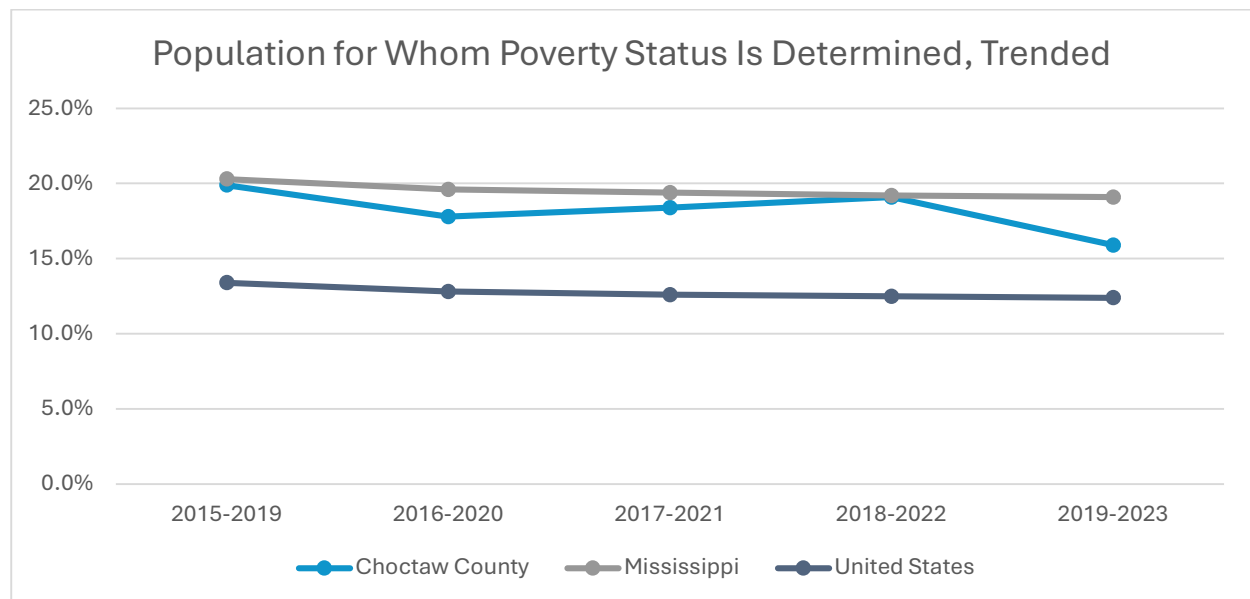
Throughout the county, racial and ethnic disparities in poverty are especially pronounced: non-White residents are more than three times as likely to live in poverty compared to White residents, only 10.1% of whom fall below the poverty line. While such disparities exist at both the state and national levels, they are particularly acute in Choctaw County. Of particular concern, 95.5% of residents identifying as Asian in the county live in poverty.

### Economic Indicators

	Choctaw County	Mississippi	United States
<b>Income and Poverty (2019-2023)</b>			
Median household income	48,321	54,915	78,538
People in poverty	15.90%	19.10%	12.40%
Children in poverty	21.90%	26.40%	16.30%
Older adults (65+) in poverty	12.80%	14.30%	10.40%
<b>Unemployment</b>			
2015-2019	8.50%	7.50%	5.30%
2016-2020	9.40%	7.10%	5.40%
2017-2021	9.70%	6.80%	5.50%
2018-2022	7.30%	6.40%	5.30%
2019-2023	8.30%	6.00%	5.20%

### 2019-2023 People in Poverty by Race and Ethnicity

	White	Black or African American	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Some Other Race	Two or More Races	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
Choctaw County	10.1%	29.3%	0.0%	95.5%	N/A	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%
Mississippi	11.7%	29.9%	28.4%	12.7%	25.6%	27.6%	21.3%	25.3%
United States	9.9%	21.3%	21.8%	9.9%	17.2%	18.2%	14.7%	16.9%



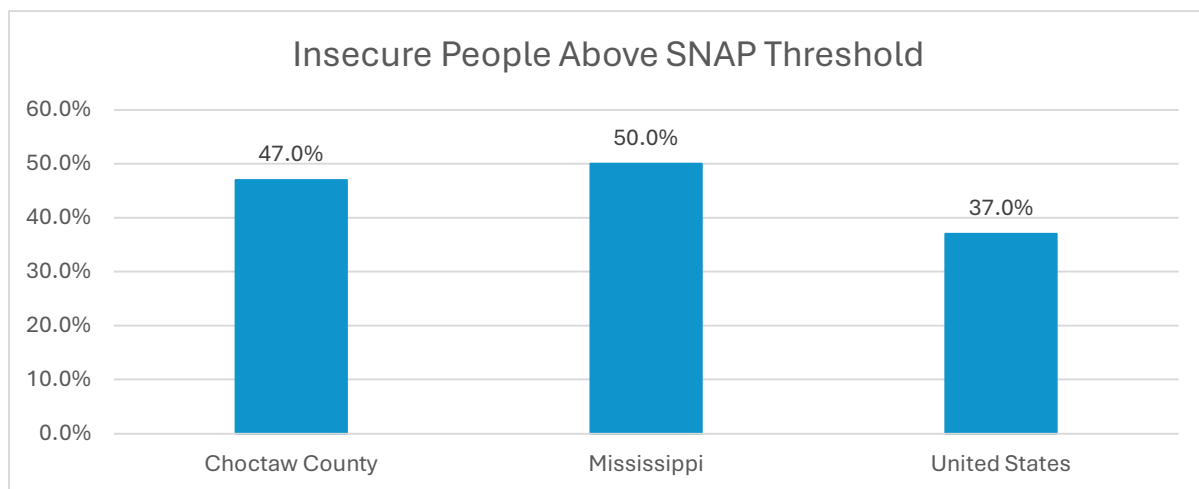
## Food Insecurity

Following the economic disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, both federal and local governments expanded support programs that helped temporarily stabilize—or in some cases reduce—food insecurity for about two years. However, as these emergency measures were phased out and the cost of living, particularly food prices, continued to rise, food insecurity has begun to increase once again.

In 2021, Choctaw County and the United States as a whole recorded their lowest levels of food insecurity in five years, largely due to these expanded assistance efforts. Since the expiration of those programs, however, food insecurity rates have surged, now reaching their highest point since 2019. Currently, nearly one in five residents in Choctaw County—and one in four children—face food insecurity. Alarming, almost half of those affected earn too much to qualify for SNAP benefits. This troubling pattern reflects a broader crisis across the southern United States, where food insecurity remains deeply intertwined with persistent poverty.

**2019-2023 Food Insecurity**

	Choctaw County	Mississippi	United States
<b>Food Insecurity among the Overall Population</b>			
2023	18.9%	19.4%	14.3%
2022	19.5%	18.8%	13.5%
2021	16.5%	16.3%	10.4%
2020	16.7%	16.2%	11.8%
2019	19.4%	18.5%	10.9%
<b>Food Insecurity among the Child Population</b>			
2023	22.6%	23.0%	19.2%
2022	23.2%	23.6%	18.5%
2021	16.9%	18.8%	12.8%
2020	19.4%	20.4%	16.1%
2019	25.0%	22.4%	14.6%



## Education

Educational attainment in Choctaw County generally aligns with statewide trends up to the associate degree level, with one notable difference: a higher proportion of residents have a high school diploma as their highest level of education. However, the county falls behind state averages when it comes to higher education. Only 10.4% of Choctaw County residents hold a bachelor's degree, and 8.1% have a graduate or professional degree—compared to 14.7% and 9.4%, respectively, across Mississippi. Both the county and the state trail behind national averages, with a larger share of the population lacking a high school diploma or equivalent.

Racial and ethnic disparities in educational attainment are especially pronounced in Choctaw County, reflecting—yet in some cases exceeding—gaps seen at the state and national levels. Most racial and ethnic groups in the county have lower levels of educational achievement compared to their counterparts statewide and nationwide. However, there are a few exceptions: 100% of individuals identifying as American Indian and Alaska Native, and 50.8% of those identifying as two or more races, hold a bachelor's degree or higher. In stark contrast, the Hispanic or Latino population in Choctaw County reports 0% attainment at the bachelor's degree level or above.

**2019-2023 Educational Attainment**

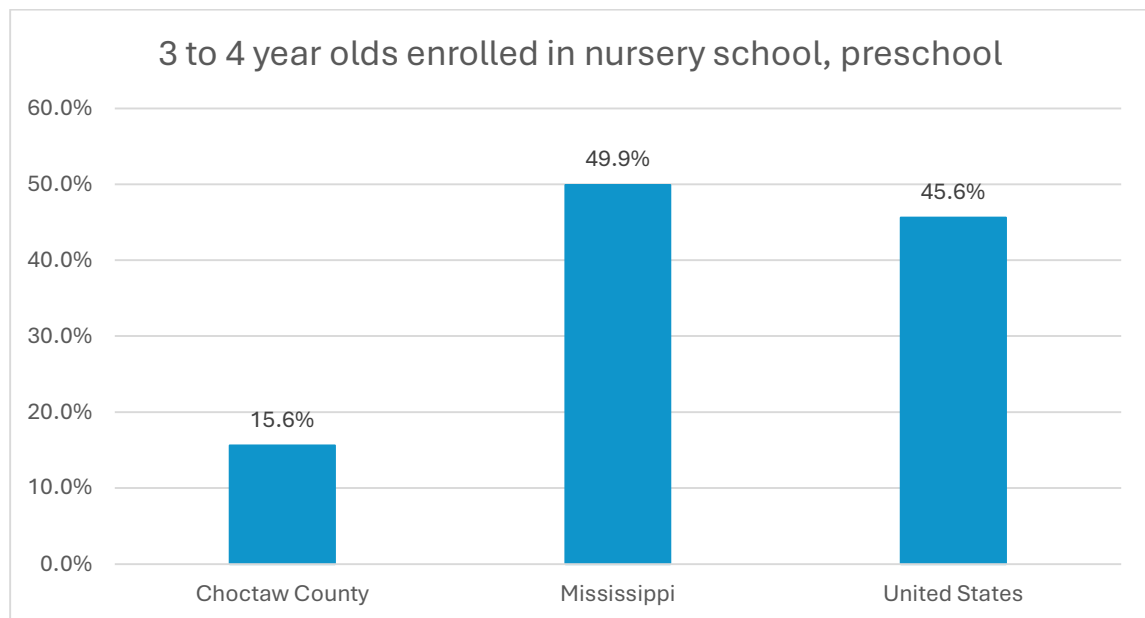
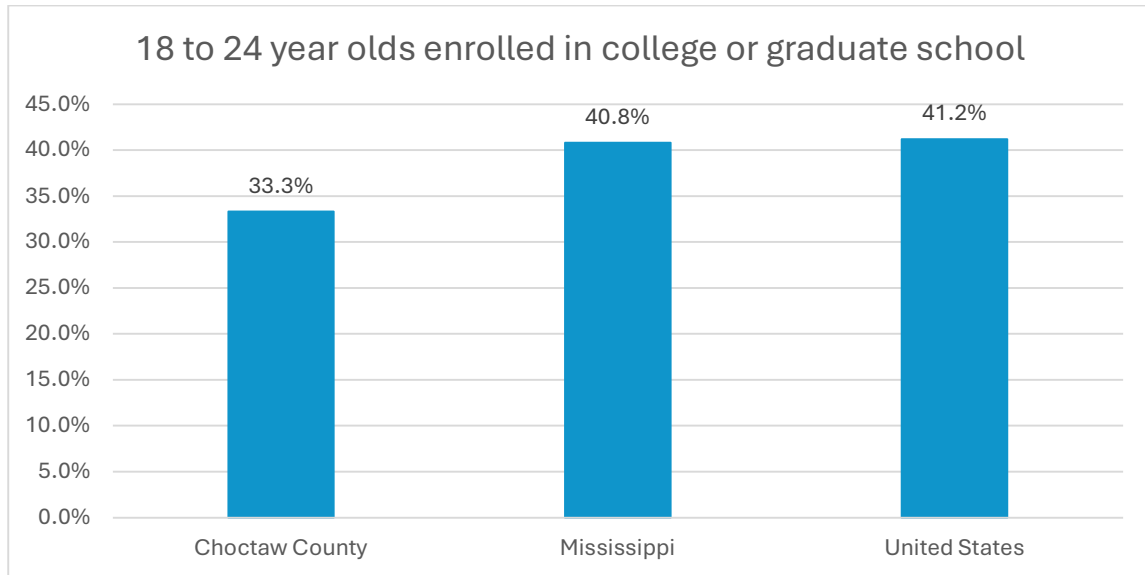
	Less than 9th grade	9th to 12th grade, no diploma	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	Some college, no degree	Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree
Choctaw County	3.0%	11.2%	38.5%	16.6%	12.2%	10.4%	8.1%
Mississippi	4.5%	8.9%	29.9%	21.8%	10.8%	14.7%	9.4%
United States	4.7%	5.9%	26.2%	19.4%	8.8%	21.3%	13.7%

**2019-2023 Population with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher by Race and Ethnicity**

	White	Black or African American	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Some Other Race	Two or More Races	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
Choctaw County	21.2%	10.3%	100.0%	15.4%	N/A	0.0%	50.8%	0.0%
Mississippi	27.9%	17.7%	10.5%	43.3%	30.5%	16.8%	23.8%	17.2%
United States	37.7%	24.7%	16.2%	57.0%	19.0%	15.6%	28.2%	19.9%

In Choctaw County, college or graduate school enrollment among individuals aged 18 to 24 is significantly lower than both state and national averages. While enrollment rates stand at 40.8% in Mississippi and 41.2% across the U.S., only about one in three young adults in this age group are enrolled in higher education within the county.

An even more pronounced gap exists in preschool enrollment for children ages 3 to 4. Choctaw County's rate is just 15.6%—dramatically lower than Mississippi's 49.9% and the national average of 45.6%.



## Housing

Homeownership in Choctaw County is significantly higher than both state and national averages, with 80.3% of residents owning their homes, compared to 69.5% in Mississippi and 65.0% nationwide. The county also reports lower selected monthly owner costs (SMOC), which likely contributes to its high homeownership rate and results in a slightly lower proportion of homeowners being cost burdened relative to state and national levels. While a smaller share of residents in Choctaw County live in rental housing, over one-third of renters still face cost burdens—a trend that reflects broader patterns seen across Mississippi and the U.S.

**2019 - 2023 Housing Indicators, Owners**

	Owners				
	Occupied Units	Median SMOC - with a mortgage*	Cost-Burdened**	Median SMOC - without a mortgage*	Cost-Burdened**
Choctaw County	80.3%	1,174	34.1%	391	11.3%
Mississippi	69.5%	1,353	26.3%	418	12.1%
United States	65.0%	1,902	27.6%	612	13.9%

\*Selected monthly owner costs (SMOC)

\*\*Selected monthly owner costs (SMOC) equal 30% or more of monthly household income

**2019 - 2023 Housing Indicators, Renters**

	Renters		
	Occupied Units	Median Rent	Cost-Burdened**
Choctaw County	19.70%	661	36.2%
Mississippi	30.5%	923	50.5%
United States	35.0%	1,348	50.4%

\*\*Monthly rent equals 30% or more of monthly household income

Although the use of lead-based paint in residential buildings was banned in the U.S. in 1978, many older homes still contain it, posing serious health risks—particularly for children. Lead exposure can harm the kidneys, blood, and brain, and in severe cases, it can cause seizures, coma, or even death. Children from low-income families and minority racial or ethnic groups are especially at risk of exposure within their homes. Data collected between 2019 and 2023 indicates that Choctaw County had a higher percentage of homes built before 1980 than the state average, increasing the potential for lead exposure in the community.

### 2019-2023 Housing by Year Built

	Before 1980	1980 to 1989	1990 to 1999	2000 to 2009	2010 to 2019	2020 or later
Choctaw County	45.9%	15.0%	16.5%	11.9%	10.1%	0.7%
Mississippi	42.3%	13.9%	16.0%	16.7%	10.2%	1.0%
United States	50.5%	13.0%	12.8%	13.6%	8.9%	1.2%

Nationwide, people living in low-income neighborhoods and older housing often face environmental hazards such as allergens, dampness, and mold—conditions associated with approximately 21% of current asthma cases. Excess moisture promotes the growth of mold and dust mites and can attract pests like cockroaches, rats, and mice, all of which release allergens that can worsen asthma and other respiratory illnesses. In Choctaw County, the percentage of adults currently diagnosed with asthma is slightly above the rates observed in both Mississippi and the U.S. overall, though the difference is not statistically significant.

### Current Asthma among Adults, Age-Adjusted

	Choctaw County	Mississippi	United States
2022	10.2%	9.4%	9.9%

While most adults in the United States use the internet, a significant portion still lack broadband access at home. Gaps in broadband availability remain across lines of race and ethnicity, age, geography, education, and income. As hospitals and healthcare systems increasingly rely on digital tools and online communication, expanding broadband access has become critical for promoting equitable health outcomes. In Choctaw County, computer access is roughly on par with the state average, with about 1 in 10 residents lacking access—slightly below the national average. However, broadband internet access, while similar to state levels, falls more noticeably behind the national rate: approximately 1 in 5 people in both Choctaw County and Mississippi lack internet access, compared to just 1 in 8 nationwide.

### 2019 - 2023 Households with Digital Access

	With a computer	With an Internet subscription
Choctaw County	89.1%	79.0%
Mississippi	91.4%	81.9%
United States	94.8%	89.7%

# A Closer Look at Health Statistics

## Access to Healthcare

Preventive healthcare plays a critical role in reducing disease and preventing premature death. In Choctaw County, more than three-quarters of residents have visited a doctor in the past year. However, many older adults are still missing out on essential preventive services, such as flu and pneumococcal (PPV) vaccinations, colorectal cancer screenings, and mammograms. Oral health is another major concern, as untreated dental issues are often linked to chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease. Despite this connection, over 90% of Choctaw County residents have not seen a dentist in the past year. This pattern highlights a broader public health challenge affecting not only Choctaw County but also communities throughout Mississippi and across the country.

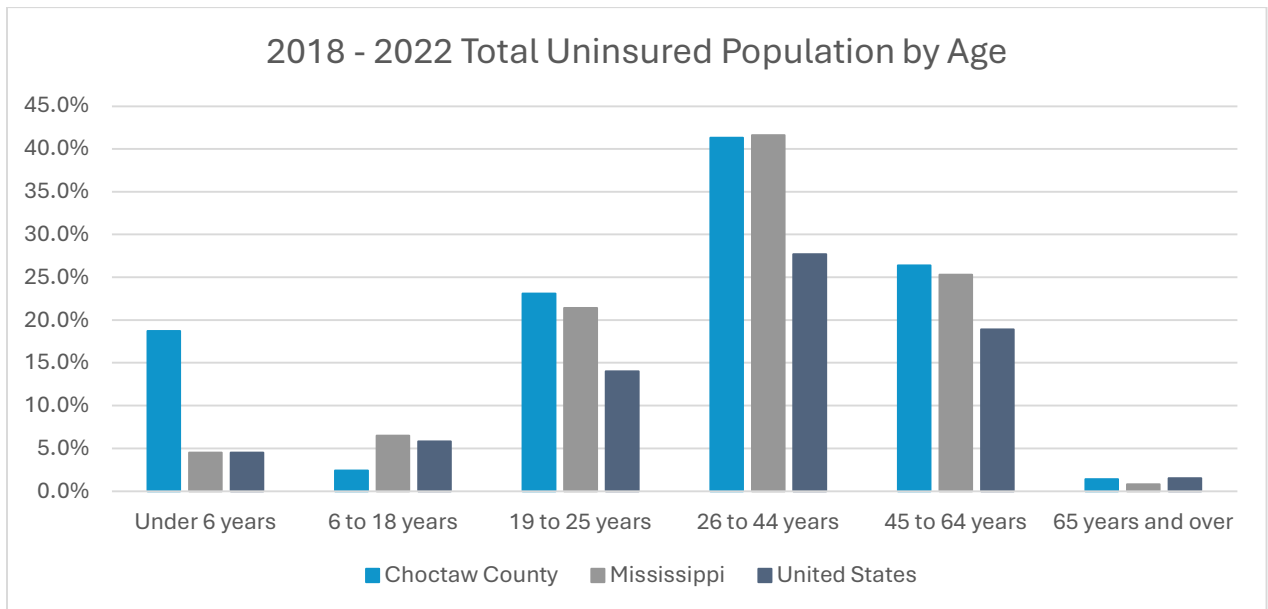
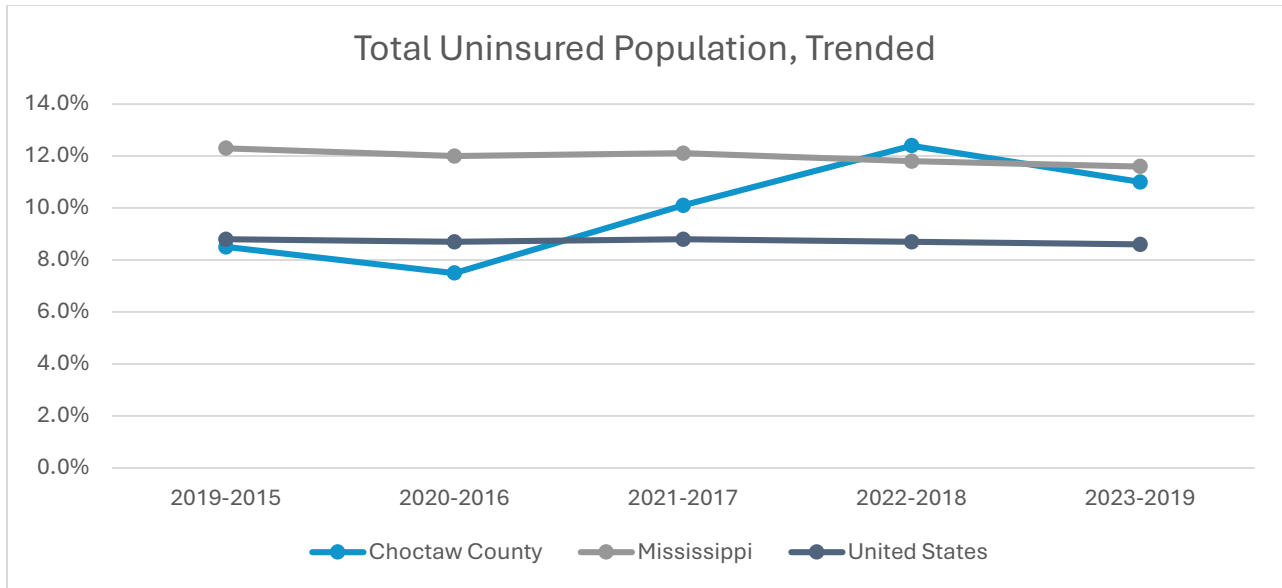
**Preventative Healthcare Rates, Age-Adjusted**

	Visits to Doctor	Visits to Dentist
Choctaw County	76.9%	9.0%
Mississippi	78.6%	9.8%
United States	74.2%	63.4%

Lack of health insurance significantly lowers the chances of having a regular healthcare provider and increases the likelihood of forgoing routine care, which can lead to more serious health issues. As of 2023, 11.0% of Choctaw County residents were uninsured, up from 8.5% in 2019. While Mississippi has seen a gradual decline in uninsured rates over the past five years, Choctaw County has experienced more volatility—with a drop in 2020 followed by a steady rise until 2022, and a slight decline in 2023. This recent dip may signal the beginning of a downward trend. In contrast, the national uninsurance rate has remained relatively stable at around 8.7% during the same period.

When looking at coverage by age group, nearly all adults aged 65 and older are insured at the county, state, and national levels. Insurance rates are also relatively high for children at the state and national levels. However, in Choctaw County, nearly 1 in 5 children under age six lack coverage. The highest uninsurance rates are among adults aged 19 to 64—particularly those between ages 26 and 44. In this group, over 2 in 5 in Choctaw County are uninsured, a trend also seen across the state.

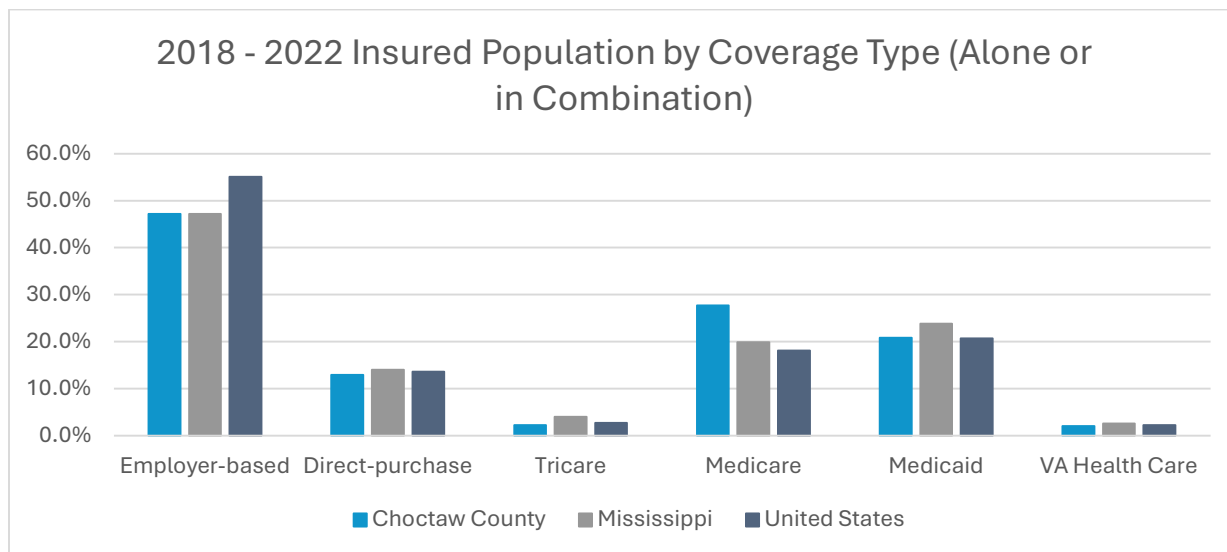
Insurance disparities by race and ethnicity generally reflect broader poverty patterns, though some gaps are more pronounced in Choctaw County. Non-White residents are more likely to be uninsured than White residents, with the disparity wider than at the state and national levels. This gap is particularly striking among Asian and Hispanic or Latino populations. Interestingly, Choctaw County departs from statewide trends in one key area: Black or African American residents are more likely to have health insurance than White residents, the opposite of what is observed at the state level.



**2023 Uninsured Population by Race and Ethnicity**

	White	Black or African American	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Some other race	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)
Choctaw County	11.8%	7.7%	0.0%	54.5%	N/A	25.0%	16.3%	34.7%
Mississippi	9.7%	12.8%	28.2%	16.0%	24.4%	32.4%	16.2%	29.1%
United States	6.6%	9.5%	19.2%	5.9%	11.6%	19.7%	13.0%	17.5%

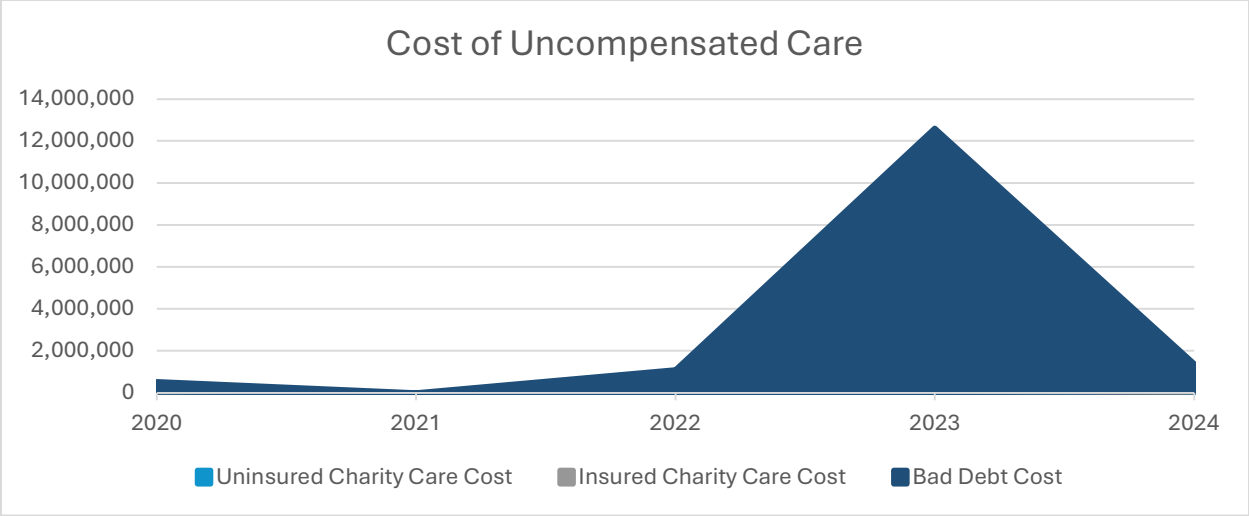
In Choctaw County, nearly half of residents receive health insurance through employer-sponsored plans. The remaining population is primarily covered by Medicare (27.7%), Medicaid (20.8%), or direct-purchase plans (12.9%). As expected due to the county's age profile and socioeconomic factors, Medicare enrollment is higher than both the state and national averages—19.9% and 18.1%, respectively. Medicaid enrollment in the county falls between state and national rates, reflecting a balance between broader access needs and eligibility.



## Uncompensated Care Cost

Uncompensated care represents the total value of hospital services provided without payment from either the patient or an insurer. It includes both bad debt and financial assistance. Financial assistance covers services for which the hospital does not expect payment, including free or discounted care for individuals who qualify based on need. Bad debt occurs when patients do not pay their bills but either do not apply for assistance or choose not to pay, leaving the hospital unable to recover costs. It's important to note that uncompensated care does not include losses from underpayments by Medicaid or Medicare. **Over the past five fiscal years, CRMC has incurred over \$15 million in uncompensated care costs for services provided without reimbursement from either insurers or patients.**

Under CRMC's Financial Assistance Policy (FAP), patients may qualify for partial or full financial assistance for emergency and medically necessary services. Eligibility is determined using a sliding fee scale based on household size and income, which is updated annually in line with federal poverty guidelines. Approved discounts are valid for six months, and patients must reapply every six months to continue receiving the discount. **Over the past five fiscal years, CRMC has delivered more than \$100,000 in charity care, with 77.1% of those costs resulting from services provided to uninsured patients.**



## Health Risk Factors and Chronic Diseases

Mortality data for Choctaw County in 2022 was sourced from the Mississippi State Department of Health’s Office of Vital Records and Public Health Statistics. After excluding “Other Diseases and Conditions” (Rank 3), “Unintentional Injuries” (Rank 4), and “COVID-19” (Rank 7), we identified the following five leading causes of death as key focus areas:

1. Heart Disease
2. Cancer
3. COPD / Emphysema
4. Alzheimer’s
5. Stroke

### Heart Disease

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in Choctaw County, as well as across Mississippi and the United States. Several factors can increase a person’s risk, including pre-existing health conditions, lifestyle choices, age, and family history. While some risk factors—like age and genetics—are unavoidable, many others can be controlled or reduced. The CDC reports that nearly 47% of Americans have at least one of three modifiable risk factors for heart disease. Ischemic heart disease, the most common type, is also the leading cause of heart-related deaths—and is largely preventable.

Mississippi has the second-highest rate of heart disease-related deaths in the nation. However, Choctaw County shows slightly better outcomes for certain risk factors when compared to the state overall. For example, two in five county residents have high blood pressure, compared to three in five statewide—and over two-thirds of those individuals are taking medication to manage it. High cholesterol affects about one in three residents, a rate on par with the state average. Smoking rates are also similar, with roughly one fifth of Choctaw County residents identifying as current smokers, mirroring statewide patterns.

**Age-Adjusted Heart Disease Risk Factors**

	High blood pressure	Taking high blood pressure medication among adults with high blood pressure	High cholesterol	Smoking
Choctaw County	41.1%	66.2%	32.4%	19.3%
Mississippi	63.7%	70.1%	32.8%	18.1%

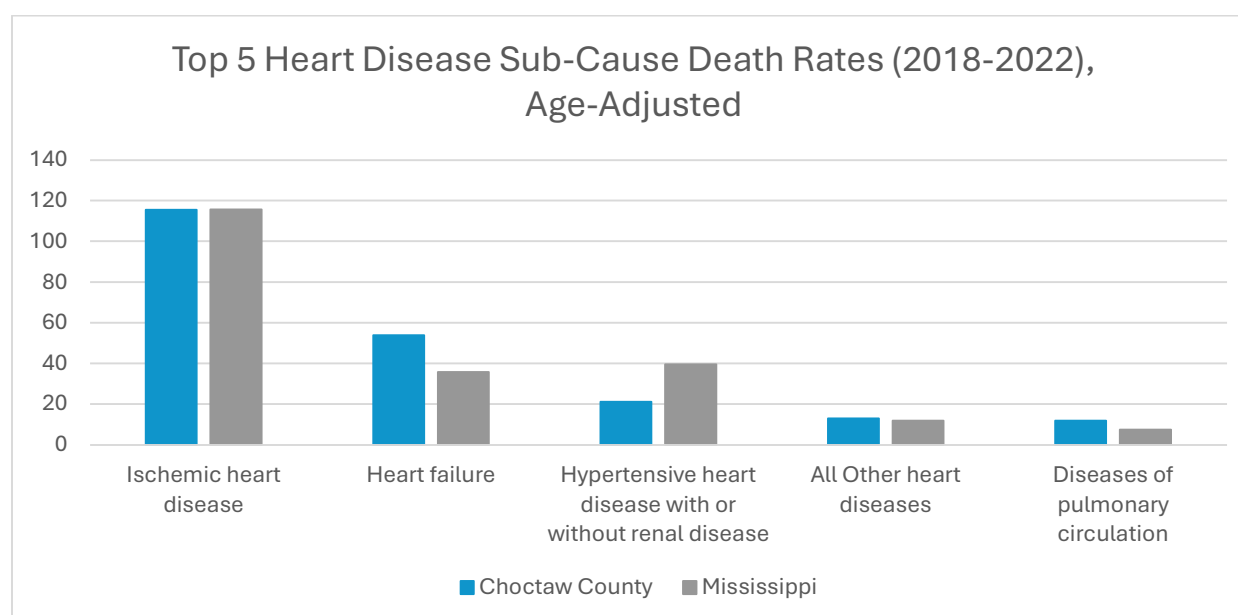
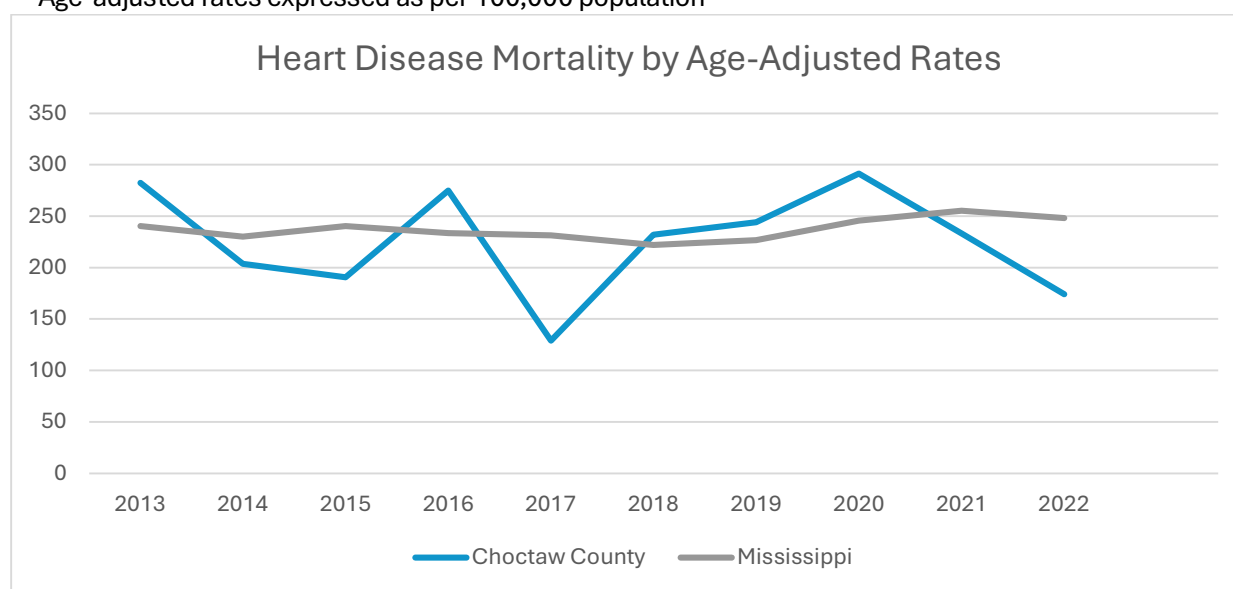
Heart disease remains the leading cause of death across most racial and ethnic groups in the United States. In Mississippi, Black or African American individuals account for 39.8% of heart disease-related deaths, while White individuals make up 34.5%. A similar pattern is observed in Choctaw County, where mortality is slightly higher among Black or African American residents (54.1%) compared to White residents (45.9%).

Since 2018, Mississippi has seen a gradual, modest increase in heart disease mortality. In contrast, Choctaw County has experienced greater year-to-year fluctuations. Despite notable spikes in 2016, 2018, and 2019, the county's overall heart disease mortality rate has declined significantly—falling well below the state rate by 2022. Data from that year suggests this downward trend may be continuing at both the county and state levels.

**Heart Disease Death Rates (2018-2022) by Race and Ethnicity, Age-Adjusted**

	White	Black or African American	Other	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
Choctaw County	226.6	267.4	0	0
Mississippi	228.4	263.3	93.9	76.2

\* Age-adjusted rates expressed as per 100,000 population



## Cancer

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Choctaw County and nationwide, and the third leading cause in Mississippi. Common risk factors include tobacco use, alcohol consumption, obesity, HPV infection, and family history. While certain factors—such as genetics—cannot be changed, making healthier lifestyle choices can significantly lower the risk of developing many forms of cancer.

Choctaw County shows slightly higher rates for all major risk factors compared to the state average, though the differences are not statistically significant. Nearly half of residents are classified as obese, close to one-third report little to no physical activity, and approximately one in seven residents engages in binge drinking, a rate that falls slightly below the national average.

**2022 Age-Adjusted Cancer Risk Factors**

	Obesity	Lack of Physical Activity	Binge drinking
Choctaw County	41.6%	31.0%	15.5%
Mississippi	40.1%	30.9%	14.4%
United States	33.4%	23.0%	18.0%

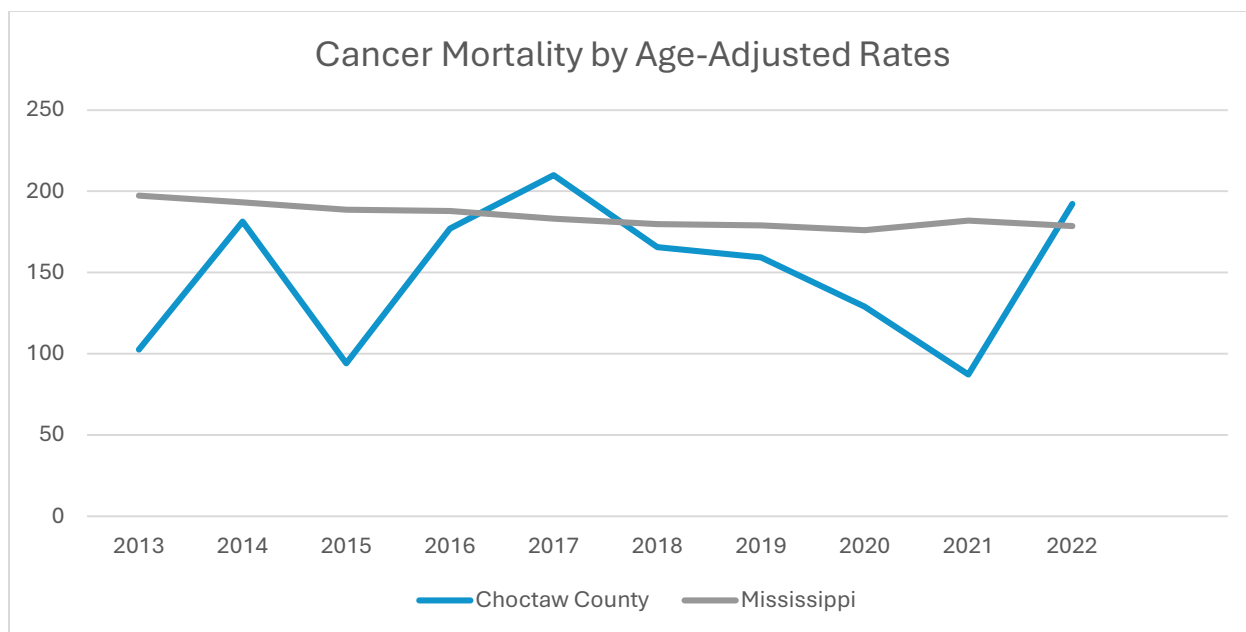
Over the past decade, Mississippi's age-adjusted cancer mortality rate declined overall. In contrast, Choctaw County has experienced notable fluctuations, with its overall cancer death rate nearly doubling during that time. For most of the decade, the county's rate remained below the state average, except for sharp increases in 2014, 2016, 2017, and 2022—when it either approached or exceeded the state level.

Statewide, Black or African American residents face a higher risk of cancer-related mortality than other racial groups. However, in Choctaw County, White residents experience a higher cancer mortality rate compared to other groups.

**Cancer Death Rates (2018-2022) by Race and Ethnicity, Age-Adjusted**

	White	Black or African American	Other	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
Choctaw County	149.3	137.8	116.2	0
Mississippi	173.3	197.4	69.2	61.1

\* Age-adjusted rates expressed as per 100,000 population

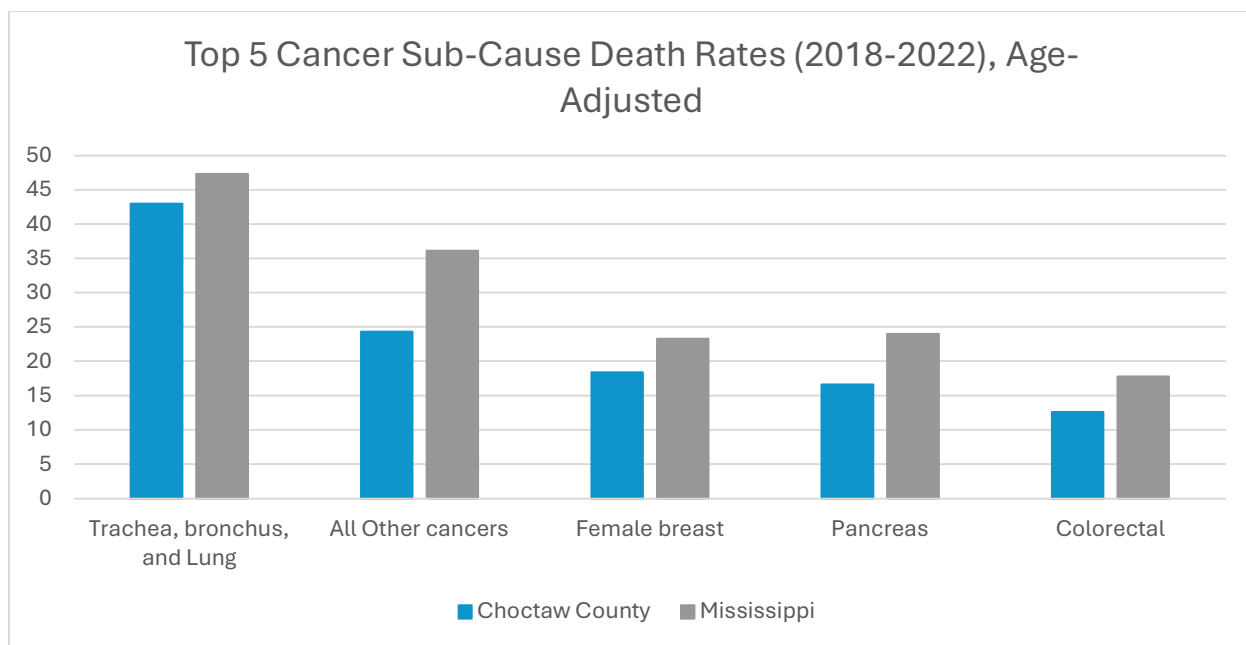


Trachea, bronchus, and lung cancers are the leading causes of cancer-related deaths in Choctaw County, despite being largely preventable. According to the CDC, cigarette smoking accounts for 80% to 90% of all lung cancer deaths nationwide. In Choctaw County, around one in five residents are current smokers. Avoiding tobacco—or quitting if you smoke—is the most effective way to lower your risk of lung cancer.

Female breast cancer is the third most common cause of cancer death in the county. Regular mammograms are essential for early detection, often identifying cancer up to three years before symptoms appear. However, only about one in four senior women in Choctaw County reported having a mammogram within the past year.

Pancreatic cancer is the fourth leading cause of cancer deaths locally. It has the highest mortality rate of all major cancers. Risk can be reduced by maintaining a healthy weight, staying physically active, avoiding tobacco use, and limiting alcohol and consumption of red or processed meats.

Colorectal cancer ranks fifth in both Choctaw County and the United States. Most cases occur in people aged 50 and older. In the county, just over half of adults between ages 45 and 75 have received a colorectal cancer screening in the past year. Preventive steps include regular physical activity, avoiding tobacco, and moderating alcohol intake.



## COPD / Emphysema

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is the fifth leading cause of death in Choctaw County and continues to be a significant cause of mortality at both the state and national levels. Smoking is the primary risk factor for COPD, placing current and former smokers at substantially higher risk. The best way to prevent COPD is to avoid smoking entirely, and for those already diagnosed, quitting smoking is the most important step in managing the condition.

While COPD mortality rates in Mississippi have remained relatively stable over the past decade, Choctaw County has experienced sharp fluctuations. Between 2014 and 2015, the county's COPD death rate more than doubled, exceeding the state's stroke mortality rate. Rates then stabilized before falling below the state average in 2018. However, a steady rise followed, culminating in another sharp increase in 2022. By that year, COPD mortality in Choctaw County had tripled compared to a decade earlier.

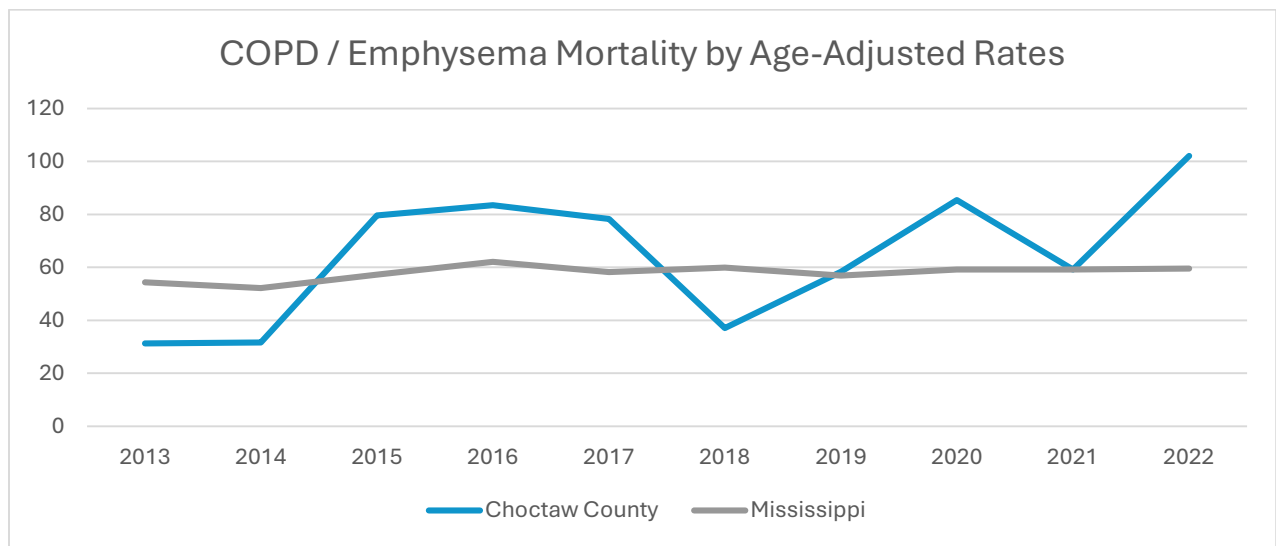
**2022 Percentage of Residents with COPD, Age-Adjusted**

	Total Population
Choctaw County	8.2%
Mississippi	9.7%

**COPD / Emphysema Death Rates (2018-2022) by Race and Ethnicity, Age-Adjusted**

	White	Black or African American	Other	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
Choctaw County	69.1	80	0	0
Mississippi	68.1	37.7	12.7	13.3

\* Age-adjusted rates expressed as per 100,000 population



## Alzheimer's

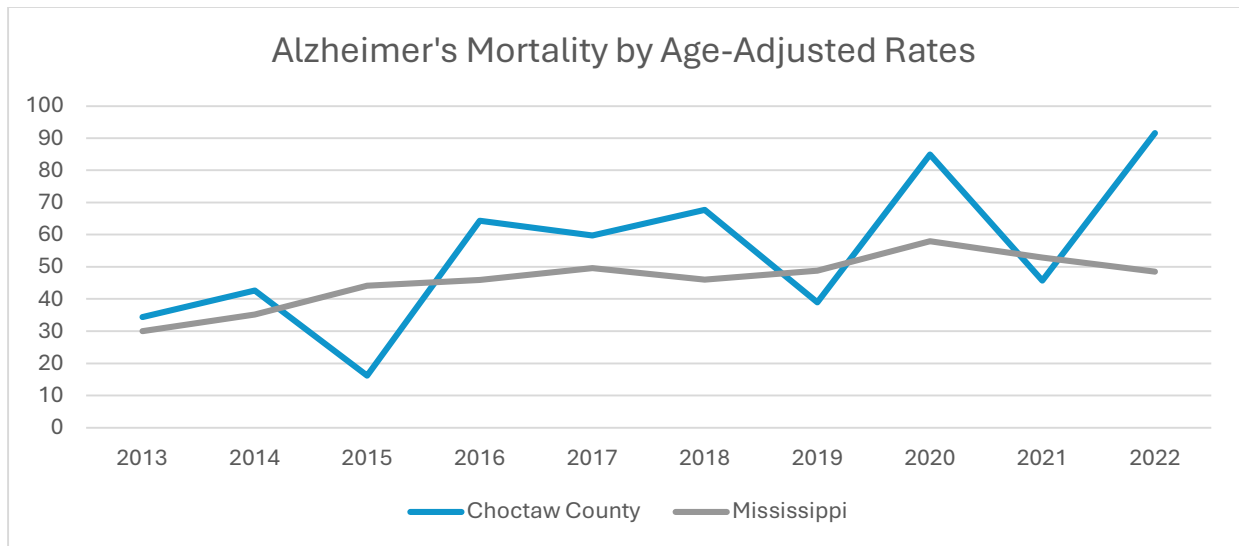
Alzheimer's disease is the sixth leading cause of death in Choctaw County and is a common cause of mortality throughout Mississippi and the United States. Strategies to reduce the risk of Alzheimer's include managing high blood pressure, maintaining a healthy weight, staying physically active, quitting smoking, limiting alcohol use, addressing hearing loss, and getting adequate sleep. While certain risk factors—such as age and genetics—cannot be changed, adopting healthier lifestyle habits can help lower the likelihood of developing the disease.

Statewide, Alzheimer's mortality rates have steadily increased over the past decade, though there was a slight decline from 2020 to 2022, suggesting a potential downward trend. In Choctaw County, Alzheimer's-related deaths have also risen overall, but with greater variability and a more pronounced increase. The county's mortality rate has tripled over the last ten years. Although there were notable declines in 2015, 2019, and 2021, each of these was followed by a sharp spike the following year—leading to historically high mortality levels by 2022.

**Alzheimer's Death Rates (2018-2022) by Race and Ethnicity, Age-Adjusted**

	White	Black or African American	Other	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
Choctaw County	66.5	74.3	0	0
Mississippi	53.9	44.7	10.3	13.1

\* Age-adjusted rates expressed as per 100,000 population



## Stroke

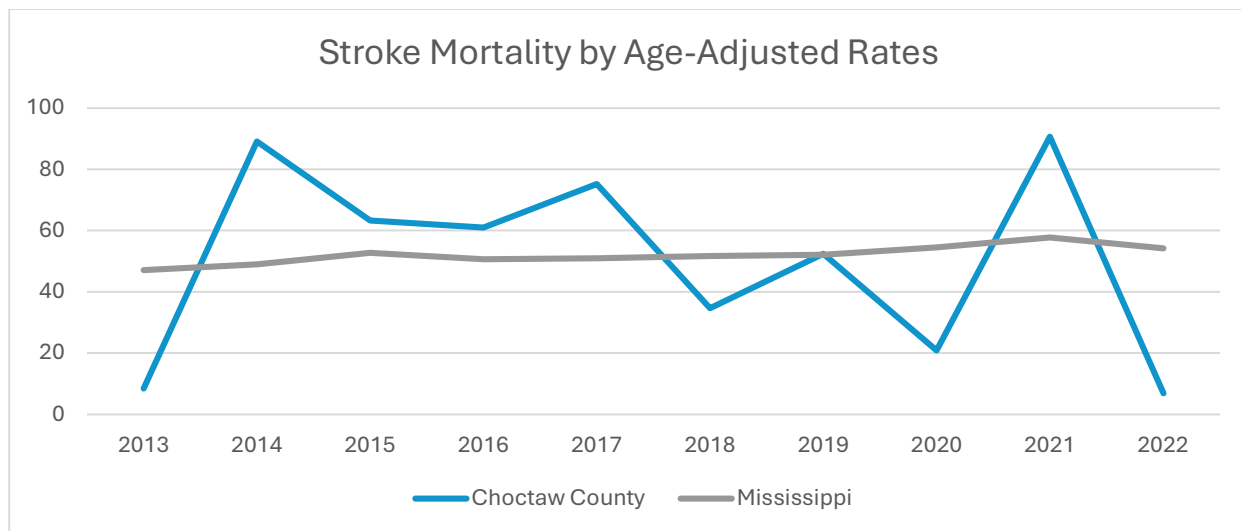
Stroke is the eighth leading cause of death in Chocotaw County. While strokes can occur at any age, several risk factors significantly increase the likelihood. Managing these risks is key to prevention and promoting both individual and community health. Although some factors—such as age and family history—are beyond our control, many are preventable or manageable, including obesity, smoking, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and heart disease.

According to the CDC, Black or African American individuals are nearly twice as likely as White individuals to experience a first stroke and have a higher risk of dying from it. In Mississippi, stroke mortality rates have remained relatively stable over the past decade, with only a slight increase. In contrast, Chocotaw County has seen much greater fluctuation. In 2014, stroke-related deaths in the county rose to nine times the rate of the previous year. Aside from a few minor spikes, mortality declined through 2020. However, in 2021 the rate more than quadrupled, followed by a dramatic drop of over 90% in 2022—the lowest level in over ten years. Despite this encouraging decline, the volatility in stroke mortality makes future trends difficult to predict.

**Stroke Death Rates (2018-2022) by Race and Ethnicity, Age-Adjusted**

	White	Black or African American	Other	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
Chocotaw County	37.5	48.4	0	0
Mississippi	47.3	69.4	27.1	17.2

\* Age-adjusted rates expressed as per 100,000 population



# Community Health Needs Assessment

## Background and Distribution

Between July and August 2025, Choctaw County residents and employees—as well as individuals in surrounding areas—were invited to participate in a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) survey. While the survey was primarily distributed online, printed copies and secure drop boxes were also made available at all CRMC facilities to ensure broader access for community members.

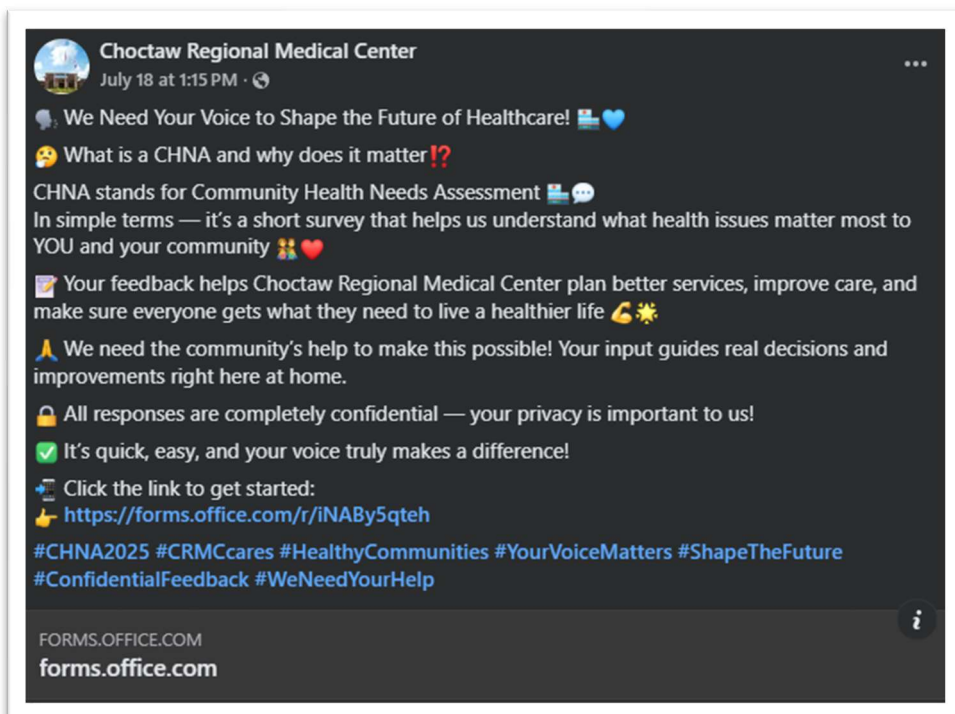
Choctaw Regional Medical Center thoroughly reviewed and analyzed the survey data to guide strategic planning and determine the health priorities that would have the greatest impact on the community.

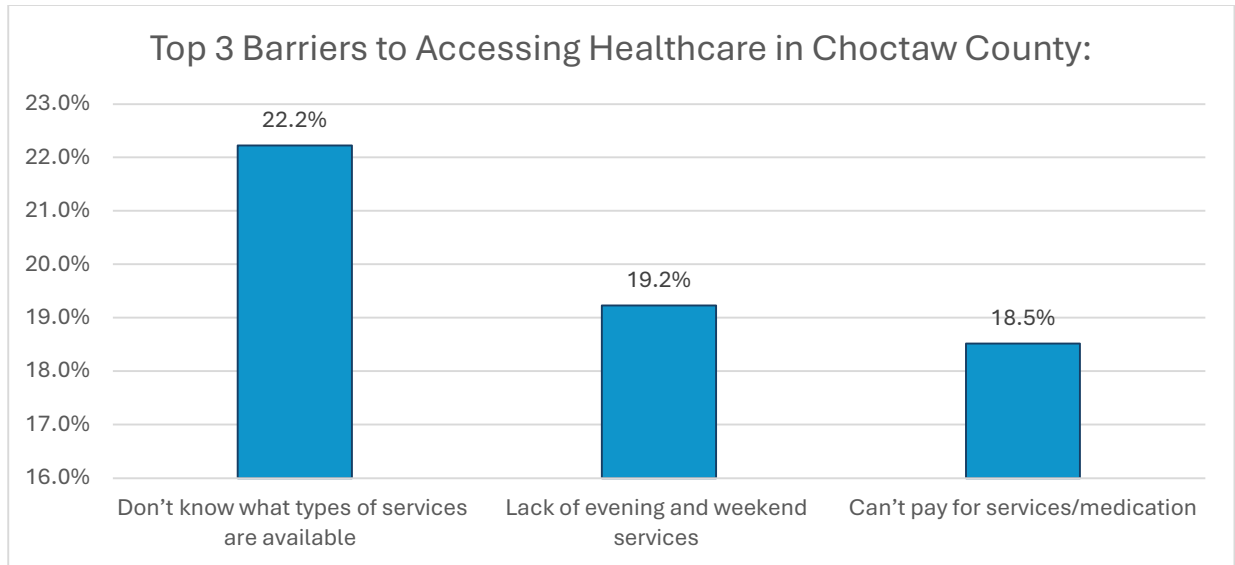
In addition to the survey, CRMC organized a focus group of key community stakeholders to gain deeper insight into local health challenges and needs. The perspectives shared during this session were instrumental in shaping a community-centered health improvement plan that addresses the most urgent and meaningful concerns of those we serve.

## Survey Findings

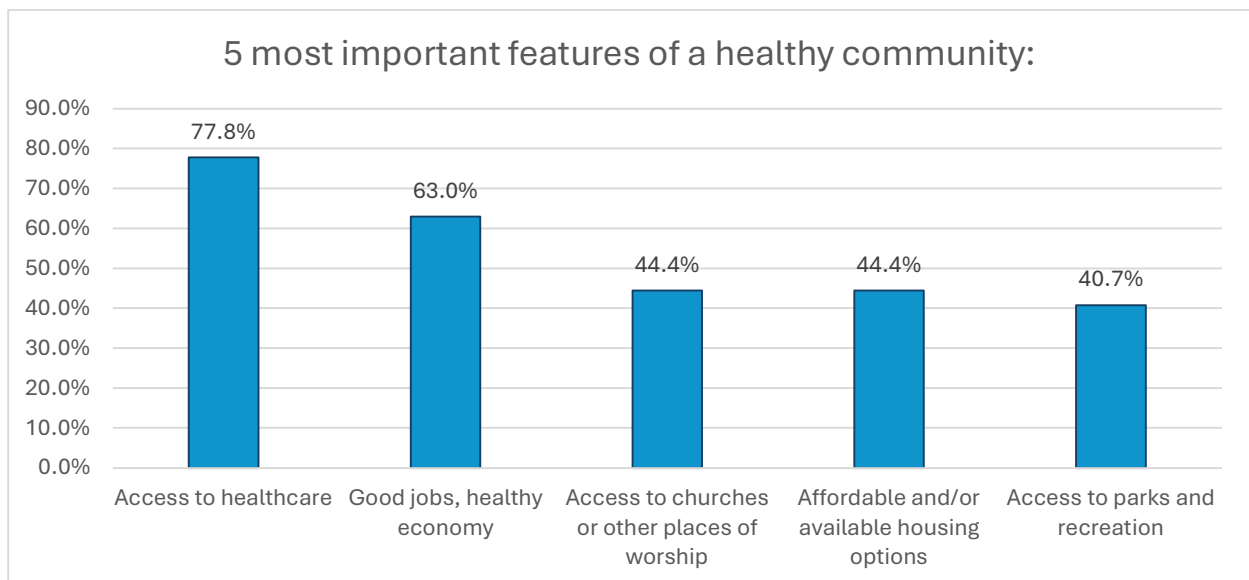
These sample questions provide insight into the topics explored in the community survey.

88.0% of survey participants reported visiting a Choctaw Regional Medical Center facility for healthcare services within the past 12 months, underscoring CRMC’s pivotal role in supporting the health of our community. Additionally, when asked about the most important components of a healthy community, more than three out of four participants identified access to healthcare—further highlighting the value of CRMC’s presence in Choctaw County. However, respondents also pointed out three significant barriers to accessing care in Choctaw County: limited awareness of available services, lack of evening and weekend services, and inability to pay for services or medication.

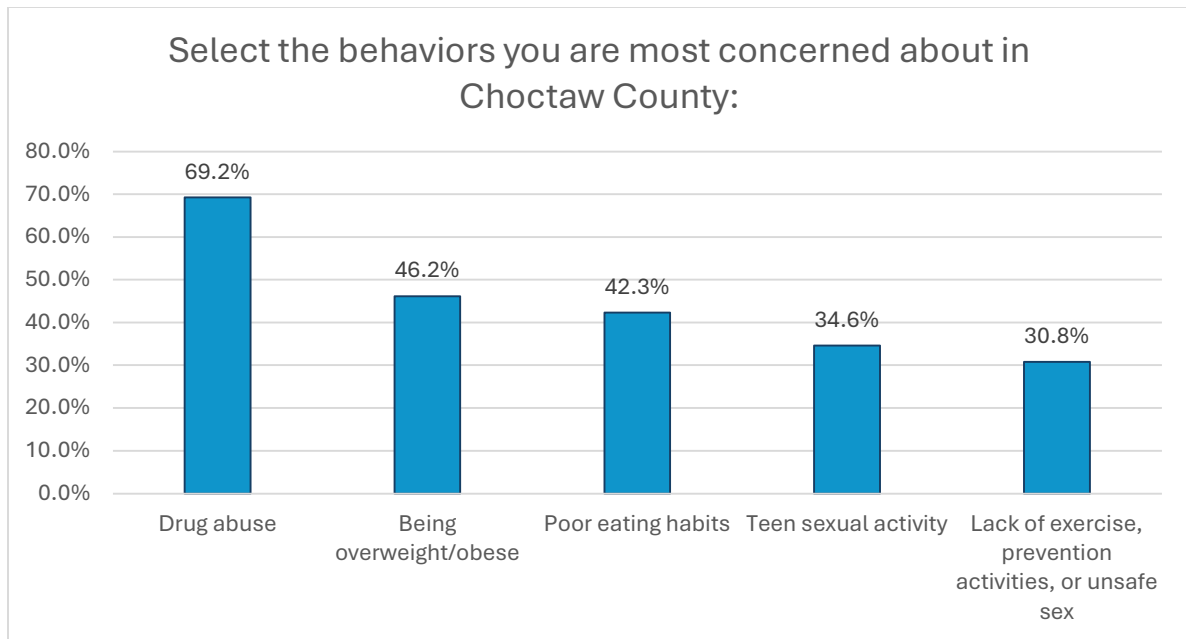




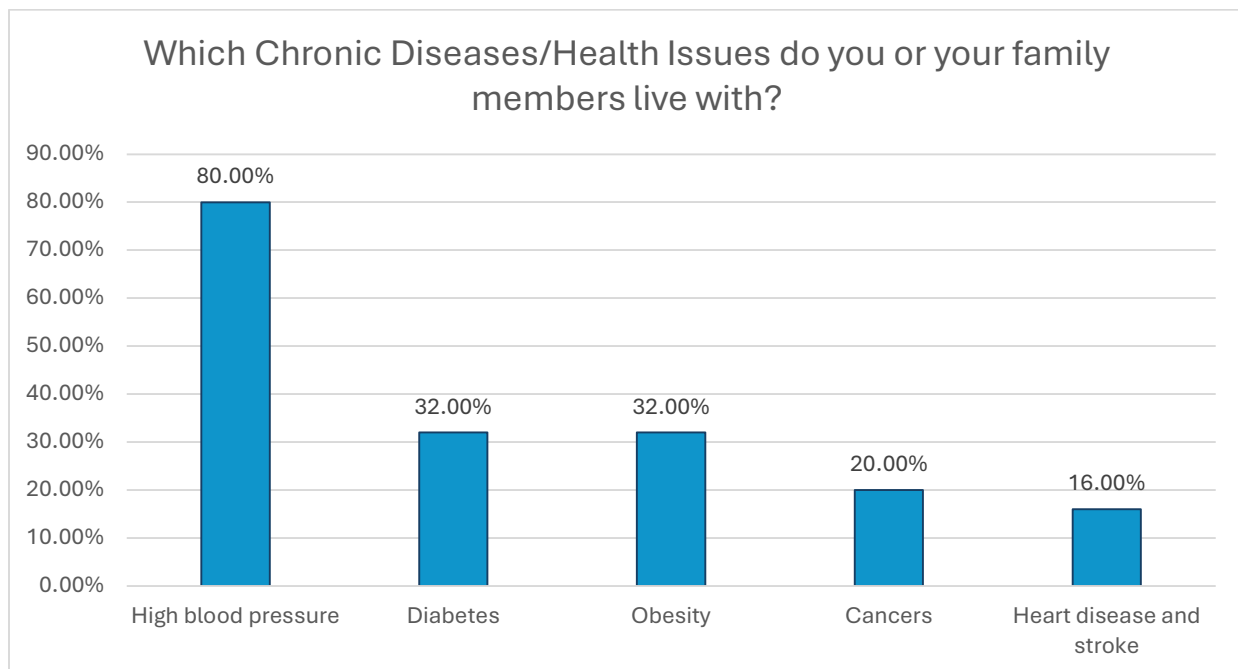
In addition to access to healthcare, survey participants cited access to parks and recreation as a crucial factor in building a healthy community, with two in five respondents highlighting its importance. More than half also expressed a strong interest in having a community fitness center, walking track, or public exercise classes. Concerns about obesity, poor nutrition, and lack of physical activity emerged as consistent themes throughout the survey.



When asked which behaviors they were most concerned about in our community, over two thirds of respondents identified drug abuse as a prevalent health concern. Substance or alcohol abuse is a risk factor for cancer and Alzheimer's, two of the leading causes of death in Choctaw County—ranking second and sixth, respectively. Additionally, almost half of participants expressed concern about obesity and poor eating habits in the community, and roughly one third also highlighted lack of exercise. These health challenges are all risk factors for cancer, Alzheimer's, and stroke. One third of participants also noted concern surrounding lack of preventive action taken by community members, such as through cancer screenings and cholesterol screenings.



Respondents were asked to share which chronic diseases or health issues directly affect themselves or their family members. 4 in 5 respondents stated that they are impacted by high blood pressure, which is a risk factor for heart disease, Alzheimer's, and stroke. One third also cited diabetes and obesity as health concerns, both of which CRMC aimed to improve under our Best Living Habits 2022 CHNA priority, emphasizing the hospital's commitment to targeting the most prevalent health issues within our community. One in five individuals mentioned being affected by cancer, and one in six are impacted by heart disease or stroke, the second, first, and eighth leading causes of death in Choctaw County, respectively.



# 2022 Community Health Improvement Plan Progress

## Priority #1: Best Living Habits for Choctaw County

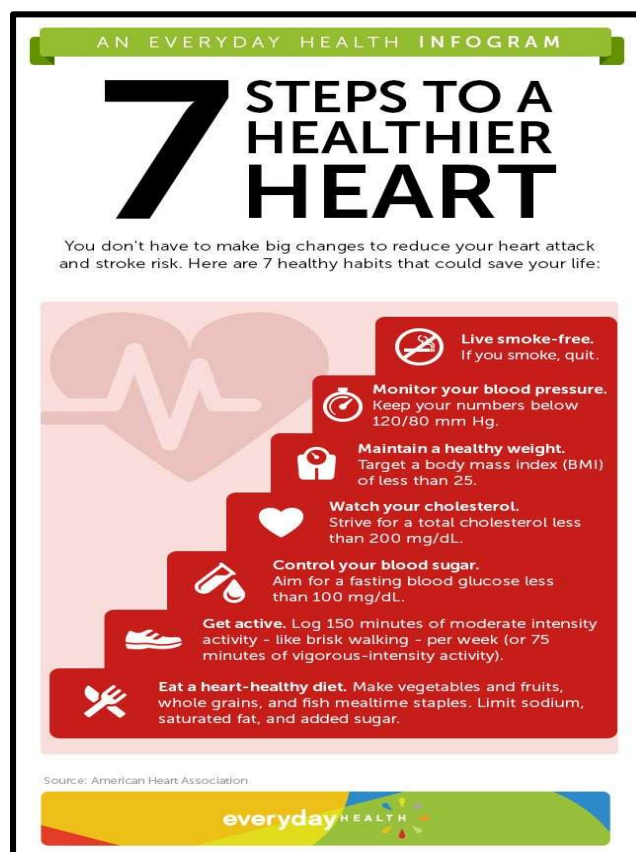
### Plan of Action

Statistics say that in Choctaw County, heart disease is the #1 cause of death, with ischemic heart disease being classified as the leading type of heart disease. The top 2 cancers leading to death in Choctaw County are female breast cancer and tracheal/lung cancer. We seek to impact healthy eating and exercise has on heart disease, cancer, and diabetes, raise awareness of the importance of routine self-breast exam, and address the dangers of smoking with younger students in hopes of prevention. Our plan includes the following:

1. Heart healthy checks offered at the American Coal Mine annually in February for their employees.
2. Diabetes/AHA/ Alzheimer/ Hospice 2-day Health event held at Choctaw Regional Medical Center annually in November where the public will be invited and lectures, educational pamphlets, and handouts will be provided. Utilize social media.
3. Breast Cancer Awareness will be provided by providing educational pamphlets on how to perform self-breast exams, targeting middle age and younger women and utilizing social media posts.
4. Vaping/Smoking prevention will be addressed annually during Red Ribbon Week at Choctaw Elementary School, providing informative novelties for the students.

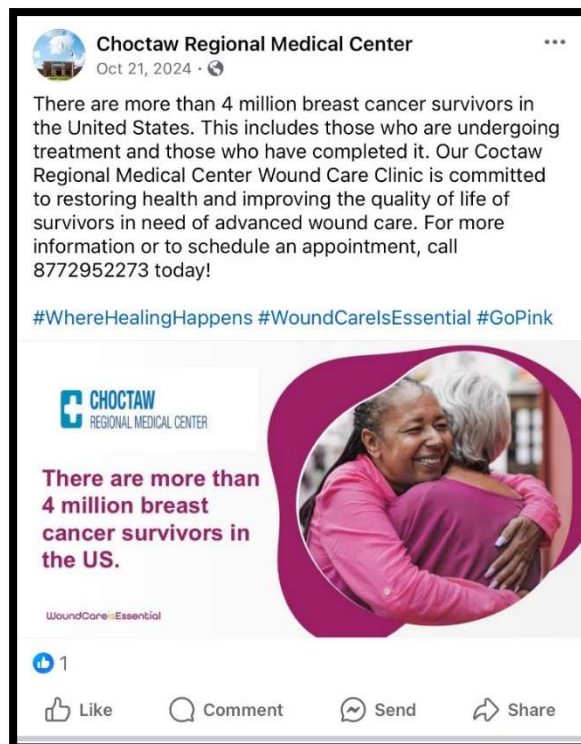
We aim to provide Heart Healthy Screens to 25 American Coal Mine employees annually, distribute educational material through handouts, pamphlets, social media, and lectures to over 100 members of the community annually, provide smoking prevention education or novelties to at least 80% of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade class at Choctaw Elementary. Our collaborative partners are:

- American Coal Mine
- American Heart Association
- Alzheimer's Association
- Halcyon Hospice
- WellCare Hospice
- American Cancer Society
- Tobacco Free Coalition
- Choctaw County School System
- Chamber of Commerce



## Response to Stated Strategies

- Heart Healthy Checkups every February for 50-75 employees of the Coal mine where their blood pressure, weight, bmi were checked and recorded on sheet and given to employee. Any abnormal findings were discussed with the employee and encouraged to f/u with an appointment with their PCP and if they do not have a PCP encouraged to make an appt. Education and hand outs are provided for abnormal findings. 7 steps to a Healthy Heart flyer is handed out.
- Food Pantry Partnership with Broken Wings
- LMC offered free blood pressure checks at Winston County Health Fair
- Provided Health education and information at the Community Health and Resource Fair in Choctaw County: Heart disease prevention, Tips for being active with diabetes, Smoking Cessation.
- Provided breast cancer awareness using social media posts.



## Priority #2: Alzheimer's

### Plan of Action

Statistics say that cancer is the #2 cause of death in Choctaw County with Alzheimer's being #3. We will Educate the public on the importance of POA, Advance Directives, and living wills, raise awareness of end-of-life care, and make known the difference in dementia and Alzheimer's. Our strategy includes:

1. Diabetes/AHA/ Alzheimer/ Hospice 2-day Health event held at Choctaw Regional Medical Center annually in November where the public will be invited and lectures, educational pamphlets, and handouts will be provided. Utilize social media
2. Difference between Alzheimer's and Dementia flyers and Facebook posts.
3. Paint Choctaw Purple in November for Alzheimer's awareness month.

We plan to distribute educational material on Alzheimer and the end stages of life through handouts, pamphlets, social media, and lectures to over 100 members of the community annually and will collaborate with:

- Alzheimer's Association
- Halcyon Hospice
- WellCare Hospice
- American Cancer Society
- Chamber of Commerce

### Response to Stated Strategies

In 2022, Choctaw Regional Medical Center hosted a two-day Palliative Care Symposium on its campus, drawing participation from both the public and healthcare professionals. The event featured expert guest speakers including Jackie Nason of Kindred Hospice, Michelle Lowe of Halcyon Hospice, and Lacey Jones of Spring Valley Palliative Care. Designed to foster open dialogue around sensitive but essential topics such as hospice care, death and dying, powers of attorney, advance directives, and living wills (including the 5 Wishes program), the symposium aimed to increase community awareness and comfort with end-of-life planning. Representatives from the Alzheimer's Association and Generations Care were also present, providing valuable information on their services and resources. Attendees enjoyed refreshments, educational materials, and a chance to win door prizes donated by local businesses and healthcare providers.



**Palliative Care Symposium**

- November 9th and 10th
- 10:00 – 11:30
- Choctaw Regional Medical Center Dining Room
- Free and open to the public
- Refreshments provided
- Door prizes each day

Join us as we host an open dialogue symposium, discussing the concept of hospice, powers of attorney, advance directives, and living wills.

**Featured Speaker – Wednesday, Nov. 9th**  
Jackie Nason, Kindred Hospice

**Featured Speaker – Thursday, Nov. 10th**  
Michelle Lowe, Halcyon Hospice

Representatives with the Alzheimer's Association and Generations Care will be onsite to provide information, resources and answer guests' questions.

8613 MS Highway 12  
Ackerman, Mississippi 39735  
Phone: 662-285-4400  
[www.choctawregional.com](http://www.choctawregional.com)

**CHOCTAW**  
REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

The event was organized by Stephanie Black, CRMC's Director of Social Services, who emphasized its purpose in addressing Choctaw County's leading causes of death—heart disease, cancer, Alzheimer's disease, and COPD—through education and early planning. She highlighted the importance of connecting the public with local resources and encouraging proactive conversations about future medical care. The symposium is now held annually in November.

Additionally, at the Community Health and Resource Fair in Choctaw County, Choctaw Regional Medical Center provided health education and resources focused on advanced directives, powers of attorney, caregiver support, and the 5 Wishes program. CRMC's outreach efforts are supported by collaborative partners including the Alzheimer's Association, Halcyon Hospice, WellCare Hospice, and the American Cancer Society, all working together to promote informed decision-making and support for patients and caregivers.

## Priority #3: Patient/Provider Trust

### Plan of Action

Providers at Choctaw Medical Clinic feel the need to raise awareness with patients being noncompliant about their health and their appointments, thus leading to further health issues.

We will raise awareness of the importance of frequent appointments, compliance, and follow-up appointments and educate our community members on how to manage/monitor other areas of the body with diabetes, HTN, etc.

1. Healthy Minute Video on social media
  - a. Importance of frequent appointments/compliance
  - b. Manage/Monitor other areas of your body with diabetes, HTN, etc.
2. Workforce Wellness – Healthy You Benefit
  - a. Partner with the county and their insurance
3. Text reminder for follow-up appointments/Make note of follow-up appointment on card for patient to have before leaving current visit.
4. Reach out to African American church pastors to build a rapport with them so in return they can communicate the importance of patient/ provider trust and the importance of checkup

We aspire to offer “Healthy You” appointments to 100% of employees employed by the county and will aim to have our Health Minute Video reach at least 150 members of the community annually.

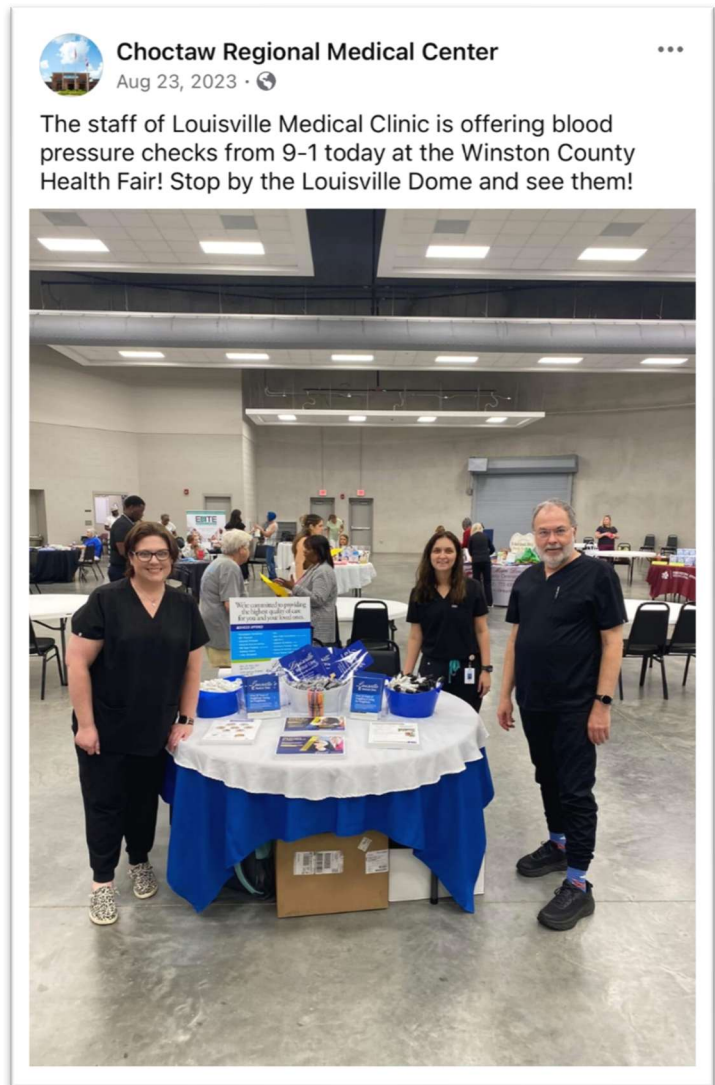


We also set out to hold informative Health meetings with local African American Pastors annually. We will execute our plans in collaboration with:

- Choctaw County Employees
- Choctaw County
- American Diabetes Association

## Response to Stated Strategies

To raise awareness about the importance of regular medical appointments, treatment compliance, and follow-up care—especially for managing chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension—Choctaw Regional Medical Center (CRMC) implemented several community-focused initiatives. A “Health Minute” video series was shared on social media, highlighting the necessity of consistent care and how to monitor other aspects of health affected by conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure. Each week, CRMC also featured a provider and their team on its Facebook page, offering insights into their areas of specialization and sharing personal details to build stronger community connections. Additionally, CRMC participated in the Choctaw County Community Health and Resource Fair, providing education on heart disease prevention, physical activity tips for those with diabetes, and smoking cessation. Free blood pressure checks were also offered at the Winston County Health Fair to promote early detection and ongoing health monitoring.



# 2025 COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN



# 2025-2028 Community Health Improvement Plan

## Priority #1: Community Health Education

### Plan of Action

1. Provide community education through:
  - a. Monitors located in clinics and hospitals
  - b. CRMC's social media platforms
2. Participate in health fairs and community events, distributing educational materials through handouts
3. Offer education on a variety of health topics, including but not limited to:
  - a. Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia
  - b. Power of Attorney (POA) and Advance Directives
  - c. Heart Disease
  - d. Diabetes
  - e. Challenges related to prescription medications
  - f. Trauma prevention and response

## Priority #2: Best Living Habits for Choctaw County

### Plan of Action

1. Offer annual heart health checks
2. Participate in health fairs and community events
3. Distribute educational materials on:
  - a. Adequate nutrition
  - b. Benefits of exercise
4. Provide vaccines to:
  - a. Local businesses
  - b. School system

## Priority #3: Community Resource Guide

### Plan of Action

1. Collaborate with local agencies to:
  - a. Create a comprehensive community resource guide
  - b. Distribute the guide throughout the community
  - c. Include information on available assistance programs

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