

# Cherokee County

## Region A Opioid Abatement Needs Assessment

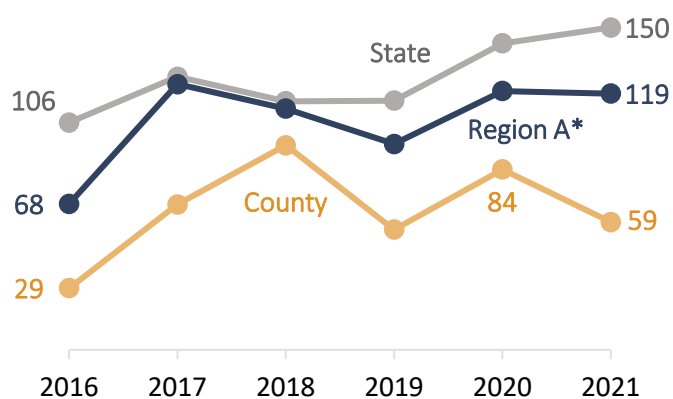


**Cherokee County** is a small, rural community, with a total population of 28,774 in 2020.<sup>1</sup> Between 2017-2021, the county's **median household income** was roughly \$17,000 less than the state's median (\$43,319 vs \$60,516). In 2020, the **median age** in the county was 52 years, much greater than in the state (39 years). This page highlights indicators specific to opioids and opioid use disorder (OUD).



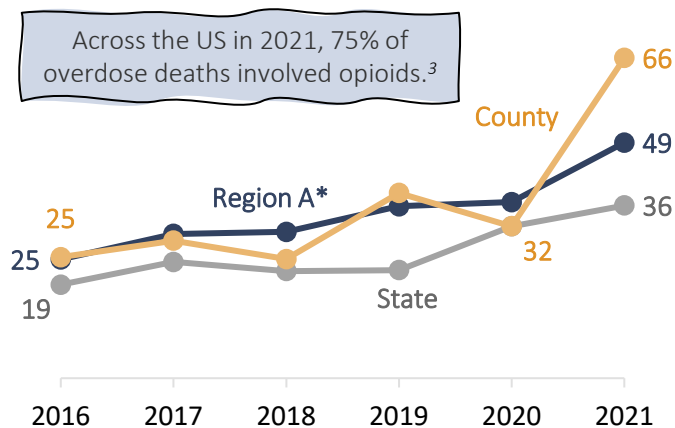
### Overdose ED Visits

*Rate of emergency department visits with a drug overdose diagnosis, per 100,000 residents (Crude)<sup>2</sup>*



### Overdose Deaths

*Rate of unintentional overdose deaths due to any drug, per 100,000 residents (Crude)<sup>2</sup>*

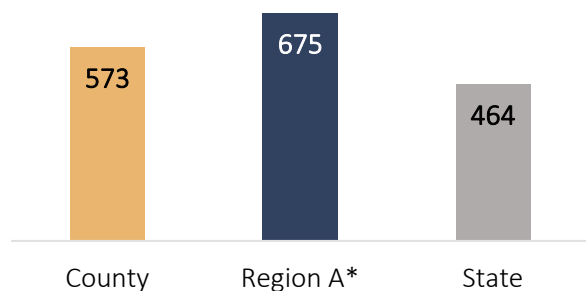


Although the **rate of overdose deaths** more than doubled in Cherokee County from 2020 – 2021, the **rate of ED visits due to a drug overdose** decreased by roughly 30% over the same period.



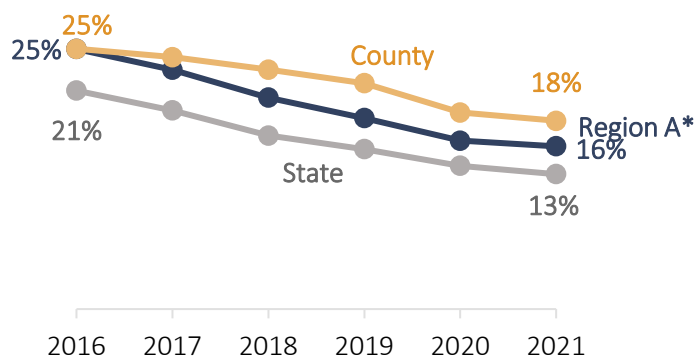
### Access to OUD Care

*Rate of individuals<sup>†</sup> served by treatment programs for Opioid Use Disorder, per 100,000 residents (Crude, 2021)<sup>2</sup>*



### Opioid Prescriptions

*Percentage of residents receiving dispensed opioid pills<sup>2</sup>*



In 2021, the **rate of individuals served by treatment programs for OUD** in Cherokee County was lower than in Region A\* overall. Although the **percentage of residents receiving opioid pills** has been decreasing, it has consistently been higher in the county than in the region and state.

\* Region A figures are estimates extrapolated from county-level counts, rates, and/or percentages.

† Among Medicaid beneficiaries and those who are uninsured.

Sources: <sup>1</sup>Census; <sup>2</sup>NCCDHS Opioid Action Plan Dashboard; <sup>3</sup>CDC

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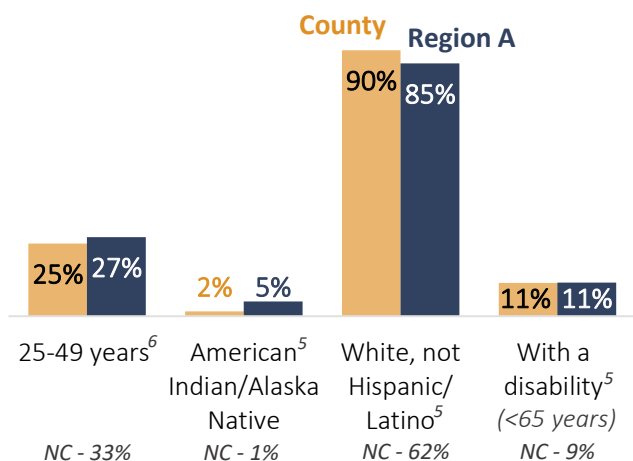


**i** This page highlights sociodemographic and socioeconomic characteristics associated with higher risk of unfavorable opioid-related outcomes, as well as indicators related to mental health.

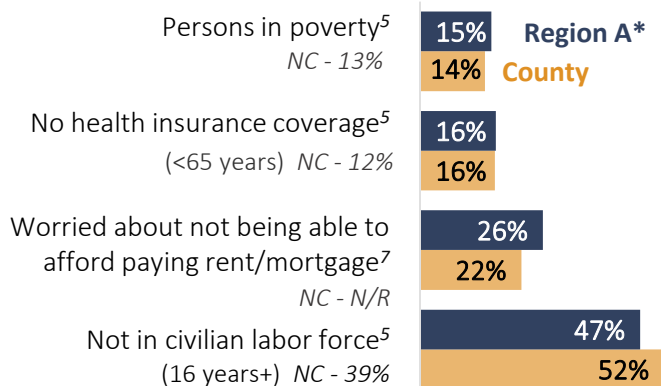
### Sociodemographic Risk Factors

**100%** of Cherokee County residents live in a **rural area** (77% in Region A, 34% in NC).<sup>4</sup>

**1 in 2** Cherokee County residents are **male** (same in Region A and NC).<sup>5</sup>



### Socioeconomic Risk Factors



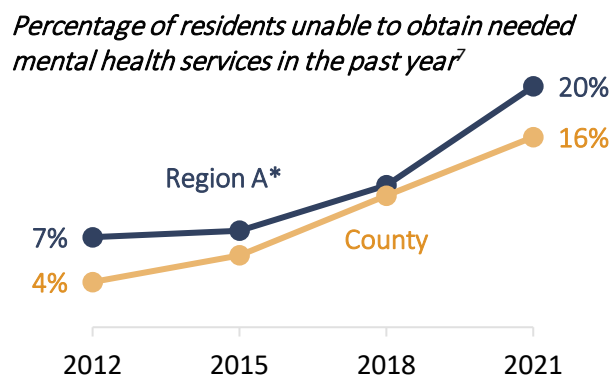
There are **55 senior adults per 100 working-age people** in Cherokee County (46 per 100 in Region A\*; 26 per 100 in NC).<sup>6</sup>

The large older population is a driver of **lower labor force participation** and likely **increases household financial stress**. It may also **increase the supply of prescription opioid pills** in the county due to the higher prevalence of chronic pain issues among older adults.

### Mental Health

**72%** of Cherokee County residents **always** or **usually** received needed social/emotional support (72% in Region A\*, N/R for NC).<sup>7</sup>

**16%** of Cherokee County residents reported **8+ days of poor mental health in past month** (23% in Region A\*, N/R for NC).<sup>7</sup>



While most people in Cherokee County **always** or **usually** received needed social/emotional support, about 1 in 4 residents did not. In addition, the percentage of county residents who did not receive needed mental health services in the past year has been rising. **This highlights the need for an increase in various types of support.**

\* Region A figures are estimates extrapolated from county population data and county rates/percentages.

Sources: <sup>4</sup>Census (2020); <sup>5</sup>Census (2017-2021); <sup>6</sup>Census (2016-2020); <sup>7</sup>WNC Health Network (2021)