

MOVAC – Clay County Excess Death Analysis

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Based on population numbers provided by [West Virginia Demographics](#), Clay County ranks forty-seventh in population with 7,783 total residents. MOVAC has performed numerous detailed analyses on Wood County excess death. Via that analysis, we confirmed that 2021 saw the highest levels of death experienced in recent history. Based on that analysis and the publication of the 2021 vital statistics by the WV DHHR, we are finally able to provide an analysis of this excess death phenomenon for each county in West Virginia.

As you can see from the two tables below, Clay County’s experience with excess death in 2020 and 2021 closely mirrors the statewide phenomenon:

Year	Total WV Death	Percent Change
2011	21,870	
2012	21,651	-1.00%
2013	21,846	0.90%
2014	22,164	1.46%
2015	22,643	2.16%
2016	22,721	0.34%
2017	23,290	2.50%
2018	23,462	0.74%
2019	23,291	-0.73%
2020	26,108	12.09%
2021	29,402	26.24%

Year	Total Clay County Death	Percent Change
2011	102	
2012	111	8.82%
2013	113	1.80%
2014	112	-0.88%
2015	109	-2.68%
2016	123	12.84%
2017	118	-4.07%
2018	136	15.25%
2019	124	-8.82%
2020	142	14.52%
2021	143	15.32%

Data source - https://dhhr.wv.gov/HSC/SS/Vital_Statistics/Pages/Vital_Statistics.aspx

Note – While each of the other years in the tables above are compared to the prior year, 2021 is compared to the pre-pandemic year of 2019. It makes no sense to compare 2021 to an already pandemic-effected elevated death total in 2020.

It is difficult to draw any conclusions from a county with such a small population. What is interesting is that like many counties in West Virginia, Clay County experienced its two highest death totals in 2020 and 2021.

The age-ranged tables that follow were created by compiling each year’s age-ranged data provided on the “Age at Death by County of Residence” table in the appendix section of each year’s [Vital Statistics Report published by DHHR from 2011 to 2020](#). The 2021 report no longer contains these detailed schedules. We contacted the DHHR for the 2021 details and were provided a spreadsheet containing the county level detail.

Age Ranges of Concern

The following are the tables for age ranges with the most alarming trends culminating in 2021. Please note, many of these deaths are occurring in our working age citizens. Shouldn’t this be investigated by our elected officials?

(*)Note – For each of the age ranges below, the two highest years in regards to total death are identified by the bold boxes. The percent change column is comparing totals for each year to the prior year for years 2011 through 2020. For the 2021 percent change calculation, the next highest death total is identified and used as the comparison year.

Age Range 65-74			Age Range 75-84		
Year	Total Death	Percent Change	Year	Total Death	Percent Change
2011	17		2011	28	
2012	14	-17.65%	2012	29	3.57%
2013	25	78.57%	2013	30	3.45%
2014	26	4.00%	2014	28	-6.67%
2015	24	-7.69%	2015	36	28.57%
2016	29	20.83%	2016	32	-11.11%
2017	22	-24.14%	2017	31	-3.13%
2018	28	27.27%	2018	34	9.68%
2019	23	-17.86%	2019	36	5.88%
2020	36	56.52%	2020	38	5.56%
2021 *	39	8.33%	2021 *	47	23.68%

For the 65-74 age range, 2020 set the record for total deaths exceeding the next highest year (2016) by 24.14%. 2020 was the first year in this 11-year span where 65-74-year-old death surpassed 30. Then in 2021, death surged another 8.33% over the record level set in 2020.

For the 75-84 age range, 2020 appears to be in line with historical trends. However, 2021 death eclipsed the record set in 2020 and was 30% higher than any other pre-pandemic year.

If you are concerned about this alarming rise in Clay County death (as documented by your state), please consider sharing this information with state leaders responsible for representing your population.

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Please note – After the election, your delegate or senator may change. After November 5, 2024, please refer to the new rosters as published on the legislature’s website –

House Roster - <https://www.wvlegislature.gov/house/roster.cfm>

Senate Roster - <https://www.wvlegislature.gov/Senate1/roster.cfm>

