

## MOVAC – Morgan County Excess Death Analysis

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MOVAC Contributor: Sean P. Keefe

Based on population numbers provided by [West Virginia Demographics](#), Morgan County ranks thirty-second in the state with 17,649 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.

Morgan County is very small and thus the death numbers can be very volatile. However, even in this very small county, the 2020 death total set the record for deaths, when compared to the previous 10 years, with 256 deaths. Then in 2021, that record was again broken with 279 Morgan County deaths:

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%
<b>2020</b>	<b>26,108</b>	<b>12.09%</b>
<b>2021</b>	<b>29,402</b>	<b>26.24%</b>

Year	Total Morgan County Death	Percent Change
2011	194	
2012	189	-2.58%
2013	226	19.58%
2014	205	-9.29%
2015	206	0.49%
2016	242	17.48%
2017	238	-1.65%
2018	231	-2.94%
2019	229	-0.87%
<b>2020</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>11.79%</b>
<b>2021</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>21.83%</b>

Data source - [https://dhr.wv.gov/HSC/SS/Vital\\_Statistics/Pages/Vital\\_Statistics.aspx](https://dhr.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.**

Although it is difficult to come to any conclusions with such a small population, isn't it just a little curious that we are setting death records in 2020 only to see those records broken in 2021? Also a bit curious is that after the previous high in death was reached in 2016, we saw Morgan County death decline for three straight years. Shouldn't we be investigating consecutive records being set right after a three-year decline?

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 age-ranged tables show the most alarming growth for Morgan County.

**(\*)Note – For the tables 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 45-54				Age Range 65-74			
Year	Total Death	Percent Change		Year	Total Death	Percent Change	
2011	11			2011	38		
2012	15	36.36%		2012	46	21.05%	
2013	16	6.67%		2013	46	0.00%	
2014	6	-62.50%		2014	41	-10.87%	
2015	12	100.00%		2015	34	-17.07%	
2016	17	41.67%		2016	42	23.53%	
2017	18	5.88%		2017	58	38.10%	
2018	12	-33.33%		2018	49	-15.52%	
2019	12	0.00%		2019	43	-12.24%	
2020	16	33.33%		2020	57	32.56%	
2021 *	24	33.33%		2021 *	61	5.17%	

It is very difficult to come to any conclusions with a population so small. The detailed age-range data provided by DHHR omits any death counts in an age range if the total is less than five deaths. For this reason, many of the age ranges could not be properly analyzed.

For both the 45-54 and 65-74 age ranges, records were set for total death in 2017. These records were followed by significant decreases the following two years. Although 2020 saw death rise in both age ranges, the previous records were neither equaled nor surpassed. Why were records set for Morgan County in the year after the pandemic?

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

**Delegates –**

GEORGE MILLER (R) – MORGAN - [george.miller@wvhouse.gov](mailto:george.miller@wvhouse.gov)

**Senators –**

CRAIG P. BLAIR (R - BERKELEY) - [craig.blair@wvsenate.gov](mailto:craig.blair@wvsenate.gov)

CHARLES S. TRUMP IV (R) – MORGAN - [charles.trump@wvsenate.gov](mailto:charles.trump@wvsenate.gov)

**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>