

MOVCAC – Nicholas County Excess Death Analysis

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

Nicholas County is one of the very few counties where a record for total death was not set in 2020. However, 2021 saw total death rise by 24.79% to easily set the new record:

| 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 Nicholas County Death | Percent Change |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 2011 | 341 | |
| 2012 | 355 | 4.11% |
| 2013 | 327 | -7.89% |
| 2014 | 311 | -4.89% |
| 2015 | 322 | 3.54% |
| 2016 | 336 | 4.35% |
| 2017 | 358 | 6.55% |
| 2018 | 317 | -11.45% |
| 2019 | 351 | 10.73% |
| 2020 | 354 | 0.85% |
| 2021 | 438 | 24.79% |

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.

Either Nicholas County navigated the pandemic year of 2020 better than most in West Virginia, or record keeping issues moved 2020 deaths to 2021. Either way, shouldn't the leaders of Nicholas County have a detailed understanding of what happened in 2021 to so drastically increase total death? The 24.79% increase in total death is more than twice the next highest increase which occurred in 2019.

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 Nicholas 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 35-44

| Year | Total Death | Percent |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| 2011 | 17 | |
| 2012 | 12 | -29.41% |
| 2013 | 15 | 25.00% |
| 2014 | 13 | -13.33% |
| 2015 | 14 | 7.69% |
| 2016 | 12 | -14.29% |
| 2017 | 9 | -25.00% |
| 2018 | 12 | 33.33% |
| 2019 | 14 | 16.67% |
| 2020 | 9 | -35.71% |
| 2021 * | 18 | 5.88% |

Age Range 45-54

| Year | Total Death | Percent Change |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|
| 2011 | 28 | |
| 2012 | 24 | -14.29% |
| 2013 | 29 | 20.83% |
| 2014 | 25 | -13.79% |
| 2015 | 28 | 12.00% |
| 2016 | 29 | 3.57% |
| 2017 | 21 | -27.59% |
| 2018 | 21 | 0.00% |
| 2019 | 21 | 0.00% |
| 2020 | 16 | -23.81% |
| 2021 * | 33 | 13.79% |

Age Range 55-64

| Year | Total Death | Percent Change |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|
| 2011 | 57 | |
| 2012 | 54 | -5.26% |
| 2013 | 42 | -22.22% |
| 2014 | 45 | 7.14% |
| 2015 | 55 | 22.22% |
| 2016 | 55 | 0.00% |
| 2017 | 53 | -3.64% |
| 2018 | 44 | -16.98% |
| 2019 | 47 | 6.82% |
| 2020 | 48 | 2.13% |
| 2021 * | 65 | 14.04% |

| Age Range 65-74 | | |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------|
| Year | Total Death | Percent Change |
| 2011 | 61 | |
| 2012 | 78 | 27.87% |
| 2013 | 64 | -17.95% |
| 2014 | 59 | -7.81% |
| 2015 | 62 | 5.08% |
| 2016 | 60 | -3.23% |
| 2017 | 85 | 41.67% |
| 2018 | 76 | -10.59% |
| 2019 | 78 | 2.63% |
| 2020 | 83 | 6.41% |
| 2021 * | 110 | 29.41% |

| Age Range 75-84 | | |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------|
| Year | Total Death | Percent Change |
| 2011 | 84 | |
| 2012 | 80 | -4.76% |
| 2013 | 85 | 6.25% |
| 2014 | 81 | -4.71% |
| 2015 | 71 | -12.35% |
| 2016 | 73 | 2.82% |
| 2017 | 100 | 36.99% |
| 2018 | 76 | -24.00% |
| 2019 | 99 | 30.26% |
| 2020 | 102 | 3.03% |
| 2021 * | 112 | 9.80% |

For each of the age ranges shown above, a new record for total death was set in Nicholas County in 2021. Are we normalizing excess death? Are we failing to keep meticulous records of death while experiencing the worst pandemic since 1918? How are we silent in the face of such elevated excess death in Nicholas County? How are we setting records for total death in each of the age ranges noted above in the year after the pandemic? Is anyone in Nicholas County investigating this? I remember when we were told in 2020 that one death was too many. What happened to that concern in 2021?

If you are concerned about this alarming rise in Nicholas 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>