

MOVAC – Pocahontas County Excess Death Analysis

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Based on population numbers provided by [West Virginia Demographics](#), Pocahontas County ranks forty-eighth in the state with 7,765 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.

Pocahontas County is very small and thus the death numbers can be very volatile. However, even in this very small county, the 2020 and 2021 death totals set the record for deaths with 120 and 136 deaths respectively, when compared to the previous 11 years:

| 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 Pocahontas County Death | Percent Change |
|-------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| 2011 | 91 | |
| 2012 | 106 | 16.48% |
| 2013 | 116 | 9.43% |
| 2014 | 106 | -8.62% |
| 2015 | 107 | 0.94% |
| 2016 | 95 | -11.21% |
| 2017 | 103 | 8.42% |
| 2018 | 107 | 3.88% |
| 2019 | 115 | 7.48% |
| 2020 | 120 | 4.35% |
| 2021 | 136 | 18.26% |

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.

Having survived the pandemic year with minimal growth in total death, what happened in 2021 when an unprecedented 136 Pocahontas County citizens died?

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 shows the most alarming growth for Pocahontas 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.

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.

Pocahontas County is not alone in setting their total death records in 2020 and 2021. Forty-one of the fifty-five counties in West Virginia saw their two highest death totals in 2020 and 2021.

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

Delegates –

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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>