

MOVAC – Ohio County Excess Death Analysis

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MOVAC Contributor: Sean P. Keefe

Based on population numbers provided by [West Virginia Demographics](#), Ohio County ranks twelfth in the state with 41,194 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.

Much like the state as a whole, Ohio County set a new record for total death in 2020. That record of 693 deaths was surpassed again in 2021 when 716 deaths were recorded:

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 Ohio County Death	Percent Change
2011	581	
2012	611	5.16%
2013	560	-8.35%
2014	580	3.57%
2015	577	-0.52%
2016	576	-0.17%
2017	557	-3.30%
2018	571	2.51%
2019	613	7.36%
2020	693	13.05%
2021	716	16.80%

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.

Ohio County’s experience with excess death only exacerbated in 2021. When looking at the age range data below, one cannot attribute this excess death to just Covid. We know that Covid primarily affected the elderly and infirmed. Why was Ohio County’s excess death spread amongst so many age categories?

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 Ohio 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 25-34		
Year	Total Death	Percent
2011	5	
2012	7	40.00%
2013	7	0.00%
2014	6	-14.29%
2015	6	0.00%
2016	6	0.00%
2017	12	100.00%
2018	12	0.00%
2019	11	-8.33%
2020	14	27.27%
2021 *	17	21.43%

Age Range 35-44		
Year	Total Death	Percent
2011	8	
2012	9	12.50%
2013	13	44.44%
2014	12	-7.69%
2015	9	-25.00%
2016	12	33.33%
2017	17	41.67%
2018	17	0.00%
2019	17	0.00%
2020	25	47.06%
2021 *	22	-12.00%

Both the 25-34 and 35-44 age ranges set records in 2020 for total death. Why are 2020 and 2021 both higher in death than any other year in this 11-year span?

Age Range 45-54		
Year	Total Death	Percent Change
2011	29	
2012	30	3.45%
2013	35	16.67%
2014	24	-31.43%
2015	22	-8.33%
2016	25	13.64%
2017	25	0.00%
2018	32	28.00%
2019	31	-3.13%
2020	42	35.48%
2021 *	33	-21.43%

Age Range 55-64		
Year	Total Death	Percent Change
2011	74	
2012	64	-13.51%
2013	54	-15.63%
2014	60	11.11%
2015	64	6.67%
2016	63	-1.56%
2017	75	19.05%
2018	78	4.00%
2019	76	-2.56%
2020	83	9.21%
2021 *	85	2.41%

Age Range 65-74			Age Range 75-84		
Year	Total Death	Percent Change	Year	Total Death	Percent Change
2011	98		2011	158	
2012	109	11.22%	2012	150	-5.06%
2013	93	-14.68%	2013	138	-8.00%
2014	95	2.15%	2014	139	0.72%
2015	96	1.05%	2015	151	8.63%
2016	112	16.67%	2016	138	-8.61%
2017	119	6.25%	2017	119	-13.77%
2018	105	-11.76%	2018	132	10.92%
2019	124	18.10%	2019	143	8.33%
2020	141	13.71%	2020	172	20.28%
2021 *	178	26.24%	2021 *	162	-5.81%

For each of the four age ranges shown above, a new record for total death was set in Ohio County in either 2020 or 2021. For three out of the four, both 2020 and 2021 reflect the most total death in the 11-year span under analysis.

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 Ohio County? How are we setting records for total death in half of the age ranges noted above in the year after the pandemic? Is anyone in Ohio 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 Ohio County death (as documented by your state), please consider sharing this information with state leaders responsible for representing your population.

Delegates –

- SHAWN FLUHARTY (D) – OHIO - shawn.fluharty@wvhouse.gov
- DIANA WINZENREID (R) – OHIO - diana.winzenreid@wvhouse.gov

Senators –

- LAURA WAKIM CHAPMAN (R) – OHIO - laura.chapman@wvsenate.gov
- RYAN W. WELD (R) – BROOKE - ryan.weld@wvsenate.gov

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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>