

MOVAC – Wirt County Excess Death Analysis

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Based on population numbers provided by [West Virginia Demographics](#), Wirt County ranks last in the state with 5,000 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, Wirt County's increase in death in both 2020 and 2021 was almost double what the state as a whole experienced:

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%

Total Wirt		
Year	County Death	Percent Change
2011	62	
2012	50	-19.35%
2013	57	14.00%
2014	72	26.32%
2015	66	-8.33%
2016	56	-15.15%
2017	67	19.64%
2018	64	-4.48%
2019	57	-10.94%
2020	69	21.05%
2021	87	52.63%

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.

The 52.63% increase in total Wirt County death in 2021 (over the pre-pandemic year of 2019) ranks first in the state. In order to understand how each county performed during the height of the pandemic, I compared 2021 death to 2019 and 2021 death to 2020 and ranked each county by percent increase. Wirt County is only one of three counties (Wetzel and Lewis were the other two) to rank in the top six for increase in death in both year comparisons.

West Virginia Death by County					West Virginia Death by County				
County	2019	2020	2021	2021 Change Over 2019	County	2019	2020	2021	2021 Change Over 2020
1 Wirt	57	69	87	52.63%	1 Tyler	115	98	144	46.94%
2 Lewis	232	268	352	51.72%	2 Wetzel	221	236	322	36.44%
3 Wetzel	221	236	322	45.70%	3 Lewis	232	268	352	31.34%
4 Summers	180	222	261	45.00%	4 Webster	124	119	153	28.57%
5 Wyoming	291	379	414	42.27%	5 Harrison	921	866	1,103	27.37%
6 Taylor	190	253	270	42.11%	6 Wirt	57	69	87	26.09%
7 Berkeley	1,097	1,372	1,535	39.93%	7 Randolph	383	391	486	24.30%
8 Doddridge	68	91	95	39.71%	8 Mason	390	398	493	23.87%
9 Wayne	523	636	722	38.05%	9 Nicholas	351	354	438	23.73%
10 Preston	358	439	491	37.15%	10 Braxton	180	172	210	22.09%

What happened in Wirt County in 2021? The pandemic was new in 2020 and there were no vaccines available until 2021. Wouldn't common sense tell you that our 2020 experience should be worse than 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 55-64		
Year	Total Death	Percent Change
2011	8	
2012	8	0.00%
2013	5	-37.50%
2014	15	200.00%
2015	10	-33.33%
2016	9	-10.00%
2017	8	-11.11%
2018	10	25.00%
2019	12	20.00%
2020	8	-33.33%
2021 *	20	33.33%

Age Range 65-74		
Year	Total Death	Percent Change
2011	14	
2012	13	-7.14%
2013	19	46.15%
2014	19	0.00%
2015	21	10.53%
2016	15	-28.57%
2017	16	6.67%
2018	14	-12.50%
2019	7	-50.00%
2020	17	142.86%
2021 *	27	28.57%

It is difficult to glean much from such a small population, but in the 55-64 and 65-74 age ranges records were set in 2021. Not only did the all of the increase from 2020 to 2021 occur in these age ranges, but both ranges exceeded their previous records by at least 28.57%.

If you are concerned about this alarming rise in Wirt 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>