



Electronic Reporting System Broadens Picture of North Carolina COVID-19 Deaths

COVID-19-related deaths added to COVID-19 Dashboard beginning with January 2022

Raleigh

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More timely access to death certificate data through a new electronic reporting system is giving North Carolinians a more comprehensive picture of COVID-19-related deaths, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services today announced.

With the ability to access death certificate data electronically, NCDHHS identified 1,146 additional deaths that occurred between Jan. 1, 2022 and March 31, 2022, with COVID-19 noted as the cause on the death certificate and with a positive COVID-19 test. These deaths will be added to North Carolina's COVID-19 dashboard Wednesday, pushing the total deaths for the pandemic to more than 24,000. Data continue to show North Carolina has the lowest per capita rates of COVID-19 deaths in the Southeast and ranks among the lowest in the nation.

Until now, deaths on North Carolina's COVID-19 dashboard have been reported through physicians or hospitals and through case investigation by local health departments. The North Carolina Database Application for Vital Events began accepting death certificate data electronically on Jan. 1, and it is now available sooner and will be linked with data in the COVID-19 reporting system every month. Prior to NCDAVE, North Carolina was one of the last two states that still relied on paper death certificates. The paper certificates were filed manually, weren't available for months and therefore couldn't be linked with the COVID-19 reporting system.

"The electronic reporting system will help us identify deaths more systematically and better track the impact of COVID-19 over time," said ClarLynda Williams-DeVane, Ph.D., Director of the State Center for Health Statistics. "Beyond COVID-19, SCHS relies on death reporting for the tracking of cause-of-death information and identification of significant trends in public health."

The primary purpose of NCDAVE is to enable the people who provide decedent fact-of-death and cause-of-death information – funeral homes, medical certifiers, including providers, and medical examiners – to file death records electronically with local registrars within the required reporting period after the death occurs. It also eliminates the need for physical handling and transfer of paper certificates. Further, NCDAVE allows for the more timely state registration and certification of death records, reducing the registration time from three to six months to five to 10 days.

Vaccines and boosters remain the best protection against death from COVID-19. They are also effective in reducing severe illness, hospitalization and long COVID. More information on vaccines, boosters and where to get one is available at myspot.nc.gov.
(<https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/vaccines>)

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