



2020 NORTH CAROLINA WOMEN'S HEALTH REPORT CARD

A progress report on women's health and their health care needs

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UNC report provides snapshot of NC women's health

2020 North Carolina Women's Health Report Card finds both promising trends and room for improvement

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (July 20, 2020) – A new report from the UNC Center for Women's Health Research shares promising trends in the area of preventative measures for North Carolina's 5+ million women while also demonstrating a need to address challenges in the areas of racial disparities and obesity rates.

The 2020 North Carolina Women's Health Report Card was released by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) center on July 20 and is the only report of its kind in the state.

The document is a progress report on the health and health care needs of North Carolina's women, who outnumber men. Preventive health, chronic disease, perinatal health, mental health, and substance use disorders are the key measures examined.

Each edition is released biennially and tracks the state's female health statistics in two year increments. The 2020 publication is the 11th edition.

"There are numerous conditions and diseases that affect women differently from men," said Dr. Wendy Brewster, Director of CWHR. "It is important that we target our resources wisely in these gap areas to preserve the health of our entire community."

The report card is distributed to medical and public health professionals, policy makers, researchers, and women's health advocacy groups throughout the state. Data was compiled from state health behavior surveys, vital statistics, and disease reporting systems by UNC's Carolina Demography, a division of the Carolina Population Center.

Highlights of the 2020 North Carolina Women's Health Report Card include:

POSITIVE FINDINGS

Preventative health screenings: NC women are exceeding Healthy People 2020 targets for both colorectal cancer screenings and mammograms. Additionally, North Carolina ranks 3rd in cervical cancer screenings and 5th in well-woman visits.

ADVERSE FINDINGS

Racial disparities: Disparities exist in data reflecting health care access and screenings. Non-Hispanic White women are more likely to be diagnosed with a range of illnesses. They are also more likely to report cancer and less likely to die from it, suggesting a racial disparity in doctor willingness to diagnose or a lack of doctor access. Additionally, African American women are 65% more likely than Non-Hispanic White women to meet criteria for obesity.

Rates of obesity remain high: More women in North Carolina are now classified as either overweight or obese than are within their recommended weight range. Obesity plays an important role in the risk factors for diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and stroke. These increased risks place a greater burden on the health care system and economy.

The mission of CWHR is to improve the health of women through research by focusing on diseases, disorders, and conditions that affect women only, women predominately, and/or women differently than men. Current research areas targeted by the Center include perinatal health, cancer, obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular health, mental health, and substance use disorders.

The 2020 North Carolina Women's Health Report Card, expanded data, and health recommendations can be downloaded at cwahr.unc.edu.