



# NEWTON COUNTY

## Community Health Assessment Community Health Improvement Plan



MOBILIZING FOR ACTION THROUGH  
PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIPS

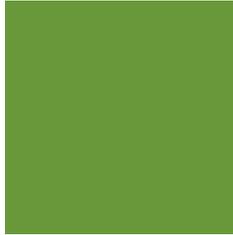


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# Newton County Health Department, Georgia

## 2019 Community Health Assessment



### About the Newton County Health Department

The Newton County Health Department continuously monitors the health status of the community to identify health problems, educate the public on ways to reduce health risks, and promote better health through individual contact and media interactions.

We regularly participate in and mobilize community groups to develop policies and action plans to improve the health of the people in the community. The health department enforces laws, regulations, and ordinances that protect health and ensure safety. Working together to provide these vitally important, essential public health services, we can improve the quality of life for everyone in the community and state.

### **Our Mission**

To protect and improve the health of our community by monitoring and preventing disease; promoting health and wellbeing; and preparing for disasters.

### **Our Vision**

A healthy, protected, and prepared community.

### **Our Values**

**Availability:** We will be available to our clients through emergency preparedness services, disease and outbreak investigations, expanded hours and readily available services.

**Affability:** We will work to ensure our clients have a good experience at our clinics. We will treat clients, co-workers, partners and others in our community with respect. We will value our employees.

**Ability:** We will work toward a high level of competency in all areas of service.

**Accountability:** We will be good stewards of the funds and materials we receive.

**Adaptability:** We will always look forward to meet the current and future needs of our community.

## Purpose of This Report

*Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.*

-World Health Organization (WHO)<sup>1</sup>

This report describes a combined community health assessment (CHA) and community health improvement plan (CHIP) for Newton County, Georgia. By examining the county's health status, this combined CHA/CHIP will help our community focus our efforts on the most important health needs of county residents. This community-wide health assessment is intended to help shape coordinated community plans to improve health.

This report focuses not just on disease indicators like death rates and case counts, but also on the many factors that influence health, which include income, housing, education, and transportation. This focus is consistent with the WHO definition of health—stated above—and reflects the diversity of community efforts currently ongoing and needed in Newton County to improve health.

This report was done in collaboration with Piedmont Newton Hospital and the Newton County Community Partnership. Additional support was provided by Grand Canyon University and GNR Health Intern, Hillary Daniel.

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization <http://www.who.int/about/definition/en/print.html>

## **Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan Methods and Overview of Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships**

GNR Health conducts a county Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan every five years, per PHAB accreditation standards. This cycle of the CHA/CHIP began in December 2017 and continued until March 2019. GNR Health led the assessment process in collaboration with Piedmont Newton Hospital, Newton County Community Partnership (NCCP), Newton Interagency, and other community partners.

This CHA/CHIP was done based on a framework called Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP), a community-driven strategic planning process that is used by “communities to move through the process of organizing partners, collecting comprehensive data, and implementing an action plan” (MAPP User’s Handbook, p. 3). The MAPP process involves six phases, outlined in the table below.

<b>Six Phases of the MAPP Process</b>	
Phase One: Organize for Success	Community members and agencies form a partnership and learn about the MAPP process.
Phase Two: Visioning	Those who work, learn, live and play in the MAPP community create a common understanding of what it would look like to achieve a healthier community.
Phase Three: Four MAPP Assessments	Qualitative and quantitative data are gathered to provide a comprehensive picture of health in the community.
Phase Four: Identify Strategic Issues	The data are analyzed to uncover underlying themes that need to be addressed in order for the community to achieve its vision.
Phase Five: Formulate Goals and Strategies	The community identifies goals it wants to achieve and formulates strategies for reaching those goals.
Phase Six: Action Cycle	The community implements and evaluates action plans to meet goals, address strategic issues, and achieve the community’s vision.

Four main assessments are included in Phase Three of the MAPP process, including the Community Health Status Assessment, Community Themes and Strengths Assessment, Local Public Health System Assessment, and Forces of Change Assessment.

The Community Health Status Assessment was utilized during focus groups we conducted with residents of Covington Public Housing, Covington Senior Center, Strive and More Than Conquerors, Inc. The survey used was adapted from an assessment done by the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District in San Antonio, Texas.

The Community Themes and Strengths Assessment was addressed through interviews with community members. The Community Health Manager at the Gwinnett, Newton, and Rockdale County Health Departments conducted Key Stakeholder Interviews with representatives from various community agencies to gather their insight on health, wellbeing, and quality of life in Newton County.

To conduct the Local Public Health System Assessment, we identified organizations and individuals to represent each of the 10 Essential Public Health Services. Each of these organizations and individuals was then invited to participate in a focus group to discuss these essential services in Newton County and complete the National Public Health Performance Standards Local Instrument.

In September of 2018, Newton Interagency individuals from several community agencies met at the Common Ground Church to conduct the Forces of Change assessment.

The processes and findings related to each of these four assessments are further detailed in the CHA/CHIP.

To supplement information gathered from the community, data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Georgia Department of Public Health's Online Analytical Statistical Information System (OASIS), and County Health Rankings were included regarding demographics, poverty, transportation, and morbidity and mortality.

# **Newton County Health Priorities—Identified in Community Meetings**

Community participants identified **seven health priorities** for Newton County.

## **Access to Care**

- Lack of Primary Care and Specialty Physicians
- Transportation Desert
- Uninsured/Underinsured

## **Chronic Illness Prevention and Management**

- Diabetes
- Lung Disease (Emphysema/COPD/Lung Cancer)
- Heart Disease & Stroke
- Cancer

## **Mental Health & Substance Abuse**

- Suicide
- Opiates
- Heroin

## **Adolescent Lifestyle**

- Tobacco
- Alcohol
- Substance Abuse
- STD

## **Quality of Life/Lifestyle**

- Obesity
- Tobacco Use
- Motor Vehicle Safety
- STD

## **Senior Health**

## Quick Stats about Newton County and the Health Priorities

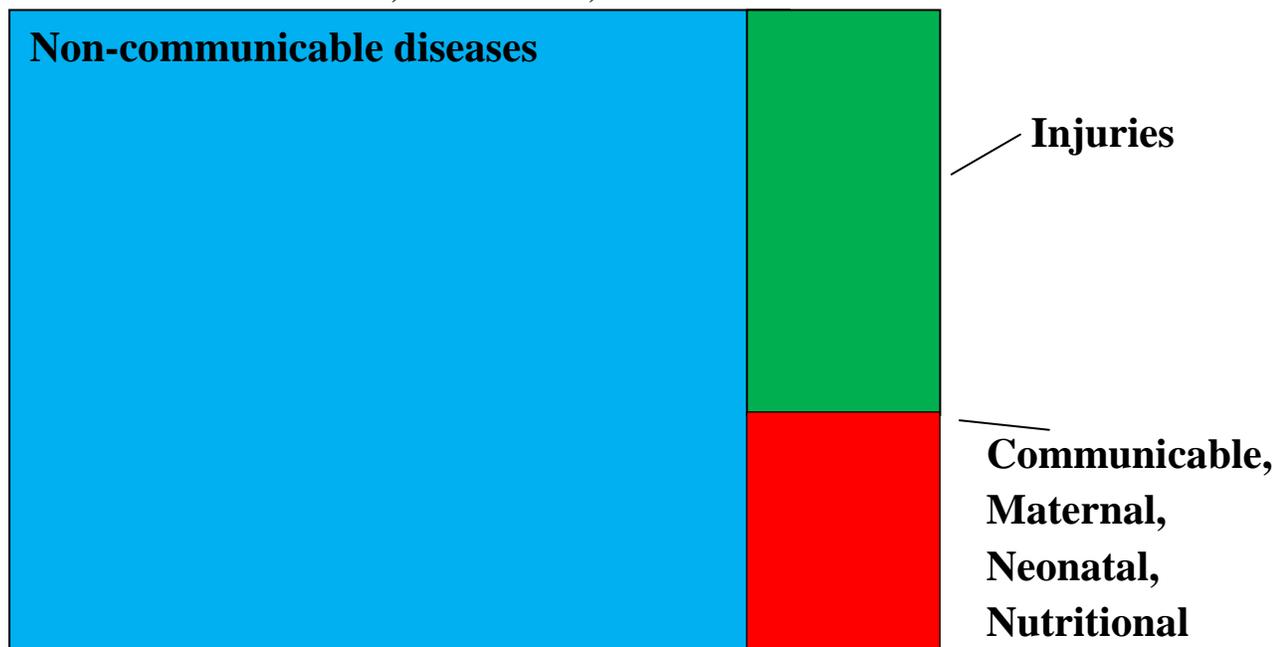
- The county's **population increased** dramatically through the 1990s and 2000s, but the rate of increase **slowed markedly** after 2008
- The proportion of residents **65 years and older is growing**
- The county **diversified** substantially between 2000 and 2010; the non-Hispanic White population declined from 74% to 52%. The non-Hispanic White population from 2010 to 2017 had continued to decrease to an estimated 46.6% in 2017.
- About **one in four children** live in **poverty**
- **Two-thirds** of students are **eligible for free or reduced-price** school meals
- **The county's rank has decreased to 52** in overall health among Georgia's 159 counties
- Nearly **one in seven** Newton County residents **lacked health insurance** in 2016, including 32% of adults 18-24 years
- There were about **2,880 residents per primary care physician**, which was almost double the statewide ratio of 1,530:1
- There were about **5,860 residents per dentist**, which was nearly three times the statewide ratio of 2,030:1; Newton County has been designated a **health provider shortage area** for dentists
- There were about **1,240 residents per mental health care provider**, which was nearly **1.5 times higher** than the statewide ratio of about 900:1
- Nearly **one in three** Newton County adults are **obese**, and **one in eight** low-income preschool **children** are obese
- **One in three** Newton county residents gets **no leisure-time physical activity**
- The number of Newton County residents with **diabetes increased by 68%** between 2004 and 2010
- The age-adjusted **death rate to suicide** in Newton County was higher than the statewide rate
- The county has **no transit system**
- **Half** of renters and **one third of** home mortgage holders are considered "**cost burdened**" when it comes to housing
- **One in four** residents has **low access to a grocery store**
- **Nearly one in five** residents smoke **tobacco**
- **One in thirteen pregnant women** smoke tobacco with rates highest among Whites (**one in seven**)
- Cancer caused more than one in five deaths; the **overall cancer death rate** and death rates (age-adjusted) for the **four most common cancers** (breast, colorectal, lung, and prostate) were **higher than Georgia rates**
- The **teen pregnancy rate has declined substantially** in the past decade and is now below the Healthy People 2020 goal, but the teen pregnancy rate for Hispanic girls is **higher** than rates for both White and Black girls
- The rate of **Chlamydia** cases has **more than doubled** in the past decade

## Background: The National Health Context

When assessing a community's health, it is important to keep in mind which illnesses and conditions cause the most disability and early death. This burden of disability and early death is commonly measured with an indicator called disability-adjusted life years, or DALYs. DALYs measure both the years lost to early death and those worsened due to disease and disability. Although this measure is not available specifically for Newton County, recent estimates for the United States serve as a useful benchmark. Figure 1, which uses 2010 data from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation,<sup>2</sup> clearly shows that non-communicable diseases cause the vast majority (88%) of DALYs in the United States. These non-communicable diseases include heart and circulatory diseases (17% of DALYs), cancer (15%), mental health disorders (14%), musculoskeletal disorders (12%), and a range of other health problems like dementia, emphysema, and diabetes.

Injuries, shown in green, are the second largest category causing DALYs, representing 7% of total DALYs. This category includes transport injuries (including motor vehicle collisions; 3% of DALYs), self-harm and interpersonal violence (3%), and unintentional injuries (4%). The final category causing DALYs included communicable diseases (3%), diseases of the newborn (2%), maternal conditions (<1%), and nutritional deficiencies (<1%).

**Figure 1. Distribution of Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) by Type of Condition or Illness, United States, 2017**



<sup>2</sup> Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME): Global Burden of Disease  
<http://viz.healthmetricsandevaluation.org/gbd-compare/>

Source: Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (<http://viz.healthmetricsandevaluation.org/gbd-compare/>)

Clearly, to make the biggest impact on health, we must reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases like heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. However, the causes of these diseases are complex and long-term, are strongly influenced by the environment and community, and are tied to human behavior. They must be addressed from their very beginnings through environmental design, prevention efforts, community interventions, primary care, and at later stages through hospital care. Because of this complexity and the range of influences, we must work across a variety of disciplines and specialty areas to make the biggest impact on health. Areas that the public might consider unrelated to health, including income, housing, education, and transportation, must be part of the discussion.

The importance of non-communicable diseases is further evident in the top ten health risk factors for early death and disability in the United States in 2010:<sup>3</sup>

- Poor diet (dietary risks)
- Smoking
- Overweight and obesity
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes and pre-diabetes
- Physical inactivity
- Alcohol use
- High cholesterol
- Drug use
- Air pollution (specifically particulate matter)

Infectious diseases, injuries, and maternal and newborn health remain critical to the overall health of the population. These areas need continuous focus to prevent outbreaks, disease, and tragic outcomes.

## **Background: Premature Death in Newton County**

A combined measure of death *and* disability (like the DALY) in Newton County is not available, but data are available on leading causes of premature death in Newton County (Figure 2).<sup>4</sup> This local information is similar to the data from the national level: chronic disease like heart disease and cancer dominate this list. Because this measure examines the number of potential years of life lost before age 75, conditions that cause death among children and adolescents are weighted

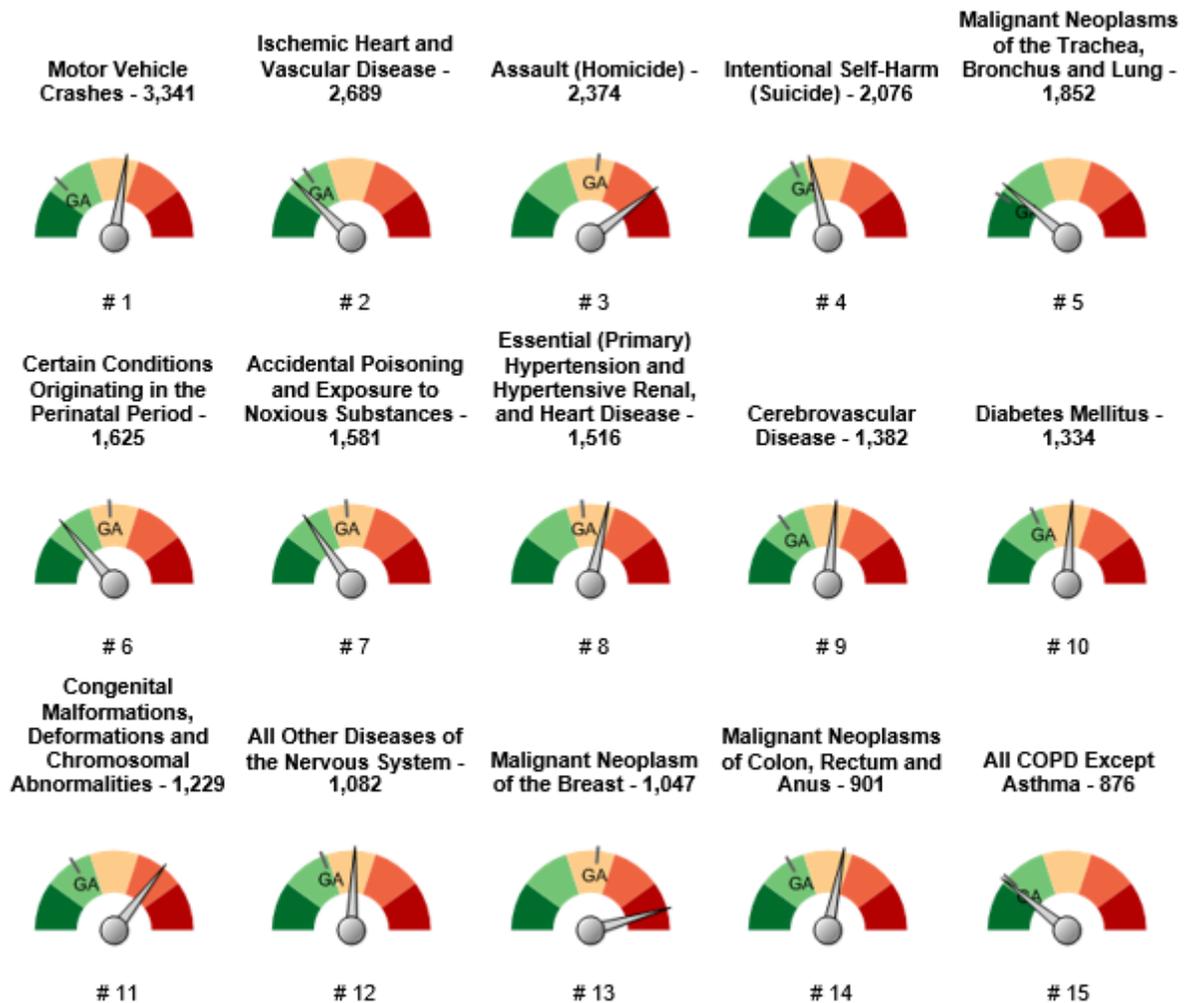
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<sup>3</sup> IMHE <http://www.healthmetricsandevaluation.org/gbd/visualizations/gbd-arrow-diagram>

<sup>4</sup> Georgia Online Analytical Statistical Information System <http://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/>

heavily. Deaths from injuries and accidents (motor vehicle crashes, suicide, assault, poisoning) led to many years of potential life lost; many of these conditions are related to abuse of alcohol and drugs and to mental health conditions. Conditions that affect infants (conditions originating in the perinatal period and SIDS) were also major causes of premature death; tobacco use can increase the risk of these conditions. It is important to note that this measure does not adjust for age, as do many other measures cited in this report, and Newton County’s relatively younger population likely explains some of the high burden of conditions more common among younger people.

**Figure 2. Top 15 Leading Causes of Premature Death in Newton County, Georgia, 2013-2017**



Number indicates years of potential life lost due to death before the age of 75 per 100,000 population less than 75 years of age. The “GA” marker indicates the Georgia rate.

Source: Georgia Online Analytical Statistical Information System <http://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/>

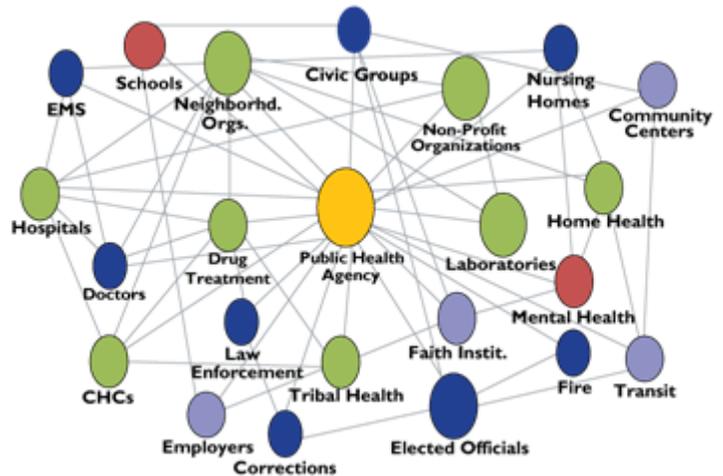
## Background: The “Public Health System:” Far Beyond the Health Department

All communities have a public health system to prevent and treat illness, disability, and death. A public health system is composed not just of government agencies, but includes many other organizations and people.

According to the CDC’s National Public Health Performance Standards, public health systems are “all public, private, and voluntary entities that contribute to the delivery of essential public health services within a jurisdiction.”<sup>5</sup>

A community’s public health system includes:

- Public health agencies at state and local levels
- Healthcare providers
- Public safety agencies
- Human service and charity organizations
- Education and youth development organizations
- Recreation and arts-related organizations
- Economic and philanthropic organizations
- Environmental agencies and organizations



## Organization of This Report

*We know that much of what influences our health happens outside of the doctor’s office—in our schools, workplaces and neighborhoods.*

-County Health Rankings & Roadmaps<sup>6</sup>

When we think about health, we often think first about medical care. As noted above, however, medical care is only part of the health picture. Section 1 describes many of the factors that strongly influence health.

<sup>5</sup> Essential Public Health Services <http://www.cdc.gov/nphsp/essentialservices.html>

<sup>6</sup> County Health Rankings & Roadmaps <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/about-project>

## **Section 1: Factors that Influence Health**

- (1) Demographics and Diversity
- (2) Economy and Basic Needs
- (3) Housing
- (4) Education and Child Activities
- (5) Transportation and Land Use
- (6) Community Engagement
- (7) Safety
- (8) Environment

The second section of this report focuses on the health indicators of Newton County residents and examines the critical role of the health care sector.

## **Section 2: Health Status**

- (1) Overall Health Status
- (2) Access to Health Services
- (3) Health Behaviors
- (4) Chronic Diseases
- (5) Cancer
- (6) Injuries
- (7) Teen Pregnancy
- (8) Maternal and Infant Health
- (9) Infectious Diseases
- (10) Mental Health and Social Support
- (11) Emergency Preparedness

## **Section One: Determinants of Health**

*The social determinants of health are the circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, work and age, and the systems put in place to deal with illness. These circumstances are in turn shaped by a wider set of forces: economics, social policies, and politics.*

- World Health Organization<sup>7</sup>

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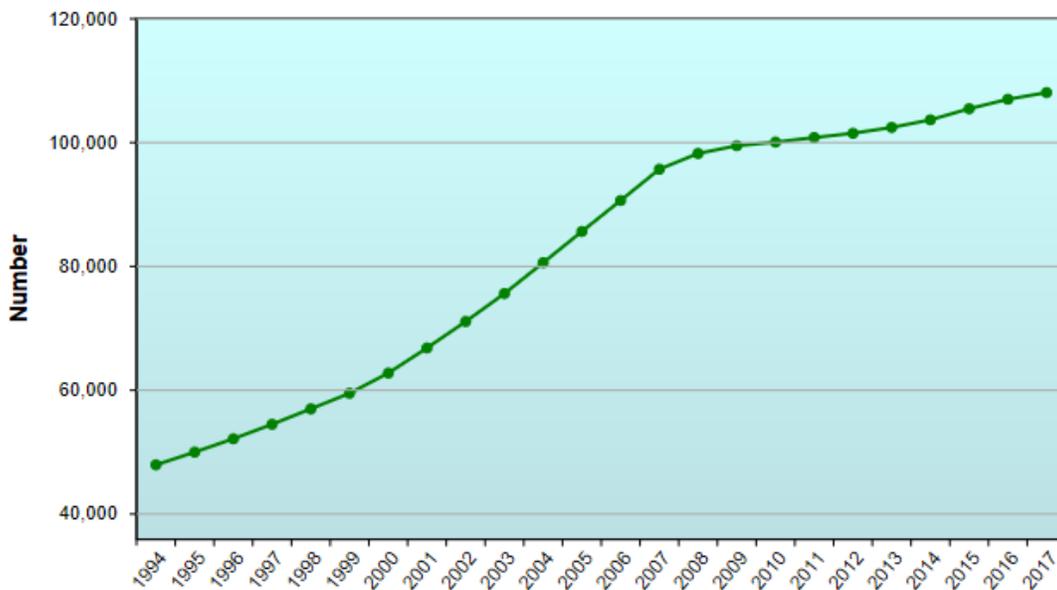
<sup>7</sup> WHO: Social Determinants of Health  
[http://www.who.int/social\\_determinants/thecommission/finalreport/key\\_concepts/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/social_determinants/thecommission/finalreport/key_concepts/en/index.html)

## Demographics and Diversity

To understand and improve health—and health determinants—in Newton County, we must first consider the county and its residents.

Newton County is located about 36 miles east of Atlanta at the edge of the metropolitan area’s eastern suburbs. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county’s land area is 25% urban and 75% rural, although more than two-thirds (69%) of the population lives in the urban areas. Newton County includes the cities of Covington (14,044 residents), Oxford (2,234 residents), Porterdale (1,481 residents), Newborn (749 residents), and Mansfield (427 residents).<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 3. Annual Population Estimates, Newton County, Georgia, 1994-2017**  
**Population, Newton County, GA, 1994-2017**



Source: OASIS <https://oasis.state.ga.us/trendingtool/index.html?redirectto=CountyPop>

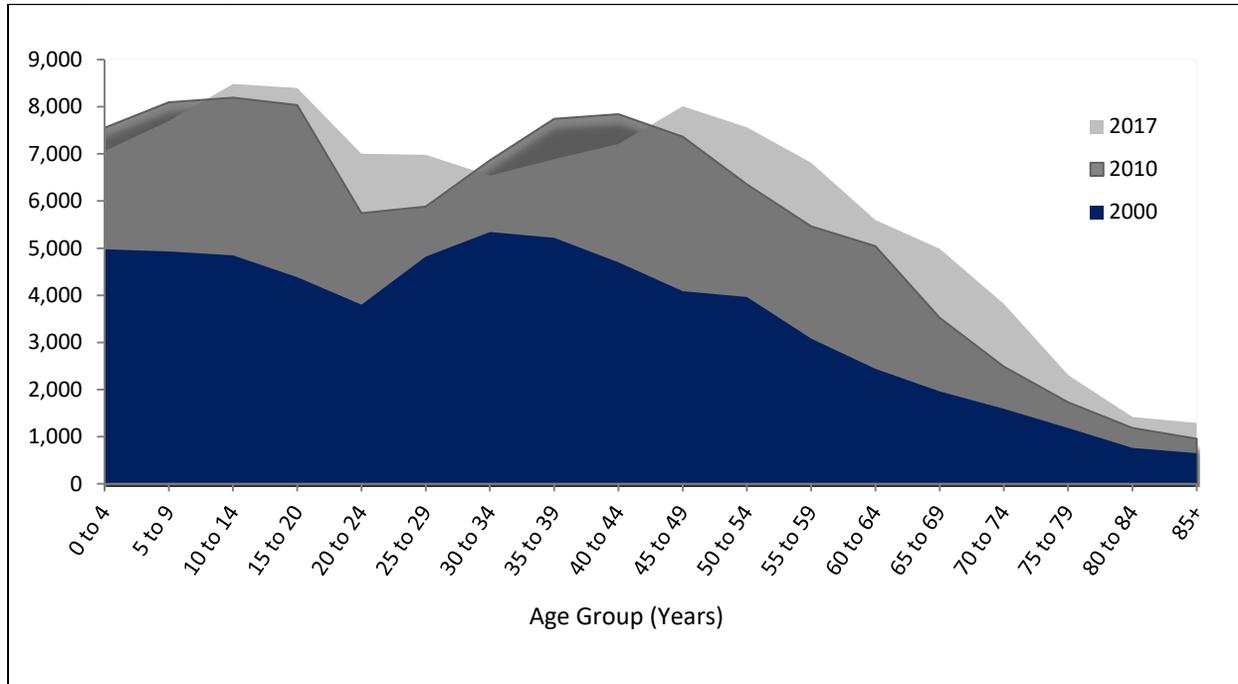
From 2013 to 2017, the population grew from an estimated 102,466 to 108,098 (Figure 3), or just above 1% (<1,400 people) per year. By comparison, rates of population growth from 2000 to 2007 were over 5% per year.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census Bureau <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045218>

## Age Distribution

Newton County's population is relatively young (Figure 4); however, its senior population is projected to grow rapidly in the coming years.<sup>9</sup> People in their sixties were the fastest growing population group from 2000 to 2017 (Figure 5), suggesting that the senior population is growing and will continue to grow. In 2017, just under one-third (29%) of the population was younger than 20 years and about one in 8 residents (13%) were 65 years or older (Figure 4).

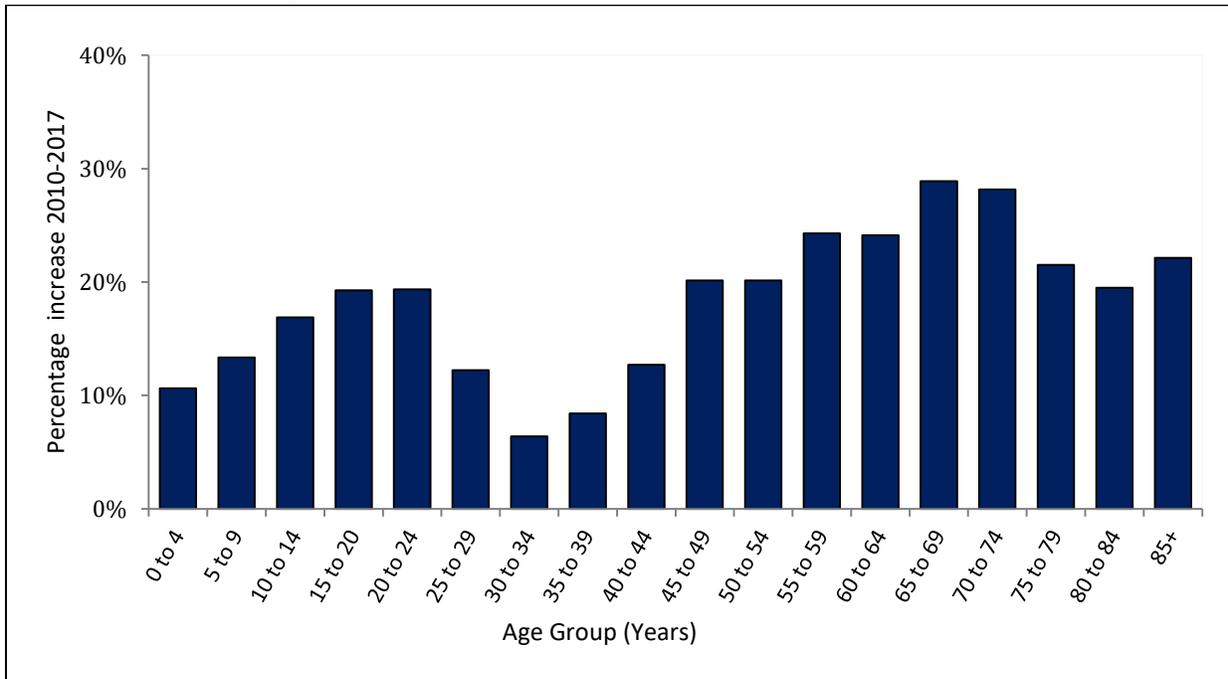
**Figure 4. Population Distribution of Residents, Newton County, 2000, 2010, and 2017**



Source: OASIS <http://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/>

<sup>9</sup> Newton County 2006-2028 Comprehensive Plan: Community Assessment  
<http://www.dca.state.ga.us/development/PlanningQualityGrowth/programs/documents/NewtonCo.CAss.pdf>

**Figure 5. Percentage Change in Population by Age Group, Newton County, 2010–2017**



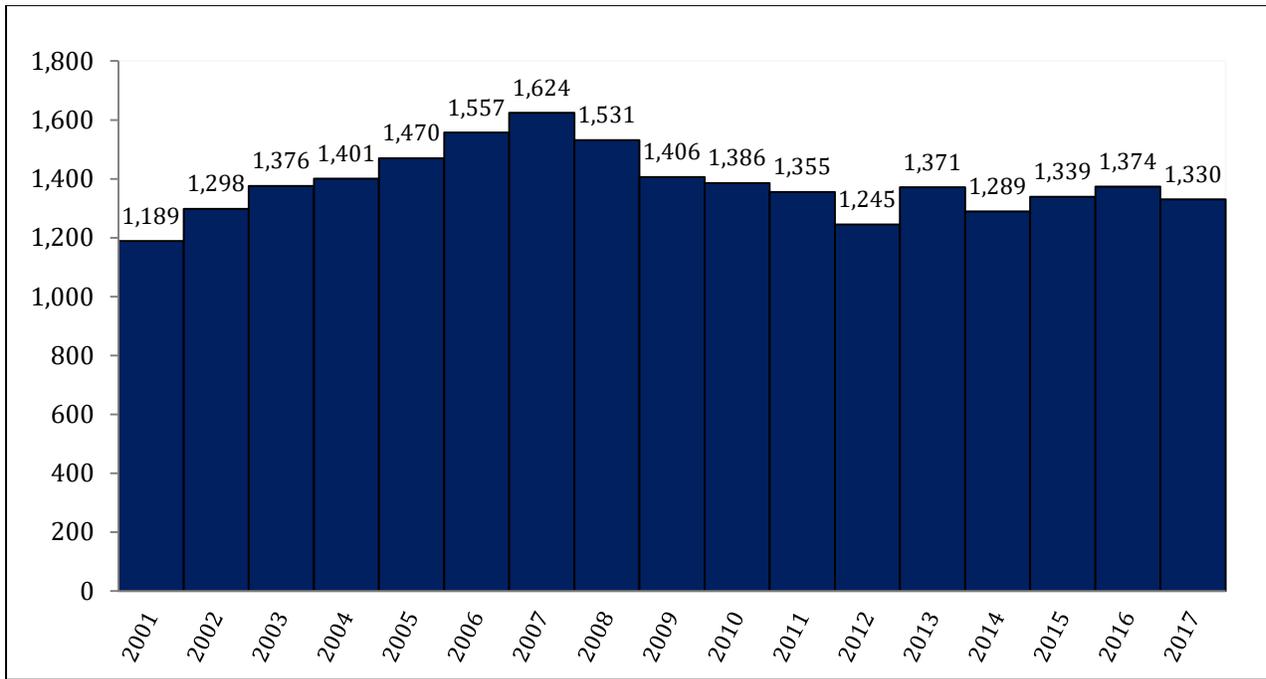
Source: OASIS <http://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/>

### Number of Births

The number of births to Newton County mothers in 2012 was at its lowest point since 2002 despite many more reproductive-age women in the county. The number of births peaked in 2007 at 1,624 and declined to 1,330 in 2017, representing a 18% decline over these ten years. The numbers of births to Newton County mothers showed a steady increase from 2014 to 2016(Figure 6). In 2017 (the most recent data available), the number of births had begun to decline.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> OASIS <http://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/>

**Figure 6. Number of Births to Newton County Mothers, 2001-2017**



Source: OASIS <http://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/>

## Diversity

Newton County has continued to grow more diverse since 2000. The American Community Survey 5-Year estimates for 2013-2017, report just under half (48.7%) of the population was non-Hispanic White, 42.6% was non-Hispanic Black, 5.1% was Hispanic (of any race), 1.0% was Asian, and 2.1% was multiracial (Figure 7). According to the 2010 U.S. Census, about half (52%) of the population was non-Hispanic White, 40.4% was non-Hispanic Black, 4.6% was Hispanic (of any race), 0.9% was Asian, and 1.7% was multiracial (Figure 7). By comparison, the county's population in 2000 was about three-quarters (74.2%) non-Hispanic White, 22.2% Black, 1.9% Hispanic, 0.7% Asian, and 1.0% multiracial.<sup>15</sup> Census data show that the population in both 1980 and 1990 was about three-quarters White and one-quarter Black, percentages that were very similar to those in 2000.

In the 2010 census, the Hispanic population of Newton County (4.6%) was majority Mexican (2.7% of the total population) and the remaining Hispanic population identified as Puerto Rican (0.7%), Cuban (0.3%), or other Hispanic or Latino (1.0%). Among the 0.9% of the population that reported being Asian, 0.2% were Asian Indian, 0.1% were Chinese, 0.1% were Filipino,

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Census Bureau <https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/phc-1-12.pdf>

0.1% were Korean, 0.1% were Vietnamese, and 0.2% were other Asian. According to the 2013-2017 population estimates, the Hispanic population of Newton County (5.1%) was majority Mexican (3.1% of the total population) and the remaining Hispanic populations identified as Puerto Rican (0.9%), Cuban (.01%), or other Hispanic or Latino (1.0%).<sup>12</sup> Among the 1.0% of the population that was estimated being Asian, 0.2% were Asian Indian, 0.3% were Chinese, 0.1% were Filipino, 0.4% were Vietnamese, and <.1% were other Asian.

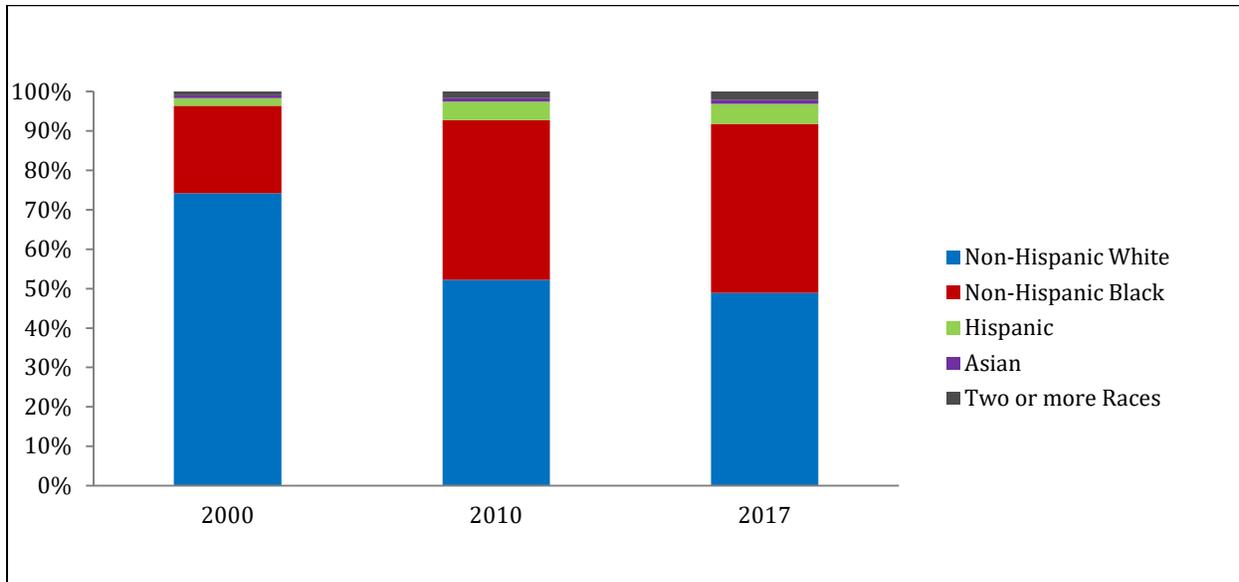
Based off the American Community Survey, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that about one in sixteen (5.9%) Newton County residents were foreign born in 2017. Among these estimated 6,376 foreign born residents, most (69%) were from Latin America, 9% were from Europe, 15% were from Asia, 4% were from Africa, 2% were from elsewhere in North America, and <1% were from the Oceania region.<sup>13</sup> More than ninety percent (90.3%) of the foreign-born population during this period had entered the United States before 2010. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that sixty-three percent of Newton County residents were born in Georgia and 29.4% were born in another U.S. state.

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<sup>12</sup> U.S. Census Bureau <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Census Bureau <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

**Figure 7. Race/Ethnicity Distribution of Newton County Residents, 2000, 2010, and 2017**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey <sup>14</sup>

### **Linguistic Isolation**

People who do not speak English in Newton County may have difficulty accessing services that are available to fluent English speakers. The U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey estimates 21.3% of people age 5 years or older spoke a language other than English at home, and 8.5% spoke English less than “very well” (over 60% of whom spoke Spanish at home) in 2017.

### **Families and Households**

In 2017, there were an estimated 35,823 households in Newton County, with an average of 2.89 people per household. <sup>15</sup> Families—defined as a householder with at least one related person—made up just under three-quarters (72.4%) of households. Households with married-couple families made up 48.7% and 23.6% were families without a married couple. Just over twenty percent (22.6%) of households were composed of people living alone (over a third of whom were

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Census Bureau <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Census Bureau <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

age 65 years or older) and 4.5% were households in which no one was related to the householder. Less than half of households (39.8%) included children younger than 18 years old.

Newton County's population has been quite mobile. Approximately one in seven residents (13.3%) moved or changed residence in the previous year.<sup>16</sup> One in seven residents (12.9%) had moved to Newton from outside the county in the previous year, including one in forty (2.5%) who moved from another state.

## **Economy and Basic Needs**

*Few people would deny that there are many advantages of having more income or wealth. Nevertheless, apart from the well-known link between economic resources and being able to afford health insurance and medical care, their influence on health has received relatively little attention from the general public or policy-makers, despite a large body of evidence from studies documenting strong and pervasive relationships between income, wealth and health*

-Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), Report on Income, Wealth, and Health<sup>17</sup>

As described by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation above, there are strong links between income, wealth, and health, which is why any health assessment must include an examination of these factors. To give just one example of the connection between income and health, life expectancy at age 25 is closely correlated with income as a percentage of the federal poverty level (FPL) (Figure 8). Life expectancy at age 25 was more than six years longer for people earning more than four times the FPL compared with those earning less than or equal to the FPL.<sup>18</sup>

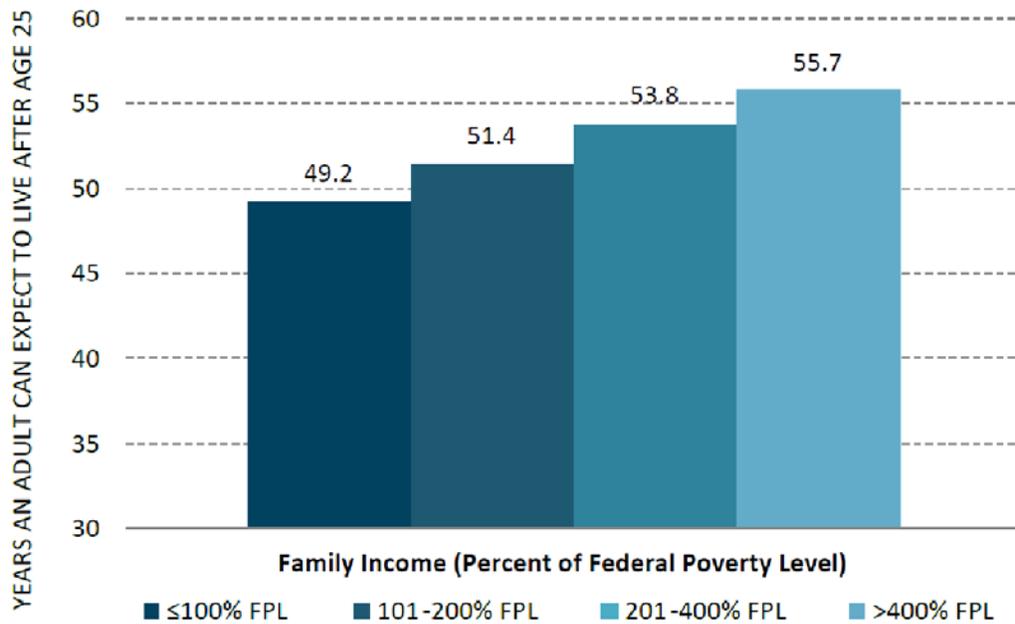
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<sup>16</sup> U.S. Census Bureau <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml?refresh=t>

<sup>17</sup> Robert Wood Johnson Foundation [http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue\\_briefs/2011/rwjf70448](http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2011/rwjf70448)

<sup>18</sup> Robert Wood Johnson Foundation [http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue\\_briefs/2011/rwjf70448](http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2011/rwjf70448)

**Figure 8. Number of Years an Adult Can Expect to Live After Age 25 by Family Income, United States**



Source: RWJF [http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue\\_briefs/2011/rwjf70448](http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2011/rwjf70448)

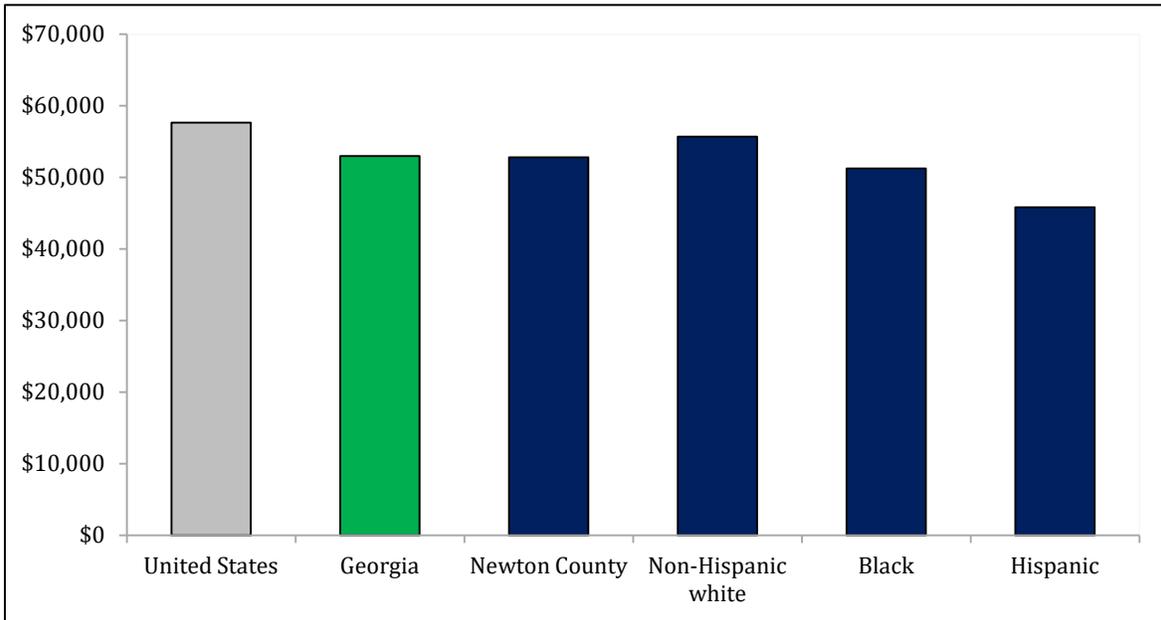
We will examine income indicators for Newton County first and then markers of poverty within the county.

### Household Income

Newton County’s median household income was below the median household income for Georgia, as well as, below the national figure. From 2013-2017, the median household income in Newton County was estimated to be \$52,784. By comparison, the Georgia median was \$52,977 and the national median was \$57,652.<sup>19</sup> Non-Hispanic Whites had the highest median income in Newton County, estimated to be \$55,689. Among other race/ethnic groups, the estimates of median household income were \$51,219 for Black residents and \$45,828 for Hispanic residents. Married couples had an estimated median income of \$73,586, which exceeded the estimated median incomes for male householders without a wife present (\$45,143) and female householders without a husband present (\$37,093). People 65 years and older had an estimated median income of \$42,229.

<sup>19</sup> U.S. Census Bureau <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

**Figure 9. Median Household Income in Newton County by Race/Ethnicity, 2013-2017**

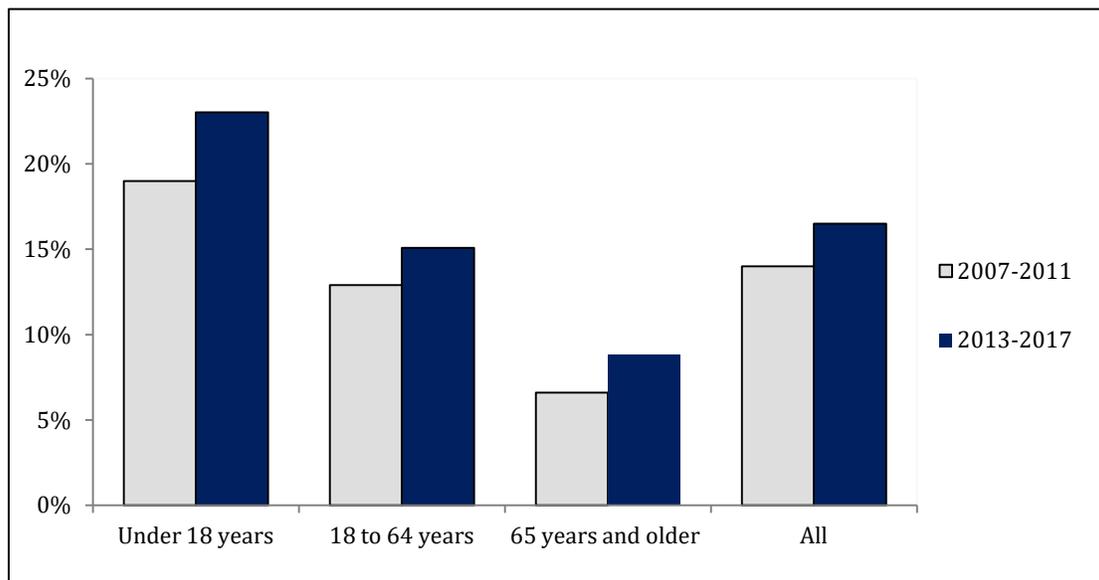


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

### **Poverty**

Although the county’s median income was higher than the state’s, large numbers of residents live in poverty. From 2013-2017, about one in eight (13.4%) of Newton County residents had household incomes below the federal poverty level. About one in four (23.9%) children lived in poverty, as did 14.8% of residents 18-64 years and one in ten (9.5%) residents age 65 years or older (Figure 10). Compared with the estimates from 2007-2011, poverty rates increased in all age groups (Figure 10).

**Figure 10. Percent of People Living in Poverty by Age Group, Newton County, 2007-2011 and 2013-2017**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

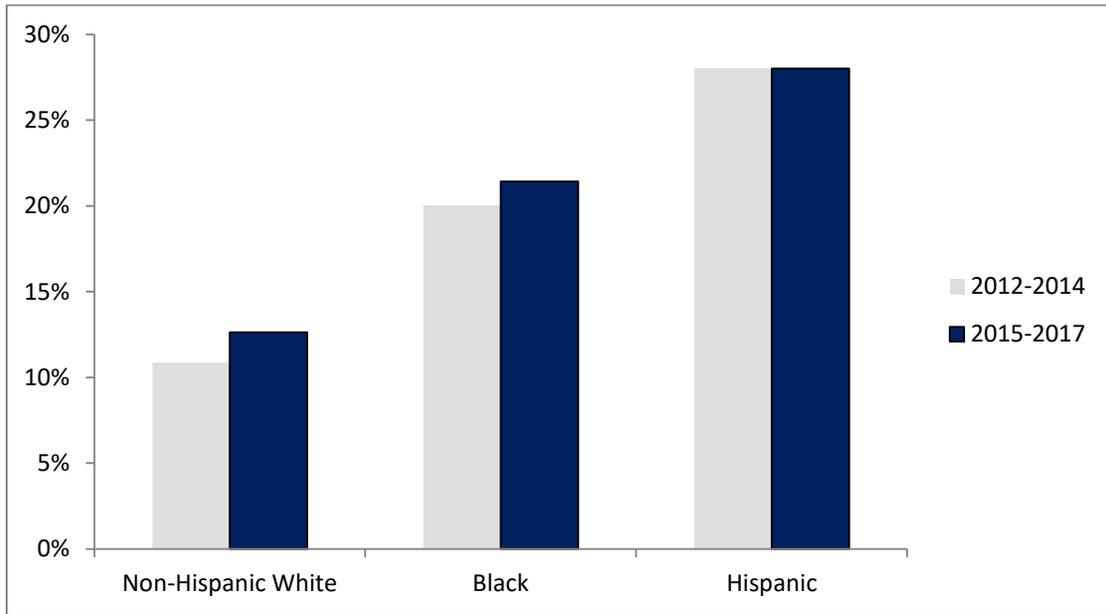
About one in twelve (12.6%) non-Hispanic Whites lived in poverty compared with about one in five (21.4%) Black residents, and nearly one in three (28%) Hispanic residents (Figure 11). Two-thirds (67%) of students in 2013 were eligible to receive free or reduced price school meals (Figure 12), which was higher than the statewide percentage of 60% and much higher than the 43% of Newton County students eligible ten years earlier.<sup>20</sup> Two-thirds (68.5%) of students in 2017 were eligible to receive free or reduced price school meals (Figure 13), which was higher than the statewide percentage of 60.58%.<sup>21</sup> In some schools, over 70% of children are eligible for free school lunch (not including those eligible for reduced-price lunch).<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Kids Count Data Center <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#GA/5/0>

<sup>21</sup> Georgia Department of Education [https://oraapp.doe.k12.ga.us/ows-bin/owa/fte\\_pack\\_fr1001\\_public.entry\\_form](https://oraapp.doe.k12.ga.us/ows-bin/owa/fte_pack_fr1001_public.entry_form)

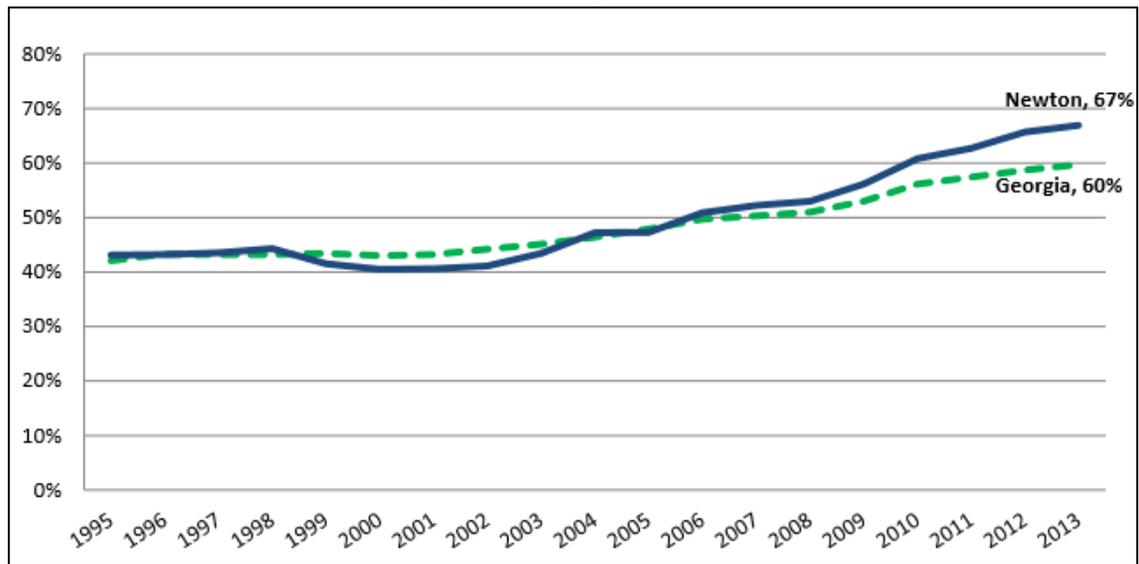
<sup>26</sup> Children's Issues In Newton Report <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B3SuY1V9SSTUSFFLNDZKVjRIM1E/edit>

**Figure 11. Percent of People in Each Race/Ethnicity Group Living in Poverty, Newton County, 2012-2014 and 2015-2017**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey<sup>23</sup>

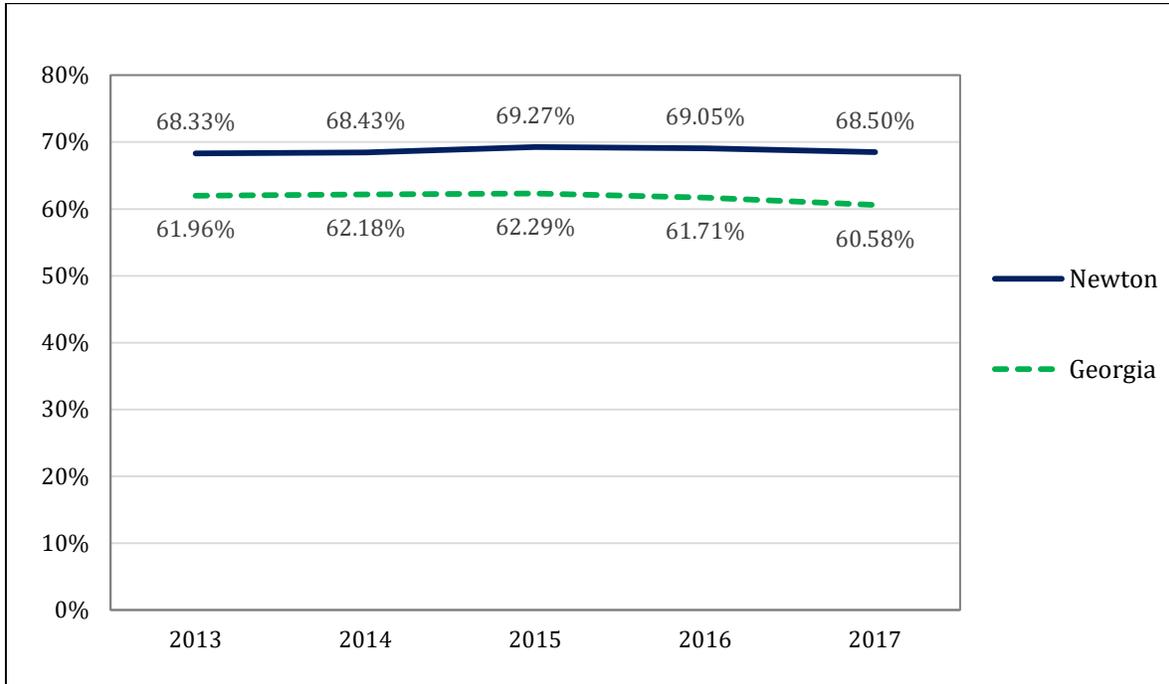
**Figure 12. Percent of School Children Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, Newton County and Georgia, 1995-2013**



Source: Kids Count Data Center <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#GA/5/0>

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Poverty Status in the Past Twelve Months [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_17\\_1YR\\_S1701&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_17_1YR_S1701&prodType=table)

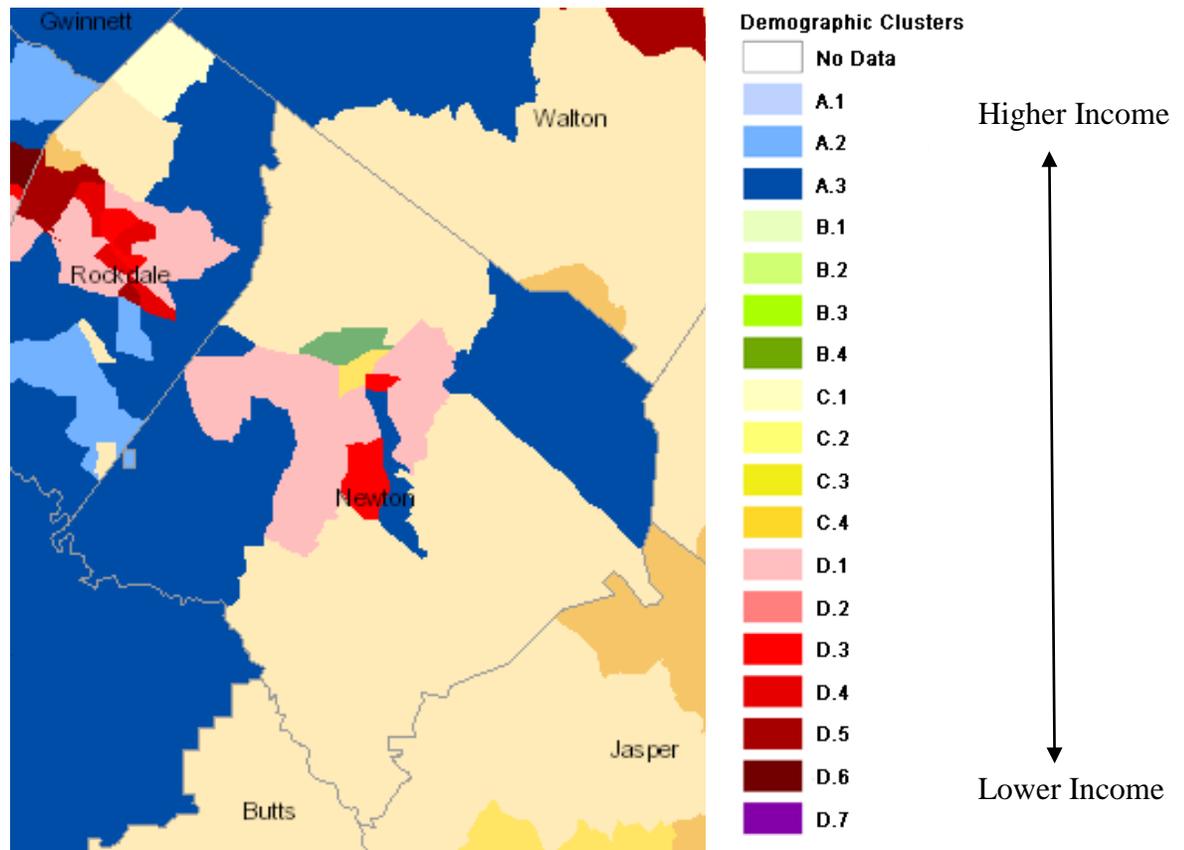
**Figure 13. Percent of School Children Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, Newton County and Georgia, 2013 – 2017**



Source: Georgia Department of Education [https://oraapp.doe.k12.ga.us/ows-bin/owa/fte\\_pack\\_frl001\\_public.entry\\_form](https://oraapp.doe.k12.ga.us/ows-bin/owa/fte_pack_frl001_public.entry_form)

Demographic data suggest that some of the poverty in the county is clustered along the western and central areas of the county to the south of interstate 20, including part of the city of Covington (Figure 14).

**Figure 14. Demographic clusters of Newton County, 2017**



Source: <http://oasis.state.ga.us/GADemoProfile/DemoClusters2011.htm>

Detailed descriptions of demographic cluster groups are available at <http://oasis.state.ga.us/GADemoProfile/documents/DemoClusters2011Description.pdf>.

Blue colors represent higher income areas; yellow and red colors represent lower income areas.

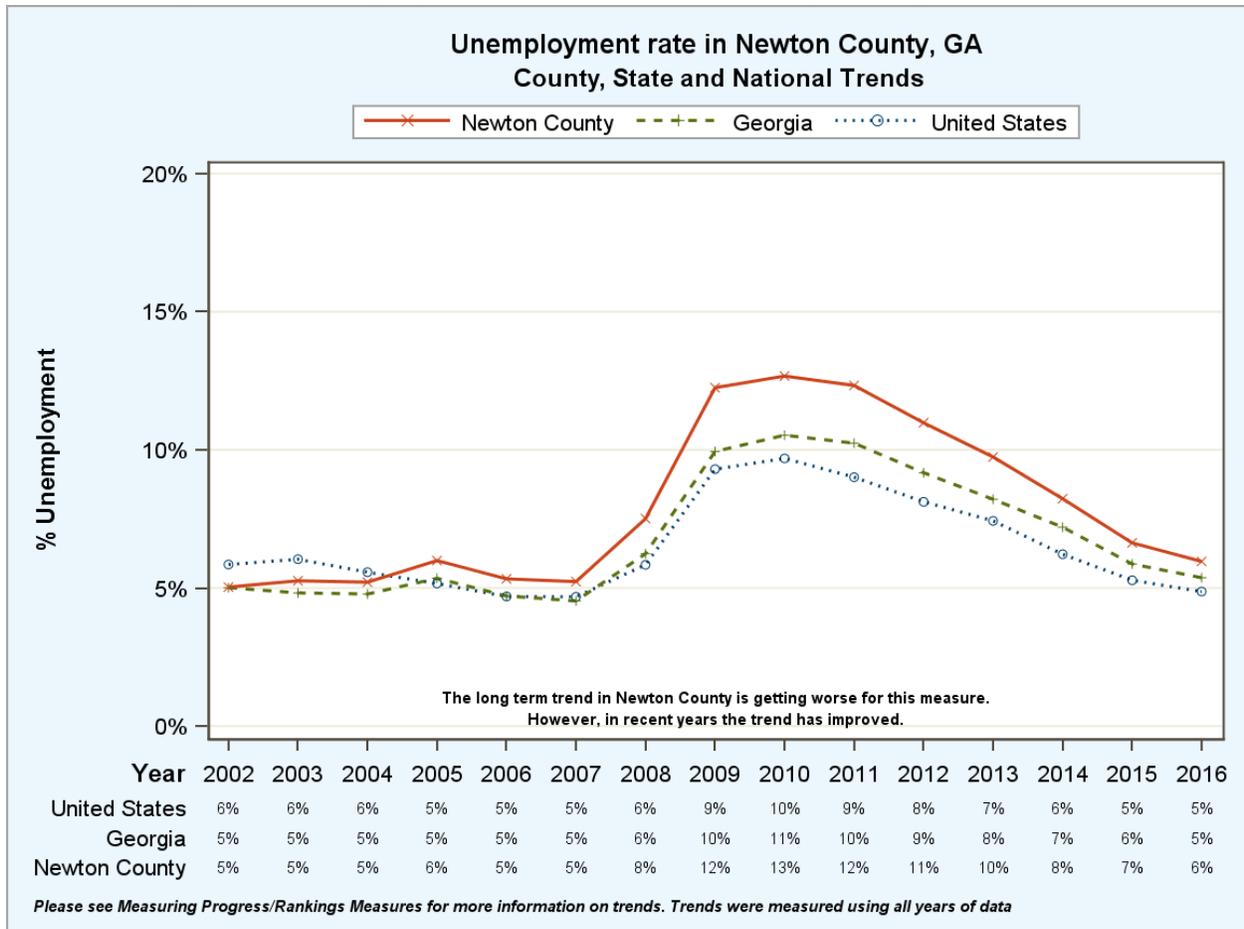
According to the U.S Census American Community Survey, in 2017, an estimated 79.5% of Newton households received earnings, 18.1% received retirement income other than Social Security, and 29.8% received Social Security. Some households received income from more than one source. The average annual income from Social Security was \$18,719. An estimated 8% of households received Supplemental Security Income (SSI; average \$11,788 per year) and 19.3% received Food Stamp/SNAP benefits.

Since 2007, unemployment has become a major problem for Newton County, as it has for much of the nation. According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, job loss and unemployment are linked to a number of health problems, including stress-related conditions like stroke and heart disease.<sup>24</sup> In 2016, the unemployment rate was estimated to be 8.2%, which was improved from the 2010 peak of about 12.5%, but still one percent greater than rates seen in the early

<sup>24</sup> Robert Wood Johnson Foundation [http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue\\_briefs/2013/rwjf403360](http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2013/rwjf403360)

2000s (Figure 15). Unemployment rates in Newton County are estimated to have decreased to 6.6% in 2017.<sup>25</sup>

**Figure 15. Unemployment Rate in Newton County, Georgia, 2002-2016**



Source: County Health Rankings

<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2013/newton/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot/by-rank>

## Housing

*Where we live is at the very core of our daily lives. Housing is generally an American family's greatest single expenditure, and, for homeowners, their most significant source of wealth. Given*

<sup>25</sup> County Health Rankings

<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/rankings/newton/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>

*its importance, it is not surprising that factors related to housing have the potential to help—or harm—our health in major ways.*

-Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Report on Housing and Health<sup>26</sup>

As noted by the Robert Wood Johnson foundation, housing can strongly affect health.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey estimates, during 2013-2017, there were about 38,713 housing units in Newton County, 92.5% of which were occupied. Of the total number of housing units, about six in seven (83.5%) were single family houses. Multi-unit structures like apartment buildings were less common in Newton County than in Georgia or the United States. Almost one in ten (9.4%) Newton County housing units were in multi-unit structures compared with 20.6% of those in Georgia and 26.2% of those in the United States. Five percent of Newton County housing units were mobile homes.

Just under three-quarters (69%) of Newton County housing units were owned and the rest were rented. More than one-third (39%) of housing units were built since 2000 and nearly two-thirds (64%) were built since 1990. Nearly nine in ten residents (91.2%) moved into their current household since 1990.

A relatively high percentage of Newton County residents are considered “cost burdened” when it comes to housing. The Department of Housing and Urban Development defines cost burdened households as those that pay more than 30% of income for housing. People in these households may have difficulty affording necessities like food, transportation, and medical care. From 2013-2017, the median monthly housing cost in Newton County was \$1,215 for mortgage owners and \$390 for non-mortgage owners. Thirty-one percent of owners with mortgages and about one in eleven (9%) owners without a mortgage were considered cost burdened. The median monthly housing cost for renters was \$936, and over half (53%) spent 30% or more of their household income on rent, which was much higher than the national average of 50.6%.<sup>27</sup>

Housing foreclosures have been a major problem for many Newton County residents in recent years. According to data from the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, Newton County had one of the top 5 highest foreclosure rates among the 159 Georgia counties in all four quarters of 2011.<sup>28</sup> Related to the foreclosure trend, prices from home sales have increased substantially since 2012 (Figure 16). According to the American Community Survey, the median value of owner-occupied housing units from 2013-2017 was \$123,300, though values have likely declined since then.

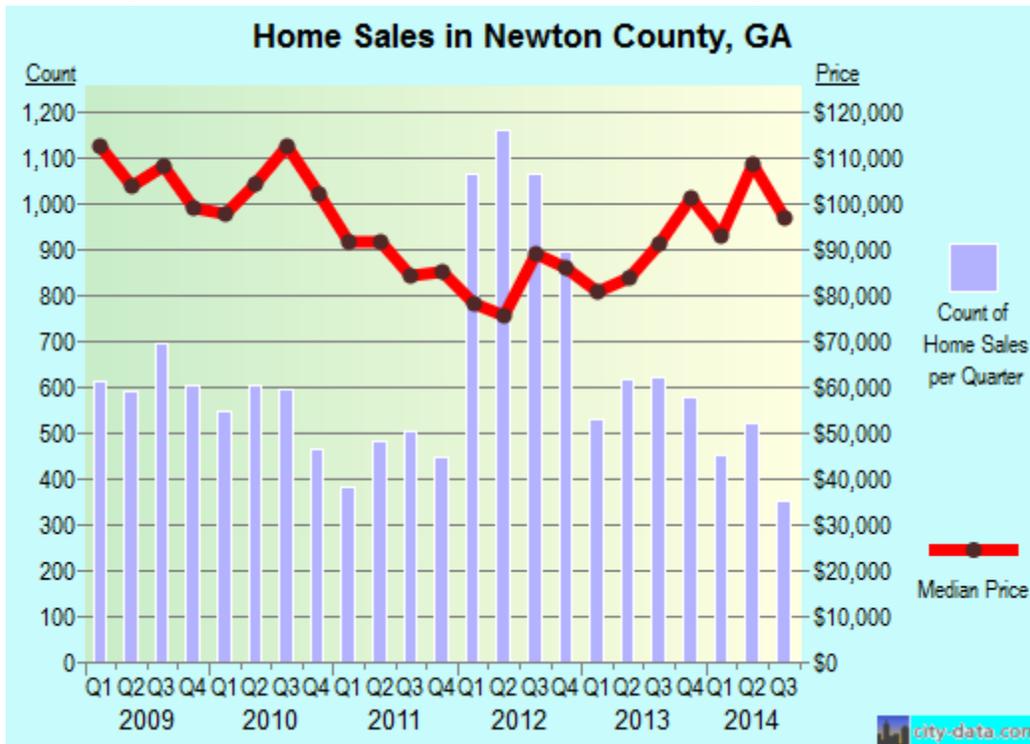
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<sup>26</sup> Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Report on Housing and Health  
<http://www.rwjf.org/en/research-publications/find-rwjf-research/2011/05/housing-and-health.html>

<sup>27</sup> U.S. Census Bureau <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

<sup>28</sup> Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta <http://www.frbatlanta.org/pubs/mdft/>

**Figure 16. Home Sales in Newton County, Georgia, 2009-2014**



Source: [http://www.city-data.com/county/Newton\\_County-GA.html](http://www.city-data.com/county/Newton_County-GA.html)

No estimates of Newton County’s homeless population are available.

The Newton County 2006-2028 Comprehensive Plan states, “county officials need to ensure that workforce housing continues to be available in the future.”<sup>29</sup> The plan encourages a specific type of development: “traditional neighborhood developments,” which “offer a variety of housing types in a dynamic mixed-use environment that helps to reduce auto trips and create a strong sense of place that can help make Newton unique.” This type of neighborhood development yields positive health benefits by making walking part of the daily routine and facilitating interpersonal interactions.<sup>30</sup> It is discussed more in the Transportation and Land Use section.

## Education and Child Activities

*Everyone knows that without a good education, prospects for a good job with good earnings are slim. Few people think of education as a crucial path to health, however. Yet a large body of evidence strongly—and, with very rare exceptions, consistently—links education with health, even when other factors like income are taken into account.*

<sup>29</sup> Newton County 2006-2028 Comprehensive Plan: Community Assessment

<http://www.dca.state.ga.us/development/PlanningQualityGrowth/programs/documents/NewtonCo.CAss.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> Does the Built Environment Influence Physical Activity? Transportation Research Board, Institute of Medicine  
<http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/sr/sr282.pdf>

Newton County residents have education levels similar to those across the state and the nation with about 6 in 7 adult residents having completed high school.<sup>32</sup> Newton County residents were less likely to have completed a bachelor's degree (less than one in five) than were people statewide or nationwide (more than one in four). The county has a large public school system and several institutions of higher learning.

From 2013-2017, an estimated 32.6% of Newton County residents 25 years and older were identified as high school graduates.<sup>33</sup> This is higher than the percentage for Georgia (28%) and the national rate (27.3%) which implies that Newton County graduates are less likely to pursue further education after high school when compared to the state or national level. About one in eight (12.6%) residents age 25 years and older had a bachelor's degree or higher. This rate is substantially lower than the state rate of 18.6% for Georgia and national rate of 19.1%.

The Newton County School System serves the entire county including five municipalities and includes 13 elementary schools, 5 middle schools, 3 high schools, 1 theme school (grades K-6), 2 charter schools, and the Ombudsman Alternative Education Program. All are fully accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.<sup>34</sup> Their mission is to "provide educational excellence for all students." The school system is supported by the Newton Educational Foundation, a non-profit foundation that "is working to create a culture of support for education in Newton County, and who's vision is to "create a better community."<sup>35</sup>

The 2017 four-year cohort graduation rate for Newton County high school students was 84.8%, which was higher than the Georgia rate of 80.6%, and higher than the national rate of 84% in 2016, the most recent year for which data are available. Alcovy High School had a four-year graduation rate of 81.8%, Newton High School had a rate of 82.3%, and Eastside High School had a rate of 90.3%.

The county has several schools of higher education: Oxford College of Emory University,<sup>36</sup> the Newton Campus of the Georgia Piedmont Technical College,<sup>37</sup> the Newton Campus of Georgia State University,<sup>38</sup> and the Covington Campus of Troy University.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Robert Wood Johnson Foundation [http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue\\_briefs/2011/rwjf70447](http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2011/rwjf70447)

<sup>32</sup> U.S. Census Bureau <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/newtoncountygeorgia/POP645217#POP645217>

<sup>33</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

<sup>34</sup> Newton County Schools <http://www.newtoncountyschools.org/about.aspx>

<sup>35</sup> The Newton Educational Foundation <http://reimagineNewton.org/>

<sup>36</sup> Oxford College <http://oxford.emory.edu/a-distinctive-place/>

<sup>37</sup> Georgia Piedmont Technical College <http://www.gptc.edu/content.cfm?PageCode=campusdirectory>

<sup>38</sup> Georgia State University: Perimeter College <https://perimeter.gsu.edu/about-perimeter-college/newton/>

<sup>43</sup> Troy University <http://trojan.troy.edu/globalcampus/sites/covington/>

## Transportation and Land Use

*Transportation decisions affect our individual lives, economy and health. Everyone needs to use various modes of transportation to get to work or school, to get medical attention, to access healthy foods at grocery stores and markets, and to participate in countless other activities every day.*

-American Public Health Association<sup>40</sup>

### Transportation

In a community assessment done as part of the Newton County Community Agenda in 2008, “a large percentage of those that took the survey stated that the top issue was mitigating increasing traffic congestion.”<sup>41</sup>

The average travel time to work in Newton County from 2013-2017 was estimated to be 31.5 minutes, which was longer than the Georgia average of 28.0 and higher than the national average of 26.4 minutes.<sup>42</sup> According to the Healthy Communities Institute, these lengthy commutes cut into workers’ free time and can contribute to health problems like headaches, anxiety, and increased blood pressure. Longer commute times also require workers to consume more fuel, which is both expensive to workers and damaging to the environment.

Five percent of Newton County households did not have access to a car, truck or van for private use. Twenty-seven percent of households had one vehicle.<sup>43</sup>

The Newton County 2006-2028 Comprehensive Plan identified several key transportation issues.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> American Public Health Association <http://www.apha.org/advocacy/priorities/issues/transportation>)

<sup>41</sup> Newton County Community Agenda

<http://www.dca.state.ga.us/development/PlanningQualityGrowth/programs/documents/NewtonCo.CAg.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> U.S. Census <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml?refresh=t>

<sup>43</sup> U.S. Census <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml?refresh=t>

<sup>44</sup> Newton County 2006-2028 Comprehensive Plan: Community Assessment

<http://www.dca.state.ga.us/development/PlanningQualityGrowth/programs/documents/NewtonCo.CAss.pdf>

1. **No County Transit System.** There is not a public transit system in Newton County. The community should study the opportunities for express bus routes and vanpooling.
2. **Lack of adequate traffic signals.** There are many all-way stops in the community that need to be signalized and existing signals should be synchronized; this would help to reduce queuing.
3. **Mitigating increasing traffic congestion.** Traffic congestion is going to get worse as the county grows. Steps need to be emplaced to slow the increase in congestion including requiring street connectivity and conducting traffic studies.
4. **Poorly connected or incomplete pedestrian network.** There are ordinances in place to promote sidewalk construction as a part of new development, but the network is disconnected. The County should identify future collector streets to be built as development occurs.

The Newton County Medical Center CHNA reported that many people in the community cited transportation as a major issue preventing access to care, particularly the lack of a public transportation system.<sup>45</sup> One community member reported that EMS receives inappropriate calls for transportation to doctor appointments because there is no public transit.

Seniors who are unable to drive have few transportation options. However, Newton County Senior Services provides some transportation services for a small fee and meal-delivery for homebound seniors.<sup>46</sup>

## Land Use

Future land development, which is tightly connected to transportation, is of great interest to many Newton County residents. While most development halted during the Great Recession beginning in 2007-2008, development is likely to resume and the mode of development going forward will greatly impact health. Several community plans have examined these issues and a brief summary is presented here.

The Newton County 2006-2028 Comprehensive Plan, released in 2006, found that the following issues contribute to traffic congestion in the county.

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<sup>45</sup> Newton County Medical Center CHNA

<http://www.newtonmedical.com/pdf/Newton%20Final%20Report2013.pdf>

<sup>46</sup> Newton County Senior Services <http://co.newton.ga.us/content/view/31/31/>, phone 770 787-0038

1. **Suburban Sprawl.** Most of the recent development in the County over the past 10 years has occurred in a typical suburban land use pattern. Most of the new development associated with this pattern is single-family residential spread out in a leap-frog fashion. Retail and employment opportunities are primarily relegated to Covington, and surrounding counties, such as Rockdale, forcing more and more residents to drive longer distances.
2. **Strip Commercial Development.** The land uses along some highway corridors form stereotypical commercial strips that detract from the rural character and regional identity.

## Environment

According to the County Health Rankings, Newton's physical environment ranking decreased to 121<sup>st</sup> of the 159 Georgia counties. The Healthy Communities Institute defines the physical environment as all places where we live and work (e.g., homes, buildings, streets, and parks) and includes infrastructure described in the Transportation and Land Use section. The environment influences a person's level of physical activity and ability to have healthy lifestyle behaviors. For example, inaccessible or nonexistent sidewalks or walking paths increase sedentary habits. These habits contribute to obesity, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes. Other factors that contribute to healthy lifestyle behaviors are access to grocery stores and recreation facilities.

### Access to Healthy Foods

In 2015, the county had 19 grocery stores (20 grocery stores per 100,000 population), which was similar to the nationwide county average of 21 per 100,000.<sup>47</sup> There are strong correlations between the density of grocery stores in a neighborhood and the nutrition and diet of its residents. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, an estimated 25,322 Newton County residents (including 7,462 children and 2,107 seniors) had low access to a grocery store in 2015 and an estimated 784 households had no car and low access to a grocery store. About 11% of low-income residents had low access to a grocery store compared with 6% nationwide.

People who live in certain areas of Newton County have less access to fresh foods than others. The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines a food desert as a census tract with a substantial share of residents who live in low-income areas and have low levels of access to a grocery store or a healthy, affordable food retail outlet.<sup>48</sup> Two areas within the central part of the county, including part of Oxford and Covington, are considered to be food deserts (Figure 17). \

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<sup>47</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-environment-atlas/go-to-the-atlas.aspx#.Um68NnC-qtE>

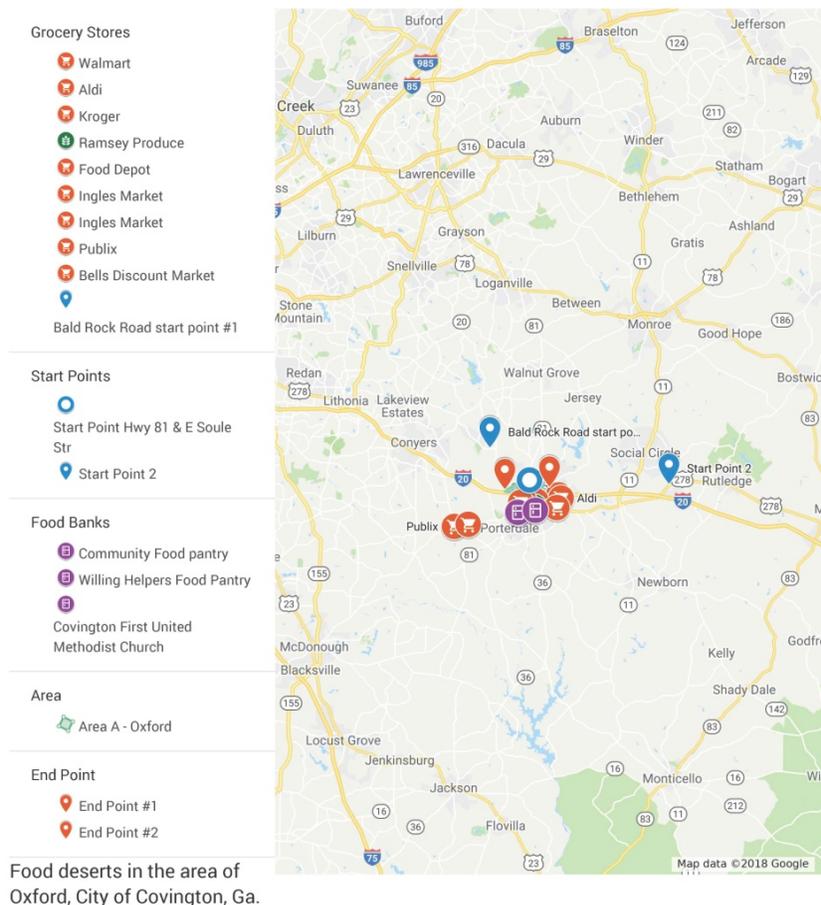
<sup>48</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture <http://apps.ams.usda.gov/fooddeserts/>

The lack of public transportation and low income in these areas hinders residents from providing healthy food for their families, leaving fast food, convenience stores, and small box retailers as their only option for food. This leads to obesity, chronic heart disease and increased tobacco use amongst this population.

According to the Newton Partnership, the county has a few community gardens, including one in Porterdale that was initiated by HANDS-ON NEWTON and was embraced by the mayor and other citizens.<sup>49</sup>

**Figure 17. Food Deserts in Newton County, Georgia**

### Food Deserts



Source: Reproduced by students that attends Georgia State University Perimeter Campus

<sup>49</sup> Newton Partnership—Food Desert <http://www.newtonpartnership-gafcp.org/hunger-obesity-in-food-desert/>

## **Fast Food**

In 2014, Newton County had a density of fast food restaurants that was slightly lower than the national average (59 vs. 57 per 100,000).<sup>50</sup> According to the Healthy Communities Institute, “fast food is often high in fat and calories and lacking in recommended nutrients.... studies suggest that fast food outlets strongly contribute to the high incidence of obesity and obesity-related health problems.”<sup>51</sup> Although the density of fast food restaurants was low, 58% of all restaurants in the county in 2013 were fast food restaurants, which was higher than the Georgia average of 50% and the national average of 27%.<sup>52</sup>

## **Liquor Stores**

In 2016, Newton County had a liquor store density of about 7 per 100,000 populations, which was lower than the national average of 11 per 100,000. Studies have shown that neighborhoods with a high density of alcohol outlets are associated with higher rates of violence, regardless of other community characteristics like poverty and age of residents. High alcohol outlet density has been shown to be related to increased rates of drinking and driving, motor vehicle-related pedestrian injuries, and child abuse and neglect.

## **Parks and Recreation**

Newton had an estimated 5 recreation or fitness facilities per 100,000 residents in 2010, which was lower than the Georgia average of 8 per 100,000 and the national benchmark of 16 per 100,000.<sup>53</sup> According to the CDC, high frequencies of walking and biking can correlate to lower levels of obesity-related illnesses. In 2017, Newton County began paving its 15-mile rail trail, the Cricket Frog Trail, making it accessible to more people. Newton County also has a Miracle League field which hosts softball games for players facing mental and physical challenges.

## **Water Safety**

According to the Safe Drinking Water Information System cited in the County Health Rankings, drinking water safety in Newton County was good. In fiscal year 2017, no residents were reported to have been exposed to water exceeding a violation limit.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-environment-atlas/go-to-the-atlas.aspx#.Um68NnC-qtE>

<sup>51</sup> Healthy Communities Institute <http://www.healthypasodelnorte.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=NS-Indicator&file=indicator&iid=1122582>

<sup>52</sup> County Health Rankings <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2013/measure/factors/84/map>

<sup>53</sup> County Health Rankings <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2013/measure/factors/68/map>

<sup>54</sup> County Health Rankings <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/rankings/newton/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>

The county's rivers and streams, however, are less healthy. According to the Newton County 2006-2028 Comprehensive Plan,<sup>55</sup> written in 2006, surface water quality was in decline.

Four of the county's significant streams and rivers do not meet federal water quality standards. Lake Jackson in south Newton County is also in violation of clean water standards, in large part due to these impaired streams and rivers. None of these streams originate in Newton County, and all are impaired by the time they reach the County. Several large urban areas are upstream of Newton County, as are a number of active agricultural areas. Much of the pollution generated is due to urban and rural non-point source runoff, but wastewater from industrial and municipal uses also contribute to substandard water quality.



**Lake Jackson**

Source: Newton County 2006-2028 Comprehensive Plan: Community Assessment

[https://www.dca.ga.gov/sites/default/files/newton\\_county\\_comp\\_plan\\_community\\_assessment\\_2006.pdf](https://www.dca.ga.gov/sites/default/files/newton_county_comp_plan_community_assessment_2006.pdf)

## **Air Quality**

According to the County Health Rankings, the average daily measure of fine particulate matter (10.7 micrograms per cubic meter) in Newton County exceeded the state average and national benchmark.<sup>56</sup> The Newton County 2006-2028 Comprehensive Plan also noted that the county was one of 21 metropolitan Atlanta counties with poor air quality. “The County along with the region does not meet federal clean air standards for particulate matter or ground-level ozone. Regionally, the bulk of the problem originates with high traffic volumes, often traveling relatively long distances in congested operating conditions.”<sup>57</sup> The report further identified several ongoing trends that would likely exacerbate the county's air quality problem:

- Increased development – commercial and residential
- New developments continue to focus on travel by motor vehicle
- Segregation of land uses

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<sup>55</sup> Newton County 2006-2028 Comprehensive Plan: Community Assessment

[https://www.dca.ga.gov/sites/default/files/newton\\_county\\_comp\\_plan\\_community\\_assessment\\_2006.pdf](https://www.dca.ga.gov/sites/default/files/newton_county_comp_plan_community_assessment_2006.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> County Health Rankings

<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/rankings/newton/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>

<sup>63</sup> Newton County 2006-2028 Comprehensive Plan: Community Assessment

<http://www.dca.state.ga.us/development/PlanningQualityGrowth/programs/documents/NewtonCo.CAss.pdf>

- Poor street connectivity/cul-de-sac and dead-end streets
- Lack of pedestrian or bicycle facilities
- Lack of adequate job opportunities in the County
- Loss of tree canopy

The Comprehensive Plan states, “stemming these trends will require a multi-faceted campaign of zoning and land development regulation reform, public education, and intergovernmental coordination between all government entities in the region.”

## **Safety**

### **Violent Crime Rate**

The Newton County violent crime rate of 382 per 100,000 residents in 2017 was higher than the Georgia rate (374 per 100,000).<sup>58</sup> From 2015-2017, violent crime was the second leading cause of premature death in the county, as noted in the Background section. The property crime rate of 3,213 per 100,000 in Newton County was lower than the statewide rate of 3,556 per 100,000.<sup>59</sup>

### **Motor Vehicle Collisions**

Motor vehicle-related injuries kill more children and young adults than any other single cause in the United States and they were the leading cause of years of potential life lost (i.e., premature death) in Newton County from 2015-2017. Newton County had an age-adjusted death rate due to motor vehicle collisions in 2015-2017 that was higher than the Georgia rate (20.4 vs. 14.5 per 100,000) and the Healthy People 2020 goal of 12 per 100,000 (Figure 18). For the years 2012-2014, the Newton County rate had been much lower at 17.2 per 100,000.<sup>60</sup> As noted in the Transportation and Land Use section, new modes of development can improve (or worsen) traffic safety depending on the mode of development. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in three crash deaths involves a drunk driver, suggesting that alcohol is likely involved in many Newton County motor vehicle-related deaths as well.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> County Health Rankings

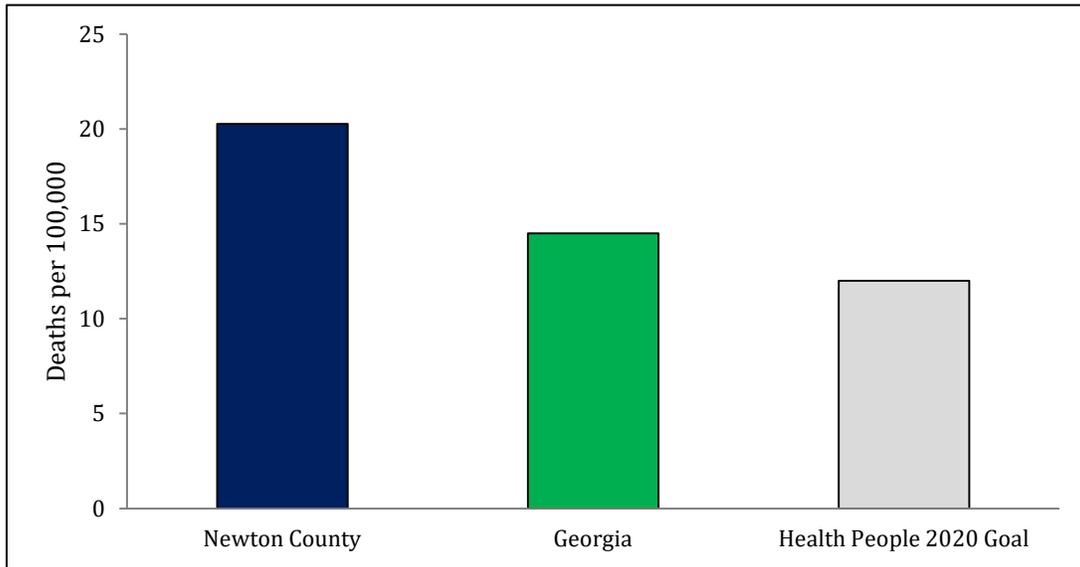
<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/rankings/newton/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>

<sup>65</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/drinkinganddriving/?s\\_cid=vitalsigns-093-bb](http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/drinkinganddriving/?s_cid=vitalsigns-093-bb)

<sup>66</sup> City-Data <http://www.city-data.com/city/Georgia3.html>

<sup>67</sup> Oasis <http://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/oasis/qryMorbMort.aspx>

**Figure 18. Age-Adjusted Death Rate Due to Motor Vehicle Collisions per 100,000 residents, 2015-2017**



Source: OASIS <http://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/oasis/qryMorbMort.aspx>

## Poisoning

According to Poison Prevention.org, more than 2 million poisonings are reported each year in the United States and the majority of non-fatal poisonings occur in children younger than six years old. Poisonings are a leading cause of death nationwide and were the sixth leading cause of premature death in Newton County. From 2015-2017, 40 deaths in Newton County were caused by poisoning.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>62</sup> OASIS <http://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/oasis/qryMorbMort.aspx>

## Emergency Preparedness

Newton County has several agencies and organizations that plan for and respond to emergencies, which include natural disasters (e.g., floods), man-made accidents (e.g., a train wreck involving a chemical spill), disease epidemics or pandemics, and intentional acts of terrorism involving chemical, biological, or radiological devices. These groups include the Emergency Preparedness Department of the Health Department,<sup>63</sup> the Covington-Newton County Emergency Management Agency, the Newton County Sheriff's Office,<sup>64</sup> the Newton County Fire Service,<sup>65</sup> hospitals, emergency medical services (EMS), and volunteer groups, such as the Medical Reserve Corps.<sup>66</sup> Other partners include the Georgia Department of Public Health, the Georgia Emergency Management Agency, CDC, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) is a national storehouse of medical supplies and pharmaceuticals maintained by CDC and local health departments, including the Newton County Health Department. It is deployed during an emergency situation in which a chemical or biological agent, such as anthrax or plague, is released into our community, which might happen by accident or as part of a terrorist attack.<sup>67</sup>

Information for Newton County residents on preparing themselves and their families for emergencies, including specific situations like floods, tornadoes, and hurricanes, as well as links to other organizations, is available through the Health Department (Local Preparedness and Safety Information website <http://www.gnrhealth.com/services/emergency-preparedness/local-preparedness-safety/>) and other community sources.

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<sup>63</sup> Newton County Health Department <http://www.gnrhealth.com/services/emergency-preparedness>

<sup>64</sup> Newton County Sheriff's Office <http://www.newtonsheriffga.org/index.html>

<sup>65</sup> Newton County Fire Service <http://www.newtoncountyfireservice.org/index.php>

<sup>66</sup> Medical Reserve Corps <https://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/MrcUnits/UnitDetails/71>

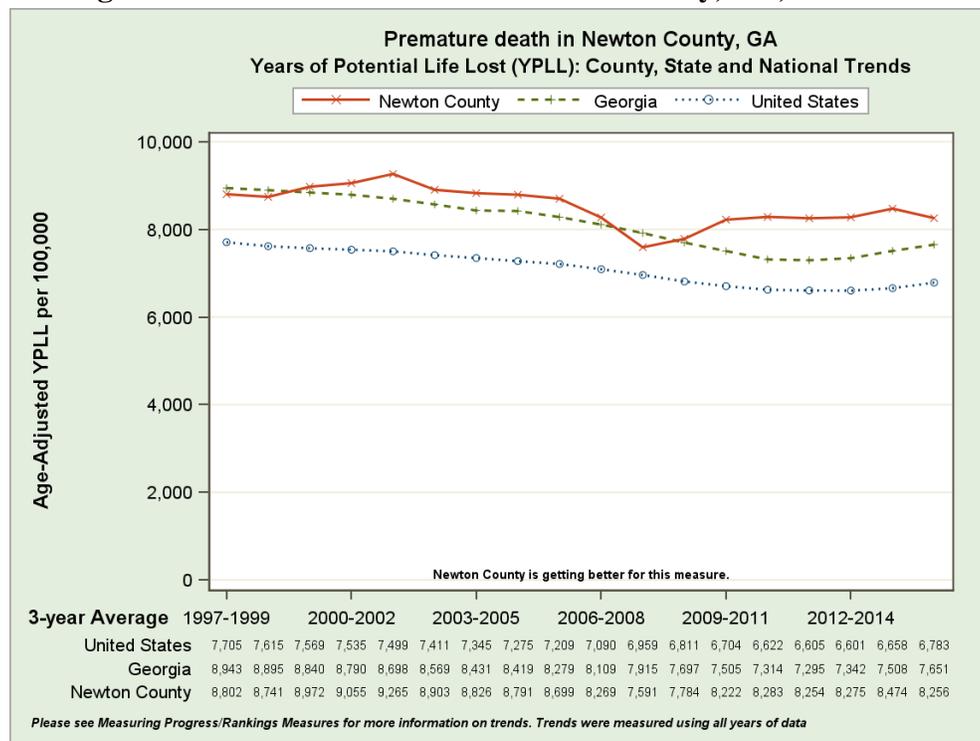
<sup>67</sup> Partners in Preparedness <http://www.gnrhealth.com/services/emergency-preparedness/pip-vol2-2#secret>

## Section Two: Health Status

### Overall Health

Newton County is relatively healthy compared with other counties in Georgia, but still has a great deal of room for improvement, particularly when compared to the national level. According to the 2017 County Health Rankings, Newton County ranked 52<sup>nd</sup> among the 159 Georgia counties in terms of overall health outcomes.<sup>68</sup> This is a significant drop from the 2013 County Health Ranking of 33<sup>rd</sup>. Where Newton County ranked 34<sup>th</sup> by measures of illness and disability (morbidity) and 40<sup>th</sup> by a measure of premature death (mortality) in 2013, in 2017, the county had dropped to 62<sup>nd</sup> by measures of illness and disability (morbidity) and 59<sup>th</sup> by a measure of premature death (mortality). In 2014, Newton County had 8,256 age-adjusted years of potential life lost per 100,000 residents, which was greater than the state rate of 7,651 per 100,000 (Figure 19).

**Figure 19. Premature Death in Newton County, GA, 1997-2014**



Source: County Health Rankings

<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2018/rankings/newton/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>

<sup>68</sup> County Health Rankings for Newton County, Georgia

<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2018/rankings/newton/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>

An estimated 18% of Newton County residents reported their health to be poor or fair, which was similar to the statewide rate of 17%.<sup>69</sup> Similarly, Newton County residents reported an average of 3.9 days of poor physical health per month—about the same as the Georgia figure (3.7 days). Newton County residents reported the same number of poor mental health days (3.8 per month) as statewide residents.

## **Access to Health Services**

Clinical care is an important part of maintaining good health. The County Health Rankings estimates that about 20% of a community's health status can be attributed to clinical care. This organization ranks Newton County's clinical care as 64<sup>th</sup> out of the 159 Georgia counties, suggesting that room for improvement exists.<sup>70</sup>

Whether a person has health insurance is a major factor in whether they have access to health services. In 2017, an estimated one in five (18%) Newton County residents lacked health insurance.<sup>71</sup> Just under six percent (5.9) of children under 19 years were uninsured compared with a national average of 5.7%. Almost twenty percent (19.9) of adults age 18-65 years were estimated to be uninsured, which was slightly above the national average of 16.7%. Of those uninsured, an estimated 48.4% were Non-Hispanic White residents, 36.1% were Non-Hispanic Black residents, and 12.8% were Hispanic residents. Over one-fifth (20.1%) of uninsured residents were age 18 to 24 years compared with less than 1% of residents 65 years and older (Figure 20).

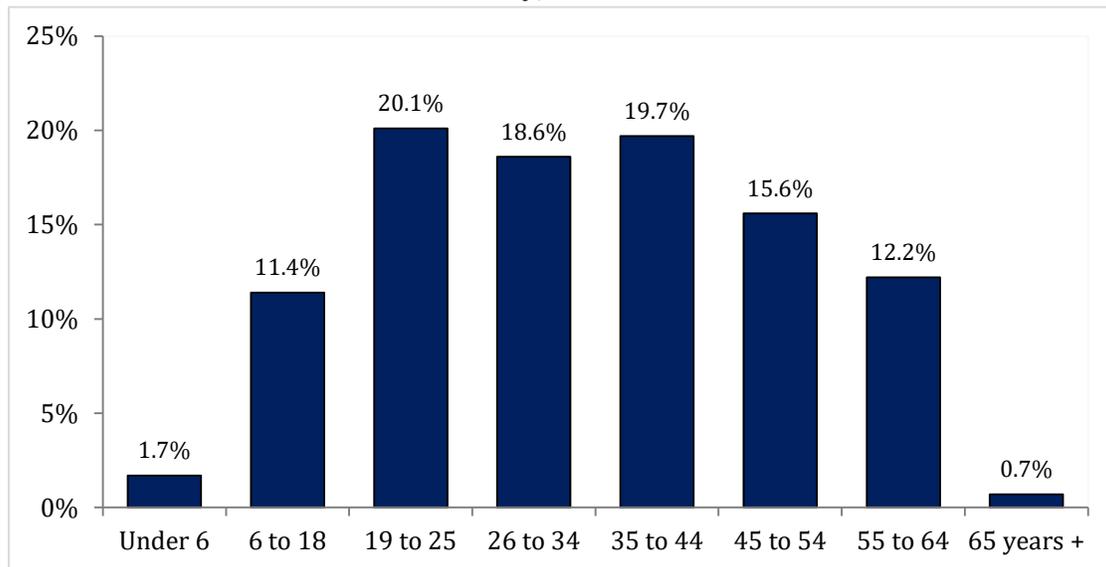
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<sup>69</sup> County Health Rankings for Newton County, Georgia  
<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/rankings/newton/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>

<sup>70</sup> County Health Rankings for Newton County, Georgia  
<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/rankings/newton/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>

<sup>71</sup> County Health Rankings County Health Rankings County Health Rankings  
<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/rankings/newton/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>

**Figure 20. Percentage of Residents that Are Uninsured (Estimated) by Age Group, Newton County, 2013-2017**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates<sup>72</sup>

The ratio of residents to primary care physicians was 2,880:1, which was nearly twice as high as the statewide ratio of 1,530:1, suggesting that primary care services might be less accessible in the county than in other areas of the state. Similarly, there was an estimated 1 dentist per 5,860 residents, which meant that there were nearly three times fewer dentists per capita than the statewide ratio of 1 dentist per 2,030 residents.<sup>73</sup> The federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) designated Newton County as a health provider shortage area for dentists.<sup>74</sup>

Beyond insurance, available data offer a conflicting picture about clinical care in the county. Newton County had a higher rate of preventable hospital stays than the state and the nation (Figure 21). On the other hand, one indicators suggest that Medicare enrollees (who are mostly people age 65 years or older) receive above average care. A higher percentage of diabetic Medicare enrollees in the county (86%) were screened with an HBA1c test—which is important for monitoring blood sugar control—than diabetic Medicare enrollees throughout Georgia (85%).<sup>75</sup>

<sup>72</sup> U.S. Census

[https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_17\\_5YR\\_S2702&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_17_5YR_S2702&prodType=table)

<sup>73</sup> County Health Rankings for Newton County, Georgia

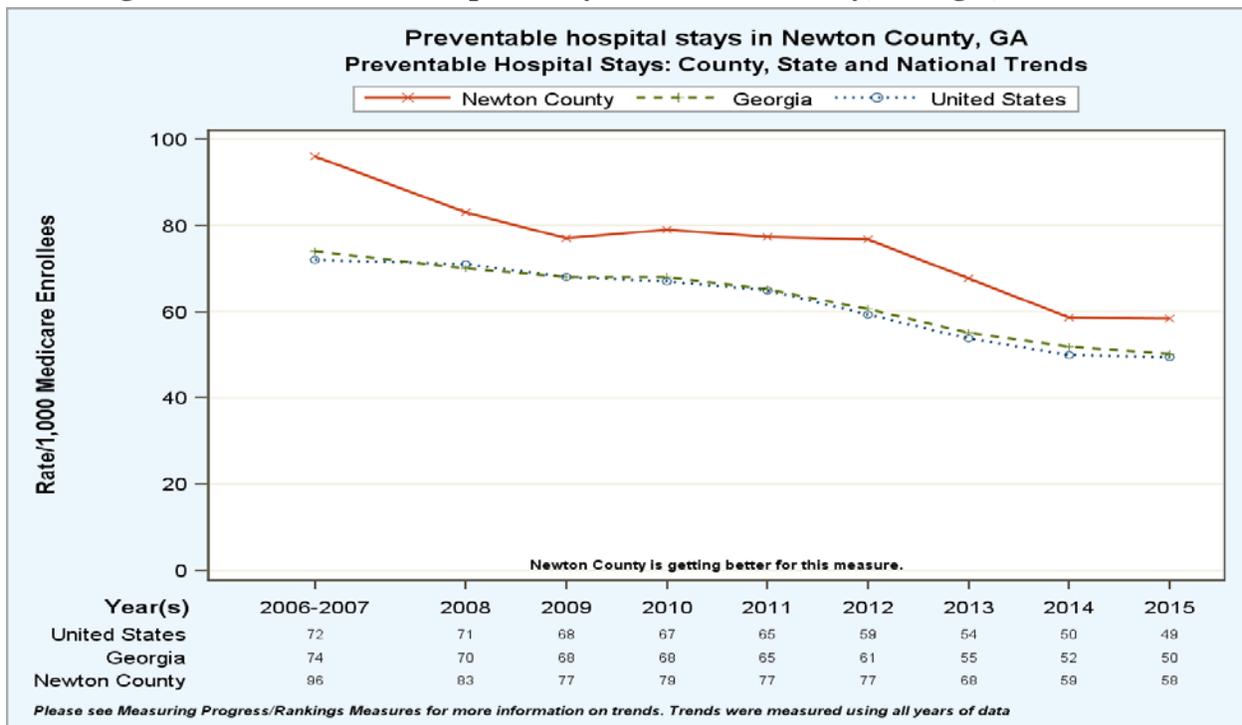
<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2013/newton/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot/by-rank>

<sup>74</sup> Health Resources and Services Administration <http://hpsafind.hrsa.gov/HPSASearch.aspx>

<sup>75</sup> County Health Rankings for Newton County, Georgia

<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2013/newton/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot/by-rank>

**Figure 21. Preventable Hospital Stays in Newton County, Georgia, 2006-2015**



Source: County Health Rankings

<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2018/rankings/newton/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>

## Emergency Room Visits

According to the CDC, in 2015 there were 136.9 million hospital visits in the United States, but only 12.3 million resulted in hospital admission and 1.5 million resulted in critical care admission.<sup>76</sup> This leaves a majority of hospital visits not truly emergency in nature. Although the rates are different, for 2013-2017, Newton County and Georgia share nine of the top ten causes for emergency room visits; the top reasons being unintentional injury, diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue, and other diseases of the genitourinary system. The age-adjusted emergency room visit rate for Newton County for unintentional injury (the number one cause of emergency room visits) was 4,220. This is much higher than the Georgia rate of 2,976.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>76</sup> CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/emergency-department.html>

<sup>77</sup> OASIS <https://oasis.state.ga.us/CHNADashboard/Default.aspx>

## Health Behaviors

As noted in the background section, most of the top ten risk factors for premature death, disease, and disability in the United States are health behaviors—or are closely linked to health behaviors—that lead to chronic diseases.<sup>78</sup> For this reason, we must focus attention on health behaviors to make the biggest improvements in health in Newton County. We must also recognize that people’s health behaviors are strongly influenced by biological factors like addiction, as well as the environment and public policy.<sup>79</sup>

Newton County has a great deal of room for improvement when it comes to health behaviors. The county’s health behavior ranking (60<sup>th</sup> of 159 counties) places it in the top half of Georgia counties.

### Top 10 Risk Factors for Illness and Premature Death

- Poor diet (dietary risks)
- Smoking (tobacco)
- Overweight and obesity
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes and pre-diabetes
- Physical inactivity
- Alcohol use
- High cholesterol
- Drug use
- Air pollution (specifically particulate matter)

## Tobacco Use

According to CDC, smoking harms nearly every organ in the body and it accounts for nearly one of every five deaths each year in the United States.<sup>80</sup> A lower percentage of Newton County adults smoke cigarettes (17%) than do adults statewide (18%) (Figure 22).<sup>81</sup> This percentage is well-above the Healthy People 2020 target of 12% and puts many Newton County residents at increased risk of illness, worsened quality of life, and premature death. In addition, about one in thirteen (7.9%) pregnant women in the county from 2016-2017 smoked cigarettes (see Maternal and Infant Health section), putting infants at increased risk for several health problems including prematurity and low birth weight.

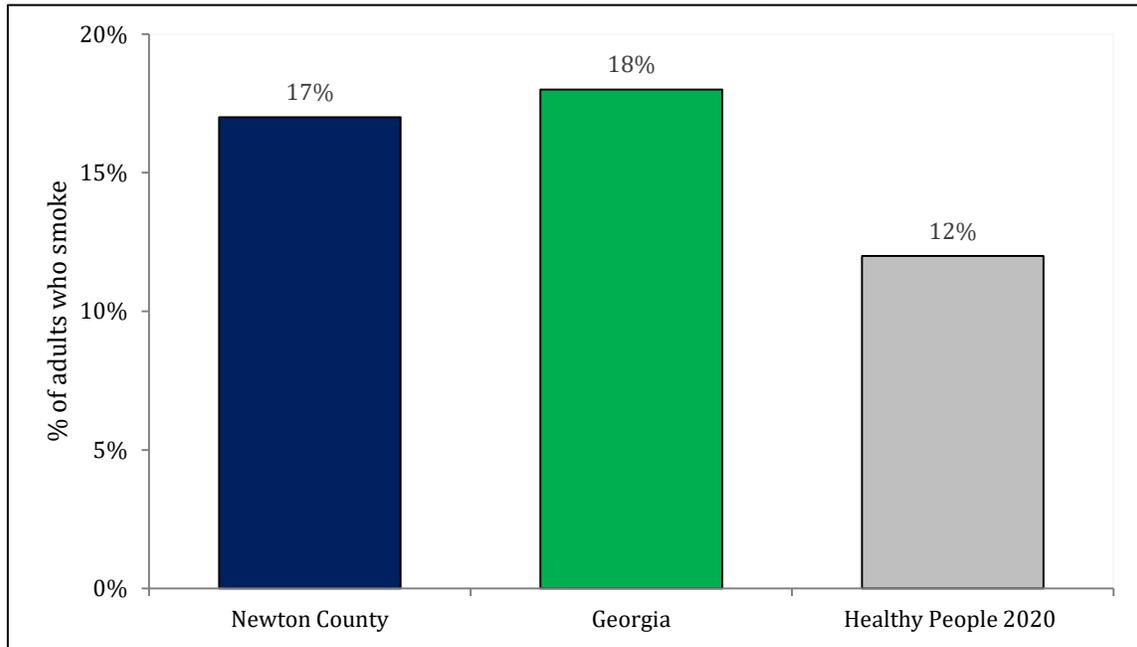
<sup>78</sup> IMHE <http://www.healthmetricsandevaluation.org/gbd/visualizations/gbd-arrow-diagram>

<sup>79</sup> Health and Behavior: The Interplay of Biological, Behavioral, and Societal Influences. National Academy of Sciences [http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record\\_id=9838](http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=9838)

<sup>80</sup> CDC [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/health\\_effects/effects\\_cig\\_smoking/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/health_effects/effects_cig_smoking/index.htm)

<sup>81</sup> County Health Rankings for Newton County, Georgia <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/rankings/newton/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>

**Figure 22. Percent Adults Who Smoke Cigarettes in Newton County and Georgia Compared with Healthy People 2020 Target, 2012-2017**



Source: County Health Rankings (<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/home>)

### **Physical Activity**

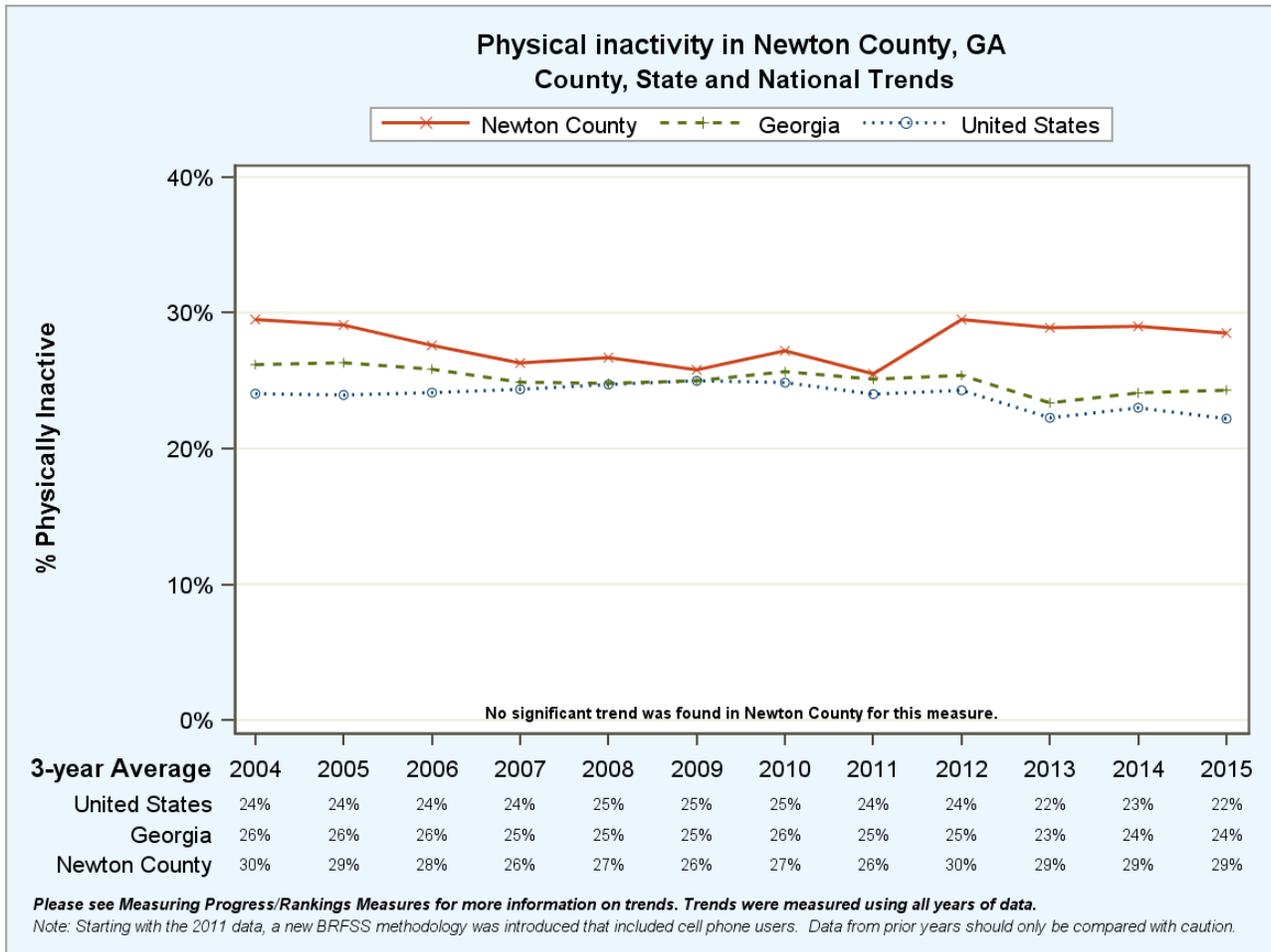
An estimated 29% of Newton residents get no leisure-time physical activity compared with a state average of 24%.<sup>82</sup> Since 2011, Newton County's rate of no leisure-time physical activity has remained greater than the state and nation (Figure 23). Lack of physical activity is a major risk factor for premature death and can contribute to an unhealthy body weight.

Resources to improve physical activity are discussed further in the Transportation and Land Use section and the Chronic Diseases section.

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<sup>82</sup> County Health Rankings  
<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2019/rankings/newton/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>

**Figure 23. Physical Inactivity in Newton County, Georgia, 2004-2015**



Source: County Health Rankings

<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2019/rankings/newton/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>

## Excessive Drinking and Drug Abuse

According to the Guide to Community Preventive Services, excessive alcohol consumption is the third leading cause of preventable death in the United States. In 2006, the estimated economic cost of excessive drinking in the U.S. was nearly a quarter of a trillion dollars.<sup>83</sup>

An estimated 13% of Newton residents drank alcohol excessively during the time period 2012-2017 compared with a statewide average of 14.8%.<sup>84</sup> Additionally, 24% of driving deaths were alcohol related in 2017. According to the Community Guide, evidence-based interventions that can further reduce the level of excessive drinking include increasing alcohol taxes, maintaining

<sup>83</sup> Guide to Community Preventive Services <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/alcohol/index.html>

<sup>84</sup> County Health Rankings for Newton County, Georgia  
<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2017/rankings/newton/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>

limits on the days and hours of alcohol sales, and enhanced enforcement of laws prohibiting alcohol sales to minors.

Deaths resulting from drug overdose are continuing to increase in the United States. According to the CDC, from 1999 to 2017, more than 700,000 people died from a drug overdose in the United States. Since 2013, there have been more deaths attributed to overdoses involving synthetic opioids, especially those containing fentanyl. Deaths due to drug overdose have also increased in Newton County. In 2017, there were 10 deaths due to opioid overdose in Newton County. This is double the number of deaths in 2015.<sup>85</sup> Both law enforcement and EMS have reported spikes in witnessed overdoses. In overdose situations, a drug called naloxone can be administered to treat a narcotic overdose. Local law enforcement has begun carrying naloxone in case they encounter someone experiencing an overdose. Individuals can also purchase naloxone over the counter at their local pharmacies.

Data is not available specific to Newton County, but prescription drug abuse is a growing epidemic in the United States. Nationwide, deaths from prescription painkiller overdoses have increased 265% among men and 400% among women from 1999 to 2013.<sup>86</sup> Every 3 minutes, a woman goes to the emergency department for prescription painkiller misuse or abuse.

### **Adolescent Health Behaviors**

According to the Georgia Student Health Survey 2.0, most rates of substance abuse were lower among Newton County high school students than statewide rates (Figure 24). However, this data is based on a limited sample of Newton County students and may not reflect the true prevalence of these behaviors.

Importantly, community members were concerned about the level of after-school supervision and the lack of after-school activities, which some thought led to high rates of drug use. Some thought that drug use was underreported. Another community member was concerned that alcohol and drug treatment was not available for children and teens in the county.

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<sup>85</sup> OASIS <https://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/webquery/qryDrugOverdose.aspx>

<sup>86</sup> CDC <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/PrescriptionPainkillerOverdoses/>

**Figure 24. Drug and Substance Abuse Behaviors Among Adolescents in Newton County and Georgia, 2017-2018**

**(used or participated in a substance abuse behaviors in the past 30 days)**

	<b>Newton County Schools Grade 6-12 2017-2018</b>	<b>Newton County High Schools (3 total) 2017-2018</b>	<b>Georgia High Schools 2017-2018</b>
<b>At least one drink of alcohol</b>	9.0%	12.5%	13.1%
<b>Binge Drinking</b>	4.4%	6.3%	6.5%
<b>Drinking and Driving</b>	2.1%	2.8%	3.0%
<b>Tobacco Use</b>	3.5%	5.0%	5.5%
<b>Cigarette Use</b>	3.1%	4.3%	4.7%
<b>Vape Use</b>	6.8%	8.6%	10.6%
<b>Marijuana Use</b>	7.5%	10.8%	9.4%
<b>Meth Use</b>	1.8%	2.4%	2.4%
<b>Prescription Drug use other than medical reason</b>	5.3%	5.8%	5.9%

Source: Georgia Department of Education, Georgia Student Health Survey 2.0

<http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/GSHS-II/Pages/GSHS-Results.aspx>

Teen pregnancy and teen births have declined over the past decade (Teen Pregnancy section), despite a perception by some in the community that rates have remained elevated. However, the rate of sexually transmitted diseases in this group has increased (see STD section). Some community members perceived that few resources exist in the county to prevent teen pregnancy. According to community input in Newton Medical Center’s CHNA, community members stated that “there is no family planning in schools” and “we do not have preventive programs for teen pregnancy.”<sup>87</sup>

According to the Georgia Student Health Survey 2.0, 12.3% of Newton County students 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade reported experiencing severely out-of-control behavior within the last 30 days that could hurt themselves or others. Additionally, 9.4% of Newton County students 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade responded to intentionally harming themselves in the last 12 months.<sup>88</sup> When asked about suicide, in the last 12 months, almost 12% of students had considered attempting suicide and 6% of students responded that they had attempted suicide. The top reasons for self-harm or

<sup>87</sup> Newton Medical Center CHNA <http://www.newtonmedical.com/pdf/Newton%20Final%20Report2013.pdf>

<sup>88</sup> Georgia Department of Education <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/GSHS-II/GSHS%20System%20Reports/2018/Newton%20County.pdf>

attempting suicide were family problems, being bullied, and other. When asked if they had been bullied or threatened by other students within the last 30 days, 21.4% responded that they had. Bullying may inflict physical, psychological, social, or educational harm.<sup>89</sup>

### **Physical Activity**

Because over one-quarter of Newton County residents get no leisure-time exercise, community resources are needed to encourage physical activity. Changes in the built environment, described in the Transportation and Land Use section, can play a key role in making physical activity part of residents' everyday routines. Resources like sidewalks and trails make it easier (and even fun) for residents to walk, run, and cycle, and they allow residents to get physical activity when travelling to work, school, or the store.

### **Chronic Diseases**

Newton County faces a growing burden of chronic disease. As noted in the Background section, interventions to foster healthy behaviors, prevent chronic disease, and treat these diseases in their early stages have a huge potential impact on health.

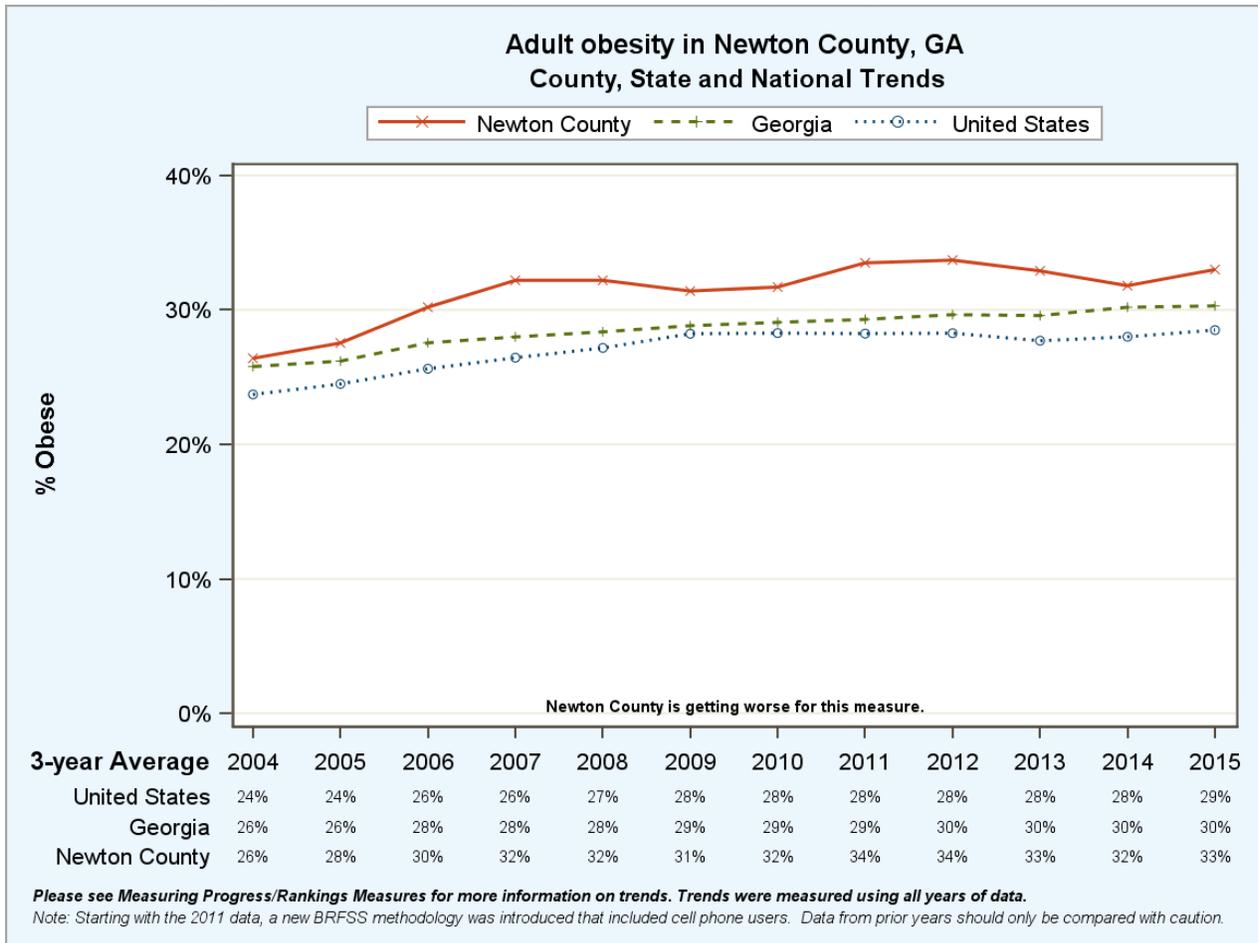
### **Adult Obesity**

An estimated 32% of Newton County adults are obese (defined as a body mass index [BMI] of 30 or higher) compared with a statewide percentage of 30% (Figure 25). This level of obesity puts nearly one-third of adult residents at higher risk for serious conditions like diabetes, heart disease, cancer, osteoarthritis, respiratory problems, and stroke. It is important to note that this degree of obesity is relatively new for both Newton County and Georgia.

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<sup>89</sup> CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/bullyingresearch/index.html>

**Figure 25. Adult Obesity in Newton County, Georgia, 2004-2015**



Source: County Health Rankings

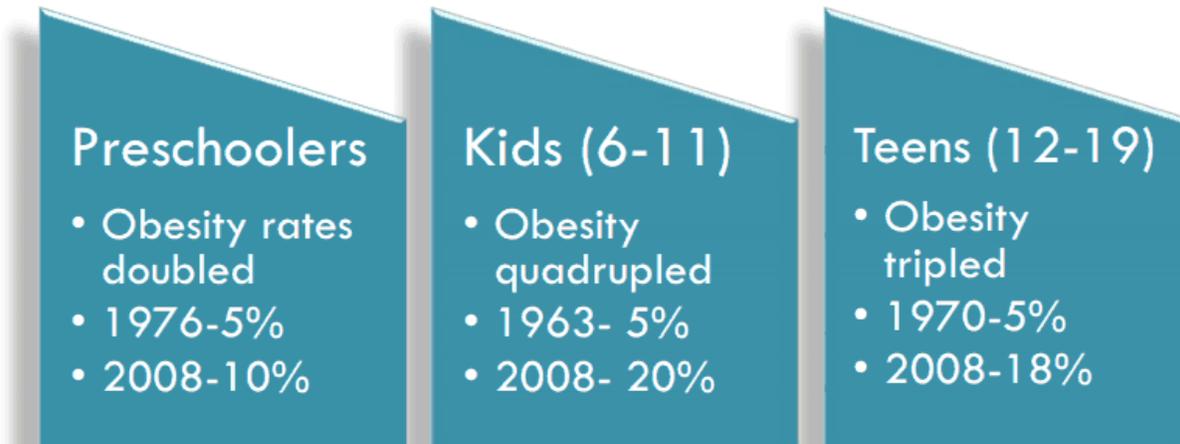
<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2019/rankings/newton/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>

From 2009-2011, an estimated one in eight (12%) Newton low-income children in preschool (ages 2-4) were obese compared with a nationwide county average of 14%.<sup>90</sup> Obesity this early in life carries both immediate and potentially severe long-term risks. Nationwide, childhood obesity has increased dramatically in recent decades (Figure 26), raising concern that many of today's children might live shorter lives than their parents. In Georgia, obesity-related hospitalizations of children cost \$2.1 million a year and continue to rise. The CDC estimates that 34.4% of children aged 2 to 17 years in Newton County are obese or overweight and 19.1% are obese only.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>90</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-environment-atlas/go-to-the-atlas.aspx#.Um68NnC-qtE>

<sup>91</sup> CDC [https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2015/14\\_0229.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2015/14_0229.htm)

**Figure 26. Rising Obesity Rates in the United States**



Graphic Source: Newton Partnership—Children’s Issues in Newton Report 2013

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B3SuY1V9SSTUSFFLNDZKVjRIM1E/edit>

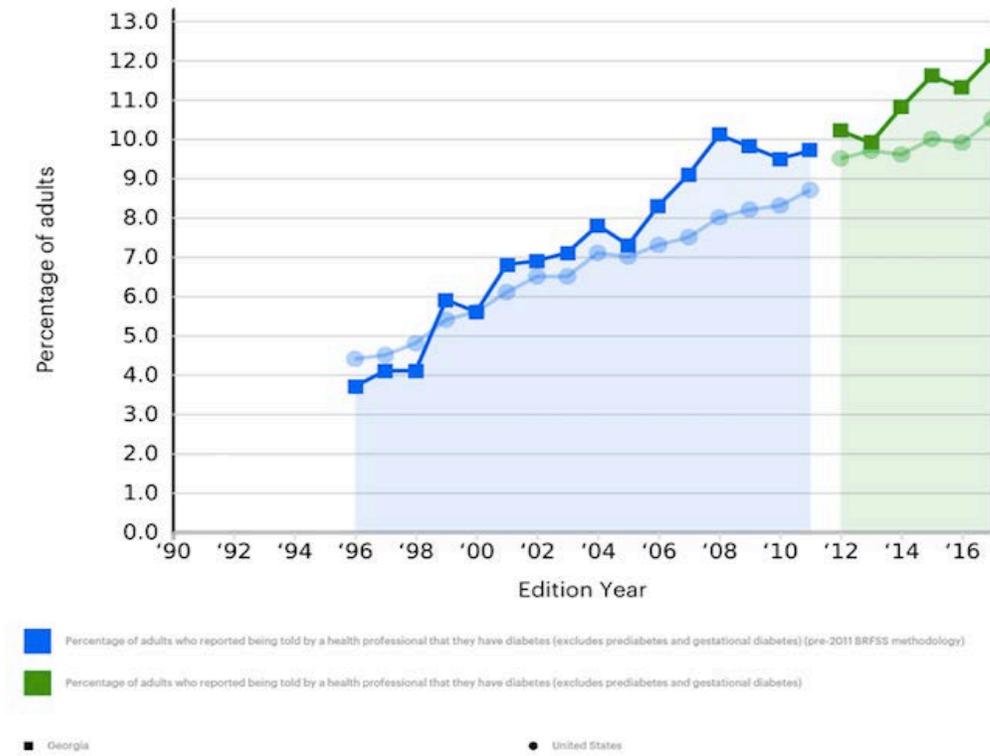
Data Source: GA SHAPE & COC/NCHS National Examination Surveys

## **Diabetes**

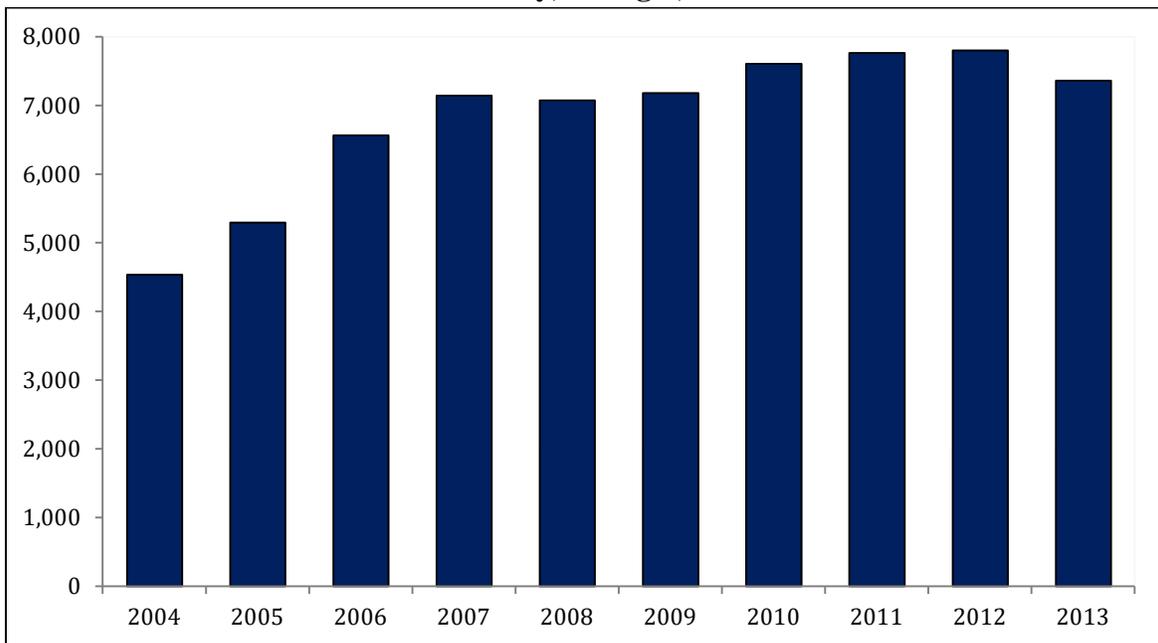
Diabetes affects nearly all of the body’s organ systems and can lead to disability and early death. In 2015, an estimated 14% of Newton adults had diabetes, which was higher than the Georgia estimate of 12%.<sup>92</sup> Diabetes is part of the growing chronic disease trend. From 1996 to 2010, the percent of Georgians with diabetes more than doubled from 4% to 10% and the number of people with the disease more than tripled (Figure 27). In Newton County, from 2004 to 2013, the number of diabetic residents grew by 28% (Figure 28).

<sup>92</sup> County Health Rankings <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2019/measure/outcomes/60/data>

**Figure 27. Percentage of Adults with Diabetic Diagnosis in Georgia and US**



**Figure 28. Total Number of Adults (age 18 years and older) with Diagnosed Diabetes, Newton County, Georgia, 2004-2013**



Source: CDC <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/atlas/>

Eating habits and physical activity play a major role in most cases of diabetes. The age-adjusted death rate from 2015-2017 due to diabetes in Newton County was 26.2 per 100,000 population compared with a statewide average of 21.1 per 100,000.<sup>93</sup> For the three year period, men died from diabetes at almost the same rate of women (26.7 per 100,000 vs. 26 per 100,000). However, the rate for diabetes in females almost doubled from 2015 to 2016 rising from 16.7 to 30.8. Non-Hispanic Black residents had a higher age-adjusted death rate from diabetes (39.3 per 100,000) compared with non-Hispanic White residents (20.2 per 100,000). These data suggest that diabetes prevention through environmental changes that promote physical activity and better eating habits and early treatment are needed.

#### **Why Age-Adjusted?**

Death rates due to many diseases are adjusted for age to make it possible to compare counties or population groups. For example, two counties might have the same death rate due to diabetes after age is taken into account. But if age had not been adjusted for, the county with the older population would likely have a higher death rate because older people are more likely to die from

### **Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke**

Cardiovascular disease and stroke caused over one-fourth of the deaths in Newton County from 2015-2017.<sup>94</sup> These diseases are strongly related to obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, and tobacco use. Newton's age-adjusted rates of heart disease and stroke are above the statewide average, and they are important health threats in the county, just as they are nationwide. Smoking, lack of physical activity, poor diet, high cholesterol, diabetes, and high blood pressure are all risk factors for heart disease and stroke.

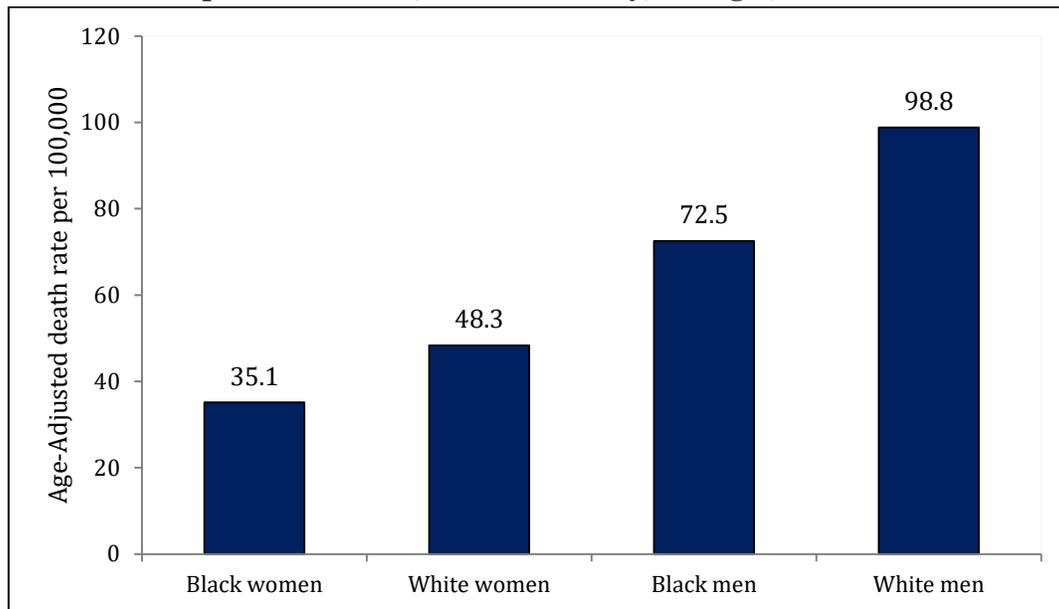
The age-adjusted death rate due to "obstructive" heart disease (which includes heart attacks) in Newton was 61.4 per 100,000 from 2015-2017, which was lower than the statewide rate of 74.6 per 100,000. This was also lower than Newton's rate from 2009-2011 (102.3 per 100,000). Women had lower rates than men and Non-Hispanic Black residents had lower rates than non-Hispanic White residents of the same gender.

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<sup>93</sup> Oasis <https://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/webquery/qryMortality.aspx>

<sup>94</sup> Oasis <https://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/webquery/qryMortality.aspx>

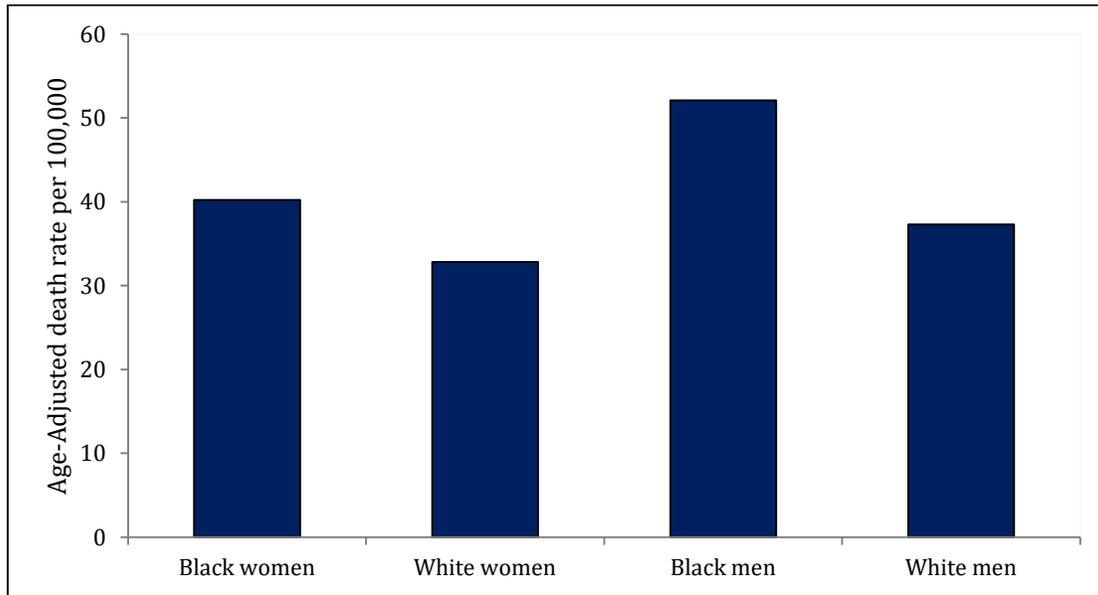
**Figure 29. Age-Adjusted Death Rate Due to “Obstructive” Heart Disease among Non-Hispanic Residents, Newton County, Georgia, 2015-2017**



Source: OASIS <http://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/oasis/qryMorbMort.aspx>

Strokes, sometimes referred to as “brain attacks,” are one of the leading causes of death in the United States. The age-adjusted death rate due to stroke in Newton County from 2015-2017 was 37.8 per 100,000 (compared to 53.8 from 2009 to 2011), which was lower than the Georgia rate of 43.8 per 100,000. Black men had a higher age-adjusted rate (50.7 per 100,000) of stroke than White men (36.5 per 100,000) and both White (33.1 per 100,000) and Black women (39.5 per 100,000).

**Figure 30. Age-Adjusted Death Rate Due to Stroke Among Non-Hispanic Residents, Newton County, 2015-2017**



Source: OASIS <http://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/oasis/qryMorbMort.aspx>

### **Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases**

Chronic lower respiratory diseases are the fourth leading cause of death in the United States.<sup>95</sup> Tobacco smoke is a key factor in the development and progression of these diseases. The age-adjusted death rate from emphysema from 2015-2017 in Newton County was 11.5 per 100,000, which was higher than the Georgia rate of 2.3 per 100,000.<sup>96</sup> Avoiding tobacco smoke is the key way to prevent emphysema.

### **Cancer**

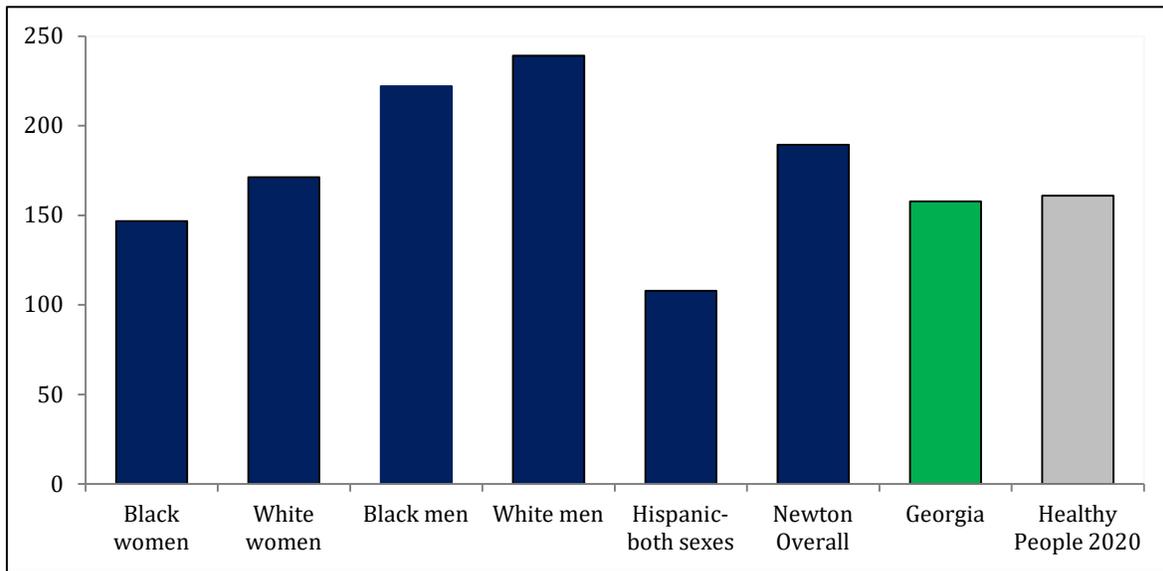
Cancer caused more than one in five deaths in Newton County from 2015-2017. Rates of cancer in the county were higher than statewide rates.

The overall age-adjusted death rate due to cancer in Newton County was 189.3 deaths per 100,000 population from 2015-2017, which was above the Georgia average of 157.8 per 100,000 and the Healthy People 2020 target of 161 per 100,000. Men had substantially higher rates than women and non-Hispanic Black residents had a higher rate than non-Hispanic Whites (Figure 31). Hispanic residents had a substantially lower age-adjusted death rate than non-Hispanic residents, though this figure is based on limited data because of the relatively small number of Hispanic residents.

<sup>95</sup> CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/leading-causes-of-death.htm>

<sup>96</sup> OASIS <http://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/oasis/qryMorbMort.aspx>

**Figure 31. Age-Adjusted Death Rate Due to Cancer by Race/Ethnicity and Sex, Newton**

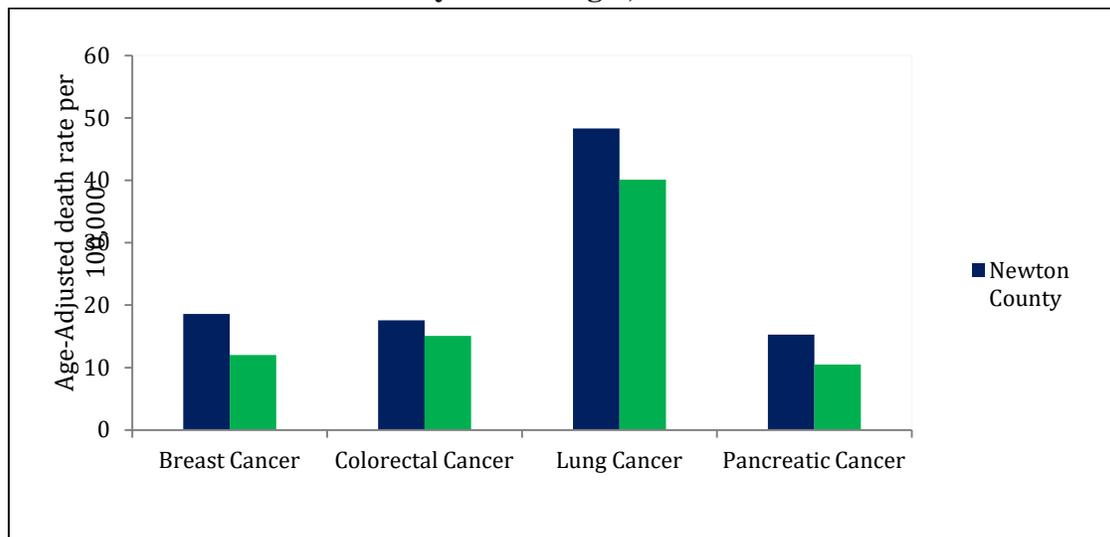


Source: OASIS <http://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/oasis/qryMorbMort.aspx>

White and Black categories include only non-Hispanic residents; insufficient data were available to report Hispanic rates by sex

Breast cancer, colorectal cancer, lung cancer, and pancreatic cancer are the four most common types of cancer in Newton County and statewide. Newton County age-adjusted death rates due to each of these four cancers exceeded the statewide rate (Figure 32) and Healthy People 2020 targets.

**Figure 32. Age-Adjusted Death Rate Due to Four Most Common Cancers in Newton County and Georgia, 2015-2017**

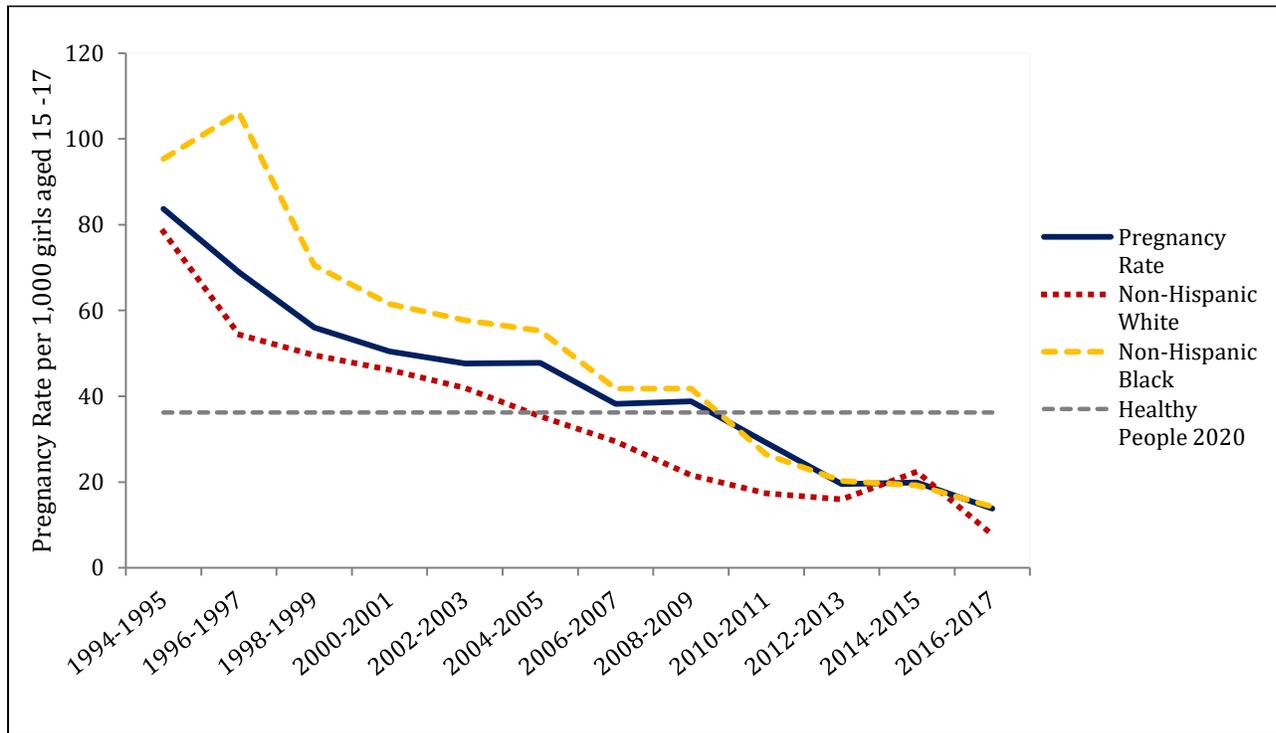


Source: OASIS <http://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/oasis/qryMorbMort.aspx>

## Teen Pregnancy

According to the Healthy Communities Institute, teen pregnancy and childbearing have substantial social and economic impacts for communities, contributing to high school dropout and increased health care and foster care costs. In 2017, the teen pregnancy rate in Newton County was 10.4 per 1,000 girls age 15-17 (Figure 33), which was slightly lower than the Georgia statewide rate of 12.3 per 1,000, and well below the Healthy People 2020 target of 36.2 per 1,000.<sup>97</sup> There is insufficient data available for teen pregnancy rates among Hispanic girls from 2012-2017.

**Figure 33. Teen Pregnancy Rate (per 1,000 girls age 15-17) for Newton County Residents, 1994-2017**



Source: OASIS <https://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/webquery/qryPregnancy.aspx>

<sup>97</sup> OASIS <https://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/webquery/qryPregnancy.aspx>

## Maternal and Infant Health

Of the 1,774 births to Newton County mothers in 2017, 12.5% of infants were born premature or preterm (defined as birth before the end of the 37<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy).<sup>98</sup> This percentage was slightly higher than the statewide average of 11.4%. Preterm birth is a leading cause of infant death and disability and can be influenced by smoking, alcohol use, stress, and lack of prenatal care and vitamins. Girls 20-24 years old and women in their late 30s had the highest rates of preterm delivery.

The infant mortality rate varied substantially by race and ethnicity, with African-Americans having a rate (11.6 per 1,000 live births) versus white women (4.6 per 1,000 live births) from 2016-2017. In 2017, the county's infant mortality rate of 9.8 per 1,000 live births was higher than the state average and did not achieve the Healthy People 2020 goal of 6.0 per 1,000.

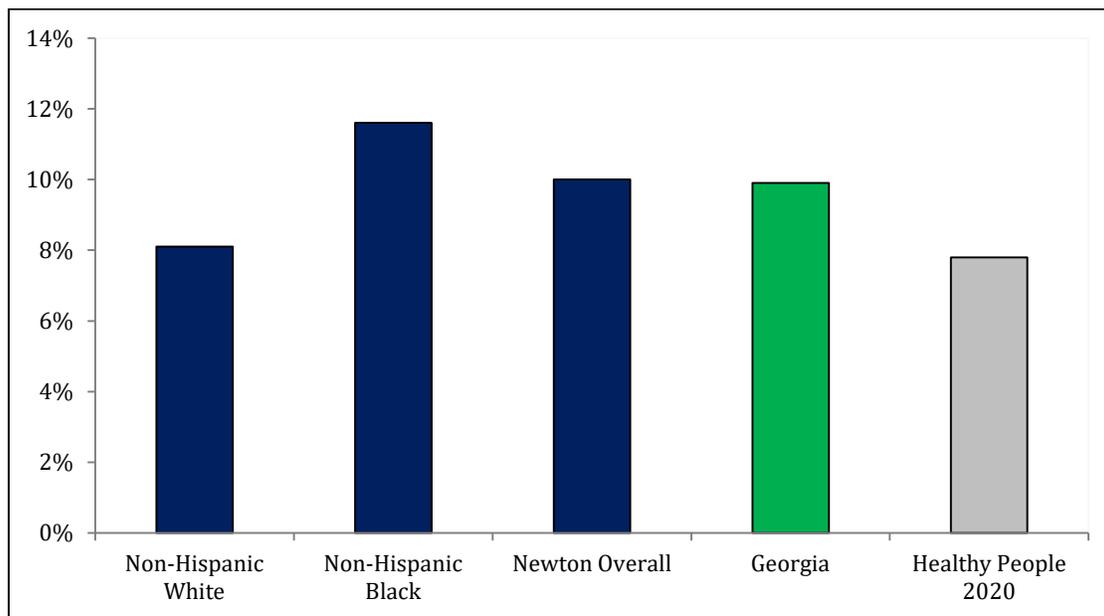
Low birth weight is closely related to preterm birth, but may be caused by other factors. About 10% of babies born in Newton County in 2017 had low birth weight (less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces), which was about the same as the statewide average of 9.9%, but higher than the Healthy People 2020 target of 7.8%.<sup>99</sup> Low birth weight was most common among women in their thirties, and African-American women (Figure 34).

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<sup>98</sup> OASIS <https://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/webquery/qryBirth.aspx>

<sup>99</sup> OASIS <https://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/webquery/qryBirth.aspx>

**Figure 34. Percent of Newborns with Low Birth Weight born to Newton County Mothers, 2017**



Source: OASIS <https://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/webquery/qryBirth.aspx>

Babies born at very low birth weight (less than 3 pounds, 5 ounces) are at high risk of complications like infection, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), breathing problems, and bleeding inside the brain. About 2.3% of babies born in Newton County in 2017 had very low birth weight.<sup>100</sup> This percentage was higher than the state average of 1.8% and the Healthy People 2020 target of 1.4%. The rate among African-American women was 2.6%. Risk factors for very low birth weight are similar to those for low birth weight.

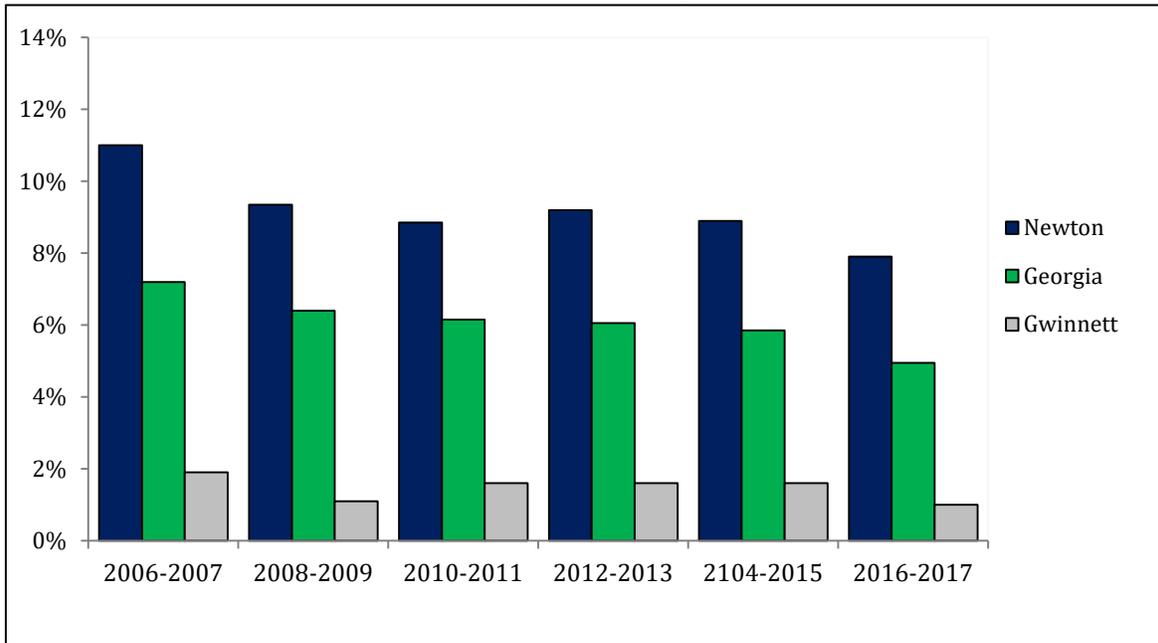
### Mothers who Smoked During Pregnancy

Smoking during pregnancy poses significant risks to both the mother and the fetus, including an increased risk for preterm birth and low birth weight. From 2015-2017, 8% of pregnant women in Newton County smoked (Figure 35).<sup>101</sup> This percentage was higher than the statewide percentage of 5.2% and more than seven times the percentage in nearby Gwinnett County (1.1%). Smoking during pregnancy was most common among non-Hispanic White women (14.5%) and women 20-24 years (9.9%) (Figures 36 and 37).

<sup>100</sup> OASIS <https://oasis.state.ga.us/trendingtool/index.html?redirectto=Birth>

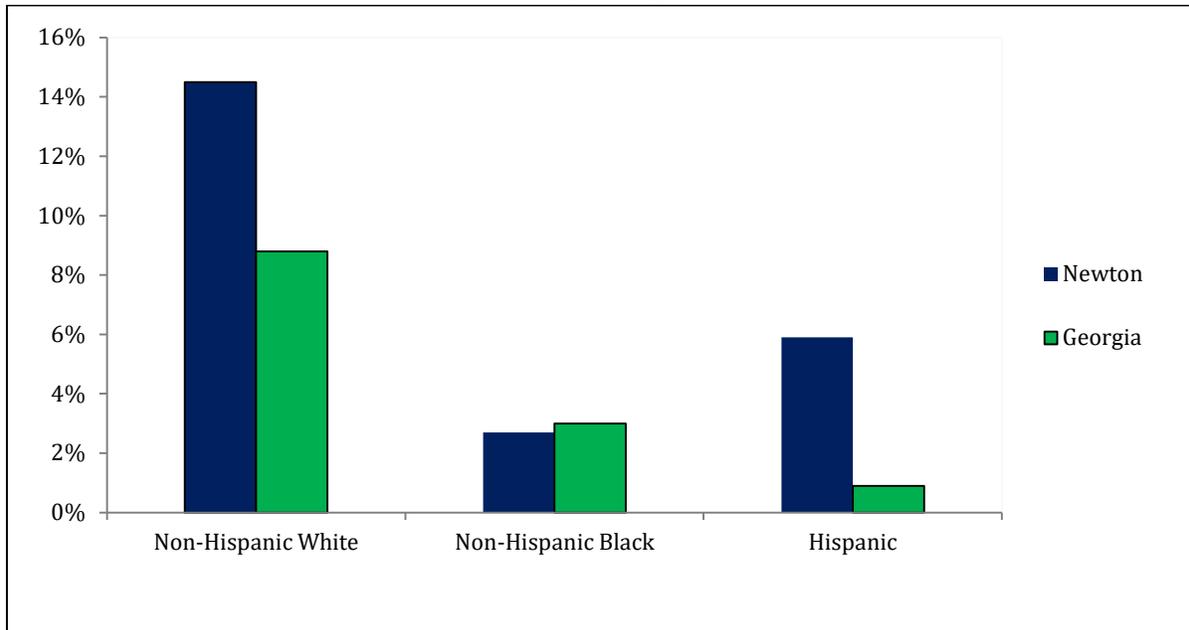
<sup>101</sup> OASIS <https://oasis.state.ga.us/trendingtool/index.html?redirectto=Birth>

**Figure 35. Percentage of Mothers Who Smoked During Pregnancy, Newton County, Gwinnett County, and Georgia, 2006-2017**



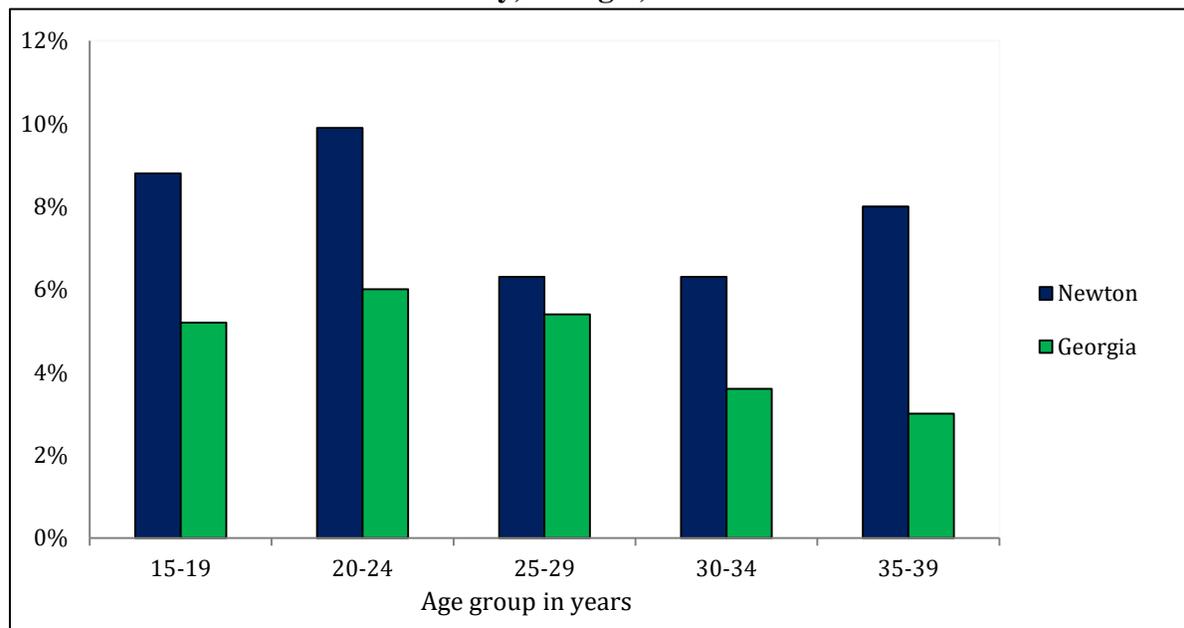
Source: OASIS <https://oasis.state.ga.us/trendingtool/index.html?redirectto=Birth>

**Figure 36. Percentage of Mothers Who Smoked During Pregnancy by Race/Ethnicity, Newton County, Georgia, 2015-2017**



Source: OASIS <https://oasis.state.ga.us/trendingtool/index.html?redirectto=Birth>

**Figure 37. Percentage of Mothers Who Smoked During Pregnancy by Age Group, Newton County, Georgia, 2015-2017**



Source: OASIS <http://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/oasis/qryMorbMort.aspx>

## Infectious Diseases

Infectious diseases, including influenza, pneumonia, tuberculosis, HIV, hepatitis, and sexually transmitted infections, remain a threat to Newton County’s health. Ongoing vigilance is critical in our increasingly interconnected world. Infectious diseases do not respect national—or county—borders.

According to the National Foundation for Infectious Disease, each year, on average, in the U.S. more than 50,000 adults die from vaccine-preventable diseases. A number of diseases and infections are easily prevented in both children and adults through adequate immunizations including diphtheria\*, *Haemophilus influenzae* type B\* (Hib), hepatitis A, hepatitis B\*, measles\*, mumps\*, pertussis\* (whooping cough), polio\*, rubella\* (German measles), *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, tetanus\* (lockjaw) and varicella\* (chickenpox). Georgia law requires vaccination for the diseases marked with an asterisk (\*) for children who attend daycare and prior to entry into school.

## **Influenza, Pneumonia, Varicella, and Pertussis**

Influenza and pneumonia rank eight among the leading causes of death in the United States, and vaccines for influenza and pneumonia can help prevent serious illness and death.<sup>102</sup> In Newton County, the 2015-2017 age-adjusted death rate due to influenza and pneumonia was 9.9 per 100,000 population.<sup>103</sup> By comparison, the statewide rate was 13.8 per 100,000, but the rate in nearby Gwinnett County was 9.2 per 100,000.

Varicella-Zoster Virus is extremely contagious, causing an itchy, blister like rash known as chicken pox. Varicella can be very serious, especially in infants, adolescents, adults, pregnant women, and the immunocompromised, causing hospitalization, death, and put individuals at risk for shingles.<sup>104</sup> Vaccinations are available for varicella. In 2018, 11 cases of varicella were identified in Newton County.

Pertussis, also known as **whooping cough**, is a highly contagious respiratory disease. It is caused by the bacterium *Bordetella pertussis*. Pertussis is known for uncontrollable, violent coughing which often makes it hard to breathe.<sup>105</sup> In 2018, 6 cases of pertussis were identified in Newton County.

## **HIV/AIDS**

HIV/AIDS affects people in Newton County. In 2015, there were approximately 288 people living with HIV in Newton County, which yielded a prevalence of 336 per 100,000 residents.<sup>106</sup> This figure was lower than the statewide prevalence of 588 per 100,000. Of the 288 people living with HIV/AIDS in the county in 2015, 74% were Black, 18% were White, and 5% were Hispanic; 89% were male. A majority of these residents were age 45 years or older; 8% were 13-24 years, 18% were 25-34 years, 20% were 35-44 years, 30% were 45-54 years, and 24% were age 55 years or older.<sup>107</sup> From 2013 to 2015, 45 Newton County residents were diagnosed with HIV.<sup>108</sup>

## **Hepatitis**

Hepatitis is a viral disease that causes inflammation of the liver. Transmission and/or treatment differ depending on which virus causes the illness. There are five possible viruses named hepatitis: A, B, C, D and E viruses. Other viruses may cause hepatitis but are very rare. In

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<sup>102</sup> Centers for Disease Control, Leading Causes of Death <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/leading-causes-of-death.htm>

<sup>103</sup> OASIS <https://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/webquery/qryMortality.aspx>

<sup>104</sup> CDC Chickenpox <https://www.cdc.gov/chickenpox/>

<sup>105</sup> CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/index.html>

<sup>106</sup> AIDSVu [www.aidsvu.org](http://www.aidsvu.org)

<sup>107</sup> AIDSVu [www.aidsvu.org](http://www.aidsvu.org)

<sup>108</sup> AIDSVu [www.aidsvu.org](http://www.aidsvu.org)

Georgia, hepatitis A, B and C are reportable diseases; hepatitis D is not reportable as it only occurs among individuals already infected with hepatitis B; hepatitis E is not monitored as it is not found in the United States. Vaccines are available for both hepatitis A and B; however, no vaccine is available for hepatitis C.

Each type of hepatitis can be spread in different ways. Hepatitis A virus is spread from person to person by putting something in the mouth that has been contaminated with the stool of a person with hepatitis A. Casual contact, as in the usual office, factory or school settings, does not spread the virus. Hepatitis B virus is spread when blood from an infected person enters the body of a person who is not infected. For example, hepatitis B is spread through having unprotected sex with an infected person, by sharing drugs, needles or other paraphernalia, through needle sticks or sharps exposures on the job, or from mother to her baby during birth. Hepatitis C virus is also spread when blood from an infected person enters the body of a person who is not infected. However, it is rare for hepatitis C to be spread through unprotected sexual activities.

### **Perinatal Hepatitis B**

According to CDC, Hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection in a pregnant woman poses a serious risk to her infant at birth.<sup>109</sup> Without appropriate treatment, about 40% of infants born to HBV-infected mothers in the United States will develop chronic HBV infection, about one-fourth of whom will eventually die from chronic liver disease.

### **Sexually Transmitted Diseases**

Georgia's rates of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) like chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis, are among the highest in the country (Table 1).

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<sup>109</sup> CDC <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/HBV/PerinatalXmtn.htm>

**Table 1. States with the 10 Highest Rates of Syphilis, Gonorrhea, and Chlamydia, United States, 2017**

Rank	Syphilis		Gonorrhea		Chlamydia	
	State	Rate*	State	Rate*	State	Rate*
1	Nevada	20	Mississippi	309.8	Alaska	799.8
2	California	17.1	Alaska	295.1	Louisiana	742.4
3	Louisiana	14.5	Louisiana	256.7	Mississippi	707.6
4	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>14.4</b>	South Carolina	254.4	New Mexico	651.6
5	Arizona	13.6	Alabama	245.7	South Carolina	649.8
6	New York	11.9	Oklahoma	231.4	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>631.4</b>
7	Florida	11.6	North Carolina	225.4	North Carolina	619.7
8	North Carolina	11.2	Arkansas	224.5	Alabama	615.5
9	Mississippi	10.4	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>219.8</b>	New York	591.6
10	Illinois	9.6	New Mexico	215.7	Illinois	589.9

Source: CDC <http://www.cdc.gov/std/default.htm>

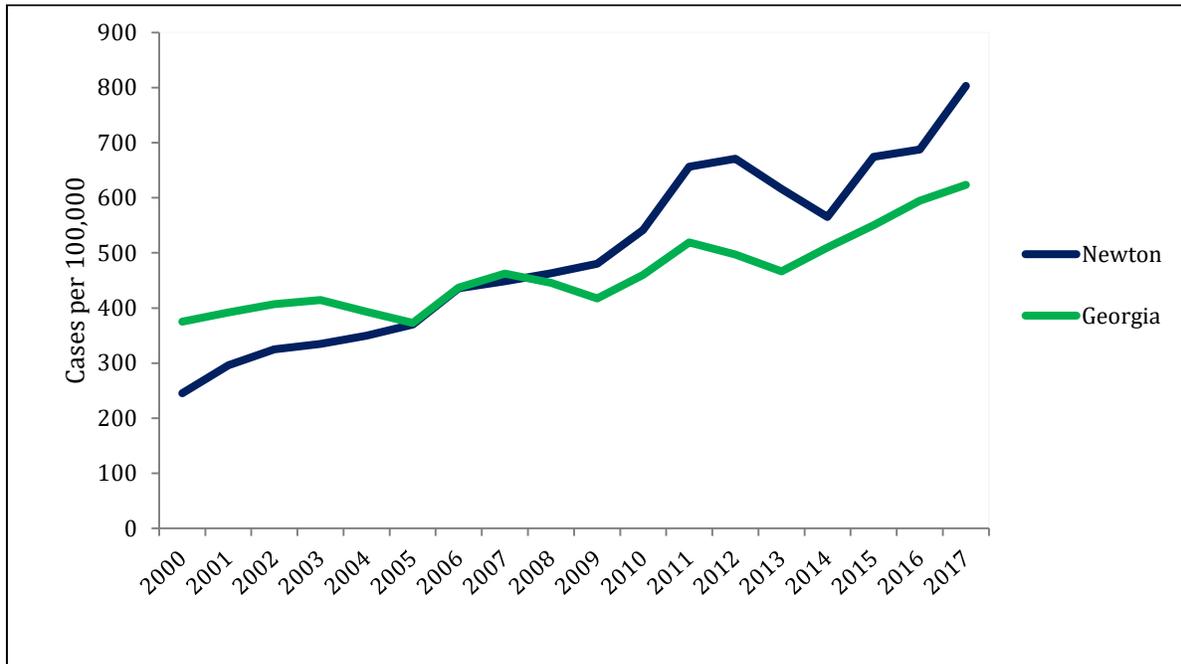
\*Rate per 100,000 residents

## Chlamydia

Like elsewhere in Georgia, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are a health problem in Newton County. In 2017, there were 803 cases of chlamydia per 100,000 population in Newton County, representing a more than 40% increase from 2009, when the rate was 480 per 100,000 (Figure 38).<sup>110</sup> The statewide rate was 623 per 100,000 in 2017. The incidence in Newton County was highest among non-Hispanic Black residents and women (Figures 39 and 40). In 2017, there were 110 cases of Chlamydia among those 15-17 years old. In 2014, the number of cases of Chlamydia among this age group was at its lowest in the last ten years at 72 cases. However, since 2015, the rate has continued to increase.

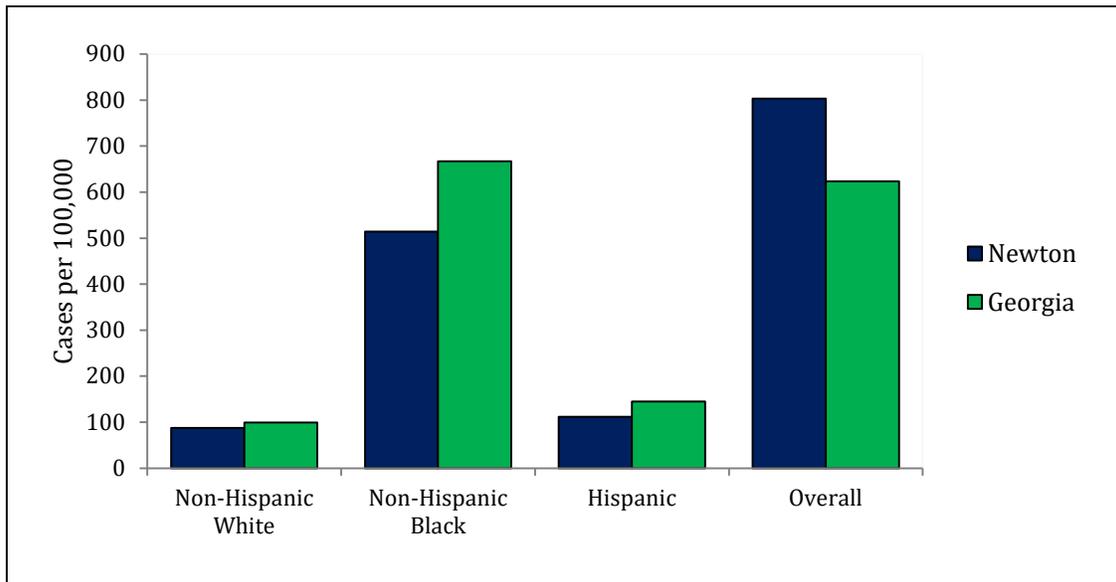
<sup>110</sup> OASIS <https://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/webquery/qrySTD.aspx>

**Figure 38. Chlamydia Cases per 100,000 in Newton County and Georgia, 2000-2017**



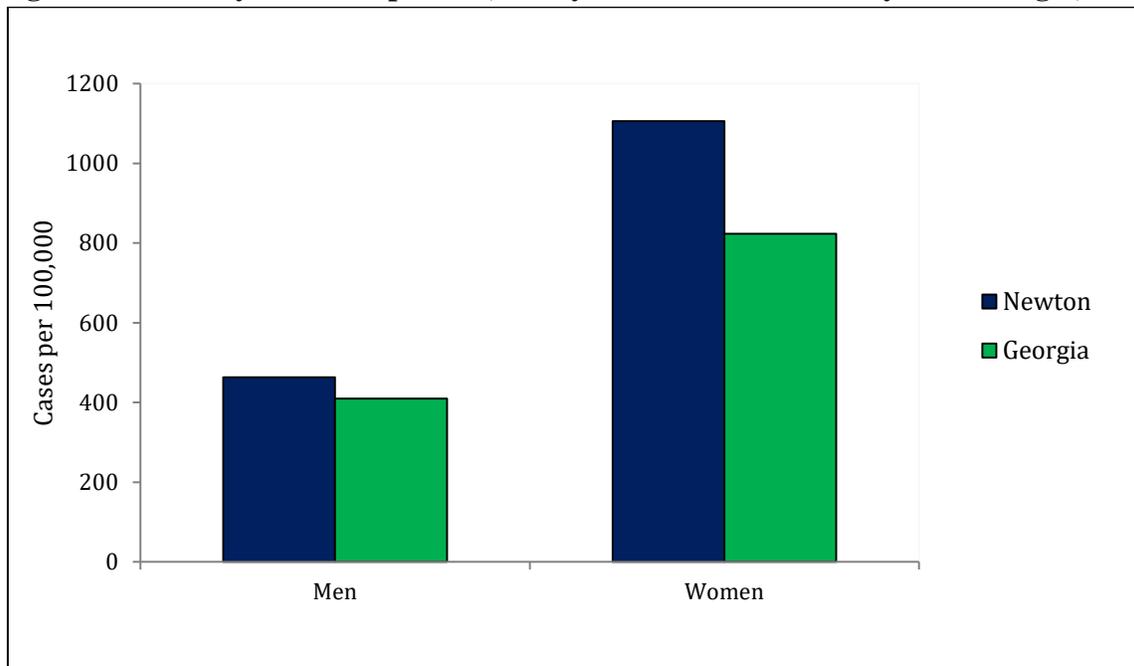
Source: OASIS <https://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/webquery/qrySTD.aspx>

**Figure 39. Chlamydia Cases per 100,000 by Race/Ethnicity in Newton County and Georgia, 2017**



Source: OASIS <https://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/webquery/qrySTD.aspx>

**Figure 40. Chlamydia Cases per 100,000 by Sex in Newton County and Georgia, 2017**



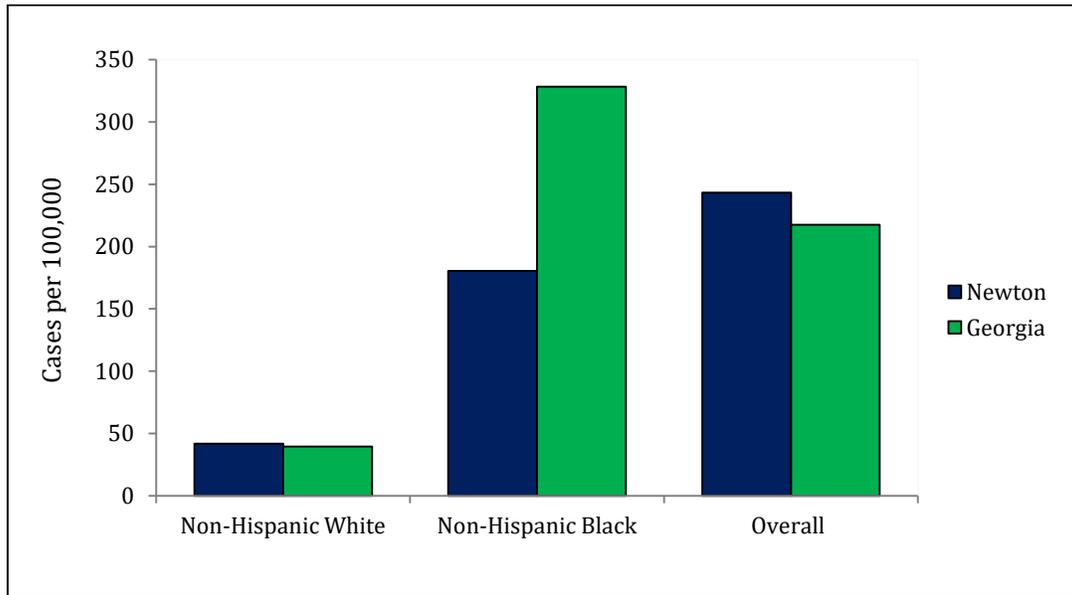
Source: OASIS <https://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/webquery/qrySTD.aspx>

## Gonorrhea

Like chlamydia, gonorrhea can cause serious and permanent health problems in women and men. The 2017 gonorrhea rate for Newton County was 252 per 100,000 compared with a statewide rate of 217 per 100,000.<sup>111</sup> The gonorrhea rate for black residents (180 per 100,000) was four times the rate for white residents (42 per 100,000) (Figure 41) and the rate for women (233 per 100,000) was lower than the rate for men (252 per 100,000) (Figure 42). There were 15 cases of Gonorrhea among those 15-17 years old in 2017.

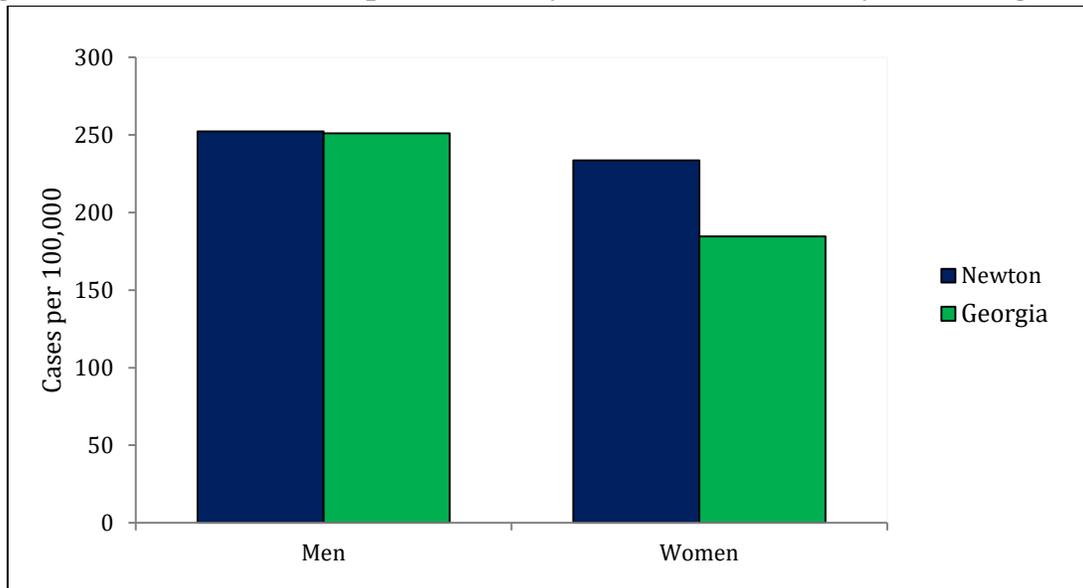
<sup>111</sup> OASIS <https://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/webquery/qrySTD.aspx>

**Figure 41. Gonorrhea Cases per 100,000 by Race/Ethnicity in Newton County and Georgia, 2017**



Source: OASIS <https://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/webquery/qrySTD.aspx>

**Figure 42. Gonorrhea Cases per 100,000 by Sex in Newton County and Georgia, 2017**



Source: OASIS <https://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/webquery/qrySTD.aspx>

## Syphilis

The 2017 rate for syphilis, another STD, was 66 per 100,000 in Newton County compared with a statewide rate of 74 per 100,000.<sup>112</sup> All 15 cases reported in 2017 were among African-Americans.

## Mental Health and Social Support

In Georgia, suicide is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death for ages 25-34 and 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of death for ages 10-24. In 2015, Newton County residents reported an estimated 3.8 days of poor mental health in the 30 days before interview equal to the Georgia average days.<sup>113</sup> This indicator is important for overall health because research has shown that people with social and emotional support experience better health outcomes (including recovery from cardiac surgery, coping with cancer pain, and overall longevity) compared with people who lack such support.

## Mental Health Care Providers

In 2017, there was an estimated 1 mental health care provider per 1,240 residents in Newton County, suggesting that there was a severe shortage of mental health care providers in the county.<sup>114</sup> By comparison, the Georgia ratio was 900:1.

## Suicide

Suicide is a major, preventable public health problem, and was the tenth leading cause of death in the United States in 2010. In Newton County, it was the fifth leading cause of premature death in terms of years of potential life lost. The 2015-2017 age-adjusted death rate due to suicide in Newton was 14.5 per 100,000, which is higher than the statewide rate of 13.0 per 100,000 and the Healthy People 2020 target of 10.2 per 100,000. The age-adjusted rate for males (24.1 per 100,000) was nearly four times the rate for women (6.5 per 100,000). Men in their forties had the highest rate of suicide (28.4 per 100,000).<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> OASIS <https://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/webquery/qrySTD.aspx>

<sup>113</sup> County Health Rankings  
<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2013/newton/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot/by-rank>

<sup>114</sup> County Health Rankings  
<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2013/newton/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot/by-rank>

<sup>115</sup> County Health Ranking <https://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/webquery/qryMortality.aspx>

## **People 65+ Living Alone**

People over age 65 years who live alone may be at risk for social isolation, limited access to support, and institutionalization. In Newton County, 27.7% of people over age 65 years live alone compared with the U.S. rate of 30.9%.<sup>116</sup>

## **Alzheimer's Disease**

Alzheimer's disease is the fifth leading cause of death in the United States among adults 65 and older. In Newton County, the age-adjusted death rate due to Alzheimer's in 2015-2017 was 34.3 per 100,000, which was lower than the statewide rate of 44.0 per 100,000. No specific actions have been clearly shown to reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease. However, diabetes, smoking, and depression have been associated with cognitive decline (or worsening mental function), and cognitive engagement and physical activity have been associated with a *lower* risk of cognitive decline. Since smoking cessation, physical activity, social and cognitive engagement, and prevention of diabetes have many other positive health benefits, promoting these activities is clearly worthwhile and might help prevent Alzheimer's Disease.

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<sup>116</sup> U.S. Census Bureau <http://factfinder2.census.gov/>

# **Community Health Improvement Plan**

## **How the Health Improvement Process Was Conducted**

During the assessment process, the Steering Committee of Be Healthy Newton met monthly and the Core Team reviewed progress quarterly. This process culminated in the Newton Community Health Improvement Plan, which outlines coordinated actions by many organizations to improve the health and well being of Newton County residents.

## **Demographic Change Community Plan**

Although Newton County's growth rate has slowed in recent years, the county will continue to change. In particular, the county has become increasingly diverse and the senior population continues to grow.

To help serve the growing senior population, Newton County Senior Services<sup>117</sup> is a recreation and information Center for seniors who are 55 plus. The Senior Center provides a wide variety of wellness, leisure and social opportunities for residents of Newton County.

The Newton County Health Department will continue to serve the language needs of an increasingly diverse clientele. Many staff members are certified in a language other than English or are native speakers of that language. The health clinic also offers telephone-based interpreter services.

## **Basic Needs Resources and Improvement Plan**

Newton County's median household income was below the median household income for Georgia, as well as, below the national figure. From 2013-2017, the median household income in Newton County was estimated to be \$52,784. Many county residents, and particularly children, live in poverty.

Several community resources exist to help meet resident's basic food needs (See Community Resources - Attachment A). The health department administers the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, which provides nutrition education, breastfeeding support and supplemental foods to low income families.<sup>118</sup> The Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) of the Georgia Department of Human Services provide residents with food

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<sup>117</sup> Newton County Senior Services <https://www.co.newton.ga.us/227/Senior-Services>

<sup>118</sup> Newton County Health Department <http://www.gnrhealth.com/services/clinical-services/women-infants-children-wic>

stamps through the Georgia Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).<sup>119</sup> Newton County has fifteen food pantries who provide emergency food relief to individuals and families.

The Salvation Army location in Covington provides a family store, social services-food pantry, clothing assistance, rental/mortgage assistance, utility assistance, prescription assistance, and disaster relief.”<sup>120</sup> DFCS provides Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF); residents can apply at the county DFCS office.<sup>121</sup>

Newton County Community Partnership (NCCP) addresses poverty by providing community awareness and education. They also match volunteers with people in poverty who have identified needs.<sup>122</sup>

## **Housing Community Improvement Plan**

At present, many Newton County residents are cost-burdened when it comes to housing; many owe more on their mortgages than their homes are worth and many foreclosures have taken place.

The City of Covington’s Comprehensive Plan recommends that the city develop a plan to examine the existing housing stock, potential barriers to local homeownership, ways to support current owner occupants, and programs to encourage home buying and home improvements. The high number of renter-occupied units in the city suggests the potential availability of affordable housing options in the area, which can be an asset to maintaining a diverse local workforce.<sup>123</sup>

There are organizations in Newton County that help residents with housing. Action Ministries addresses the challenges of poverty by focusing on hunger relief, housing and education.<sup>124</sup> CaringWorks endeavors to end homelessness in the Greater Atlanta area by providing resources to clients, including access to housing.<sup>125</sup> The Housing Authority of the City of Covington provides affordable housing to residents of Newton County.<sup>126</sup>

The Garden of Gethsemane and Wellington Ridge shelters serve as community resources by operating homeless shelters in Covington.

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<sup>119</sup> Georgia Division of Family and Children Services <http://dfcs.dhs.georgia.gov/food-stamps>

<sup>120</sup> Salvation Army <http://www.salvationarmy-georgia.org/SearchDetail.asp?Zip=30015>

<sup>121</sup> Newton County DFCS Office <http://dfcs.dhs.georgia.gov/newton-county-dfcs-office>

<sup>122</sup> Newton County Community Partnership <http://newton.gafcp.org/>

<sup>123</sup> City of Covington Comprehensive Plan <http://www.cityofcovington.org/Documents/CityofCovingtonComprehensivePlan.pdf>

<sup>124</sup> Action Ministries <https://actionministries.net/regions/piedmont/>

<sup>125</sup> CaringWorks <https://www.caringworksinc.org/>

<sup>126</sup> Housing Authority of the City of Covington <https://www.covha.com/>

## **Education Community Improvement Plan**

Several resources exist in the county to improve both child and adult education. (See Appendix A)

Hands on Newton, a program of the Newton County Community Partnership, provides service learning opportunities and leadership training to youth who do not usually volunteer.<sup>127</sup>

Newton County READS is a local volunteer-based, non-profit organization that works to empower Newton County families through literacy by providing literacy programs for adults who want to improve their reading skills or prepare for a GED certificate.<sup>128</sup> Newton County READS also works to help adults ages 16-24 years old who are out of school and not working.

The Newton Mentoring Program recruits, trains, and places adult mentors during each school year to help address the needs of their mentees in personal and academic areas.<sup>129</sup>

The Newton County Community Partnership aims to help all Newton County children graduate from high school on time with the skills they need for continuing education, family management, and gainful employment. The partnership has specific objectives related to on-time high school graduation, reducing absenteeism longer than 15 days, reducing the number of referrals to juvenile court for unruly or delinquent behavior, and reducing the rate of substantiated incidences of child abuse and neglect. The partnership's strategy also focuses on supporting parents by providing programs and services that increase their nurturing and parenting skills and ensure their children's academic success.

Georgia State University Perimeter Campus, Georgia Piedmont Technical College, and Oxford College provide college education opportunities in Newton County.

## **Transportation and Land Use Improvement Plan**

Community members identified transportation as one of the top priority areas for improving health in Newton County. Newton County residents have, on average, long commutes which often negatively impact quality of life. The County appears to be generally accessible to people with access to vehicles, however transportation is a significant problem to those without a privately owned car or truck. These include children, seniors, low income residents, and those with disabilities. The county is fortunate to have strong leadership in transportation and land use planning. Transportation is a part of the County's Strategic Plan which includes conducting a county survey in the near future.

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<sup>127</sup> Hands On Newton <http://www.newtonpartnership-gafcp.org/hands-on-newton/>

<sup>128</sup> Newton County READS <http://www.newtonlibrary.org/ir/newton-county-reads>

<sup>129</sup> Newton Mentoring Program <http://www.newtonpartnership-gafcp.org/portfolio/newton-mentoring-inc/>

Given the large burden of chronic diseases in Newton County related to physical inactivity, development that promotes walking and cycling would likely yield important benefits in overall health.<sup>130</sup> Since depression and many other mental health problems can be helped by physical activity and interpersonal connections, forms of development that foster walking and social interaction will likely yield benefits for mental health as well.

Some transportation methods already exist such as Five Star Transportation, which offer low cost rides to residents in Covington. There are also two main taxi services as well as Uber and Lyft which is usually available in the City of Covington. Several private shuttle and cab operators, such as for churches and day cares, operate within the county and could be expanded.

Public transportation, such as City or County Buses and expanded MARTA services have all been considered and desired by some residents, but at the present time those options are not available in the County.

## **Environment Community Improvement Plan**

As shown by the unfavorable environmental ranking from County Health Rankings, Newton County faces several environmental challenges, including problems with air quality and access to healthy foods and recreational facilities. Substantial improvements in air quality will require regional changes. However, at the local level, the plans outlined in the Transportation and Land Use section have the potential to improve air quality to some degree and to greatly improve residents' access to healthy foods and recreational facilities.

To improve access to recreation areas, the Newton County Recreation Commission implemented a master plan with a focus on the following primary activities:

- Softball
- Baseball
- Multi-use courts
- Tennis courts
- A Trail System for biking, walking, running and fitness
- Passive use opportunities
- Senior center meeting space
- Picnic area
- Seating in parks
- Tot-lots/playgrounds

The master plan is currently being implemented. These priorities for Newton County parks were based on “existing recreational facilities, projected population growth patterns, public recommendation, management strategies, and suggestions as to improving efficiency to an expanding park system in Newton County.”<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Guide to Community Preventive Services <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/pa/environmental-policy/communitypolicies.html>

<sup>131</sup> Newton County Recreation Commission  
<http://www.newtonrecreation.com/Home/OrganizationStrategicPlanning.aspx>

The Covington Family YMCA and Newton Trails are also places for recreation and exercise in Newton County.

To help protect water quality, the Newton County Health Department works to ensure that septic systems do not pose a threat to resident's health or the environment.<sup>132</sup>

## **Safety Community Improvement Plan**

Available data suggest that violent crime and motor vehicle safety could be improved in Newton County. The fact that Newton County's age-adjusted death rate from motor vehicle collisions is higher than the Georgia average suggests that significant room for improvement exists. Changes in road design and community development may help reduce the number of deaths. Because drinking is involved with about one-third of deaths from car crashes, interventions to reduce drinking and driving would help protect the health of Newton County residents.<sup>133</sup> These evidenced-based interventions include publicized sobriety checkpoint programs, mass media campaigns, multi-component interventions and community mobilization, as well as school-based intervention programs. Programs that increase use of child safety seats like community-wide information and enhanced enforcement campaigns, can help protect young children.<sup>134</sup>

The American Association of Poison Control Centers provides information about poisoning prevention on their website.<sup>135</sup> The National Georgia Poison Control operates a 24-hour emergency treatment information service ([www.georgiapoisoncenter.org](http://www.georgiapoisoncenter.org), 800-222-1222).

## **Access to Care Resources and Improvement Plan**

A sizeable portion of Newton County residents are uninsured, limiting their access to health care. For residents with health insurance, a variety of medical providers exist within the county, though available data suggest that the county has a lower than average density of health care providers. Several organizations are working to address these issues. (See Appendix A)

Newton County has one major hospital: Piedmont Newton Hospital.<sup>136</sup> Piedmont Newton has 97 beds and the emergency room sees about 42,000 people yearly. The county has 2 nursing homes, 8 Medicare-certified Home Health Agencies, 20 plus Medicare Certified Hospices and four dialysis centers. Additionally, there are two urgent care centers and 16 primary care physicians with 7 mid-levels which includes Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants (NP/PA).

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<sup>132</sup> Gwinnett Newton Rockdale County Health Departments <http://www.gnrhealth.com/services/environmental-health-index/septic-systems-homeownerslandlords>

<sup>133</sup> The Guide to Community Preventive Services: Motor Vehicle-Related Injury Prevention <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/mvoi/AID/index.html>

<sup>134</sup> The Guide to Community Preventive Services: Use of Child Safety Seats <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/mvoi/childsafetyseats/index.html>

<sup>135</sup> American Association of Poison Control Centers [www.aapcc.org](http://www.aapcc.org)

<sup>136</sup> Piedmont Newton Hospital <https://www.piedmont.org/locations/piedmont-newton/newton-home>

The county has one free or sliding scale clinic. Willing Helpers Medical Clinic is located in Covington and offers basic primary care services.<sup>137</sup> The clinic only sees uninsured Newton County residents and appointments are required. Willing Helpers performs over 1,000 free visits per year for Newton County residents.

The Health Department provides a range of health care services, including immunizations, family planning, women's health, child health exams, treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, and breast and cervical cancer screening.<sup>138</sup>

## **Health Behaviors Improvement Plan**

### **Tobacco**

A lower percentage of Newton County adults smoke cigarettes (17%) than do adults statewide (18%). However, this percentage is well-above the Healthy People 2020 target of 12% and puts many Newton County residents at increased risk of illness, worsened quality of life, and premature death. In addition, about one in thirteen (7.9%) pregnant women in the county from 2016-2017 smoked cigarettes, putting infants at increased risk for several health problems including prematurity and low birth weight.

Newton County has shown a commitment to reducing smoking rates by its tobacco-free schools policy and tobacco-free parks policy. More work to reduce tobacco use in Newton County is needed.

Another community resource is the Georgia Tobacco Quit Line. The Quit Line is a statewide public health service that offers free and effective service that helps Georgians quit smoking and using tobacco products. The quit line offers quitting tips, techniques, and support.

As part of the community improvement plan to improve health behaviors, Piedmont Newton Hospital will provide patient education and offer smoking cessation classes. The health department provides patient education and offers smoking cessation to patients as needed.

The Guide to Community Preventive Services provides a list of evidence-based interventions to reduce tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure.<sup>139</sup> These interventions include measures to increase the price of tobacco products, mobile phone-based cessation interventions, and smoke-free policies.

The Georgia Tobacco Use Prevention Program (GTUPP) is continuing to use evidenced-based approaches to prevent tobacco use, tobacco use initiation, promote tobacco cessation, and eliminate exposure to second hand smoke by creating tobacco-free places.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Willing Helpers Medical Clinic <http://www.solidrockbaptist.com/479779>

<sup>138</sup> Gwinnett Newton Rockdale County Health Departments <http://www.gnrhealth.com/services>

<sup>139</sup> Guide to Community Preventive Services <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/Tobacco/index.html>

<sup>140</sup> Georgia Tobacco Use Prevention Program

[https://dph.georgia.gov/sites/dph.georgia.gov/files/DPH%20GTUPP%20Strategic%20Plan\\_FINAL%208.19.15.pdf](https://dph.georgia.gov/sites/dph.georgia.gov/files/DPH%20GTUPP%20Strategic%20Plan_FINAL%208.19.15.pdf)

## **Physical Activity**

Because over one-quarter of Newton County residents get no leisure-time exercise, community resources are needed to encourage physical activity. Changes in the built environment, described in the Transportation and Land Use section, can play a key role in making physical activity part of residents' everyday routines. Resources like sidewalks and trails make it easier (and even fun) for residents to walk, run, and cycle, and allow residents to get physical activity when traveling to work, school, or the store.

Several other resources are available to help residents increase physical activity and achieve a healthy body weight. The Newton Partnership has a Childhood Obesity Prevention Initiative.<sup>141</sup> The Newton County School System has successful physical education programs.

The Newton Health Department promotes and educates on the importance of daily physical activity across the lifespan.

## **Excessive Drinking and Drug Abuse Improvement Plan**

To help stop drug abuse in Newton County, the Newton Partnership has helped build the Drug Free Community Coalition to support substance abuse prevention. The Newton County Drug Free Coalition meets monthly to share the individual work of agencies in the community who are concerned with prevention, treatment, and recovery from substance abuse and related health behaviors. The agencies work cooperatively to support each other's programs and collaborate to engage and educate the community through events, print materials, and social media.

## **Adolescent Health**

According to the Georgia Student Health Survey 2.0, most rates of substance abuse were lower among Newton County high school students than statewide rates. However, these data are based on a limited sample of Newton County students and may not reflect the true prevalence of these behaviors.

The Newton County Health Department Adolescent Health and Youth Development (AHYD) Program provides a network of community-based support to help adolescents succeed as they move into adulthood by focusing on the "assets" of individual youth and their family. AHYD-sponsored programs reinforce positive attitudes, healthy behaviors and activities, and reduce risk-taking behaviors, such as violence, substance abuse, poor school performance and sexual activity.<sup>142</sup>

More Than Conquerors Inc (MTCI) equips youth ages 14-19 throughout greater Atlanta with the tools needed to build healthy relationships and increase capacity for self-sufficiency.<sup>143</sup> More

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<sup>141</sup> Georgia Family Connection Partnership [http://www.gafcp.org/communicate/tmp\\_stories/cohorts](http://www.gafcp.org/communicate/tmp_stories/cohorts)

<sup>142</sup> Gwinnett Newton Rockdale County Health Departments <http://www.gnrhealth.com/services/community-health/ahyd/>

<sup>143</sup> More Than Conquerors Inc <https://mtciga.org/>

Than Conquerors has peersuaders located in the high schools in Newton County. These persuaders are trained as peer educators to facilitate health and wellness presentations to their peers. MTCI is the contractor for the health departments AHYD program.

## **Chronic Disease Resources and Community Improvement Plan**

The three most important behavioral factors in preventing chronic disease are (1) smoking cessation, (2) good nutrition, and (3) increased physical activity. These behavioral factors also influence blood pressure, blood sugar levels, and cholesterol, which also affect chronic disease. Resources and plans to improve these behavioral factors are described in the Health Behaviors section.

Improving nutrition and physical activity also require a coordinated community effort. Education is a key part of the equation, but needs to be part of a larger effort. Changes in the built environment—like sidewalks and developments that encourage walking to school—and the food environment—like increasing access to healthy foods—are promising strategies for helping all residents attain a healthy body weight. Newton County organizations and government are working to make these changes happen.

The Covington Family YMCA is a key player in increasing physical activity.<sup>144</sup> Health care providers and organizations also have important roles to play in controlling obesity-related chronic diseases. The Newton Partnership has also begun work on an obesity-related initiative.

Piedmont Newton Hospital has several efforts planned to reduce the burden of chronic disease. This includes providing patient education or outreach education (health fairs, health screenings, or support groups) on the risk factors associated with heart disease and stroke. The hospital will also offer other programs and services such as:

- cardiac and pulmonary outpatient rehab
- diabetes education
- Transitions Nurse Program
- Population Health telephone outreach
- Sixty Plus, Outpatient Wound Care Center
- Piedmont Home Health Agency

The Newton County Health Department will do the following to address the growing burden of chronic diseases in the community:

- Continue to promote tobacco cessation, healthy eating, physical activity to help lower residents' risk of obesity, diabetes, heart disease and stroke (for example, the health department website includes a list of local farmer's markets)
- Continue Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program that includes nutrition counseling and promotion of healthy foods and breastfeeding (since breastfeeding has been shown to reduce the risk of obesity)
- Continue to reach out to populations at highest risk of chronic illness
- Provide community education

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<sup>144</sup> Covington Family YMCA <http://www.ymcaatlanta.org/locations/facility/branches/cvy/branchhome.shtml>

## **Cancer Community Improvement Plan**

Cancer prevention was identified as a priority by Newton County residents. Some of the most important ways to prevent cancer are tobacco cessation, maintaining a healthy body weight, and physical activity. Evidence-based screenings like pap smears for cervical cancer and mammograms for breast cancer are also important. Quality clinical care for those with cancer is critical.

The Newton County Health Department provides evidence-based screening for breast and cervical cancer. These services are funded in part by grants from the Susan G. Komen Foundation. The health department also provides human papilloma virus (HPV) screening and vaccines, which can also help prevent cervical cancer.

Piedmont Newton Hospital provides patient education or outreach education (health fairs, health screenings, or support groups) on the risk factors associated with cancer. They also have a breast cancer patient navigator. Patient Navigators are specially trained oncology nurses who help individuals sort through their needs and provide education and support to families, provide helpful information about hospital services, and serves as a liaison.<sup>145</sup>

## **Teen Pregnancy Community Improvement Plan**

Although the rate of teen pregnancy is declining, rates of sexually transmitted infections among teens are increasing, further suggesting that teens in Newton County continue to be sexually active. Several focus group participants felt that more programs were needed to educate teens about pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

The Newton County Health Department will continue work to prevent teen pregnancy by

- Providing teen pregnancy prevention education in clinics
- Collaborating with community partners

More than Conquerors, Inc. is a program that focuses on teaching teenagers about making successful choices and providing tools to build healthy relationships.

The Refuge Pregnancy Center and the Pregnancy Resource Center of Newton County provide support, guidance, and education.

## **Maternal and Infant Health Community Improvement Plan**

To improve the health of pregnant women and infants, the Newton County Health Department will

- Continue to provide essential maternal and child health services
- Continue teen pregnancy prevention efforts outlined above
- Collaborate with community groups in activities to reduce smoking among teens and women

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<sup>145</sup> Piedmont Newton Hospital <https://www.piedmont.org/cancer/support-services/patient-navigator-sub>

- Support smoke-free legislation to reduce maternal smoking and second-hand smoke exposure

First Steps, a program housed in the Piedmont Newton Hospital, offers support to parents of newborns. Prenatal women are eligible for Safe Sleep classes and at the end of the course can receive a free Pack and Play. They also counsel new mothers after birth. Piedmont Newton Hospital also offers childbirth classes, car seat safety classes, breastfeeding classes and support groups, and a special care nursery with neonatologists.

Prevent Child Abuse Rockdale/Newton partners with other agencies, including the health department, to provide home visits for young mothers, car seats, and parenting courses.

Work done to reduce overall smoking rates may reduce the risk of preterm birth and low birth weight in the community.

### **STD Community Health Improvement Plan**

Rates of STDs, particularly chlamydia, are rising in Newton County; and highest among young people, suggesting that education interventions are warranted.

To decrease the rate of new STD cases, the Newton County Health Department will

- Continue contact investigations and treatment of STDs
- Collaborate with community groups on interventions to reduce sexual activity among teens and to promote protection against STDs among adults, particularly among African-Americans who have a high burden of disease

### **Mental Health Community Resources and Improvement Plan**

There are several agencies that provide mental health services in Newton County. (See Appendix A)

Piedmont Newton Hospital provides mental health and substance abuse treatment to the adult population of Newton County. They may also provide a list of meeting places for Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous.

Viewpoint Health is one of twenty-seven agencies created by the State of Georgia to provide a safety net of care for behavioral health and developmental disabilities, as well as care for substance use disorders. The agency “provides a single point of entry for care where Master's level clinicians determine a person's immediate needs and offer support, evaluation and referral when appropriate.”<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> View Point Health – Access View Point Health Services <https://www.myviewpointhealth.org/access-vph-services.da>

The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities provides a free Crisis and Access Line (800-715-4225) and searchable database of resources for people with mental health problems, developmental disability, and addictive diseases.<sup>147</sup>

Newton County has a mental health court with the goal of identifying people with mental health problems who are in jail or subject to being sentenced to jail to supervise them and provide treatment so they can safely function in society.”<sup>148</sup> The Newton County Health Department serves on the advisory board of this court.

Piedmont Newton Hospital helps implement health fairs and local community events to increase education and awareness about available mental health resources. The hospital collaborates with the County to focus on the recruitment of mental health providers. The hospital incorporates a marketing effort to reduce the stigma of mental health [problems] and increase education on domestic violence. Lastly, the hospital partners with the County to focus on methamphetamine drug abuse.

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<sup>147</sup> Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities ResourceBase  
<https://bhlweb.com/tabform/Default.aspx>

<sup>148</sup> Newton Citizen. “Mental health court to start in July.” April 1, 2013.  
<http://www.newtoncitizen.com/news/2013/apr/01/mental-health-court-to-start-in-july/>

## Appendix A: Newton County Resource List

### Economy & Basic Needs

- **Housing**
  - Action Ministries
  - Housing Authority
  - CaringWorks
  - George Jefferson Boarding House
  - Garden of Gethsemane
  - Wellington Ridge
- **Food Assistance**
  - Action Ministries
  - 15+ local food banks

### **Local Food Assistance Newton County**

**PLEASE CALL THESE AGENCIES TO CONFIRM SCHEDULES BEFORE DRIVING OUT FOR FOOD.**

#### **Belmont Baptist Church**

Hours: Mondays: 9am-11:30am (no holidays)

Address: 3275 Iris Drive, Conyers, GA 30013

Main Line: (770) 786-8676

Requirements: Please bring some form of ID with you. **Rockdale and Newton residents only.**

Can come once per month. For emergency situations – bare pantry with no food – call the church for assistance.

#### **The Community Food Pantry**

Hours: Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9am-12pm

Address: 7125 Turner Lake Circle SW, Covington, GA 30014

Main Line: (770) 784-0037

Requirements: **Newton County residents only**, picture ID required, may come once every 4 months

#### **Covington First United Methodist Church**

Hours: **Mondays and Wednesdays, 2-4pm; also some Saturdays**

Address: 1113 Conyers Street SW, Covington, GA 30014-2391

Requirements: Newton County residents may come to food pantry once a month. Picture ID needed at each visit.

#### **Disciples for Christ Newborn UMC**

Hours: Second Saturday every month at 10AM

Address: 118 Church Street, Newborn, GA 30056

Main Line: (770) 786-3574

**Emmanuel Community Church Fish & Loaves Food Pantry**

Hours: Tuesdays 6:30pm-7:30pm  
Address: 1400 Highway 212, Conyers, GA 30094  
Main Line: (678) 413-3603  
Requirements: **No residency requirement**, picture ID needed, may come once per month

**Harvest Baptist Food Bank**

Hours: Second, fourth and fifth Mondays:: 8:30am-11:00am 1st& 3rd Monday: 5:00 pm- 7:00 pm  
Address: 2075 Highway 212, Covington, GA 30013  
Main Line: (770) 787-7275  
Requirements: Recipients can get food 4 times a month; **servicing greater Atlanta area**. \$10 donation required.

**Manna Food Pantry @ Repairers of the Breach of the Promise**

Hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays 9:30-4:30  
Address: 5120 Old Brown Bridge Road, SW, Covington, Georgia  
Main Line: (770) 787-7250  
Requirements: **One-time per year only food bank for absolute emergency needs. Newton, Rockdale and Walton County residents only.** Picture ID required

**Monastery of the Holy Spirit**

Hours: Tuesdays: 8am-10am  
Address: 2625 Highway 212 SW, Conyers, Georgia 30094  
Description: Free box of food. The box contains items such as produce, dry goods and canned goods. Meat is supplied at the holidays and as available. Eligibility once every 3 months /90 days.  
Requirements: Valid Picture ID. **Rockdale, Newton, Walton, Jasper & Butts** county residents can use the food bank.

**New Praise Life Church**

Hours: As needed basis only; complete online form at church website or call church to make appointment  
Address: 3144 Stone Mountain Street, Covington, Georgia 30014  
Main Line: (770) 815-3601 [www.newlifepraisecenter.net](http://www.newlifepraisecenter.net)

**Oak Hill Church of Christ**

Hours: As needed basis only; call church to make appointment  
Address: 195 Snapping Shoals Rd, Covington GA 30016  
Main Line: (762) 435-4181

**The Potter's House Church**

Hours: Wednesdays 4-6PM (by appointment only), every other Saturday: 9:30-11:00AM (Walk-in)  
Address: 1120 Crowell Road, Covington, 30014  
Main Line: (678) 660-3798  
Description: Call church to schedule appointment.

### **Resource Center for Community Action**

Hours: By appointment only

Address: 3940 Hwy. 20, SE, Conyers, GA 30013

Main Line: (770) 760-1346

Requirements: Call Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 9:00am to 2:00pm to schedule appointment for food. Picture ID/driver license, proof of residence, social security card for all household members, **Rockdale/Newton only**

### **Salvation Army Covington**

Hours: Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday 9:30AM-12PM

Address: 5193 Washington Street, Covington, GA 30015

Main Line: (770) 786-2107

Requirements: Come once every three months. Need picture ID that shows Newton County Residency.

### **Shepherd's Store #2**

Hours: Wednesdays at 1pm

Address: 6125 Washington Street, Covington, GA, 30014

Main Line: (770) 385-8551

Description: Provides leftover pizzas from local restaurants

### **Willing Helpers (Solid Rock Baptist Church)**

Hours: Thursdays from 10am-1pm

Address: 8111 Brown Bridge Rd, Covington, GA 30014

Main Line: (678) 342-3434 [www.solidrockbaptist.com](http://www.solidrockbaptist.com)

Services: Food box provided for \$10 donation.

Requirements: Picture ID for first visit. May come one time per week. \$10 donation required. Extra box for \$10 more.

## **Access to Care**

- **Piedmont Newton Hospital**  
5126 Hospital Dr NE, Covington, GA 30014
  
- **Newton County Health Department**  
8203 Hazelbrand Rd NE, Covington, GA 30014
  
- **Willing Helpers Free Clinic**  
8111 Brown Bridge Rd, Covington, GA 30014
  
- **Physicians**
  - 16 primary care docs in Covington
  - 9 mid-level providers (nurse practitioners and physician assistants)

<b>Group Name</b>	<b>Specialty</b>	<b>Practice</b>
Dr. Roopal Desai	PCP	Independent
Dr. Anil Desai	PCP	Independent
Dr. Donna Groover	PCP	PPG Covington
Dr. Monica Chappell	PCP	PPG Covington
Dr. Matthew Mote	PCP	PPG Covington
Kim Chitwood, NP	PCP	PPG Covington
Dr. Anne Grant	PCP	PPG Adams
Dr. Wendell Smith	PCP	PPG Adams
Ashley Cheek, NP	PCP	PPG Adams
Dr. Muthu Kuttapan	PCP	PPG Brown Bridge
Dr. Derex Stewart	PCP	Covington One
Dr. Muhammad Abbasi	PCP	Alliance Family Care
Marisa Persaud, PA-C	PCP	Alliance Family Care
Dr. Eastlyn Harding-Marin	PCP	Independent
Dr. Stillerman	PCP	Emory at Covington
Dr. Blanchford	PCP	Emory at Covington
Dr. Ehret	PCP	Emory at Covington
Dr. Ross	PCP	Emory at Covington
Becky Strickland, NP	PCP	Emory at Covington
Kathy Young, NP	PCP	Emory at Covington
Veronica Jackson, NP	PCP	Emory at Covington
Sue Eleazer, PA	PCP	Emory at Covington
Dr. George Smith	PCP	Independent

- **Outpatient Health Providers**

- 2 nursing homes
- 3 assisted livings
- 24 personal care homes

- **Nursing Homes – Newton County**

<b>Pruitt Covington Manor</b>	<b>4148 Carroll Street SW, Covington, GA 30014</b>	<b>770-786-0427</b>
<b>Riverside Health Care</b>	<b>5100 West St NW, Covington, GA 30014</b>	<b>770-787-0211</b>

- **Assisted Living – Newton County**

<b>Benton House</b>	<b>7155 Dearing Road, Covington, GA 30014</b>	<b>678-297-0388</b>
<b>Merryvale</b>	<b>11980 Highway 142, Oxford, GA 30054</b>	<b>678-712-2000</b>
<b>The Oaks at Ashton Hills</b>	<b>10050 Eagle Drive,</b>	<b>770-886-4600</b>

- **Personal Care Homes – Newton County**

There are 24 personal care homes listed for the community at present [www.gamap2care.info](http://www.gamap2care.info)

## **Mental Health**

- **6 Independent Licensed Professional Counselors**

- Latoria Hairston
- Michael Lenox Anderson
- Rochelle Wilson
- Stacey O'Neil Kitchens
- Tim Bolen
- Peggy Nolen

- **4 Mental Health Practices (all see both children and adults)**

- ASFC Outreach <http://www.asfcoutreach.com/site/>
- Creating Hope And Needed Care for Everyone, Inc. (CHANCE)  
<http://www.chancecreatinghope.org/>
- ViewPoint Mental Health [www.myviewpointhealth.org](http://www.myviewpointhealth.org)
- Southeastern Psychological Associates <http://www.southeasternpsyc.com>

- **1 Inpatient 28 Day Recovery Center**

- GRAN Recovery through Viewpoint

- **High School Program**

Project Aware: The mission of Project AWARE is to join together to raise mental health awareness and support in schools and communities.

[https://www.newtoncountyschools.org/departments/division\\_of\\_operations/student\\_services/project\\_aware](https://www.newtoncountyschools.org/departments/division_of_operations/student_services/project_aware)

- **Newton County Resource Court:**

The Newton County Resource Court is a collaborative court designed to address the needs of individuals diagnosed with a severe and persistent mental illness who have committed criminal act(s) and who are being prosecuted for those acts by the Newton County District Attorney's office.

<https://www.alcovycircuit.com/courts/superior-courts/walton-superior-court/46-courts/superior-courts/newton-county-superior-court/95-resource-court.html>

- **NAMI ROCKDALE NEWTON, the National Alliance on Mental Illness**  
<https://namirockdalenevton.com/>
- **Georgia Crisis and Access Line 1-800-715-4225**

## Appendix B: MAPP Assessments

### Community Themes and Strengths Assessment

One of the MAPP assessments is the Community Health Status Assessment (CHSA). The CHSA identifies priority community health, quality of life issues, and focuses in on the important factors for a healthy community. The survey used was adapted and revised to fit Newton County from an assessment done by the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District in San Antonio, Texas. Surveys were distributed to our community partners to provide to their clients at Newton County's Monthly Interagency between February and March of 2018. We presented the secondary data gathered from the surveys and discussed what was accomplished from the 2014 CHIP at the Newton Interagency Meeting in May 2018.

**Survey results listed below.**



### DEMOGRAPHICS

- N = 55
- 69% of respondents were female
- 42% of respondents were married
- 20% of respondents reported income <\$10,000
- 22% of respondents reported income of \$60,000 to \$99,999

### DEMOGRAPHICS

- 55% of respondents were Black/African American
- 35% of respondents were white
- 85% of respondents were not Hispanic
- 24% of respondents reporting having a Masters degree
- 18% of respondents had some college credits
- 51% of respondents were employed for wages

### DEMOGRAPHICS

- 18% of respondents had some college credits
- 51% of respondents were employed for wages
- 44% of respondents were from zip code 30014

## CHRONIC DISEASE

CONDITION	
Asthma	9
Arthritis	16
Diabetes	9
Heart Disease	3
High Blood Pressure	27
Gestational High Blood Pressure	1
COPD, Emphysema or Bronchitis	8

## MENTAL HEALTH

- 64% of respondents have not experienced having little or no interest or pleasure in doing things in the past 2 weeks
- 16% of respondents have experienced several days in the past 2 weeks of having little or no interest or pleasure in doing things
- 13% of respondents have experienced more than half of the days in the past 2 weeks having little or no interest or pleasure in doing things

## MENTAL HEALTH

- 69% of respondents have not experienced feeling down, depressed or hopeless in the past 2 weeks
- 11% of respondents have experienced several days in the past 2 weeks of feeling down, depressed or hopeless
- 7% of respondents have experienced more than half of the past 2 weeks of feeling down, depressed or hopeless

## PREVENTIVE CARE

MEDICAL TEST	
Mammogram	44%
Pap Smear	44%
Colonoscopy or Sigmoidoscopy	42%

## ACCESS TO CARE – INSURANCE

No Insurance	3
Medicaid (because I have kids or am pregnant)	4
Medicaid because I am disabled	7
Medicare because I am disabled	5
Medicare because I am 65 or older	8
Insurance through my job or family's job	25
Insurance through the ACA	4
Other kind of insurance	4

## ACCESS TO CARE – ER VISITS

NONE	ONCE	2-3 TIMES	4-6 TIMES
38	8	5	1

### ACCESS TO CARE – ORAL HEALTH

- 35% of respondents have lost a tooth because it was rotten, infected, or gum disease
- 62% of respondents have never lost a tooth because it was rotten, infected, or gum disease

### HEALTH BEHAVIORS – DIET & EXERCISE

- Only 2% of respondents eat the recommended daily number of servings of fruits and vegetables
- 22% of respondents had not exercised in the last month

### HEALTH BEHAVIORS – TOBACCO & ALCOHOL USE

- 84% of respondents reported they do not smoke cigarettes every days, some days, or not at all
- 87% of respondents reported they do not use chewing tobacco, snuff, or snus every days, some days, or not at all
- 42% of respondents reported that they do not drink or have not drank alcohol in the past 30 days
- 51% of respondents reported they drank alcohol one or more times per week in the past 30 days

# CHIP 2014

## What We Have Accomplished



### Access to Care

- Be Healthy Newton, a collaborative of Piedmont Newton, Newton County Community Partnership, Newton Health Department and Willing Helpers, applied for and received funding that supports expanding service provision the underserved, un-insured and underinsured of Newton County
  - The total uninsured percentage, ratio of population to primary care physicians and ratio of population to dentists has improved slightly. However we continue to work to increase those that have insurance, adding to the number of primary care physicians and dentists; thus improving access to care.

### Obesity/Diabetes

- The health department works collaboratively with Oxford College to determine the community's food access needs and provide nutrition resources and education to emergency food providers. Additionally a collective is working to provide a Farmer's Market at the Health Center where WIC recipients will be able to use their vouchers to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Willing Helpers provides diabetes care and Piedmont Newton provides a team approach to diabetes care and education.
- The health department is part of Newton County School's Wellness Committee to address childhood obesity, as well as the *Bridges Out of Poverty* Initiative to address both childhood and adult obesity.

### Mental Health

- The age adjusted death rate due to suicide has improved slightly
- The Newton and Rockdale Suicide Prevention (NRSP) Coalition has been an active planner and participant in Community Conversations on various aspects of Mental Health (including suicide and criminal justice); as well as providing Suicide Prevention QPR trainings throughout the community. Project AWARE has actively educated the community through Youth Mental Health First Aid Trainings and other youth mental health education and awareness promotions.

## **Access to Care – Transportation**

- Community partners are actively involved in development of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan which is being updated and developing recommendations around projects that will help improve roadway safety, ease congestion, and add or increase transportation infrastructure that will support access to care.

## **Respiratory Disease/Tobacco Use**

- Respiratory death rates and rate of adults who smoke have improved slightly
- Newton County Parks & Recreation, Newton County Community Partnership and the health department were partner in the efforts to ban the use of tobacco products in county parks. Willing Helpers provides tobacco cessation classes and the health department offers tobacco education classes to all interested patients seen at the Newton County Health Department. Through the State Chronic Disease Prevention grant, the health department will work with businesses to offer them a smoke-free toolkit. The health department also has an asthma grant through the State Department of Public Health. The purpose of this funding is to expand access to comprehensive asthma control services and resulted in Newton County Schools becoming the 7<sup>th</sup> school district to adopt a model Asthma Friendly School procedure.

## **Cancer**

- Breast cancer, colorectal cancer, lung cancer, and prostate cancer are the four most common types of cancer in Newton County. The age-adjusted death rates due to each of these cancers had decreased slightly except breast cancer.
- The Newton County Health Department provides evidence-based screening for breast and cervical cancer. These services are supported in Newton and Rockdale by the Kimberly Chance Atkins Foundation. The health department also provides human papilloma virus (HPV) screening and vaccines, which can also help prevent cervical cancer. The health department has a referral agreement with Covington Women’s Health Specialist for treatment following abnormal pap smears and removal of abnormalities.

## **Adolescent Lifestyle**

- A Town Hall meeting to inform participants about the consequences of underage drinking and evidence-based measures to prevent it was developed and executed.
- Kick the Habit (an adolescent health education and promotion event) was planned and executed by youth volunteers at both Newton and Eastside High Schools.
- ❖ Relevant to all health issues community partners, lead by the Newton County Community Partnership created an electronic resource guide.

## COMMUNITY HEALTH

### NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

#### LONGTERM OUTCOMES AND CHRONIC DISEASE INCIDENCE

##### Chronic Health Conditions

1. Has a doctor, nurse, or other health professional EVER told you that you have any of the following conditions? (Check all the apply)

Asthma

Arthritis

Diabetes

Female, told only during pregnancy

Heart Disease

High Blood Pressure

Female, told only during pregnancy

COPD, emphysema, or bronchitis

##### Quality of Life

- 2.

<i>OVER THE PAST TWO WEEKS, HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU BEEN BOTHERED BY ANY OF THE FOLLOWING PROBLEMS?</i>	<i>NOT AT ALL</i>	<i>SEVERAL DAYS</i>	<i>MORE THAN HALF THE DAYS</i>	<i>ALMOST EVERY DAY</i>
Little interest or pleasure in doing things	0	1	2	3
Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless	0	1	2	3

#### CLINICAL & COMMUNITY CARE AND PREVENTIVE SERVICES

##### Preventive Services

3. Have you EVER been told that you need to have ANY of these medical tests? (check the ones that have been suggested):

- Mammogram (Checks for breast cancer; the test uses a machine to take an x-ray of your breasts)
- Pap smear test (Checks for cervical cancer; doctor looks into the vagina and takes a sample with Q-Tip)
- Colonoscopy or Sigmoidoscopy (Checks men and women for colon cancer; the doctor looks into your colon by putting a tube into your rectum (butt/backside)).

### Access to Care

4. Right now, do you have any kind of health insurance/healthcare coverage?
- No insurance
- Medicaid because I have kids or am pregnant
- Medicaid because I am disabled
- Medicare because I am disabled
- Medicare because I am 65 or older
- Insurance through my job or my family's job
- Insurance through the Affordable Care Act or "Obamacare"
- Other kind of health insurance not mentioned
5. In the last year, how many times have you gone to the emergency room for treatment?
- None
- Once
- 2-3 times
- 4-6 times
- 7-10 times
- More than 10 times

### Oral Health

3. Have you ever lost a tooth because of it was rotten, or from infection or gum disease? (don't count teeth that came out from an accident)
- No  Yes

## HEALTH BEHAVIORS AND RISK FACTORS

### Diet & Exercise

4. How often per day do you eat vegetables and fruit? Count fresh, frozen, or canned.
- 0 times per day
- 1 time per day

2 times per day

3 times per day

4 times per day

5 times per day

Don't know/Not sure

5. In the last month, have you done any exercise? (Like walking or running, playing ball, aerobics)  
 Yes  N

### **Tobacco Use**

6. Do you now smoke cigarettes every day, some days, or not at all?  
 Every day  Some days  Not at all  Don't know/Not sure

7. Do you currently use chewing tobacco, snuff, or snus every day, some days, or not at all?  
 Every day  Some days  Not at all  Don't know/Not sure

### **Alcohol Use**

8. During the past 30 days, how many days per week or per month did you have at least one drink of any alcoholic beverage such as beer, wine, a malt beverage or liquor?  
 Days per week (1 – 7)

Days in the past 30 days (1 – 30)

No drinks in past 30 days

Don't Know/Not Sure

### **Social Determinants of Health**

9. What is your sex?  
 Male  Female

10. What is your marital status?  
 Married

Widowed

Divorced

Separated

Never Married

11. What is your household income (total for everyone that lives in your home)?  
 Less than \$10,000

\$10,000 to \$24,999

\$25,000 to \$44,999

\$45,000 to \$59,999

\$60,000 to \$99,999

\$100,000 to \$149,000

12. What is your race?  
 White

Asian

Black

American Indian/Alaska Native

Other

13. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?  
 No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin

Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano

Yes, Puerto Rican

Yes, Cuban

14. What is the highest level of school you have completed?  
 Some high school

High school graduate – high school diploma or the equivalent (for example: GED)

Some college credit, but less than 1 year

Associate degree

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Doctorate degree

15. Are you currently?  
 Employed for wages

Self-employed

\_\_\_ Out of work and looking for work

\_\_\_ Out of work but not currently looking for work

\_\_\_ A homemaker

\_\_\_ A student

\_\_\_ Retired

\_\_\_ Unable to work

16. Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Key Stakeholder Interviews Summary of Themes**

### **Introduction**

Key informant interviews were conducted as part of the MAPP Themes and Strengths Assessment. The purpose of key informant interviews is to collect information from a wide range of people who have firsthand knowledge about the community. These key informants can provide insight on the strengths of the community as well as the nature of problems and give recommendations for solutions.

### **Methods**

Key informant interviews were conducted July 2018 with 9 Community Leaders from Newton County. Community leaders were selected purposely with diverse backgrounds from government, education, medical, social services, media and faith based organizations based on the MAPP framework (see Appendix A). Interviews provided a greater understanding of the strengths, areas in need of improvement, actions to address, and future implications for the health and quality of life in Newton. An interview guide (see Appendix B), was developed by the Newton Health Department based on previous guides and revised to gather comprehensive and succinct information. Key informants were informed that information collected in the interviews would not be attributed to a specific person. The majority of interviews were face-to-face with only one phone interview. They lasted no more than 30-45 minutes. Interviews were recorded for quality assurance. The interviewer received assistance from scribes to take notes and transcribe interviews. Scribes were present during face-to-face interviews. A total of 9 interviews were conducted and transcribed. Interviews were then analyzed for major themes and patterns regarding status of health and quality of life. Major themes and patterns were determined based on similar responses from two or more key informants.

### **Results**

Topics discussed during these interviews included: **quality of life, strength and weakness, five-year vision for Newton County, areas of improvement and perceptions of services provided.**

**Major strengths** that were mentioned are Newton trails and the use of the recreation system, the collaboration with Piedmont, ease of service, positive experience when visiting the health department, physicians and hospitals in the county, strong arts association with the community, and partnership among organizations in the community.

**Common areas in need of improvement** mentioned by two or more key stakeholders were physical health wellness and obesity, improving mental health care and services, decreasing poverty and food deserts in the county, the further development of the Newton trail system and creating more sidewalks, improvement of transportation services, increase communication

services available to the community, and improving seniors quality of care and way of life and pushing for more collaborations with organizations in the community.

**Health concerns** are mental health awareness, obesity and underinsured/uninsured in the community.

**To improve quality of health and life in Newton County**, key stakeholders suggested creating more collaboration with organizations in the community. They also suggested increasing transportation services in the county especially for the senior’s population. Mental health needs to be addressed more in the community especially among teenagers and adolescents.

**For the 5 year trajectory** in Newton County, many key stakeholders mentioned mental health could worsen if not addressed and likewise obesity could increase due to bad eating behaviors and sedentary lifestyles in the population of Newton County. They also mentioned the growing senior population in Newton County and providing more services for this population.

Regarding the **perception of the community** when it comes to health, many stated that the community is unaware and uninformed of the services available and because of this the health department needs to communicate more with the community.

**Newton County Key Informant Interview Participants**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Years Lived in Newton</b>	<b>Years Worked in Newton</b>
<b>Non-Profit</b>	JoAnn Compton	Program Coordinator	Prevent Child Abuse Rockdale	25	4
<b>Faith Based Org</b>	Ron Compton	Pastor	Common Ground Church	55	1.5
<b>Chamber of Commerce</b>	Ralph Staffins	President/CEO	Covington/Newton Chamber of Commerce	21	4
<b>Government</b>	Marcello Banes	Chairman	Board of Commissioners	42	10
<b>Government</b>	Nancy Schultz	Commissioner/Business Owner	Board of Commissioners	>25	>25
<b>Seniors</b>	Freda Reed	Senior Center Director	Newton Senior Center	44	44
<b>Hospital</b>	Norris Little	Chief Medical Officer	Piedmont Newton	34	34

			Hospital		
<b>Trails</b>	Sara Vinson	Farm Owner	Trails Farmer	>20	17
<b>Government</b>	Ronnie Johnston	Mayor	City of Covington Mayor	11	7

### Key Informant Interview Script

<i>Date:</i>	<i>Start Time:</i>	<i>End Time:</i>
<i>Name:</i>		<i>Title:</i>
<i>Organization:</i>		
<i>Interviewer:</i>		
<i>Scribe:</i>		
<i># Years Living in Gwinnett County (if applicable):</i>		
<i># Years Working in Gwinnett County (if applicable):</i>		

### **Introduction**

Thank you for taking time out of your day to speak with me. [Briefly introduce yourself and the scribe, including your role at the health department and how long you have been with the organization.]

This interview has five to six questions and should take 30 to 45 minutes. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may stop at any point. We are recording your answers for ease of summarizing the results of the interviews. Please take as much time as you need to answer each question.

The Newton County Health Department, Piedmont Newton Hospital, and the Newton County Community Partnership are gathering local data to update our plan to improve the health and

quality of life in Newton County. You have been selected for a key informant interview because of your knowledge, insight and familiarity with the community. The themes that emerge from these interviews will be summarized and made available to the public. Your participation in the assessment process will be noted in the final report, but responses will not be attributed to a specific person.

**You will be asked a series of questions about health and quality of life in Newton County. As you consider these questions, keep in mind the broad definition of health adopted by the World Health Organization: “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”**

### **Questions**

1. What do you believe to be our community’s 2 - 3 greatest strengths in supporting health and quality of life?
2. Can you think of 2 – 3 areas where our community has fallen short in health or quality of life?
3. Based on your unique knowledge of the community, what actions can be taken to address these areas?
4. How do you think health and quality of life in Newton County will change in the next five years?
5. Do you think that anything else should be considered in the community health assessment and planning process that we have not already covered?

### **Close**

Thank you so much for sharing your perspectives on these issues. The information you have provided will contribute to developing a better understanding about factors impacting health and quality of life in Newton County.

As a reminder, summary results will be made available by the Newton County Health Department and used to update the community health assessment and health improvement plan. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Here is my business card.

## **Focus Groups Summary of Themes**

There were five focus groups representing the Senior Center, Covington Housing Authority, More Than Conquerors Inc, STRIVE Clubhouse, and Nancy Schulz West End. These focus groups were conducted to gain insights from the community regarding the quality of life and needs of the community within Newton County. These focus groups re Newton County residents identified major health priorities as well as emerging concerns.

**The strengths** mentioned were the availability of housing for a variety of income levels and the availability of basic health care services. Certain areas of the county have a greater income level and better schools to serve those students. The overall quality of needs being met is greatly dependent on the areas of the county where individuals live. As the manufacturing industry grows and more people are drawn into the county for work, this gap is anticipated to increase.

**Common areas of improvement** mentioned were health care services are not adequately meeting the needs of residents. Residents are seeking basic care outside the county due to the quality of doctors available. Specialty care is also sought outside Newton County because a service such as burn care is not available. Additionally, individuals who need assistance with medical issues or substance abuse do not know where to seek information for help. Many of the programs that are provided for substance abuse and mental health are short-term in nature so the services are not truly rehabilitating the individuals leading to relapse or no improvement of systems. Awareness needs to be increased for the programs available to residents so they are aware of services that are provided.

**Another pressing issue consistently mentioned in the focus groups is the lack of a community transportation system.** Individuals are unable to seek out medical attention because they do not have a means of transportation to get to the appointments. High school students have to utilize services such as Uber or Lyft to get to after-school programs or extracurricular activities.

**Another main health priority is the overall needs of the youth and children.** Many children have a lack of parental involvement at home due to single parent households or work schedules outside the normal 8-5 timeframe. The school system in Newton County is another aspect of consensus among the focus groups. Improvements are needed with the resources available to the students, the curriculum and methods taught to the students, and the counseling services available. Outside of the home and school, there is also a lack of activities available for entertainment for youth and children. The main focal point for entertainment in the community is the town square which is centered on shopping and restaurants. There are no movie theaters, skating rinks, arcades, or any other similar facilities outside one single airsoft arena. Most students resort to hanging out at their homes or friends' homes or go outside the county if there is transportation available to them.

**Other rising concerns mentioned** by the residents of the community include more code enforcement, better gun control, the need for assistance programs for elderly and low-income individuals, and more investment in parks and outdoor options that are free.

### **Focus Group Introduction**

Please tell us about yourself: (a) your first name; (b) what city you live in; (c) size of household and (d) how long you have lived in Newton County.

### **Focus Group Questions**

1. To begin with, how would you rate the quality of life for residents (on a scale from Excellent, Very Good, Average, Fair or Poor) in Newton County and why?
2. Do you believe that Newton County's healthcare resources adequately meet your needs?
3. If you are sick or injured in Newton County, are there sufficient healthcare resources to treat you or would you have to leave the county for care? (If you have left Newton County for healthcare, what was your reason for receiving care elsewhere?)
4. Do you believe that the overall needs of the Newton County children and youth are being met?
5. Do Newton residents with mental health and substance abuse problems have access to adequate resources?
6. How do you think health and quality of life in Newton County will change in the next five years?
7. One final question... Name one issue that the Newton community could focus on to improve the quality of life in the county?

# **Forces of Change Assessment**

## **Executive Summary**

The Forces of Change assessment was conducted as part of the MAPP assessment process. The purpose of this assessment is to identify the trends, factors, and events that are likely to influence community health and quality of life or impact the work of the local public health system in Newton County.

The intentions of the meeting were to address the following questions:

- What does existing data tell us about our community's health?
- What is important to our community? What assets do we have to improve health?
- What factors positively and negatively impact health?
- How well does the public health system collaborate to serve the community?

We began by conducting the Forces of Change assessment. The Community Health Manager from the Gwinnett, Newton, and Rockdale County Health Departments explained trends (patterns over time), factors (discrete elements), and events (one-time occurrence), and the realms in which these items can occur (social, economic, political, demographic, technological, environmental, scientific, legal/legislative, and ethical).

We then broke into four groups and moved into the Forces of Change brainstorming session, focusing on the following questions:

- What has occurred recently that may affect our local public health system or the health of Newton?
- Are there trends occurring that will have an impact? Describe.
- What forces are occurring locally? Regionally? Nationally? Globally?
- What may occur in the foreseeable future that may affect our public health system or the health of Newton?

After discussing these questions, the group reconvened to discuss trends, factors, and events as well as the forces of changes in the County.

## **Findings**

The recognized trends, factors, and events are represented in the table below.

**Forces of Change Assessment Findings**

Trends	Factors	Events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in mental health awareness</li> <li>• Increase in homelessness</li> <li>• Change in socioeconomic status</li> <li>• Opioid use/abuse, marijuana use</li> <li>• Lack of affordable housing</li> <li>• Changes in caregivers – more grandparents as parents, absent parents, single parents)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food access (lack of fresh produce)</li> <li>• Court system (drug court, adult mental health court, DUI court, etc.)</li> <li>• Lack of transportation</li> <li>• Be Healthy Newton, Newton Interagency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Piedmont purchased Newton Medical (increased population; increased health opp, brings \$)</li> <li>• Community support after police shooting</li> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> female African American gubernatorial candidate</li> </ul>

The table below contains the forces of change that were identified for each of the eight categories in Part I of the survey.

Social	Economic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More visibility of gangs activity/bullying</li> <li>• Changing demographic</li> <li>• Increased poverty</li> <li>• Food desert/access to healthy options</li> <li>• More mental health awareness</li> <li>• Increase in collaborative capacity</li> <li>• Health disparities (shift in where this is occurring in the county)</li> <li>• Media and social media</li> <li>• Low self esteem-self image</li> <li>• Changes in caregivers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing population</li> <li>• Job growth</li> <li>• New businesses</li> <li>• More non-traditional education centers</li> <li>• Increase in Apex funding to enter more schools</li> <li>• Lack of jobs/unemployment rate</li> <li>• High percentage of food insecurity</li> <li>• Higher rate for children eligible for free or reduced lunch</li> </ul>
Political	Technological
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political &amp; community leader collaborative</li> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> African American gubernatorial candidate</li> <li>• Census</li> <li>• Healthcare changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cyber bullying</li> <li>• Increased documentation</li> <li>• Increase in internet availability</li> <li>• Disconnect on social media - not everyone uses it</li> <li>• Communication – technology (how</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of public trust in government</li> </ul>	<p>accurate is the info being received)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community wide/county wide resource directory that is properly marketed to encourage use</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental</b>	<b>Scientific</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solid waste program</li> <li>• Increase in violence and crimes</li> <li>• Lack of transportation</li> <li>• Lack of affordable housing</li> <li>• Opioid crisis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New trends in medicine and new discoveries</li> <li>• New technologies/treatments not available due to insurance regulations</li> <li>• Lack of research about specific health issue</li> <li>• Prescription cost</li> </ul>
<b>Legal</b>	<b>Ethical</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community support after police shooting</li> <li>• City vs County political conflict</li> <li>• Budget cuts</li> <li>• Tobacco free parks</li> <li>• Lack of trust in law enforcement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocation of health resources</li> <li>• Access to care</li> <li>• Covington withdrawing financial contribution from Newton tomorrow</li> <li>• Barriers to care for the uninsured and underinsured</li> </ul>

## Local Public Health System Assessment

**Local Public Health System Assessment:** The LPHSA measures the capacity of the local public health system to conduct essential public health services by bringing together community organizations to discuss and evaluate the community's public health system. The assessment was conducted in November 2018 at a monthly Newton Interagency Meeting. Agency key at the end of section.

- **Essential Service 1: Monitor health status to identify community health problems.**
  - ACV-CAC – Medical exams for clients include comprehensive background and check-up; not only forensic
  - NCSS – Identify and report potential public health problem identified in schools
  - NCSS – Project Aware monitors referrals made to mental health agencies
  - NCCP – Newton DFC & Newton Rockdale Suicide Prevention Coalition
  - CHA – Constant communication with residents and their contacts when admitted to hospitals, etc...
  - Piedmont Newton Hospital
  - Be Healthy Newton
  - Willing Helpers Clinic
- **Essential Service 2: Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community.**
  - NCSS – School nurses identify health hazards and notify school administration and parents as appropriate
  - Piedmont Newton Hospital & Physician offices
    - Emergency & in pt care & diagnosis
    - Infection control nurse – Health Dept
    - Be Healthy Newton
  - NCCP – Newton DFC & Newton Rockdale Suicide Prevention Coalition
  - ACV-CAC – Medical exams include pregnancy test & STD screening; screen for commercial sexual exploitation
  - CHA – Smoke detectors in all apartments
- **Essential Service 3: Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.**

- ACV-CAC – All clients able to meet with nurse and receive education; re: health issues
- ACV-CAC – Community education and outreach; re: child abuse
- Piedmont Newton Hospital & Physician offices
  - Outpatient diabetic education, advance care planning
  - In-hospital health education, in-office health education
  - Website
  - App
  - MyChart
- Piedmont Newton Hospital First Steps
  - New mother education on infant/child safety and healthcare
  - All families receive resource list of community resources
  - Play yards for safe sleep (DPH grant): travel bassinets (Medicaid moms/DPH grant)
  - Community car seat check events
- NCCP – Newton DFC & Newton Rockdale Suicide Prevention Coalition
- GSU Perimeter College – Civic engagement
- NCSS – Suicide prevention training for school personnel
- NCSS – Youth mental health training (Project Aware)
- NCSS – Asthma initiative
- PCARN-PPP – Safe sleep program, parenting program that empowers new mom’s/dad’s for successful parenting that fosters child well being
- **Essential Service 4: Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems.**
  - DJJ – Make referrals for youth with mental health
  - ACV-CAC – Partner with multidisciplinary team (LE, DFCS, DA, schools, mental health providers) to identify clients who may have experienced child abuse to allow for intervention
  - PCARN – Partner collaboration with other local nonprofits to provide cross functional resources
  - NCSS – Provide youth mental health training & utilize mobile crisis unit

- NCCP – Newton DFC & Newton Rockdale Suicide Prevention Coalition, resource courts
- CHA – refer residents via newsletter/website/flyers to health partners and health events (mental health, AA, Dept of H, Piedmont Newton, nursing homes, Medicaid, etc)
- Piedmont Newton First Steps – Partner with juvenile court to provide car seats
- Viewpoint Apex – Mobile dental clinic
- Local Lions Club – vision check and eyeglass services
- Piedmont Newton Hospital
- Be Healthy Newton
- Willing Helpers Clinic
- Adult Protective Services
- SNF meetings
- **Essential Service 5: Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.**
  - NCSS
    - School policies try to stay in line with CDC guidelines; maintain communication regarding communicable diseases or outbreaks, etc...
    - Develop plans to address mental health issues (suicide attempts/ideations) as a district
    - Cameras at other precautionary measures to address active shooter
  - NCCP – Resource court advisory boards
  - ACV-CAC – Assist with child abuse protocol updates
  - CHA – Federal policies again smoking; mandated to make apartments handicap accessible
  - Piedmont Newton Hospital
  - Be Healthy Newton
  - Willing Helpers Clinic
- **Essential Service 6: Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety**
  - NCSS
    - Ensure students enrolled in school are properly immunized .

- SB401 child abuse education for students
  - DJJ
    - Help enforce students to attend school, follow laws, and rules
    - Mandated reporters
    - Delinquency
  - CHA – respond to cases of illegal drug usage/sales
  - ACV-CAC – Evaluate child safety during forensic interviews and medicals, make DFCS reports when necessary
  - MTECDC – Report child abuse and neglect
  - Project Renewal – Report child abuse and neglect
  - Piedmont Newton – Report child/elder abuse/neglect, EMTALA, CMS
  - Piedmont Newton First Steps – Provide car seats and booster seats through DPH grant; provide play yards through DPH grant for safe sleep
  - PCARN – Report child abuse/neglect and car seat safety checks
- **Essential Service 7: Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.**
  - NCSS – Refer students/parents and provide follow up
  - Piedmont Newton – SNF, Home Health, private aide care, MCD waivers, PCH, Health Dept, PCP, free clinics, FQHC, homeless shelters, medication assistance, insurance assistance, free care, Be Healthy Newton, Viewpoint, CHANCE
  - MTECDC – Refer students/parents to local services
  - DJJ – Follow up after referrals are made for services
  - ACV-CAC
    - Needs assessment completed with all clients – referrals provided, follow up to determine effectiveness
    - Sometimes provide funding to overcome barriers to services (mostly for mental health)
  - CHA – Heavy referrals to health partners; install strobe lights for elderly
  - PCARN – Provide resources/referrals to clients
  - Piedmont Newton First Steps – Families receive resource list of local/state resources

- Project Renewal – Provide people in shelter resources and transportation to medical facilities
- NCCP – Referrals from community to partner-providers
- **Essential Service 8: Assure a competent public health and personal health care workforce.**
  - ACV-CAC – Provide training to partners on recognizing, responding to, and preventing child abuse (offer free CEU’s)
  - NCCP – Participate in NC CTAE Advisory committee
  - NCSS – Communicate with partners to assist with good referrals and ensure relevant knowledge
  - Piedmont Newton Hospital – Employee credentialing, education, training site for student nurses and respiratory therapist
- **Essential Service 9: Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.**
  - NCCP – CHA/CHIP; GA FCP data (Kids Count)
  - NCSS – Continuously look at family’s ability to access services and the ease of doing so
  - CHA – Periodic survey of residents needs
  - Piedmont Newton Hospital – Be Healthy Newton, CHA, readmissions reduction
- **Essential Service 10: Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.**
  - NCSS – Student surveys
  - NCCP – Suicide Prevention Coalition

<b><u>Key</u></b>	<b><u>Agency</u></b>
ACV-CAC	A Childs Voice Child Advocacy Center
CHA	Covington Housing Authority
DJJ	Department of Juvenile Justice

MTECDC	Macintosh Trail Early Childhood Development Council
NCCP	Newton County Community Partnership
NCSS	Newton County School System
PCARN- PPP	Prevent Child Abuse Rockdale Newton -Positive Parenting Program
PCARN	Prevent Child Abuse Rockdale Newton