

# A Century of Measuring the Health of North Carolinians

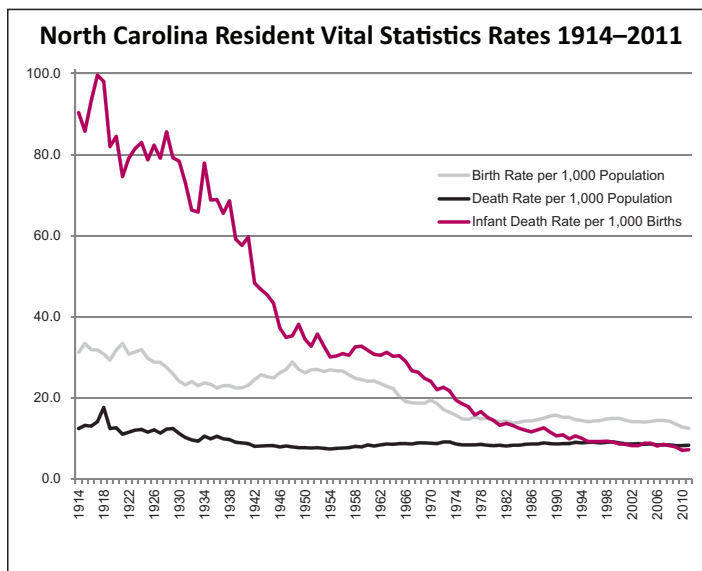
The North Carolina General Assembly created the Bureau of Vital Statistics in 1913 and the first tabulated report of Vital Statistics data were published for 1914 vital events. In 2013, the North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics (SCHS) celebrates 100 years of collecting, analyzing and disseminating data on the health status of North Carolinians. Over the years, the duties of SCHS have expanded beyond vital registration to encompass the collection and analysis of a broader array of health data, including the Central Cancer Registry, the Birth Defects Registry, state and federal health surveys, inpatient hospital discharge, health department records, Medicaid services and eligibility data and other health services utilization data. However, the central goal of SCHS remains much like it was a century ago—collecting and disseminating high quality health information that enables public health programs and policy leaders to make better informed decisions and effective health policies for North Carolina.

## Population Health Indicators

Health Indicators	1914	2011
Estimated Population	2,339,452	9,656,401
Births	71,931	120,403
Birth Rate per 1,000 Residents	30.7	12.5
Deaths	29,044	79,680
Death Rate per 1,000 Residents	12.4	8.3
Maternal Deaths	524	56
Maternal Death Rate per 1,000 Births	7.3	0.5
Infant Deaths	6,497	866
Infant Death Rate per 1,000 Births	90.3	7.2
Marriages	22,761	64,789
Marriage Rate per 1,000 Residents	9.7	6.7

Since 1914, substantial changes in North Carolina’s resident population have occurred as well as significant improvements in mortality and birth outcomes (see Table). In 1914, North Carolina’s population comprised approximately 2.3 million residents. Based on the latest available Census Bureau estimates, North Carolina’s population now stands at more than

9.6 million, representing a 313 percent increase in our state’s population during this time period. Related to this population growth, the number of resident deaths have risen 174 percent and the number of births have increased 67 percent since 1914.



While the overall number of vital events has increased over the last century, most health measures have experienced dramatic improvements. North Carolina’s maternal and infant mortality have demonstrated some of the most noteworthy declines. In 1914, 90 infants in every 1,000 live births died before reaching their first birthday; compared to seven infants per 1,000 live births in 2011 (92% decline). Similarly, rates of maternal mortality have also experienced significant reductions (93% decline). North Carolina’s overall crude death rate has declined by a third during this time period (33% reduction). Despite substantial population growth, North Carolina’s resident birth rates have declined

by 59 percent since 1914 when the birth rate stood at 30.7 per 1,000 residents, to a birth rate of just 12.5 per 1,000 in 2011. The 2011 rate represents the lowest recorded birth rate in state history (see Chart).

Daily averages for North Carolina Vital Registrations have also changed since Vital Statistics were first collected in 1914. In 1914, North Carolina’s Vital Records office recorded 197 births per day; compared with 330 per day in 2011. In 1914, 80 deaths were recorded per day and by 2011 there were an average of 218 deaths registered each day. The average number of marriage certificates filed per day has also increased significantly since 1914; from 62 in 1914 to an average of 178 marriage certificates registered per day in 2011.

Please visit the SCHS website at [www.schs.state.nc.us/schs/data/vitalstats.cfm](http://www.schs.state.nc.us/schs/data/vitalstats.cfm) for vital statistics reports dating back to 1914.