



Public Health
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Wayne County Health Department

Wayne County

2021 Suicide Death Summary Report

Wayne County Health Department

July 31, 2022

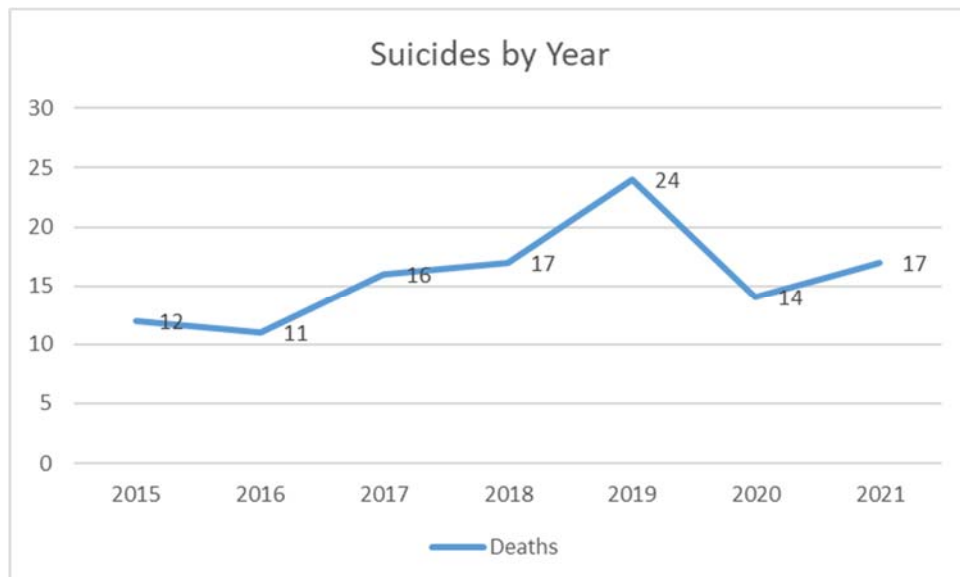
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to take a deeper dive into the suicides in Wayne County by looking at various demographics and descriptors of those that have died by suicide. This report also compares the data 5 years pre-pandemic (2015-2019) to the years 2020 and 2021.

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the entire population in many ways. One of the tenets of preventing Covid-19 early on especially, was to stay home and go out as little as possible. This isolation had impacted people's mental health. And while we may not ever be able to attribute suicides directly to the pandemic, it is a reasonable assumption that the pandemic had a part to play.

NUMBER OF SUICIDE DEATHS

Chart 1 Suicide Deaths per year. Wayne County Health Department Vital Statistics



Rates of suicide in 2020 and 2021 had not increased that much compared to the five years pre-pandemic. The average number of suicides from 2015-2019 is 16 and we saw 14 suicides in 2020 and 17 in 2021. The pre-pandemic average may have been skewed by the large number of people (24) that dies by suicide in 2019. However, if you look at Chart 1, we are trending upward from 2015 and 2016.

AGE and SEX

In examining suicide sex, men died from suicide at a rate of almost to 8 to 1 compared to women pre-pandemic. The ratio did not change much during the pandemic with women accounting for approximately 2 suicides per year pre-pandemic as well as 2020 and 2021. See Table 1.

Table 1. Number of Suicides among Wayne County Residents by Sex

Sex	2021*		2020*		2015-2019	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Males	15	88%	12	86%	71	89%
Females	2	12%	2	14%	9	11%
Total	17		14		80	

The age ranges of the decedents in Wayne County who dies by suicide did not vary widely pre-pandemic or during the first two years of the pandemic. Table 2 indicates the deaths were pretty evenly split from 15-65 and older. However, in 2021 when you combine the age groups of those 65 and older and those 25 to 34, this accounts for half of last year's suicides. These age groups could be foci for targeted messaging going forward.

Table 2. Number of Suicide among Wayne County Residents by Age

Age	2021*		2020*		2015-2019	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
0 to 14	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
15 to 24	2	12%	3	18%	12	15%
25 to 34	4	24%	3	18%	14	18%
35 to 44	2	12%	4	24%	14	18%
45 to 54	2	12%	0	0%	14	18%
55 to 64	2	12%	2	12%	14	18%
65+	5	29%	2	12%	11	14%
Total	17		14		80	

RACE AND ETHNICITY

According to the 2020 Census, Wayne County is over 95% white, less than 2% Black, 1% Asian. In terms of ethnicity, 2.2% of Wayne County is Hispanic. While there was very little change from pre-pandemic levels of suicides with race and ethnicity as Wayne County there was one 1 Black person and 2 Hispanic people for the seven years covered in this document, there were 2 residents of Asian descent that completed suicide last year. See Table 3.

Table 3. Number of Suicides among Wayne County Residents by Race/Ethnicity

Race	2021*		2020*		2015-2019	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
White, non-Hispanic	15	88%	12	86%	78	98%
Black	0	0%	1	7%	0	0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	12%	0	0%	0	0%
Hispanic	0	0%	1	7%	1	1%
Other race	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
Total	17		14		80	

EDUCATION

Table 4 below is a summary of the level of education of each of the decedents who have died from suicide. Those with a high school level of education or less account for over 80% of suicides pre-pandemic, 100% of suicides in 2020, and 77% of suicides in 2021. According to the 2020 US Census, 22.5% of Wayne County residents have a Bachelor's degree. So while a majority of the population does not have a Bachelor's degree, this group is still overrepresented barring last year.

Table 4. Number of Suicides among Wayne County Residents by Education Year

Education	2021*		2020*		2015-2019	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Did not Graduate from High School	3	18%	3	21%	15	19%
High School Graduate or GED	10	59%	11	79%	49	61%
Some College	1	6%	0	0%	5	6%
College Graduate or Higher	3	18%	0	0%	11	14%
Total	17		14		80	

COMMUNITY DIFFERENCES

Where one lives can sometimes be a determining factor that puts people at higher risk for certain illness and disease, it makes sense to investigate geographical and neighborhood differences pre and during pandemic for suicides. During the five years pre-pandemic while the city of Wooster and its surrounding areas had close to 50 percent of suicides. Areas like Orrville, Rittman, and Dalton had high rates of suicide compared to their total populations. In the two years of the pandemic, Wooster percentage dipped in 2020 with 35% and returned to pre-pandemic proportions with 47% of suicides in 2021. Orrville had more than typical percentage of suicides 2020. Doylestown has seen 2 suicides in each of the last two years which is more than typical pre-pandemic. See Table 5.

Table 5. Number of Suicide Deaths among Wayne County Residents by Zip Code

Zip Code – Location	2021*		2020*		2015-2019	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
44214 Burbank	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
44216 Clinton	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
44217 Creston	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
44230 Doylestown	2	12%	2	14%	3	4%
44270 Rittman	1	6%	0	0%	9	11%
44276 Sterling	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
44287 West Salem	0	0%	0	0%	3	4%
44606 Apple Creek	0	0%	1	7%	1	1%
44618 Dalton	1	6%	0	0%	7	9%
44627 Fredericksburg	0	0%	1	7%	0	0%
44638 Lakeville	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
44645 Marshallville	1	6%	0	0%	2	3%
44662 Navarre	1	6%	0	0%	1	1%
44666 North Lawrence	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
44667 Orrville	1	6%	4	28%	7	9%
44676 Shreve	0	0%	1	7%	3	4%
44677 Smithville	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
44691 Wooster	8	47%	5	35%	37	46%
Unknown	2	12%	0	0%	1	1%
Total	17		14		80	

MECHANISM

In examining the mechanism by which suicides were completed, 50% or a little more than 50% of suicides in Wayne County was by firearm. In the years of the pandemic, the rates of suicide by firearm are slightly lower when compared to pre-pandemic years. Suicide by overdose occurred more than typical in 2020 and unfortunately 4 of 31 suicides in 2020 and 2021 combined were unspecified as to mechanism. See Table 6.

Table 6. Number of Suicide Deaths among Wayne County Residents by Mechanism

Mechanism	2021*		2020*		2015-2019	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Firearm	9	53%	7	50%	47	59%
Overdose	0	0%	4	29%	10	13%
Suffocation	4	24%	2	14%	21	26%
Unspecified	3	18%	1	7%	0	0%
Fall	1	6%	0	0%	2	3%
Total	17		14		80	

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In general, the number of suicides are trending up over the last five years compared to 2015 and 2016. Wayne County needs to continue awareness of suicide prevention activities.

We also know that men more than women die by suicide. While suicide is evenly distributed amongst age groups above the age of 15, Wayne County saw a huge increase in those 65 and older in 2021. And while we do not see large numbers from Black or Hispanic populations, they are still overrepresented in suicides in Wayne County. In 2021, Wayne county had 2 Asians who died by suicide. While most of the population has a high school education or less, they are also overrepresented in terms of suicide in Wayne County.

While the cities of Wooster, Rittman and Orrville may be overrepresented, so are the areas of Doylestown (before and during the pandemic) and Dalton (primarily pre-pandemic).

One of the last implications is the use of firearms. At a rate of 50% or more, using a firearm was the most common mechanism used for suicide before and during the pandemic. While these implications are not indicative of all the factors surrounding suicide, these can be used to target messaging to groups of people who are at greater risk of death from suicide coming out of the pandemic.