

How the health system is working in North Carolina

Using the most recent available data, see the indicators where your state performed best — and where there is room to improve.

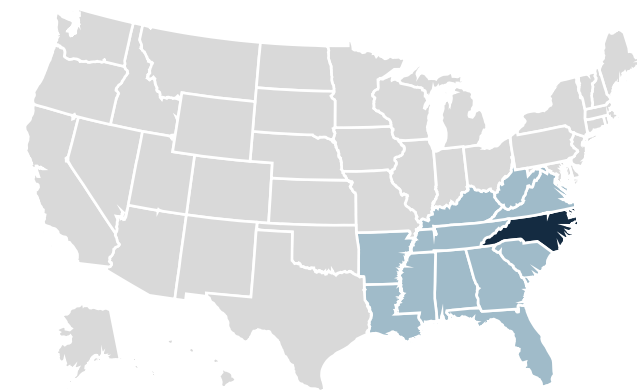


The Commonwealth Fund

North Carolina ranks #29 overall.

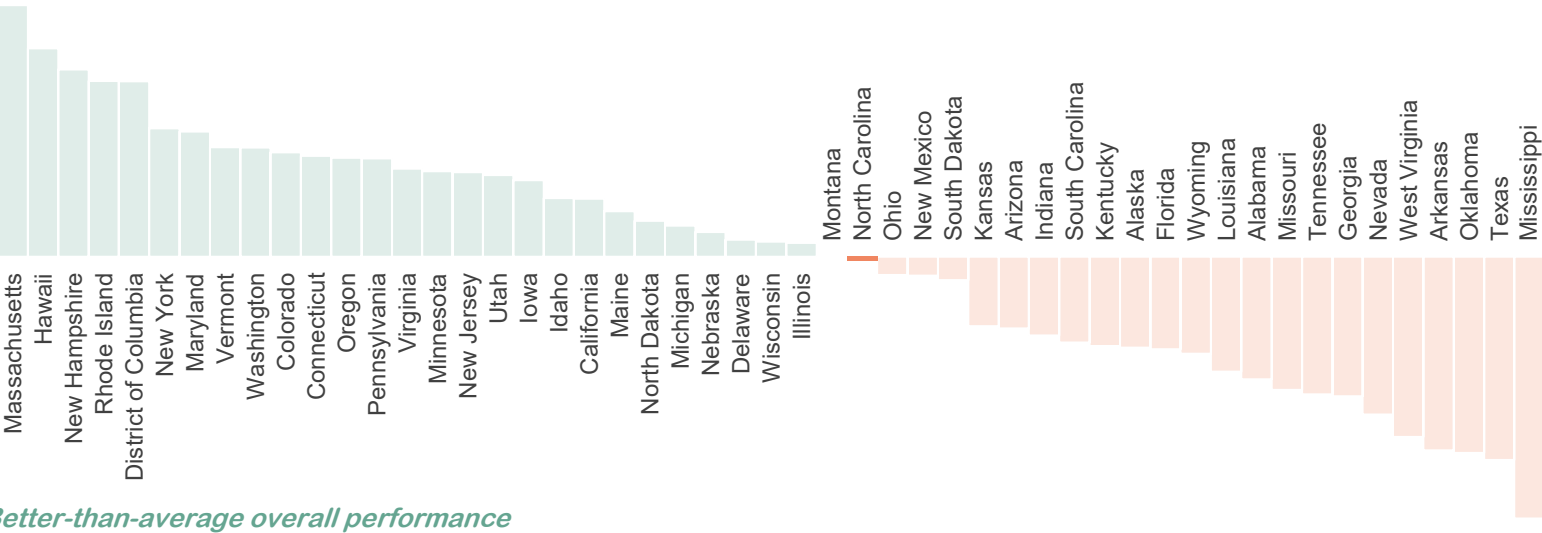
	National rank	Rank among Southeastern states
Access & Affordability	38 of 51	6 of 12
Prevention & Treatment	8	1
Avoidable Hospital Use & Cost	11	1
Healthy Lives	34	3
Income Disparity	43	10
Racial Health Equity	17	4

North Carolina ranks #2 in the Southeast region.



Note: Southeast region includes AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV.

How North Carolina compares to all states



North Carolina performed best on:

- Adults with inappropriate lower back imaging
- Diabetic adults without an annual hemoglobin A1c test
- Children with a medical home

North Carolina performed worst on:

- High out-of-pocket medical spending
- People with medical debt in collections
- Central line–associated blood stream infection (CLABSI)

Table 1. State Health Performance Indicators

Dimension and indicator	Data year	State rate	U.S. average	Best state rate	State rank ^a	Data year	State rate	U.S. average	Change over time ^b
Access & Affordability						2025 Scorecard			Baseline
Adults ages 19–64 uninsured	2023	13%	11%	3%	41	2019	17%	13%	Improved
Children ages 0–18 uninsured	2023	5%	5%	2%	28	2019	6%	6%	No change
Adults age 18 and older who went without care because of cost in past year	2023	11%	12%	7%	27	2019	16%	14%	Improved
Adults age 18 and older without a usual source of care	2023	17%	17%	8%	29	—	—	—	—
Individuals under age 65 with high out-of-pocket medical costs relative to their annual household income	2022–23	11.9%	9.7%	5.6%	44	2018–19	13.2%	10.2%	Improved
Employee total potential out-of-pocket medical costs as a share of state median income	2023	13.0%	10.8%	6.0%	44	2019	13.6%	11.5%	No change
People with medical debt in collections	2023	8%	5%	0%	47	2021	20%	13%	Improved
Adults age 18 and older without a dental visit in past year	2022	36%	36%	26%	33	2018	35%	34%	No change
Prevention & Treatment						2025 Scorecard			Baseline
Adults with all age- and gender-appropriate cancer screenings	2022	68%	65%	73%	11	—	—	—	—
Adults with age-appropriate flu and pneumonia vaccines	2023	41%	39%	53%	21	2019	47%	41%	Worsened
Adults with up-to-date COVID-19 vaccination	2024	19%	22%	39%	35	2022	26%	42%	Worsened
Diabetic adults without an annual hemoglobin A1c test	2023	5%	9%	4%	4	2019	9%	8%	Improved
Children without all recommended vaccines	2023	23%	31%	10%	7	2019	20%	27%	Worsened
Children with a medical home	2022–23	52%	44%	57%	4	2018–19	49%	48%	Improved
Children without a medical and dental preventive care visit	2022–23	28%	32%	22%	10	2020–21	34%	38%	Improved
Children who did not receive needed mental health care	2022–23	17%	20%	11%	17	2018–19	19%	18%	No change
Adults with substance use disorder who did not receive treatment	2022	80%	77%	67%	43	—	—	—	—
Youth with depression who did not receive mental health services	2021–22	47%	56%	32%	10	2019–20	62%	60%	Improved
Hospitals with better-than-average patient experience ratings	2023	32%	27%	65%	20	2019	44%	48%	Worsened
Hospital 30-day mortality	07/2020 – 06/2023	15%	14%	12%	25	07/2016 – 06/2019	14%	14%	Worsened

Table 1. State Health Performance Indicators (cont.)

Dimension and indicator	Data year	State rate	U.S. average	Best state rate	State rank ^a	Data year	State rate	U.S. average	Change over time ^b
Prevention & Treatment (cont.)						2025 Scorecard			Baseline
Central line–associated blood stream infection (CLABSI)	2023	0.872	0.724	0.347	47	2019	0.916	0.689	No change
Nursing home residents with an antipsychotic medication	2023	13%	15%	6%	14	2018	12%	15%	No change
Home health patients with improved mobility	2023	89%	87%	92%	9	2019	83%	80%	Improved
Home health patients who got better at taking their drugs correctly by mouth	2023	86%	86%	92%	18	—	—	—	—
Avoidable Hospital Use & Cost						2025 Scorecard			Baseline
Potentially avoidable emergency department visits									
Ages 18–64, per 1,000 employer-insured enrollees	2023	155.3	151.4	130.6	35	2019	191.0	137.4	Improved
Age 65 and older, per 1,000 Medicare beneficiaries	2023	149.4	155.2	126.4	20	2019	191.5	185.3	Improved
Admissions for ambulatory care–sensitive conditions									
Ages 18–64, per 1,000 employer-insured enrollees	2023	4.7	4.6	3.6	31	2019	6.9	6.7	Improved
Age 65 and older, per 1,000 Medicare beneficiaries	2023	29.6	30.6	17.6	26	2019	42.5	40.9	Improved
30-day hospital readmissions									
Ages 18–64, per 1,000 employer-insured enrollees	2023	2.8	2.9	2.2	11	2019	3.1	3.1	Improved
Age 65 and older, per 1,000 Medicare beneficiaries	2023	30.6	35.0	17.5	22	2019	36.9	39.7	Improved
Skilled nursing facility patients with a hospital readmission	2023	22%	23%	15%	24	—	—	—	—
Adults with inappropriate lower back imaging	2023	59%	63%	54%	3	2019	65%	68%	Improved
Employer-sponsored insurance spending per enrollee	2023	\$6,252	\$6,437	\$4,296	22	2019	\$5,291	\$5,354	Worsened
Medicare spending per beneficiary	2023	\$10,869	\$11,792	\$7,976	18	2019	\$9,542	\$10,151	Worsened
Primary care spending as a share of total health care spending									
Ages 18–64 (employer-insured enrollees)	2023	8.7%	6.8%	10.6%	8	2019	9.5%	7.2%	Worsened
Age 65 and older (Medicare beneficiaries)	2023	6.8%	5.7%	10.9%	7	2019	7.0%	5.8%	No change

Table 1. State Health Performance Indicators (cont.)

Dimension and indicator	Data year	State rate	U.S. average	Best state rate	State rank ^a	Data year	State rate	U.S. average	Change over time ^b
Healthy Lives ^c						Baseline			
Premature deaths from treatable causes per 100,000 population	2022–23	94.4	85.7	56.6	36	2018–19	90.1	83.8	No change
Premature deaths from preventable causes per 100,000 population	2022–23	213.4	191.8	142.2	38	2018–19	179.3	167.6	Worsened
Infant mortality, deaths per 1,000 live births	2022	6.8	5.6	3.3	39	2018	6.8	5.7	No change
Drug overdose deaths per 100,000 population	2023	33.7	31.3	9.0	29	2019	22.3	21.6	Worsened
Suicide deaths per 100,000 population	2023	14.3	14.1	5.7	14	2019	12.5	13.9	No change
Alcohol-related deaths per 100,000 population	2023	11.1	12.6	5.5	14	2019	9.6	10.4	No change
Firearm deaths per 100,000 population	2023	16.4	13.7	3.7	30	2019	13.1	11.9	Worsened
Breast cancer deaths	2023	19.6	18.7	15.4	32	2019	19.2	19.4	No change
Colorectal cancer deaths	2023	13.1	13.0	9.9	26	2019	13.0	13.1	No change
Adults who report fair or poor health	2023	17%	17%	10%	27	2019	18%	17%	No change
Adults who smoke	2023	13%	11%	6%	30	2019	19%	15%	Improved
Children who are overweight or obese	2022–23	31%	31%	22%	28	2018–19	31%	31%	No change
Adults who are obese	2023	35%	34%	23%	24	2019	35%	32%	No change
Adults who have lost six or more teeth	2022	10%	9%	4%	38	2018	11%	9%	No change

Table 2. State Income Disparity Data

Disparity Indicator	Data year	Low-income group rate ^d	Difference between income groups ^e	State rank ^a	Data year	Low-income group rate ^d	Difference between income groups ^e	Change over time ^f
2025 Scorecard					Baseline			
Adults ages 19–64 uninsured	2023	24%	-19	43	2019	31%	-25	Improved
Children ages 0–18 uninsured	2023	7%	-5	26	2019	7%	-4	Worsened
Adults age 18 and older who went without care because of cost in past year	2022-23	24%	-21	46	2018-19	29%	-23	Improved
Adults age 18 and older without a usual source of care	2022-23	24%	-12	34	—	—	—	—
Individuals under age 65 with high out-of-pocket medical costs relative to their annual household income	2022–23	29%	—	—	2018–19	30%	-29	—
Adults age 18 and older without a dental visit in past year	2020, 2022	53%	-33	43	2016, 2018	53%	-34	No change
Adults with all age- and gender-appropriate cancer screenings	2020, 2022	67%	-11	43	—	—	—	—
Adults with age-appropriate flu and pneumonia vaccines	2022-23	34%	-16	36	2018-19	37%	-11	Worsened

Table 2. State Income Disparity Data (cont.)

	Data year	Low-income group rate ^d	Difference between income groups ^e	State rank ^a	Data year	Low-income group rate ^d	Difference between income groups ^e	Change over time ^f
Disparity Indicator	2025 Scorecard				Baseline			
Children ages 19–35 months who did not receive all recommended vaccines	2023	30%	-13	20	2019	24%	-12	Worsened
Children ages 0–17 with all components of a medical home	2022–23	42%	-24	20	2018–19	34%	-28	Improved
Children without age-appropriate medical and dental preventive care visits in the past year	2022–23	33%	-16	17	2020–21	42%	-21	Improved
Potentially avoidable emergency department visits, Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older, per 1,000 beneficiaries	2023	289	-151	37	2019	410	-246	Improved
Hospital admissions for ambulatory care–sensitive conditions, Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older, per 1,000 beneficiaries	2023	66	-38	33	2019	84	-51	Improved
30-day hospital readmissions, Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older, per 1,000 beneficiaries	2023	58	-35	29	2019	85	-54	Improved
Primary care spending as share of total health care spending among Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older	2023	6.0%	-0.9	33	2019	6.5%	-0.6	Worsened
Adults ages 18–64 who report fair or poor health	2022-23	31%	-24	39	2018-19	30%	-23	Worsened
Adults age 18 and older who smoke	2022-23	24%	-15	32	2018-19	28%	-15	Improved
Adults ages 18–64 who are obese (BMI >= 30)	2022-23	40%	-5	11	2018-19	40%	-8	No change
Adults ages 18–64 who have lost six or more teeth because of tooth decay, infection, or gum disease	2020, 2022	19%	-13	28	2016, 2018	16%	-12	Worsened

Table 3. Health Equity Performance Summary Data^g

Health system performance score & State rank among population group		
	Percentile score (1–100)	State rank among population group
American Indian and Alaska Native people	28	1 of 10 states
Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander people	71	18 of 31 states
Black people	40	13 of 39 states
Hispanic people	13	37 of 47 states
White people ^h	82	—

Performance score based on methodology used in: *Advancing Racial Equity in U.S. Health Care: The Commonwealth Fund 2024 State Health Disparities Report* (Commonwealth Fund, Apr. 2024), available at:
<https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/fund-reports/2024/apr/advancing-racial-equity-us-health-care>

Table 4. Health Equity Performance, by Racial/Ethnic Group^g

	Data year	U.S. total	AIAN people ⁱ	AANHPI people ^j	Black people	Hispanic people	White people
Health Outcomes							
Deaths before age 75 from health care–treatable causes per 100,000 population	2020–21	88.8	113.8	44.3	157.3	54.5	85.4
Deaths before age 75 from preventable causes per 100,000 population	2020–21	233.1	401.6	99.4	309.4	172.4	241.4
Infant mortality, deaths per 1,000 live births	2020–21	5.4	6.9	5.7	11.7	5.1	5.1
Breast cancer deaths per 100,000 female population	2020-21	19.4	—	6.7	26.1	7.8	19.3
Colorectal cancer deaths per 100,000 population	2020-21	13.4	10.4	6.2	15.5	8.3	12.5
30-day hospital readmissions, Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older, per 1,000 beneficiaries	2021	33.1	—	—	39.0	—	21.9
Adults age 18 and older who smoke	2021-22	13%	33%	—	17%	8%	15%
Adults ages 18–64 who are obese (BMI >= 30)	2021-22	34%	37%	14%	51%	33%	33%
Adults ages 18–64 who have lost six or more teeth because of tooth decay, infection, or gum disease	2020, 2022	9%	25%	—	14%	5%	10%
Health Care Access							
Adults ages 19–64 uninsured	2022	11%	20%	10%	14%	39%	10%
Children ages 0–18 uninsured	2022	5%	7%	3%	4%	12%	3%
Adults age 18 and older who went without care because of cost in past year	2021-22	11%	9%	—	13%	20%	10%
Individuals under age 65 with high out-of-pocket medical costs relative to their annual household income	2021–22	10%	15%	10%	13%	17%	10%
Adults age 18 and older without a usual source of care	2021-22	18%	9%	28%	15%	47%	13%

Table 4. Health Equity Performance, by Racial/Ethnic Group (cont.)^g

	Data year	U.S. total	AIAN people ⁱ	AANHPI people ^j	Black people	Hispanic people	White people
Health Care Quality and Service Use							
Hospital admissions for ambulatory care–sensitive conditions, Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older, per 1,000 beneficiaries	2021	29.5	—	—	44.6	—	26.5
Potentially avoidable emergency department visits, Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older, per 1,000 beneficiaries	2021	141.3	—	—	218.4	—	129.8
Adult women ages 50–74 who did not receive a mammogram in the past two years	2020, 2022	23%	25%	41%	13%	33%	21%
Adult women ages 25–64 who received a cervical cancer screening test in the past three years	2020, 2022	82%	92%	95%	91%	87%	87%
Adults ages 50–74 with a recent colon cancer screening test	2020, 2022	60%	67%	41%	69%	38%	70%
Adults age 18 and older who did not receive a flu shot in the last year	2021–22	55%	60%	61%	59%	65%	50%
Adults age 65 and older who have never gotten a pneumonia vaccine	2021–22	30%	39%	—	30%	26%	23%
Children without age-appropriate medical and dental preventive care visits in the past year	2021–22	36%	—	—	28%	37%	26%
Children ages 19–35 months who did not receive all recommended vaccines	2021	28%	—	—	20%	28%	19%
Adults age 18 and older without a dental visit in past year	2020, 2022	36%	43%	36%	37%	50%	32%
Primary care spending as a share of total health care spending age 65 and older (Medicare beneficiaries)	2021	5.3%	—	—	6.2%	—	7.0%

Notes

^a The 2025 State Scorecard rankings generally reflect 2023 data. The 2025 Scorecard added or revised several performance measures compared to earlier editions; rankings are not comparable between reports.

^b Trend data available for 45 of 50 total Scorecard indicators. For indicators where trends were possible, the baseline period generally reflects five years prior to the time of observation for the latest year of data available (often 2019). Improved/worsened denotes a change of at least one-half (0.5) standard deviation larger than the indicator's distribution among all states over the two time points. No change denotes no change in rate or a change of less than one-half standard deviation.

^c Several of the indicators in the Healthy Lives dimension are also nested in the definition of Preventable and Treatable deaths. We made an adjustment in our ranking method to account for this to avoid double-counting mortality from certain causes (e.g. deaths from breast cancer). Note that this adjustment is only reflected in the ranked values for preventable and treatable mortality; the values reported in charts and the report appendix are unadjusted.

^d Rates are for each state's low-income population, generally those whose household income is less than 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL). See report Methods for further details: <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/scorecard/2025/jun/2025-scorecard-state-health-system-performance>

^e Income disparity is the difference between rates for the state's low-income and higher-income (generally 400%+ FPL) populations.

^f Improvement indicates that the low-income rate improved and the disparity between low- and higher-income populations narrowed; worsening indicates that the low-income rate worsened and the disparity between low- and higher-income populations widened.

^g Performance data not available for all groups in every state. Health equity performance indicators reflect 2020–2022 data.

^h State not ranked on health system performance for white people in this report; included for comparative purposes.

ⁱ AIAN = American Indian and Alaska Native.

^j AANHPI = Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander.

“—” means data not available.

Most data reported here can also be found in the Commonwealth Fund's online State Health Data Center at:

<https://www.commonwealthfund.org/datacenter>