

2025

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT



PREPARED BY

CARR, RIGGS & INGRAM

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Our Commitment to Community Health

Message From Our President and CEO

At Winston Medical Center, our commitment to improving health outcomes and promoting equity for every member of our community is at the heart of everything we do. Our dedication extends far beyond our hospital walls and is exemplified through our Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). This critical initiative, developed in partnership with community stakeholders, seeks to uncover and address the pressing health needs of our most vulnerable and underserved populations.

By engaging local leaders, public health experts, individuals with chronic conditions, and those often left without a voice, we've built a diverse coalition that truly reflects the community we serve. Together, we are working to eliminate barriers to care, enhance support networks, and empower people to lead healthier, more fulfilling lives.

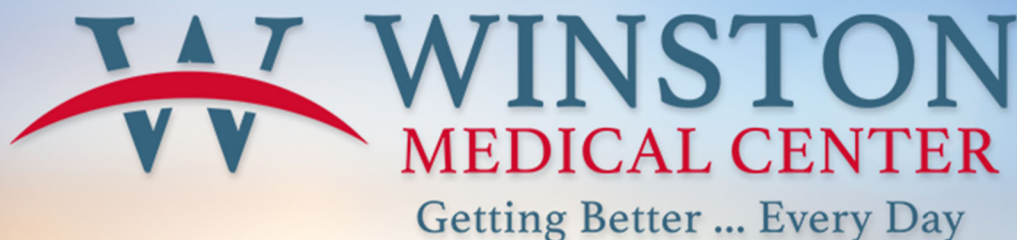
More than just a mandate under the Affordable Care Act, the CHNA represents a shared vision and responsibility. Under the guidance of Carr, Riggs & Ingram (CRI) and with the support of a dedicated Steering Committee, the assessment process began in June 2025. It will continue as we develop, implement, and evaluate health initiatives shaped by real data and authentic community perspectives. These initiatives are reviewed annually and undergo a full reassessment every three years to ensure they remain effective and relevant.

We are proud to be deeply rooted in Winston County and the surrounding region and invite you to consider how you can play a part in creating a healthier community. We offer our sincere gratitude to our partners, the Steering Committee, and CRI for their essential roles in this process. United by a common goal, we are honored to continue serving as a trusted healthcare leader—delivering compassionate, patient-centered care to all.

Michael Nester

Chief Executive Officer

Winston Medical Center



About Us

Winston Medical Center (WMC) is a nonprofit, short-term acute care hospital situated in Louisville, Mississippi. Since 1958, it has served as the only acute-care provider in Winston County, meeting the healthcare needs of the local population.

Originally established as Winston County Community Hospital, the facility was funded through Hill-Burton, state, and local resources. It replaced the former Louisville Hospital in downtown Louisville with a new location on East Main Street. In 1994, the Winston County Medical Foundation—a 501(c)(3) nonprofit—leased the facility (constructed in 1981) from the county and began operations under the current name.

On April 28, 2014, a powerful EF-4 tornado devastated much of the hospital campus, including auxiliary buildings, making the East Main facility unusable. WMC resumed limited operations in a temporary structure by May and transitioned to an interim medical facility in April 2015. Three years later, the hospital reopened in a brand-new, advanced medical facility on its original site.

Today, Winston Medical Center has evolved into a full-service healthcare campus, including:

- A 14-bed acute care hospital
- A 10-bed geriatric psychiatric unit
- A 120-bed long-term care nursing home
- A 24/7 emergency department

Through a collaborative, patient-centered approach, WMC delivers a wide range of medical services:

Hospital Services Include:

- Cardiology
- Diagnostic Imaging
- Laboratory Services
- Turning Point Behavioral Health



- Physical, Occupational & Speech Therapy
- Emergency Medical Services
- Inpatient & Observation Care
- Swing Bed Transitional Services
- Senior Long-Term Care
- Sleep Medicine
- Surgical Procedures
- Respiratory Therapy

In addition, WMC operates three primary care clinics across the region, staffed by skilled physicians, nurses, and health professionals focused on preventive care and long-term wellness strategies.

Clinic Services Include:

- Well-child checkups
- Women's health services
- Preventive care
- Medicare Wellness Exams
- Adolescent healthcare
- Treatment of work-related injuries
- Chronic disease management
- Acute illness care
- Pre-employment and DOT physicals
- Laboratory services and immunizations

Community Impact

As one of the leading employers in the county, WMC significantly contributes to the local economy through its workforce and payroll. Beyond healthcare, it plays an active civic role—offering free health screenings, hosting educational events, and presenting health topics at local gatherings and clubs.



Healthcare Services Offered

Cardiology

Starting in February 2023, Dr. Julius Kato of Baptist Cardiology began seeing patients on the last Thursday of each month. Appointments are held at the Main Clinic located on the WMC Hospital Campus, 17540 East Main Street.

Dr. Kato is board-certified in both Cardiovascular Disease and Internal Medicine. His areas of expertise include the management of Congestive Heart Failure, Cardiac Arrhythmias, Coronary Artery Disease, Hypertension, Hyperlipidemia, and Adult Congenital Heart Disease. He also performs pacemaker and loop recorder insertions

Diagnostic Imaging

WMC's radiology department is accredited by the American College of Radiology and utilizes cutting-edge digital imaging technology for quicker exams and clearer results. Portable systems bring imaging to patients' bedsides, improving both accuracy and patient safety. Available services include:

- Digital Mammograms
- Ultrasound & Echocardiography
- CT Scans
- Wide-Bore MRI
- Bone Density Scans
- Lung Cancer Screening



Laboratory

Open 24/7, WMC's laboratory provides a broad array of diagnostic testing with quick turnaround times.

Staffed by certified medical technologists and lab technicians, the lab supports both inpatient and outpatient services, offering tests in:

- Hematology
- Clinical Chemistry
- Urinalysis
- Therapeutic Drug Monitoring
- Microbiology (bacteriology, mycology, parasitology)
- Transfusion Medicine
- Diagnostic and Syphilis Serology
- Pathology (surgical, cytopathology)
- Substance Abuse Screening
- Therapeutic Phlebotomy

Turning Point – Geriatric Behavioral Health

This inpatient psychiatric program supports adults 55 and older experiencing emotional or behavioral challenges. Using a blend of therapy, education, and medication review, the goal is to help individuals regain independence and improve their quality of life. Conditions warranting referral may include:

- Depression & Anxiety
- Suicidal Ideation
- Stress or Emotional Trauma
- Paranoia or Hallucinations
- Confusion or Cognitive Decline

Rehabilitation Therapies

Physical Therapy

Therapists evaluate mobility, muscle strength, and overall physical function to develop custom treatment plans. Therapy may include specialized exercises and aquatic therapy for conditions such as:

- Stroke
- Spinal Cord or Brain Injuries
- Orthopedic Conditions
- Fibromyalgia or Arthritis
- Neurological Disorders

The graphic for Winston Medical Center's Outpatient Therapy Services features a blue and white color scheme. At the top left is the logo, which consists of three stylized 'W' shapes in blue and red, followed by the text 'WINSTON MEDICAL CENTER' in blue. Below the logo, the word 'Comprehensive' is written in a large, bold, blue font, followed by 'Physical, Occupational, & Speech Therapy' in a smaller blue font. A line of text states, 'We utilize the following state-of-the-art technology and techniques:'. Below this is a list of 13 services, each preceded by a blue checkmark icon. The services are: Functional Dry Needling, Aquatic Therapy Program, Myofascial Release, Soft Tissue Mobilization, Mechanical Traction, Game Ready, E-Stim Systems, Vital Stim Swallow Therapy, Voice Therapy, Cognitive Retraining Therapy, Functional Strength Training, and Functional Balance Training. To the right of the text is a large circular image showing three scenes: a person in a blue swimsuit and swim cap using a white and blue aquatic therapy device in a pool; a close-up of a person's arm being treated with dry needling by a therapist wearing blue gloves; and a person in a red shirt and shorts performing a physical therapy exercise on a blue mat. At the bottom of the graphic, the text 'Outpatient Therapy Services' is written in a bold blue font.

WINSTON MEDICAL CENTER

Comprehensive
Physical, Occupational, & Speech Therapy

We utilize the following state-of-the-art technology and techniques:

- ✓ Functional Dry Needling
- ✓ Aquatic Therapy Program
- ✓ Myofascial Release
- ✓ Soft Tissue Mobilization
- ✓ Mechanical Traction
- ✓ Game Ready
- ✓ E-Stim Systems
- ✓ Vital Stim Swallow Therapy
- ✓ Voice Therapy
- ✓ Cognitive Retraining Therapy
- ✓ Functional Strength Training
- ✓ Functional Balance Training

Outpatient Therapy Services

Occupational Therapy

Designed to enhance patients' independence in daily activities, this therapy focuses on personal care, home tasks, and functional mobility. Aquatic therapy is also available for qualifying conditions.

Speech Therapy

Therapists assist with speech, swallowing, memory, and cognition impairments, often post-stroke or trauma-related. Customized care plans aim to restore maximum communication and function.

Emergency Department

Designated a Level IV Trauma Center, WMC's emergency room is staffed around-the-clock by ACLS, PALS, and TNCC-certified physicians and nurses. A helipad allows rapid transport to higher-level trauma centers when needed.

Swing Bed Program

This transitional care program supports patients needing short-term skilled services after hospital discharge. Patients can be transferred from any hospital, allowing them to recover closer to home. Services include:

- Skilled Nursing Observation
- IV Therapy
- Physical, Occupational, and Speech Therapy
- Wound Care
- Palliative Care
- Discharge planning for home or extended care

Senior Living and Long-Term Care

WMC provides round-the-clock care for seniors who can no longer live independently. Residents receive nursing care, rehab services, meals, and assistance in a safe, nurturing environment. Care is provided by licensed and certified nursing staff, with continuous training to uphold quality standards.



Respiratory Therapy

Registered respiratory therapists deliver comprehensive care for patients with chronic and acute respiratory conditions such as asthma, COPD, bronchitis, or pneumonia. Services include:

- Oxygen and Breathing Treatments
- Airway Management
- Diagnostic testing and monitoring
- Mechanical Ventilation
- EEG Testing
- Pulmonary Rehabilitation
- Patient Education



2025 CHNA Executive Summary

CHNA Leadership

The 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) was directed by a steering committee made up of representatives from Winston Medical Center, with valuable input from community stakeholders. These participants served as vital links between the hospital and the populations it supports.

CHNA Steering Committee Members:

- Matt Woodard, CFO
- Heather Ming, Purchasing Director
- Nellie Darden, RN, Med-Surg Nurse Supervisor
- Lori Luke, Accounts Payable Director
- Lindsey Joiner, Gentiva Hospice
- Lindey Hill, Business Office Manager, WMCNH

Our Research Partner



Winston Medical Center collaborated with Carr, Riggs & Ingram (CRI) to complete its 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). CRI is a nationally recognized, full-service accounting and advisory firm, consistently ranked among the top 25 firms in the United States. With offices spanning from New Mexico to North Carolina, CRI serves over 100,000 clients across the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and U.S. military bases abroad.

For more than 25 years, CRI has offered a wide array of services, ranging from traditional accounting and financial reporting to advanced consulting and technology-driven solutions. Their industry expertise spans over 20 sectors, helping clients stay competitive and forward-thinking.

CRI's Healthcare Advisory team specifically supports hundreds of hospitals and health systems throughout the southern United States. Their offerings include financial audits, reimbursement consulting, cost reporting, and strategic advisory services. The team also works alongside hospital associations and healthcare advocacy organizations to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of care delivery across their service region.

Core services provided by CRI's Healthcare Advisory team include:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| • Accounting | • Compilation Services |
| • Agreed-Upon Procedures (AUPs) | • Cost Reporting |
| • Audit & Single Audit | • Cybersecurity |

- Medicare & Medicaid DSH and Supplemental Payment Programs
- Employee Benefit Plan Services
- Fraud & Forensic Accounting
- HIPAA and IT Risk Assessments
- HITRUST Certification Support
- Financial Review Services
- Strategic Advisory Services, ***including CHNAs for numerous hospitals and health systems***
- Transaction Advisory Support
- Business Valuation Services

At CRI, innovation and forward-thinking solutions drive every engagement. Whether you're a returning client or exploring new services, CRI is dedicated to helping organizations thrive in an ever-evolving landscape. For more information, visit www.criadv.com.

Methodology and Community Engagement

The 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) integrated statistical data with community perspectives to uncover health trends and disparities throughout Winston County. By examining critical health indicators and incorporating input from local stakeholders, the assessment identified key priority areas to guide healthcare service delivery, shape public health initiatives, and inform the development of health and social support programs.

Community involvement was a cornerstone of the CHNA process. Feedback was gathered from individuals representing a wide cross-section of the population—including underserved, low-income, and minority groups—offering essential insight into local health concerns, existing assets, and unmet needs that contribute to inequities in care.

To evaluate the county's health landscape, the following research methods were utilized:

- Analysis of demographic, economic, and health-related statistics revealed pressing health needs within the Winston County community and aided our steering committee in selecting our upcoming community health priorities.
- An online Community Health Needs Survey was made available to residents of Winston County, WMC staff, and individuals from nearby communities. This assessment allowed WMC to capture residents' views on major health issues and opportunities for improvement, and this feedback has been made available to the provider.
- Focus group sessions with key community leaders and representatives to gain deeper insight into pressing health issues and unmet needs. The valuable input gathered during this session played a critical role in shaping a community-driven health improvement plan focused on the most significant and urgent concerns facing the population we serve.

CHNA Focus Group Organizations Represented:

- Diabetes Coalition
- Police/First Responders
- Health Department
- Gentiva Hospice
- Pastors within the community
- Lions Club of Louisville
- Step of Faith Counseling
- MSDH Emergency Preparedness
- Chamber of Commerce
- Main Street Association
- Local churches
- Winston Medical Center

Community Health Priorities

Promoting health equity requires focusing resources and efforts on the community's most pressing health challenges. With guidance from community stakeholders and a thorough assessment of Winston Medical Center's strengths and capabilities, hospital leadership has identified the following key priority areas to address in the 2025–2028 Community Health Implementation Plan:

1. Improving the Southern Lifestyle and Mental Health Through Education, Awareness, and Screenings
2. Alzheimer's Awareness and Education, Emphasizing Taking the Resources to the People
3. Falls Education and Fall Prevention, Emphasizing Safety, Mobility, and Independence

Board Approval

Under Section 501(r)(3)(A) of the Internal Revenue Code, tax-exempt hospitals are required to complete a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every three years in partnership with the communities they serve. In addition to conducting the assessment, hospitals must also develop an implementation plan to address the health needs identified through the CHNA process.

According to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the CHNA process must include the following components:

1. Clearly define the community served by the hospital
2. Assess the health needs of that community

3. Collect input from individuals who represent the broad interests of the community, including public health experts
4. Prepare a written CHNA report, approved by the hospital's authorized governing body
5. Make the CHNA report publicly accessible

Failure to comply with these requirements may result in a \$50,000 IRS penalty and could risk the hospital's tax-exempt status.

In accordance with these federal regulations, Winston Medical Center must complete and obtain governing board approval of its CHNA by the close of its fiscal year—December 31, 2025.

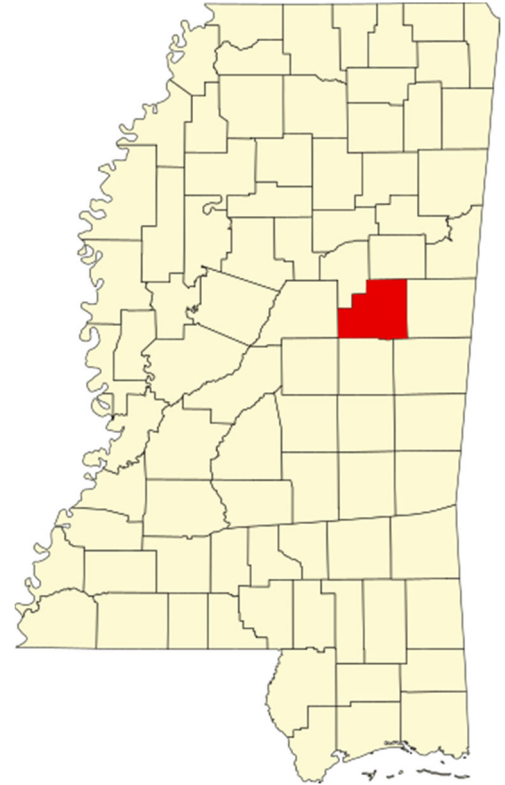
The 2025 CHNA and the corresponding Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) were presented to WMC's Board of Directors on Tuesday, November 16th, 2025. Following approval, both documents were made publicly available at www.winstonmedical.org, with printed copies also obtainable through the hospital's administrative office.



Primary Service Area Description

Winston County, Mississippi—WMC’s primary service area—encompasses 607.2 square miles, making it the 32nd largest county in the state by total area. It is bordered by Noxubee, Neshoba, Attala, Oktibbeha, Leake, Kemper, and Choctaw counties. According to the *Mississippi Encyclopedia* (2018), the land that now constitutes Winston County was ceded by the Choctaw Nation in the 1830 Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek. The county was officially established in 1833 and named after Colonel Louis Winston, a Natchez attorney.

In its early years, Winston County was primarily rural, with most residents engaged in small-scale farming, cultivating cotton and corn, and raising livestock. By the turn of the 20th century, the county remained predominantly agricultural, lacking an urban center and having minimal industrial activity—reflected in its ranking as the fourth-lowest in Mississippi for total industrial wages at the time. However, between 1880 and 1930, the population doubled, and roughly one-quarter of the workforce shifted into manufacturing, particularly in the furniture and apparel sectors. Like many counties in central Mississippi, it has retained its rural character, with agriculture continuing to play a central role in the local economy.



Social Determinates of Health

Background

Social determinants of health (SDOH) are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, learn, play, worship, and age—conditions that shape their health, daily life, and overall well-being. These factors are influenced by broader systems and policies, including economic frameworks, social norms, and political structures. In essence, they represent the areas where strategic investment and public health efforts can have the greatest impact.

SDOH are generally categorized into five key domains:

1. Economic Stability
2. Education Access and Quality
3. Health Care Access and Quality
4. Neighborhood and Built Environment
5. Social and Community Context

Reducing disparities in these areas is crucial for achieving health equity, ensuring everyone has a fair chance to reach their highest level of health.

Studies have shown that SDOH often have a greater impact on health outcomes than genetics or access to medical care. However, these factors are deeply rooted in societal structures and contribute to unequal access to essentials like safe housing, quality education, steady employment, and adequate income—ultimately increasing health risks for many communities.

Encouraging healthy behaviors alone is not enough to overcome the challenges posed by SDOH. Instead, public health organizations must work in partnership with other sectors—such as education, transportation, and housing—to build environments that support good health for all. This means fostering the social, physical, and economic conditions that allow individuals and communities to thrive.



Understanding Health Equity

Area Deprivation Index

Living in disadvantaged neighborhoods is linked to a range of health challenges, including higher rates of diabetes and heart disease, greater reliance on healthcare services, and shorter life expectancy. Health programs that fail to account for neighborhood-level disadvantage risk being ineffective.

The Area Deprivation Index (ADI), originally created by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) over thirty years ago, has been further developed by Dr. Amy Kind and her team at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. The ADI ranks neighborhoods according to socioeconomic disadvantage, using measures such as income, education, employment, and housing quality. It serves as a valuable tool in guiding healthcare delivery and shaping policy to better support the most underserved communities.

Within this state, ADI scores are ranked from lowest to highest and grouped into deciles. A score of 1 represents the least disadvantaged areas, while a score of 10 identifies the most disadvantaged block groups. **In 2023, Winston County reported an ADI score of 6.30, indicating a higher-than-average level of socioeconomic hardship relative to typical communities.**

Area Deprivation Index (ADI) 2023	
	Winston County, MS
Overall	6.30

Social Vulnerability Index

Social vulnerability refers to the social and economic conditions that increase a community’s susceptibility to harm during public health emergencies and other crises that may lead to illness or injury. Factors such as poverty, lack of access to transportation, and overcrowded housing can weaken a community’s ability to respond to and recover from these challenges.

The CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) is a tool designed to identify communities that may require additional support before, during, or after disasters. It includes data and maps illustrating various components of social vulnerability, which are grouped into four key themes. These themes are combined to produce an overall social vulnerability score for each community.

The SVI uses a percentile ranking system, with scores ranging from 0 (lowest vulnerability) to 1 (highest vulnerability). **In Winston County, the overall SVI score was 0.3951, reflecting a low to medium level of social vulnerability. Although most indicators fall within the low to medium range, two themes—household characteristics and racial and ethnic minority status—showed medium to high vulnerability, each with a score of 0.6173.**

Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) 2023

	Winston County, MS
Overall	0.3951
Socioeconomic Status	0.2963
Household Characteristics	0.6173
Racial and Ethnic Minority Status	0.6173
Housing Type/Transportation	0.3580

The household characteristics sub-indicator is comprised of the following elements:

- Individuals aged 65 and older
- Individuals aged 17 and younger
- Civilians with a disability
- Single-parent households
- Proficiency in the English language

The racial and ethnic minority status-sub indicator is composed of the following elements:

- Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
- Black or African American, Not Hispanic or Latino
- Asian, Not Hispanic or Latino
- American Indian or Alaska Native, Not Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Not Hispanic or Latino
- Two or More Races, Not Hispanic or Latino
- Other Races, Not Hispanic or Latino

Distressed Communities Index

The Distressed Communities Index (DCI) reveals substantial differences in economic well-being among communities across the United States. Drawing on seven key socioeconomic indicators from the most recent Census data, the index classifies areas into five categories: prosperous, comfortable, mid-tier, at risk, and distressed.

The DCI uses a percentile-based scoring system to highlight disparities both within and between cities and states. Distress Scores range from 0 (indicating the most prosperous areas) to 100 (indicating the most distressed). **Winston County, Mississippi is categorized as "distressed," with a Distress Score of 82.13, ranking it 40th out of the state's 82 counties.**

Distressed Communities Index (DCI) 2025

	Winston County, MS
Overall	82.13
No high school diploma	14.5%
Poverty rate	26.0%
Adults not working	30.2%
Housing vacancy rate	10.3%
Median income ratio	85.9%
Change in employment	-2.7%
Change in establishments	0.3%

Vizient Vulnerability Index

The Vizient Vulnerability Index (VVI) is designed to identify social needs and barriers that affect access to healthcare across different neighborhoods—factors that can significantly impact individual and community health. The index provides data across nine distinct domains of vulnerability, covering all five categories of Social Determinants of Health (SDOH).

VVI scores range from -3.000 (indicating low vulnerability) to 3.000 (indicating high vulnerability). A score above 1.000 designates an area as having "high vulnerability," meaning these communities experience challenges significantly greater than the national average. **Winston County has an overall VVI score of 1.085, placing it in the high vulnerability category. The highest vulnerability among its sub-domains is in health care access, which has a score of 1.410.**

This sub-indicator encompasses the following:

- Percentage of uninsured individuals
- Shortages in health care providers (primary care, dental, and mental health)
- Far distance to travel to a hospital

Vizient Vulnerability Index (VVI) 2025

	Winston County, MS
Overall	1.085
Economic	0.725
Education	0.435
Health Care Access	1.410
Neighborhood	0.860
Housing	0.030
Clean Environment	0.475
Social	0.425
Transportation	0.095
Public Safety	-0.505

Priority Health Needs

As discussed in the previous section, Winston County faces multiple vulnerabilities and socioeconomic challenges that warrant attention. Nonetheless, it is essential to concentrate our efforts and resources on the most urgent health concerns within the community. To determine which issues should take priority over the next three years, WMC engaged with community partners and stakeholders to gather input and identify three primary health needs. Guided by this feedback, WMC will focus its initiatives on these key priorities for the 2025–2028 period:

1. Improving the Southern Lifestyle and Mental Health Through Education, Awareness, and Screenings
2. Alzheimer's Awareness and Education, Emphasizing Taking the Resources to the People
3. Falls Education and Fall Prevention, Emphasizing Safety, Mobility, and Independence

The strategies developed to address these priority areas will be informed by community population trends and input from stakeholders, as outlined in the following sections.

Community Overview and Trends

While WMC serves multiple counties across central Mississippi, its main focus remains on the residents of Winston County. The county's demographic, socioeconomic, and public health trends are reflective of those seen across the state, suggesting that neighboring counties likely experience comparable challenges.

As of the 2023 Census, Winston County reported a population of 17,609—a decline of approximately -7.57% since 2013. Although the state of Mississippi has also experienced population loss during this period, the rate of decline in Winston County is more prevalent.

Demographically, the county is characterized by a near-equal racial distribution, with white residents comprising 49.7% of the population and Black or African American residents accounting for 47.2%. Over the past decade, some smaller racial groups in the county have experienced population increases exceeding 500%, suggesting a trend toward greater racial diversity at the local level. However, when examining ethnic diversity, Mississippi overall remains more diverse than Winston County. The Hispanic or Latino population accounts for 3.6% of the state's residents, compared to just 0.5% in Winston County. Whereas Mississippi's Hispanic or Latino population has grown by 30.3% over the past decade, Winston County has seen a sharp decline of -52.1% in this demographic.

Winston County is also facing notable demographic shifts due to an aging population. As of 2023, 21.2% of residents are aged 65 or older—well above the state and national average of 16.8%. This senior demographic has grown by 15.8% since 2013, driven largely by the aging baby boomer generation. Meanwhile, 22.2% of the population is under the age of 18, although this age group has declined by 15.9% over the past decade. These trends present both

challenges and opportunities for healthcare providers, who must adapt to the rising demand for elder care while continuing to support preventive health services for younger residents.

Economic hardship remains a pressing concern in Winston County. Poverty has worsened over the past decade, with nearly one in three residents living below the poverty line—compared to one in eight nationally. Food insecurity affects nearly one fourth of the population. Most alarming is the fact that over half of the county's children live in poverty, and more than one-third face food insecurity. While these issues are particularly acute in Winston County, they mirror broader patterns of economic distress throughout the southern United States, where poverty and food insecurity are deeply intertwined.

Housing trends in Winston County generally align with state and national averages, with approximately two-thirds of residents owning their homes. Rental rates are also comparable. However, nearly half of renters in the county are considered cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing. This is especially concerning given that Winston County's median rent is significantly lower than state and national levels, suggesting that lower median income may be a driving factor in housing insecurity.

Digital access remains another area of disparity. Residents of Winston County are slightly less likely to own computers than the state and national average and are even less likely to have active internet subscriptions. These gaps in digital connectivity highlight persistent barriers to accessing essential services, educational opportunities, and economic advancement.

Initiative #1: Improving the Southern Lifestyle and Mental Health Through Education, Awareness, and Screenings

Winston Medical Center seeks to strengthen community health by promoting sustainable lifestyle improvements and elevating the importance of mental well-being through ongoing education, awareness, and accessible screening opportunities. Through community events, Lunch and Learns, and other outreach communications, Winston Medical Center will deliver practical, engaging, and culturally relevant information that residents can incorporate into everyday life. These efforts will be designed to encourage long-term behavior change while meeting individuals where they are in their health journey.

The medical facility is deeply committed to improving both physical and mental health outcomes across the county. Winston Medical Center will emphasize proper nutrition, provide awareness of healthier alternatives to traditional high-fat southern diets, and reinforce the value of mental health education and early intervention. By addressing lifestyle patterns alongside mental health needs, the initiative aims to improve quality of life and reduce preventable disease burden within the community.

Winston Medical Center will provide education on overall wellness—including physical activity, nutrition, stress management, and mental health—to racially and economically diverse populations. Education will not only focus on what healthy choices are, but also on how to realistically implement them using resources that are already available locally. In

addition, screenings will be offered throughout the county with a focus on chronic diseases commonly associated with lifestyle risk factors, ensuring that early detection and prevention services are reachable for all residents.

Initiative #2: Alzheimer's Awareness and Education, Emphasizing Taking the Resources to the People

Over the past six years, Alzheimer's disease has remained one of the five leading causes of death in Winston County, underscoring a growing and urgent public health concern. Beginning in 2017, Alzheimer's rose to become the county's third leading cause of death, reflecting both the increasing prevalence of the disease and the significant impact it has on families and the healthcare system. These trends highlight the need for expanded education, early detection, and consistent community-based support.

Older adults—particularly those age 65 and above—represent the population most affected by Alzheimer's disease and will be the primary audience for awareness, prevention education, and early screening efforts. Winston Medical Center will prioritize equipping this group with information on early warning signs, available diagnostic resources, and strategies for maintaining cognitive health. Just as importantly, the initiative recognizes that Alzheimer's affects more than the individual; it impacts entire households and support networks.

Caregivers—who may range from spouses and adult children to grandchildren and close friends—will be a central focus of this initiative. Because caregivers often experience emotional strain, fatigue, and limited access to guidance, Winston Medical Center will provide targeted education and ongoing support to help them navigate the realities of caregiving. By bringing resources directly into the community, this effort aims to reduce isolation, improve caregiver resilience, and ensure families feel informed and supported throughout every stage of the disease.

Initiative #3: Falls Education and Fall Prevention, Emphasizing Safety, Mobility, and Independence

Falls remain one of the most common and preventable causes of injury among older adults and individuals with mobility challenges, often leading to emergency visits, hospitalizations, and long-term disability. In Winston County, where a significant portion of the population is age 65 and older, fall-related injuries represent a serious threat to independence and overall quality of life. This initiative is designed to reduce falls through proactive education, community engagement, and practical prevention strategies that residents can apply immediately.

Winston Medical Center will prioritize increasing awareness of the risk factors that contribute to falls, including balance limitations, medication side effects, vision changes, chronic disease, and home hazards. Through evidence-based education and community outreach, the medical center will encourage residents to recognize early warning signs, adopt safer daily

habits, and access preventive resources before injuries occur. Emphasis will be placed on achievable improvements that support long-term mobility and confidence.

Education will focus on fall prevention across a racially and economically diverse community, with special attention to older adults, caregivers, and individuals recovering from illness or injury. Winston Medical Center will provide clear guidance on balance and strength improvement, safe movement techniques, appropriate use of assistive devices, and simple home modifications that reduce risk. By taking these resources directly into the community and reinforcing them through repeated messaging, this initiative aims to lower fall rates and help residents maintain active, independent lives.

The following sections provide a comprehensive summary of the CHNA data findings for the WMC service area, including comparisons at the state and national levels.



Service Area Population Trends

Demographics

Winston County has a population of 17,609, compared to Mississippi's total population of 2,951,438. Both experienced modest population declines, with Winston County decreasing by 7.57% and the state by 0.85%. In contrast, the overall U.S. population grew by approximately 6.69%.

2023 Total Population

	Total Population	% Change Since 2012
Winston County	17,609	-7.57%
Mississippi	2,951,438	-0.85%
United States	332,387,540	6.69%

Census data shows that Winston County is more racially and ethnically diverse than Mississippi overall. Non-White residents make up 50.8% of the county's population, slightly above the state average of 47.3%. About 49.7% of Winston County residents identify as White, compared to 56.3% statewide and 63.4% nationally. In contrast, Winston County has more limited ethnic diversity, with only 0.5% of residents identifying as Hispanic or Latino—well below the state average of 3.6% and far below the national rate of 19.0%.

Over the past decade, Winston County, Mississippi, and the United States have all seen declines in their White populations, with reductions ranging from 6.1% to 11.8%. In Winston County, all population growth came from non-White groups. While the Black or African American, Asian, and some other race populations declined, there were significant increases among individuals identifying as American Indian and Alaska Native, as well as those of two or more races—each group growing by more than 500%. Despite these shifts, the county experienced a decline in ethnic diversity, largely due to a 52.1% drop in its Hispanic population.

2023 Population by Race and Ethnicity

	White	Black or African American	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Some Other Race	Two or More Races	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
Winston County	49.7%	47.2%	1.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%	1.6%	0.5%
Mississippi	56.3%	37.0%	0.4%	1.0%	0.0%	1.7%	3.6%	3.6%
United States	63.4%	12.4%	0.9%	5.8%	0.2%	6.6%	10.7%	19.0%

Population Change by Race and Ethnicity, 2013 to 2023

	White	Black or African American	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Some Other Race	Two or More Races	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
Winston County	-11.8%	-6.9%	541.2%	-86.4%	0.0%	-41.3%	585.7%	-52.1%
Mississippi	-6.1%	-1.5%	1.2%	4.6%	415.0%	99.1%	207.7%	30.3%
United States	-8.6%	4.9%	15.1%	27.1%	19.6%	48.8%	307.6%	21.9%

Winston County’s population is nearly evenly split by gender, with 48.4% male and 51.6% female—closely aligning with Mississippi’s averages of 48.5% and 51.5%, respectively. The county’s median age is 40.0 years, slightly older than the state median of 38.4 years. Overall, Winston County’s age distribution mirrors that of Mississippi, with more than one-third of residents falling into dependent age categories: 22.2% are under 18, and 21.2% are 65 or older.

This demographic profile presents a dual challenge for healthcare providers: meeting the immediate care needs of an aging population while also delivering preventative services for youth. For Winston Medical Center, this creates a strategic opportunity to expand preventative care offerings and promote long-term community health.

Over the past decade, Winston County has seen steady growth in its senior population, reflecting broader state and national trends driven largely by the aging baby boomer generation. However, while the local increase in residents aged 65 and older is notable at 15.8%, it remains less dramatic than the statewide and national increases of 26.0% and 33.7%, respectively. Meanwhile, the county has experienced a sharp decline in its youth population, with the number of residents under 18 falling by 15.9%—a trend consistent across Mississippi and the U.S., but more pronounced in Winston County.

Population by Sex

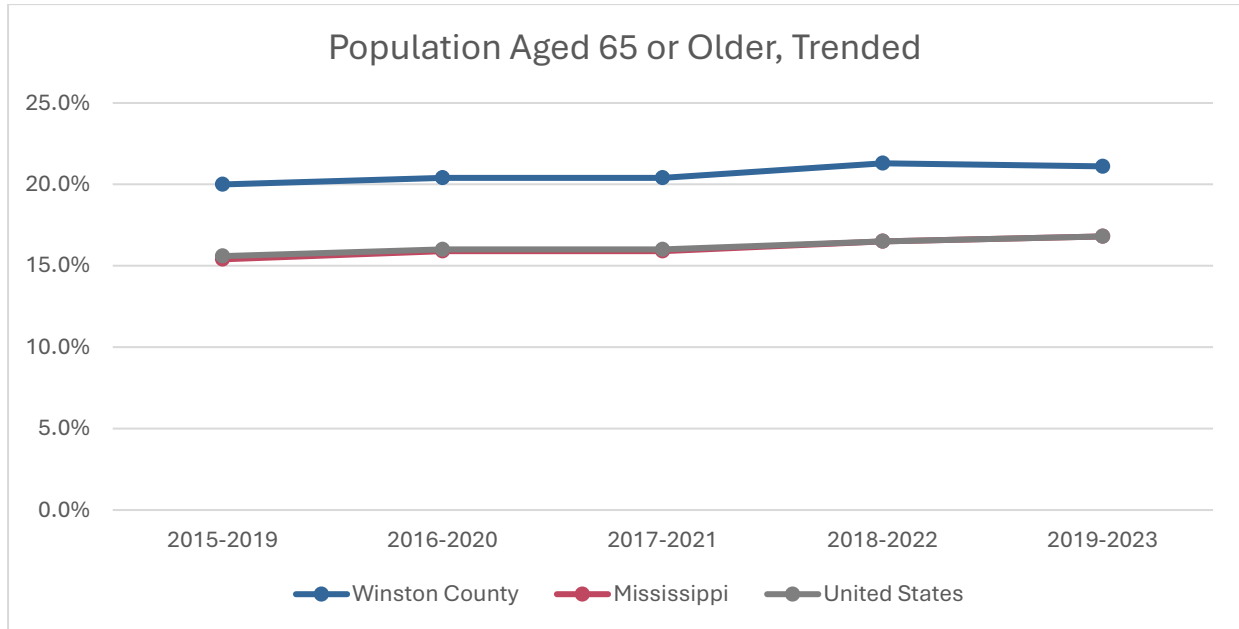
	Male	Female
Winston County	48.40%	51.60%
Mississippi	48.50%	51.50%
United States	49.50%	50.50%

2019-2023 Population by Age

	Under 18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+ years	Median Age
Winston County	22.2%	8.9%	10.2%	12.4%	11.7%	13.4%	21.2%	40.0
Mississippi	23.5%	9.6%	12.6%	12.6%	12.1%	12.8%	16.8%	38.4
United States	22.2%	9.1%	13.7%	13.1%	12.3%	12.8%	16.8%	38.7

Population Change by Age, 2013 to 2023

	Under 18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+ years	Median Age
Winston County	-15.9%	-4.3%	-17.1%	-1.9%	-20.9%	-7.3%	15.8%	-6.8%
Mississippi	-7.5%	-6.9%	-4.0%	-0.9%	-12.6%	5.6%	26.0%	6.1%
United States	-0.3%	-2.5%	9.1%	6.4%	-8.2%	13.2%	33.7%	3.8%



Income and Work

Winston County's median household income falls slightly below the Mississippi state average, contributing to higher poverty rates across all age groups compared to both state and national levels. Consistent with elevated poverty, unemployment is also more prevalent in Winston County than in the rest of Mississippi. Currently, 30.4% of county residents live below the poverty line, compared to 19.1% statewide. Seniors aged 65 and older are also affected, with 19.9% living in poverty—above the state average of 14.3%. However, children are the most impacted demographic: 51.5% live in poverty in Winston County, nearly double the 26.4% statewide rate.

While overall poverty levels in the county have remained relatively stable over the past five years, a slight uptick was observed in 2023. Stark racial and ethnic disparities persist. Non-White residents are twice as likely to live in poverty as White residents, of whom 17.3% are below the poverty line. Though such disparities exist statewide and nationally, they are particularly pronounced in Winston County. Notably, 77.5% of residents identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native live in poverty, along with 43.1% of those identifying as Black or African American.

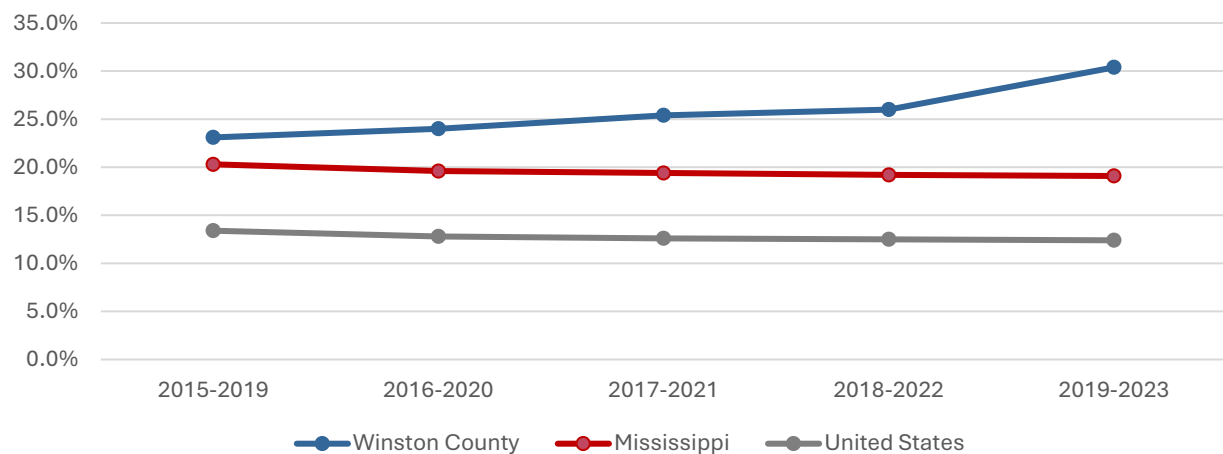
Economic Indicators

	Winston County	Mississippi	United States
Income and Poverty (2019-2023)			
Median household income	49,071	54,915	78,538
People in poverty	30.40%	19.10%	12.40%
Children in poverty	51.50%	26.40%	16.30%
Older adults (65+) in poverty	19.90%	14.30%	10.40%
Unemployment			
2015-2019	7.10%	7.50%	5.30%
2016-2020	8.30%	7.10%	5.40%
2017-2021	8.00%	6.80%	5.50%
2018-2022	6.90%	6.40%	5.30%
2019-2023	7.90%	6.00%	5.20%

2019-2023 People in Poverty by Race and Ethnicity

	White	Black or African American	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Some Other Race	Two or More Races	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
Winston County	17.3%	43.1%	77.5%	0.0%	N/A	0.0%	27.7%	30.8%
Mississippi	11.7%	29.9%	28.4%	12.7%	25.6%	27.6%	21.3%	25.3%
United States	9.9%	21.3%	21.8%	9.9%	17.2%	18.2%	14.7%	16.9%

Population for Whom Poverty Status Is Determined, Trended



Food Insecurity

In response to the economic disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, federal and local governments expanded support programs that helped temporarily stabilize—and in some cases reduce—food insecurity for roughly two years. However, as these emergency measures were gradually withdrawn and the cost of living, especially food prices, continued to rise, food insecurity has once again begun to climb.

In 2021, both Winston County and the nation experienced their lowest levels of food insecurity in five years, largely thanks to the expanded assistance programs. But since those programs expired, food insecurity has risen sharply, now reaching its highest levels since 2019. Today, nearly one in four residents in Winston County—and one in three children—struggle with food insecurity. Alarming, nearly half of those affected earn too much to qualify for SNAP benefits. This troubling trend mirrors a wider crisis across the southern United States, where food insecurity remains deeply linked to long-standing poverty.

2019-2023 Food Insecurity

	Winston County	Mississippi	United States
Food Insecurity among the Overall Population			
2023	24.3%	19.4%	14.3%
2022	21.0%	18.8%	13.5%
2021	17.8%	16.3%	10.4%
2020	18.4%	16.2%	11.8%
2019	19.1%	18.5%	10.9%
Food Insecurity among the Child Population			
2023	37.4%	23.0%	19.2%
2022	33.0%	23.6%	18.5%
2021	26.1%	18.8%	12.8%
2020	28.5%	20.4%	16.1%
2019	26.8%	22.4%	14.6%

Education

When compared to educational attainment levels across Mississippi and the United States, Winston County has a higher proportion of residents whose highest level of education is a high school diploma. However, the county lags behind both state and national averages in terms of postsecondary education. Just 12.5% of Winston County residents have earned a bachelor's degree, and only 6.1% hold a graduate or professional degree—figures that fall short of Mississippi's averages of 14.7% and 9.4%, respectively. Both the county and the state also remain behind the national benchmarks, with a greater percentage of the population lacking a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Educational disparities by race are particularly pronounced in Winston County, often surpassing the gaps observed at both the state and national levels. Most racial and ethnic groups in the county have lower levels of academic attainment compared to their peers statewide and nationwide.

However, there are notable exceptions. For instance, 100% of individuals identifying as "some other race" and 36.0% of those identifying as two or more races have attained a bachelor's degree or higher. Additionally, 29.7% of Hispanic or Latino residents in Winston County hold at least a bachelor's degree—well above the state and national averages of 17.2% and 19.9%, respectively. These figures suggest that, while overall educational attainment remains low, Winston County exhibits comparatively smaller ethnic disparities in higher education than Mississippi or the U.S. as a whole.

2019-2023 Educational Attainment

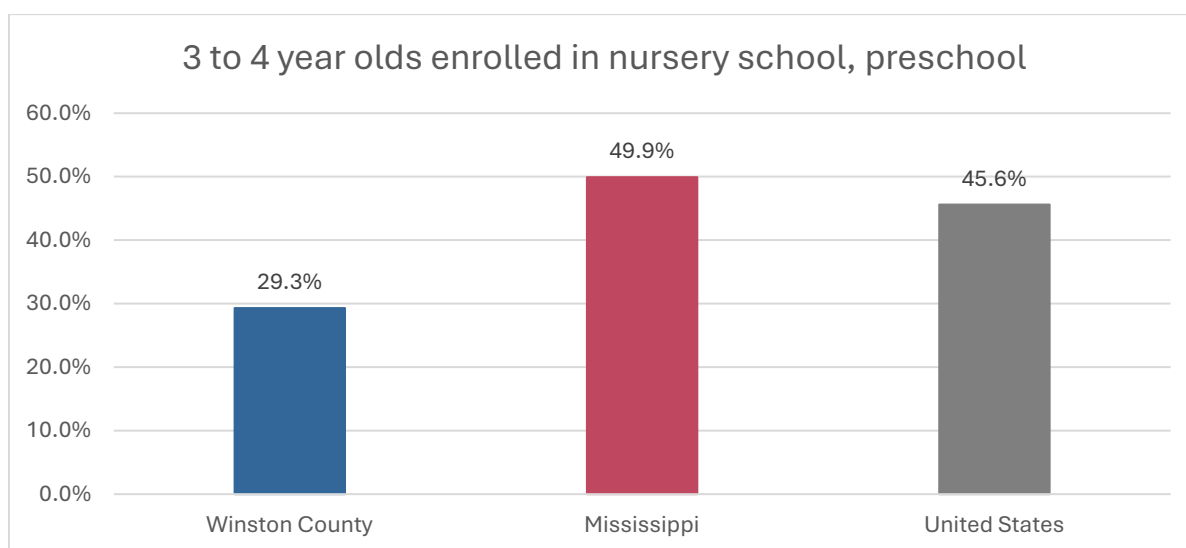
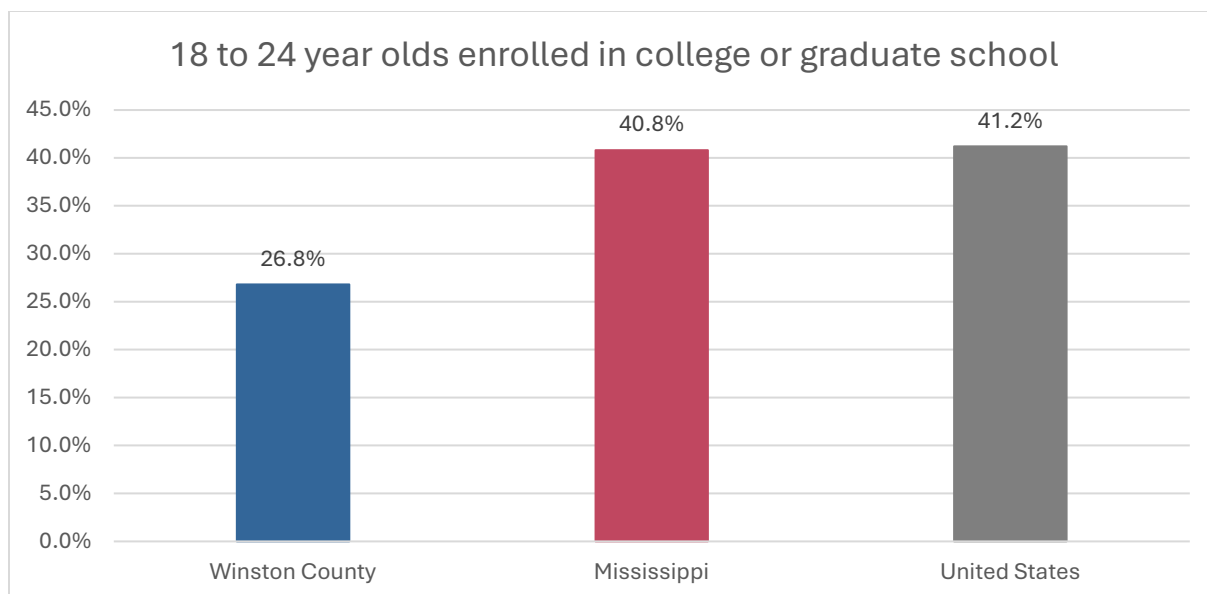
	Less than 9th grade	9th to 12th grade, no diploma	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	Some college, no degree	Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree
Winston County	5.1%	11.2%	36.7%	19.3%	9.0%	12.5%	6.1%
Mississippi	4.5%	8.9%	29.9%	21.8%	10.8%	14.7%	9.4%
United States	4.7%	5.9%	26.2%	19.4%	8.8%	21.3%	13.7%

2019-2023 Population with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher by Race and Ethnicity

	White	Black or African American	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Some Other Race	Two or More Races	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
Winston County	28.0%	6.6%	0.0%	0.0%	N/A	100.0%	36.0%	29.7%
Mississippi	27.9%	17.7%	10.5%	43.3%	30.5%	16.8%	23.8%	17.2%
United States	37.7%	24.7%	16.2%	57.0%	19.0%	15.6%	28.2%	19.9%

In Winston County, the percentage of individuals aged 18 to 24 enrolled in college or graduate school is well below both state and national averages. While 40.8% of young adults in Mississippi and 41.2% nationwide are enrolled in higher education, only about one in four in Winston County pursue postsecondary education.

An even wider disparity appears in preschool enrollment among children aged 3 to 4. In Winston County, just 29.3% of children in this age group are enrolled in preschool—significantly lower than the state average of 49.9% and the national rate of 45.6%.



Housing

Homeownership in Winston County closely aligns with both state and national trends, with 69.7% of residents owning their homes—slightly above the 69.5% rate in Mississippi and notably higher than the 65.0% national average. The county also has lower selected monthly owner costs (SMOC), which likely supports its strong homeownership rate and results in a slightly lower percentage of cost-burdened homeowners compared to state and national figures. Although a smaller portion of Winston County residents rent their homes, nearly half of renters still experience cost burdens, mirroring patterns observed across Mississippi and the United States.

2019 - 2023 Housing Indicators

	Owners				
	Occupied Units	Median SMOC - with a mortgage*	Cost-Burdened**	Median SMOC - without a mortgage*	Cost-Burdened**
Winston County	69.7%	1,153	27.6%	407	11.0%
Mississippi	69.5%	1,353	26.3%	418	12.1%
United States	65.0%	1,902	27.6%	612	13.9%

2019 - 2023 Housing Indicators, Renters

	Renters		
	Occupied Units	Median Rent	Cost-Burdened**
Winston County	30.30%	654	48.2%
Mississippi	30.5%	923	50.5%
United States	35.0%	1,348	50.4%

Although lead-based paint was banned in U.S. residential construction in 1978, many older homes still contain it, posing significant health risks—especially to children. Lead exposure can damage the brain, kidneys, and blood, and in severe cases, may lead to seizures, coma, or even death. Children from low-income households and minority racial or ethnic backgrounds are particularly vulnerable to exposure in their homes. Data from 2019 to 2023 reveals that Winston County had a higher proportion of homes built before 1980 compared to both state and national levels, heightening the risk of lead exposure in the area.

2019-2023 Housing by Year Built

	Before 1980	1980 to 1989	1990 to 1999	2000 to 2009	2010 to 2019	2020 or later
Winston County	53.0%	11.1%	14.1%	15.2%	5.9%	0.8%
Mississippi	42.3%	13.9%	16.0%	16.7%	10.2%	1.0%
United States	50.5%	13.0%	12.8%	13.6%	8.9%	1.2%

Across the U.S., individuals living in low-income communities and aging housing are more likely to encounter environmental hazards such as mold, dampness, and allergens—factors linked to roughly 21% of current asthma cases. High moisture levels can lead to mold growth and dust mites, and may also attract pests like cockroaches, rats, and mice, all of which produce allergens that can aggravate asthma and other respiratory conditions. In Winston County, the percentage of adults currently diagnosed with asthma is slightly higher than the state and national averages, although the difference is not statistically significant.

Current Asthma among Adults, Age-Adjusted

	Winston County	Mississippi	United States
2022	11.0%	9.4%	9.9%

Although the majority of U.S. adults use the internet, a notable share still lacks broadband access at home. Disparities in broadband availability persist across racial and ethnic groups, age, geographic location, education level, and income. As healthcare systems increasingly depend on digital platforms and online communication, expanding broadband access is essential to ensuring equitable health outcomes. In Winston County, computer access falls slightly below the state average, with about 1 in 8 residents lacking access—compared to 1 in 11 across Mississippi and 1 in 20 nationwide. Broadband internet access shows an even larger gap: around 1 in 4 people in Winston County lack internet access, versus 1 in 5 in Mississippi and just 1 in 10 nationally.

2019 - 2023 Households with Digital Access

	With a computer	With an Internet subscription
Winston County	87.1%	76.1%
Mississippi	91.4%	81.9%
United States	94.8%	89.7%

A Closer Look at Health Statistics

Access to Healthcare

Preventive healthcare is vital for lowering disease rates and avoiding early death. In Winston County, 77.6% of residents have seen a doctor within the past year. Still, many older adults are missing key preventive services, including flu and pneumococcal (PPV) vaccines, colorectal cancer screenings, and mammograms. Oral health also remains a serious issue—untreated dental problems are closely linked to chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease. Yet, more than 9 in 10 Winston County residents haven't visited a dentist in the last year. This trend reflects a larger public health concern impacting not only Winston County but also communities throughout Mississippi and the nation.

Preventative Healthcare Rates, Age-Adjusted

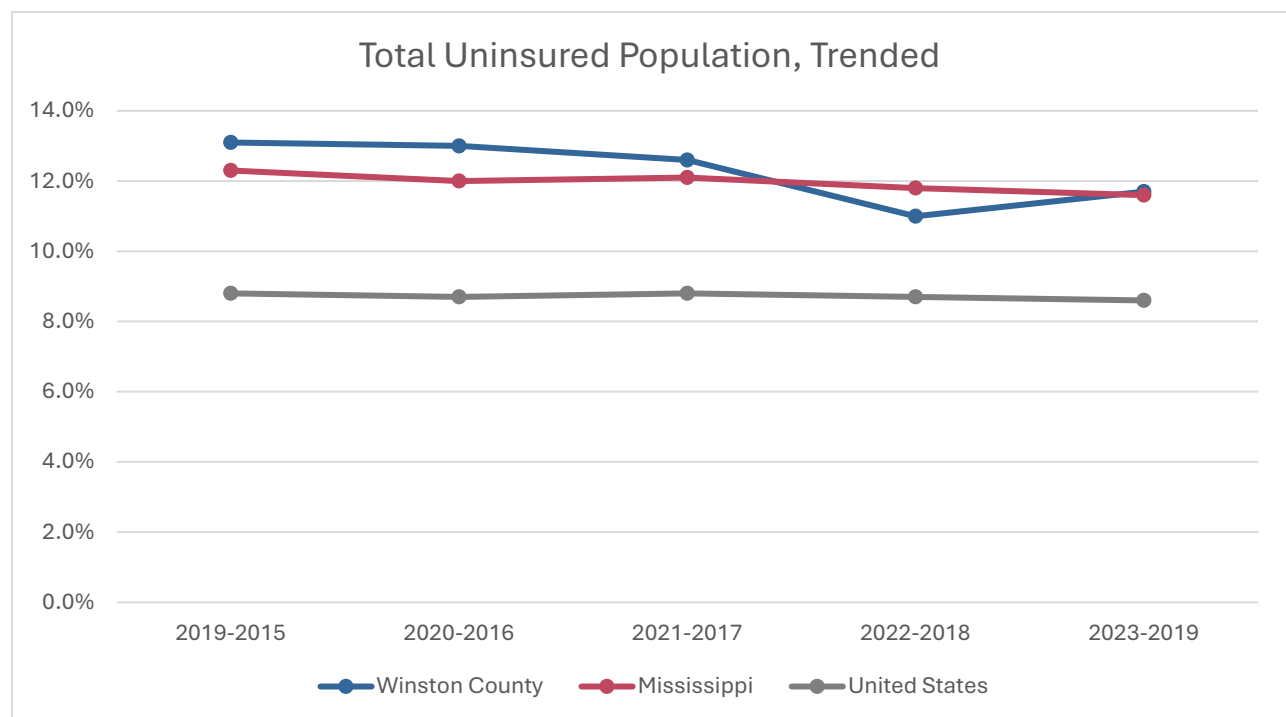
	Visits to Doctor	Visits to Dentist
Winston County	77.6%	7.6%
Mississippi	78.1%	58.3%
United States	74.2%	63.4%

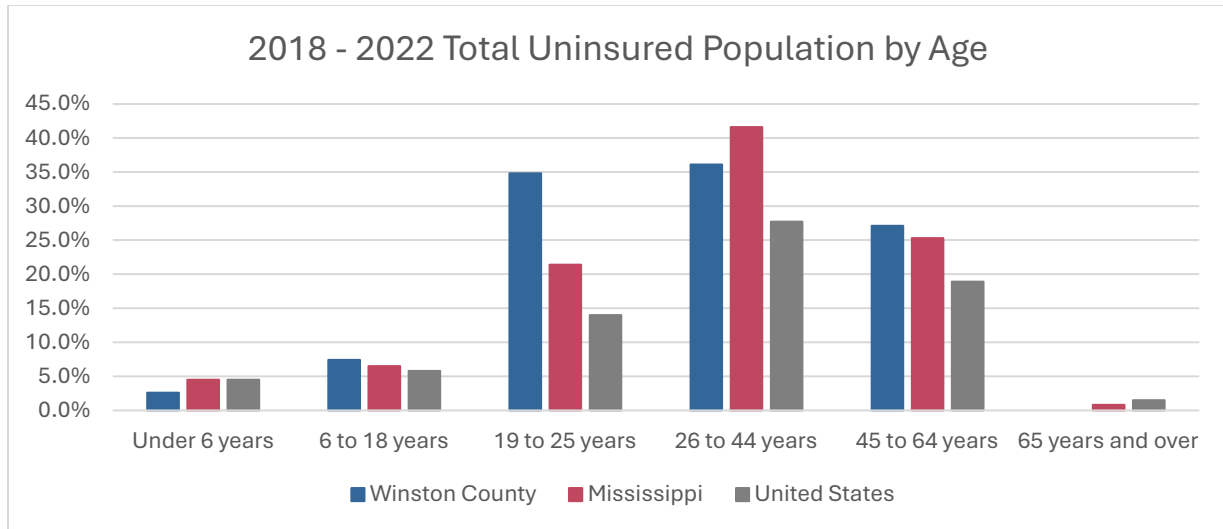
Lack of health insurance greatly reduces the likelihood of having a regular healthcare provider and increases the risk of delaying or skipping routine care—often leading to more serious health problems. In Winston County, 11.7% of residents were uninsured in 2023, a slight increase from

the county's lowest rate of 11.0% in 2022, though still down from 13.1% in 2019. Both Winston County and the state of Mississippi have experienced a gradual decrease in uninsured rates over the past five years, suggesting a potential long-term downward trend despite recent fluctuations. Nationally, however, the uninsured rate has remained relatively steady at around 8.7% over the same period.

When broken down by age group, every adult aged 65 and older in Winston County has health insurance, a trend that holds true at the state and national levels, as most older adults are insured across the state and nation. Coverage is also high among children across the board. The highest rates of uninsurance are seen among adults aged 19 to 64—particularly those between 19 and 44 years old. In Winston County, more than one in three individuals in this age group are uninsured, a pattern that mirrors statewide trends.

Disparities in insurance coverage by race and ethnicity generally reflect broader socioeconomic inequalities, though the gaps are narrower in Winston County compared to the state and nation. In most racial and ethnic groups, insurance rates are similar between White and non-White residents. Notably, all individuals identifying as Asian, Hispanic, or "some other race" in the county are insured. At the state and national levels, however, racial and ethnic disparities in insurance coverage tend to be more pronounced.

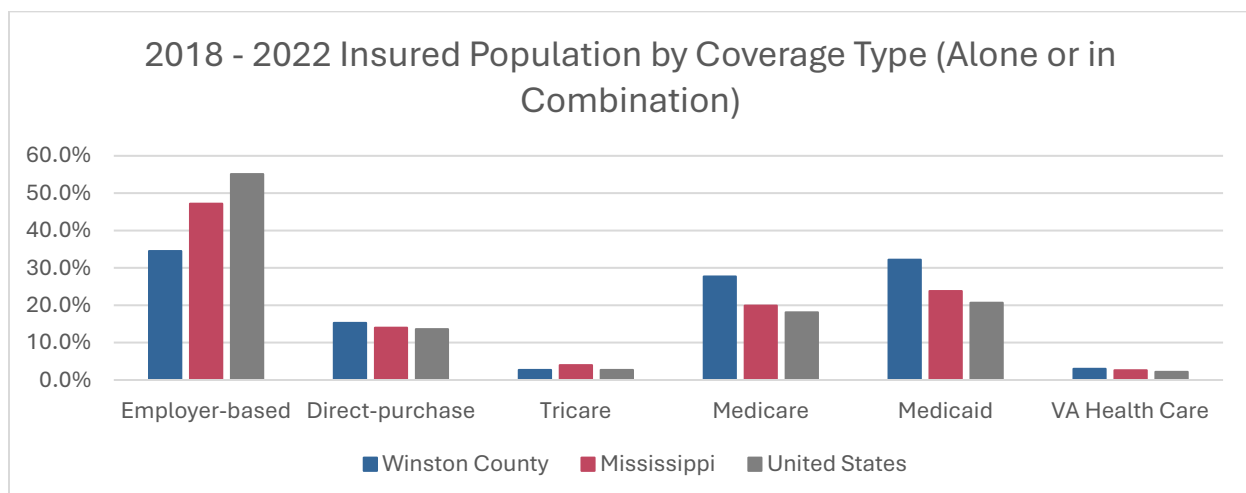




2023 Uninsured Population by Race and Ethnicity

	White	Black or African American	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Some other race	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)
Winston County	10.2%	13.1%	15.6%	0.0%	N/A	0.0%	13.5%	0.0%
Mississippi	9.7%	12.8%	28.2%	16.0%	24.4%	32.4%	16.2%	29.1%
United States	6.6%	9.5%	19.2%	5.9%	11.6%	19.7%	13.0%	17.5%

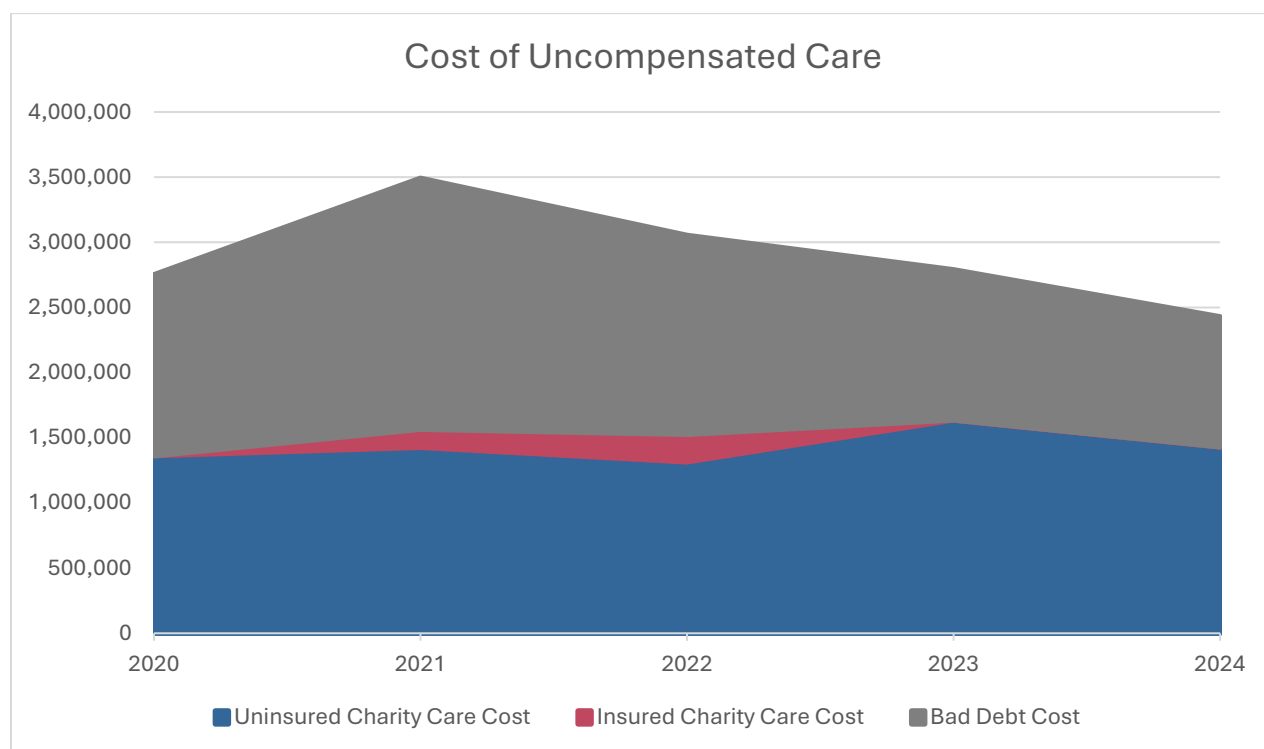
In Winston County, about one-third of residents receive health insurance through employer-sponsored plans. The rest of the population is mainly covered by Medicaid (32.2%), Medicare (27.7%), or direct-purchase plans (15.3%). Due to the county's age demographics and economic conditions, Medicare enrollment is higher than both the state average of 19.9% and the national average of 18.1%. Medicaid coverage is also above state and national levels, reflecting the county's underlying socioeconomic challenges.



Uncompensated Care Cost

Uncompensated care refers to the total value of hospital services provided without receiving payment from either the patient or a third-party insurer. It encompasses both charity care (also known as financial assistance) and bad debt. Financial assistance includes services for which the hospital does not anticipate reimbursement—typically offered free of charge or at a reduced cost to individuals who meet specific income or need-based criteria. In contrast, bad debt arises when patients fail to pay their medical bills, either because they did not apply for financial assistance or declined to do so, leaving the hospital unable to collect the owed amount. Notably, uncompensated care does not account for losses related to insufficient reimbursements from government programs such as Medicaid or Medicare. **Over the past five fiscal years, WMC has absorbed nearly \$15 million in uncompensated care costs for services delivered without reimbursement from insurers or patients.**

According to WMC's Financial Assistance Policy (FAP), patients may be eligible for full or partial assistance with the cost of emergency and medically necessary care. Eligibility is determined in part using formulas based on the U.S. Federal Poverty Guidelines, which are published and updated periodically in the Federal Register. The policy also incorporates a sliding fee scale, applied exclusively to the portion of costs billed to the patient. **Over the past five fiscal years, WMC has provided over \$7 million in charity care, with 95.3% of those costs attributed to services rendered to uninsured individuals.**



Health Risk Factors and Chronic Diseases

Mortality data for Winston County in 2022, which is the latest publicly available data from the state, was sourced from the Mississippi State Department of Health's Office of Vital Records and Public Health Statistics. After excluding "Other diseases and conditions" (Rank 2), COVID-19 (Rank 4), and "Unintentional injury" (Rank 5), we identified the following five leading causes of death as key focus areas:

1. Heart Disease
2. Cancer
3. Stroke
4. Alzheimer's
5. COPD / Emphysema

Heart Disease

Heart disease remains the leading cause of death in Winston County, as well as throughout Mississippi and the United States. Several factors contribute to an individual's risk, including existing health conditions, lifestyle habits, age, and family history. While factors like age and genetics cannot be changed, many risk factors can be managed or reduced. According to the CDC, nearly 47% of Americans have at least one of three modifiable risk factors for heart disease. Ischemic heart disease—the most common form—is the primary cause of heart-related deaths, yet it is largely preventable.

Mississippi ranks second in the nation for heart disease-related mortality. However, Winston County shows slightly more favorable trends for certain risk factors compared to the state overall. For instance, about two fifths of residents in the county have high blood pressure, compared to three fifths statewide—and more than two-thirds of those affected are managing it with medication. High cholesterol impacts roughly one-third of residents, aligning with the state average. Smoking rates are also comparable, with around one fifth of Winston County residents identifying as current smokers, reflecting similar trends across Mississippi.

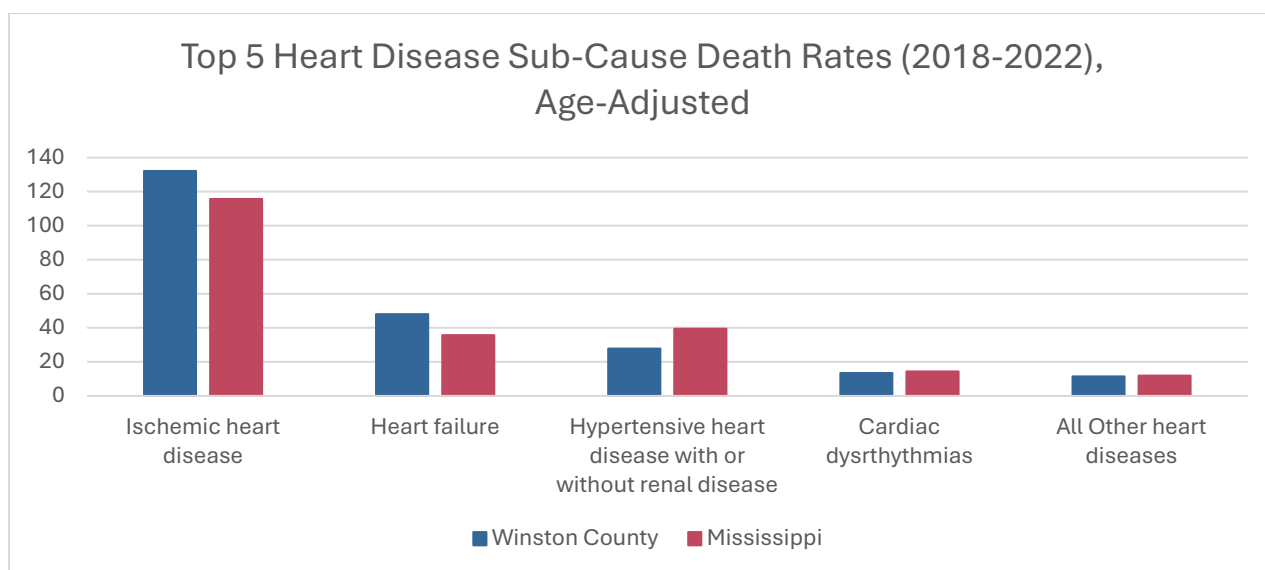
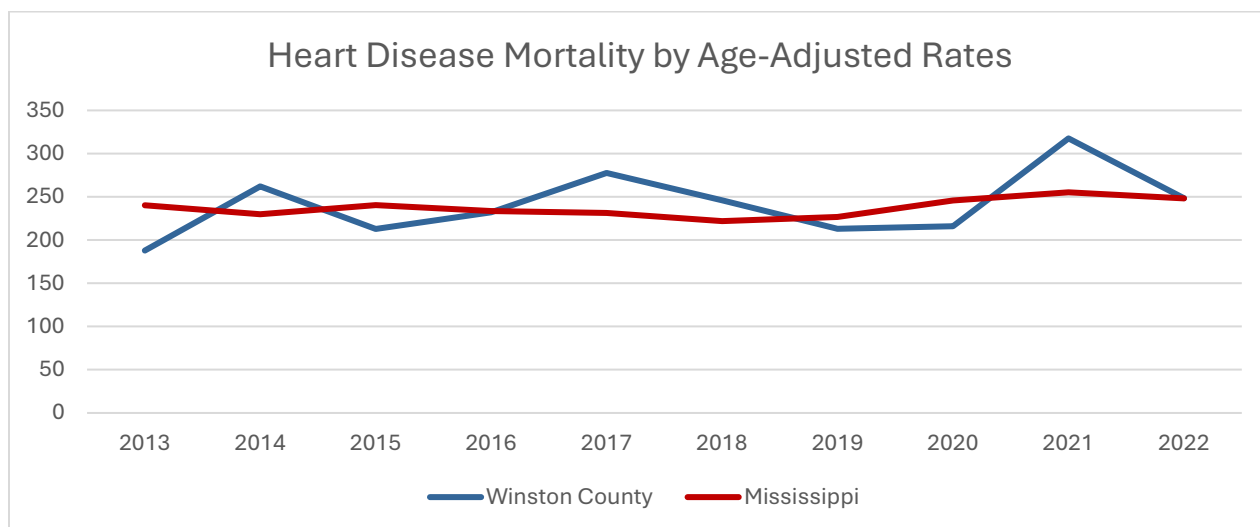
Age-Adjusted Heart Disease Risk Factors

	High blood pressure	Taking high blood pressure medication among adults with high blood pressure	High cholesterol	Smoking
Winston County	44.1%	67.8%	30.9%	21.9%
Mississippi	63.7%	70.1%	32.8%	18.1%

Heart Disease Death Rates (2018-2022) by Race and Ethnicity, Age-Adjusted

	White	Black or African American	Other	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
Winston County	252.3	226.1	163.3	198.3
Mississippi	228.4	263.3	93.9	76.2

* Age-adjusted rates expressed as per 100,000 population



Cancer

Cancer is the third leading cause of death in Winston County and is the second leading cause in the state of Mississippi and across the United States. Key risk factors include tobacco use, alcohol consumption, obesity, HPV infection, and a family history of cancer. While some factors—like genetics—are beyond individual control, adopting healthier lifestyle habits can greatly reduce the risk of developing many types of cancer.

In Winston County, certain major risk factors appear at slightly higher rates than the state average, though these differences are not statistically significant. Approximately half of residents are classified as obese, about one-third report minimal or no physical activity, and roughly one in seven engage in binge drinking—a rate that is slightly below the national average.

2022 Age-Adjusted Cancer Risk Factors

	Obesity	Lack of Physical Activity	Binge drinking
Winston County	45.3%	33.8%	13.8%
Mississippi	40.1%	30.9%	14.4%
United States	33.4%	23.0%	18.0%

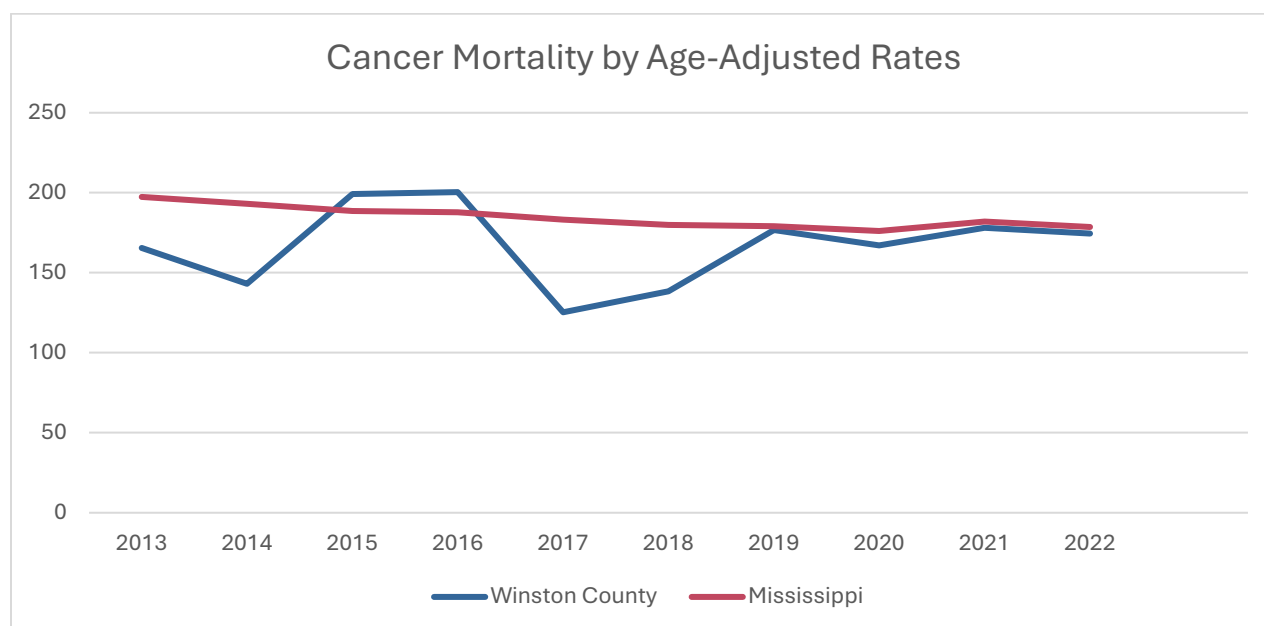
Over the past decade, Mississippi's age-adjusted cancer mortality rate has generally declined. In comparison, Winston County has shown more variability, with a slight overall increase in its cancer death rate. For most of the decade, the county's rate remained below the state average, except for a sharp rise in 2015, which pushed it above the state level until 2017. Since 2019, Winston County's cancer mortality rate has remained very close to, but still slightly below, the state average.

Both statewide and in Winston County, Black or African American residents continue to experience higher cancer-related mortality rates compared to other racial groups.

Cancer Death Rates (2018-2022) by Race and Ethnicity, Age-Adjusted

	White	Black or African American	Other	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
Winston County	158.8	186.9	0	0
Mississippi	173.3	197.4	69.2	61.1

* Age-adjusted rates expressed as per 100,000 population



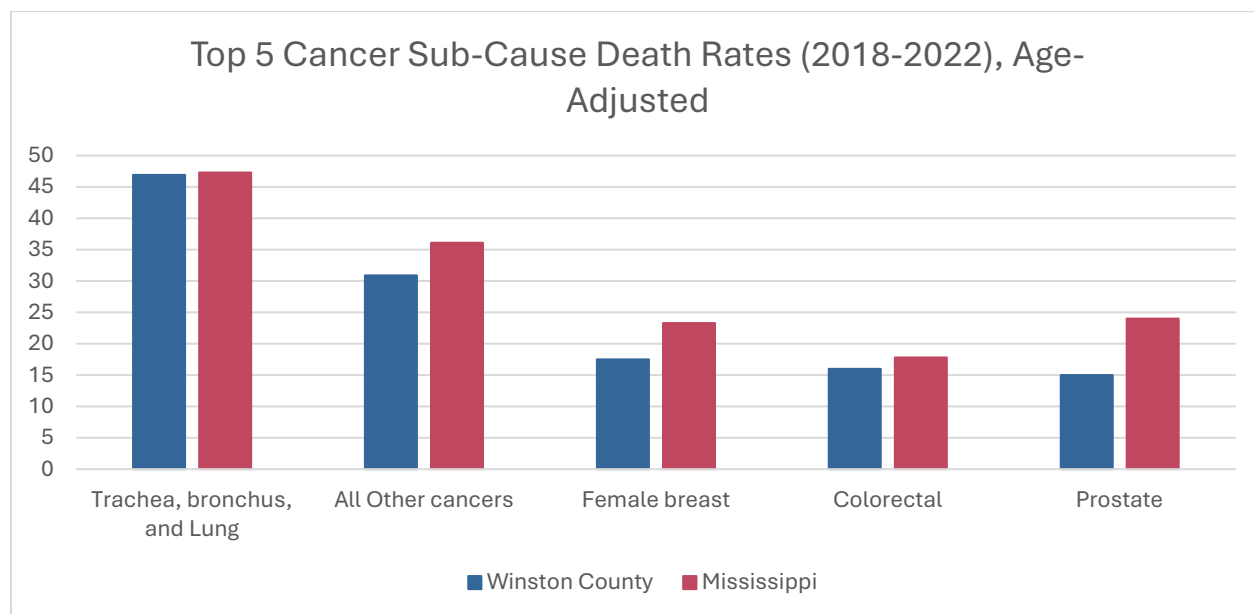
Cancers of the trachea, bronchus, and lungs are the leading causes of cancer-related deaths in Winston County, despite being largely preventable. According to the CDC, cigarette smoking is responsible for 80% to 90% of all lung cancer deaths in the U.S. In Winston County, more than one in five residents currently smoke. Avoiding tobacco use—or quitting smoking—is the most effective way to reduce the risk of lung cancer.

Female breast cancer ranks as the third leading cause of cancer-related death in Winston County. Regular mammograms are critical for early detection and can identify cancer up to three years before symptoms develop. Nearly three-fourths of senior women in the county reported receiving a mammogram in the past year, leaving about one in four at increased risk for undetected breast cancer.

Colorectal cancer is the fourth most common cancer-related death in Winston County and ranks fifth in both Mississippi and the United States. The majority of cases occur in individuals aged 50 and older. In Winston County, more than half of adults between the ages of 45 and 75 reported having a colorectal cancer screening in the past year. Key preventive measures include staying physically active, avoiding tobacco use, and limiting alcohol consumption.

Prostate cancer is the fifth leading cause of cancer-related deaths in Winston County. While any man can develop the disease, the risk is significantly higher for older men, Black or African American men, and those with a family history of prostate cancer. Men who are concerned about their risk should talk to their healthcare provider about appropriate screening options.

Prostate cancer is the fifth leading cause of cancer-related deaths in Winston County. Although all men are at risk, the likelihood of developing the disease is significantly higher among older men, Black or African American men, and those with a family history of prostate cancer. Men who are concerned about their risk should consult with their healthcare provider to discuss suitable screening options.



Stroke

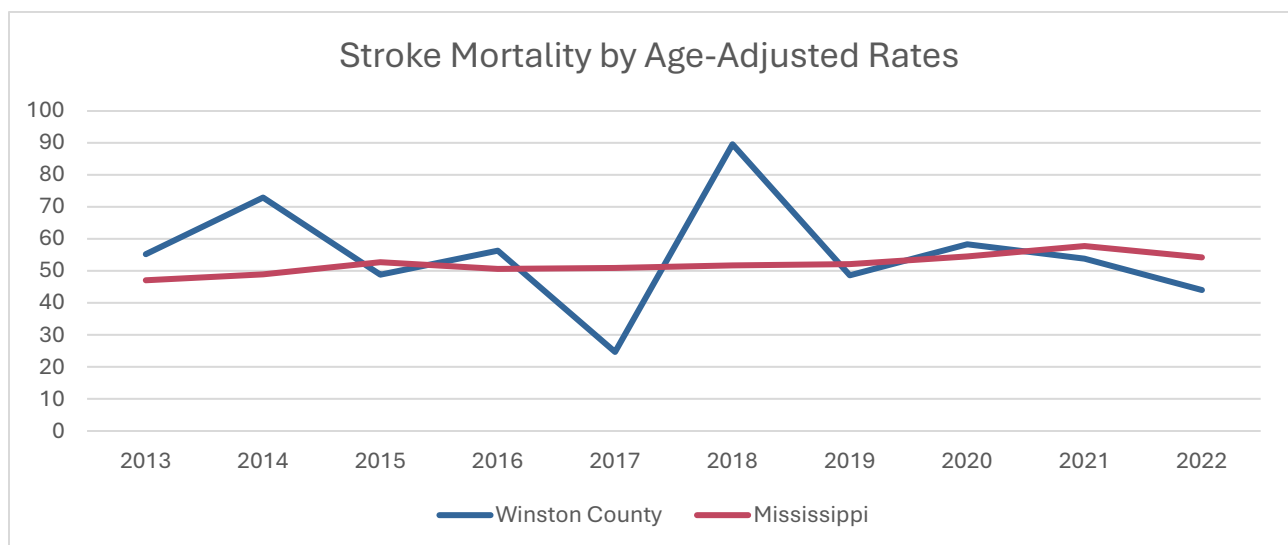
Stroke ranks as the sixth leading cause of death in Winston County. Although individuals of any age can suffer a stroke, a number of contributing factors greatly elevate the risk. Addressing these risk factors is essential not only for prevention but also for fostering better health outcomes on both personal and community levels. While uncontrollable elements like age and genetic predisposition play a role, many risks—such as obesity, tobacco use, hypertension, elevated cholesterol, and cardiovascular disease—can be effectively reduced or managed through lifestyle changes and medical intervention.

Data from the CDC highlights a troubling disparity: Black or African American individuals are nearly twice as likely as their White counterparts to experience a first-time stroke and face a heightened risk of mortality from it. In Mississippi, the stroke death rate has remained relatively consistent over the past ten years, with only a modest increase. However, Winston County presents a different pattern, marked by greater variation. For instance, in 2017, stroke-related fatalities dropped to less than half of the previous year's rate, only to surge to more than triple in 2018. Since then, the county has experienced an overall decline in stroke mortality, bringing current rates slightly below those recorded a decade ago. While this downward trend is promising, the unpredictability of year-to-year changes makes it challenging to forecast future outcomes with confidence.

Stroke Death Rates (2018-2022) by Race and Ethnicity, Age-Adjusted

	White	Black or African American	Other	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
Winston County	47.3	74.7	0	0
Mississippi	47.3	69.4	27.1	17.2

* Age-adjusted rates expressed as per 100,000 population



Alzheimer's

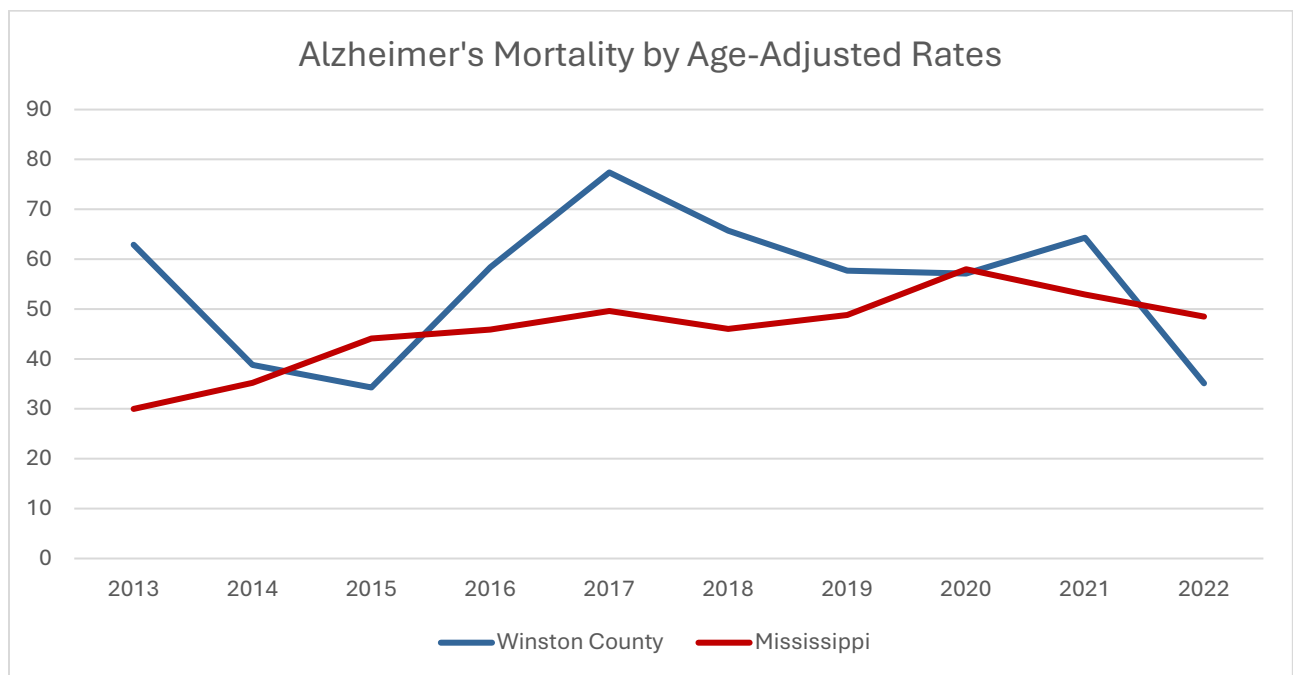
Alzheimer's disease ranks as the seventh leading cause of death in Winston County and remains a significant contributor to mortality across Mississippi and the broader United States. Although certain risk factors—such as age and genetic predisposition—are beyond individual control, adopting healthy lifestyle behaviors can significantly reduce the risk of developing the disease. Key preventive strategies include controlling high blood pressure, maintaining a healthy body weight, engaging in regular physical activity, avoiding tobacco use, moderating alcohol consumption, addressing hearing loss, and ensuring sufficient sleep.

Across Mississippi, Alzheimer's-related mortality has shown a steady upward trend over the past decade. However, a slight decline between 2020 and 2022 may indicate the beginning of a potential reversal. In contrast, Winston County has exhibited more fluctuation in Alzheimer's death rates, marked by an overall decline. Between 2013 and 2015, the county experienced a pronounced decrease, followed by a sharp spike in 2016 when the rate nearly doubled. Since then, Alzheimer's mortality in the county has generally declined, aside from a modest uptick in 2021. This was followed by a significant drop in 2022, resulting in the lowest recorded mortality rates in recent history.

Alzheimer's Death Rates (2018-2022) by Race and Ethnicity, Age-Adjusted

	White	Black or African American	Other	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
Winston County	57.8	52.9	0	0
Mississippi	53.9	44.7	10.3	13.1

* Age-adjusted rates expressed as per 100,000 population



COPD / Emphysema

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) ranks as the eighth leading cause of death in Winston County and remains a major contributor to mortality at both the state and national levels. Smoking is the leading risk factor for COPD, significantly increasing the likelihood of developing the disease among current and former smokers. The most effective way to prevent COPD is to avoid smoking altogether. For those already living with the disease, quitting smoking is the most critical step in managing their condition.

While Mississippi's overall COPD mortality rate has stayed relatively consistent over the past decade, Winston County has seen more variation. Between 2017 and 2019, the county's COPD death rate nearly doubled, surpassing the state average. However, it declined in 2020 and has continued to drop steadily. By 2022, Winston County's COPD mortality rate had fallen to about one-quarter of the state rate.

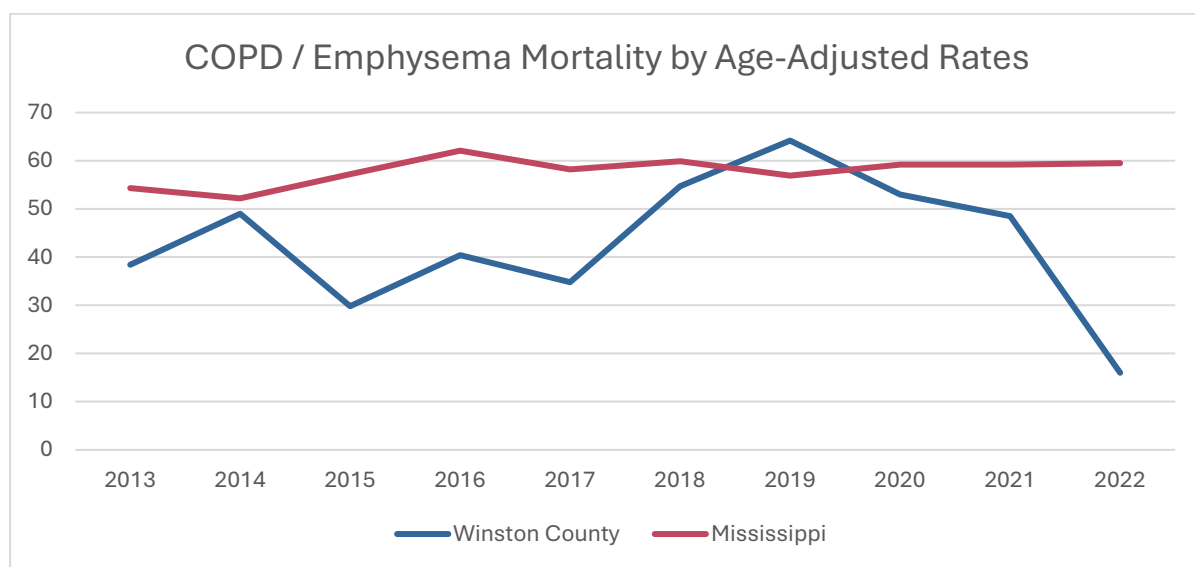
2022 Percentage of Residents with COPD, Age-Adjusted

	Total Population
Winston County	9.1%
Mississippi	9.7%

COPD / Emphysema Death Rates (2018-2022) by Race and Ethnicity, Age-Adjusted

	White	Black or African American	Other	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
Winston County	49	39.8	0	0
Mississippi	68.1	37.7	12.7	13.3

* Age-adjusted rates expressed as per 100,000 population



2022 Community Health Improvement Plan Progress

Priority #1: Improving the Southern Lifestyle and Mental Health Through Education, Awareness, and Screenings

Plan of Action

Winston Medical Center would like to educate the community about living a healthy lifestyle and the importance of mental health through events, lunch and learns, and other communications that provide fun, easily implemented information.

The medical facility is passionate about these topics and will be encouraging proper nutrition, providing awareness of healthier alternatives to the high fat southern diet, and emphasizing the importance of mental health and mental health awareness.

Winston Medical Center will provide education on overall wellness including exercise, nutrition, mental health, and stress management to a racially and economically diverse community and will teach the same audiences how to implement this information with the resources available to them. Screenings will be made available throughout the county, specifically for those chronic diseases that are frequently related to lifestyle.



Response to Stated Strategies

In response to the implementation of Improving the Southern Lifestyle and Mental Health Through Education, Awareness, and Screenings, Winston Medical Center (WMC) expanded its community outreach and preventive health efforts across multiple channels. WMC participated in the annual Louisville Community Health Fair, where staff provided health education materials and offered screenings and resources to attendees.

To reinforce healthy lifestyle behaviors year-round, WMC's Dietary Department leveraged the hospital cafeteria—open to the public for breakfast and lunch—to promote a monthly healthy eating feature.

Each month, a “Food of the Month” (fruit or vegetable) was displayed in the cafeteria foyer alongside educational materials describing its health benefits and providing practical, healthy recipe options for community members to use at home.

Clinical staff also supported wellness education through in-person engagement. Emily Perkins, FNP, regularly visited local community organizations to discuss the importance of overall health and preventive care. On April 5, 2023, she met with the Allied Health class in the local school district to provide education on recommended healthcare screenings and wellness exams. She also presented to the Louisville High School football team, emphasizing the value of maintaining an active lifestyle, balanced nutrition, and long-term health habits.

Additionally, WMC used social media as an ongoing tool for community outreach. From 2023–2025, the facility published targeted Facebook posts promoting evidence-based health tips, including the importance of physical activity and healthy dietary choices. Across the three-year period, these efforts generated more than 20,000 digital views, significantly expanding WMC’s reach and reinforcing consistent wellness messaging within the community.



Priority #2: Working With the Community to Create a Resource Guide

Plan of Action

Develop and publish a resource list of all available resources/organizations within the community that assist with mental, medical, socio-economic disparities such as drug rehabs, food banks, income based primary care clinics, etc. The list will be routinely updated, distributed, and posted throughout the county in public areas and high traffic businesses.



Response to Stated Strategies

WMC advanced its efforts to address mental, medical, and socio-economic disparities by developing a comprehensive community resource directory of local organizations and services. This list is currently distributed on the hospital campus to individuals who express a need for assistance related to mental health support, medical care access, or socio-economic challenges. The directory continues to be refined with the goal of broader publication and expanded availability to improve navigation of community-based support systems.

Priority #3: Alzheimer's Awareness and Education; Emphasizing Taking the Resources to the People

Plan of Action

Over the past six years, Alzheimer's disease continues to be one of the five leading causes of deaths in Winston County. Beginning in 2017, it was the county's third leading cause of death. The population mostly affected by Alzheimer's disease is older adults in the 65 and older age range and would be the target population for early detection and education. In addition, the caregiver, who can be anyone from grandchildren to spouses, will be the focus of education and support efforts.

Response to Stated Strategies

Winston Medical Center has prioritized Alzheimer's awareness and caregiver education through a proactive "resources to the people" approach. WMC participates in multiple health fairs each year, providing educational materials and direct community engagement to increase awareness and understanding of Alzheimer's disease. In addition, WMC clinicians and staff deliver presentations to civic organizations and community groups, emphasizing the critical role of caregiving, early recognition, and support for patients and families affected by Alzheimer's. Participation in these activities reflects WMC's ongoing commitment to education, outreach, and community partnership in addressing neurocognitive health needs. Efforts WMC participated in include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Blood Drive in Partnership with Mississippi Blood Services – April 10, 2023
- Presentation to Local School District Allied Health Class on Preventive Healthcare and Wellness Resources – April 5, 2023



- Public Health Education Posts on Heat Stroke and Heat Exhaustion Awareness Shared via Social Media – June 29, 2023 and August 16, 2023

- Community Health Fair – August 23, 2023

- Health and Wellness Presentation to the LHS Football Team by Emily Perkins – March 27, 2024

- Participation in the Annual Red Hill Arts Festival with Health Screenings and Community Resources Provided – May 19, 2024



- Blood Drive in Collaboration with Mississippi Blood Services – July 19, 2024
- Turning Point Alzheimer's Awareness Health Fair – August 30, 2024
- Health and Wellness Tips Shared via Social Media – September 9, 2024
- Community Health Screenings Event – September 25, 2024
- Resource Distribution at the Cotton Gin Festival – September 27, 2024
- Social Media Post: Maximizing Health Through Physical Activity – October 10, 2024
- Community Luncheon with the Mississippi Hospital Association Highlighting Healthcare Advocacy – December 12, 2024
- Social Media Post: Tips for a Healthy Lifestyle – January 16, 2025
- Social Media Post for Heart Health Month – February 14, 2025
- Social Media Post: Health and Wellness Guidance and Physical Activity Tips – February 26, 2025
- Blood Drive in Partnership with Mississippi Blood Services – June 17, 2025



- Social Media Post: Physical Activity Tips – June 6, 2025
- Social Media Post: Healthy Choices – July 9, 2025
- Health and Wellness Tips Shared via Social Media – September 3, 2025
- Social Media Posts on Mental Health Warning Signs – September 3 and September 18, 2025

2025 Community Health Improvement Plan



2025-2028 Community Health Improvement Plan

Initiative #1: Initiative 1: Improving the Southern Lifestyle and Mental Health Through Education, Awareness, and Screenings

Plan of Action

1. **Community Health Fairs and Screening Events:** Host regular health fairs across the county that combine wellness education with onsite screenings for lifestyle-related chronic conditions (e.g., blood pressure checks, glucose screenings, BMI assessments). These events will also include mental health awareness booths and resource referrals to normalize conversations around emotional well-being.
2. **Lunch and Learns and Targeted Educational Sessions:** Provide interactive Lunch and Learns at schools, workplaces, churches, and community centers to share easy, actionable guidance on nutrition, exercise, stress reduction, and mental health. For example, sessions may include “small swaps” for healthier southern cooking, quick desk-friendly movement routines, or practical ways to recognize and respond to stress, anxiety, or depression.
3. **Partnering with Local Civic Organizations and Community Groups:** Collaborate with local civic clubs, faith-based organizations, senior groups, youth programs, and other community partners to extend outreach and build trust. These partnerships will help Winston Medical Center co-host workshops, distribute wellness materials, and promote screenings in spaces where residents already gather and feel supported.

Initiative #2: Alzheimer's Awareness and Education, Emphasizing Taking the Resources to the People

Plan of Action

We take the following steps in partnership with local hospice providers and churches to facilitate a Caregiver Support Group:

1. **Co-host monthly Caregiver Support Groups in trusted community spaces:** Work with churches to provide welcoming, familiar meeting locations across the county, supported by hospice partners who can help lead discussions on caregiving challenges, grief support, and coping strategies. Rotating sites will make participation easier for caregivers in different areas.
2. **Integrate hospice expertise into support group programming:** Partner with local hospice providers to offer short educational segments during meetings—such as managing late-stage care, understanding disease progression, and preparing for care transitions—ensuring caregivers get practical, experience-based guidance.
3. **Leverage church networks for outreach and consistent attendance:** Collaborate with pastors, health ministries, and congregational leaders to identify caregivers in need,

promote meeting schedules through church bulletins/social channels, and encourage peer-to-peer participation so no caregiver feels alone or overlooked.

4. Provide wraparound resources and referral pathways: With hospice and church leaders, create a simple referral process connecting caregivers to respite care, counseling, home health options, spiritual support, and community services. Meetings will also include printed resource guides and direct contact points for follow-up help.

Initiative #3: Falls Education and Fall Prevention, Emphasizing Safety, Mobility, and Independence

Plan of Action

1. Partnering with local Therapy Groups to deliver community education: Collaborate with physical and occupational therapy providers to co-host fall prevention workshops in accessible locations (senior centers, churches, community halls). Therapy partners can demonstrate balance exercises, safe transfer techniques, and mobility strategies tailored to different ability levels.
2. Hosting hands-on fall prevention events and screenings: Conduct educational events that include fall-risk assessments, gait and balance screenings, and short “practice stations” where participants learn how to move safely, use walkers/canes correctly, and improve strength through simple routines they can do at home.
3. Developing a coordinated social media education campaign: Use Winston Medical Center’s social platforms to share short weekly fall-prevention tips, exercise videos led by therapy partners, home safety checklists, and “myth vs. fact” posts about fall risks. These messages will reinforce in-person education and reach caregivers and families who may not attend events.
4. Promoting participation through cross-partner outreach: Work with therapy clinics and community partners to amplify events and prevention messaging through shared flyers, patient reminders, and joint social posts. This combined outreach will expand reach, improve attendance, and ensure consistent county-wide awareness.

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