



Wills Memorial Hospital
Community Health Needs Assessment

April 2019

Lincoln, Taliaferro, & Wilkes Counties



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WMH Community Health Needs Assessment



Introduction

The Community Health Needs Assessment completed by Wills Memorial Hospital is a federal requirement of charitable hospital organizations under Section 501(r)(3) of the IRS code. It was designed to help hospitals better understand the populations in which they serve, to identify current needs within the community, and also to recognize existing assets. By completing this needs assessment, Wills Memorial Hospital can learn how to respond to these needs within the scope of our services and partnerships.

All non-profit hospitals are required to conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment every three years and make it available to the public. The Assessment should take into account input from “persons who represent the broad interests of the community served by the hospital facility, including those with special knowledge of or expertise in public health”. Through surveys and interviews with local community leaders, as well as individuals from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, we feel that the assessment IRS Section 501(r)(3) standards have been satisfied.



CNA Leadership Committee Members:

Tracie Haughey, WMH CEO & CFO

Kelly Powel, RN, WMH COO & Practice Manager of Community Medical Associates of Washington and Lincolnton

Susan Duncan Pope, WMH Human Resource and Community Relations Director

Angie Radford, WMH Director of Nursing

Mandy Jackson, WMH Administration Assistant

Community Advisory Council:

Carolyn Reynolds: Family Connection Board, Communities in Schools of Wilkes County Board, God's Marketplace Board, WMH Auxiliary, Kiwanis Member

Jennifer Jackson: RN & Wilkes County Health Department Nurse Manager

Dr. Rosemary Caddell: Superintendent of Wilkes County Board of Education, Wilkes County Board of Health

Kenya Smith: RN & Nurse Manager of Taliaferro County Health Department

Ray Hardy: RN, Owner of CSRA Private Duty Home Health, WMH Authority Board Member

Amethyst Wynn: Executive Director of Wilkes County Family Connection, Leader of Health & Wellness Coalition

Renee Brown: Taliaferro County Board of Health, Mayor of Sharon, WMH Foudation

Outside Advisors:

Elisa Marie Childs, MSW, ASW, PhD Student & Research Assistant at the University of Georgia School of Social Work



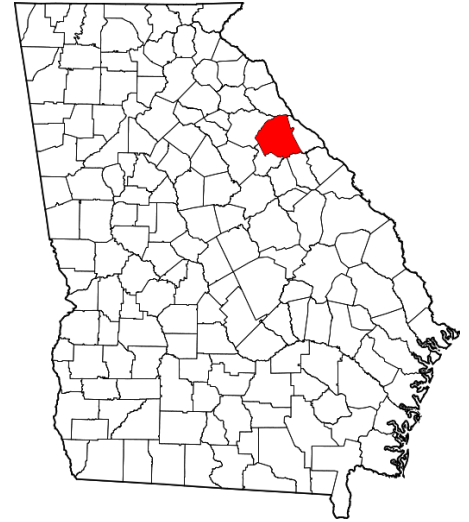
WMH Community Health Needs Assessment

Wills Memorial Hospital and the Community it Serves:

Wills Memorial Hospital is a 25 bed acute care hospital located in Washington, Georgia. It is governed by the Hospital Authority of Wilkes County. WMH is accredited by the Joint Commission and is designated a critical access hospital. The facility serves the counties of Lincoln, Taliaferro, and Wilkes. It is the only hospital located in this tri-county area. All three counties are rural and designated “medically underserved” by the State of Georgia’s Rural Health Division of the Department of Community Health (DCH).

According to the 2010 census, the total combined population of these counties is 20,306. The following figures represent the breakdown of county populations served by Wills Memorial Hospital in 2018: Wilkes 75%, Lincoln 11.3%, Taliaferro 6.7%, and other counties 7%.

The original facility opened in 1924 as Washington General Hospital. In 2012, a new inpatient wing, pharmacy, respiratory therapy department, registration, emergency room, reception, main entrance, specialty clinic, and physical therapy/occupational therapy facilities were completed. Wills Memorial Hospital focuses on providing complete medical care for Wilkes, Taliaferro, and Lincoln County residents.



Washington is a beautiful town, touted as a retirement haven and tourist destination due to the many antebellum homes and the town’s rich civil and revolutionary war history. However, poverty in WMH service areas is higher than the Georgia average. Many socioeconomic groups face disparities due to poverty and the issues that arise from it. Several area manufacturing facilities have closed or experienced a reduction-in-force over the last decade leading to higher than average unemployment rates. Due to these factors, a high percentage of Lincoln, Taliaferro, and Wilkes residents are uninsured and, as a result, not as healthy as their insured counterparts.



Process

The WMH's Community Needs Assessment is a process that identifies the health needs of the communities of Lincoln, Taliaferro, and Wilkes using primary and secondary data from various sources. The primary data was derived from on-line and in-person surveys that included community leaders as well as many diverse groups of community members. To view the survey used, visit: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TWL_CHNA. The secondary data was obtained through national and state demographic studies including the U.S. Census and the University of Georgia's <https://Georgiadata.org> website.

The assessment began with the collection of data from various Georgia and U.S. studies. This data includes demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, health data and vital statistics, as well as general county health rankings. After this secondary data was collected, a comprehensive survey was completed by community members who are knowledgeable about health care in the WMH service areas. These community members have an expertise or a vested interest in the health of our community. Surveys were also conducted with individuals from differing socioeconomic backgrounds to gather primary data. Once the primary and secondary data was collected, a meeting was held with several key community members to discuss the findings and determine how Wills Memorial Hospital would respond to the needs of the community. Finally, the WMH Community Needs Assessment leadership committee met to determine which needs the hospital can financially and physically undertake. The Hospital Authority of Wilkes County was presented the analysis in the May 29, 2019 meeting and the assessment was then posted on the WMH website: <https://www.willsmemorialhospital.com>.

A green rectangular graphic with white text and a central illustration. The text reads: 'The Taliaferro, Wilkes, and Lincoln Community Health Needs Assessment', '211 Total Responses', and 'Conducted by Elisa Childs, MSW'. The illustration shows two hands holding a heart with a tree growing from it.

**The Taliaferro, Wilkes, and Lincoln
Community Health Needs Assessment**

211
Total Responses

Conducted by Elisa Childs, MSW



Primary Data/Community Input

Primary data was collected from community members who are knowledgeable about health care in the WMH service areas. These community members have expertise and/or a vested interest in the health of our community. Data was also collected from targeted socioeconomic groups in the Lincoln-Taliaferro-Wilkes area that are known to have unmet health needs. After the survey was completed, the results were shared with the following community leaders:

- Carolyn Reynolds, Family Connection Board , Communities in Schools of Wilkes County Board, God's Marketplace Board, WMH Auxiliary, Kiwanis Member
- Jennifer Jackson, RN & Wilkes County Health Department Nurse Manager, Health & Wellness Coalition member
- Renee Brown, Taliaferro County Board of Health, Mayor of Sharon, WMH Foundation
- Kenya Smith, RN & Taliaferro County Health Department Nurse Manager
- Dr. Rosemary Caddell, Superintendent of Wilkes County Board of Education, Wilkes County Board of Health
- Amethyst Wynn, Executive Director of Wilkes County Family Connection, Leader of Health & Wellness Coalition
- Ray Hardy, RN BSN, Administrator of CSRA Private Duty, Inc.



Secondary Data

- 2018 Georgia County Guide, Carl Vinson Institute of Government and Georgia Cooperative Extension, The University of Georgia. Available at: [www. countyguide.uga.edu](http://www.countyguide.uga.edu)
- Georgia Department of Community Health. Oasis Population Data 2018. Available at: [www. oasis.ga.us](http://www.oasis.ga.us)
- Georgia Department of Public Health. Health and Data Information. Available at [www. health.state.ga.us](http://www.health.state.ga.us)
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2019 County Health Rankings, Countyhealthrankings.org
- Federal Government, Census.gov



Demographic Data

The 2010 census data reports the combined populations of Lincoln, Taliaferro, and Wilkes Counties as 20,306. The 2030 projected population for the three counties combined is 18,518, which is an 8.8% decrease over the 20 year period.

Age

Race/Ethnicity (2011)	Lincoln	Taliaferro	Wilkes	Georgia
Median age	45.8	46	44.4	38.4
Age 65 and over	17.9%	20.3%	18.8%	14.0%

Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity (2011)	Lincoln	Taliaferro	Wilkes	Georgia
Black	32.4%	59.7%	42.4%	28.4%
White	65.8%	37.8%	55.2%	68.6%
Other	0.8%	0.9%	0.9%	1.7%
Hispanic/Latino	1.4%	2.5%	3.6%	6.0%

Household Information

Households (2011)	Lincoln	Taliaferro	Wilkes	Georgia
Married Couple	67.8%	48.2%	60.0%	70.8%
Married Couple with children < 18	20.9%	7.1%	15.2%	27.7%
Male Household with children <18	1.6%	3.7%	3.6%	3.1%
Female Household with children <18	12.8%	12.4%	14.4%	12.4%



WMH Community Health Needs Assessment

Education Level

Education Level (2010)	Lincoln	Taliaferro	Wilkes	Georgia
Not Completing High School	22.6%	41.7%	28.2%	16.5%
High School Grad/GED	42.3%	37.5%	38.3%	29.6%
Some College	25.4%	14.0%	18.0%	26.7%
Bachelor's Degree	6.4%	4.5%	8.4%	17.5%
Graduate/Professional	3.3%	2.3%	7.1%	9.7%

Public Education

Public Education (2011)	Lincoln	Taliaferro	Wilkes	Georgia
High School Drop Out Rate (per 100 enrolled)	1.9%	1.4%	6.3%	3.3%
Completion Rate (2011)	75.7%	40.0%	66.7%	70.3%
Economically disadvantaged	66.2%	93.6%	75.6%	66%
Students retained in a grade	5.4%	6.5%	6.8%	3.7%
Students with disabilities	14.3%	14.1%	12.4%	12.3%
Students in Gifted Program	3.2%	0.0%	7.5%	6.7%
Grads with college prep diploma	64.4%	38.5%	51.1%	66.0%



Socioeconomic Characteristics

A significant percent of the population of Lincoln, Taliaferro, and Wilkes Counties lives below the poverty level. The percentages range from 20%-30%, which are higher than the state average of 21.7%. The population without a high school diploma/GED in the WMH service area ranges from 22.6% to 41.7% and is higher than the state average of 16.5%. The unemployment rates are above the 9.8 % state average in Lincoln, Taliaferro, and Wilkes Counties. The median household income in all three counties is much lower than the state average of \$46, 252.

Social and Economic Indicators

	Persons Below Poverty 2010	Children Below Poverty 2010	Single Female Children 2011	No High School Diploma 2010
Lincoln	20.8%	32.0%	12.8%	22.6%
Taliaferro	30.3%	48.9%	12.4%	41.7%
Wilkes	24.9%	38.7%	14.4%	28.2%
Georgia Average	21.7%	31.2%	12.4%	16.5%

	Minority 2011	Unemployed 2011	Uninsured 2010	Median Household income 2010
Lincoln	34.6%	10.8%	25.1%	\$35,201
Taliaferro	63.1%	12.6%	26.3%	\$26,863
Wilkes	46.9%	12.0%	22.6%	\$30,451
Georgia Average	36.1%	9.8%	22.5%	\$46,252



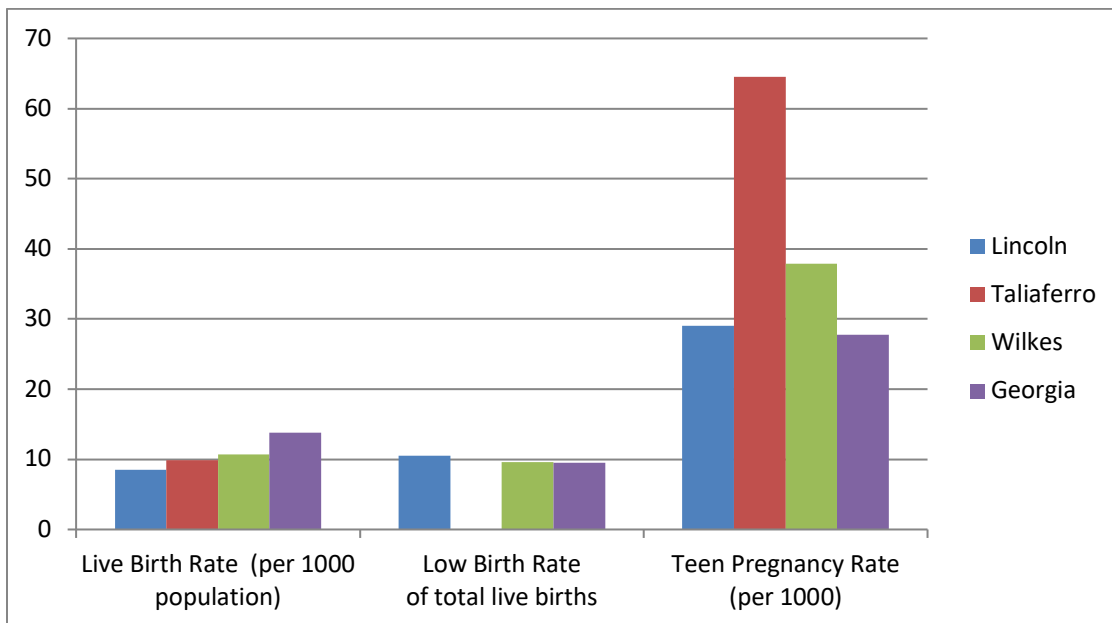
Health Data

The County Health Rankings report premature death as a measure of mortality. In 2018, the Lincoln County rate of premature death was 10,300 per 100,000 of the population. In Taliaferro the rate was unreported, and in Wilkes it was 10,700 per 100,000. Premature death represents the years of potential life lost before the age of 75 (rate is age adjusted). The overall Georgia premature death rate in 2018 was 7,500.

A vital statistic that is important to include in health data is the death rate. The Lincoln County death rate in 2018 was 1138.1 per 100,000 population. In Taliaferro the death rate was 1863.7 and in Wilkes it was 1406.6 per 100,000. The average county in Georgia's death rate in 2018 was 923.5 per 100,000.

The following graphs give information about several vital statistics and health indicators:

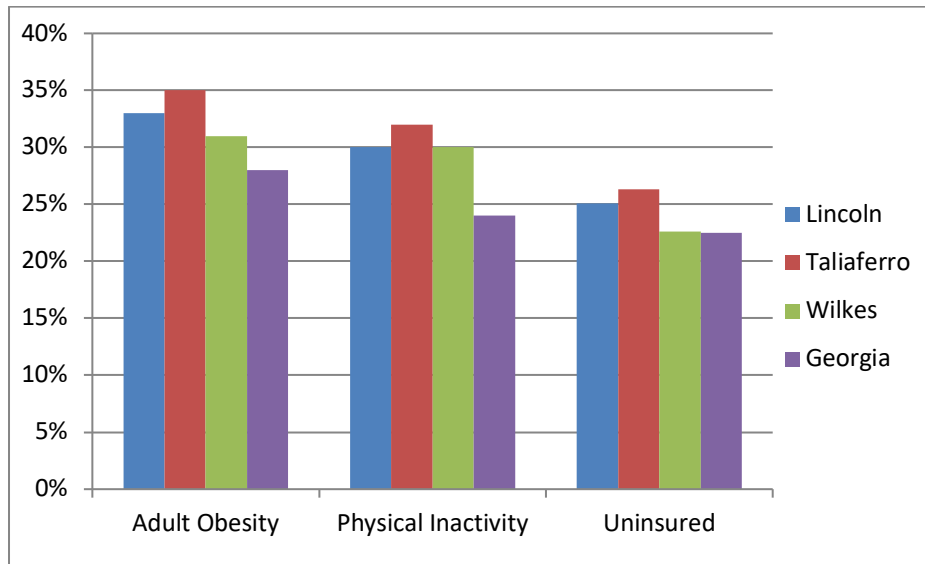
2018 Vital Statistics



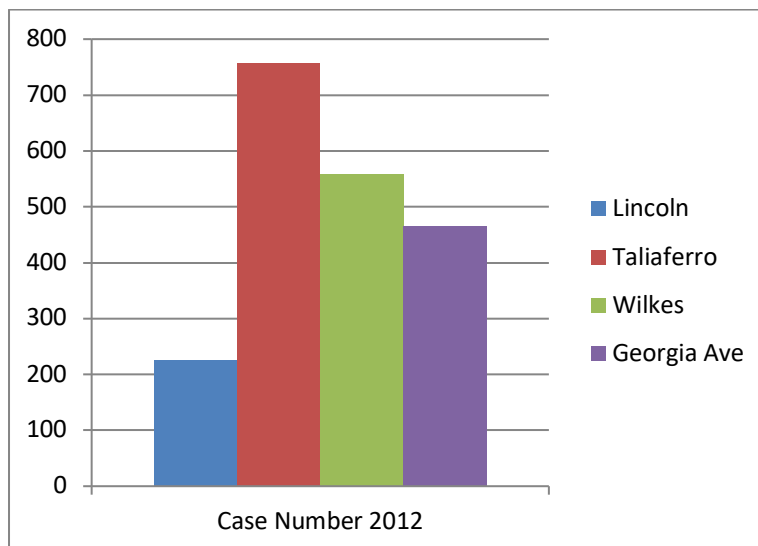
The rate of Sexually Transmitted Diseases reported in a county is an indicator of the population's health. The cases in 2012 in Lincoln, Taliaferro, and Wilkes were 225, 757, and 557 respectively. The Georgia average in 2012 was 466. The percentage of the population that is uninsured is also an indicator of the general health of a community. The uninsured rates in the WMH service areas are higher than the Georgia average of 22.5%.



Health Indicators



Sexually Transmitted Infections



The County Health Ranking report also identifies “health behaviors” and ranks each county in the state in numerical order from 1 to 159 in this category. Included in health behaviors are: adult smoking, adult obesity, physical inactivity, excessive drinking, motor vehicle crash death rate, sexually transmitted infections, and teen birth rate. Lincoln County ranks 47th in health behaviors, Taliaferro ranks 144th, and Wilkes ranks 121th out of 159 Georgia Counties.



Summary of Needs Assessment Responses

Services Difficult to access in the Area:

- Specialty Medical Care
- Mental Health
- Alternative Medicine/Treatments
- Alcohol/drug abuse treatments
- Dental care

Identified Health Issues:

- Cancer
- Problems associated with aging
- Heart Disease
- Obesity
- Lack of Affordable/Primary Healthcare

Identified Behaviors that have the Greatest Impact on Community Health:

- Drug abuse
- Obesity
- Poor eating habits
- Not visiting a doctor
- Alcohol abuse



Prioritization Process

Wills Memorial Hospital used the following process to prioritize and address the needs identified in the 2019 Community Needs Assessment.

- A. All data, primary and secondary, were read and analyzed
- B. Reoccurring issues were identified and noted
- C. Information was presented to the Community Advisory Council
- D. The Advisory Council made their recommendation to the CNA Leadership Committee that the reoccurring health issues that impacted the community the most be focused on by the Wills Memorial Hospital CNA team.
- E. The identified health issues/needs were presented to the Hospital Authority of Wilkes County to make the final decisions based on our human and financial resources.



Community Health Resources

Wills Memorial Hospital: Wills Memorial Hospital is a non-profit, community, 25 bed, acute care hospital that has been serving the area since 1924. It is designated a critical access hospital. The campus includes: inpatient wing, pharmacy, outpatient surgery, laboratory, radiology, respiratory therapy, emergency room, specialty clinic, and physical therapy/occupational therapy facilities. Also available through our emergency room are telemedicine services for early stroke recognition and intervention. Specialty services provided in Wills Memorial Hospital focus on providing complete medical care for Wilkes, Taliaferro, and Lincoln County residents. These specialty services include: general surgery, cardiology, urology, orthopedics, and podiatry. Our current Medical Staff consists of an Active Staff of 5 physicians and Courtesy, Consulting, and Affiliate Staffs consisting of 57 physicians and mid-levels.

Community Medical Associates Lincolnton: A subsidiary of WMH, CMA is a growing primary care clinic that accepts Medicare, Medicaid, and privately insured patients. The full-time provider staff consists of one family medicine physician and one nurse practitioner.

Lincoln County Health Department: The Lincoln County health department offers many services to the public including screening and treatment of high blood pressure, diabetes, TB, and sexually transmitted diseases, immunizations, family planning services, environmental health services, outbreak investigation, and is a provider of the WIC food supplementation program for low-income children.

Two Private Family Medicine Practices in Lincoln County

Taliaferro County Health Department: The Taliaferro County health department offers many services to the public including screening and treatment of high blood pressure, diabetes, TB, and sexually transmitted diseases, immunizations, family planning services, environmental health services, outbreak investigation, and is a provider of the WIC food supplementation program for low-income children.

Community Medical Associates Washington: A subsidiary of WMH, CMA is a growing primary care clinic that accepts Medicare, Medicaid, and privately insured patients. The full-time provider staff consists of one internal medicine/pediatrician and one nurse practitioner.



Community Health Resources

Urgent MD Washington

Wilkes County Health Department: The Wilkes County health department offers many services to the public including screening and treatment of high blood pressure, diabetes, TB, and sexually transmitted diseases, immunizations, family planning services, environmental health services, outbreak investigation, and is a provider of the WIC food supplementation program for low-income children.

Three Private Primary Care Physician Practices in Wilkes County; two of which are internal medicine and one family medicine practice.



Conclusion

The Community Needs Assessment has provided Wills Memorial Hospital with clear evidence that many of the health issues that we see and treat on a daily basis are indeed, the most prevalent health concerns among our population. Cancer, obesity in children and adults, lack of access to primary and specialty health care, problems associated with age, and lack of mental health/alcohol/drug counseling and treatment options were identified time and time again by respondents.

Wills Memorial Hospital is a non-profit, community hospital that focuses on serving our community's needs. The information that has been gathered in this CNA will direct our community outreach efforts. It will serve as the foundation for fostering new partnerships within our community and outside as well. It will provide an outline for us as we work to generate new ideas, approaches, and educational programs to help solve these issues. This tool has provided much useful information that we can use to better understand and serve our community.



References

- 2010 US Census. Available at: www.quickfacts.census.gov
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available at: www.cdc.gov
- County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Available at: www.countyhealthrankings.org
- 2018 Georgia County Guide, Carl Vinson Institute of Government and Georgia Cooperative Extension, The University of Georgia. Available at: www.countyguide.uga.edu
- Georgia Department of Community Health. Oasis Population Data 2018. Available at: www.oasis.ga.us
- Georgia Department of Public Health. Health and Data Information. Available at www.health.state.ga.us



Wills Memorial Hospital FY2019-FY2021 Implementation Plan

The CHNA team ranked the community health needs based on size and prevalence of the issue, effectiveness of interventions, and the hospital's capacity to address the need. Once this prioritization process was complete, the team discussed the results and decided to address the prioritized needs in various capacities through hospital specific implementation plans.

The five most significant needs are listed below:

1. Access to affordable health care and access to primary care services
2. Prevention, education, and services to address obesity, poor eating habits, chronic diseases, preventable conditions, and unhealthy lifestyles
3. Access to specialty care services
4. Access to mental health services
5. Age related issues including loss of mobility and mental health