HEALTH STATISTICS CENTER
STATISTICAL BRIEF NO. 32

WEST VIRGINIA’S
10 LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH, 2016
HSC Statistical Brief No. 32

West Virginia’s 10 Leading Causes of Death, 2016

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Cause of Death statistics are derived from the underlying cause of death that is reported on death certificates across the United States. The nationally standardized 113 selected causes of death are categorized according to the *International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision* (ICD-10). The data that is compiled by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is ordered by the occurrence of deaths attributed to each rankable cause. The ranking of causes of death provides information regarding the “relative burden of cause-specific mortality” (Heron, 2017). Age-adjusted death rates illustrate relative risk of mortality between population subgroups (Murphy, Xu, Kochanek, Curtin, & Arias, 2017). Uniform death rate age-adjustment to the 2000 U.S. Standard Population imparts comparability among populations with varying age distributions.

This report will present the 10 leading causes of death among West Virginia residents in 2016 and any trends therein.

### West Virginia 10 Leading Causes of Death, 2016
**Population 1,831,102**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause of Death</th>
<th>Number of Deaths</th>
<th>Age-Adjusted Death Rate per 100K</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Heart Disease</td>
<td>4,767</td>
<td>191.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cancer</td>
<td>4,659</td>
<td>182.2</td>
</tr>
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<td>3. Accidents</td>
<td>1,705</td>
<td>89.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases</td>
<td>1,599</td>
<td>62.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Cerebrovascular Diseases</td>
<td>1,039</td>
<td>41.7</td>
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<td>6. Diabetes</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>34.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Alzheimer’s Disease</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>31.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome, and Nephrosis</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>19.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Influenza and Pneumonia</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Suicide</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Vital Statistics
1. Heart Disease (ICD-10 I00-I09, I11, I13, I20-I51)

Heart disease includes conditions such as rheumatic fever, hypertensive heart disease, ischemic heart diseases, endocarditis, and heart failure.

Data Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Vital Statistics

Overall, deaths due to heart disease within the U.S. were on a steady decline between 1999 and 2016 with the age-adjusted death rate per 100,000 persons falling from 266.5 to 165.5 (37.9%). This trend is reflected in the WV data for the same timeframe with the same rate decreasing from 325.5 to 191.0 (41.3%). Although the rate of WV deaths due to heart disease has declined, the WV rate historically exceeds that of the U.S. The disparity between the WV rate and the U.S. rate decreased from a difference of 59.0 in 1999 to 25.5 in 2016. WV ranked 12th highest in the U.S. and District of Columbia in the age-adjusted rate of deaths attributed to heart disease in 2016.
In 2016, WV had a total of 4,767 deaths that were attributed to heart disease.
The top 5 heart disease subcategories accounted for 3,532 of those deaths.
Atherosclerotic heart disease was responsible for 1,540 deaths, or 43.6% of the top 5 subcategories.
2. **Cancer (ICD-10 C00-C97)**

Malignant Neoplasms

The U.S. age-adjusted death rate per 100,000 population for cancer has decreased since 1999 declining from 200.8 to 155.8 (22.4%) in 2016. There was also a decrease in the age-adjusted death rate in WV from 225.1 to 182.2 deaths per 100,000 population (19.1%) despite a small surge in 2004, 2007, 2009, 2011, and 2014. The difference between WV and the U.S. in age-adjusted death rates due to cancer has remained close to constant with a 24.3 difference in 1999 and a 26.4 difference in 2016 with WV rates exceeding those of the country. WV was ranked 3rd in the U.S. and D.C. for age-adjusted death rate due to cancer in 2016.
WV had a total of 4,659 deaths due to cancer in 2016.
The top 5 cancer subcategories accounted for 2,512 deaths.
Bronchus or lung cancer was responsible for 1,366 deaths, or 54.4% of the top 5 subcategories.
3. Accidents (ICD-10 V01-X59, Y85-Y86)

Unintentional Injuries

Accidental Deaths
WV vs. U.S., 1999 - 2016

Data Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Vital Statistics
Note: WV Data from 2005 and 2009 retrieved from WV Health Statistics Center due to closure of national reporting window.

The age-adjusted death rate of accidental deaths has increased at both the state and national level since 1999. The U.S. rate has grown from 35.3 to 47.4 deaths per 100,000 population, or 34.3%, while the WV rate has more than doubled, escalating from 42.0 to 89.7 (113.6%). In 2016, WV was ranked 1st in the country for the highest age-adjusted death rate due to accidents.
In 2016, there were 1,705 accidental deaths in WV.

The top 5 accidental death subcategories accounted for 1,115 of those deaths.

Accidental poisoning by and exposure to other and unspecified drugs, medicaments [substances used for medical treatment], and biological substances caused 467 deaths, or 41.9% of the top 5 subcategories.
4. Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases (ICD-10 J40-J47)

CLRD includes conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema, asthma, and chronic bronchitis.

The U.S. has seen a small decline in the age-adjusted death rate due to Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases (CLRD) from 1999 to 2016, dropping from 45.4 to 40.6 deaths per 100,000 population (10.6%). The WV age-adjusted death rate has been sporadic during this time. In 1999, the WV rate was 57.9 deaths per 100,000 persons and it was 62.1 in 2016, a 7.3% increase. This interval also included periodic spikes in the death rate in 2000, 2008, and 2011. WV had the 2nd highest age-adjusted death rate among U.S. states and D.C. for deaths due to CLRD in 2016.
Top 5 Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease Death Subcategories 
by Number of Deaths, WV, 2016 
N=1,584

- CLRD caused 1,599 WV deaths in 2016.
- The top 5 CLRD subcategories made up 1,584 of those deaths.
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) caused 1,244 WV deaths, or 78.5% of the top 5 subcategories and 77.8% of all CLRD deaths.

Data Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Vital Statistics
5. **Cerebrovascular Diseases (ICD-10 I60-I69)**

These conditions include stroke, cerebrovascular haemorrhage, aneurysm, and other cerebrovascular diseases.

Cerebrovascular disease deaths in the U.S. have declined from an age-adjusted rate of 61.6 in 1999 to 37.3 deaths per 100,000 persons in 2016 (39.4%). Although this rate has also waned in WV, the gap between WV and the U.S. has widened. In 1999, WV had an age-adjusted death rate of 63.1, which fell 33.9% to 41.7 deaths per 100,000 population in 2016. This WV trend also included a few spikes in this death rate. In 2016, WV ranked 11th in the country for age-adjusted death rate due to a cerebrovascular disease.
In 2016, WV had a total of 1,039 deaths that were attributed to cerebrovascular disease. The top 5 cerebrovascular disease subcategories accounted for 865 of those deaths. *Stroke, not specified as haemorrhage or infarction* was associated with 560 deaths, or 64.7% of the top 5 subcategories.

Data Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Vital Statistics
6. Diabetes (ICD-10 E10-E14)

This cause of death includes insulin-dependent and non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus both with and without complications.

![Deaths Due to Diabetes
WV vs. U.S., 1999 - 2016](image)

Data Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Vital Statistics

The age-adjusted death rate for diabetes was slightly improved in the U.S. between 1999 and 2016, falling from 25.0 to 21.0 deaths per 100,000 population (16.0%). This timeframe included a few spikes in this death rate including a rate of 21.6, which occurred in 2011. WV has had intermittent spikes in this death rate with significantly higher rates than the U.S. as a whole – both beginning and ending the mentioned timeframe at 34.8 deaths per 100,000 population. WV led the U.S. and D.C. in deaths attributed to diabetes in 2016, up from 3rd in 2015.
- Diabetes caused 860 WV deaths in 2016.
- The top 5 diabetes subcategories accounted for 727 of those deaths.
- *Unspecified diabetes mellitus, without complications* caused 294 deaths, or 40.4% of the top 5 subcategories and 34.2% of all Diabetes deaths.

Data Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Vital Statistics
7. Alzheimer’s Disease (ICD-10 G30)

Alzheimer’s disease is a type of dementia that results in loss of memory and cognitive abilities as well as behavioral changes.

### Deaths Due to Alzheimer’s Disease

**WV vs. U.S., 1999 - 2016**

The U.S. age-adjusted death rate of Alzheimer’s disease increased between 1999 and 2016 starting at 16.5 and rising to 30.3 deaths per 100,000 persons (83.6%). During this period, the U.S. and WV have exchanged leading roles multiple times and have had highly similar rates. WV had 15.0 deaths per 100,000 population in 1999, less than the U.S., and led the U.S. in the rate of Alzheimer’s deaths in 2016 with 31.7 deaths per 100,000 population, a 111.3% increase. A single spike in the WV rate occurred in 2008 where the age-adjusted death rate increased from 24.1 to 29.7 and then fell to 24.9 deaths per 100,000 population the subsequent year. The similarities in rates made WV 26th highest in the country for deaths caused by Alzheimer’s disease in 2016.

- The top Alzheimer’s disease death subcategory was **G30.9 Alzheimer’s disease, unspecified**.
- This category accounted for 777 (98.9%) of the total 786 Alzheimer’s deaths.
- All other category data were suppressed due to NCHS data use restrictions to assure confidentiality, which suppresses data representing 0-9 persons.

https://wonder.cdc.gov/wonder/help/ucd.html#Assurance of Confidentiality
8. **Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome, and Nephrosis (ICD-10 N00-N07, N17-N19, N25-N27)**

Kidney Disease

![Deaths Due to Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome, and Nephrosis, WV vs. U.S., 1999 - 2016](chart.png)

Data Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Vital Statistics

After several years of a rising age-adjusted death rate in the U.S. due to nephritis, nephrotic syndrome, and nephrosis (kidney disease), a sharp decline in 2011 (15.3 to 13.4 deaths per 100,000 population) started a downward trend. The 2016 U.S. age-adjusted death rate of 13.1 deaths per 100,000 population did not reach the previous low of 13.0, which occurred in 1999 (an overall 0.8% increase). The WV rate has continued to exceed the U.S. rate starting at 16.4 deaths per 100,000 population in 1999 and ending with 19.3 deaths per 100,000 population (an increase of 17.7%) after numerous surges over this period. In 2016, WV was ranked 6th in the U.S. for its age-adjusted death rate associated with kidney disease.
In 2016, WV had a total of 481 deaths that were attributed to nephritis, nephrotic syndrome, and nephrosis.

The top 4 subcategories accounted for 461 of those deaths.

*Chronic kidney disease, stage 5* caused 179 deaths, or 38.8% of the top 4 subcategories and 37.2% of all nephritis, nephrotic syndrome, and nephrosis deaths.

All other category data were suppressed due to NCHS data use restrictions to assure confidentiality, which suppresses data representing 0-9 persons.

https://wonder.cdc.gov/wonder/help/ucd.html#Assurance of Confidentiality
Influenza and pneumonia are respiratory infections.

The U.S. has seen a sharp decline in the age-adjusted death rate for influenza and pneumonia falling from 23.5 to 13.5 deaths per 100,000 population, or 42.6%, between 1999 and 2016. WV experienced the same trend with a drop from 25.0 to 17.3 deaths per 100,000 population (30.8%) in those years. Both the U.S. and WV had varying peaks in death rates over this period. Although the WV rate was higher at both ends of this period, the gap widened: there was a 1.5 deaths per 100,000 population gap in 1999 and a 3.8 deaths per 100,000 population gap in 2016. WV ranked 6th in the country for age-adjusted death rate due to influenza and pneumonia in 2016.

- The top 2 influenza and pneumonia death subcategories are J18.9 Pneumonia, unspecified (360 deaths) and J11.0 Influenza with pneumonia, virus not identified (12 deaths).
- They accounted for 372 (87.9%) of the total 423 influenza and pneumonia deaths in 2016.
- All other category data were suppressed due to NCHS data use restrictions to assure confidentiality, which suppresses data representing 0-9 persons.

https://wonder.cdc.gov/wonder/help/ucd.html#Assurance of Confidentiality
10. Suicide (ICD-10 U03, X60-X84, Y87.0)

Intentional Self-Harm

The U.S. has seen a small rise in the age-adjusted death rate for suicide (intentional self-harm) between 1999 and 2016, an increase from 10.5 to 13.5 deaths per 100,000 persons, or 28.6%. WV’s rate fluctuated periodically, experiencing a marked 59.5% increase during this time with a rate of 12.1 deaths per 100,000 population in 1999 and a rate of 19.3 in 2016. In the final year of this timeframe, WV was ranked 11th in the U.S. and D.C. for the age-adjusted death rate from intentional self-harm.

Data Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Vital Statistics

Note: WV Data from 2005 and 2009 retrieved from WV Health Statistics Center due to closure of national reporting window.
In 2016, WV had a total of 362 deaths by suicide.
The top 5 suicide subcategories accounted for 336 of those deaths.

*Intentional self-harm by other and unspecified firearm discharge* was responsible for 111 deaths, or 33.0% of the top 5 subcategories.
Accidents (ICD-10 V01-X59, Y85-Y86)

- Among the top 10 causes of death, the rate of WV accidental deaths sustained the most change between 2012 and 2016, a 26.7% increase.
- The age-adjusted death rate increased to 89.7 deaths per 100,000 population (1,705 deaths), rising by 18.9 deaths per 100,000 persons (or 334 deaths) from 2012.
- Accidents rose from the 4th leading cause of death in 2015 to 3rd in 2016.
- Accidental poisoning by and exposure to other and unspecified drugs, medicaments [substances used for medical treatment], and biological substances and accidental poisoning by and exposure to narcotics and psychodysleptics [hallucinogens], not elsewhere classified were primarily responsible for the 2016 spike in WV accidental deaths, accounting for 159 of the 189 death increase.
- In 2016, Accidental poisoning by and exposure to other and unspecified drugs, medicaments [substances used for medical treatment], and biological substances was the most common accidental death regardless of gender or age group (44 and younger vs. 45 and older).
WV 10 Leading Causes of Death by Gender, 2016

Data Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Vital Statistics
West Virginia 10 Leading Causes of Death, 2016
Men, Population 905,943

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause of Death</th>
<th>Number of Deaths</th>
<th>Age-Adjusted Death Rate per 100K</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Heart Disease</td>
<td>2,496</td>
<td>231.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cancer</td>
<td>2,460</td>
<td>214.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Accidents</td>
<td>1,112</td>
<td>122.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases</td>
<td>781</td>
<td>69.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Diabetes</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>42.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Cerebrovascular Diseases</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>41.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Suicide</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome, and Nephrosis</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>23.1</td>
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<td>9. Alzheimer’s Disease</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>23.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Influenza and Pneumonia</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Vital Statistics

West Virginia 10 Leading Causes of Death, 2016
Women, Population 925,159

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause of Death</th>
<th>Number of Deaths</th>
<th>Age-Adjusted Death Rate per 100K</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Heart Disease</td>
<td>2,271</td>
<td>156.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Cancer</td>
<td>2,199</td>
<td>158.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases</td>
<td>818</td>
<td>57.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Cerebrovascular Diseases</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>40.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Accidents</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>57.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Alzheimer’s Disease</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>36.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Diabetes</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>28.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome, and Nephrosis</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>16.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Influenza and Pneumonia</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>15.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Septicemia</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>13.4</td>
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Data Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Vital Statistics
WV 10 Leading Causes of Death by Age, 2016

Data Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Vital Statistics
### West Virginia 10 Leading Causes of Death, 2016
#### Aged 44 and Under, Population 978,536

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause of Death</th>
<th>Number of Deaths</th>
<th>Age-Adjusted Death Rate per 100K</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Accidents</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>73.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Suicide</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>18.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Heart Disease</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>12.2</td>
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<td>4. Cancer</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>11.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Homicide</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>7.4</td>
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<td>7. Congenital Malformations, Deformations, and Chromosomal Abnormalities</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Diabetes</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Septicemia</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>*Unreliable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Rates are marked as “unreliable” when the death count is less than 20 per the Centers for Disease Control.
Data Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Vital Statistics

### West Virginia 10 Leading Causes of Death, 2016
#### Aged 45 and Over, Population 852,566

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause of Death</th>
<th>Number of Deaths</th>
<th>Age-Adjusted Death Rate per 100K</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Heart Disease</td>
<td>4,654</td>
<td>525.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cancer</td>
<td>4,553</td>
<td>501.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases</td>
<td>1,584</td>
<td>175.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Cerebrovascular Diseases</td>
<td>1,021</td>
<td>116.1</td>
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<td>5. Accidents</td>
<td>988</td>
<td>120.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Diabetes</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>93.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Alzheimer’s Disease</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>91.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome, and Nephrosis</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>52.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Influenza and Pneumonia</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Septicemia</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Vital Statistics
For additional information regarding this brief please contact:

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West Virginia Bureau for Public Health
Health Statistics Center
350 Capitol Street, Room 165
Charleston, WV 25301
Phone: (304) 558-9100
http://www.wvdhhr.org/bph/hsc/default.asp

For additional information regarding conditions and diseases please contact:

West Virginia Bureau for Behavioral Health & Health Facilities
350 Capitol Street, Room 350
Charleston, WV 25301
Phone: (304) 356-4811
https://dhhr.wv.gov/bhhf/Pages/default.aspx

Behavioral Health
Substance Abuse
Alzheimer’s Disease

West Virginia Bureau for Public Health
Division of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease
350 Capitol Street, Room 514
Charleston, WV 25301-3715
Phone: (304) 356-4193

General Chronic Disease:
https://dhhr.wv.gov/hpcd/Pages/default.aspx

Cancer:
http://dhhr.wv.gov/hpcd/FocusAreas/wvcancer/Pages/default.aspx

Diabetes:
http://dhhr.wv.gov/hpcd/FocusAreas/wvdiabetes/Pages/default.aspx
West Virginia Bureau for Public Health
Division of Tobacco Prevention
350 Capitol Street, Room 514
Charleston, WV 25301
Phone: (304) 356-4193
https://dhhr.wv.gov/wvdtp/Pages/default.aspx

West Virginia Bureau for Public Health
Office of Epidemiology and Prevention Services
350 Capitol Street, Room 125
Charleston, WV 25301
Phone: (304) 558-2188

Immunizations:
http://dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/immunization/Pages/default.aspx

Infectious Disease:
http://dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/Pages/default.aspx

West Virginia Bureau for Public Health
West Virginia Violence & Injury Prevention Program
350 Capitol Street, Room 427
Charleston, WV 25301
Phone: (800) 642-9704
https://dhhr.wv.gov/vip/Pages/default.aspx

Accidents
CAVEAT: Data contained in this report were collected from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention CDC WONDER Online Database unless otherwise specified. There may be small differences between figures reported nationally by the CDC and figures kept internally by the WV Health Statistics Center.
WORKS CITED

