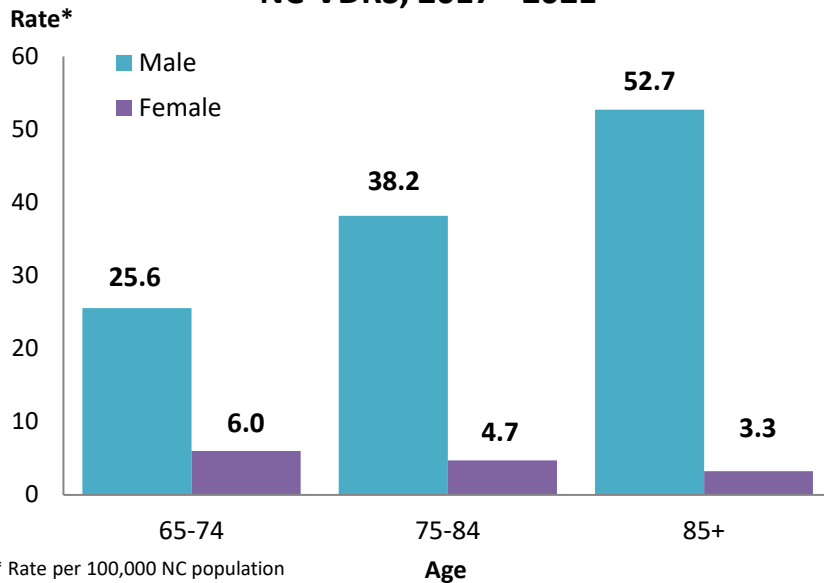


# NC Violent Death Reporting System

## SUICIDE AMONG OLDER ADULTS IN NORTH CAROLINA, 2017 - 2021

The North Carolina Violent Death Reporting System (NC-VDRS) is a CDC-funded statewide surveillance system that collects detailed information on violent deaths that occur in North Carolina including: homicide, suicide, unintentional firearm deaths, legal intervention, and deaths of undetermined intent. NC-VDRS triangulates information from death certificates, medical examiner reports, and law enforcement reports to understand and aid in the prevention of violent deaths. For more information, please visit <https://www.injuryfreenc.ncdhhs.gov/About/ncVDRS.htm>.

**Older Adult Suicide Rates\* by Age Group:  
NC-VDRS, 2017 - 2021**

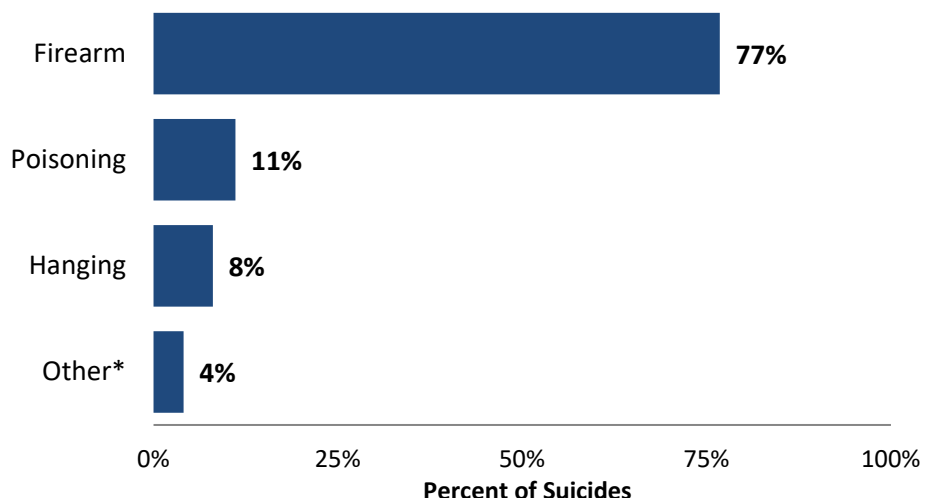


- From 2017 to 2021, 1,743 North Carolina residents ages 65 and older died as a result of violence. Of these violent deaths, 1,443 were suicide (82.8%).
- The suicide rate among older adults was 16.7 suicides per 100,000 population.
- Eighty-two percent (82.3%) of suicides among older adults were among males.
- The suicide rate peaked among males 85 and older, and the suicide rate was consistently higher for males compared to females for all age groups.
- Among females, the suicide rate peaked among those ages 65-74.

• Ninety-three (92.8%) percent of older adult suicide victims were identified as non-Hispanic (NH) white, 4.8 percent were NH Black, and the remaining 2.4 percent were identified as NH Asian, NH American Indian, or Hispanic.

- Overall, the most common method of suicide among older adults was firearms (76.8%), followed by poisoning (11.1%) and hanging/strangulation/suffocation (8.0%).
- Four percent (4.1%) of suicides involved a method other than firearms, poisoning, or hanging/strangulation/suffocation.

**Elder Suicide Method of Death: NC-VDRS, 2017 - 2021**

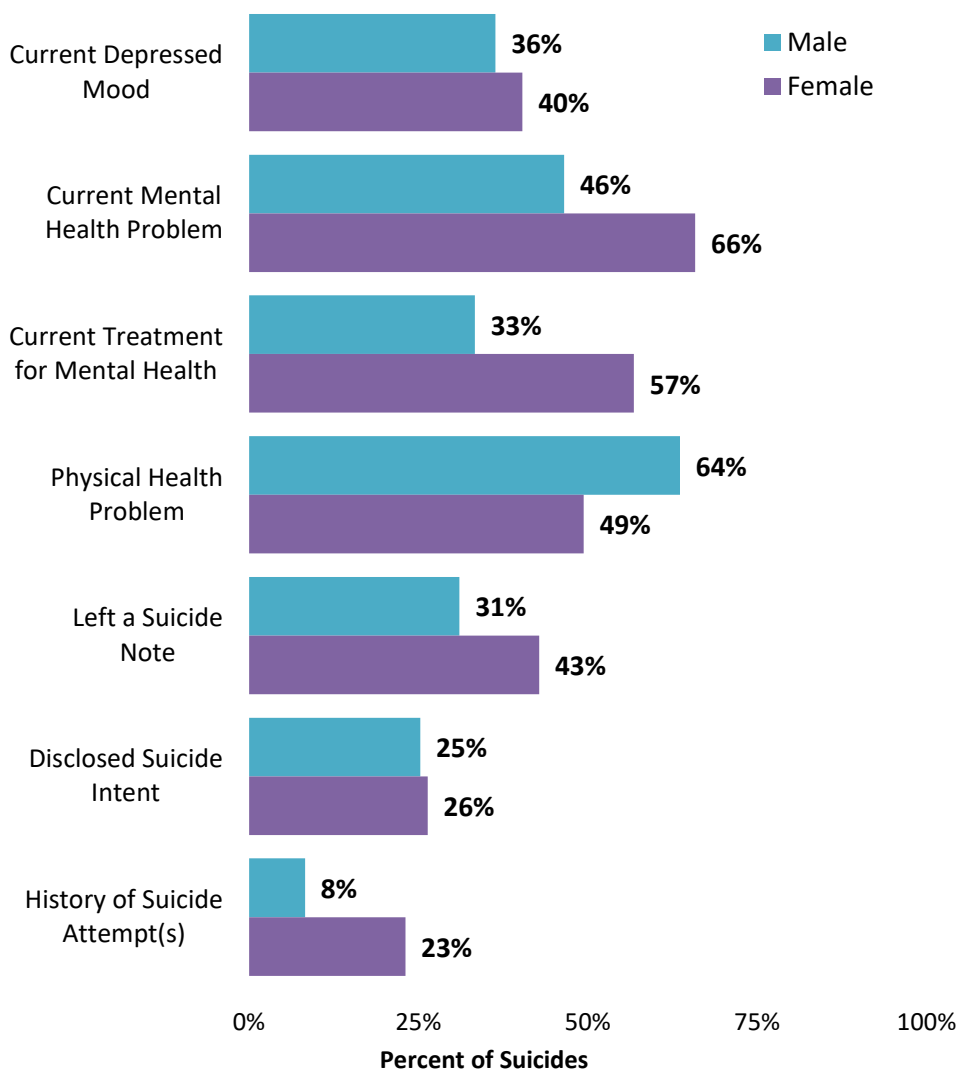


\*Other methods include: sharp instrument, fire/burns, motor vehicle and other.

**If you or someone you know needs support now,**

**call or text 988  
or chat  
988lifeline.org**

## Older Adult Suicide Circumstances\*: NC-VDRS, 2017 - 2021



- Over one-third (36.3%) of older adult male suicide victims with circumstance information were characterized as having a current depressed mood at the time of death compared to 40.3% of females.
- Sixty-six percent (65.8%) of older adult female and 46.5% of elder male suicide victims had a current mental health problem when they died by suicide.
- Twenty-three percent (23.1%) of older adult females had a history of prior suicide attempts, whereas only 8.2% of older adult males had a history of prior suicide attempts.
- Sixty-four percent (63.6%) of males and 49.4% of females had a physical health problem.

\*Circumstances are known for 97% of males (n=1153) and 95% of females (n=243).

More information on suicide prevention efforts can be found at:

### State Resource Partners

**NC Division of Mental Health,  
Developmental Disabilities and Substance Use Services**  
<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/mhddsas>

**North Carolina Office of the Chief Medical Examiner**  
<https://www.ocme.dhhs.nc.gov/>

**North Carolina Mental Health, Substance Use, and Aging Coalition**  
<https://www.med.unc.edu/aging/cgwep>

**NC Division of Aging and Adult Services**  
<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/daas>

### National Resources

**The Suicide Prevention Resource Center**  
<http://www.sprc.org/>

**The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention**  
<https://afsp.org/>

**The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**  
call or text 988

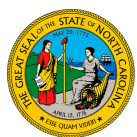
The North Carolina Violent Death Reporting System is supported by Cooperative Agreement 5 NU17CE924955-02-00 8/4/2023 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

NC Division of Public Health / [www.publichealth.nc.gov](http://www.publichealth.nc.gov) / Injury Epidemiology & Surveillance Unit / 919-707-5425  
NC Violent Death Reporting System / 919-707-5432

State of North Carolina / Department of Health and Human Services / [www.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.ncdhhs.gov)  
NCDHHS is an equal opportunity employer and provider.  
FINAL DATA 8/4/2023

Please see the NC-VDRS 2021 Annual Report for additional data and technical information:

<https://www.injuryfreenc.ncdhhs.gov/DataSurveillance/ViolentDeathData.htm>



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**  
Division of Public Health

