

Hello Professor and class,

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, New Castle County, Delaware, has an estimated population of 578,592. The median household income in the county is \$89,901, which is higher than the state's median of \$82,855. The poverty rate in New Castle County stands at 10.1%, slightly below Delaware's overall rate of 10.5%. Regarding health insurance coverage, 6.2% of people under age 65 in New Castle County are without health insurance, compared to 6.6% statewide. The poverty rate in New Castle County was 10.6%, slightly lower than Delaware's rate of 11.4%. An additional demographic indicator is educational attainment. In New Castle County, 38.6% of residents aged 25 and over held a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 34.3% statewide. The mean travel time to work for workers aged 16 and over in New Castle County is

25.4 minutes, slightly shorter than the state average of 26.1 minutes. These figures indicate that New Castle County generally aligns with state averages, with marginally higher income, lower poverty rates, slightly better health insurance coverage, and slightly shorter commute time.

According to data from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), life expectancy at birth in Delaware is congruent in New Castle and Sussex Counties at 81 years old for females and 76.5 years old for males. Data for Kent County was not available for review on the website. In 2022, IHME, determined that "life expectancy (LE) in the U.S. is forecasted to increase from 78.3 years in 2022 to 79.9 years in 2035 and to 80.4 years in 2050 for all sexes combined". Delaware's life expectancy aligns closely with national trends but is below the U.S. average, especially for males. From observations during clinical practicum and research, chronic illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension, obesity, are driving factors in the down trend of life expectancy in both the state of Delaware and nationally.

Another less spoken of trend that effects life expectancy is mental illness. According to Chan et al., (2023), "mental illness significantly reduces life expectancy across various diagnoses, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive interventions. Individuals with mental disorders often face higher mortality rates due to coexisting physical health conditions, increased risk of substance use, and barriers to accessing healthcare". In 2020, approximately 15.6% of adults in Delaware reported having a substance use disorder and in 2021, 32.8% of adults in Delaware reported symptoms of anxiety or depression, with 16.9%. (n.d.) In addition to addressing chronic illnesses, it is also essential to address mental illness to comprehensively address all discrepancies.

Chan, J. K., Correll, C. U., Wong, C. S., Chu, R. S., Fung, V. S., Wong, G. H., Lei, J. H., & Chang, W. C. (2023). Life expectancy and years of potential life lost in people with mental disorders: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *eClinicalMedicine*, 65, 102294.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eclinm.2023.102294>

Drug overdose - delaware health and Social Services. (n.d.).

<https://dhss.delaware.gov/dph/files/dedrugoverdosemortsurvrpt2017.pdf>