



Page 10A • August 27, 2025 • THE LINK

DPH expands state's tracking dashboards

IRIS HUNTER
Staff Reporter

The South Carolina Department of Public Health has expanded its tracking dashboards.

The 13 dashboards offer comprehensive and accurate insights into key health indicators for South Carolina communities. The dashboards also provide data on trends related to cancer incidences, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, heart attack/stroke, air quality, childhood lead, drinking water, heat-related illness, life expectancy, Lyme disease, reproductive health, unintentional carbon monoxide poisoning and data specific to each county.

The dashboard updates include expanded demographic breakdowns by race and age, additional county data, improved data visualization tips, new downloadable infographics, and more resource links. The new data enhances DPH's ability to respond to emerging health trends while ensuring residents in communities have access to accurate actionable data.

"We want to make sure that we have the most current data possible to see what issues are impacting our communities in the county. We would like to be able to see the difference so that we can determine what the health and environmental issues are within the community so that we can address the issue with

the most impactful resources," said Katie O'Shields Free, DPH's Epidemiology, Analytics, & Data Visualization section director.

The information in the dashboards typically goes back at least 5 years. There are some dashboards that have limited data since, in some cases, information was not always recorded.

The agency is in the process of developing food insecurity and emergency preparedness dashboards, which will be released later this year. The topics of food insecurity and emergency preparedness are an issue in the state, and the agency wants to highlight them because they impact a large amount of South Carolinians.

The food insecurity dashboard will highlight the issues impacting food insecurity and inform individuals about food banks and food programs. Food insecurity can be impacted by multiple factors, including the weather.

"The goal of the food insecurity dashboard is to provide members of the community access to food outlets by looking at how we can combat food insecurity issues," said Free.

The emergency preparedness dashboard will highlight the emergency items people should have in their homes. The emergency preparedness dashboard will contain a game that will encourage the participant to find different emergency preparedness items to teach them the importance of having the items.

The food insecurity and emergency preparedness dashboards will contain downloadable pdfs and interactive tools.

The agency hopes that the improvements to the dashboards will enhance the well-being and knowledge about specific health topics of the individuals within the community.

"We are hoping to start and continue using the tools to see the changes in the community, make important data accessible and be a resource for state and local communities," Free stated.

The South Carolina Department of Environmental Services and the South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office provided additional data used to expand the dashboards. The South Carolina Emergency Management Division, Census, Feeding America and USDA assisted with providing data for the food insecurity and emergency preparedness dashboards.

The dashboards are available in the English and Spanish languages.

More information about the dashboards is available at <https://dph.sc.gov/professionals/public-health-data/sc-environmental-public-health-tracking/sc-tracking-dashboards>.

Individuals can ask questions about the data or have DPH to present information about the dashboards by contacting SCTracking at dph.sc.gov.

Unemployment rate continues to rise

JACQUELINE HOUGH
Editor - The Link

Chesterfield County saw another increase in its unemployment rate for July.

For the county, the rate increased from 5.1 to 5.4 percent.

Williamsburg County continued to have the highest in the state and saw its rate increase from 7.8 to 8.7 percent.

Charleston County remained the lowest rate with a slight increase to 3.7 percent.

The unemployment rate for the state increased slightly to 4.2 percent.

William Floyd, executive

director of the Department of Employment and Workforce, said it was another strong employment month for the state with job growth in nearly every industrial sector and employers expanding their payrolls by an estimated 9,000 jobs.

"The unemployment rate ticked up to 4.2 percent as more people entered the labor force, while the state saw significant job growth in professional, scientific, and technical services; administrative and support and waste management and remediation services; and accommodation and food services," he said in a statement.

Floyd added in September of each year, DEW celebrates workforce development month to highlight some of the great work done by businesses, organizations and workforce partners throughout the state.

Unemployment rate changes for other counties in the area included Marlboro County from 7.1 to 7.7 percent, Dillon County from 5.9 to 6.4, Darlington County 5.0 to 5.5, Florence County from 4.8 to 5.2, and Lancaster County from 4.5 to 4.8.

In July 2024, Chesterfield County had an unemployment rate of 5.6 percent.

Chesterfield Service Club to host eighth annual breakfast fundraiser

BENNIE MILES
Staff Reporter

The Chesterfield Service Club, in partnership with the Chesterfield Police Department, will once again bring the community together with its eighth annual Edwin "Brother" Davis breakfast, scheduled for Sept. 12.

The breakfast is from 7 to 10 a.m. at the Chesterfield Family YMCA. Tickets are \$8.

The breakfast is named in honor of Edwin "Brother" Davis, a longtime leader and one of the most dedicated members of the club.

Davis served as president for more than two decades and has remained a constant

source of support and encouragement for both the organization and the community. His name on this event reflects not only his personal commitment but also the lasting impact individuals can have when they devote their time and talents to service.

Guests will enjoy a traditional Southern breakfast along with fellowship that organizers say is just as important as the meal itself. Attendance has steadily grown over the years as more families and neighbors embrace the opportunity to gather in a setting that promotes connection and unity.

The Edwin "Brother" Davis breakfast also high-

lights the broader role of civic clubs in small towns and rural communities.

As one of the oldest civic groups in Chesterfield County, the Service Club has a long tradition of giving back through charitable efforts and community service.

Proceeds from the breakfast will support the club's ongoing projects, and members continue to encourage others to consider joining.

Tickets can be purchased from club members or the Chesterfield Police Department.

More information is available by contacting Davis Yarborough at (843) 623-1182 or davis@andersonrealestate.org.

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