The Edgar Dyer Institute for Leadership and Public Policy believes that individuals across the community, state and nation can improve governance and solve problems by working together on a basis of mutual knowledge and understanding. Our mission is to engage Coastal Carolina University students in active learning opportunities while creating public value, untangling public problems, and finding public solutions that have positive and measurable impacts. For more information, please contact dyerinstitute@coastal.edu or 843-349-6952.
This data describes the number of licensed mental health providers in the county per 100,000 individuals. Mental health providers include psychiatrists, psychologists, clinical social workers and counselors who specialize in mental health care. For every 655 people in South Carolina, there is one mental health provider. Nationally, this number is 493 to one. Understanding this data can help illuminate possible shortfalls when it comes to accessing services. The shortages in mental health service providers are a concern for the state at large. Long waits in scheduling appointments coupled with limited home-based and family-based services, and a general need for case management services, means that some South Carolinians go without care. Lack of consistent access to mental health care can be problematic not only for the individual, but for other medical providers who may see mental health patients in emergency rooms that are not always equipped to offer specialized services. As with most health matters, the need for better prevention and early intervention services is of great importance. The data described here was collected by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, County Health Rankings; it represents 2016 and is displayed by county.
The data on this map describes the percentage of individuals ages 25 years and older who have not obtained a high school degree or its equivalent. This information is helpful in understanding economic opportunity in the state because educational attainment is highly correlated with future earning and positive health outcomes for individuals and their families. South Carolina and the nation are fairly similar – 13 percent and 14 percent of the population have not achieved high school attainment, respectively. However, Allendale and Dillon counties see rates as high as 28 percent. Lack of educational attainment in concentrated areas can be detrimental to the local community and can be used as an indicator of local economic stability. The data described here was collected by the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, is an average of a five-year segment (2010-2014) and is displayed by county.
This indicator describes the percentage of all births that are defined as low birth weight. Babies are considered to be low weight when, regardless of gestational age, they weigh less than 5.8 pounds at birth. In South Carolina, 10 percent of all babies born between 2006 and 2012 were deemed low weight. Nationally, this rate was 8 percent. Many factors contribute to low birth weight, including insufficient prenatal care, maternal tobacco, alcohol or drug use, multiple pregnancies, and teen/early pregnancy. Additionally, socioeconomic disparities in maternal health care can contribute to this troubling outcome. As a result of low birth weight, babies can have more serious and persistent health complications that can follow them throughout their lives. The data described here was collected by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Indicators Warehouse, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and National Vital Statistics System, is an average of a six-year segment (2006-2012) and is displayed by county.
Median household income means half of all the households have incomes above this level, and half have an income below this level. The data on this map describes median family income by various income segments. During this time period, South Carolina’s median income was $55,506 while nationally it was $65,443. Household income, which includes the incomes of all family members older than 15, gauges eligibility for many services, including student financial aid, housing vouchers and energy assistance programs. When examining income, one must also keep in mind variations in the cost of living throughout the state. Cost of living may be lower in rural areas but subject to higher transportation costs. Likewise, urban living may see higher housing costs but competitive prices for food and services. The data described here was collected by the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, is an average of a five-year segment (2010-2014) and is displayed by county.
Obesity is measured by body mass index (BMI). Individuals with BMIs greater than 30 are described as clinically obese. Nationally, 27.5 percent of individuals older than 20 years are obese, while South Carolina's statewide rate is almost 32 percent. Charleston County's obesity rate is just 24 percent and is the lowest among all counties in the state. The county with the highest obesity rate is Lee County, where 44 percent of the population (older than 20 years) is clinically obese. Environmental considerations, lifestyle choices, education, socioeconomic status and basic food environment can contribute to unhealthy weight. Obesity, and the health complications that accompany it, can have deadly consequences. In collecting this data, individuals self-reported weight and height, the two factors which are used to calculate BMI, which means these numbers are likely under-representative of the true obesity rate among South Carolinians. The data described here was collected by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, represents 2013 and is displayed by county.
The data on this map describes the percentage of individuals living in households with an income below 185 percent of the federal poverty level. At this level, pregnant or nursing women with infants or children up to age 5 are eligible for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), a federal assistance program designed to help low-income families. More generally, these families are at risk for a number of factors associated with poverty. Poverty data is helpful in determining the number of children who are eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch programs in county schools, the number of families relying on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and the number of individuals who are likely struggling to meet basic needs. In South Carolina, almost 37 percent of individuals are living in households below 185 percent of the poverty line. Nationally, this number is 31 percent. York, Dorchester and Beaufort are the only counties that fall below the national rate, while Allendale is almost twice this rate at 61 percent. Understanding the depth and breadth of poverty in South Carolina allows for our communities to invest in programs that prevent poverty and relieve the stresses associated with low socioeconomic status. The data described here was collected by the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, is an average of a five-year segment (2010-2014) and is displayed by county.