

INTRODUCTION

- Despite significant investments to improve access and delivery of high-quality health care, patients who live in rural communities tend to have worse health outcomes.
- Studies suggest clinical care impacts only 20% of variation in health outcomes, while social determinants of health (SDOH) affect up to 50%.¹
- We traveled to Grifton, North Carolina and spoke with community members to directly observe how SDOH influence health in rural NC communities.

METHODS

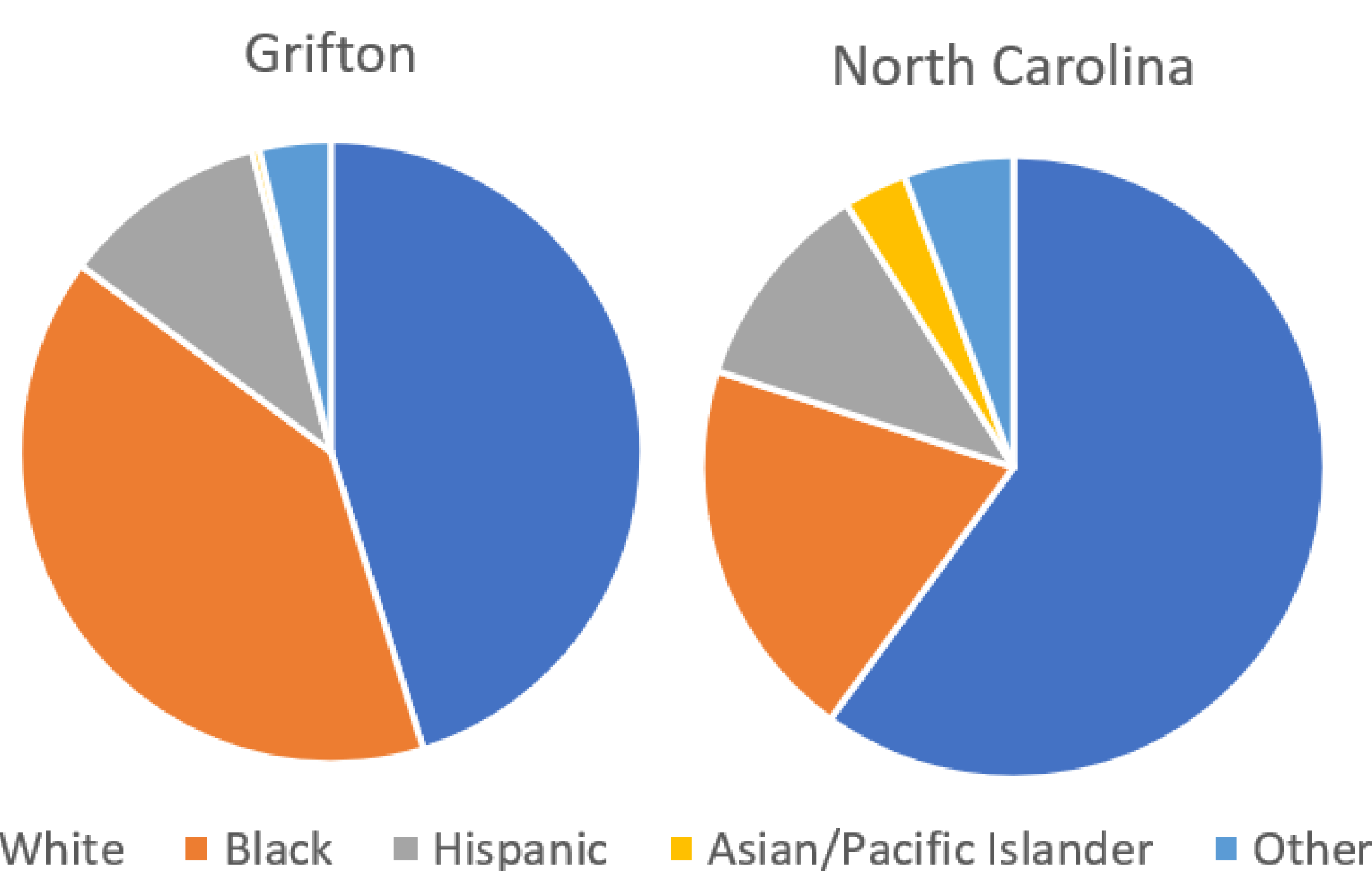
Step 1: Compared Grifton versus NC census data

Step 2: Interviewed community members about their experiences and challenges living in Grifton

Step 3: Identified SDOH likely impacting the health of Grifton residents

DEMOGRAPHICS

- Population: 2,448 (↓6.5% from 2010)



RESULTS

Income and Housing:²

	Grifton	North Carolina
Average Household Income	\$46,476	\$60,516
Median Household Income	\$31,903	\$84,888
Poverty Rate	31.83%	13.4%
Rate of Home Ownership	42.8%	65.7%

Food

- Only 1 grocery store, opened in 2022
- No local grocery store from 2018-2022
- 4 restaurants, all fast food and no healthy options
- Grifton School is a recipient of USDA Fruit and Vegetable grant

Health care

- Only 1 pediatric clinic, member of Kinston Pediatric Associates
- Physicians East Family Medicine Clinic closed several years ago
 - Closest adult primary care clinics are in Kinston and Ayden
- Closest hospitals in Kinston (Lenoir Hospital) and Greenville (ECU Health)
- Previous pharmacy closed several years ago, closest pharmacy is in Ayden

Transportation:

- No public transit system; Pitt Area Transit System (PATs) available for medical care
- Interviewees cited transportation access as a major local issue
- Most residents do not work in Grifton³

Place of Work	2000	
	Number of Residents Working	% of Total
Worked in place of residence	132	13.6
Worked in County, not in Town	565	58.2
Worked Outside County of Residence	268	27.6
Worked Outside State	6	0.6
Total	971	100

Education

- Grifton School: K-8
 - Efforts to address food insecurity: USDA Fruit and Vegetable grant recipient; free breakfast and lunch for all students; free meals for all kids under 18 in the summer
- Grifton-Ayden High School
 - 4-year graduation rate (90.4%) comparable to NC average (86.4%)⁴
 - Low college graduation rate: 11% with bachelors or higher vs. NC average of 33%²

KEY INTERVIEW TAKEAWAYS

- Lots of money and jobs leaving the town
 - DuPont in Kinston was a major source of income for the town, but it closed several years ago
- Larger commercial chains do not want to invest in the area– they tend to prefer Ayden or Kinston
- Recurrent flooding is a major challenge
 - No local grocery store from 2018-2022 due to Hurricane Florence
- Transportation is a big issue locally, PATs can be unreliable for medical appointments
 - Leads to many “no-shows”
- Illicit drug use is a significant problem

DISCUSSION

- The SDOH affecting Grifton are complex and affect multiple facets of life, especially health
- SDOH affect up to 50% of health outcomes. Of this 50%, 47% can be attributed to socioeconomic factors, 34% to health behaviors, 16% to clinical access, and 3% to physical environment. Interview responses and census data suggest Grifton struggles in all these categories.¹
- Further research should be conducted to identify strategies that mitigate the SDOH affecting the residents of Grifton, which will ultimately improve health outcomes.

REFERENCES

1. Whitman, A., Lew, N. D., Chappel, A., Aysola, V., Zuckerman, R., & Sommers, B. D. (2022). *Addressing Social Determinants of Health: Examples of Successful Evidence-Based Strategies and Current Federal Efforts*.
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4. 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate Report: 2018-19 Entering 9th Graders Graduating in 2021-22 or Earlier. (n.d.). *NC Department of Public Instruction*. Retrieved July 25, 2023, from <https://accrpt.tops.ncsu.edu/app/2022/cgr/>