

State Health Coordinating Council

Agency Recommendation

Updates to Appendix B: List of Contiguous Counties

2026 State Medical Facilities Plan

Background

Defined contiguous counties impact planning for some health services covered in the NC State Medical Facilities Plan (“SMFP”); “Appendix B: List of Contiguous Counties”, *2025 SMFP*). “Policy ESRD-2: Relocation of Dialysis Stations” allows the relocation of existing stations between contiguous counties if certain conditions are met. Also, the need determination methodology for nursing home facility beds excludes from its calculations the nursing bed inventory and days of care for any facility operated by religious or fraternal organizations for any patient whose county of residence is contiguous to the facility’s county of location.

The *2025 SMFP*, “defines contiguous grouping in relation to a base county and includes any North Carolina county that touches that base county.” The listing of contiguous counties first appeared in the 1994 edition of the SMFP. Since the inaugural listing, the grouping for Chowan County has included Bertie, Gates, Hertford and Perquimans counties although Bertie and Chowan do not share a land border. The only rationale for this contiguous grouping is that there is a bridge between them. Similarly, Chowan and Washington Counties should also be considered contiguous because there is a bridge between them. It is also noted that both Chowan/Bertie and Chowan/Washington have fewer than 45 driving miles between each pair of counties.

Analysis

The Agency has conducted a comprehensive review of the listing of contiguous counties. To determine whether additional coastal counties meet the same criteria as Chowan/Bertie and Chowan/Washington counties, Agency staff examined the proximities of base counties with bridges to other counties according to drive distance, and whether it is necessary to traverse a third county to reach the base county. The following base coastal counties were reviewed: Camden, Carteret, Chowan, Currituck, Hyde, Pamlico and Washington. Counties with 1) a distance of ≤ 45 driving miles, and 2) no other county between it and the base county meet the criteria for a revised definition for contiguous grouping. Based on these criteria, only the listings for Chowan and Washington should be updated to include the other county of the pair.

Agency staff also reviewed the remaining listings for base counties across the state to determine if touching counties are correctly listed in Appendix B and found no additional changes are needed.

Recommendation

The Agency recommends “Appendix B: List of Contiguous Counties” in the *2026 SMFP* show the listing updates for Chowan and Washington Counties as previously described (see Appendix B, with suggested revisions in blue font, attached). We also recommend revising the description of contiguous counties as follows:

For purposes of the State Medical Facilities Plan, Healthcare Planning defines contiguous groupings in relation to a base county. A county will be grouped with a base county if it touches the base county. Also, a county will be grouped with a base county if it meets the following criteria: 1) has a distance of ≤ 45 driving miles from the base county; and 2) it is not necessary to traverse a third county to reach the base county.

Recommended Revisions for Proposed 2026 SMFP

APPENDIX B LIST OF CONTIGUOUS COUNTIES

For purposes of the State Medical Facilities Plan, Healthcare Planning defines contiguous groupings in relation to a base county. A county will be grouped with a base county if it touches the base county. A county will also be grouped with a base county if it meets the following criteria: 1) has a distance of ≤ 45 driving miles from the base county; and 2) it is not necessary to traverse a third county to reach the base county.

ALAMANCE	ALEXANDER	ALLEGHANY	ANSON	ASHE	AVERY
Caswell	Caldwell	Ashe	Montgomery	Alleghany	Burke
Chatham	Catawba	Surry	Richmond	Watauga	Caldwell
Guilford	Iredell	Wilkes	Stanly	Wilkes	McDowell
Orange	Wilkes		Union		Mitchell
Randolph					Watauga
Rockingham					

BEAUFORT	BERTIE	BLADEN	BRUNSWICK	BUNCOMBE	BURKE
Craven	Chowan	Columbus	Columbus	Haywood	Avery
Hyde	Halifax	Cumberland	New Hanover	Henderson	Caldwell
Martin	Hertford	Pender	Pender	Madison	Catawba
Pamlico	Martin	Robeson		McDowell	Cleveland
Pitt	Northampton	Sampson		Rutherford	Lincoln
Washington	Washington			Transylvania	McDowell
				Yancey	Rutherford

CABARRUS	CALDWELL	CAMDEN	CARTERET	CASWELL	CATAWBA
Iredell	Alexander	Currituck	Craven	Alamance	Alexander
Mecklenburg	Avery	Gates	Jones	Guilford	Burke
Rowan	Burke	Pasquotank	Onslow	Orange	Caldwell
Stanly	Catawba		Pamlico	Person	Cleveland
Union	Watauga			Rockingham	Iredell
	Wilkes				Lincoln

CHATHAM	CHEROKEE	CHOWAN	CLAY	CLEVELAND	COLUMBUS
Alamance	Clay	Bertie	Cherokee	Burke	Bladen
Durham	Graham	Gates	Macon	Catawba	Brunswick
Harnett	Macon	Hertford		Gaston	Pender
Lee		Perquimans		Lincoln	Robeson
Moore		Washington		Rutherford	
Orange					
Randolph					
Wake					

CRAVEN	CUMBERLAND	CURRITUCK	DARE	DAVIDSON	DAVIE
Beaufort	Bladen	Camden	Currituck	Davie	Davidson
Carteret	Harnett	Dare	Hyde	Forsyth	Forsyth
Jones	Hoke		Tyrrell	Guilford	Iredell
Lenoir	Moore			Montgomery	Rowan
Pamlico	Robeson			Randolph	Yadkin
Pitt	Sampson			Rowan	

Recommended Revisions for Proposed 2026 SMFP

Stanly

DUPLIN	DURHAM	EDGECOMBE	FORSYTH	FRANKLIN	GASTON
Jones	Chatham	Halifax	Davidson	Granville	Cleveland
Lenoir	Granville	Martin	Davie	Halifax	Lincoln
Onslow	Orange	Nash	Guilford	Johnston	Mecklenburg
Pender	Person	Pitt	Rockingham	Nash	
Sampson	Wake	Wilson	Stokes	Vance	
Wayne			Surry	Wake	
			Yadkin	Warren	

GATES	GRAHAM	GRANVILLE	GREENE	GUILFORD	HALIFAX
Camden	Cherokee	Durham	Lenoir	Alamance	Bertie
Chowan	Macon	Franklin	Pitt	Caswell	Edgecombe
Hertford	Swain	Person	Wayne	Davidson	Franklin
Pasquotank		Vance	Wilson	Forsyth	Martin
Perquimans		Wake		Randolph	Nash
				Rockingham	Northampton
				Stokes	Warren

HARNETT	HAYWOOD	HENDERSON	HERTFORD	HOKE	HYDE
Chatham	Buncombe	Buncombe	Bertie	Cumberland	Beaufort
Cumberland	Henderson	Haywood	Chowan	Moore	Dare
Johnston	Jackson	Polk	Gates	Richmond	Tyrrell
Lee	Madison	Rutherford	Northampton	Robeson	Washington
Moore	Swain	Transylvania		Scotland	
Sampson	Transylvania				
Wake					

IREDELL	JACKSON	JOHNSTON	JONES	LEE	LENOIR
Alexander	Haywood	Franklin	Carteret	Chatham	Craven
Cabarrus	Macon	Harnett	Craven	Harnett	Duplin
Catawba	Swain	Nash	Duplin	Moore	Greene
Davie	Transylvania	Sampson	Lenoir		Jones
Lincoln		Wake	Onslow		Pitt
Mecklenburg		Wayne			Wayne
Rowan		Wilson			
Wilkes					
Yadkin					

LINCOLN	MACON	MADISON	MARTIN	McDOWELL	MECKLENBURG
Burke	Cherokee	Buncombe	Beaufort	Avery	Cabarrus
Catawba	Clay	Haywood	Bertie	Buncombe	Gaston
Cleveland	Graham	Yancey	Edgecombe	Burke	Lincoln
Gaston	Jackson		Halifax	Mitchell	Iredell
Iredell	Swain		Pitt	Rutherford	Union
Mecklenburg			Washington	Yancey	

MITCHELL	MONTGOMERY	MOORE	NASH	NEW HANOVER	NORTHAMPTON
-----------------	-------------------	--------------	-------------	--------------------	--------------------

Recommended Revisions for Proposed 2026 SMFP

Avery	Anson	Chatham	Edgecombe	Brunswick	Bertie
McDowell	Davidson	Cumberland	Franklin	Pender	Halifax
Yancey	Moore	Harnett	Halifax		Hertford
	Randolph	Hoke	Johnston		Warren
	Richmond	Lee	Wake		
	Rowan	Montgomery	Warren		
	Stanly	Randolph	Wilson		
		Richmond			
		Scotland			

ONSLow	ORANGE	PAMLICO	PASQUOTANK	PENDER	PERQUIMANS
Carteret	Alamance	Beaufort	Camden	Bladen	Chowan
Duplin	Caswell	Carteret	Gates	Brunswick	Gates
Jones	Chatham	Craven	Perquimans	Columbus	Pasquotank
Pender	Durham			Duplin	
	Person			New Hanover	
				Onslow	
				Sampson	

PERSON	PITT	POLK	RANDOLPH	RICHMOND	ROBESON
Caswell	Beaufort	Henderson	Alamance	Anson	Bladen
Durham	Craven	Rutherford	Chatham	Hoke	Columbus
Granville	Edgecombe		Davidson	Montgomery	Cumberland
Orange	Greene		Guilford	Moore	Hoke
	Lenoir		Montgomery	Scotland	Scotland
	Martin		Moore	Stanly	
	Wilson				

ROCKINGHAM	ROWAN	RUTHERFORD	SAMPSON	SCOTLAND	STANLY
Alamance	Cabarrus	Buncombe	Bladen	Hoke	Anson
Caswell	Davidson	Burke	Cumberland	Moore	Cabarrus
Forsyth	Davie	Cleveland	Duplin	Richmond	Davidson
Guilford	Iredell	Henderson	Harnett	Robeson	Montgomery
Stokes	Montgomery	McDowell	Johnston		Richmond
	Stanly	Polk	Pender		Rowan
			Wayne		Union

STOKES	SURRY	SWAIN	TRANSYLVANIA	TYRRELL	UNION
Forsyth	Alleghany	Graham	Buncombe	Dare	Anson
Guilford	Forsyth	Haywood	Haywood	Hyde	Cabarrus
Rockingham	Stokes	Jackson	Henderson	Washington	Mecklenburg
Surry	Wilkes	Macon	Jackson		Stanly
Yadkin	Yadkin				

Recommended Revisions for Proposed 2026 SMFP

VANCE	WAKE	WARREN	WASHINGTON	WATAUGA	WAYNE
Franklin	Chatham	Franklin	Beaufort	Ashe	Duplin
Granville	Durham	Halifax	Bertie	Avery	Greene
Warren	Franklin	Nash	Chowan	Caldwell	Johnston
	Granville	Northampton	Hyde	Wilkes	Lenoir
	Harnett	Vance	Martin		Sampson
	Johnston		Tyrrell		Wilson
	Nash				

WILKES	WILSON	YADKIN	YANCEY
Alexander	Edgecombe	Davie	Buncombe
Alleghany	Greene	Forsyth	Madison
Ashe	Johnston	Iredell	McDowell
Caldwell	Nash	Stokes	Mitchell
Iredell	Pitt	Surry	
Surry	Wayne	Wilkes	
Watauga			
Yadkin			