

## 1.3 Cancer Rates

### The Importance

Cancer statistics result from a combination of factors including genetics, lifestyle, availability of quality treatment, and environmental hazards. Behind heart disease, cancer is the second most common cause of death in America. Lung cancer, the most easily preventable cancer, is by far the leading cause of cancer death in America. With 87% of all lung cancer deaths resulting from smoking (American Lung Association) and lung cancer's low survival rate, lung cancer mortality has varied dramatically over the past 50 years. When lung cancer is removed from the cancer statistics, treatment and environmental factors can be identified as larger factors in the remaining mortality. Reductions in cancer rates are an indicator of better treatment, better environmental conditions, and healthier lifestyles.

### About this indicator

This indicator measures the Capital District's cancer mortality based on the National Cancer Institute's data on five-year mortality rates between 1950 and 1994 for White Americans and between 1970 and 1994 for African Americans. Accurate African American cancer statistics are not available earlier than 1970. This indicator also uses NYS Department of Health data to compare cancer incidence to cancer mortality in the Capital District. All cancer statistics are maintained on an age-adjusted basis to account for younger or older demographics.

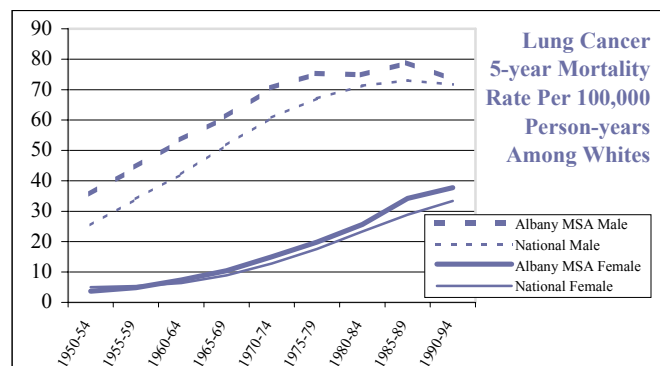
When comparing cancer rates in different geographies, it is important to maintain separate statistics by race and sex. African American cancer mortality rates, for whatever reason, are generally higher than white cancer rates. Women have different cancer rates than men, particularly breast cancer rates. Regions with different demographics will have different incident and mortality rates as a result of these differences.

### Sources for this Indicator

- The National Cancer Institute Five-year Mortality Rates.
- New York State Department of Health Cancer Registry Incidence and Mortality by County

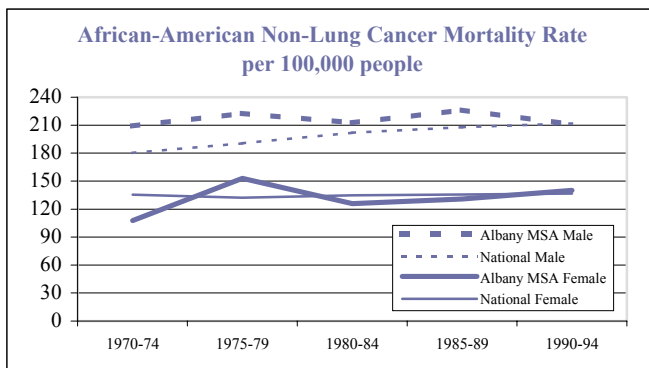
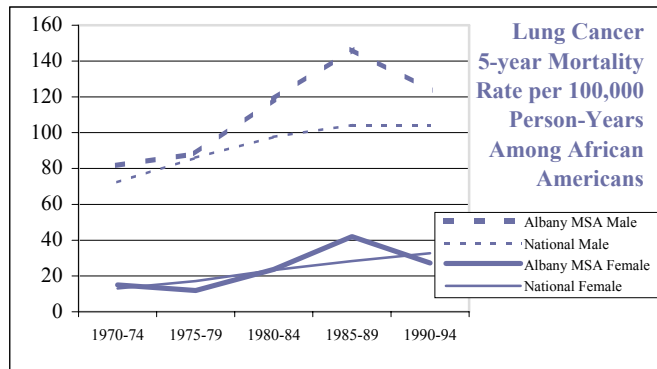
### Capital District Cancer Rates

In general, the Capital District's cancer mortality rates have been slightly above the national average. With 87% of lung cancers tied to tobacco use, lung cancer is the most preventable cancer. Capital District lung cancer mortality has been similar to the national trend.

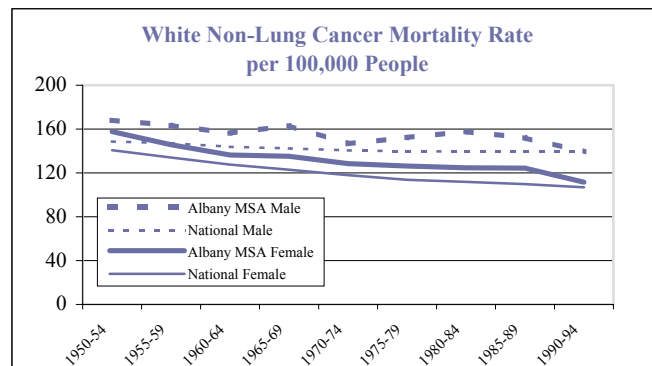


### 1.3 HEALTH

Male mortality has skyrocketed between the 1950's and the 1980's. Since the peak in the 1980's, male mortality has declined. These changes can be directly attributed to the popularity of smoking in the decades after WWII. The more recent declines in smoking rates have resulted in a decline in male mortality.

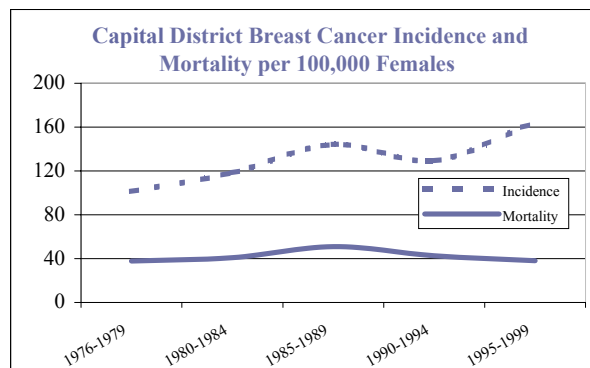
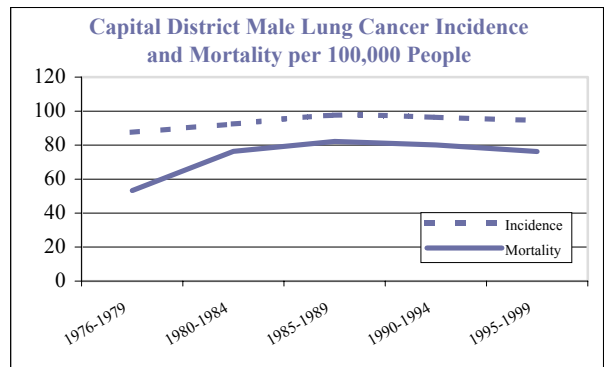
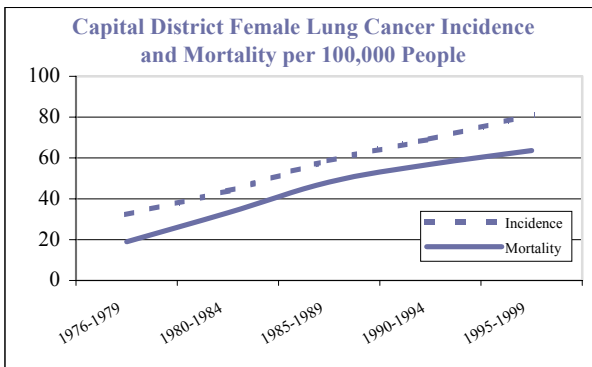
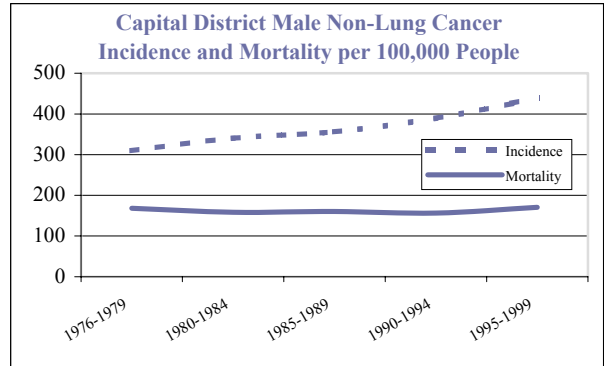
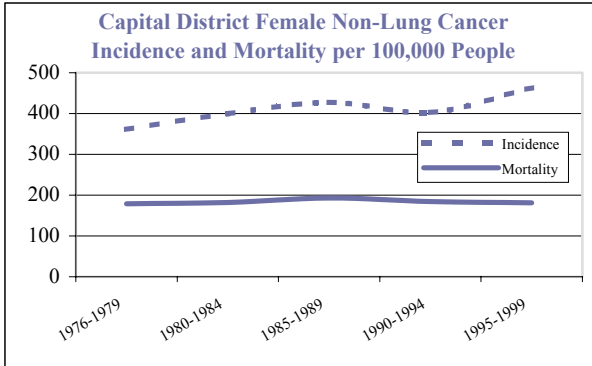


Female lung cancer rates, with the exception of African American women, have continued to climb through the 1990's. During WWII, soldiers were given free cigarettes. As a result, smoking's popularity among women took more time to catch on. Eventually, female lung cancer mortality should level off and, hopefully, start to decline as the male rates have.



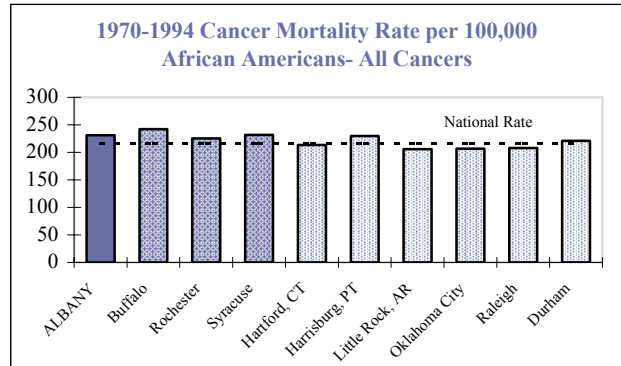
### 1.3 HEALTH

Lung cancer has an extremely low survival rate. As a result, there is very little difference between the lung cancer incidence and mortality trends. Overall, non-lung cancers have seen mortality rates stay relatively stable while the incidence rates have increased. African American mortality for non-lung cancers has risen slightly since the 1970's, while the rate has declined moderately for Whites. This may indicate increasing environmental, healthcare, or lifestyle disparities between the races.



### Regional Comparison

Compared with the its peer regions, the Albany MSA’s overall cancer mortality rate is slightly above most other regions for the period between 1970 and 1994. The Albany MSA also exceeds the national rate by approximately 5%.



All of the regions are relatively close to the national cancer mortality rate. Buffalo has the highest rate for both African Americans and whites while Harrisburg has the lowest rate for whites and Little Rock, the lowest for African Americans.

