



# ALAMEDA COUNTY COVID-19 HEALTH EMERGENCY

COUNTY OF ALAMEDA ★ CALIFORNIA

Office of Emergency Services  
4985 Broder Blvd, Dublin, CA 94568

Alameda County Health Care Services Agency

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Alameda County Releases the First-Ever Homeless Mortality Report

*This important report is based on the identification of 2018 - 2020 homeless deaths through data matching across homeless services, community reporters, and California Comprehensive Death File (CCDF) records in the California Vital Records Business Information System.*

ALAMEDA COUNTY, CA – The first-ever Homeless Mortality Report was released by the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency (HCSA) this week, a retrospective analysis on homeless deaths from 2018 to 2020. The report shows a dramatic 89% increase in the number of annual homeless deaths over those three years and examines cause of death, disparities in race and gender.

“We believe no one should die alone or unknown in homelessness,” said Colleen Chawla, HCSA’s Agency Director. “A responsible and just community must work to be closely aware of the deaths of all its members and strive to learn meaningful ways to improve program planning and shape policy.”

In total, 809 homeless individuals died in Alameda County between 2018 and 2020. Additional key findings include:

- 77% of homeless deaths occurred among men, 23% were women.
- 66% of homeless deaths occurred in non-medical settings - streets, sidewalks, parks, vehicles, shelters, encampments, railroads, transit, motel, and other locations.
- 50% of homeless deaths were due to acute/chronic medical conditions, led by heart and cardiovascular disease, cancer, liver disease, cerebrovascular disease, respiratory disease, and others.
- 41% of total homeless deaths were African American/Black persons.
- 34% of deaths occurred in medical facilities such as hospitals, nursing facilities, or in jail.
- 23% of deaths were due to drug overdose.

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“This sobering report confirms the magnitude of the health impacts and other challenges people face when homeless,” said Kerry Abbott, Director, HCSA’s Office of Homeless Care and Coordination. “In conjunction with the recent Point-in-Time Count, it will inform our work and our efforts to reduce premature deaths among unhoused residents.”

The report was developed by HCSA’s Health Care for the Homeless and Community Assessment Planning and Evaluation (CAPE) departments. To obtain the count, the team developed a data matching method across utilization lists and death certificate records in the California Electronic Death Registration system to record and analyze the deaths of people experiencing homelessness who passed away in hospitals, nursing facilities, and private residences. This approach results in more detailed information beyond currently available reports of deaths among people experiencing homelessness in Alameda County.

The report will aid in the efforts to forge multiple touchpoints across the homelessness system of care, including housing, health clinics, hospitals, emergency room, behavioral health, social services, outreach, and criminal justice. Health care and homeless services providers will have the access to analyze the data and create recommendations for policy and practice changes that contribute to the reduction of preventable deaths among people experiencing homelessness.

Read the complete Homeless Mortality report [here](#).

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