



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: HEALTH

File #: 21-918

Board Meeting Date: 11/16/2021

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Louise F. Rogers, Chief, County Health
Scott Gilman, Director, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services

Subject: San Mateo County Report on Deaths by Suicide

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution authorizing the approval and submission of the San Mateo County Report on Deaths by Suicide, 2019-2020.

BACKGROUND:

Your Board requested that Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) provide more detailed information on suicides by age (including teen suicides) and suicides by geographic location (including mapping clusters of deaths) and report findings back to the Board of Supervisors.

DISCUSSION:

We have included here key findings from the most recent suicide death data available. This data is from the California Vital Records Business Intelligence System, collected by the San Mateo County Coroner's Office and analyzed by the San Mateo County Health Office of Epidemiology and Evaluation.

- From 2019 to 2020, suicide deaths increased from 60 to 79 deaths, or 32%.
- The two most common methods of death by suicide for 2020 were firearm and hanging (this is comparable to prior years).
- Compared to 2019, there was an increase in suicide deaths among Asians and those born outside of the US (largely from Asian countries) in 2020.

As requested, the below table includes data on suicide deaths by age in San Mateo County.

Suicide Deaths by Age, San Mateo County, 2019-2020

Age Group	2019 (Number)	2019 (%)	2020 (Number)	2020 (%)
0-19	1	1.7%	2	2.5%
20-39	17	28.3%	23	29.1%
40-59	25	41.7%	30	38.0%
60-79	13	21.7%	19	24.1%
80+	4	6.7%	4	5.1%
Unknown	0	0.0%	1	1.3%
Total	60	100%	79	100%

Unfortunately, geographic mapping of our counties suicide data is not possible. HIPAA privacy rule (45 CFR 164.514) for de-identification of data requires blocking out any zip code with low numbers that could be traced back to an individual. Because San Mateo's numbers are so low, most all data would be omitted, resulting in an essentially meaningless map. For a more detailed review of this data, please visit the following links.

www.smchealth.org/SuicidePrevention <<http://www.smchealth.org/SuicidePrevention>>.
[2021 Suicide Prevention Month Presentation - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R6MzxJ05BzY) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R6MzxJ05BzY>>

Below, you may also find suicide prevention resources led by San Mateo County BHRS Office of Diversity and Equity.

- **Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) - Adult and Youth** - free 8-hour certification course that teaches community members how to recognize and appropriately respond to an adult (for Adult MHFA) or youth (for Youth MHFA) experiencing a mental health crisis.
- **Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)** - two-day interactive workshop in suicide prevention.
- **Be Sensitive, Be Brave (BSBB) Suicide Prevention** - foundational workshop in suicide prevention that teaches how to act as eyes and ears for suicidal distress and connect individuals with appropriate services.
- **Health Ambassador Program (HAP) - Adult** - program where community members use their knowledge and experience to make a difference in the lives of fellow community members who may be experiencing symptoms of a mental health and/or substance use problem.
- **Health Equity Initiatives** - focus on health inequities in access and quality of behavioral health care including suicide prevention for underserved, and inappropriately served cultural and ethnic communities.
- **Parent Project** - free, 12-week course that is offered in English and Spanish to anyone who cares of a child or adolescent. In these classes, parents learn parenting skills including suicide risks and get information about resources and other support available in their communities.

More information about above programs at <https://www.smchealth.org/bhrs/ode>.

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