

County of Santa Clara

Medical Examiner-Coroner
850 Thornton Way
San Jose, CA 95128-4702
(408) 793-1900 FAX (408) 793-6759

MEDICAL EXAMINER - CORONER
COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA



TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors
Jeffrey V. Smith, County Executive

FROM: Michelle A. Jordan MD, Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner *mag.*

SUBJECT: Off-Agenda Report: Number 21
Updated Information on Medical Examiner-Coroner Death Notices

DATE: July 16, 2021

The weekly number of deaths are provided in continuation from the prior reports (see data tables below).

In contrast to prior reports, the number of Fentanyl deaths will now be moved to the beginning of this and subsequent reports to underscore the increasing numbers of fatalities due to this powerful and deadly opioid.

Fentanyl fatalities from Jan 1, 2015 – June 30, 2021

Year	Count of Decedent	
2015	9	
2016	13	
2017	16*	*(1 case=San Benito)
2018	12*	*(1 case=San Benito)
2019	29*	*(2 case=San Benito)
2020	86*	*(2 case=San Benito)
2021	33	
Total	198**	

**Not all drug related deaths are closed in our system and this number will increase as we continue to certify deaths and close cases.

As previously stated in my prior reports [please refer to Off Agenda BOS reports #12 and #13, dated December 23, 2020] the number of fatalities is increasing in Santa Clara County. Fentanyl is an extremely potent opioid which can cause death at small doses (up to 80-100X more potent than morphine). Fentanyl is found in pills illegally sold and purchased on the streets which we term “fake pills”. Fentanyl is also available in powder form and can be mixed with other deadly drugs (i.e. cocaine, methamphetamine). Most Fentanyl drug deaths in Santa Clara County involve Fentanyl combined with other drugs, including methamphetamine and cocaine. Fentanyl is affecting our youth with many fatalities occurring in young adults with our youngest recorded death in a 12-year-old. Fentanyl can be ingested, smoked, injected and/or snorted.

The Medical Examiner-Coroner will continue to provide data on the concerning rising trend of fentanyl overdose deaths affecting our youth and adults within this pandemic. Since the last report, we have certified an additional 12 deaths for 2021 and this number will increase. The Medical Examiner-Coroner's Office is continuing to collaborate with County partners on continued public messaging, to include the homeless population, regarding the dangers of Fentanyl.

The number of COVID-19 deaths remains low. Similar to prior reports, this off-agenda report incorporates revised COVID-19 death statistics since the last report to incorporate prior pending and open cases which have since closed. Similar weekly data for these same time periods in 2019 are also enclosed for comparison.

For all of 2019, twenty-four (24) cases have been withheld due to California Health and Safety Code Section 120980.

For 2020, a total of zero (0) deaths are withheld pending legal next of kin notification and positive identification and twenty-seven (27) cases have been withheld due to California Health and Safety Code Section 120980.

For 2021, a total of eleven (11) deaths are withheld pending legal next of kin notification and positive identification and twelve (12) cases have been withheld due to California Health and Safety Code Section 120980. The current report includes NJA and jurisdictional deaths to the ME-C and fields provided are:

Full name
 Date of death
 Death place and zip code
 Gender
 Age
 Race
 Residence City and zip code
 Exam Date
 Cause of death and other significant conditions

Summary tables are provided for your convenience:

Count of Decedent			
Month	2019	2020	2021
Jan	362	351	960
Feb	302	351	541
Mar	322	403	417
Apr	271	438	311
May	287	360	340
Jun	283	335	289
Jul	256	337	
Aug	300	394	
Sep	255	387	
Oct	320	340	
Nov	286	429	
Dec	341	843	
Grand Total	3585	4968	2858

Weekly Death Counts

Weekly	2019	2020
6/7-13	59	66
6/14-20	69	76
6/21-27	70	81
6/28-7/4	58	76
7/5-11	60	73
7/12-18	58	84
7/19-25	58	80
7/26-8/1	54	78
8/2-8	62	68
8/9-15	73	83
8/16-22	59	104
8/23-29	74	92
8/30-9/5	58	92
9/6-9/12	62	92
9/13-9/19	61	104
9/20-9/26	68	81
9/27-10/03	66	82
10/04-10	56	63
10/11-17	82	75
10/18-24	78	81
10/25-31	69	90
11/1-7	66	88
11/8-14	65	82
11/15-21	68	121
11/22-28	67	103
11/29-12/5	101	113
12/6-12	69	159
12/13-19	63	195
12/20-26	67	235
12/27-31	61	176
Grand Total	1981	2993

Weekly Death Counts

Week	2021
1/1-2/21 (2 Days)	72
1/3-9	223
1/10-16	243
1/17-23	209
1/24-30	186
1/31-2/6	171
2/7-13	157
2/14-20	129
2/21-27	104
2/28-3/6	81
3/7-13	110
3/14-20	73
3/21-27	117
3/28-4/3	71
4/4-10	69
4/11-17	75
4/18-24	75
4/25-5/1	77
5/2-8	82
5/9-15	60
5/16-22	74
5/23-29	86
5/30-6/5	63
6/6-6/12	71
6/13/2019	82
6/20-6/26	66
6/27-6/30	32
Grand Total	2858

COVID-19 Deaths		COVID-19	
Weekly	2020	Weekly	2021
6/7-13	3	1/1-2 (2 Days)	51
6/14-20	1	1/3-9	134
6/21-27	5	1/10-16	152
6/28-7/4	7	1/17-23	130
7/5-11	11	1/24-30	100
7/12-18	15	1/31-2/6	93
7/19-25	12	2/7-13	64
7/26-8/1	15	2/14-20	47
8/2-8	9	2/21-27	35
8/9-15	12	2/28-3/6	22
8/16-22	19	3/7-13	22
8/23-29	21	3/14-20	11
8/30-9/5	12	3/21-27	11
9/6-9/12	14	3/28-4/3	10
9/13-9/19	20	4/4-10	13
9/20-9/26	13	4/11-17	3
9/27-10/03	15	4/18-24	5
10/04-10	12	4/25-5/1	5
10/11-17	10	5/2-8	8
10/18-24	16	5/9-15	2
10/25-31	10	5/16-22	2
11/1-7	20	5/23-29	2
11/8-14	11	5/30-6/5	2
11/15-21	22	6/6-12	6
11/22-28	22	6/13-19	4
11/29-12/5	45	6/20-26	2
12/6-12	73	6/27-30	2
12/13-19	108		
12/20-26	140		
12/27-31	116		
Grand Total	809	Grand Total	938

Attachments: 2019, 2020, and 2021 data

cc: Chief Board Aides

James Williams, County Counsel

Miguel Márquez, Chief Operating Officer

Megan Doyle, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

Mary Ann Barrous, Agenda Review Administrator

The attachments to this off-agenda report are on file with the Office of the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors.

Individuals wishing to view the complete report may obtain a copy by contacting the Office of the Clerk of the Board Records Unit at RecordsUnit@cob.sccgov.org