

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 32
Updated Information on Medical Examiner-Coroner Death Notices

DATE: September 27, 2022

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

Fentanyl fatalities from Jan 1, 2015 – August 31, 2022

| 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 | 90* | *(2 case=San Benito) |
| 2021 | 135* | *(4 case=San Benito) |
| 2022 | 87* | *(2 case=San Benito) |
| Total | 391** | |

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

FENTANYL FATALITIES CONTINUE:

Fentanyl continues to take many lives in Santa Clara County. The Medical Examiner-Coroner continues to endorse messaging on fentanyl-laced candy, a new form of fentanyl appearing as candy and available in gummy bears, multicolored pills and powders. 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 continue to involve Fentanyl combined with other drugs, including methamphetamine. Fentanyl can be ingested, smoked, injected and/or snorted. Continued education regarding the dangers of Fentanyl, particularly the new fentanyl-laced candy, is strongly encouraged.

COVID-19:

The ME-C is closely monitoring and continues to communicate with Public Health frequently regarding COVID-19 fatalities. 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.

INCREASED CASELOAD HANDLED BY ME-C:

The number of cases examined by the ME-C has increased since 2019 (*please see below*). Although the number of deaths has slowed in 2022 when compared to last year, the number of deaths examined by the ME-C in 2022 surpassed 2019 numbers and are expected to remain higher than pre-pandemic numbers.

The ME-C is currently experiencing multiple vacancies including management and is working to fill these vacancies as soon as possible.

Summary tables are provided for your convenience:

Count of Decedent

| Month | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Jan | 364 | 353 | 965 | 528 |
| Feb | 303 | 354 | 543 | 470 |
| Mar | 325 | 405 | 421 | 375 |
| Apr | 275 | 441 | 317 | 321 |
| May | 288 | 360 | 345 | 381 |
| Jun | 287 | 334 | 300 | 352 |
| Jul | 258 | 339 | 313 | 422 |
| Aug | 304 | 398 | 376 | 344 |
| Sep | 256 | 391 | 429 | |
| Oct | 322 | 343 | 396 | |
| Nov | 286 | 432 | 363 | |
| Dec | 341 | 845 | 424 | |
| Grand Total | 3609 | 4995 | 5192 | 3193 |

| Weekly Cases | | Weekly Cases | | Weekly Cases | | Weekly Cases | |
|--------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Week | 2019 | Week | 2020 | Week | 2021 | Week | 2022 |
| 1/1-5 | 63 | 1/1-4 | 45 | 1/1-2 | 73 | 1/1/2022 | 13 |
| 1/6-12 | 87 | 1/5-11 | 83 | 1/3-9 | 223 | 1/2-8 | 103 |
| 1/13-19 | 85 | 1/12-18 | 80 | 1/10-16 | 245 | 1/9-15 | 106 |
| 1/20-26 | 74 | 1/19-25 | 81 | 1/17-23 | 210 | 1/16-22 | 139 |
| 1/27-2/2 | 76 | 1/26-2/1 | 76 | 1/24-30 | 186 | 1/23-29 | 131 |
| 2/3-9 | 60 | 2/2-8 | 94 | 1/31-2/6 | 172 | 1/30-2/5 | 133 |
| 2/10-16 | 83 | 2/9-15 | 85 | 2/7-13 | 159 | 2/6-12 | 122 |
| 2/17-23 | 87 | 2/16-22 | 84 | 2/14-20 | 129 | 2/13-19 | 115 |
| 2/24-3/2 | 80 | 2/23-29 | 79 | 2/21-27 | 104 | 2/20-26 | 113 |
| 3/3-9 | 68 | 3/1-7 | 84 | 2/28-3/6 | 81 | 2/27-3/5 | 89 |
| 3/10-16 | 76 | 3/8-14 | 82 | 3/7-13 | 111 | 3/6-12 | 89 |
| 3/17-23 | 80 | 3/15-21 | 97 | 3/14-20 | 73 | 3/13-19 | 78 |
| 3/24-30 | 66 | 3/22-28 | 98 | 3/21-27 | 120 | 3/20-26 | 76 |
| 3/31-4/6 | 55 | 3/29-4/4 | 100 | 3/28-4/3 | 71 | 3/27-4/2 | 88 |
| 4/7-13 | 81 | 4/5-11 | 125 | 4/4-10 | 69 | 4/3-9 | 79 |
| 4/14-20 | 62 | 4/12-18 | 109 | 4/11-17 | 78 | 4/10-16 | 77 |
| 4/21-27 | 60 | 4/19-25 | 86 | 4/18-24 | 77 | 4/17-23 | 66 |
| 4/28-5/4 | 56 | 4/26-5/2 | 85 | 4/25-5/1 | 78 | 4/24-30 | 77 |
| 5/5-11 | 51 | 5/3-9 | 99 | 5/2-8 | 83 | 5/1-5/7 | 73 |
| 5/12-18 | 61 | 5/10-16 | 72 | 5/9-15 | 61 | 5/8-5/14 | 100 |
| 5/19-25 | 86 | 5/17-23 | 70 | 5/16-22 | 76 | 5/15-5/21 | 74 |
| 5/26-6/1 | 67 | 5/21-30 | 86 | 5/23-29 | 87 | 5/22-5/28 | 89 |
| 6/2-8 | 67 | 5/31-6/6 | 84 | 5/30-6/5 | 63 | 5/29-6/4 | 92 |
| 6/9-15 | 68 | 6/7-13 | 66 | 6/6-6/12 | 75 | 6/5-11 | 78 |
| 6/16-22 | 63 | 6/14-20 | 76 | 6/13-19 | 86 | 6/12-18 | 78 |
| 6/23-29 | 75 | 6/21-27 | 81 | 6/20-6/26 | 68 | 6/19-25 | 77 |
| 6/30-7/6 | 55 | 6/28-7/4 | 76 | 6/27-7/3 | 55 | 6/26-7/2 | 107 |
| 7/7-13 | 61 | 7/5-11 | 74 | 7/4-10 | 70 | 7/3-9 | 82 |
| 7/14-20 | 58 | 7/12-18 | 84 | 7/11-17 | 69 | 7/10-16 | 104 |
| 7/21-27 | 57 | 7/19-25 | 81 | 7/18-24 | 72 | 7/17-23 | 92 |
| 7/28-8/3 | 59 | 7/26-8/1 | 78 | 7/25-31 | 80 | 7/24-30 | 94 |
| 8/4-10 | 63 | 8/2-8 | 68 | 8/1-7 | 84 | 7/31-8/6 | 94 |
| 8/11-17 | 66 | 8/9-15 | 84 | 8/8-14 | 82 | 8/7-13 | 71 |
| 8/18-24 | 69 | 8/16-22 | 106 | 8/15-21 | 76 | 8/14-20 | 77 |
| 8/25-31 | 79 | 8/23-29 | 93 | 8/22-28 | 97 | 8/21-27 | 76 |
| 9/1-7 | 46 | 8/30-9/5 | 92 | 8/29-9/4 | 88 | 8/28-31 | 41 |
| 9/8-14 | 65 | 9/6-12 | 92 | 9/5-11 | 115 | Grand Total | 3193 |
| 9/15-21 | 60 | 9/13-19 | 106 | 9/12-18 | 106 | | |
| 9/22-28 | 71 | 9/20-26 | 82 | 9/19-25 | 93 | | |
| 9/29-10/5 | 64 | 9/27-10/3 | 83 | 9/26-10/2 | 87 | | |
| 10/6-12 | 56 | 10/4-10 | 65 | 10/3-9 | 98 | | |
| 10/13-19 | 88 | 10/11-17 | 75 | 10/10-16 | 85 | | |
| 10/20-26 | 75 | 10/18-24 | 81 | 10/17-23 | 94 | | |
| 10/27-11/2 | 68 | 10/25-31 | 91 | 10/24-30 | 86 | | |
| 11/3-9 | 78 | 11/1-7 | 88 | 10/31-11/6 | 74 | | |
| 11/10-16 | 58 | 11/8-14 | 83 | 11/7-13 | 102 | | |
| 11/17-23 | 55 | 11/15-21 | 123 | 11/14-20 | 80 | | |
| 11/24-30 | 80 | 11/22-28 | 103 | 11/14-27 | 81 | | |
| 12/1-7 | 103 | 11/29-12/5 | 113 | 11/28-12/4 | 84 | | |
| 12/8-14 | 62 | 12/6-12 | 160 | 12/5-11 | 93 | | |
| 12/15-21 | 68 | 12/13-19 | 195 | 12/12-18 | 99 | | |
| 12/22-28 | 72 | 12/20-26 | 236 | 12/19-25 | 110 | | |
| 12/29-31 | 36 | 12/27-31 | 176 | 12/26-31 | 74 | | |
| Grand Total | 3609 | Grand Total | 4995 | Grand Total | 5192 | | |

| Weekly Cases | | Weekly Cases | | Weekly Cases | |
|--------------------|------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------------|------------|
| COVID-19 | 2020 | COVID-19 | 2021 | COVID-19 | 2022 |
| 1/1-4 | 0 | 1/1-2 | 51 | 1/1/2022 | 2 |
| 1/5-11 | 0 | 1/3-9 | 136 | 1/2-8 | 25 |
| 1/12-18 | 0 | 1/10-16 | 152 | 1/9-15 | 32 |
| 1/19-25 | 0 | 1/17-23 | 130 | 1/16-22 | 60 |
| 1/26-2/1 | 0 | 1/24-30 | 100 | 1/23-29 | 58 |
| 2/2-8 | 1 | 1/31-2/6 | 93 | 1/30-2/5 | 45 |
| 2/9-15 | 0 | 2/7-13 | 65 | 2/6-12 | 39 |
| 2/16-22 | 1 | 2/14-20 | 47 | 2/13-19 | 35 |
| 2/23-29 | 0 | 2/21-27 | 35 | 2/20-26 | 31 |
| 3/1-7 | 1 | 2/28-3/6 | 22 | 2/27-3/5 | 15 |
| 3/8-14 | 3 | 3/7-13 | 23 | 3/6-12 | 21 |
| 3/15-21 | 11 | 3/14-20 | 11 | 3/13-19 | 4 |
| 3/22-28 | 19 | 3/21-27 | 12 | 3/20-26 | 11 |
| 3/29-4/4 | 14 | 3/28-4/3 | 10 | 3/27-4/2 | 11 |
| 4/5-11 | 20 | 4/4-10 | 14 | 4/3-9 | 1 |
| 4/12-18 | 27 | 4/11-17 | 4 | 4/10-16 | 9 |
| 4/19-25 | 16 | 4/18-24 | 5 | 4/17-23 | 5 |
| 4/26-5/2 | 15 | 4/25-5/1 | 6 | 4/24-30 | 8 |
| 5/3-9 | 10 | 5/2-8 | 8 | 5/1-5/7 | 2 |
| 5/10-16 | 7 | 5/9-15 | 2 | 5/8-5/14 | 10 |
| 5/17-23 | 1 | 5/16-22 | 3 | 5/15-5/21 | 8 |
| 5/21-30 | 2 | 5/23-29 | 2 | 5/22-5/28 | 17 |
| 5/31-6/6 | 7 | 5/30-6/5 | 2 | 5/29-6/4 | 12 |
| 6/7-13 | 3 | 6/6-6/12 | 6 | 6/5-11 | 14 |
| 6/14-20 | 1 | 6/13-19 | 3 | 6/12-18 | 18 |
| 6/21-27 | 5 | 6/20-6/26 | 3 | 6/19-25 | 14 |
| 6/28-7/4 | 7 | 6/27-7/3 | 2 | 6/26-7/2 | 22 |
| 7/5-11 | 12 | 7/4-10 | 2 | 7/3-9 | 17 |
| 7/12-18 | 15 | 7/11-17 | 3 | 7/10-16 | 24 |
| 7/19-25 | 12 | 7/18-24 | 6 | 7/17-23 | 25 |
| 7/26-8/1 | 15 | 7/25-31 | 6 | 7/24-30 | 20 |
| 8/2-8 | 9 | 8/1-7 | 4 | 7/31-8/6 | 35 |
| 8/9-15 | 12 | 8/8-14 | 14 | 8/7-13 | 13 |
| 8/16-22 | 19 | 8/15-21 | 15 | 8/14-20 | 15 |
| 8/23-29 | 21 | 8/22-28 | 23 | 8/21-27 | 7 |
| 8/30-9/5 | 12 | 8/29-9/4 | 21 | 8/28-31 | 6 |
| 9/6-12 | 14 | 9/5-11 | 31 | Grand Total | 691 |
| 9/13-19 | 20 | 9/12-18 | 25 | | |
| 9/20-26 | 13 | 9/19-25 | 11 | | |
| 9/27-10/3 | 15 | 9/26-10/2 | 11 | | |
| 10/4-10 | 12 | 10/3-9 | 14 | | |
| 10/11-17 | 10 | 10/10-16 | 9 | | |
| 10/18-24 | 16 | 10/17-23 | 11 | | |
| 10/25-31 | 10 | 10/24-30 | 11 | | |
| 11/1-7 | 20 | 10/31-11/6 | 11 | | |
| 11/8-14 | 11 | 11/7-13 | 14 | | |
| 11/15-21 | 22 | 11/14-20 | 11 | | |
| 11/22-28 | 22 | 11/14-27 | 10 | | |
| 11/29-12/5 | 45 | 11/28-12/4 | 17 | | |
| 12/6-12 | 73 | 12/5-11 | 8 | | |
| 12/13-19 | 108 | 12/12-18 | 7 | | |
| 12/20-26 | 140 | 12/19-25 | 17 | | |
| 12/27-31 | 117 | 12/26-31 | 9 | | |
| Grand Total | 966 | Grand Total | 1268 | | |

cc: Chief Board Aides

James Williams, County Counsel

Greta Hansen, Chief Operating Officer

Tiffany Lennear, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

Mary Ann Barrous, Agenda Review Administrator