



Deaths Among Homeless Persons in Santa Barbara County

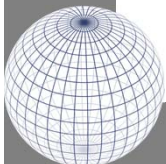
January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2010

A Report for the Santa Barbara County
Board of Supervisors

March 13, 2012

Background

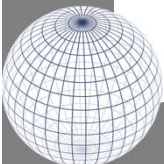
- The Homeless Death Review Team meets quarterly
- This report reflects data from 2 calendar years
- County Departments initiated changes:
 - Collaborated to secure benefits
 - Facilitated referrals across county agencies
 - Enhanced coordination through process improvements
 - Identified the highest risk with the “Vulnerability Index”
 - 25 previously homeless now have housing



Demographics

From 2 years of data

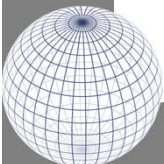
- 79 individuals were identified in 2009 & 2010
- 86% were male
- Average age of death is 52
- By race: 80% were Caucasian, 9% were Latino/Hispanic
- By ethnicity: 23% were Hispanic
- 86% were US citizens
- 14% were veterans



Manner of Death

From 2 years of data

- 38% were listed as from natural causes
- 35% were listed as due to accidents
- 1% was due to suicide
- 1% was undetermined
- 24% did not list the manner of death



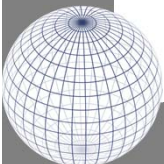
Cause of Death

For 2 years of data

- Drug or Alcohol Related = 46%
- Cardiovascular Related = 27%
- All Other Causes = 28%

Location and Season

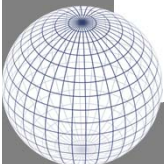
- 70% were indoors and 30% were outdoors
- Deaths occur fairly evenly in all seasons



Related Health Conditions

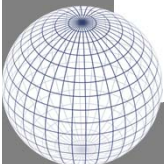
The most common conditions among decedents were:

- Alcohol disease was identified in 76%
- Illicit substance abuse in 53%
- Cardiovascular disease in 49%
- Mental health disease in 48%
- 63% of those with mental health conditions also identified as using illicit drugs or alcohol



Summary Conclusions

- Overwhelming use of drugs and/or alcohol
- Mental health conditions present in a large portion of the population
- Those with alcohol/substance use pose substantial challenges
- Additional resources are needed for acute treatment and services



Summary Conclusions, continued

- After alcohol/drugs, cardiovascular disease is leading cause of death
- Although many had accessed services, many were lost to follow up and not receiving services around the time of death
- Homeless are discharged from hospitals to the street where conditions not conducive to recovery
- Access to housing is paramount to promoting health and preventing deaths

