An Executive Summary

of the

Alaska Native Mortality Report
Alaska Native Mortality: 1980-2018 | Executive Summary

Alaska Native people have higher rates than all other races in the U.S. for every one of the ten leading causes of death. During the most recent five-year period for which we have data (2014-2018), the mortality rate for Alaska Native people was 51% higher than the U.S. all races rate. Reliable information on cause of death is essential to the development of policies and programs for prevention and control of disease and injury. It is also important for public health planning, healthcare resource allocation, and research.

This booklet summarizes information about key mortality indicators among Alaska Native people. It gives information on leading causes of death, life expectancy, and other related measures, including years of potential life lost and regional mortality rates.

Data for the full report were based on death certificate data provided by the State of Alaska’s Health Analytics & Vital Records section of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. The full report, Alaska Native Mortality Report: 1980-2018 is available on the ANTHC Epidemiology Center website (http://anthctoday.org/epicenter/publications.html).

Suggested Citation:
The top 3 causes of death for Alaska Native people (cancer, heart disease, unintentional injury) accounted for nearly 50% of all mortality during this period. Cancer continued as the leading cause of death.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAUSE OF DEATH</th>
<th>COUNT*</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>979</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart Disease</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unintentional Injury</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Others</td>
<td>2,826</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,396</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The top 5 causes of death among Alaska Native people had significantly higher mortality rates compared to U.S. all races rates.

**Count** is the total number of deaths due to an associated cause.

**Rate** is the age-adjusted total number of deaths per 100,000 people to the U.S. 2000 standard population.
The all-cause mortality rate for Alaska Native people declined 9% overall, however the gap between Alaska Native and U.S. all races rates has increased since 2004-2008.

Heart Disease and Unintentional Injury mortality rates decreased significantly during the 1980-2018 time period, while COPD increased significantly.
Regional all-cause mortality rates compared to the rest of the state.

- Deaths were assigned to the service region in which the person was resident, regardless of place of death.
- Rate is the age-adjusted total number of deaths per 100,000 people to the U.S. 2000 standard population.
Regional heart disease mortality rates compared to the rest of the state.

Regional unintentional injury rates compared to the rest of the state.

* A statistically significant difference is likely due to actual population differences rather than occurring by chance.
Life expectancy at birth is the average number of years that a newborn is expected to live if current mortality rates continue to apply.¹

- Life expectancy at birth increased in all regions since 1980, ranging from 3% in the Yukon-Kuskokwim region to 24% in the Copper River/Prince William Sound region.
- For the time period 2014–2018, life expectancy at birth for Alaska Native females was 72.8 years, 6.5 years less than U.S. all races.
- Life expectancy at birth for Alaska Native males was 68.1 years, 7.2 years less than U.S. all races.

¹ who.int/whosis/whostat2006DefinitionsAndMetadata.pdf
Years of potential life lost (YPLL) is the number of years more a person would have lived if the person lived to age 75. It is a measure of premature mortality.2

- Alaska Native people experienced an average of 26.8 YPLL from all causes during this time period.
- Unintentional injury caused the greatest number of YPLL among Alaska Native people.

---

2 cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal_help/definitions_ypll.html
For more information, please contact us at:
Alaska Native Epidemiology Center
Division of Community Health Services
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
Phone: (907) 729-4567
Fax: (907) 729-4569
E-mail: anepicenter@anthc.org

Full report available at:
http://anthctoday.org/epicenter/publications.html

Funding for this publication was provided by cooperative agreements with the Indian Health Service (Grant Number UI81IHS00008) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Grant Number NU58DP006379).