



CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS
DATA SUMMARY

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**PREMATURE MORTALITY
IN CALIFORNIA, 1998**

Years of potential life lost before age 75 (YPLL-75) is one of the commonly used measures in public health to reflect the impact of premature mortality on a population.¹ This report summarizes 1998 California mortality data for selected causes of death contributing to premature mortality as measured by YPLL-75, and compares 1998 data with 1997 data.

YPLL-75 reflects the impact of deaths occurring before the age of 75, the younger the decedent the greater the measured impact. An example would be a 29-year-old man who dies from Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). This event would be counted as 46 years of potential life lost. A 73-year-old woman who dies from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) would be counted as two years of potential life lost.

Total YPLL-75 for California residents decreased significantly (-2.0%) from 1997 to 1998, this was consistent with the long-term trend in premature mortality. From 1997 to 1998 YPLL-75 decreased for 10 causes of death and increased for three (**Table 1**, page 2). Premature mortality due to AIDS (-24.5%), sudden infant death syndrome (-21.3%), and suicide, homicide, and legal intervention (-13.2%) decreased dramatically. Premature mortality declined at a slower pace for congenital anomalies (-4.6%), unintentional injuries (-4.0%), and pneumonia and influenza (-3.4%). A slight decrease was seen in chronic liver disease and cirrhosis (-1.6%), prematurity (-1.0%), malignant neoplasms (-0.6%), and cerebrovascular diseases (-0.5%). Premature mortality increased for COPD (+3.9%), diseases of the heart (+0.7%), and diabetes mellitus (+0.1%).

As shown in **Table 2** (page 2), malignant neoplasms (cancers) accounted for a total of 29,774 deaths representing 425,704 (21.6%) of the total YPLL-75 for California residents during 1998. Deaths attributed to diseases of the heart (23,254) ranked second in 1998 and accounted for 296,151 (15.0%) of the total YPLL-75. Unintentional injuries occupied the third rank and accounted for 7,000 deaths and a YPLL-75 of 253,232 (12.9% of the total). Intentional injuries (suicide, homicide, and legal intervention) was ranked fourth and accounted for 5,060 deaths and 195,365 (9.9%) of the total YPLL-75. The low number of deaths and high YPLL-75 for unintentional injuries and intentional injuries shows the greater impact these two causes of death have on younger California residents. This is in contrast to malignant neoplasms and diseases of the heart, the first and second ranked causes of death, which affect older Californians at higher rates.

Congenital anomalies ranked as the fifth leading cause of premature mortality, accounting for 78,551 (4.0%) of the total 1998 YPLL-75. Cerebrovascular diseases ranked sixth and accounted for an additional 61,427 (3.1% of the total) YPLL-75. Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis ranked seventh and resulted in 59,796 (3.0%) of the total YPLL-75. Deaths due to AIDS ranked eighth, accounting for 47,071 (2.4%) YPLL-75. This was a change from 1997 when AIDS ranked sixth,² and from 1995 when AIDS was in the fourth rank.³ COPD ranked ninth and accounted for 47,000 (2.4%) YPLL-75. The remaining categories, excluding the All Other Causes category, made up less than seven percent of the total YPLL-75 in California for 1998.

1. National Center for Health Statistics. *Health, United States, 2000 with Adolescent Health Chartbook*; DHHS Pub No. (PHS) 2000-1232 9-0725 June 2000.
2. Cox D. *Premature Mortality in California, 1997. Data Summary.* Center for Health Statistics, California Department of Health Services. Report Register No. DS99-06000, June 1999.
3. Cox D. *Premature mortality in California, 1995. Data Summary.* Center for Health Statistics, California Department of Health Services. Report Register No. DS97-09000, September 1997.

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TABLE 1
ESTIMATED YEARS OF POTENTIAL LIFE LOST BEFORE AGE 75 (YPLL-75),
BY SELECTED CAUSES OF DEATH, CALIFORNIA, 1997 AND 1998
(By Place of Residence)

SELECTED CAUSES OF DEATH	ICD-9 CODES	1997 YPLL-75	1998 YPLL-75	NUMERIC DIFFERENCE	PERCENT CHANGE
TOTAL		2,009,026	1,969,310	-39,716	-2.0
Malignant Neoplasms	140-208	428,135	425,704	-2,431	-0.6
Diseases of the Heart	390-398,402,404-429	294,054	296,151	2,097	0.7
Unintentional Injuries	E800-E949	263,897	253,232	-10,665	-4.0
Suicide, Homicide, and Legal Intervention	E950-E978	224,960	195,365	-29,595	-13.2
Congenital Anomalies	740-759	82,340	78,551	-3,789	-4.6
Cerebrovascular Diseases	430-438	61,711	61,427	-284	-0.5
Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis	571	60,784	59,796	-988	-1.6
Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome	042-044	62,332	47,071	-15,261	-24.5
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease	490-496	45,239	47,000	1,761	3.9
Diabetes Mellitus	250	41,108	41,151	43	0.1
Prematurity	765,769	36,675	36,300	-375	-1.0
Pneumonia and Influenza	480-487	35,156	33,974	-1,182	-3.4
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and Related Conditions	798	24,669	19,425	-5,244	-21.3
All Other Causes	Residual	347,966	374,163		

Source: State of California, Department of Health Services, Death Records.

TABLE 2
DEATHS, RATES, AND ESTIMATED YEARS OF POTENTIAL LIFE LOST BEFORE AGE 75 (YPLL-75),
BY SELECTED CAUSES OF DEATH, CALIFORNIA, 1998
(By Place of Residence)

SELECTED CAUSES OF DEATH	ICD-9 CODES	DEATHS	RATE*	YPLL-75	RANK
TOTAL		101,949	320.1	1,969,310	
Malignant Neoplasms	140-208	29,774	93.5	425,704	1
Diseases of the Heart	390-398,402,404-429	23,254	73.0	296,151	2
Unintentional Injuries	E800-E949	7,000	22.0	253,232	3
Suicide, Homicide, and Legal Intervention	E950-E978	5,060	15.9	195,365	4
Congenital Anomalies	740-759	1,262	4.0	78,551	5
Cerebrovascular Diseases	430-438	4,604	14.5	61,427	6
Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis	571	2,959	9.3	59,796	7
Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome	042-044	1,421	4.5	47,071	8
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease	490-496	4,672	14.7	47,000	9
Diabetes Mellitus	250	3,089	9.7	41,151	10
Prematurity	765,769	484	1.5	36,300	11
Pneumonia and Influenza	480-487	2,633	8.3	33,974	12
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and Related Conditions	798	259	0.8	19,425	13
All Other Causes	Residual	15,478	48.6	374,163	

* Cause-specific death rates are per 100,000 population under age 75 (n=31,851,315).

Source: State of California, Department of Finance. Race/Ethnic 1998 Population Estimates For Counties With Age and Sex Detail, May 2000
State of California, Department of Health Services, Death Records.