

# Leading Causes of Death

2023 Alaska Native Health Fact Sheet | Mortality

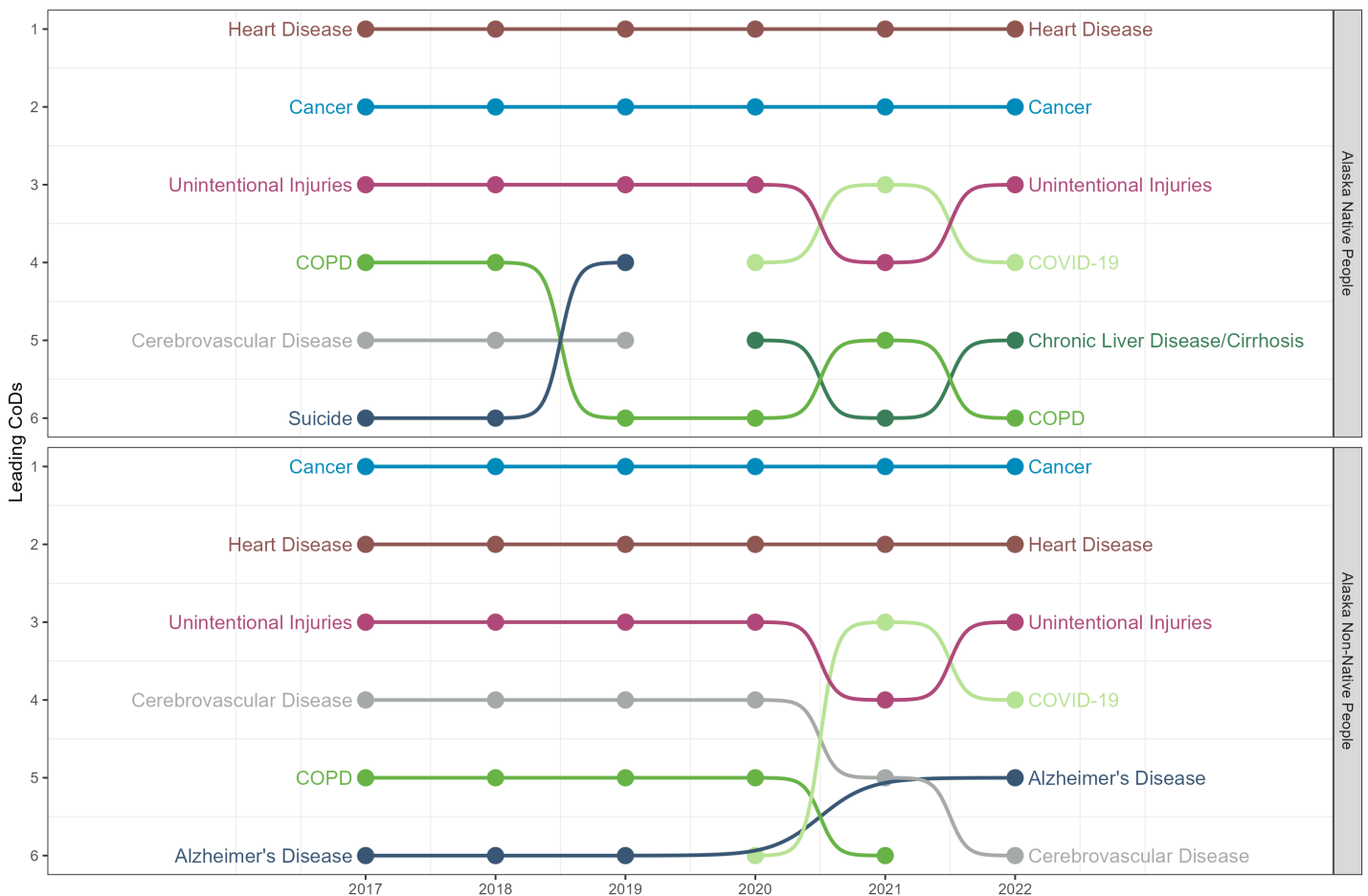
## Definition

The leading causes of death are the underlying causes of death that account for the highest number of all deaths in a population in a given time period. The leading causes of death are presented in rank order and are ranked according to the age-adjusted mortality rate. Ranking the leading causes of death is a common way to look at mortality data and to monitor the burden of various diseases and behaviors. For the International Classification of Diseases-10 (ICD-10) code categorization, visit the [National Center for Health Statistics](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/icd/icd10cm.htm).

## Note about chart and tables

- » The chart on the previous page is a type of line chart called a bump plot which displays how rank changes over time. The Y-axis shows a cause of death's rank from the 1st leading cause of death to the 6th leading cause of death. The X-axis shows the years 2017-2022. By tracking the lines, you can see how a specific cause of death moves up or down in rank over time.
- » The tables below show the top ten leading causes of death by sex for Alaska Native People and non-Alaska Native people statewide.

## Age-Adjusted Leading Causes of Death in Alaska, 2017-2022: Alaska Native People and Non-Alaska Native People



Data Source: State of Alaska Vital Statistics. | Note: Leading causes of death based upon rates age-adjusted to the 2000 U.S. standard population.

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## Summary

- » From 2017-2022 heart disease and cancer remained the first and second leading causes of death for Alaska Native people statewide. These two causes of death accounted for 36.2% of all deaths of Alaska Native people during this time period.
- » The Alaska Native mortality rates were significantly higher than the non-Alaska Native rates for the six leading causes of death.
- » In 2021, COVID-19 temporarily surpassed unintentional injuries as the third leading cause of death.
- » For 2021, the [CDC lists heart disease as the leading cause of death in the United States](#) and [Cancer as the leading cause of death for Alaska](#).

## Leading Causes of Death\*

2017-2022

Death Category	ANAI Deaths	ANAI Rate	Non-ANAI Deaths	Non-ANAI Rate
Heart Disease	1168	102.0	4221	59.3
Cancer	1105	87.3	4994	34.7
Unintentional Injuries	971	60.3	1897	25.0
Suicide	426	21.7	791	10.0
Chronic Liver Disease/Cirrhosis	366	22.5	526	5.9
COVID-19	334	27.0	924	12.2
COPD	305	26.5	971	13.8
Cerebrovasculaor Disease	256	23.5	1037	16.0
Alcohol Abuse	239	14.9	190	20.
Homicide	161	8.9	230	3.0

## Leading Causes of Death\*

Alaska Native People, 2017-2022

Death Category	Female Deaths	Female Rate	Male Deaths	Male Rate
Heart Disease	473	72.9	695	131.2
Cancer	531	73.4	574	101.2
Unintentional Injuries	382	46.5	589	74.0
Suicide	109	11.0	317	32.4
Chronic Liver Disease/Cirrhosis	235	28.7	131	16.3
COVID-19	147	21.8	187	32.2
COPD	146	23.1	159	29.9
Cerebrovasculaor Disease	149	23.6	107	23.5
Alcohol Abuse	93	11.1	146	18.6
Homicide	53	5.7	108	12.0

\* Data Source: State of Alaska Health Analytics and Vital Records