

From: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
To: [Agenda Management Support](#)
Subject: item 8 comment_Turnbull, A
Date: Monday, April 28, 2025 3:35:59 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image005.png](#)

From: Andrea Turnbull <Andrea.Turnbull@santacruzcountyca.gov>
Sent: Monday, April 28, 2025 3:29 PM
To: Board Of Supervisors <boardofsupervisors@santacruzcountyca.gov>
Subject: Please save the Suicide Prevention Program Coordinator position

Good Afternoon,

My name is Andrea Turnbull, and I am a manager in Behavioral Health. One of the programs I oversee is Suicide Prevention. In the budget for 2025-26 the Program Coordinator position for Suicide Prevention is being eliminated. This is currently a grant funded program through the California Department of Public Health, and the grant will term this year on August 31, 2025. The County of Santa Cruz was awarded this grant because we have a higher rate of suicide than the state overall with a rate of 16.6 per 100,000 in 2016. We were awarded the grant in 2021 during COVID, so it took a little while to get things up and running. The program coordinator position was filled in late March of 2023 and we hit the ground running.

I want to highlight some of the activities that have been accomplished by the Program Coordinator over the past two years:

- Facilitating monthly Suicide Prevention meetings for County and community leaders to plan for prevention activities including outreach events and to support the implementation of the 2024 Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan Update
- Hosting community engagement activities including the upcoming Mental Health Awareness First Friday chalk quilt event on May 2 (see attached flyer) and the Suicide Prevention Month events for the past two years.
- Attended and tabled at more than 35 outreach and engagement events
- Organized training of 48 therapists from throughout the county in Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality CAMS and another 30 people in the gatekeeper training Mental Health First Aid MHFA
- Distributed 250 lockboxes to safely store firearms, sharps and medications
- Supported the printing and distribution of 10,000 Mental Health Pocket Guides, which can be found at nonprofit organizations throughout the county.

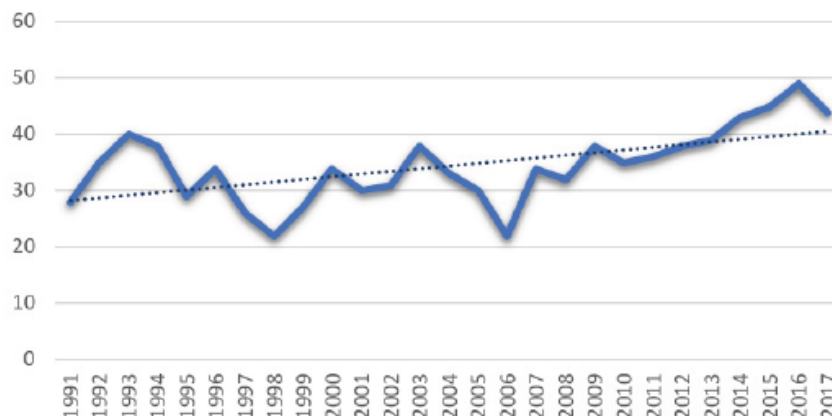
These are just some of the highlights of the activities our Suicide Prevention Coordinator has done. Our grant will sunset, but the work is far from complete. It is difficult to measure prevention efforts, but we saw a decrease in suicide in Santa Cruz County from 2023 (47 deaths) to 2024 (39 deaths). Please see below for previous statistics and the County Coroner website. We cannot afford to lose our Suicide Prevention Coordinator now when our efforts are making a difference.

Thank you for all that you do to make our County a thriving and healthy place to live.

[Suicides](#)
[Santa Cruz County Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan Final.pdf](#)
[Santa Cruz Strategic Plan Update 2024 Eng FINAL_10-22-2024.pdf](#)

Here are some statistics taken from the Suicide Prevention Strategic Plans referenced above:

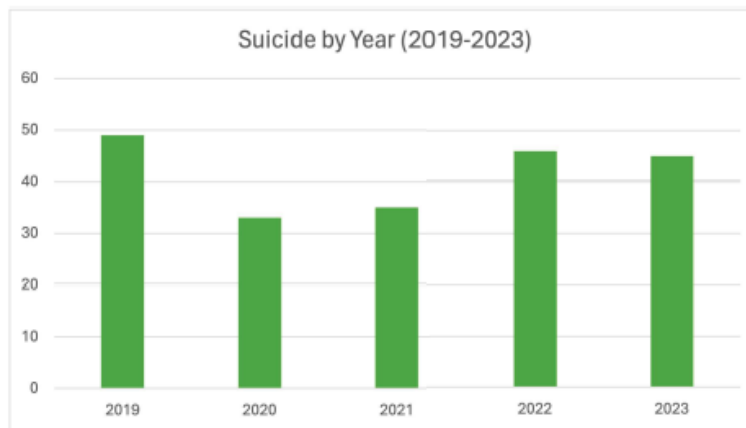
Suicides Santa Cruz



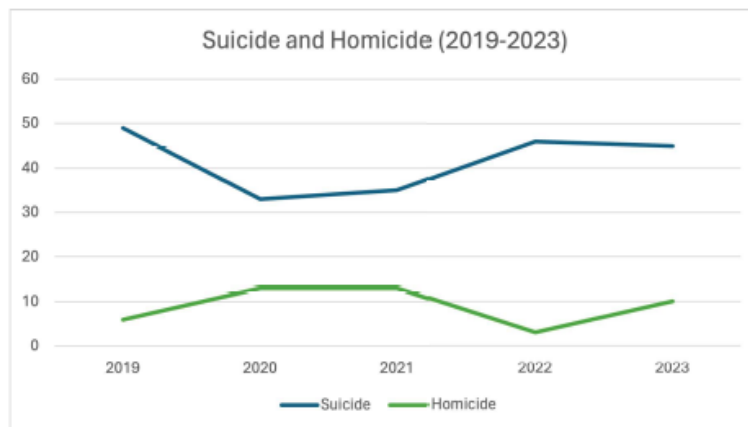
From 2014–2016, Santa Cruz averaged 45.7 suicide deaths per year, with a crude death rate of 16.6 per 100,000 and an age-adjusted death rate of 16.3. The suicide rate for the entire US was 13.9, with California having an age-adjusted death rate of 10.4. The suicide rate for Santa Cruz is above both state and national averages. By comparison, during the same time period, Santa Cruz averaged 7.7 homicides, with a crude death rate of 2.8 and an age-adjusted death rate of 2.7. This indicates that Santa Cruz experienced nearly six suicides per homicide, whereas in the United States there were 44,965 suicide deaths with a rate of 13.9 per 100,000 and 19,362 homicides with a rate of 6.0, with an age-adjusted rate of 6.1 or 2.3 suicides per homicide.

NOTE

(12) California Department of Public Health, County Health Status Profiles 2018, www.cdph.ca.gov



The data in this graph is from the Santa Cruz County Coroner and displays annual changes in the number of people who died by suicide. The first two years of the pandemic appear to have had a dampening effect on suicides. National data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that rates nearly returned to their peak in 2021 but in Santa Cruz deaths had not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels as of 2023.



In the United States, the number of suicides is nearly double that of homicides. In Santa Cruz, from 2019 to 2023, suicides consistently outnumbered homicides. This discrepancy often confuses people, as media coverage tends to focus on homicides while frequently overlooking suicides.



Andrea Turnbull, LCSW
 Acute Services Manager
 Access and Suicide Prevention
 Behavioral Health Division
 Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency
 1400 Emeline Ave
 Santa Cruz, CA 95060



Email: andrea.turnbull@santacruzcountyca.gov

Phone: (831) 454-4493 | Cell: (831) 359-0732

Web: www.santacruzhealth.org

Confidentiality Notice: This e-mail message, including any attachments, is for the sole use of intended recipient(s) and may contain confidential and protected information. Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure, or distribution is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by reply e-mail and destroy all copies of the original message.