



Dec. 31, 2020

Riverside County  
**NEWS RELEASE**

**Contacts:**

Brooke Federico  
(951) 743-0075  
[bcfederico@rivco.org](mailto:bcfederico@rivco.org)

Jose Arballo Jr.  
(951) 712-3705  
[jarballojr@ruhealth.org](mailto:jarballojr@ruhealth.org)

## **Remembering the COVID-19 victims**

*More than 1,980 residents have died from the virus*

As 2020 closes, health officials remember the lives lost during the pandemic and remind residents that, collectively, everyone contributes to slowing the spread of the virus. Coronavirus caused or contributed to the deaths of hundreds of Riverside County residents, including two children under the age of 18.

The first coronavirus-related death in Riverside County was reported March 15 – an Indio resident in his late 70s. The two youngest deaths include a 12-year-old from Western Riverside County and a 15-year-old from Central Riverside County. The oldest deaths were found in three 104-year-old Riverside County residents, including a man from Corona, a man from Riverside and a female from Mecca.

Four county employees have died from the virus, including two deputies, one probation officer and one engineer.

“This disease doesn’t discriminate. We’ve seen deaths in the young and old. We’ve seen couples, family members and healthcare workers die from this disease,” said Kim Saruwatari, director of the Riverside University Health System-Public Health. “These deaths, combined with mental health impacts and economic losses, are painful reminders of how this disease has cost all of us.”

After nine months of the pandemic, the county is reporting a total of 1,985 deaths related to coronavirus. Deaths among racial and ethnic minorities are disproportionately higher, including among Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Latino, Black and African American residents.

“Our hearts are with families, friends and neighbors who are grieving the loss of an important and special person in their lives,” said Riverside County Board Chair and Fourth District Supervisor V. Manuel Perez. “After a year of tragedy and hardship, we have hope for a better 2021. We remember and honor all Riverside County residents who have passed away from coronavirus this year, and thank all the front line workers and all who are doing their part to help overcome this pandemic.”

In addition to COVID-19 deaths, the number of fatal overdoses is up by 26.6 percent compared to last year. The unemployment rate has also risen to nine percent, representing approximately 107,000 job losses.

Taking simple actions like wearing a mask, stop gathering with others outside the household and getting the vaccine will protect yourself and others from the virus. The number of confirmed coronavirus cases is more than 180,550 in Riverside County and more than 118,800 have recovered from the virus.

Riverside County is also experiencing a surge of cases requiring hospitalization and intensive care unit treatment (ICU). COVID-19 patients requiring hospitalization is at 1,464, of which 296 are in an ICU. The positivity rate in Riverside County is 22.6 percent and the daily case rate is 140.5 new cases per 100,000 residents.

# # #