

## Elder Death Review Team



Chris Ore  
Assistant Chief Deputy DA

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Sacramento County's senior population, now classified as those individuals age 60 and older, continues to grow rapidly since the last Census.

Census numbers utilize the age 65 to categorize elder populations. According to Census estimates for 2021, **the Sacramento County population over age 65 comprises 14.5% of the total county population**, up from 11.2% in 2010.

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## Sacramento EDRT

- Ⓞ The Sacramento County Elder Death Review Team (EDRT) was created in 1999.
- Ⓞ EDRT is a multi-disciplinary team.
- Ⓞ Team reviews deaths of persons 60 and older deceased due to accidents and suicides and have received services from APS, IHSS and/or Behavioral Health.
- Ⓞ All homicides of adults 60 and over are reviewed.
- Ⓞ EDRT focus is on prevention and prosecution.

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Penal Code 11174.5.

(a) Each county may establish an interagency elder death team to assist local agencies in identifying and reviewing suspicious elder deaths and facilitating communication among persons who perform autopsies and the various persons and agencies involved in elder abuse or neglect cases.

(b) Each county may develop a protocol that may be used as a guideline by persons performing autopsies on elder adults to assist coroners and other persons who perform autopsies in the identification of elder abuse, in the determination of whether elder abuse or neglect contributed to death or whether elder abuse or neglect had occurred prior to but was not the actual cause of death, and in the proper written reporting procedures for elder abuse or neglect, including the designation of the cause and mode of death.

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Penal Code 11174.6.

County elder death review teams may be comprised of, but not limited to, the following:

- (a) Experts in the field of forensic pathology.
- (b) Medical personnel with expertise in elder abuse and neglect.
- (c) Coroners and medical examiners.
- (d) District attorneys and city attorneys.
- (e) County or local staff including, but not limited to:
  - (1) Adult protective services staff.
  - (2) Public administrator, guardian, and conservator staff.
  - (3) County health department staff who deal with elder health issues.
  - (4) County counsel.
- (f) County and state law enforcement personnel.
- (g) Local long-term care ombudsman.
- (h) Community care licensing staff and investigators.
- (i) Geriatric mental health experts.
- (j) Criminologists.
- (k) Representatives of local agencies that are involved with oversight of adult protective services and reporting elder abuse or neglect.
- (l) Local professional associations of persons described in subdivisions (a) to (k), inclusive.

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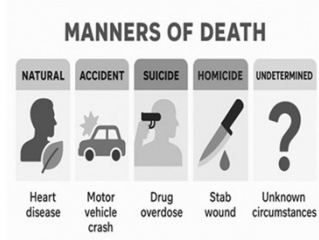
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## Categorizations vs. Manner

The categories used by the EDRT Team to categorize cases reviewed are as follows:

- Criminal Abuse – referred for prosecution
- Criminal Neglect – referred for prosecution
- Natural causes – no abuse
- Preventable
- Questionable Neglect
- Accidental
- Suspicious Death – inconclusive evidence
- Suicide
- Undetermined
- Homicide
- System Failure



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## Confidential

Penal Code 11174.7.

(a) An oral or written communication or a document shared within or produced by an elder death review team related to an elder death review **is confidential and not subject to disclosure** or discoverable by another third party.

(b) An oral or written communication or a document provided by a third party to an elder death review team, or between a third party and an elder death review team, **is confidential** and not subject to disclosure or discoverable by a third party.

(c) Notwithstanding subdivisions (a) and (b), recommendations of an elder death review team upon the completion of a review may be disclosed at the discretion of a majority of the members of the elder death review team.

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New legislation, effective January 1, 2022, reduces the age for APS eligibility from 65 to 60 years of age. Subsequently, the number of reports to Sacramento County Adult Protective Services (APS) continues to increase annually.

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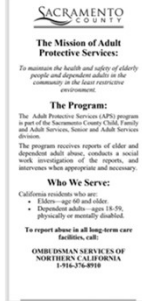
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## APS Involvement

APS received **17,119** calls to the APS Hotline during Fiscal Year (FY) 20/21, a 121% increase in calls since FY13/14.

After-hours calls to the APS hotline in FY 20/21 accounted for an additional 2689 calls.

APS opened 5464 new cases for investigation of abuse or neglect during FY20/21, a **72% increase from FY 13/14.**



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## IHSS

The population of older adults needing the County's In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program has increased by 19% since 2017.

Sacramento County IHSS currently serves **32,676** recipients and the need for services is estimated to increase annually by 5.1% or an estimated 1650 additional recipients.

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## IHSS

The increase has been particularly challenging due to a severe shortage of IHSS care providers, exacerbated by the COVID pandemic.

In 2017, Sacramento County IHSS had 25,700 registered care providers and by February 2022, IHSS had 30,635 registered care providers an increase of 19.2%.

**Approximately 70%** or 21,444 IHSS care providers are relatives of the IHSS recipient.

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Elder abuse is common. Abuse, including neglect and exploitation, is experienced by about 1 in 10 people aged 60 and older who live at home.

From 2002 to 2016, more than 643,000 older adults were treated in the emergency department for nonfatal assaults and over 19,000 homicides occurred

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### Type of Cases Reviewed by Coroner

#### Sacramento Stats

- Total Deaths- 5439
- Cases seen by Coroner
  - **1852**
  - EDRT reviewed approximately 160
- Cases not seen by Coroner
  - Did not investigate **3587**

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### Report Penal Code 11174.9.

Information gathered by the elder death review team and any recommendations made by the team shall be used by the county to develop education, prevention, and if necessary, prosecution strategies that will lead to improved coordination of services for families and the elder population.



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## Elder Death Review Team



Chris Ore  
Assistant Chief Deputy DA

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