



My Drift

Title: Homeless Deaths

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Well, I'm writing about my favorite pet peeve again – **THE HOMELESS**. The homelessness problem has gotten progressively worse since I first wrote about it in 2006 and again in 2010. Here are some homeless headlines, facts, statistics, and my comments for Hawaii and the United States in general:

Hawaii

According to the "Point in Time Count" for 2019, the homeless population in Hawaii was 6,448. The Governor and Mayor were quick to point out that this number has decreased three consecutive years. They fail to mention that Hawaii still has the highest per capita rate of homelessness in the country.

Well, me and my dog have driven around Honolulu and the island of Oahu many times every year since I come to Hawaii in 1970 and the homeless problem gets worse every year. It was much worse in 2019 than ever before. The homeless are everywhere! I don't believe the "Point in Time Count" is close to being accurate. I think these people who conduct the count are doing their best, but they are missing a lot of homeless people. There are homeless camps that are too dangerous to enter, and do you think these counters tromp through the bushes around Wilson Lake in Wahiawa? There are homeless near the ocean all the way around the island. The real homeless population for Hawaii is closer to 9,000 people (Oahu 7,000 – Maui 1,100 – Hawaii Island 450 – Kauai 450).

In 2019, there were 127 homeless people who died on Oahu -- seven more than 2018, and 46 percent more (87 deaths) than 2017. From 2014 to 2019, 500 homeless people have died on Oahu. The homeless death count doesn't double or triple while the homeless population goes down! It doesn't take a genius to figure that out.

The homeless problem is out of control on the island of Oahu!



The average life expectancy for Hawaii's homeless is about 53 – almost 30 years less than the general population. In 2019, the life expectancy for Hawaii was 81.3 years which is tops in the United States.

In the United States as a whole, the average life expectancy for a homeless person is about 47 – almost 32 years less than the general population which was 78.9 years in 2019.

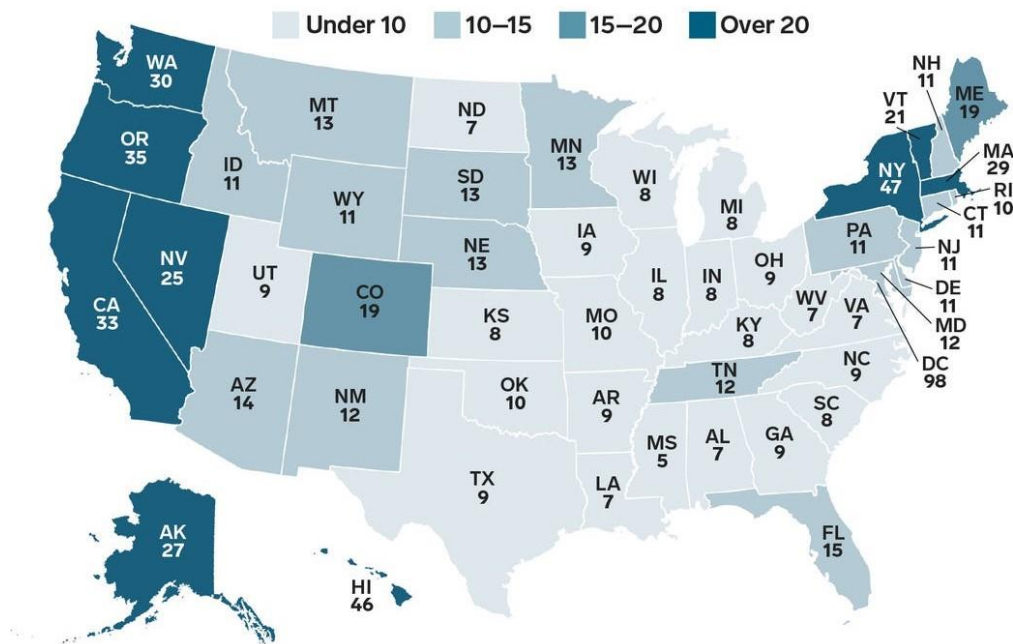
What are the states and cities with the largest per capita homeless populations?

STATES (Per Capita) – (Population)	CITIES (Per Capita) – (Population)
Hawaii (9,000)	Washington DC (8,000)
New York (93,000)	San Francisco (10,000)
California (140,000)	Los Angeles (60,000)
Oregon (14,000)	Seattle (11,500)
Washington (22,000)	San Diego (10,000)
Nevada (8,000)	San Jose/Santa Clara (9,500)
Massachusetts (21,000)	New York City (80,000)

***All homeless population counts are “best estimates”**

As you can see in the above chart, west coast states and cities dominate the biggest per capita homeless populations. New York, Washington DC, and Massachusetts (Boston) have the biggest homeless problem in the East. Here is map that shows the number of homeless people for every state and Washington DC:

Number of homeless people per 10,000 residents on one night in January 2018



On any given night in 2020, almost 650,000 people will experience homelessness in the United States. Let's take a closer look at this group of people with the following statistical information:

Who are these People?

- 61% are male
- 39% are female
- 52% are single males.
- 24% are single females.
- 23% are families with children.
- 5% are minors unaccompanied by adults
- 38% are children under the age of 18
- 24% are married
- 76% are single
- 10% are veterans

Race and ethnicity

- 40% are white
- 38% are black (African American)
- 18% are Hispanic
- 1% are Asian-American
- 3% are multiple or other single races

Mental health

- 26% of sheltered homeless have mental illness
- 40% of the chronically unsheltered homeless have severe mental issues (they are crazy)

Substance abuse

- 35% of all sheltered adults who were homeless have substance abuse issues
- 60% of the chronically unsheltered homeless have drug and/or alcohol abuse problems
- 75% of the homeless smoke cigarettes

Education

- 53% have less than a high school education
- 21% have completed high school
- 26% have some education beyond high school

Location

- 71% reside in central cities
- 21% are in suburbs
- 8% are in rural areas



HOMELESS DEATHS

It is estimated that 15,000 homeless people passed away in the US during the year 2019.

Approximately one out of every 56 sheltered homeless people will die in 2020.

Approximately one out of every 44 “unsheltered” homeless people will die in 2020.

For the US general population, about one out of 110 people will die in 2020.



Death on the street

We have known for years that homeless people are likely to die prematurely. The younger homeless population deaths are mostly attributable to substance use, violence and infectious diseases. Older homeless adults die at a rate four to five times what would be expected in the general population but die from different causes than do younger homeless adults. They die from the same causes as do other people – heart disease and cancer – but they do so 20 to 30 years earlier.

The homeless death count jumps during the winter months in Alaska and most mainland US states. Yes, homeless people are freezing to death on the streets of every US state except for Hawaii and maybe Florida. This is the primary reason why the average life expectancy for a homeless person is about 6 years longer in Hawaii. The cold weather is also a reason why the homeless per capita is so high since more than 1 out of 10 homeless people in Hawaii come from somewhere else.



Homeless Person in Chicago

INTERESTING FACT: More than 700 homeless people died in 2019 due to hypothermia in the US.



Being Homeless in Alaska Presents Many Challenges

Homeless Death Causes vs General Population Death Causes

Death Causes	Homeless Percentage	General Population %
Accidents	53%	8%
Drug and/or alcohol overdose		
Falls		
Drowning		
Vehicle (driver or pedestrian)		
Exposure (freezing to death)		
Natural	30%	89%
Cardiovascular disease		
Cancer		
Respiratory diseases		
Infectious diseases		
Homicide	11%	0.6% (about 20,000)
Gun		
Knife or sharp instrument		
Blunt injury		
Suicide	4%	1.6% (about 50,000)
Gun		
Hanging		
Jumping from high place		
Asphyxia		
Undetermined	2%	<1%

As we have found out, the biggest killer of young homeless people is drugs. The most dangerous drugs based on autopsy reports include:

#1 is Methamphetamine

#2 is Opioids

#3 is Cocaine

#4 is Alcohol

#5 is Sedatives

INTERESTING FACT: About 8% of the unsheltered homeless have HIV/AIDS - Caused mostly by sharing needles for taking drugs.



Yes, being HOMELESS can be very dangerous to your health!!

Did you know that hospital ERs must provide treatment for everybody? A federal law called the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA) requires almost all hospitals in the US to provide treatment to all patients who need emergency medical treatment regardless of whether the patients have health insurance or the ability to pay.

Most homeless people have no health insurance and no money.

INTERESTING FACT: Homeless individuals from all age groups made over 600,000 ER visits in 2019 or 72 visits per 100 homeless people in the United States.

HEADLINE: Hawaii's largest hospital cracking under strain of the homeless crisis

Here is the rest of the story:

Life on the streets has taken a toll on Alberto Rodrigues. For years, he's bounced in and out of the Queen's Medical Center. Outreach workers say he's there about a dozen times a year. He's gone in for everything from alcohol withdrawal to heart problems to serious wounds on his feet.

A few months ago, he sought care after a pit bull ripped off his ear. "One dog got this," he said, pointing to his left ear lobe. When asked why he went to the ER earlier this month, he replied, "Pain in my body. Pain, pain, pain."

As Hawaii's homeless crisis continues, Hawaii's largest hospital is cracking under the strain of helping chronically homeless people like Rodrigues, who have no access to primary care and so turn to ERs for both urgent and non-urgent health needs.



Queen's Medical Center



Queen's ER is Full of Homeless People

The Queen's Medical Center says it's seen ER visits surge in recent years. And the greatest spike is among the homeless population. In fiscal year 2013, homeless people accounted for nearly 6,958 ER visits to Queen's. At the end of the 2016 fiscal year, the figure hit nearly 11,000. They expect that number to hit 20,000 in 2020.

The cost of caring for the those high-needs homeless patients is astronomical -- about \$100 million a year for Queen's alone. And because Medicaid doesn't cover all of the costs, the hospital has been forced to eat almost \$50 million in health care expenses over the last four years. "Without the financial support that this mission-driven hospital has, it would bankrupt this hospital," said Dr. Daniel Cheng, assistant chief of the ER at Queen's.

The problem is multi-pronged, but one of the biggest issues is that only about 15 percent come into the ER with a true emergency, Cheng said. Most just need to be cleaned up and given some prescription medications. "What they really need is good access to primary care," Cheng said.

The strain on the hospital's ER was noticeable on a recent Thursday afternoon, when all 36 beds were full. With 60 people in need of immediate care, nurses were stashing patients anywhere there was room.

The issue of 911 and emergency room "super-users" isn't a new one in Honolulu, but the problem has grown more acute as the number of chronically homeless people in the islands has grown and as the cost of their health care grows. Queen's Medical Center records show that from Sept. 1 to Nov. 30, 2019, some 39 homeless people accounted for at least 734 ER visits.

Half arrived by ambulance or were brought in by police. And one person went into the Queen's ER 60 times in those 90 days.

"The cost is so great right now," Cheng said. "What we're paying as a community in terms of not being able to access 911. Paying in terms of actual cost. Paying in terms of not being able to be seen timely when we do have life-threatening emergencies."

"Right now, it's just a crazy system," Cheng said, "to have a hospital being occupied by individuals for \$4,000 and \$5,000 visits when they need \$30 worth of care and a roof over their head."

HEADLINE: Queen's Medical Center on 'Losing End' of Battle with Meth



Some days, as many 40% of people admitted at Queens ER have problems related to methamphetamine use. Homeless meth users are dying at an alarming rate!

INTERESTING FACT: 34% of the unsheltered homeless have been in jail for at least one day.

I have found during my research for this article that many US states and cities don't publish homeless death data. Therefore, homeless death statistics don't end up on the Internet where I can Google them. For example, if you Google "US homeless deaths", you will get many hits for homeless deaths in Los Angeles but not so much for other places. So, for that reason, I'm going to feature Los Angeles and a few other cities as examples to show how the number of homeless deaths are increasing in every state and large city across the United States.

Los Angeles

HEADLINE: The Homeless Are Dying in Record Numbers on the Streets of LA.

1,047 homeless people died in Los Angeles in 2018, double the number of deaths from six years ago. The number of homeless deaths has steadily increased every year since 2013, when 536 people died.

The leading causes of death were coronary heart disease, which accounted for 22% of deaths, followed by alcohol and drug overdose at 21%, transportation-related injuries at 9%, homicides at 6% and suicides at 5%.

This data sheds light on a worsening public health emergency in the LA county, where officials estimate there are now over 60,000 people homeless, including more than 44,000 people who are living unsheltered – in cars, tents, or makeshift quarters in parks and on the streets.



The Streets of LA are Crawling with Homeless People

INTERESTING FACT: Over 40% of the total US “unsheltered” homeless people are living in California.

Washington D.C.

When it comes to the overall proportion of homeless residents, no state or city compares to Washington DC. Of the district's 702,000 residents, around 8,000 are homeless — over 1% or 98 per 10,000 residents.

At least 117 homeless people died in Washington DC in 2019, according to a recent investigation by The Washington Post.



Homeless are invading DC Tourist Areas



Washington DC can be Cold in the Winter

New York City



Homeless Deaths are up by 39% in one year

With nearly 92,000 homeless residents, New York's overall share is the second highest in the country. The majority of the state's homeless people — nearly 80,000 residents — are in New York City, where a lack of affordable housing is a well-known problem. The city saw a 3% rise in homelessness from 2017 to 2018, and a 50% increase in the last decade.

Between July of 2018 and June of 2019, 404 people considered homeless in New York City died. Those deaths represent a 39 percent increase over the prior year, the largest year over year increase ever. They died in hospitals, shelters, inside the entrance of buildings, on subway cars, in abandoned buildings, and in vacant lots. Most of these homeless deaths were men under 50 years old. Most were plagued by drug addictions, alcoholism, and heart disease.

Seattle

Seattle has the second highest homeless population on the west coast with 11,500 people.

The King County Medical Examiner in 2018 investigated and confirmed 194 deaths of people presumed to be homeless, and that's a nearly 15 percent increase over 2017.



Homeless Deaths Growing in Seattle

San Francisco

It has more billionaires per capita than anywhere else in the world, but it also has a homeless problem so severe that it rivals some third-world nations. On any given day you can see souped-up Lamborghinis in one part of the city, then walk over a few blocks and see piles of human feces, puddles of urine and vomit caked on the sidewalks. The misery of homelessness, mental illness and drug addiction hits deep in San Francisco and has turned parts of a beautiful city into a public toilet. Over 400 homeless people died on SF streets in the past 3 years.



SF with its smaller area probably has the biggest homeless problem in the United States

Comments

Wait, I need to find that Soap Box of mine. I'm going to tell you why the homeless problem keeps getting worse in every large city in America. Not even one city can solve the problem. Why is that? Well, here is the problem in a nutshell: Bleeding heart liberals have passed laws that make it impossible to force or make a homeless person do anything! In fact, the homeless are doing whatever they want to do. For example:



- Authorities cannot force or make a mentally ill homeless person (even if they are dangerous) go to a mental institution for treatment.
- Police and medical authorities cannot force or make homeless drug addicts get the treatment they need. However, the police and/or medical authorities have to haul the body away when the addict dies.
- Unsheltered homeless can setup their tents wherever they want. If they don't own a tent, they can sleep on the sidewalk or in an alley or on the park grass or on the beach. Nobody can stop them.
- Police and homeless authorities cannot force or make a homeless person stay at a shelter.
- Wherever the homeless setup camp, the trash piles up and nobody can make them clean it up.
- **The unsheltered homeless do whatever they damn please and nobody can do anything to stop them!**



**Homeless tent city at beach park near Waianae on Oahu -
Where do the kids play?**

Here is a fact that may or may not have any bearing on the homeless problem. I looked up the political party of the governors and mayors for the states and cities with the biggest per capita homeless problem. Everyone was a democrat except for the governor of Massachusetts (Charlie Baker) who is a republican.

Okay, what is the solution? My ideas are not new. Most people know what needs to be done but just we can't get the required laws changed, the necessary resources, and government backing in order to accomplish the task. Here is what needs to be done:

- 1. The President, Congress, Department of Defense, State and City Governments need to step up and help all Veterans. Many Veterans are homeless because of what happened to them while serving our country. Do whatever it takes to give them the needed treatment and find suitable housing for them. IT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO!**
- 2. Help homeless families with children. Many of these people are living in their cars or tents on the beach. Many of the adults are working but just don't make enough money to rent a place to live. Government should allocate enough money to help these people get a place to live and help them get back on their feet. THE CHILDREN OF AMERICA SHOULD NOT GROW UP HOMELESS!**
- 3. Help the homeless that want to be helped. Many homeless people are homeless due to domestic violent, illness, job loss, or just bad luck. Government should allocate enough money to help these people get a place to live and help them get back on their feet. These homeless people are not the ones you see laying on the sidewalk in downtown Honolulu. THESE PEOPLE ARE THE EASIEST ONES TO HELP AND IT SHOULD BE DONE IMMEDIATELY.**
- 4. Okay, that was the easy part. Now we need to deal with the unsheltered drug addicts and mentally ill homeless. We can no longer let the homeless dictate what they want to do. Federal laws must be changed to let the police and medical personnel tell the homeless what's going to happen. If the homeless person is on drugs, that person will receive treatment. If the homeless person is mentally ill (crazy) and a danger to themselves or others, that person will be taken off the street and put in a mentally ill facility. This can be called "TOUGH LOVE" but in the long run it will save lives.**
- 5. The homeless cannot put up tents, sleep, or hangout on sidewalks, parks, or beaches. Period. If need be, the state or city can designate an out-of-the-way "tent city" area for the remaining homeless. GET ALL OF THE HOMELESS OUT OF DOWNTOWN HONOLULU AND WAIKIKI. SAME GOES FOR ALL US CITIES.**
- 6. Hundreds of hospitals across America are going bankrupt and closing because non-paying homeless are flooding their ERs. Since only a small percentage are true emergencies, the homeless need somewhere else to go. I recommend a**

medical screening office or building where the homeless can go to get checked out. A place where they can get cleaned up and get the necessary medicine they need. If a person really needs emergency care, they will be taken to the hospital. **ERs need to be available for emergencies for everybody – not just for non-paying homeless people.**

7. The ACLU and bleeding-heart liberals will cry bloody murder if my ideas were implemented. But think about it. Crazy people and drug addicts don't always make the greatest decisions in life! That is probably why they are homeless and will die at a young age. **Authorities must make these people get the treatment they need.**

HEADLINE: The Price of Homelessness: The Seattle area spends more than \$1 billion a year on this humanitarian crisis!

8. Some people will say the above solutions will cost too much money. Well, right now, states and cities are spending billions of dollars on the problem with no visible results. **Implementing these ideas will not cost much more than what is already being spend.**

Well, that's it. I'm putting away the Soap Box. I don't expect anything will be done by our great leaders therefore the homeless problem will continue to get worse and more people will die early in life. **SAD!**

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