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HPIO analysis: COVID-19 fourth leading cause of death compared to leading causes in 2019

(COLUMBUS, Ohio) – New analysis by the Health Policy Institute of Ohio has found that COVID-19 deaths currently rank fourth among leading causes of death compared to 2019 data ([click here for a graphic](#)).

More than four times as many Ohioans have died with COVID-19 in 2020 than died with flu or pneumonia (1,931) in 2019.

Between March 17 and Dec. 20, 8,047 Ohioans died with COVID-19. In 2019, 7,168 died of chronic lower respiratory diseases and 6,449 died from trachea, bronchus and lung cancer, the type of cancer responsible for the most deaths.

More Ohioans have died with COVID-19 this year than from most leading causes of death in 2019, including any specific type of cancer, stroke, diabetes and unintentional drug overdose deaths, behind heart disease (29,159 deaths), all cancers combined (25,166 deaths) and unintentional injury (8,291, including drug overdose deaths, motor vehicle crashes and other accidents). It appears that the number of people who have died with COVID-19 will surpass all unintentional injury deaths by the end of 2020.

Since the first deaths of Ohioans with COVID-19 were reported in March, the number of people dying with the virus has been comparable to many of the leading causes of death in previous years, such as motor vehicle crashes, stroke and diabetes, kidney disease and suicide.

A spike in reported COVID-19 deaths beginning in early November, however, has made COVID-19 rise higher compared to other causes of death. More than 2,700 Ohioans have died with COVID-19 since Nov. 1.

"As Ohioans consider holiday plans, we will all need to keep celebrations small, wear masks, maintain physical distancing and practice good hygiene," said HPIO President Amy Rohling McGee. "The recent rollout of vaccines is reason for optimism, but Ohioans need to remain vigilant until infection rates begin to fall."

For any questions about the analysis, or if you would like to talk with HPIO President Amy Rohling McGee or HPIO Director of Data Management and Analysis Zach Reat, please call or text Nick Wiselogel at 614.530.9918 or email nwiselogel@hpio.net.