

## DEATH HIGHLIGHTS

A total of 15,171 deaths occurred among Nebraska residents in 2010, an increase from the 14,803 deaths that occurred in 2009. The 2010 figure translates into a crude mortality rate of 8.3 deaths per 1,000 residents and an age-adjusted mortality rate of 717.8 deaths per 100,000 residents.

The average age at death among Nebraska residents in 2010 was 75.4 years, an increase from the previous year's figure of 75.0 years. The state's all-time record is 75.5 years, which was set in 2003. By gender, the average age at death in 2010 was 78.7 years for Nebraska women, an increase from the 2009 mark of 78.3 years, and 72.0 years for Nebraska men, an increase from the 2009 mark of 71.5 years and a new state record, breaking the previous record (set in 2003) of 71.9 years.

Nebraska's leading cause of death in 2010 was cancer, which accounted for 3,437 resident deaths. This figure represents just under one-fourth (22.7%) of all deaths that occurred among Nebraska residents in 2010. This is the second consecutive year in which cancer has surpassed heart disease as the state's leading cause of death, although it first occurred among Nebraska men in 2006. This historic shift is primarily the result of a substantial decrease in heart disease mortality; in fact, 2010 marked the eighth consecutive year that the number of heart disease deaths in Nebraska fell below 4,000, and the state's heart disease mortality rate has declined by more than 25% since 2000. At the same time, the cancer mortality rate in Nebraska has declined only modestly, and the number of cancer deaths has remained between 3,000 and 3,500 in every year since 1984.

Cancer of the lung was the year's leading cause of cancer deaths among both Nebraska men and women, accounting for 928 deaths (525 men, 403 women). Colorectal (colon and rectum) cancer was Nebraska's second leading cause of cancer deaths overall in 2010, with 358 deaths (181 men, 177 women). However, breast cancer was the second leading cause of cancer deaths among Nebraska women in 2010, claiming 225 lives (five men died from it as well), and prostate cancer was the #3 cause of cancer deaths among Nebraska men, claiming 167 lives in 2010. Taken together, these four sites were responsible for nearly half (49.0%) of the state's cancer deaths in 2010.

With only 93 fewer deaths than cancer, heart disease was the second leading cause of death among Nebraska residents in 2010, and was responsible for 3,344 deaths. However, among Nebraska women, heart disease remained the leading cause of death in 2010, by a count of 1,684 to 1,645 for cancer. Among people age 75 and older, heart disease was also the state's leading cause of death in 2010, by a count of 2,411 to 1,682 for cancer.

After heart disease and cancer, no other single cause of death accounted for more than 10% of Nebraska resident deaths in 2010. For the third year in a row, chronic lung disease was Nebraska's third leading cause of death, accounting for 903 deaths in 2010. Cerebrovascular disease (usually referred to as stroke), for many years the state's third leading cause of death, was again the #4 leading cause of death, and was responsible for 877 deaths in 2010.

## **DEATH HIGHLIGHTS (continued)**

Accidents (also referred to as unintentional injuries) were Nebraska's fifth leading cause of death in 2010, claiming 696 lives. Motor vehicle accidents were once again Nebraska's leading cause of accidental deaths, accounting for 209 fatalities. This figure is the lowest annual number of motor vehicle accident deaths recorded in Nebraska since 1944. Falls were the #2 cause of accidental deaths, with 199 resident fatalities in 2010. Nineteen of the state's accidental deaths in 2010 were farm-related. Accidents were the leading cause of death in 2010 among Nebraska residents under the age of 45 years (excluding infants under one year of age), accounting for 223 (32.1%) of 694 deaths.

Alzheimer's Disease has now ranked among the top ten causes of death in Nebraska for over a decade, and in 2010 it was again the state's sixth leading cause of death, accounting for 565 deaths. After Alzheimer's Disease, Nebraska's top ten causes of death in 2010 included diabetes (with 450 deaths), nephritis and nephrosis (290 deaths), pneumonia (264 deaths), and suicide (186 deaths).

A total of 136 infant deaths occurred among Nebraska residents in 2010, which translates into an infant mortality rate of 5.2 per 1,000 live births. The latter figure is the lowest infant mortality rate ever recorded in the state's history, breaking the previous mark of 5.4, which was first recorded in 2003 and again in 2008 and 2009. The leading cause of infant deaths in Nebraska in 2010 was birth defects, which accounted for 37 deaths. Low birth weight babies accounted for 92 (67.6%) of Nebraska's infant deaths, with 77 of these children falling into the very low birth weight (<1500 grams) category. Neonates (infants less than 28 days old) accounted for the majority of Nebraska's 2010 infant deaths, with a count of 96, while post-neonates (infants between 28 days and one year of age) accounted for the remaining 40.