



NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Orange County Sheriff-Coroner Don Barnes commissions County's first Homeless Death Review Committee

SANTA ANA, Ca. (Jan. 26, 2022): Orange County Sheriff-Coroner Don Barnes announced today that he has commissioned the County's first Homeless Death Review Committee to review deaths of people experiencing homelessness in Orange County.

Sheriff-Coroner Barnes is commissioning the committee through the Orange County Coroner's Office, a division of the Orange County Sheriff's Department. The Homeless Death Review Committee, consisting of technical experts from both the public and private sectors, will explore the root causes of the reviewed deaths and determine what, if any, factors contributing to the deaths were preventable.

While the Sheriff's Department and Orange County Coroner's Office have tracked deaths of people experiencing homelessness for many years, the Homeless Death Review Committee will provide an extensive and in-depth review. Based on this review, the committee will develop an independent report with recommendations to Sheriff-Coroner Barnes and policymakers to find solutions that assist in reducing the number of preventable deaths of people experiencing homelessness.

"Addressing the impacts of homelessness remains a top priority for the Sheriff's Department and our County partners," said Sheriff-Coroner Barnes. "This Review Committee presents an opportunity to make data-driven policy decisions that will ultimately result in lives saved and an enhanced quality of life for our community."

A Mortality Review Committee is a recommended best practice by the National Health Care for the Homeless Council. Several jurisdictions have employed the use of these committees to assist in developing policies aimed at reducing preventable deaths.

The Orange County Homeless Death Review Committee will be comprised of representatives from the Orange County Coroner's Office, the Orange County Health Care Agency, the County of Orange Social Services Agency, the Hospital Association of Southern California, the Orange County Medical Association, multiple experts in providing direct service to individuals experiencing homelessness, and at least one municipal law enforcement agency. The committee will hold its first meeting in the spring of 2022.

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