

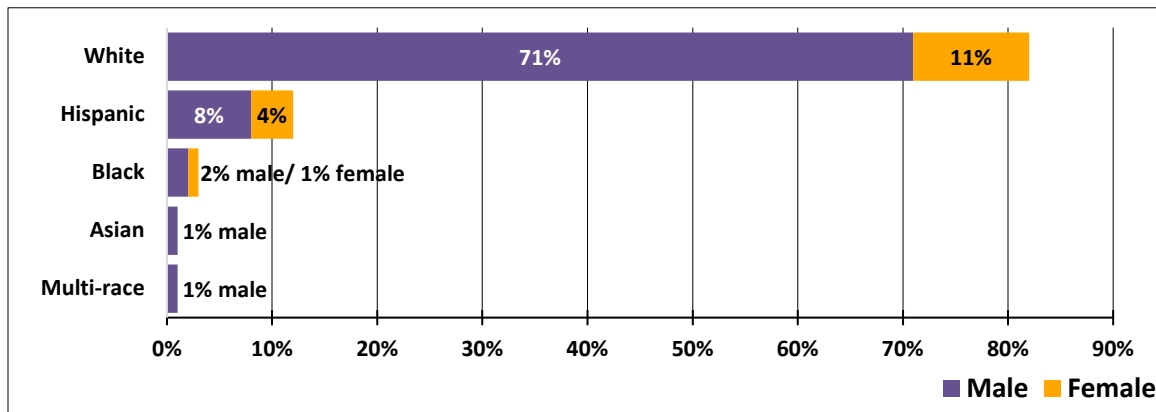
SUICIDE DEATHS IN BERKS COUNTY, 2023

BACKGROUND

Berks County, Pennsylvania is an urban county with a population of more than 433,000 people (215,000 males and 218,000 females). In 2023, Berks County had 84 suicide deaths (71 males and 13 females) which occurred at a rate of 19 suicide deaths per 100,000 people. This is a considerable increase from 2022 when the suicide rate in Berks County was 13 deaths per 100,000 people (58 suicide deaths). The Pennsylvania Violent Death Reporting System (PAVDRS) worked closely with the Bureau of Health Statistics and Registries, the Berks County Coroner’s Office, and Berks County law enforcement to gather detailed information about each violent death. Below are some key findings from those collaborations.

- In 2023, at least two people died by suicide each week in Berks County.
- Males were over five times more likely to die by suicide than females.
- Overall, suicide rates in Berks County were higher than the state average:  
**Berks County Rates:** 19 deaths per 100,000 residents (males 33 and females 9)  
**Pennsylvania Rates:** 15 deaths per 100,000 residents (males 25 and females 6)

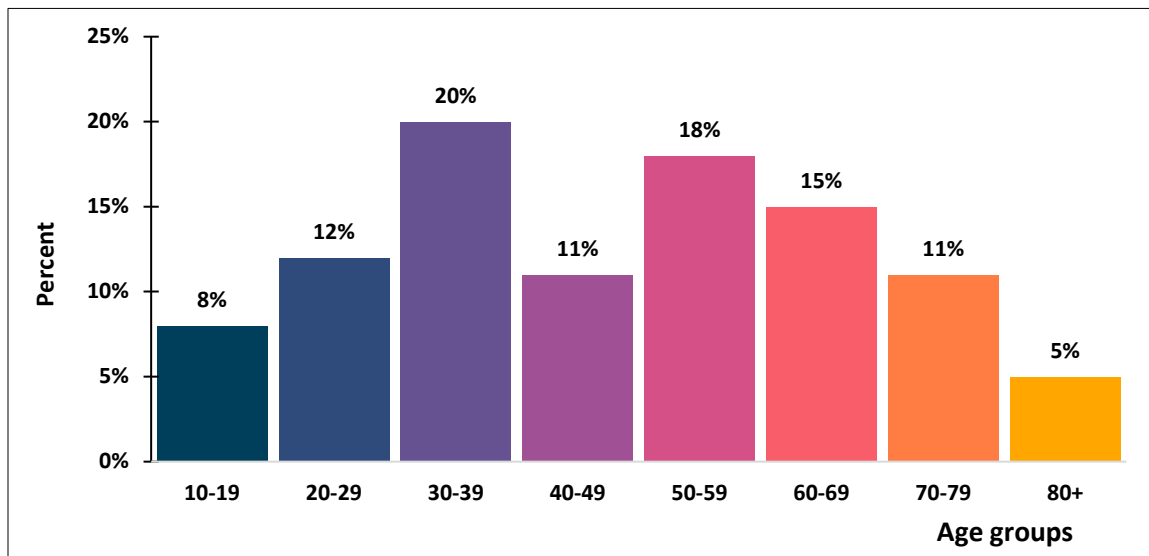
Race\*/Ethnicity and Sex of People who Died by Suicide



- White, non-Hispanic males accounted for 71% of all suicide victims in Berks County in 2023.

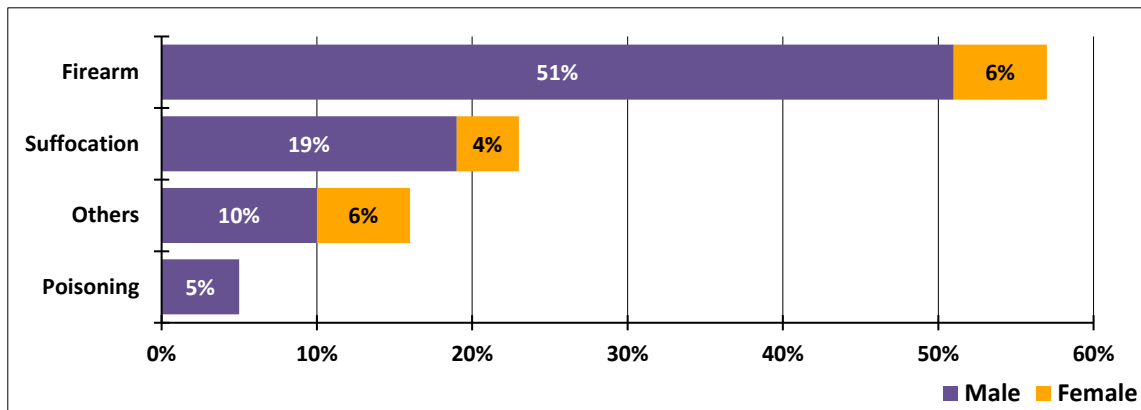
\*Non-Hispanic

Age of People who Died by Suicide



- The 30-39 age group had the highest percentage of all persons who died by suicide (20%).
- The frequency of suicide deaths for the 60-69 age group decreased from 26% in 2022 to 15% in 2023.

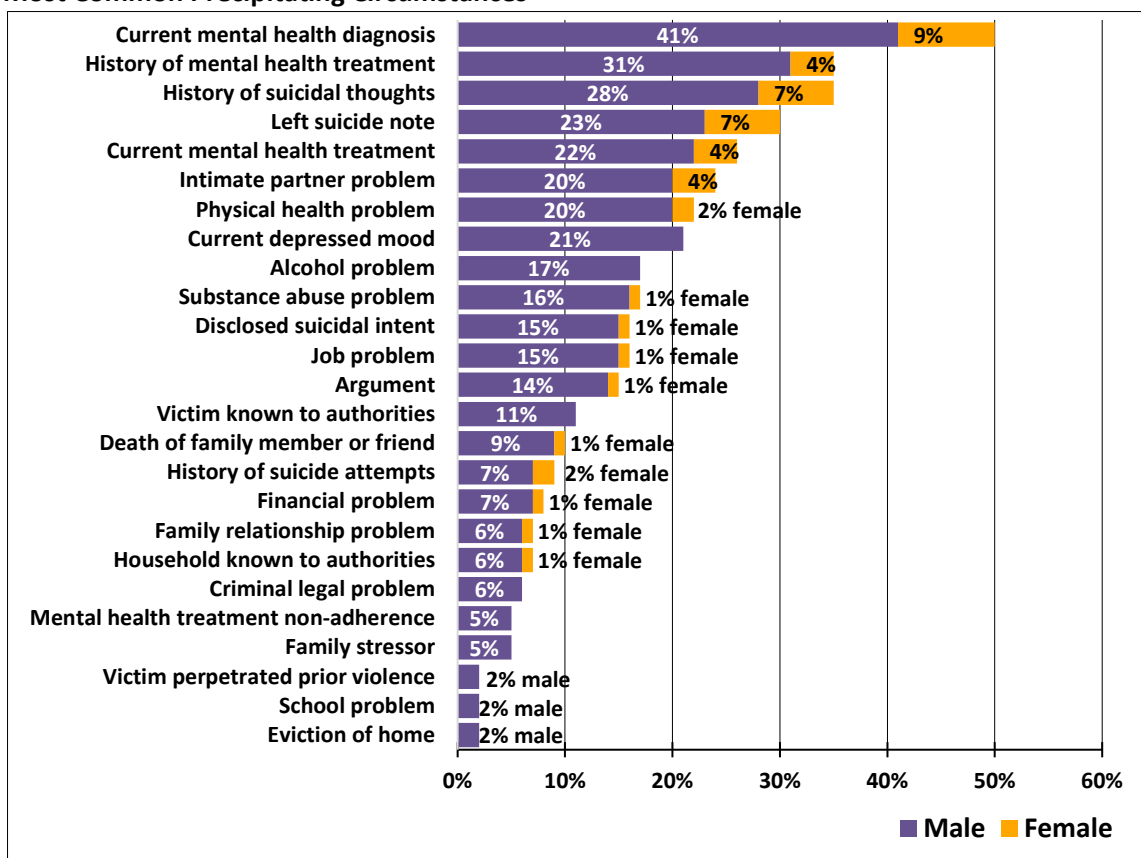
### Leading Cause of Suicide Deaths by Sex



- Firearms were involved in 57% of suicides in Berks County. This is a 7% increase from 2022 (50%).

- “Other” causes of suicide include drowning and sharp instruments.

### Most Common Precipitating Circumstances



- At least 50% of people who died by suicide had a diagnosed mental health problem.

- About 26% of people who died by suicide received mental health treatment within two months of their death.

- Around 22% of people who died by suicide had a contributing physical health problem.

Note: The denominator for Most Common Precipitating Circumstances is the sum of records with coroner/medical examiner and law enforcement circumstantial data. Circumstantial information is not available for all deaths. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

The PAVDRS is a state level surveillance system funded and overseen by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The program is part of the National Violent Death Reporting System. The PAVDRS collects data on suicides, homicides, deaths of undetermined intent and accidental firearm deaths. The program collects data from death certificates, coroners/medical examiners, and law enforcement. PAVDRS/NVDRS data are used for research, policymaking, and to inform violence prevention programs and strategies to enhance community safety. For more information, please visit the [PAVDRS webpage](#) or email [RA-DHPAVDRS@pa.gov](mailto:RA-DHPAVDRS@pa.gov)