Gun-Related Deaths in Virginia

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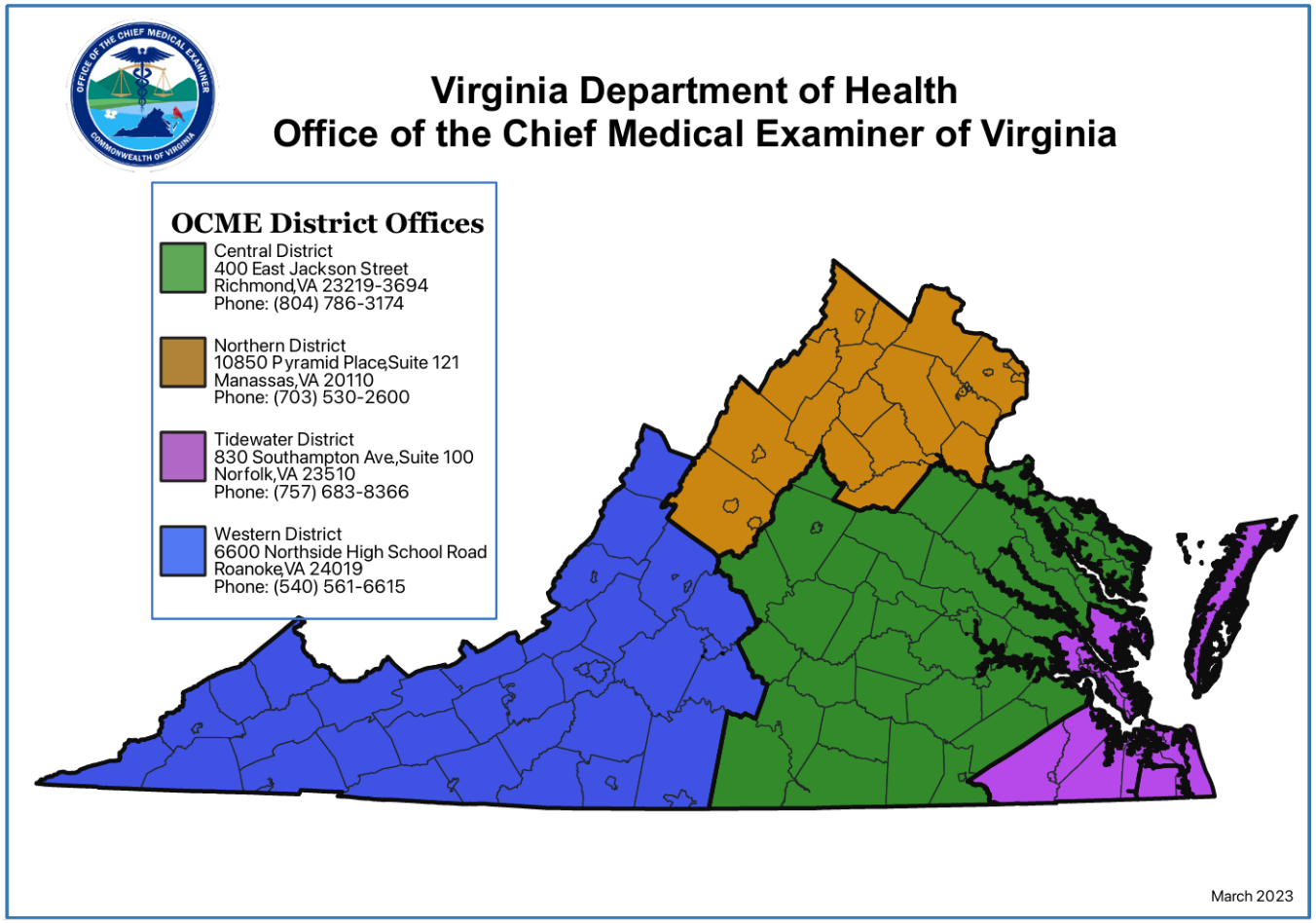
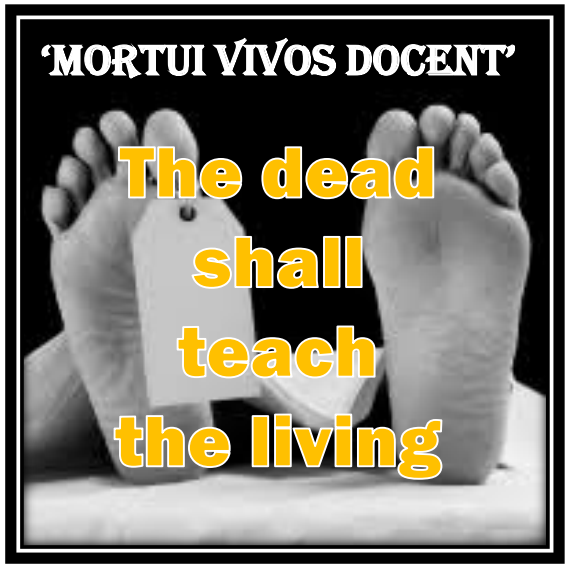
'Provide state of the art, high quality, professional medicolegal death investigation for all citizens of the Commonwealth regardless of their geographic location'



OCME Mission



- Conduct medicolegal death investigations
- Perform exams to certify cause and manner of death
- Provide medical insight/findings in court proceedings of OCME cases
- Educate peers and professionals on subjects related to death investigation
- Mass fatality planning
- Provide statistics on unnatural death in the Commonwealth
- Reduce violent death by conducting surveillance and fatality review
  - Provide support and technical assistance to local fatality review teams
- Administer the State Anatomical Program

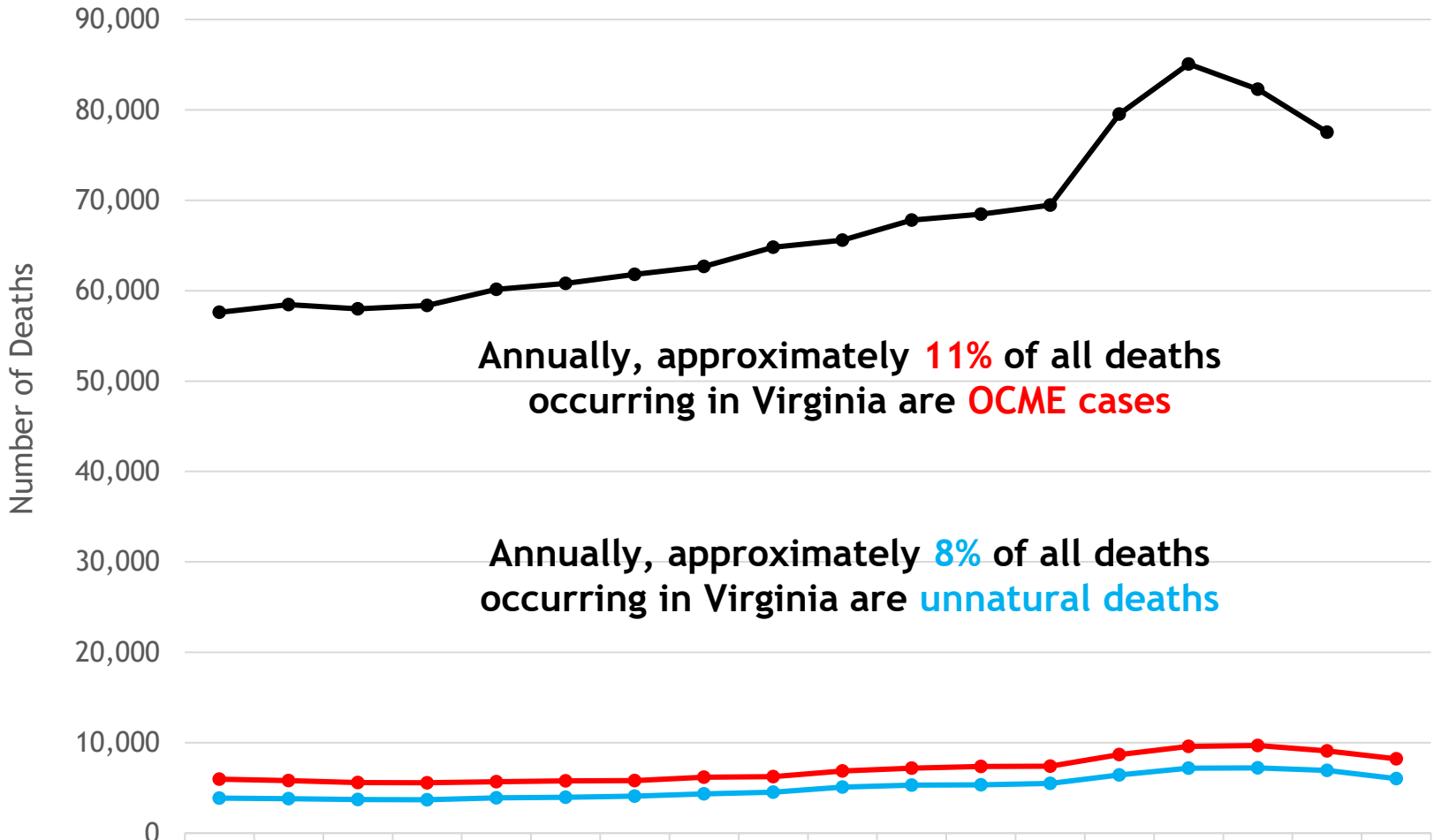
What Makes a Death an OCME Case?

Death must have occurred in VA

Pursuant to § 32.1-283 of the Code of Virginia, all of the following deaths are investigated by the OCME:

- any death from trauma, injury, violence, or poisoning attributable to accident, suicide or homicide;
- sudden deaths to persons in apparent good health or deaths unattended by a physician;
- deaths of persons in jail, prison, or another correctional institution, or in police custody (this includes deaths from legal intervention);
- deaths of patients/residents of state mental health facilities;
- the sudden death of any infant less than eighteen months of age whose death might be attributable to SIDS or SUID
- any other suspicious, unusual, or unnatural death

Number of All OCME Deaths and All Unnatural Deaths Compared to All Deaths in Virginia by Year, 2007-2024*



	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024*
OCME Cases (Unnatural manner)	3,876	3,795	3,710	3,693	3,920	3,979	4,103	4,346	4,542	5,106	5,300	5,354	5,511	6,436	7,184	7,216	6,923	6022
All OCME Cases	5,960	5,811	5,608	5,574	5,672	5,767	5,809	6,176	6,253	6,868	7,187	7,390	7,393	8,684	9,605	9,693	9,085	8205
Total Virginia Deaths	57,609	58,467	57,980	58,352	60,157	60,808	61,800	62,694	64,801	65,580	67,796	68,480	69,468	79,540	85,079	82,292	77,523	X

* Data for 2024 is incomplete, preliminary, and subject to change

Different Sources of Mortality Data

Office of Information Management (OIM)

Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME)

Office of Vital Records (OVR)

1. Death certificates
2. All deaths
3. ICD-10 coding
4. Residents of VA that die in VA
5. Reports geography based on residence location

Under OCME Jurisdiction

1. Internal database
2. Deaths under OCME jurisdiction per Code
3. Internal coding schema
4. Anyone that dies in VA (doesn't need to be resident of VA)
5. Reports geography based on where event leading to death occurred (event/injury location)

Division of Death Prevention

1. Internal/web-based database
2. Death specific (ex. maternal mortality)
3. Mixed coding
4. Residents of VA that die in VA
5. Reports geography based on residence location

OCME Data Methods, Considerations, and Limitations

- Deaths that occur in VA, not based on state of residence
- Unique internal OCME coding schema; no ICD-10 codes
- Date elements based on date of death
- Delayed deaths (deaths that occur months or years after injury/event)

CDC: Provisional Leading Causes of Death, 2024

Provisional Leading 15 Causes of Death in United States, 2024

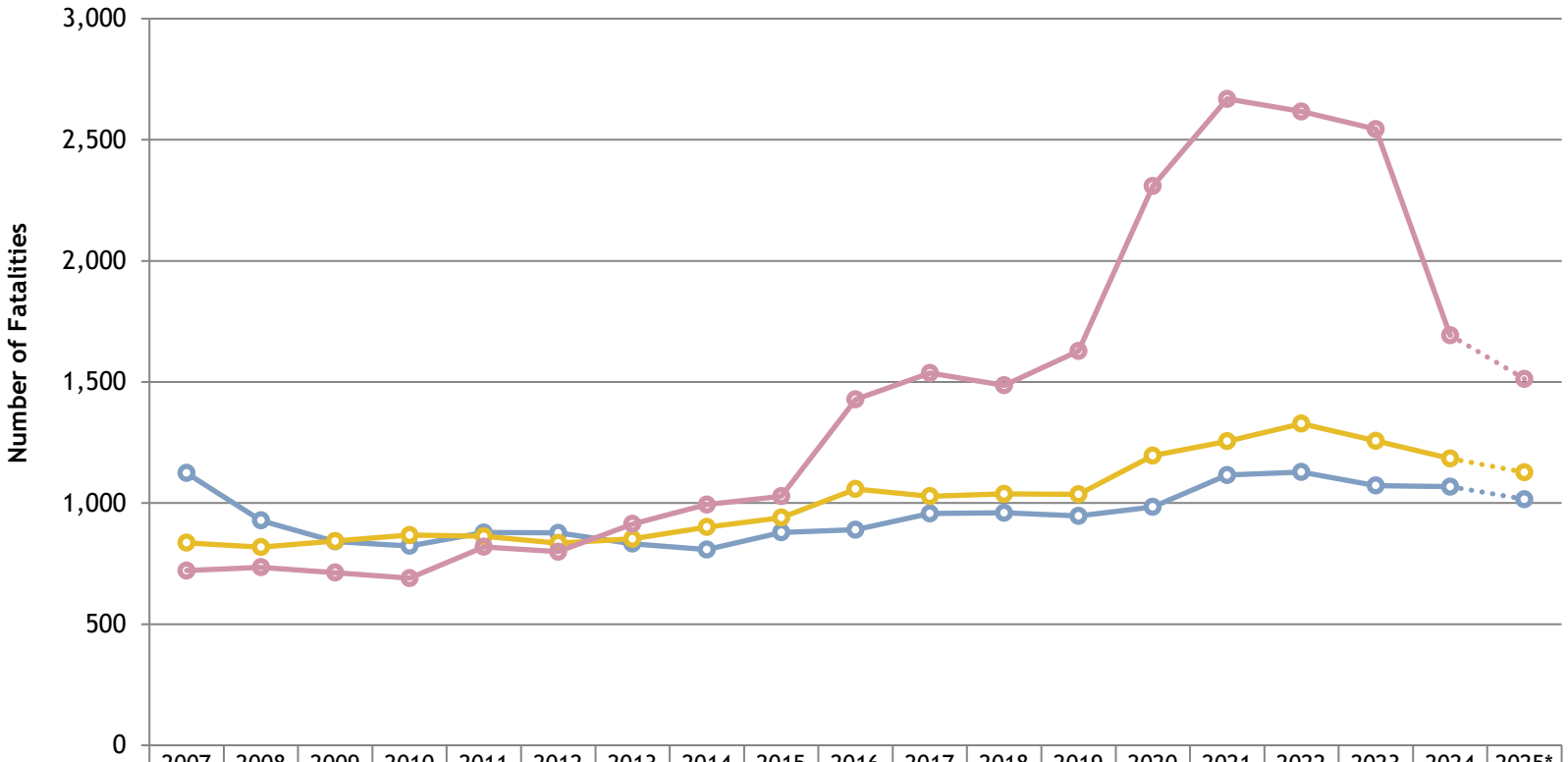
Rank	Leading Causes of Death	# of Deaths	Crude Rate per 100k
1	Diseases of heart (I00-I09,I11,I13,I20-I51)	683,501	204.1
2	Malignant neoplasms (C00-C97)	619,874	185.1
3	Accidents (unintentional injuries) (V01-X59,Y85-Y86)	197,445	59.0
4	Cerebrovascular diseases (I60-I69)	166,850	49.8
5	Chronic lower respiratory diseases (J40-J47)	145,642	43.5
6	Alzheimer disease (G30)	116,023	34.6
7	Diabetes mellitus (E10-E14)	94,443	28.2
8	Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis (N00-N07,N17-N19,N25-N27)	55,081	16.4
9	Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis (K70,K73-K74)	52,273	15.6
10	Intentional self-harm (suicide) (*U03,X60-X84,Y87.0)	48,821	14.6
11	Influenza and pneumonia (J09-J18)	48,142	14.4
12	Essential hypertension and hypertensive renal disease (I10,I12,I15)	42,343	12.6
13	Parkinson disease (G20-G21)	40,919	12.2
14	Septicemia (A40-A41)	40,057	12.0
15	COVID-19 (U07.1)	31,424	9.4

Note: Accidents and Suicides (manners of death) highlighted here include all causes of death and are not restricted to one specific cause of death (ex. gun-related deaths)

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System, Provisional Mortality on CDC WONDER Online Database. Data are from the final Multiple Cause of Death Files, 2018-2023, and from provisional data for years 2024 and later, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. Accessed at http://wonder.cdc.gov/mcd-icd10-provisional.html on Sep 3, 2025 3:30:17 PM

Top 3 Methods of Unnatural Death (All Manners) in VA

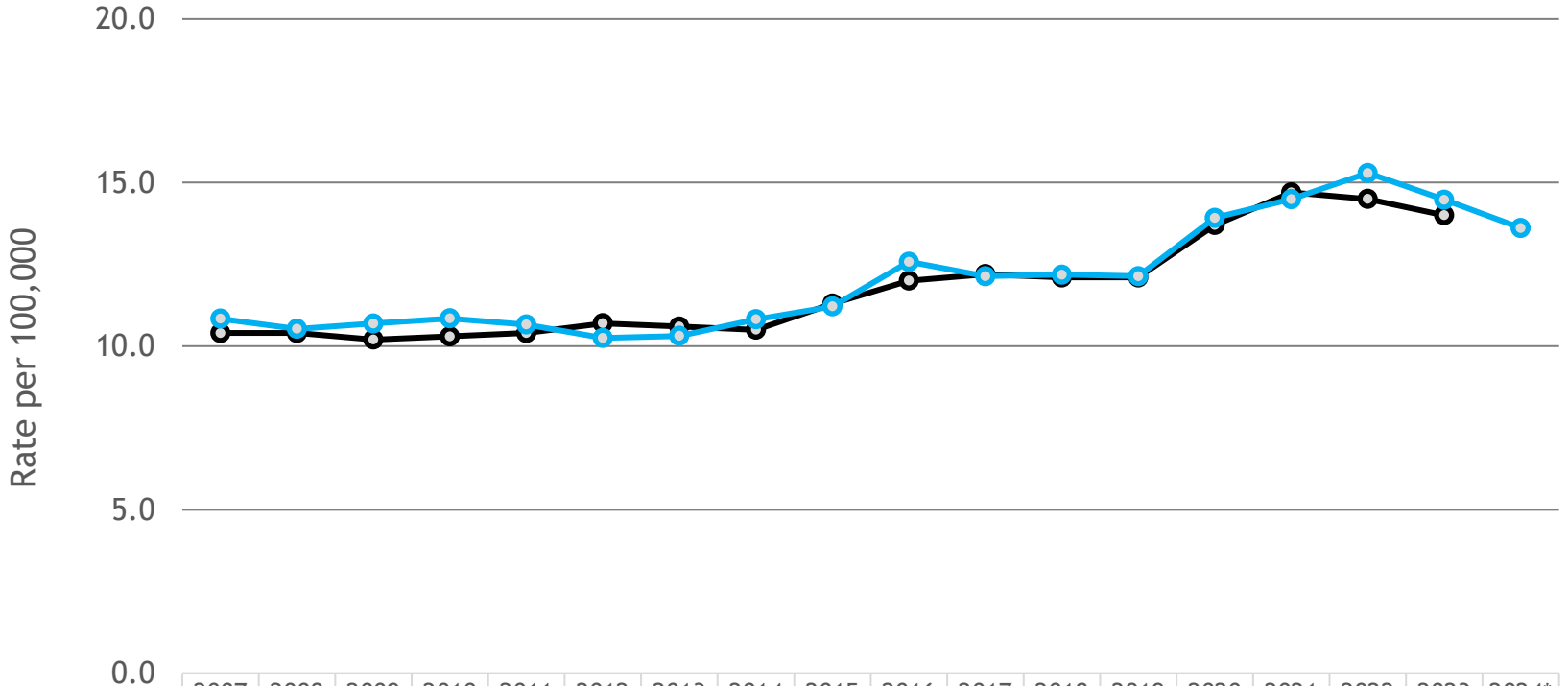
Total Number of Motor Vehicle, Gun, and Drug Related Fatalities by Year of Death, 2007-2025*
Data for 2025 is a Predicted Total for the Entire Year



	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*
Motor Vehicle Related	1,124	928	841	823	878	877	832	808	879	890	957	960	947	984	1,116	1,128	1,072	1,068	1,016
Gun Related	836	818	843	868	863	835	852	901	940	1,058	1,028	1,038	1,036	1,196	1,255	1,328	1,257	1,184	1,127
Fatal Drug Overdose	721	735	713	690	819	799	914	994	1,028	1,428	1,537	1,486	1,628	2,309	2,669	2,617	2,544	1,693	1,513

[1] Top 3 methods of death (motor vehicles, guns, and drugs) include all manners of death (accident, homicide, suicide, and undetermined)

Rates of Gun-Related Death Nationally vs. VA



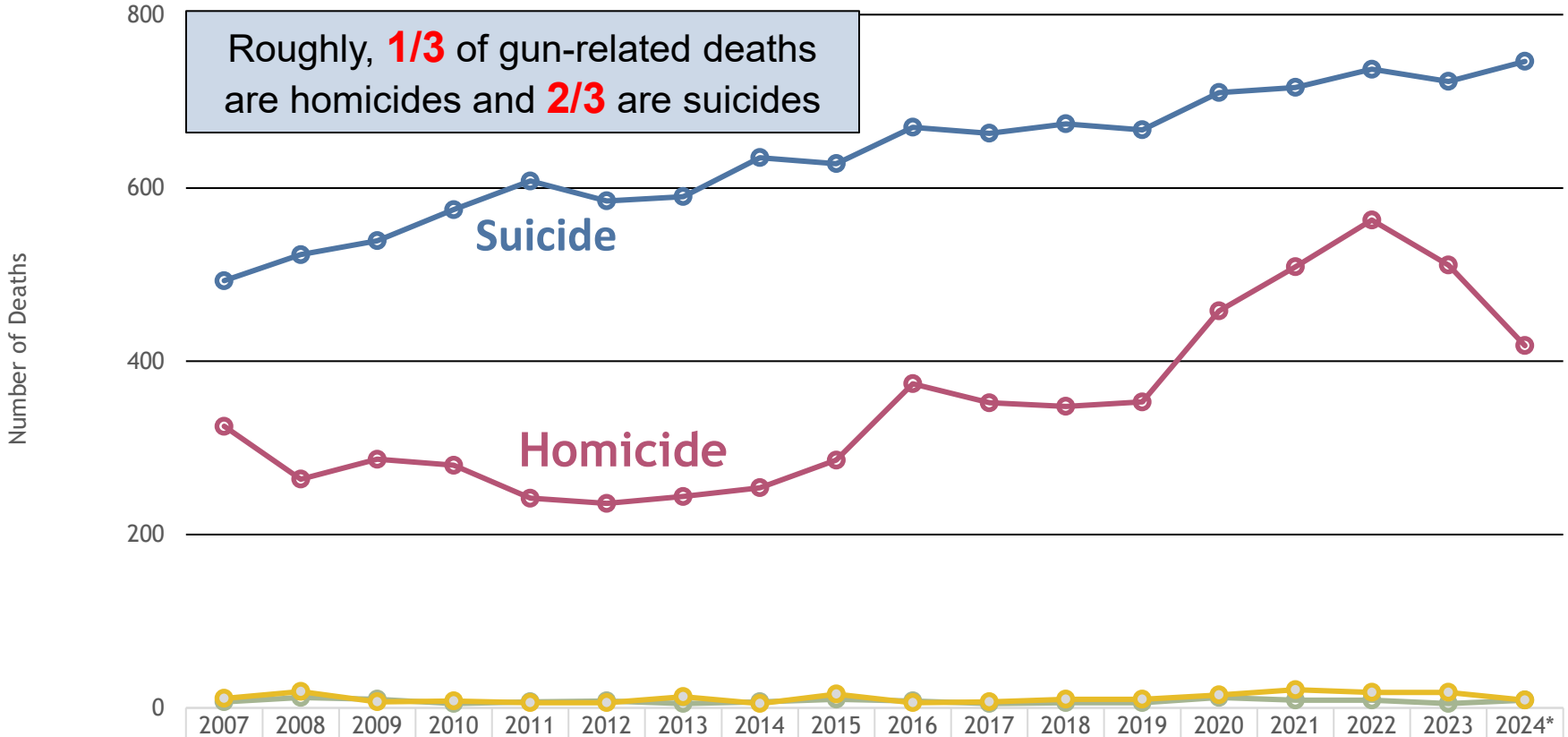
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024*
National Rate	10.4	10.4	10.2	10.3	10.4	10.7	10.6	10.5	11.3	12.0	12.2	12.1	12.1	13.7	14.7	14.5	14.0	*
VA Rate	10.8	10.5	10.7	10.8	10.7	10.3	10.3	10.8	11.2	12.6	12.1	12.2	12.1	13.9	14.5	15.3	14.5	13.6

* Virginia rates for 2024 are preliminary and subject to change. Rate calculations for 2024 use 2023 population estimates. At the time of this analysis, national rates from the US Census are not available for 2024.

Source: National rate (crude rates, not age-adjusted): https://wonder.cdc.gov

Note: Rate calculations are based upon Virginia population estimates. From 2007 to 2020, Bridged-Race Population Estimates from the National Center for Health Statistics were used for rate calculations; however, these estimates were discontinued in 2020. From 2021 forward, rates were calculated using Single-Race Population Estimates from the US Census.

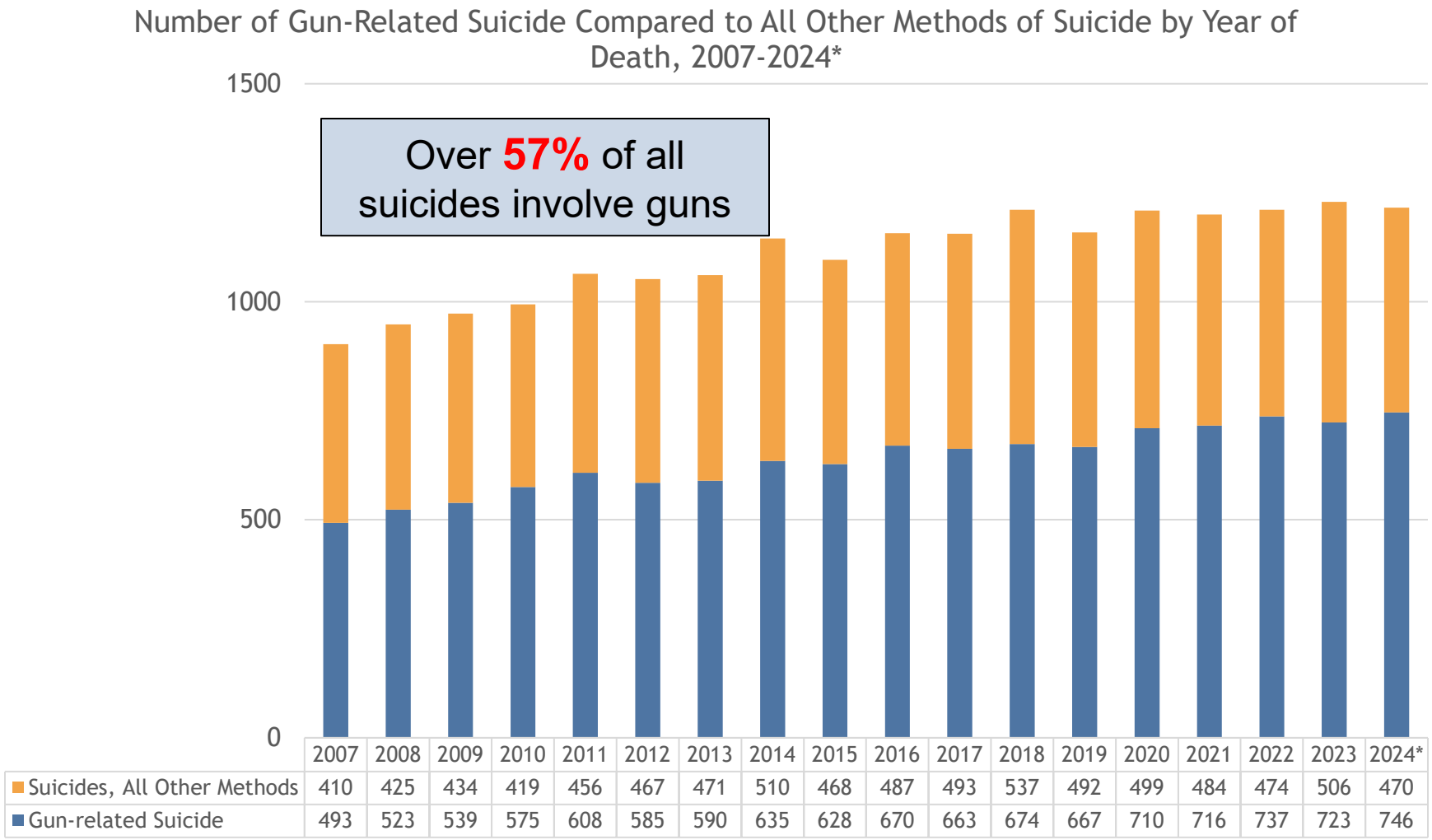
VA Gun-Related Deaths by Manner



	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024*
Accident	7	12	10	5	7	8	5	7	10	8	5	6	6	12	9	9	5	9
Homicide	325	264	287	280	242	236	244	254	286	374	352	348	353	458	509	563	511	418
Suicide	493	523	539	575	608	585	590	635	628	670	663	674	667	710	716	737	723	746
Undetermined	11	19	7	8	6	6	13	5	16	6	7	10	10	15	21	18	18	9

* Data for 2024 are preliminary and subject to change

Gun-Related Suicides vs All Other Methods of Suicide

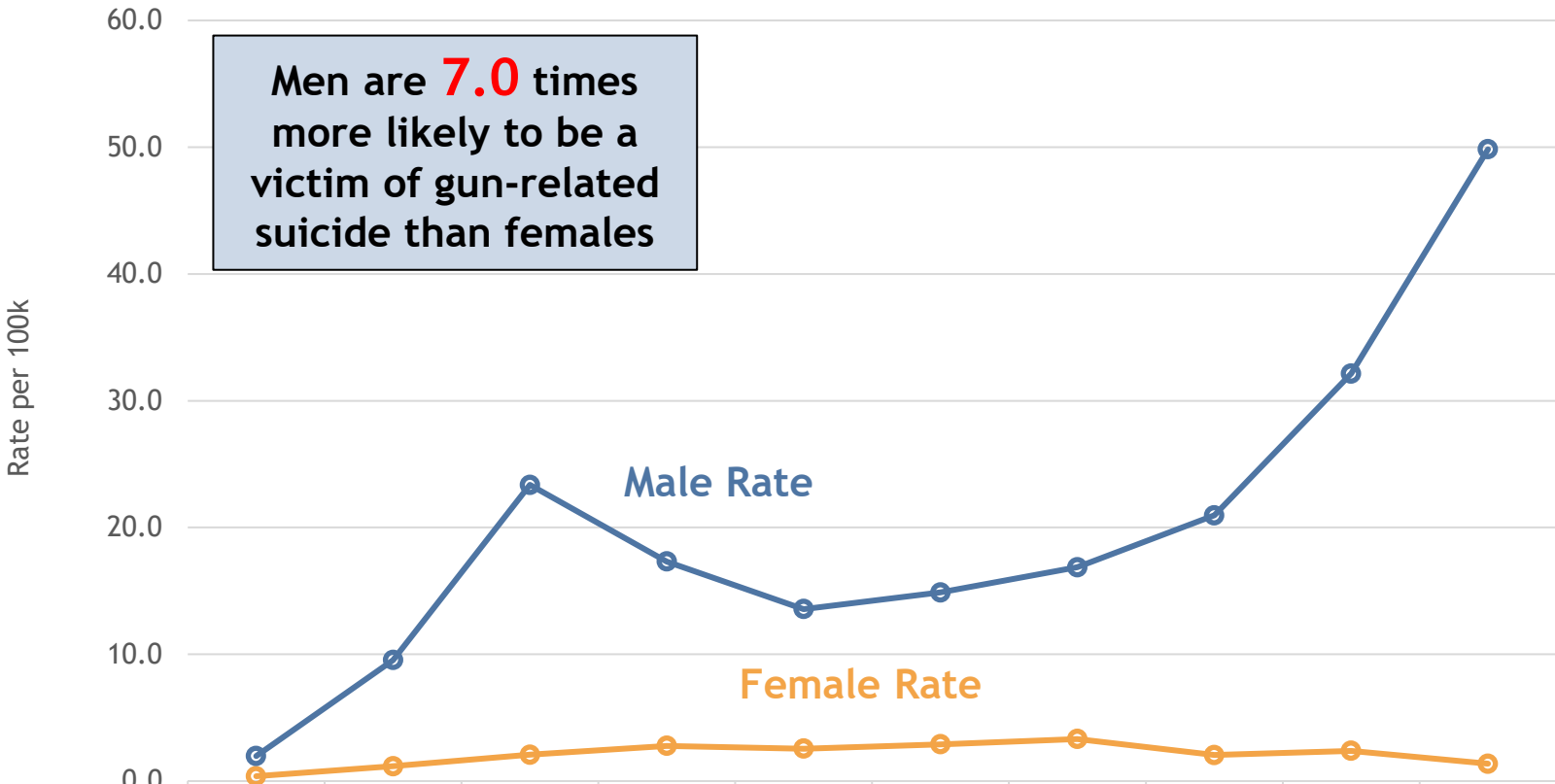


	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024*
Suicides, All Other Methods	410	425	434	419	456	467	471	510	468	487	493	537	492	499	484	474	506	470
Gun-related Suicide	493	523	539	575	608	585	590	635	628	670	663	674	667	710	716	737	723	746

* Data for 2024 are preliminary and subject to change

Gun-Related Suicide Demographics (Sex-Age)

Aggregated Five Year Rate of Gun-Related Suicide by Gender and Age Group, 2020 - 2024*

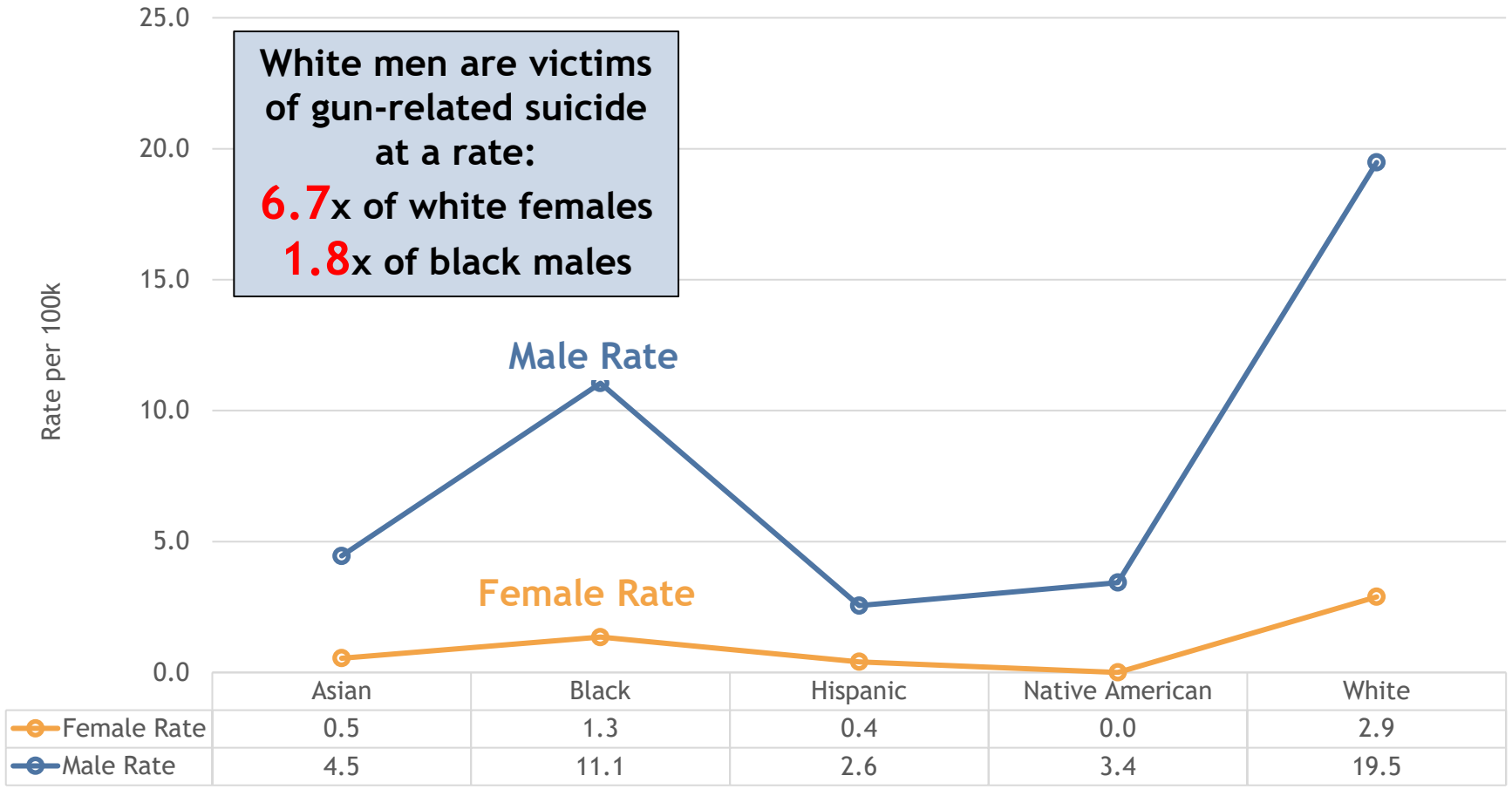


	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+
Female Rate	0.4	1.2	2.1	2.8	2.6	2.9	3.3	2.1	2.4	1.4
Male Rate	2.0	9.5	23.4	17.3	13.6	14.9	16.9	21.0	32.1	49.8

* Data for 2024 are preliminary and subject to change

Gun-Related Suicide Demographics (Sex-Race)

Aggregated Five Year Rate of Gun-Related Suicide by Sex and Race/Ethnicity, 2020 – 2024*



	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Native American	White
Female Rate	0.5	1.3	0.4	0.0	2.9
Male Rate	4.5	11.1	2.6	3.4	19.5

* Data for 2024 are preliminary and subject to change

Note: 'Other' race/ethnicity categories are excluded from this analysis due to unknown population denominators

Gun-Related Suicide #s by Locality of Residence

Annual Top Five Localities with Largest Number of Gun-Related Suicides by Locality of Residence and Year of Death, 2020 - 2024*

Locality of Residence	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024*	Average per Year
Fairfax County	44	35	45	42	58	44.8
Virginia Beach City	42	35	40	33	39	37.8
Chesterfield County	36	41	27	35	21	32.0
Out of State	33	31	33	28	33	31.6
Henrico County	23	26	30	15	29	24.6
Prince William County	14	33	13	26	23	21.8
Loudoun County	13	10	15	29	15	16.4
Spotsylvania County	9	7	16	11	25	13.6

Ranking
1st
2nd
3rd
4th
5th

* Data for 2024 are preliminary and subject to change

Gun-Related Suicide Rates per 100K by Locality of Residence

Annual Top Five Highest Rates of Gun-Related Suicide by Locality of Residence and Year of Death, 2020 - 2024*

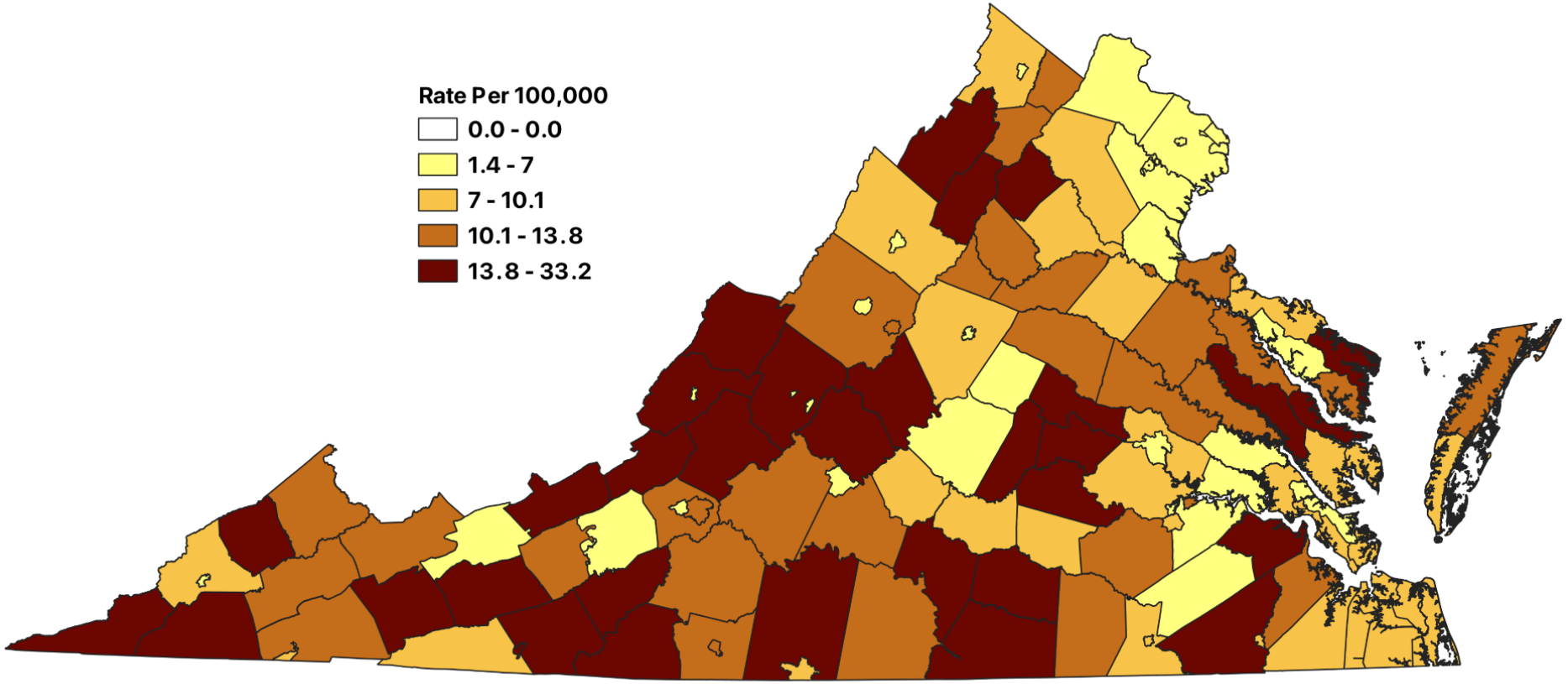
Locality of Residence	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024*	Aggregated Five-Year Rate (2020-2024*)
Galax City	63.5	30.0	29.7	29.8	14.9	33.2
King and Queen County	43.2	45.0	14.9	44.6	0.0	29.6
Middlesex County	37.8	37.1	27.4	9.2	36.6	29.6
Charlotte County	8.5	43.4	8.7	35.3	35.3	26.1
Dickenson County	28.4	21.7	14.6	44.0	0.0	21.8
Northumberland County	0.0	16.6	32.5	32.3	16.1	19.6
Rappahannock County	41.3	0.0	0.0	40.5	13.5	18.9
Craig County	39.4	41.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.3
Nelson County	6.8	0.0	20.5	13.6	40.8	16.3
Surry County	15.7	15.3	30.6	0.0	15.2	15.3
Lunenburg County	16.3	33.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	14.9
Floyd County	19.0	6.4	32.0	6.4	6.4	14.1
Warren County	2.5	9.8	16.9	4.8	31.1	13.1
Greene County	0.0	14.3	9.5	9.4	28.2	12.4
Norton City	0.0	0.0	27.7	0.0	0.0	5.5

Ranking
1st
2nd
3rd
4th
5th

Note: Many of the individual annual rates calculated by year in sparsely populated localities are often based on low case counts (1-4 deaths/year) and are thus, statistically unstable and unreliable for interpretation. Therefore, the top five aggregated five-year rates are more appropriate and stable to be used for the interpretation of gun-related suicide risk by residence.

* Data for 2024 are preliminary and subject to change. Rate calculations for 2024 use 2023 population estimates. At the time of this analysis, national rates from the US Census are not available for 2024.

Five Year Aggregated Rate of Gun-Related Suicide by Locality of Residency, 2020-2024

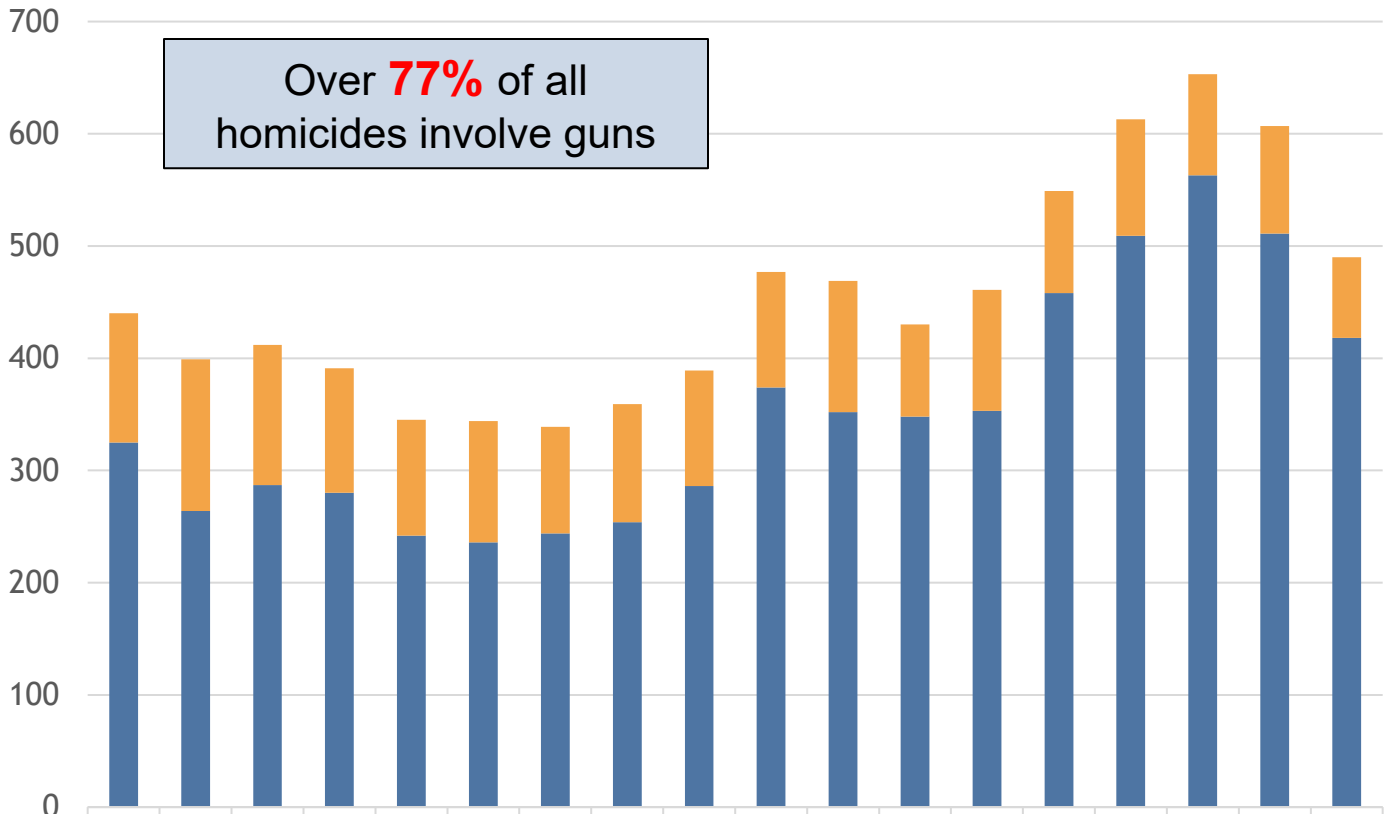


Source: Virginia Department of Health, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

* Rate ranges are based upon quartiles

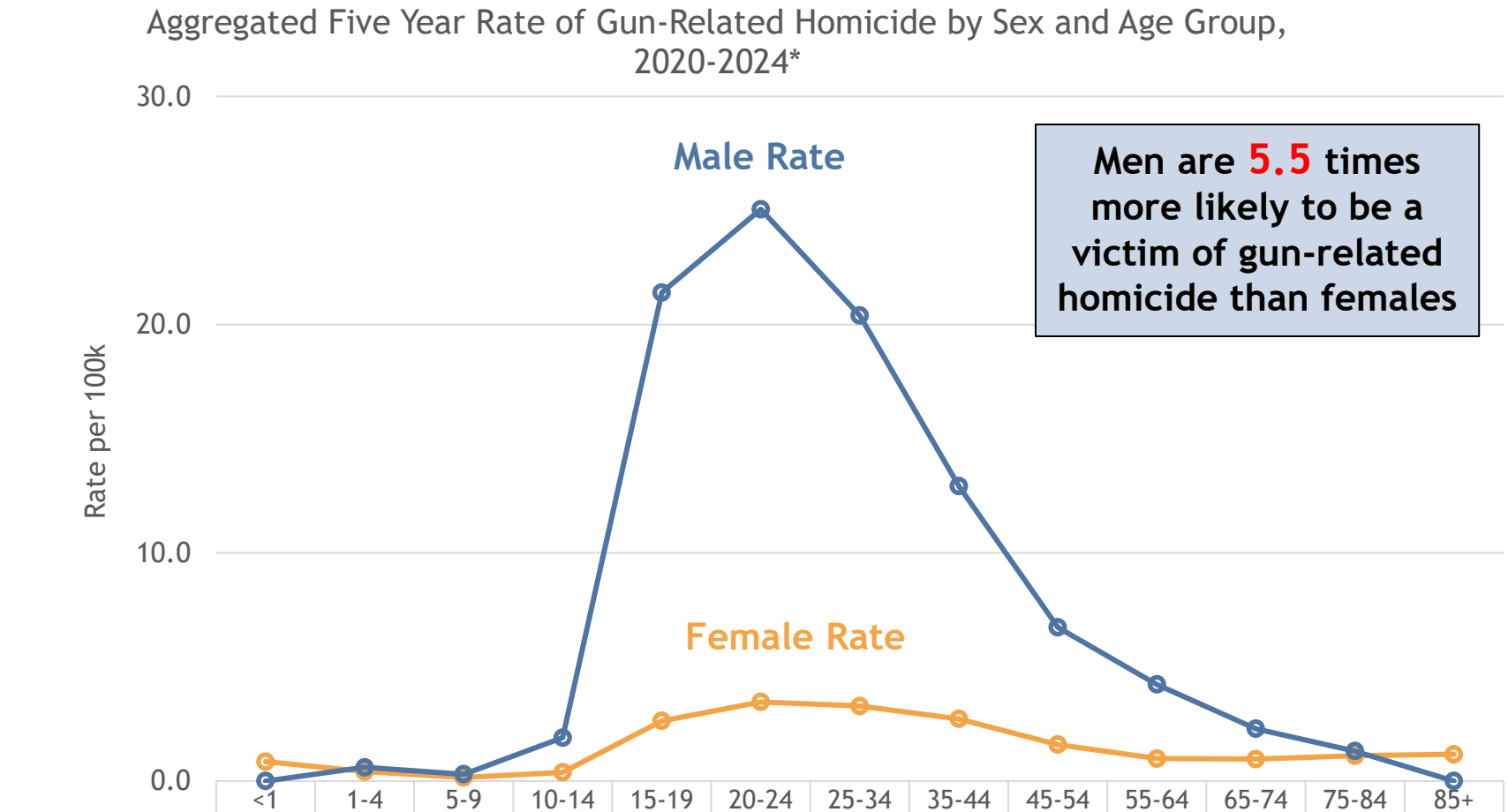
Gun-Related Homicides vs All Other Methods of Homicide

Number of Gun-Related Homicides Compared to All Other Methods of Homicide by Year of Death, 2007-2024*



	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024*
Homicides, All Other Methods	115	135	125	111	103	108	95	105	103	103	117	82	108	91	104	90	96	72
Gun-related Homicide	325	264	287	280	242	236	244	254	286	374	352	348	353	458	509	563	511	418

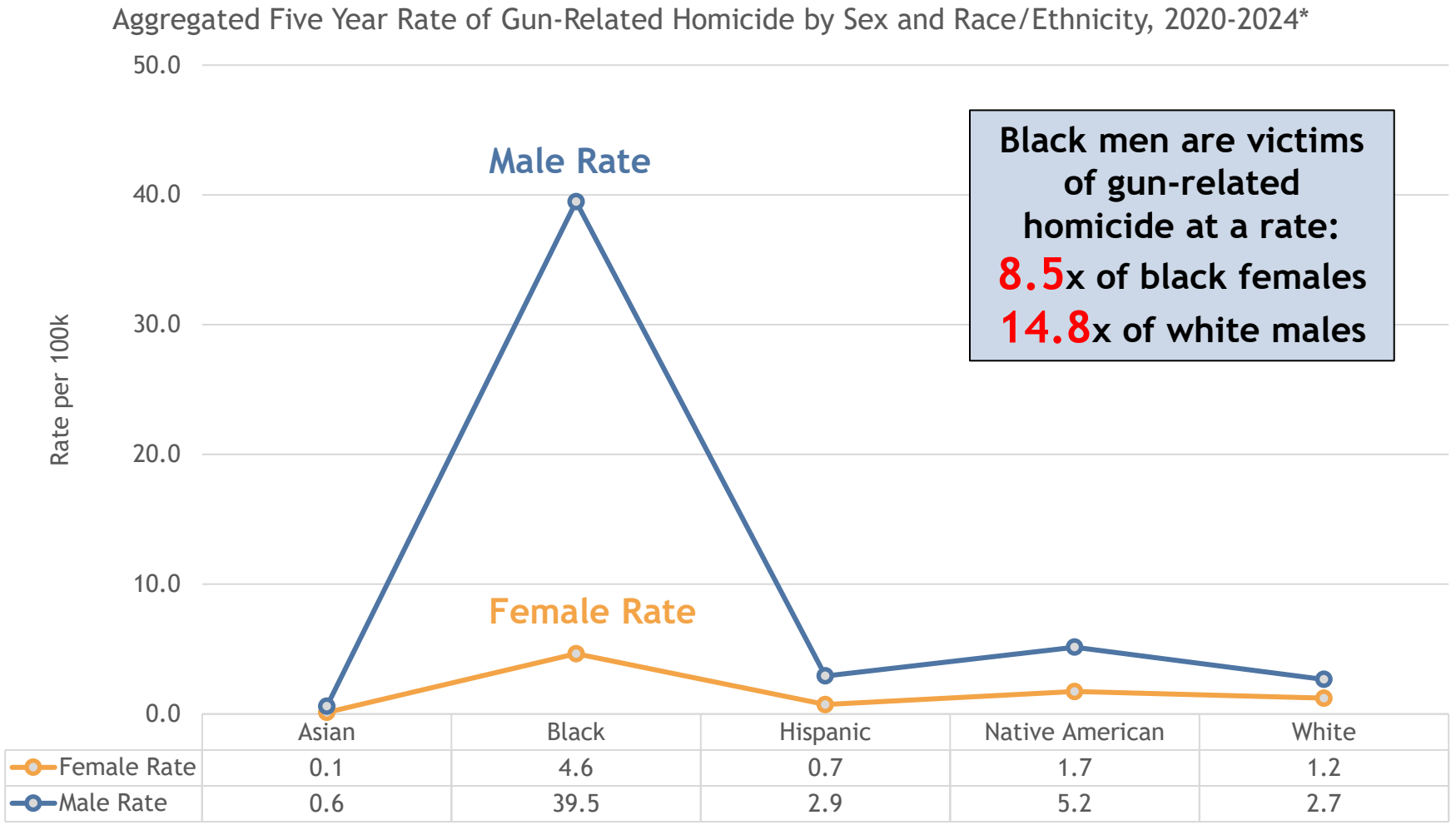
Gun-Related Homicide Demographics (Sex-Age)



	<1	1-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+
Female Rate	0.8	0.4	0.2	0.4	2.6	3.5	3.3	2.7	1.6	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.2
Male Rate	0.0	0.6	0.3	1.9	21.4	25.1	20.4	12.9	6.7	4.2	2.3	1.3	0.0

* Data for 2024 are preliminary and subject to change

Gun-Related Homicide Demographics (Sex-Race)



	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Native American	White
Female Rate	0.1	4.6	0.7	1.7	1.2
Male Rate	0.6	39.5	2.9	5.2	2.7

* Data for 2024 are preliminary and subject to change

Note: 'Other' race/ethnicity categories are excluded from this analysis due to unknown population denominators

Gun-Related Homicide #s by Locality of Event

Annual Top Five Localities with Largest Number of Gun-Related Homicides by Locality of Event (Shooting) and Year of Death, 2020-2024*

Locality of Event (Shooting)	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Average per Year
Richmond City	70	92	61	69	57	69.8
Norfolk City	45	59	60	33	32	45.8
Portsmouth City	29	34	39	34	32	33.6
Newport News City	22	25	23	43	27	28.0
Hampton City	23	28	21	28	15	23.0
Henrico County	16	23	23	25	22	21.8
Roanoke City	13	15	18	28	13	17.4
Prince William County	7	12	16	17	23	15.0

Ranking
1st
2nd
3rd
4th
5th

* Data for 2024 are preliminary and subject to change

Gun-Related Homicide Rates per 100K by Locality of Event

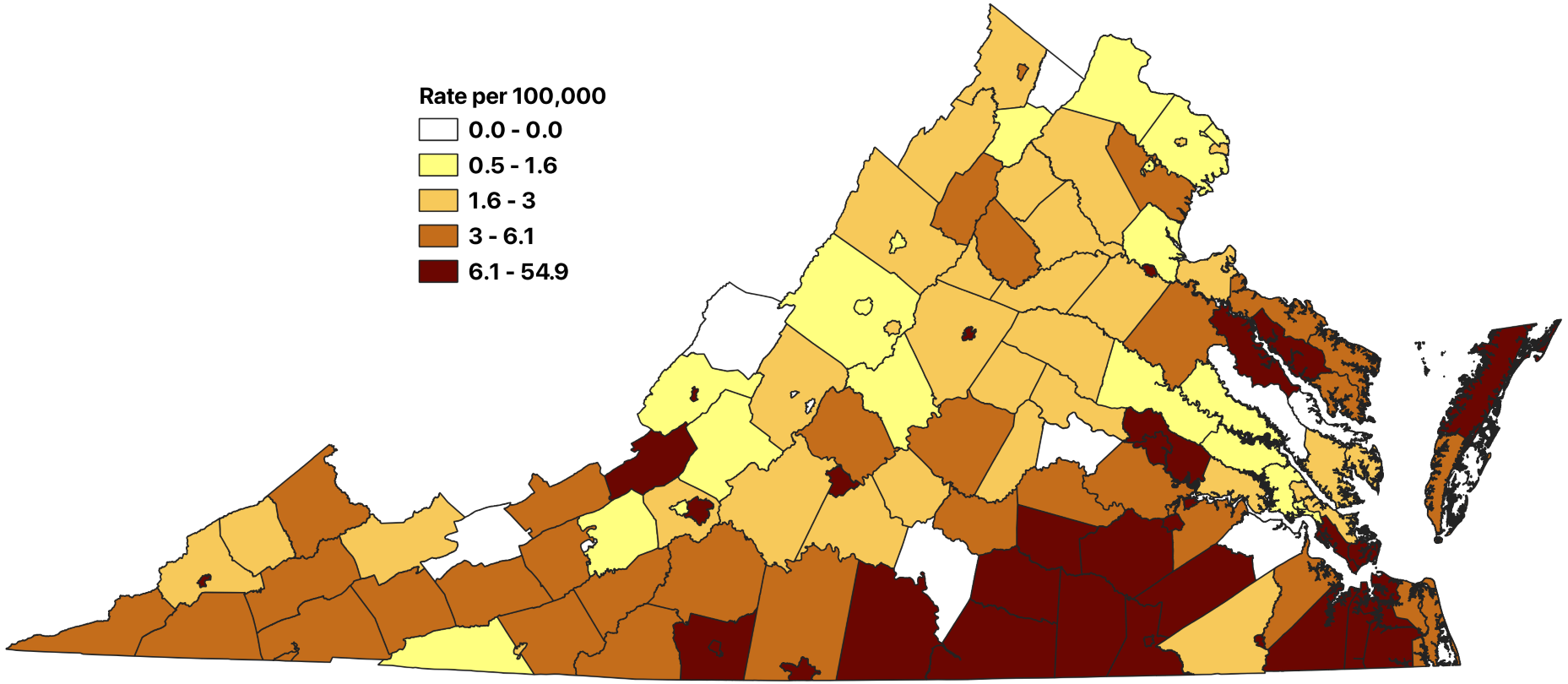
Locality of Event (Shooting)	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024*	Aggregated Five-Year Rate (2020-2024*)
Petersburg City	69.0	56.9	62.9	60.0	27.0	54.9
Portsmouth City	30.5	34.8	40.2	35.1	33.1	34.8
Richmond City	30.1	40.4	26.6	30.1	24.9	30.4
Emporia City	38.0	17.8	54.7	36.6	0.0	29.3
Hopewell City	26.8	13.0	39.2	35.2	26.4	28.1
Franklin City	25.5	24.6	24.3	24.0	12.0	22.0
Norfolk City	18.5	25.1	25.8	14.3	13.9	19.5
Covington City	17.7	0.0	70.4	0.0	0.0	17.8
Craig County	39.4	20.5	0.0	20.6	0.0	16.3
Norton City	0.0	0.0	55.4	0.0	0.0	11.0
Greensville County	8.9	8.8	0.0	9.0	26.9	10.7

Ranking
1st
2nd
3rd
4th
5th

Note: Many of the individual annual rates calculated by year in sparsely populated localities are often based on low case counts (1-4 deaths/year) and are thus, statistically unstable and unreliable for interpretation. Therefore, the top five aggregated five-year rates are more appropriate and stable to be used for the interpretation of gun-related homicide risk by injury locality.

* Data for 2024 are preliminary and subject to change. Rate calculations for 2024 use 2023 population estimates. At the time of this analysis, national rates from the US Census are not available for 2024.

Five Year Aggregated Rate of Gun-Related Homicide by Locality of Event, 2020-2024



Source: Virginia Department of Health, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

* Rate ranges are based upon quartiles

Key Points on Gun-Related Death in Virginia

- Rates of gun-related death in Virginia (all manners) are very similar to national rates of gun-related death
- The number of gun-related suicides are increasing slightly each year but the number of gun-related homicides decreased in 2023 and 2024
- Handguns were involved in 62% of gun-related homicides and nearly 85% of gun-related suicides
- Rates of gun-related suicide among men increase with age
- White men and Black men had the highest rates of gun-related suicide
- Black males and males age 20-24 years of age had the highest rates of gun-related homicide

Contact Information

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OCME Quarterly Drug Report: http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/medical-examiner/forensic-epidemiology/
Annual Reports: http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/medical-examiner/annual-reports/
Surveillance and Fatality Review links: http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/medical-examiner/fatality-review-surveillance-programs-reports/