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**Unintentional injury mortality rate remains steady;  
homicide mortality rate declines in Multnomah County**  
*Unintentional injury mortality rates similar in Multnomah County, Oregon and the U.S.*

Unintentional injury is the leading cause of death among adolescents, the second leading cause of death among children and is one of the top five leading causes of death among adults in Multnomah County. Unintentional injury deaths are considered accidental. The most frequent causes are motor vehicle accidents, poisoning, fires, drowning, and falls. Unintentional injury mortality rates are similar for Multnomah County, Oregon and the United States.

According to a new report issued by Multnomah County Health Department, "Multnomah County: Unintentional Injury, Violence, and Premature Death":

- African American and Hispanic unintentional injury death rates declined significantly between the 1991-1995 and 2001-2005 periods. The African American rate declined from 49 per 100,000 to 34 per 100,000 and the Hispanic rate declined from 42 per 100,000 to 25 per 100,000.
- In recent years, rates of death due to unintentional injury for African Americans (34 per 100,000) and Hispanics (25 per 100,000) have been lower than rates for White non-Hispanics (38 per 100,000).
- Rates of motor vehicle-related deaths have declined by 19% in Multnomah County between 1991 and 2005. The decline was seen in all racial and ethnic groups.
- Over three-quarters of the unintentional injury deaths due to falls were among adults age 75 years and older in 2001-2005.

In Multnomah County homicide rates have been consistently higher among African Americans than among other race/ethnicities; however, the rate among African Americans has declined more than 50% since the early 1990s, from a high of 46 per 100,000 in 1991-1995 to 17 per 100,000 in 2001-2005.

According to Multnomah County Health Department Director Lillian Shirley, "The declining homicide rates for African American and Hispanic populations is very good news, as is the decline in motor vehicle-related deaths. Public health will continue to examine how public policy and education can influence unintentional injury deaths."

The full report is available online at: [http://www.co.multnomah.or.us/health/hra/health\\_mc.shtml](http://www.co.multnomah.or.us/health/hra/health_mc.shtml)

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