

# Santa Clara County Revises Official COVID-19 Death Toll Down by 22 Percent

By [Maria Medina](#) July 2, 2021 at 11:26 pm Filed Under: [Coronavirus](#), [COVID-19](#), [San Jose News](#), [Santa Clara County](#)

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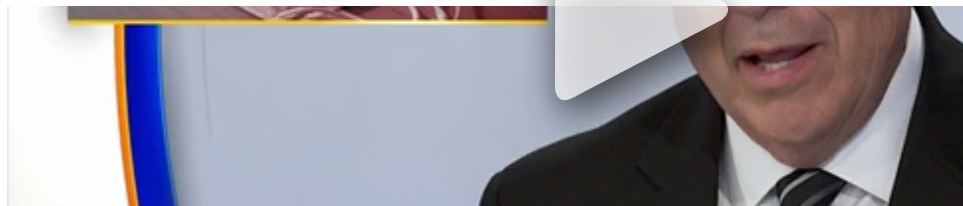
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SAN JOSE (KPIX) – On Friday, Santa Clara County health leaders announced a drop in its COVID-19 death toll by nearly a quarter after it refined its approach in reporting the data.

The county reported that it had reviewed each COVID-19 fatality and was only counting those whose cause of death was from the virus and not those who tested positive for COVID-19 at the time of death but did not necessarily die from the virus.

The new approach meant that the death toll dropped by 22%, specifically from 2,201 to 1,696 deaths.

“It is important to go back and do this accounting to see if COVID was actually the cause of death,” said University of California San Francisco Prof. of Medicine and Infectious Disease expert Dr.

Monica Gandhi. “I think that transparent communication is an upside, I mean, in the sense that it’s true that if we did this across the nation, it would bring our death rate lower. A downside of that, could be that people will say, ‘Well, it wasn’t as serious as you said.’”

The refined approach in Santa Clara County comes as county officials try to figure out the true impact of the virus on the community. Last month, Alameda County health leaders refined their approach to reporting COVID-19 deaths as well and also registered a drop in that county’s death toll by about a quarter.

“In the midst of everything COVID people were sort of putting down that cause of death as COVID,” Gandhi said. “It is important to go back and do this accounting to see if COVID was actually the cause of death.”

Gandhi believes the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention may soon ask all counties to do the same as Alameda and Santa Clara Counties and that the nation could also see a drop in its COVID-19 death toll.

She also said she believes the lower, newer numbers may actually encourage people to get vaccinated.

“Because a lot of people have kind of said, ‘I’ve heard people are dying anyway of COVID what’s the point?’ and it is very important to say, ‘No, did they die of COVID or were they in the hospital for something else and they died of that?’” Gandhi said. “That helps people say, ‘Oh, the risk of breakthrough infection is so low I want to go ahead and get vaccinated.’ So I think it’s very good for vaccine hesitancy.”



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