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COVID-19 now a leading cause of death in Ohio, HPIO analysis finds

(COLUMBUS, Ohio) -- **Analysis** of Ohio COVID-19 data by the Health Policy Institute of Ohio found that the virus ranks among the leading causes of death in the state in 2020.

According to Ohio Department of Health data, 3,668 Ohioans have died with COVID-19 between March 17, the date the first death was reported, and Aug. 8. Except for heart disease and cancer, more Ohioans have died with COVID-19 in 2020 than all other leading causes of death during the same 21-week period in 2018, the most recent year for which death data is available.

The total number of Ohioans who have died with COVID-19 in less than five months would rank as the eighth leading cause of death for the entire year of 2018, higher than Influenza, kidney disease, suicide and three times higher than motor vehicle fatalities.

"The long-term health impacts of this pandemic are daunting," said HPIO President Amy Rohling McGee. "Addressing the pandemic's many economic, social and health consequences requires accurate data, action based on the best available research evidence and strong collaboration between state and local-level partners across the public and private sectors."

To combat the spread of COVID-19, Ohio has steadily increased the number of daily COVID-19 tests administered. On April 1, Ohio conducted 2,939 tests. That number increased to 20,978 on July 1, for a rate of 174 per 100,000 population. However, according to an estimate by the Harvard Global Health Institute, 355 tests per 100,000 people would be needed to slow the spread of the virus. Given Ohio's population, that would mean conducting about 41,500 tests per day, nearly double the current rate of testing.

As of Aug. 8, about half of COVID-19 cases were among adults ages 30-59 (45.9%). The majority of hospital admissions (58.6%) and deaths (90.6%) were among adults ages 60 and older. The median age of Ohioans with COVID-19 has decreased from 51 to 42 over the last three months. Cases have been detected in all 88 Ohio counties.

Click here to read the data brief. For any questions about the brief, or If you would like to talk the authors, please call or text Nick Wiselogel at 614.530.9918 or email **nwiselogel@hpio.net**.

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