



Surveillance of the Deaths of People Experiencing Homelessness in Toronto

**presented by
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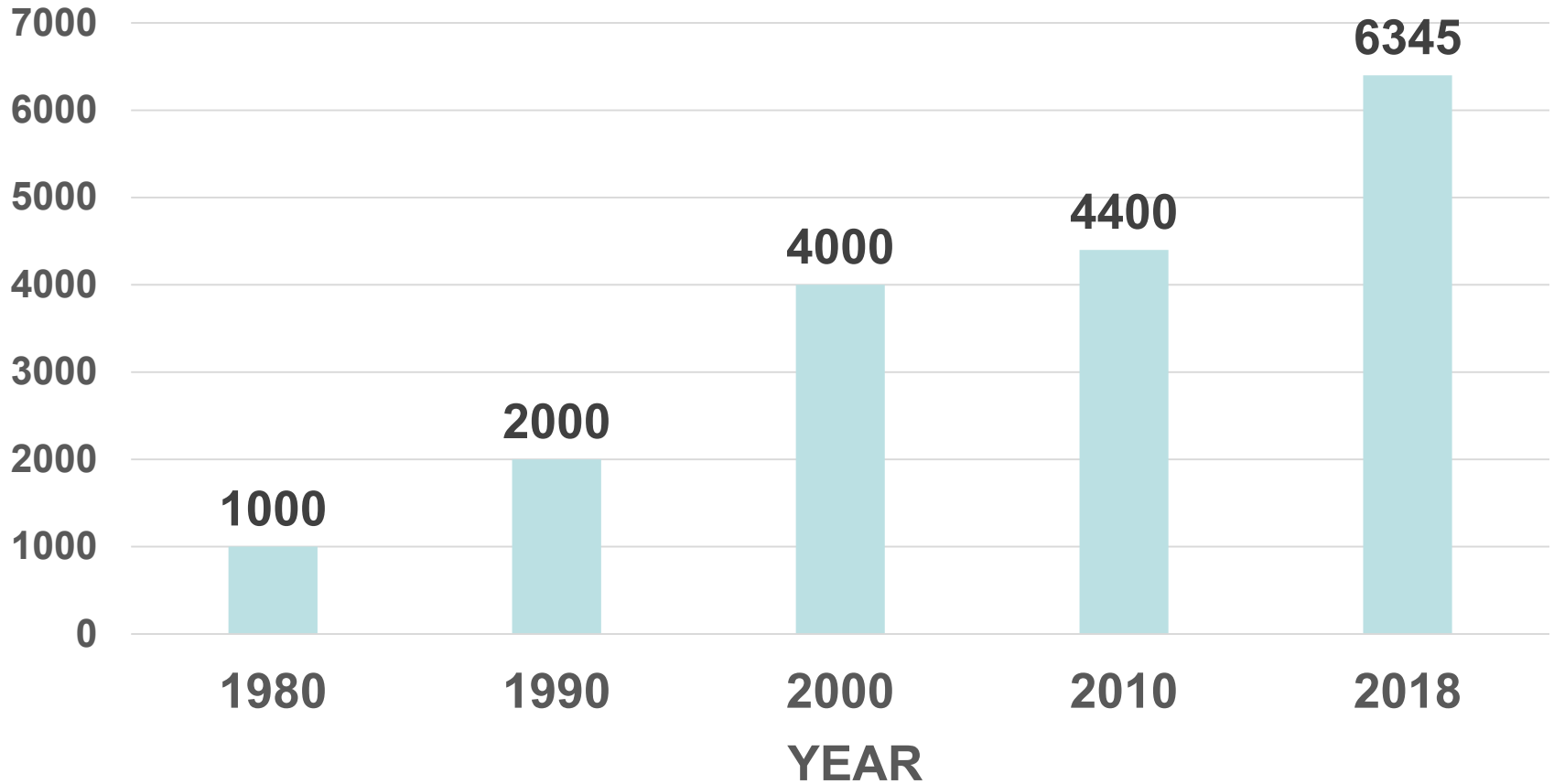
Third Annual Homeless Data-Sharing Initiative

Calgary, Alberta

May 28, 2018

BACKGROUND (Cont'd)

Toronto Nightly Shelter Occupancy





MOTION TO CONDUCT SURVEILLANCE OF DEATHS OF HOMELESS PEOPLE IN TORONTO

- **On Feb. 21, 2016, Toronto Star article “Ontario’s Uncounted Homeless Dead”**
- **On April 1, 2016, citing the Toronto Star article, City Council directed appropriate city staff to
“Collect all relevant data related to the deaths of homeless individuals for occurrences within and outside homeless shelters”**

- **Literature review**
- **Community Consultations with:**
 - **Toronto Shelter Support and Housing Admin.**
 - **Toronto Homeless Memorial Volunteers**
 - **Drop-in Centres**
 - **Needle Exchange Sites**
 - **Hospitals**
 - **Community Health Centres**
 - **Outreach teams**
 - **Religious Institutions**
 - **People who have experienced homelessness**⁴

- **Networks for communications**
- **Enthusiasm from front line workers**
- **Hospitals**
 - **Health Information Custodians**
 - **One size will not fit all.**
 - **Possible approaches:**
 - **Hospital social workers**
 - **Morgue Staff**
 - **Flagging homeless patients on admission**
 - **Chart Reviews**

- **Community based project feasible**
 - **Based on Toronto birth count of homeless women**
 - **REF: Shah et al, Paediatrics & Child Health, 2017**
 - **Over 200 agencies/programs agreed to be ‘sentinels’**
 - **Use Canadian definition of homelessness, which includes a continuum of circumstances**
 - **REF: <http://ontario.cmha.ca/news/new-canadian-definition-of-homelessness-published>**

- Reports submitted through CheckMarket.com
- Checked for duplication.
- Shared with the coroners' office.
- Entered in secure Excel data base
- Results posted quarterly in 2017 on website.

<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/health-wellness-care/health-inspections-monitoring/monitoring-deaths-of-homeless-people/>

Information collected

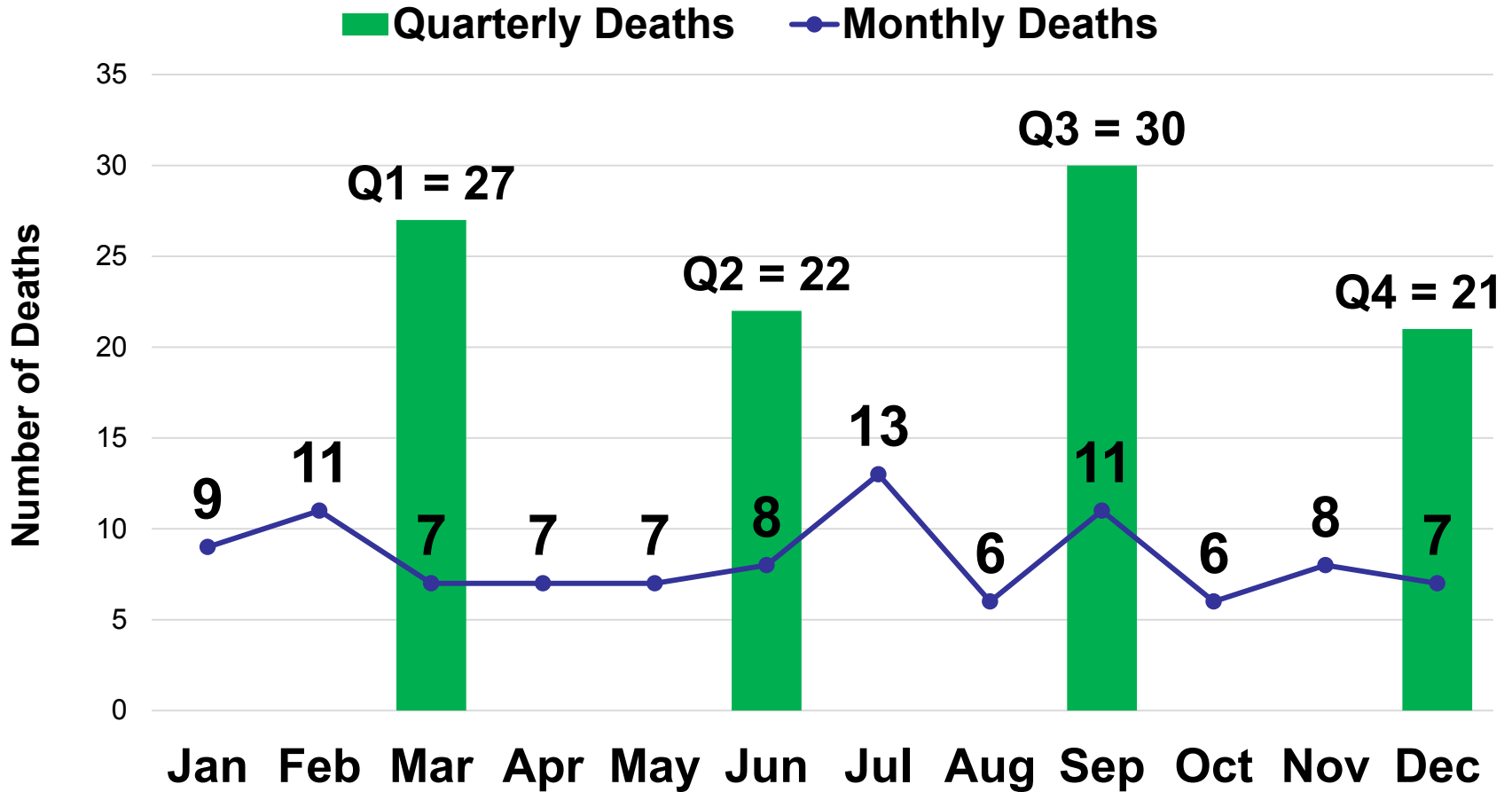
- Demographics – name or nicknames, age, gender, Indigenous status
- Descriptors of Death – Date, Address, Place, Cause
- Known health challenges
- Agencies Used by the deceased
- Reporter Contact Information Known
- Homeless history
- Reporter contact information
- Any other information you want to share

QUESTION ON HOUSING HISTORY

Over the past few months the deceased....

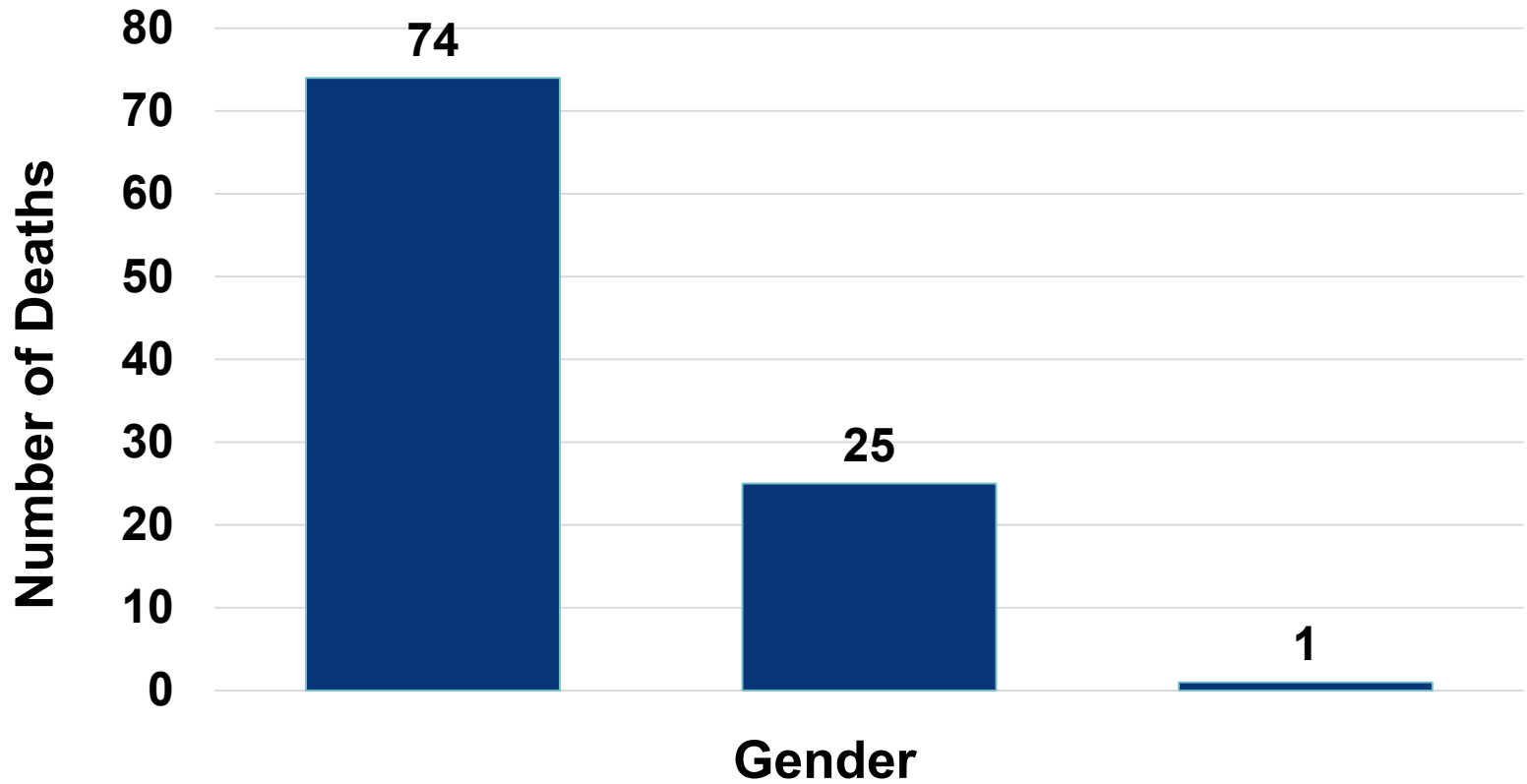
- Was a shelter resident at time of death
- Sometimes had housing with family/friends
- Sometimes had other housing
- Sometimes slept on the street/outdoors
- Sometimes used Out of the Cold Program
- Unknown
- Other _____

RESULTS – 2017 DEATHS by MONTH/QUARTER



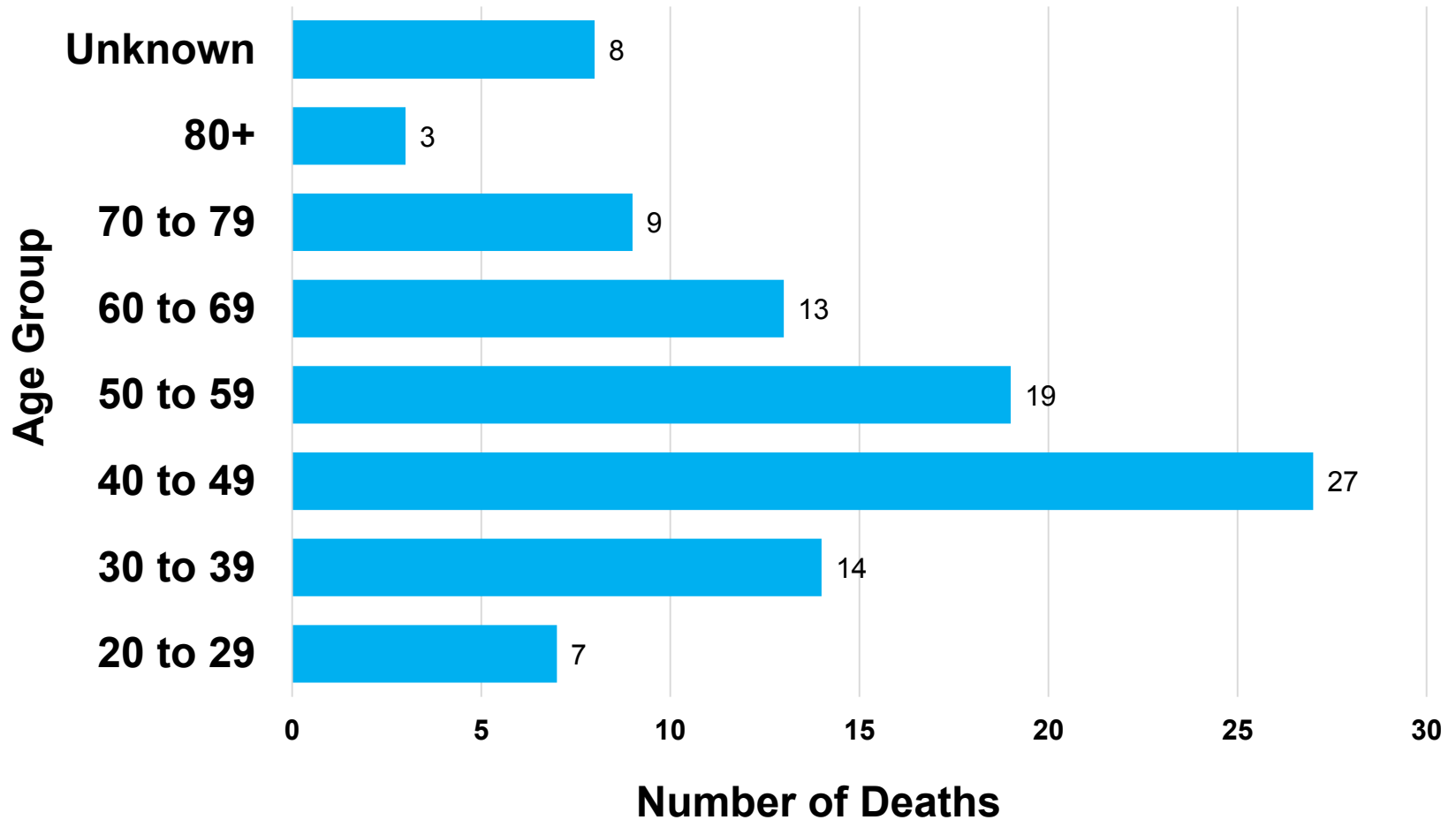
TOTAL of 100 DEATHS
2017

RESULTS – 2017 DEATHS BY GENDER



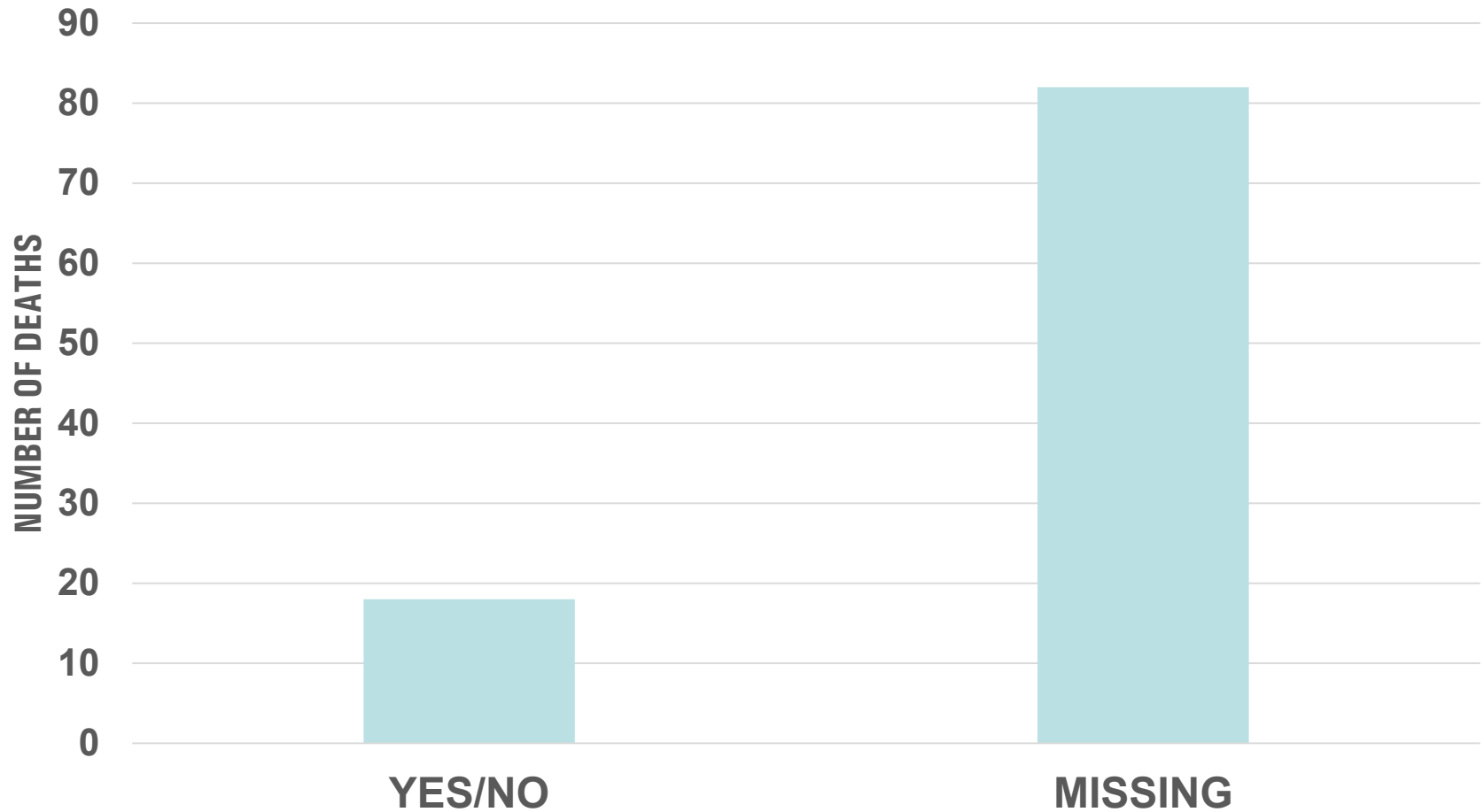
TOTAL of 100 DEATHS
2017

RESULTS – 2017 DEATHS by AGE



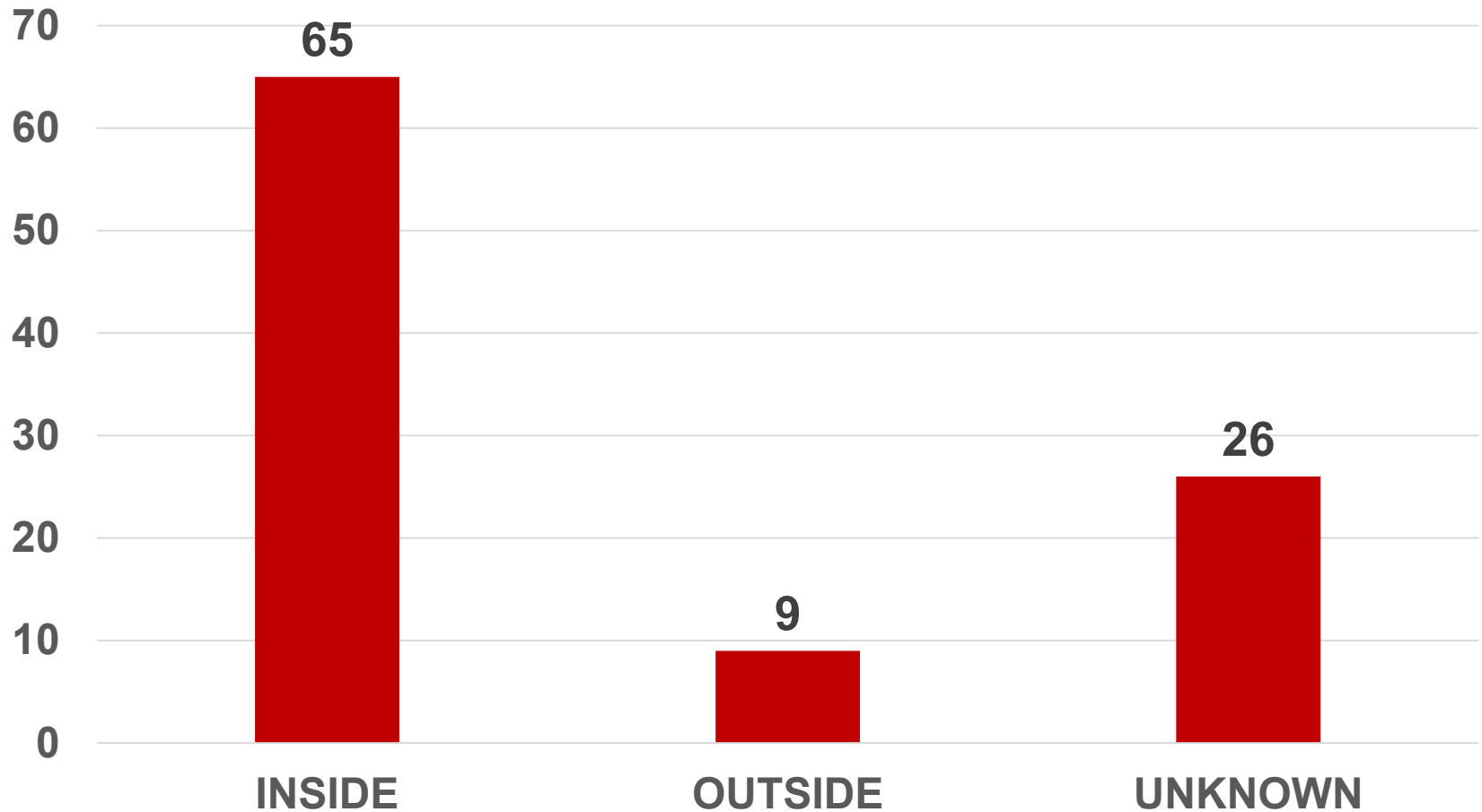
TOTAL of 100 DEATHS

RESULTS – 2017 DEATHS by INDIGENOUS STATUS



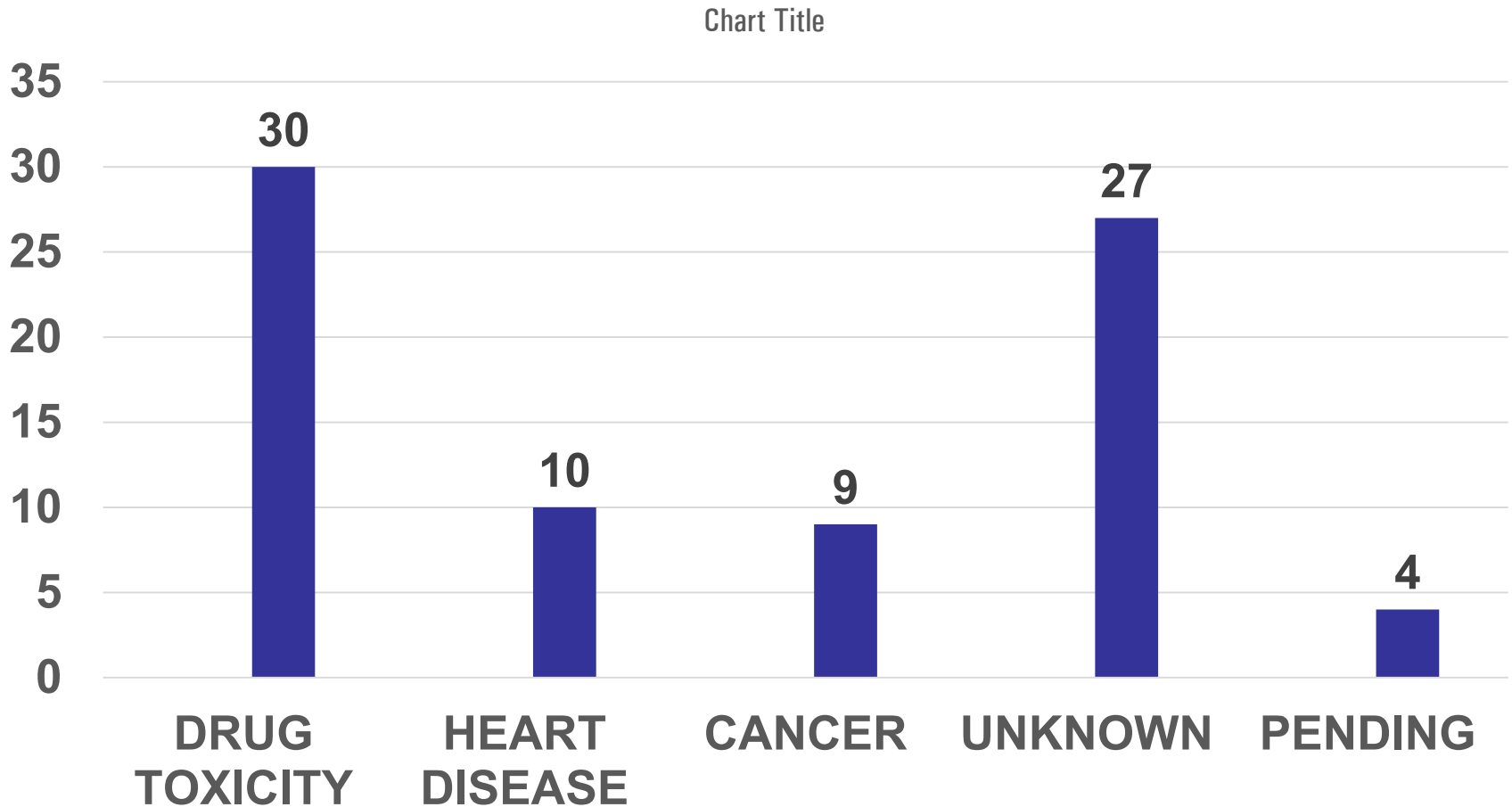
**TOTAL of 100 DEATHS
2017**

RESULTS – 2017 DEATHS by INSIDE VS OUTSIDE



TOTAL of 100 DEATHS
2017

RESULTS – 2017 DEATHS by MAJOR CAUSE





REFLECTIONS

- Data emphasize need to support homeless people with chronic illnesses
- Continue to monitor, validate, assess and report data
- Provide ongoing, timely support to participating agencies
- Continue to work toward adding hospitals, VAW shelters, respite centres
- Knowledge sharing