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### **LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH**

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In 2010, the Office of Vital Records (OVR) of the Arizona Department of Health Services implemented the new (2003) Standard U.S. death certificate. The new certificate added several new questions: 1) whether tobacco use contributed to the death, and 2) whether, if the decedent was a female, the death was "pregnancy-associated" (defined as death from any cause during pregnancy or within one calendar year of delivery or pregnancy termination).

The death certificate now includes a new classification of the decedent's racial/ethnic status, consistent with the revised federal standards for collecting and reporting racial and ethnic status. These standards were published in the Federal Register on October 30, 1997, as "Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity". The revised standards are available on the OMB (the Office of Management and Budget) web-site at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg/ombdir15.html>

There are now 15 racial categories (including Guamanian or Chamorro; Samoan or Native Hawaiian) to choose from. It is also permitted to indicate more than one race for a decedent. In 2013, among the 49,929 deaths of Arizona residents, indication of "two or more races" appeared on only 398 certificates. The total number of deaths for decedents identified as Native Hawaiian was 15. To create frequency counts of race and ethnicity that were adequate to compute statistically reliable mortality rates, race was "bridged", or essentially collapsed into 5 categories; White non-Hispanic, Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Native American, and Asian or Pacific Islander. When an individual was identified as both Hispanic and any other race, that person was added to the racial/ethnic group with the lowest population. For example, a person identified as both White and Hispanic would be coded as Hispanic, where a person identified as American Indian and Hispanic would be coded as American Indian. Please refer to the technical appendix for further explanation of the racial bridging used in this report.