



OCTOBER 2019 COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

Loverine Butler, the County’s First Woman Coroner Field Investigator Dies

Loverine Doreatha Butler, the first woman coroner’s field investigator in California and believed to be first in the nation, has died at the age of 91.

Butler was born January 13, 1928 in Love County, Oklahoma. She attended Langston University in Oklahoma before moving to San Francisco in 1945, where she graduated from San Francisco College of Mortuary Science in 1949. She later attended Rio Hondo College in Whittier, where she majored in police science.

A resident of Long Beach at the time of her death, Butler is survived by a grandson and eight great-grandchildren.



After the retirement of Dr. Theodore J. Curphey as Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner, Dr. Thomas T. Noguchi was appointed to head the Los Angeles County Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner in 1967 and left the office in 1983. During their tenures, the office began to reclassify the job of trained mortuary personnel. These staff members were engaged in the removal of coroner cases from the field. They also worked with law enforcement, contacted the next of kin, and gathered pertinent information on the terminal circumstances of the death, medical, and social history. They were then tasked to provide a written report to the deputy medical examiner, who conducted the autopsy/investigation on the decedent. They transported decedents to the Hall of Justice, assisted medical examiners at the autopsy table, took photographs, etc. They became the invaluable eyes and ears for the office of the Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner. This medical examiner-coroner investigator job reclassification program began in 1965 and later became a permanent civil service item for the County of Los Angeles. On July 1, 1965, seven mortuary personnel successfully passed the civil service requirements and were reclassified as coroner investigators.

Noguchi, as chief medical examiner–coroner, insisted a female staff member such as Loverine Butler could be appointed to be a coroner investigator. In the beginning, there were concerns for the coroner investigator’s safety as she would often be alone during field calls at any hour of the day or night and was required to make arrangements for removal of the body from the scene. However, all who worked alongside Butler knew that she could handle many different situations with great skill and assisted families as a professional, garnering her many accolades. Noguchi was certain that Butler was capable of doing the job just as well, if not better, than her colleagues. She was also one of the few coroner investigator candidates who had a college degree, and in 1974, Butler received her appointment as field investigator. At the time, Jet Magazine said it was believed she was the first woman in the nation appointed to such a post.

Investigator Butler met her expectations and handled her assignments well. She later became senior investigator and was assigned to dispatch as a shift leader. Butler retired in 1991 after 33 years of service to the County, the first 11 years in Health Services and the remaining 22 with the Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner. After her retirement, she continued to support the office during the tenure of Dr. Lakshmanan Sathyavagiswaran.

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Calendar of Events

Center Theatre Group

(213) 628-2772

www.centertheatregroup.org

Ahmanson Theatre

Through November 24 – The New One

December 3 through January 5 – Matthew Bourne’s Swan Lake

Kirk Douglas Theatre

January 17 through February 23 – Until the Flood

March 18 through April 19 – Block Party 2020

Mark Taper Forum

November 22 through December 29 – August Wilson’s Jitney

January 12 through February 16 – What the Constitution Means to Me

Ford Theatres

(323) 461-3673

www.fordtheatres.org

November 2 – Artist Residency: She/Her: Memory Trace

November 9 – Michael Keegan-Dolan/Teac Damsa: Loch na hEala (Swan Lake)

Grand Park

(213) 972-8080

www.grandparkla.org

Every Tuesday through Thursday – Lunch a la Park Food Trucks

Every Wednesday and Friday – Lunch a la Park Yoga reTreat

November 1 – Selena for Sanctuary

Hollywood Bowl

(323) 850-2000

www.hollywoodbowl.com

November 2 – Sara Bareilles

November 8 and November 9 – Disney Pixar Coco - A Live-to-Film

Concert Experience

Visit <http://hr.lacounty.gov> for information on employment opportunities with the County of Los Angeles



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October is Disability Awareness Month

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Submissions to the DIGEST may be edited or otherwise altered for clarity.

Check out the DIGEST at:

<http://hr.lacounty.gov/about-the-county/>

Suicide Prevention

Suicide is the act of taking one's life by inflicting self-directed injuries with the intent to die. Suicide rates have increased in nearly every state from 1999 through 2016, according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), with half of the states increased by more than 30%.

Moreover, the number of adults who have seriously thought about harming themselves and made plans or taken actions has been rising. Suicide has become the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S.

Presently, suicide is considered a public health issue that affects people of all races, genders, ages, and ethnicities. People who have attempted suicide have used different methods with the most common being firearms among men, and poisoning among women.

Given the high prevalence of suicidal thoughts, it is important to be aware of the warning signs and risk factors in order to offer assistance as soon as possible. These **warning signs** include:

- Talking about wanting to die or wanting to kill themselves
- Talking about feeling empty, hopeless, or having no reason to live
- Planning or looking for a way to kill themselves, such as searching online, stockpiling pills, or acquiring potentially lethal items
- Talking about great guilt or shame
- Talking about feeling trapped or feeling that there are no solutions
- Feeling unbearable pain, both physical and emotional
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Using alcohol or drugs more often
- Acting anxious or agitated
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Changing eating and/or sleeping habits
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Taking risks that could lead to death, such as reckless driving
- Talking or thinking about death often
- Suddenly changing from very sad to very calm or happy
- Giving away important possessions
- Saying goodbye to friends and family
- Putting affairs in order; making a will

Approximately 41% of people who commit suicide have a mental health condition; however, there are other **risk factors** as well such as: serious physical conditions and pain, continuous stress from harassment and bullying, recent financial changes or job loss, stressful life events (for example,

divorce or other life transitions), finding out about or seeing another person's suicide or hearing sensationalized accounts of suicide, access to lethal means, a family history of suicide, and childhood abuse or trauma.

Suicide may be prevented through strategies that empower the person, families, and communities. On an individual basis, other than removing the means and being patient; it is significant for each of us to be able to talk openly, honestly, and calmly to the person who is exhibiting warning signs. Several **action steps** are recommended for communicating with someone who may be suicidal:

ASK

Inquiring "Are you thinking about suicide?" does not "plant the seed" in the person's mind; it can possibly reduce it, and it communicates that you can speak about emotional pain and suicide in a non-judgmental and direct manner. Other questions are, "How can I help?" and "How do you hurt?" Even if the person asks you, do not ever promise to keep their suicidal thoughts confidential. In addition to asking, always listen, since this is the pathway to finding out about potential reasons for staying alive, as well as reasons that they are in emotional pain. You can help them focus on **their** reasons to stay alive.

KEEP THEM SAFE

After discovering that the person is talking about suicide, there are a few other questions that you want to ask in order to establish the imminence and severity of the danger the person poses to themselves, since proper actions need to be taken to keep them safe. You want to find out if they have already done anything to attempt harming themselves prior to their disclosure to you. Do they have a specific and detailed plan? What type of access do they have to the means to put their plan in to action? When the person has put more steps in place, the severity of risk increases, and it would signify that they are more likely to go through with the plan.

BE THERE

Given that "connectedness" is a protective component; being there for someone with thoughts of suicide may help alleviate some of the feelings of loneliness, helplessness, and hopelessness while showing support for the person. If you are either unable to commit or not able to follow through on being present, it is best to not make any promises. It would be more important at that point to generate ideas for others who may be able to step in to support the individual.

HELP THEM CONNECT

Assisting the person in connecting with safety nets such as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and other resources is critical. Make a list of individuals that they can contact

SUICIDE PREVENTION

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when a crisis occurs, including those who are currently serving as part of their support network. For example, that list can entail the mental health professional whom they are currently seeing, or have seen in the past, as well as some of the mental health resources in their community. Additional resources include:

- The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health 's ACCESS hotline available 24/7 at 800-854-7771;
- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline has trained crisis workers available 24/7 who can be reached at 800-273-8255;
- The Crisis Text Line (741741) has been put in place for those who prefer to communicate via written messages;
- My3app – a safety planning and crisis intervention application that is easily stored on one's smartphone and can assist in developing support;
- Teen Line 800-852-8336;
- The Los Angeles County Department of Human Resources, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers counseling and referrals to all County employees, and appointments can be scheduled by calling 213-738-4200;
- Primary care physicians, advice nurses, and crisis mental health assistants whose services are offered through insurance carriers can also serve as another resource.

If you cannot develop a plan, and a suicide attempt is imminent, seek outside emergency help from the local hospital, mental health clinic, or call 911.

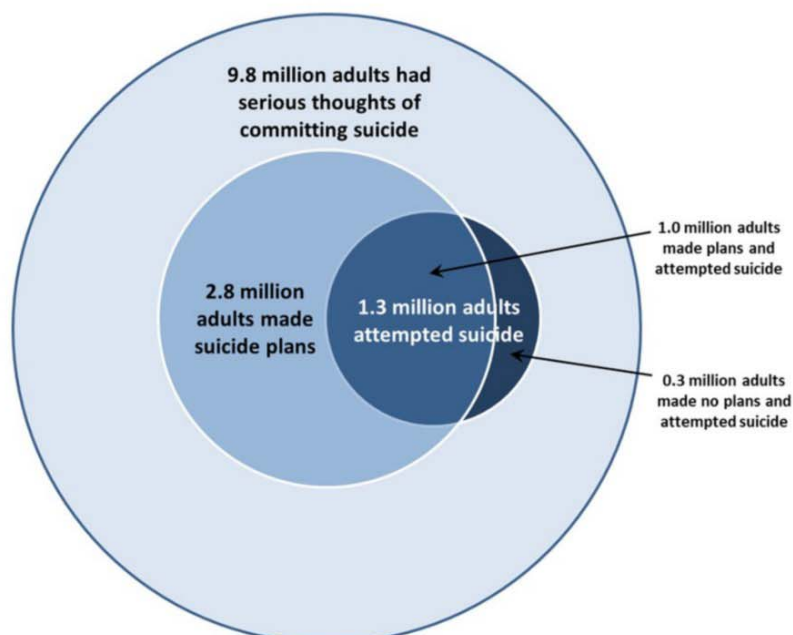
FOLLOW UP

After you have aided the individual in connecting with those who can provide immediate and ongoing support, in order to increase the feelings of connectedness, it would be appropriate to follow up with the individual via a phone call or text to check in and determine how they are doing and fulfill any other plans that you have told them you can do. Several studies have shown that with high risk populations when there was follow-up after their discharge from acute care services, there was a reduction of deaths by suicide.

In order to obtain more information, the following resources are available: www.BeThe1To.com; <https://afsp.org>; <https://www.nami.org>; <https://save.org>; National Action for Suicide Prevention; National Library of Medicine—Suicide; National Strategy for suicide prevention; National Institute of Mental Health Suicide Prevention; StopBullying.gov; American Association of Suicidology; Centers for Disease Control Suicide Prevention; and Los Angeles County Youth Suicide Prevention Project.

Past Year Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors Among U.S. Adults (2017)

Data Courtesy of SAMHSA



Recovery

For the past 30 years, each September, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has been sponsoring and celebrating National Recovery Month, in observance of millions of Americans who are in recovery from substance use and mental illness disorders. This celebration also aims to decrease the stigma of psychological and substance use disorders and to encourage those who suffer to seek treatment.

Young people (ages 10-24) experience a great deal of growth, uncertainty and a multitude of changes. Individuals in this age range are vulnerable to external influences and may begin misusing prescription drugs (due to easy access at home) and experimenting with dangerous substances such as alcohol and marijuana. Bullying, peer pressure, and schoolwork are common factors that may induce stress and negative emotions in youth, which increases their risk of using substances as well as developing mental disorders.

According to SAMHSA's 2017 National Survey, the number of youths (ages 12-17) who have used opioids, methamphetamine, marijuana, and alcohol is on the rise. There has also been significant increase in the use of e-cigarettes within this population. About 37.3 percent of 12th graders reported "any vaping" in the past 12 months, an increase from 27.8% in 2017. This is an alarming increase; especially since the numbers of deaths and other disabling medical disorders resulting from vaping have increased.

Approximately one in five youth experience a severe mental health condition, while 70% of youth in the juvenile justice system have at least one known mental health condition.

Given that young people are continuously connected to their devices, and their ideals and values are shaped through the themes presented in the media and social media, their favorite shows, music, blogs, apps, and podcasts can impact their actions and views of mental illness, addiction, and recovery. This creates an opportunity to show recovery in a constructive manner and to choose models that would have the greatest positive influence. In that way, educators and parents can help young people become educated about mental illness and substance use disorders, and support talking openly as well as seeking treatment early on.

The same survey by SAMHSA found that among adults, approximately 11.4 million misused opioids in 2017, creating an epidemic. At this time, cocaine use is also on the rise in communities across the U.S., with over one million individuals using this substance for the first time in 2017.

As the numbers of people who use a variety of drugs has increased, the number of those who suffer from different

mental illnesses has been rising as well. Mental illness and mental disorders are medical/psychiatric conditions that interrupt a person's mood and thinking and impairs their ability to function and relate to others. Mental illness is not a product of one's intelligence or character.

Our jails and state prisons have become the largest institutions for those who have mental health conditions. However, simply detaining and jailing those who experience mental health crises does not protect public safety, and results in huge burdens on law enforcement and correctional facilities, as well as state and local budgets.

When we are interacting with someone who is experiencing a mental health crisis, there are techniques which we can utilize to de-escalate the situation:

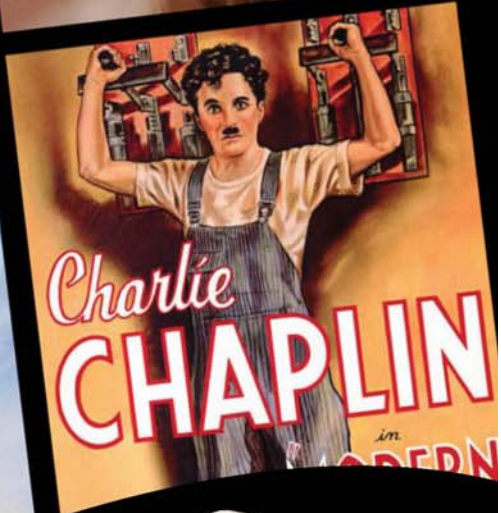
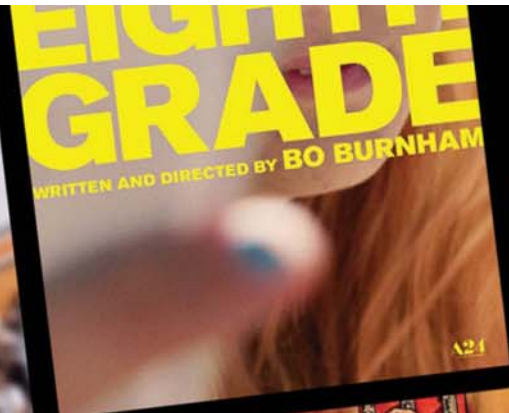
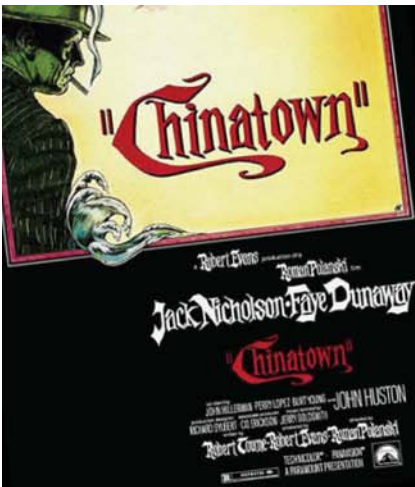
- ✓ Avoid overreacting
- ✓ Keep your voice calm
- ✓ Listen to the person
- ✓ Express support and concern
- ✓ Avoid continuous gazing/eye contact
- ✓ Inquire how you can help
- ✓ Keep stimulation/distraction low
- ✓ Move slowly and not abruptly
- ✓ Avoid touching the person
- ✓ Offer options instead of taking control
- ✓ Be patient
- ✓ Provide space, do not make the person feel trapped
- ✓ Prior to initiating actions, gently announce them

Resources for those struggling with mental illness/substance use disorders include:

- The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health's ACCESS hotline is available 24/7 at 800-854-7771;
- The Los Angeles County Department of Human Resources, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers counseling and referrals to all County employees; appointments can be scheduled by calling 213-738-4200;
- Primary care physicians, advice nurses, and crisis mental health assistants, whose services are offered through insurance carriers.

In any serious life-threatening circumstance, you should call 911.

Recovery support services and substance use treatment can assist individuals in finding pathways to wellness, ability to contribute to their communities, and live meaningful lives.



grab the popcorn THE MOVIE'S ON US!

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LACountyLibrary.org/movies-tv



Retirees

Congratulations for your many years of service to the County of Los Angeles!

50+ Years

HEALTH SERVICES: Pauline P. Jackson

45+ Years

HEALTH SERVICES: Michael Booker
SHERIFF: Cynthia M. Sheckells
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, AGING & COMMUNITY SERVICES: Josephine L. Marquez

40+ Years

HEALTH SERVICES: Cynthia L. Doucet, Gustavo Marin
INTERNAL SERVICES: Mary E. Villegas
PROBATION: Cheryl L. Jackson, Sylvia D. Lewis, Alma E. Reyes
SHERIFF: Marsha L. Corley-Kraal, Debbie Madrid

35+ Years

COUNTY COUNSEL: Mia Smith
DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Patricia Wilkinson
FIRE: Bernard J. Ament, Ronald D. Watts
HEALTH SERVICES: Hamid Atighi, Linda G. Banda, Anthony W. Tan
INTERNAL SERVICES: Marissa U. Camanga Reye, Jesus B. Perdomo
MENTAL HEALTH: Camille Parker
PROBATION: Nassor B. Khalfani, Andrea Washington
PUBLIC HEALTH: Sandra J. Kelly, Linda K. Lee Maeweath
PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES: Virginia Rivera
PUBLIC WORKS: Chris Nelson

30+ Years

BEACHES & HARBORS: D C Tarvin III, Conception Silva
CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES: Rebecca L. Roberts, Amy Watanabe
FIRE: Fredrick Chavez, Michael L. Henry, Timothy P. Panza
HEALTH SERVICES: Zoraida Alamo, Maivan Chau, Eve Cruz, Mary Doyle, James F. Figley, Jean S. Jeon, Matthew B. Martin, Sandra A. McGowan, Debora Neely, Josefina A. Reclusador, Edith V. Thorne
PROBATION: Carlo D. Mejia, Milton K. Smith, Kimberly H. Wilson
PUBLIC HEALTH: Janet M. Humber
SHERIFF: Michael S. Cadiz, Mary D. Cueva, Thomas L. Lewis, Alejandro Salinas, Jeffrey L. Scroggin, Jon K. Tedder, David N. Winn

25+ Years

CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES: Joni A. Alcaraz, Maria D. Buynak, Roberta M. Davis
COUNTY COUNSEL: Karen Weiner
FIRE: Mark A. Griffen, Eva C. Mauck, Mark A. Ortiz, Raymond L. Brown
HEALTH SERVICES: Joaquin R. Cruz, Charles M. Nojang, Judy L. Reno, Kathy E. Sietsema, Carmen G. Carrillo
PROBATION: Ronald Bournes, Cori Moreno
PUBLIC HEALTH: Sharonda M. Anderson, Stephanie C. Taylor
PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES: Jose R. Gonzalez
PUBLIC WORKS: David B. Goetzelman, Elisabeth L. Ismael
SHERIFF: June A. Baca, El L. Griffin Jr., Maria R. Gutierrez, Dennis S. Stangeland, Lydia Lozano

October is Girls Empowerment Month

RECOVERY

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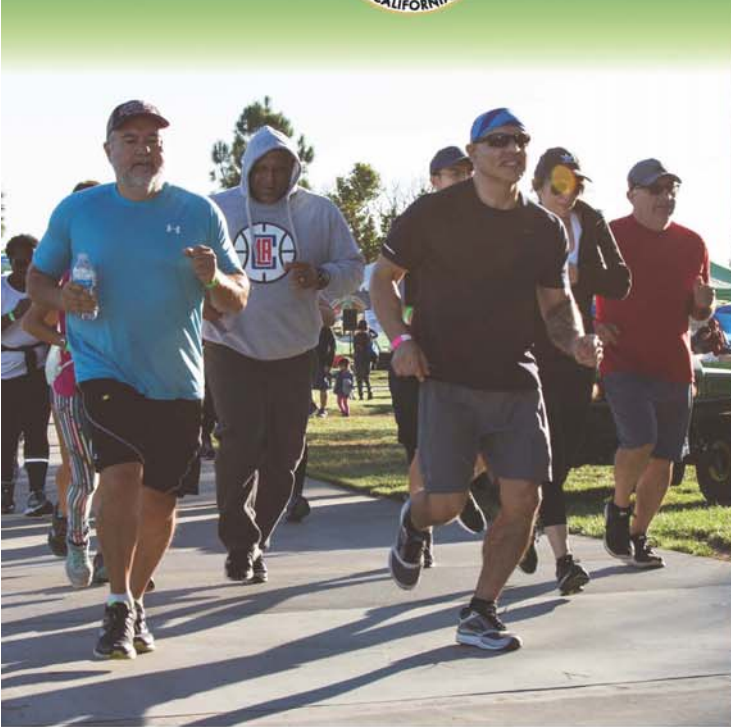
Each of us can play a role by engaging with those who are using drugs and/or have a mental illness in helping them access the recovery support and services that are needed.

In order to learn more about recovery resources, the following can be accessed:

National Alliance on Mental Illness (<https://www.nami.org>), National Institute of Mental Health (<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml>), and SAMHSA's Behavioral Health treatments and services webpage at <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/treatment>, as well as <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/recovery>.



COUNTYWIDE FITNESS CHALLENGE 2019



PLAY FOR LIFE!

Join us for a day of family fun featuring the "triath-a-fun!" — fitness walks, bicycle fun rides, and pedal boat rally.

- PEDAL BOAT AND KAYAK RALLY*
- BICYCLE FUN RIDE*
- 5K FUN RUN
- SILENT DISCO PARTY WALKS
- FITNESS POWER WALKS
- KID FUN!
- HEALTH SCREENINGS
- PICNIC AREA
- FREE GIVEAWAYS
- DRAWING PRIZES

Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area

15501 Arrow Highway
Irwindale, CA 91706
1st Supervisorial District

Saturday, November 2, 2019

8:00 a.m. – Noon



*Free use of kayaks, pedal boats, bicycles/buggies
RSVP to secure your giveaways at:
www.LACountyGetsFit.com

