



## **MEDIA ADVISORY/REQUEST FOR COVERAGE**

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**PITTSBURGH MERCY INVITES THE PUBLIC TO REMEMBER  
PERSONS WHO DIED WHILE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN 2021**  
*The public is invited to stop by the wall of memorial plaques on  
December 21, the first day of winter, the winter solstice, & longest night of the year*

**WHAT:** [Pittsburgh Mercy's Operation Safety Net](#)<sup>®</sup>, an innovative, award-winning medical and social service outreach program for persons experiencing homelessness, and community partners invite the public to remember the 19\* individuals who died while experiencing homelessness in Allegheny County in 2021. Due to the ongoing high level of community transmission of COVID-19, there will not be a singular memorial service event this year. As in 2020, persons who wish to honor the individuals who have died while homeless are invited to visit the wall of memorial plaques at their convenience on December 21. For the safety of all, especially persons who are the most vulnerable, participants are asked to wear masks and stay at least 6 feet away from others.

**WHEN:** **Tuesday, December 21, 2021, from noon to 8 p.m.**

**WHERE:** **Intersection of Fort Pitt Boulevard & Grant Street, Downtown Pittsburgh**  
There, beneath a busy highway overpass, a memorial wall of bronze plaques silently commemorates the 206\* individuals who are known to have died while homeless in Allegheny County since 1989.

**WHO:** [Pittsburgh Mercy](#) colleagues and other providers have been invited to join staff members from Pittsburgh Mercy and Bethlehem Haven who will be on hand throughout the day; partners Allegheny County Department of Human Services, City of Pittsburgh, and Allegheny Health Network; persons served and others who are concerned about social justice for persons experiencing homelessness.

*(Editor's note: \*These numbers are subject to change between now and December 21.)*

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## **Pittsburgh Mercy's Operation Safety Net invites public to remember persons who died while experiencing homelessness in 2021**

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**WHY:** Each year on December 21 – the first day of winter, the winter solstice, and the longest night of the year – the [National Coalition for the Homeless](#) and homeless service providers throughout the United States host public events to call attention to the plight of people who have died while experiencing homelessness. Pittsburgh is among more than 100 U.S. cities to take part in National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day observances. According to the National Healthcare for the Homeless Council, the average age of death for a person experiencing homelessness is 50 years, compared to 78 years for a person who is not homeless. [Pittsburgh Mercy's Operation Safety Net](#)<sup>®</sup>, a member of [Trinity Health](#), serving in the tradition of the [Sisters of Mercy](#), has organized a public vigil in Pittsburgh every year since 1998. To make a donation in support of its work, visit [www.pittsburghmercy.org](http://www.pittsburghmercy.org).

### ***About Pittsburgh Mercy's Operation Safety Net***<sup>®</sup>

[Pittsburgh Mercy's Operation Safety Net](#)<sup>®</sup> is an award-winning, innovative medical and social service outreach program for the unsheltered homeless population in Allegheny County. It strives to address the circumstances which undermine the behavioral and physical health of persons served by creating avenues for people who are homeless to access the medical and social services that are necessary for them to improve their quality of life. Since its founding in 1992, Operation Safety Net has reached approximately 10,000 homeless individuals with more than 68,000 visits where they live – in camps along riverbanks, in alleyways, or beneath bridges and highway overpasses – and has successfully helped more than 1,400 individuals who were once homeless to find homes of their own. In doing so, Operation Safety Net not only assists with providing health care and affordable housing, but also offers this vulnerable population hope, dignity, and a sense of community. Operation Safety Net is part of [Pittsburgh Mercy](#) and [Trinity Health](#), serving in the tradition of the [Sisters of Mercy](#). To learn more, or to make a donation in support of our important work in the community, visit [www.pittsburghmercy.org](http://www.pittsburghmercy.org).

### ***About Pittsburgh Mercy***

[Pittsburgh Mercy](#) is a person-centered, population-based, trauma-informed community health and wellness provider. It is the region's only [Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic \(CCBHC\)](#) and Integrated Community Wellness Center. We reach out and offer help – and hope – to some of our community's most vulnerable populations: people who have physical and behavioral health challenges; people with intellectual disabilities; and people who are experiencing addiction, homelessness, abuse, and other forms of trauma. Our mission is to be a compassionate and transforming, healing presence within our communities. Pittsburgh Mercy is a member of [Trinity Health](#) and serves in the tradition of the [Sisters of Mercy](#). With annual operating revenue of \$112 million, Pittsburgh Mercy is one of the largest health and human service nonprofit organizations and employers in Southwestern Pennsylvania. We serve more than 33,000 people annually in 60+ locations and employ 1,200 colleagues. For more information or to make a donation in support of our mission, visit [www.pittsburghmercy.org](http://www.pittsburghmercy.org).

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