Fatal and Non-fatal Drug Overdoses in Pennsylvania, 2019

Through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-funded Enhanced State Opioid Overdose Surveillance and Overdose Data to Action grants, the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) has collected both fatal and non-fatal overdose data for the past four years from a variety of sources†.

As of December 7, 2020, there were 4458 drug overdose deaths in Pennsylvania in 2019. Key findings include:

• Of the 4458 any drug overdose deaths identified in 2019, 83.9% (3742) have been confirmed to be opioid-related, a 0.1% increase compared to the 3737 in 2018, and a 19.2% (4630) decrease compared to 2017 when the Opioid Command Center was established.
  • Of the 3742 confirmed opioid-related overdose deaths, 42% (1568) also involved a stimulant such as cocaine and/or methamphetamine contributing to their cause of death, which is a 12.6% increase compared to 2018 (1392).
  • In 2019, 9.3% (409) of overdose deaths involved a stimulant without an opioid. For comparison, 7.8% (347) of overdose deaths involved a stimulant without an opioid in 2018.
  • 3.5% (158) of overdose deaths are missing toxicology information; 3.7% (163) of 2018 overdose deaths were missing toxicology information.

• On average, approximately 12 Pennsylvanians died from drug overdose every day in 2019.
• There was a non-statistically significant increase in drug overdose deaths in Pennsylvania (0.8%) compared to 2018, and a decrease of 17.4% compared to 2017 when the Opioid Command Center was established.
• Based on death record data, over half of drug overdose deaths occurred in the decedent’s own home (57%), highlighting the importance of getting naloxone into the hands of community members, particularly friends and family of people who use opioids.
• 27% of overdose deaths occurred among those 25-34 years of age, followed by 26% among those 35-44.
• 78% of drug overdose decedents were white, 16% were black, and 7% were of other or unknown races.
• 91% drug overdose decedents were non-Hispanic, 8% were Hispanic, and <1% were of unknown ethnicity.

As of December 7, 2020, there were 111 death records still pending for 2019, meaning the cause and manner of death have not yet been finalized, which may potentially change the results.

The DOH will publish an annual report and additional detailed findings, which will be available on the PDMP website.
Fatal and Non-fatal Drug Overdoses in Pennsylvania, 2019

1. **Rate of Fatal and Non-fatal Overdose Trends per 10000 Population for Any Drug**
   - Overdose deaths per 10000 population
   - Emergency department visits per 10000 population

2. **Rate of Fatal and Non-fatal Overdose Trends per 10000 Population for Any Opioid**
   - Overdose deaths per 10000 population
   - Emergency department visits per 10000 population

3. **Any Drug Overdose Deaths by Race, 2019**
   - White: 16%
   - Black: 78%
   - Other: 6%
   - Unknown: <1%

4. **Any Drug Overdose Deaths by Age Group, 2019**
   - 0-14: 16%
   - 15-24: 21%
   - 25-34: 26%
   - 35-44: 21%
   - 45-54: 16%
   - 55-64: 4%
   - 65+: 6%
   - Unknown: <1%

5. **Any Drug Overdose Deaths by Gender, 2019**
   - Male: 70%
   - Female: 30%

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* **Any Drug** Overdoses include overdoses from illicit, prescription or over-the-counter drugs, excluding alcohol-only related overdoses.

§ **Any Opioid** Overdoses include overdoses from illicit or prescription opioids, including heroin and fentanyl.

†† Overdose deaths include those with a manner of death of “Accidental” or “Undetermined.” Counts/rates do not include “Homicides” or “Suicides.” NOTE: For prosecution purposes, some counties certify “Accidental” and/or “Undetermined” overdose deaths as “Homicides.”