

Statewide Trends in Drug Overdose: Preliminary 2022 Data Update

Note: This report includes preliminary 2022 death certificate and hospital discharge data.

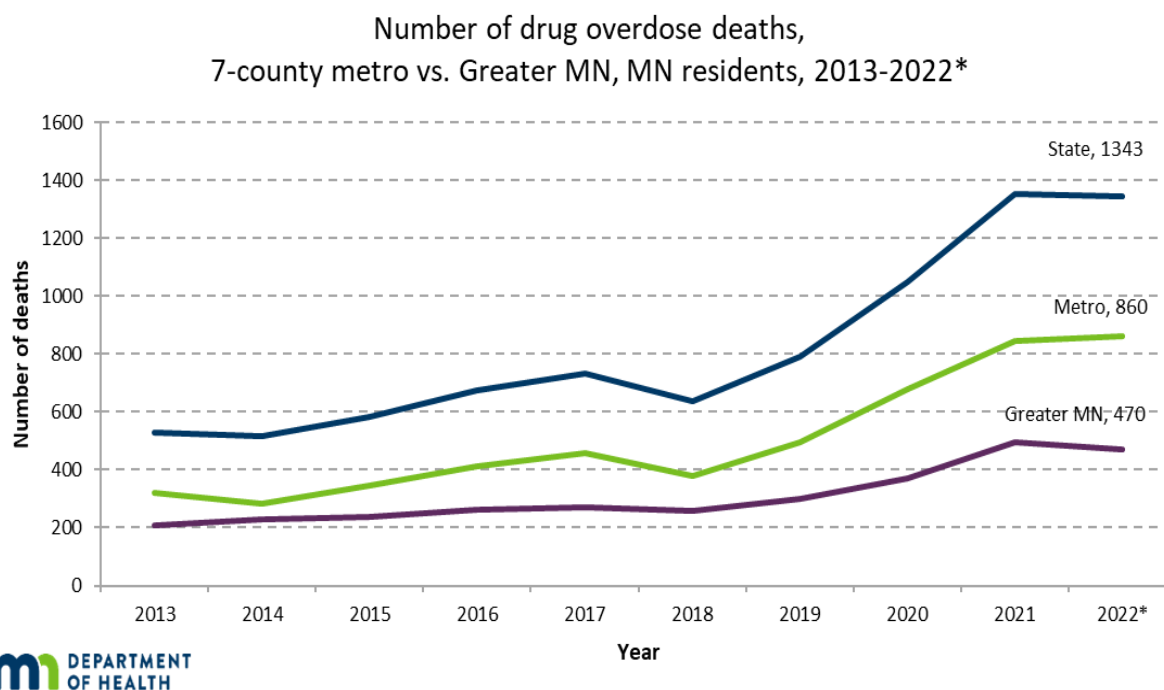
Summary

Drug overdose continues to affect the lives of many Minnesotans. In 2022, on average three Minnesotans died each day from a drug overdose with the total number of drug overdose deaths holding steady from the previous year. Drug overdose deaths continue to be dominated by synthetic opioids (e.g., fentanyl), psychostimulants (e.g., methamphetamine), and cocaine. Moreover, for every one drug overdose death, there were nearly 13 nonfatal drug overdoses.

Statewide drug overdose deaths

Minnesota data is in line with national trends that are also experiencing a slowdown of overdose deaths. Statewide data show that drug overdose deaths are holding steady from 2021 to 2022 (1,356 to 1,343 deaths) (Figure 1), with an increase expected when final data become available. A small increase in drug overdose deaths was seen in the Seven-county Metro (the Metro) while Greater Minnesota saw a modest decrease. In the Metro, drug overdose deaths increased 2% from 2021 to 2022 (846 to 860 deaths); in Greater Minnesota, drug overdose deaths decreased 5% from 2021 to 2022 (495 to 470 deaths) (Figure 1). We expect 2022 numbers to increase when final data are available.

Figure 1. The number of drug overdose deaths in 2022 remained stable from the previous year.



SOURCE: Minnesota death certificates, Injury and Violence Prevention Section, Minnesota Department of Health, 2013-2022

NOTE: 2022 data are preliminary and likely to change when finalized.

Opioid-involved overdose deaths

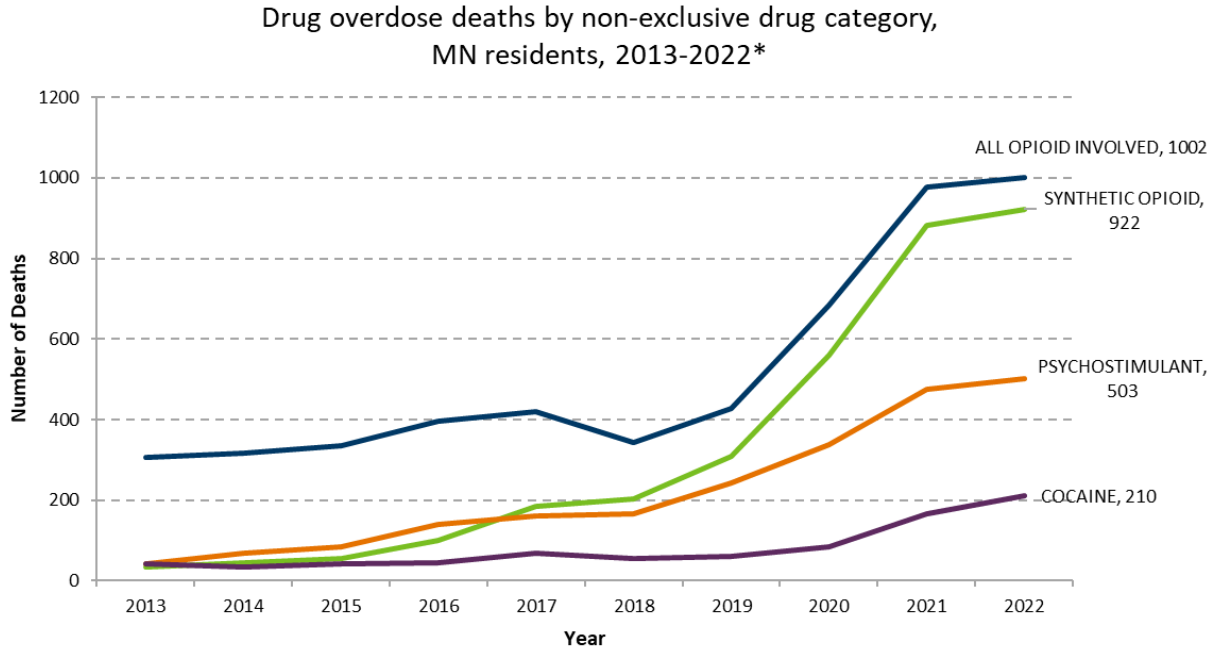
In 2022, we saw a continuation of trends for opioid categories as compared with previous years, but the rate of increase slowed considerably compared with the past few years. From 2021, statewide 2022 data show a 3% increase for all opioid-involved deaths (977 to 1002 deaths). Deaths involving synthetic opioids, including fentanyl and fentanyl analogues, increased 5% (882 to 922 deaths), and were involved in 92% of all opioid-involved deaths and 62% of overdose deaths overall (Figure 2). Other opioid categories continued to decrease in 2022. Deaths involving commonly prescribed opioids (i.e., other opioids and methadone) decreased 15% (207 to 176 deaths); deaths involving heroin decreased 56% (103 to 45 deaths) to a ten-year low (data not shown).

Non-opioid overdose deaths

Statewide 2022 data also show increases from 2021 for deaths that involved stimulants. Cocaine-involved deaths saw the largest increase of any drug category, increasing 27% (165 to 210 deaths). Many other states in the nation have also seen increases in cocaine-involved deaths along with significant decreases in heroin-involved deaths. Psychostimulant-involved deaths, which includes methamphetamine, modestly increased 6% (474 to 503 deaths) during

this period (Figure 2). Deaths involving benzodiazepines decreased 3% (119 to 116 deaths) (data not shown).

Figure 2. There was a large increase in overdose deaths, driven by synthetic opioids, psychostimulants, and cocaine.



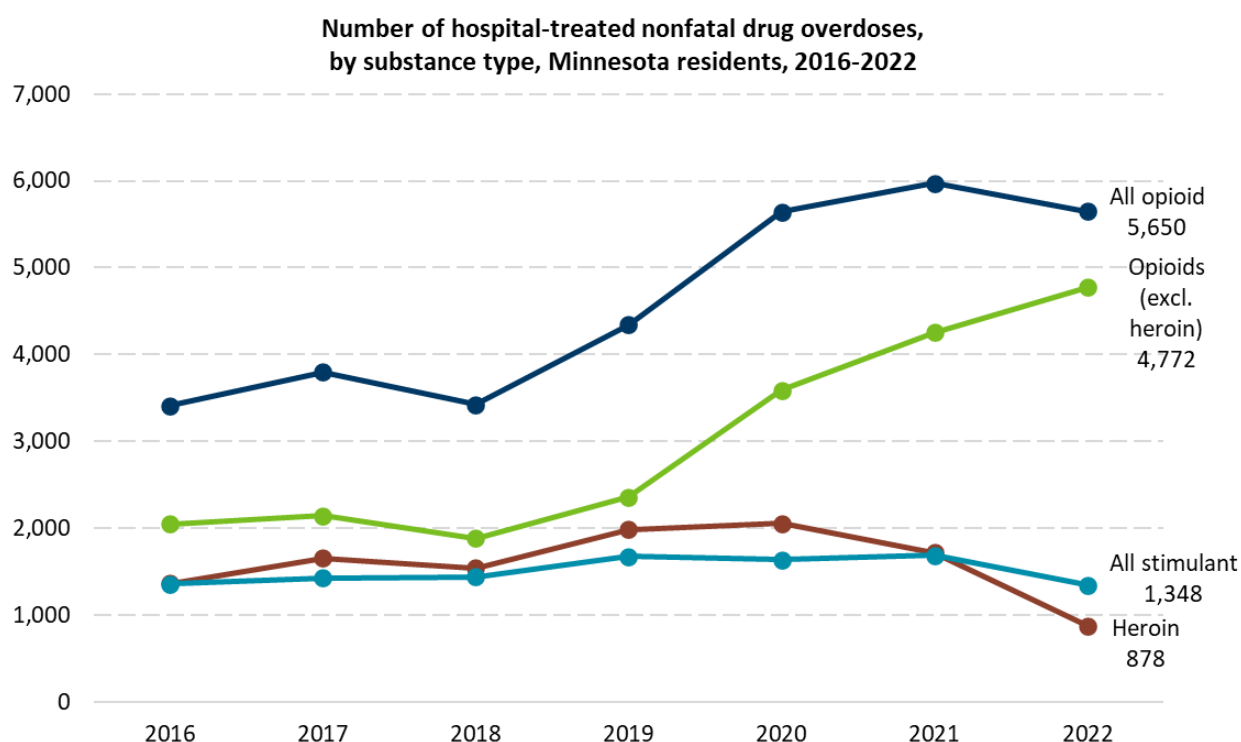
SOURCE: Minnesota death certificates, Injury and Violence Prevention Section, Minnesota Department of Health, 2013-2022.
NOTE: 2022 data are preliminary and likely to change when finalized. NOTE: Drug categories are non-exclusive.

Nonfatal drug overdose

In 2022, for every one overdose death, there were nearly 13 nonfatal overdoses. A majority of nonfatal overdoses were treated in the emergency department (69%) and were of unintentional (i.e., accidental) or undetermined intent (65%). The number of hospital-treated nonfatal overdoses remained relatively stable, decreasing 5% from 2021 to 2022 (17,792 to 16,934 overdoses). This trend was true across the state – the number of hospital-treated nonfatal drug overdoses in the Metro (10,726 to 10,222 overdoses) and Greater Minnesota (7,062 to 6,686 overdoses) remained relatively stable over this time period.

Nonfatal overdoses involving at least one opioid remained relatively stable, decreasing 5% (5,971 to 5,650 overdoses) (Figure 3). Of note, nonfatal overdoses involving an opioid other than heroin, like fentanyl, increased 12% (4,253 to 4,772 overdoses), whereas the number of nonfatal overdoses involving heroin substantially decreased (49% decrease; 1,178 to 878 overdoses). Nonfatal overdoses involving at least one stimulant, including psychostimulants and cocaine, decreased 20% (1,686 to 1,348 overdoses), but surpassed nonfatal overdoses involving heroin for the first time.

Figure 3. From 2021 to 2022, the number of hospital-treated nonfatal overdoses involving an opioid other than heroin, like fentanyl, increased while the number of nonfatal drug overdoses involving heroin substantially decreased.



SOURCE: Minnesota Hospital Discharge Data, Injury and Violence Prevention Section, Minnesota Department of Health, 2016-2022.
 NOTES: Nonfatal drug overdoses of all intents are included. Drug categories are non-exclusive.

Suggested citation.

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Minnesota Department of Health, Injury and Violence Prevention Section, Drug Overdose Epidemiology Unit

Mary DeLaquil | mary.delaquil@state.mn.us | 651-201-4091

Shelbi Giesel | shelbi.giesel@state.mn.us | 651-201-4169

Nate Wright | nate.wright@state.mn.us | 651-201-4237

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