

# Drug Overdose Deaths Among Minnesota Residents from January Through June 2020

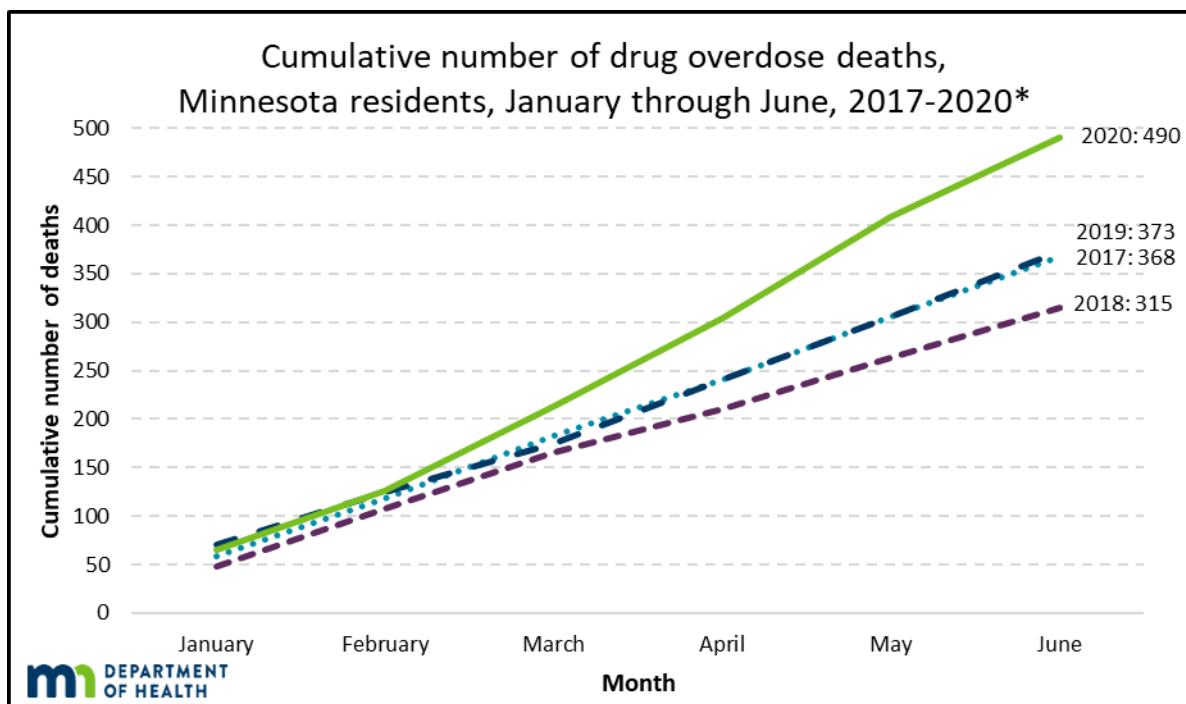
## DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS DURING THE EMERGING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

*NOTE: Data contained within this report are preliminary and likely to change when finalized. The results throughout the report are indicative, not definitive, of the final 2019 and 2020 drug overdose deaths.*

### Statewide Drug Overdose Deaths

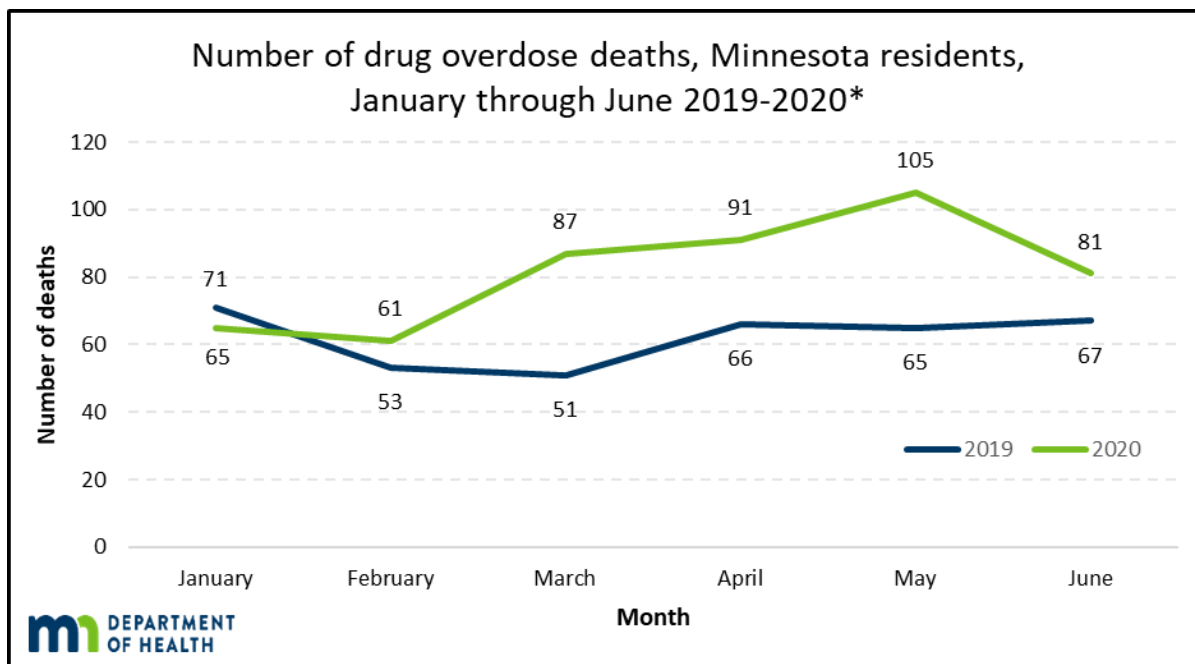
Preliminary statewide data show that drug overdose deaths increased 31% from January through June 2019 to January through June 2020 (373 to 490 deaths) (Figure 1). Compared to 2019, the monthly number of drug overdose deaths increased in March and peaked in May 2020 (Figure 2). From Quarter 1 (January through March) to Quarter 2 (April through June), drug overdose deaths increased 30% (213 to 277 deaths) in 2020 compared to 13% (175 to 198 deaths) in 2019 (Figure 3).

**Figure 1: The total number of drug overdose deaths from January to June 2020 is higher when compared to the same periods in 2017-2019**



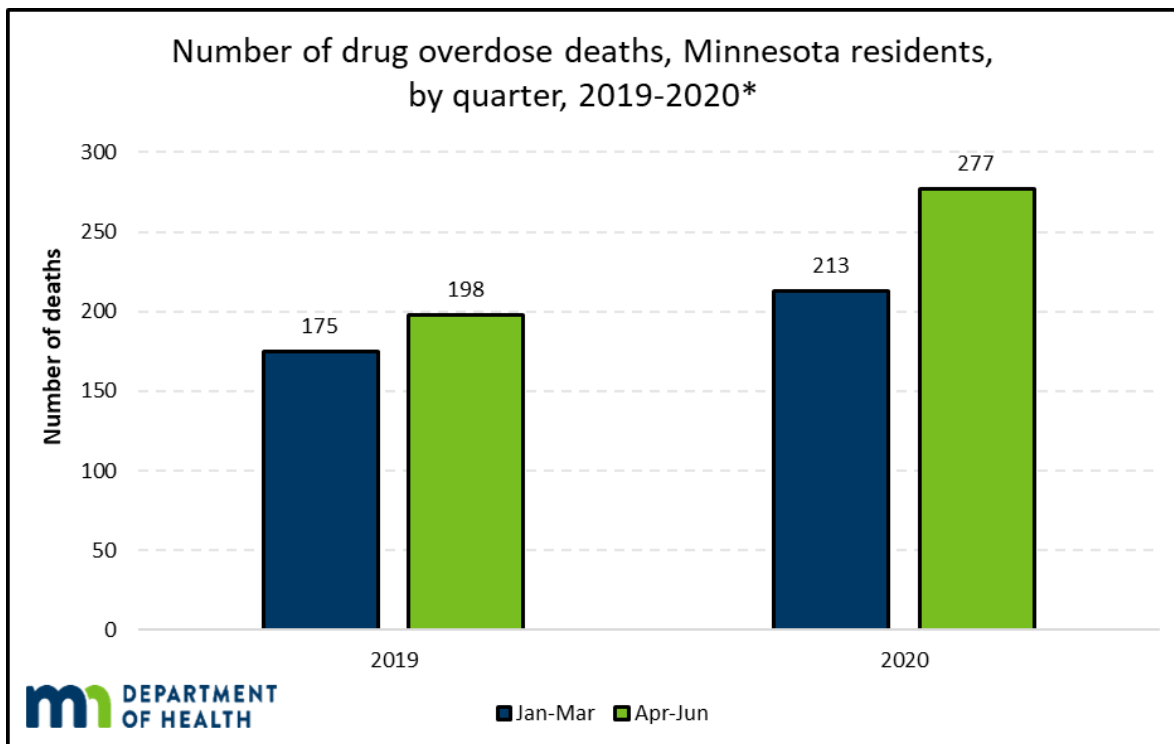
SOURCE: Minnesota death certificates, Injury and Violence Prevention Section, Minnesota Department of Health, 2017-2020  
 \*NOTE: 2019 and 2020 data are preliminary and likely to change when finalized.

**Figure 2: Drug overdose deaths started to increase in March and peaked in May 2020**



SOURCE: Minnesota death certificates, Injury and Violence Prevention Section, Minnesota Department of Health, 2019-2020  
 \*NOTE: 2019 and 2020 data are preliminary and likely to change when finalized.

**Figure 3: The number of drug overdose deaths increased substantially more from Quarter 1 to Quarter 2 in 2020 compared to the same period in 2019**



SOURCE: Minnesota death certificates, Injury and Violence Prevention Section, Minnesota Department of Health, 2019-2020  
 \*NOTE: 2019 and 2020 data are preliminary and likely to change when finalized.

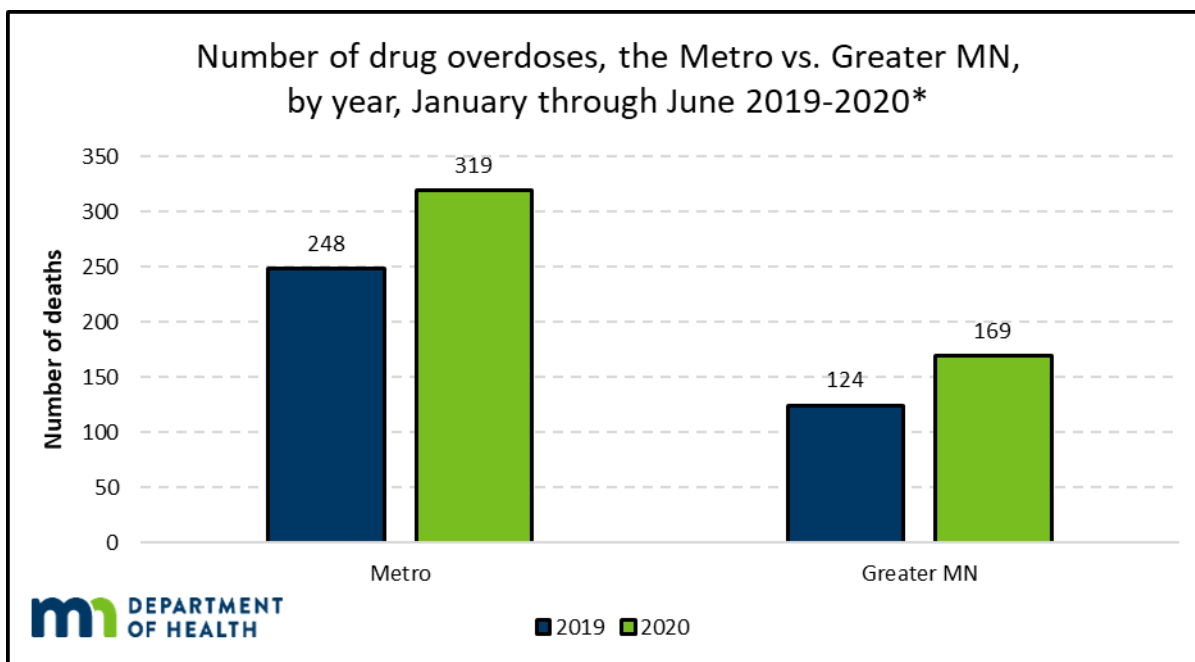
## Seven-county Metro compared to Greater Minnesota

Preliminary data show large increases in drug overdose deaths in both the Seven-county Metro (the Metro) and Greater Minnesota from January through June 2019 to 2020, with a larger increase seen in Greater Minnesota.

In the Metro, drug overdose deaths increased 29% from January through June 2019 to the same period in 2020 (248 to 319 deaths) (Figure 4). From Quarter 1 to Quarter 2 in the Metro, drug overdose deaths increased 25% (142 to 177 deaths) in 2020 compared to 14% (116 to 132 deaths) in 2019.

In Greater Minnesota, drug overdose deaths increased 36% from January through June 2019 to the same period in 2020 (124 to 169 deaths) (Figure 4). In Greater Minnesota, the increase from Q1 to Q2 in 2020 (41%, 70 to 99 deaths) was substantially larger than in 2019 (10%, 59 to 65 deaths) and larger than the increase in the Metro (Figure 5).

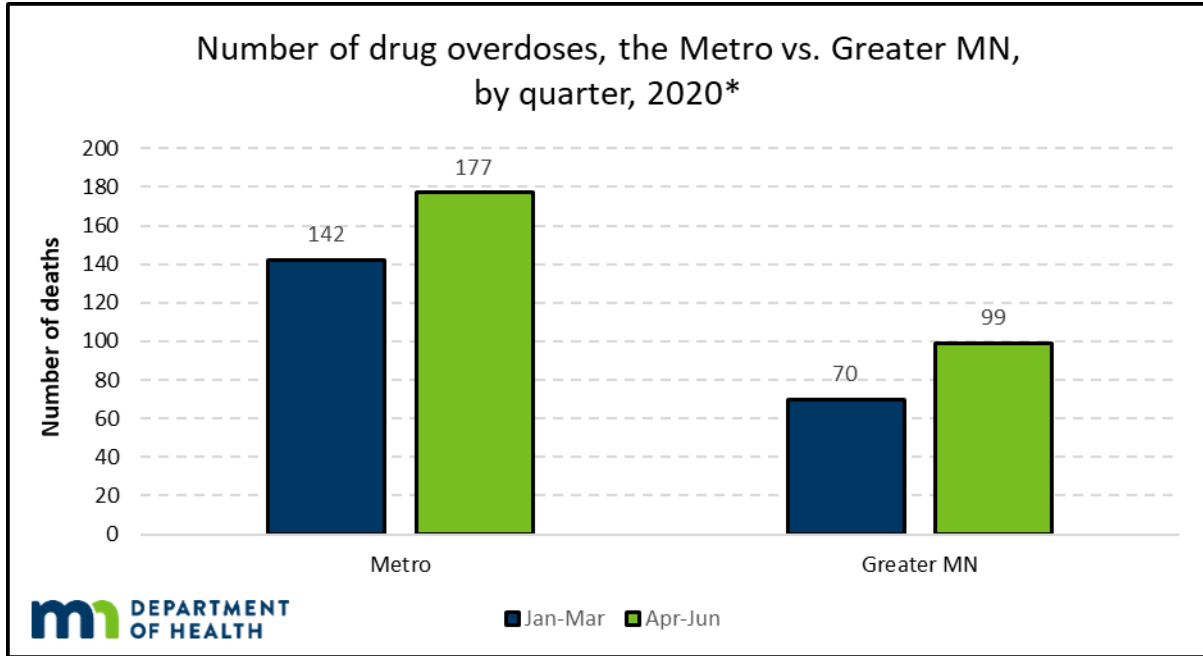
**Figure 4: From January through June 2019 and 2020, drug overdose deaths increased in both the Metro and Greater MN**



SOURCE: Minnesota death certificates, Injury and Violence Prevention Section, Minnesota Department of Health, 2019-2020

\*NOTE: 2019 and 2020 data are preliminary and likely to change when finalized.

**Figure 5: In 2020, both the Metro and Greater Minnesota saw an increase in drug overdose deaths, but the increase from Quarter 1 to Quarter 2 was larger in Greater Minnesota**



SOURCE: Minnesota death certificates, Injury and Violence Prevention Section, Minnesota Department of Health, 2020

\*NOTE: 2020 data are preliminary and likely to change when finalized.

## Drug overdose deaths by drug category

Drug overdose deaths for all drug categories, both opioid and non-opioid, increased from January through June 2019 to January through June 2020 (Figure 6).

### Opioid-involved drug overdose deaths

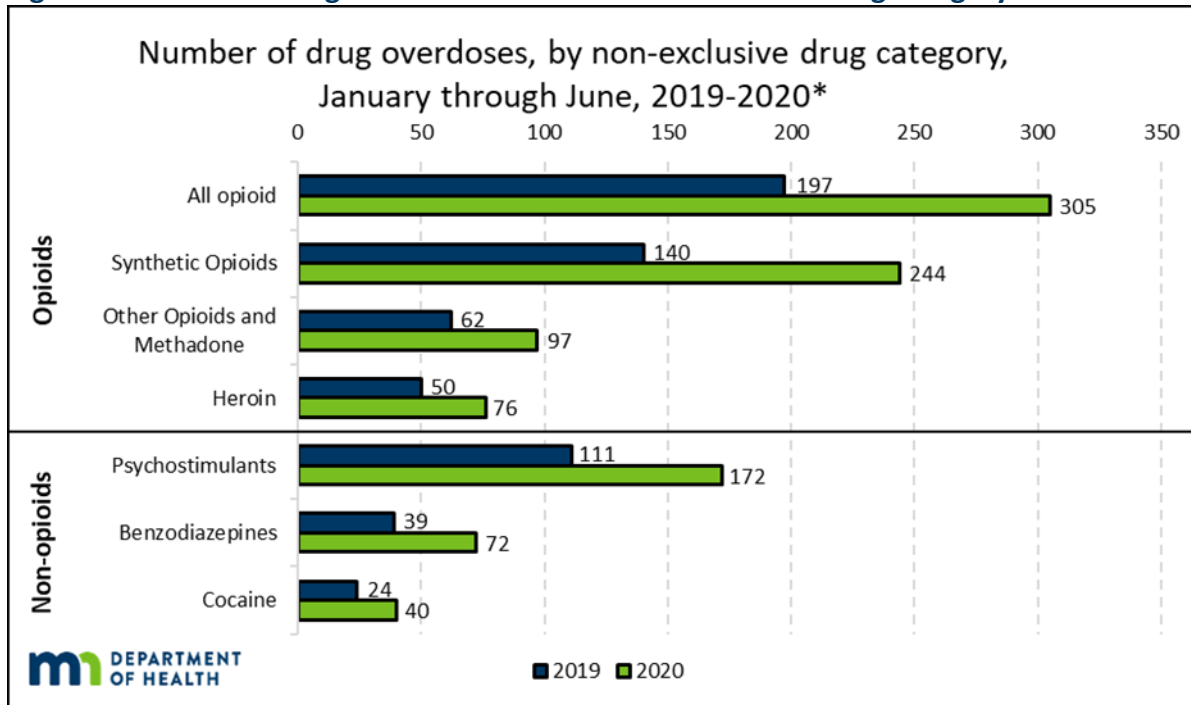
Preliminary data show a 55% increase from January through June 2019 to January through June 2020 for all opioid-involved deaths among Minnesota residents (197 to 305 deaths) (Figure 6). Beginning in March, a large increase in all opioid-involved deaths was observed, largely driven by synthetic opioids (Figure 7).

Deaths involving synthetic opioids, including fentanyl and fentanyl analogues, increased 74% (140 to 244 deaths) during this same period, and were involved in 80% of all opioid-involved deaths. Deaths involving commonly prescribed opioids (i.e. other opioids and methadone) increased 56% (62 to 97 deaths). Deaths involving heroin increased 52% (50 to 76 deaths).

### Non-opioid drug overdose deaths

Preliminary data also show a large increase from January through June 2019 to January through June 2020 for deaths involving non-opioids, with the greatest number of deaths involving psychostimulants (Figure 6). Psychostimulant-involved deaths, which includes methamphetamine, increased 55% (111 to 172 deaths) during this period. Deaths involving benzodiazepines increased 85% (39 to 72 deaths). Deaths involving cocaine increased 67% (24 to 40 deaths).

**Figure 6: Number of drug overdose deaths increased for each drug category**

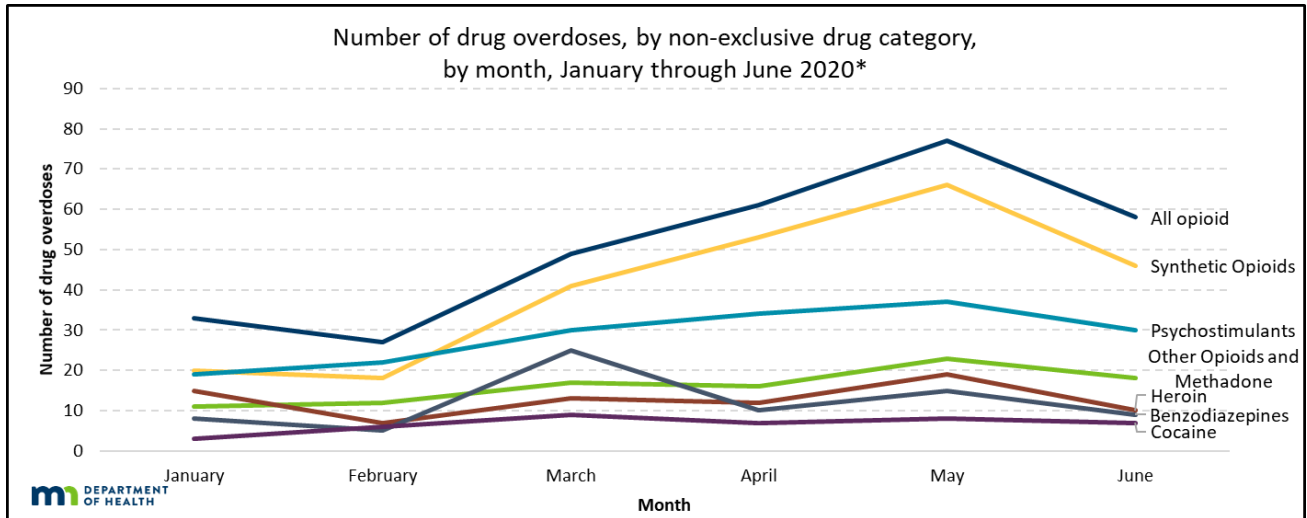


SOURCE: Minnesota death certificates, Injury and Violence Prevention Section, Minnesota Department of Health, 2019-2020

\*NOTE: 2019 and 2020 data are preliminary and likely to change when finalized.

NOTE: Drug categories are non-exclusive.

**Figure 7: Beginning in March, there was a large increase in all-opioid involved deaths, mainly driven by synthetic opioids**



SOURCE: Minnesota death certificates, Injury and Violence Prevention Section, Minnesota Department of Health, 2020

\*NOTE: 2020 data are preliminary and likely to change when finalized.

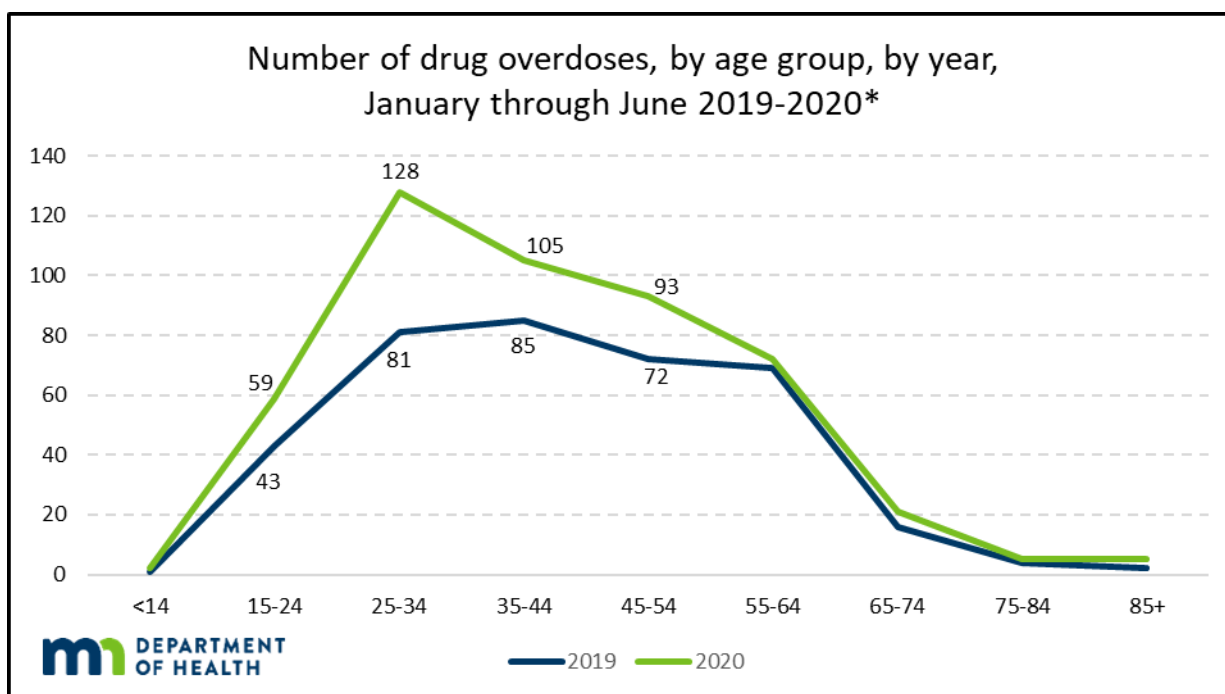
NOTE: Drug categories are non-exclusive.

## Age of drug overdose deaths

Preliminary data from January through June 2020 show Minnesota residents aged 25 to 34 experienced the greatest number of drug overdose deaths, increasing 58% from January through June 2019 (81 to 128 deaths) (Figure 8). Additionally, there were increases in drug overdose deaths in the 15 to 24, 35 to 44, and 45 to 54 age groups.

Preliminary data for the number of drug overdose deaths by age group and month from January through June 2019 compared to the same period in 2020 show generally similar trends to what was seen overall. Minnesota residents aged 15 to 24 experienced an increase in drug overdose deaths beginning in March, increasing 37% overall (43 to 59 deaths); Minnesota residents aged 35 to 44 experienced a large increase in drug overdose deaths beginning in March, increasing 24% overall (85 to 105 deaths); Minnesota residents aged 45 to 54 experienced a 29% increase in drug overdose deaths (72 to 93 deaths) (data not shown).

**Figure 8: Statewide, adults aged 25 to 34 had the highest number of drug overdose deaths, and increased the most from 2019**



SOURCE: Minnesota death certificates, Injury and Violence Prevention Section, Minnesota Department of Health, 2019-2020

\*NOTE: 2019 and 2020 data are preliminary and likely to change when finalized.

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## Suggested citation

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