



Unintentional Overdose Deaths & Efforts to Expand Statewide Awareness of Fentanyl Drug Overdose Dangers

Interim Health Services Committee | Representative McLeod, Chair

Kodi Pinks, Unit Director, Surveillance & Data Management
Laura Anderson, Behavioral Health Division Policy Director
August 18, 2025



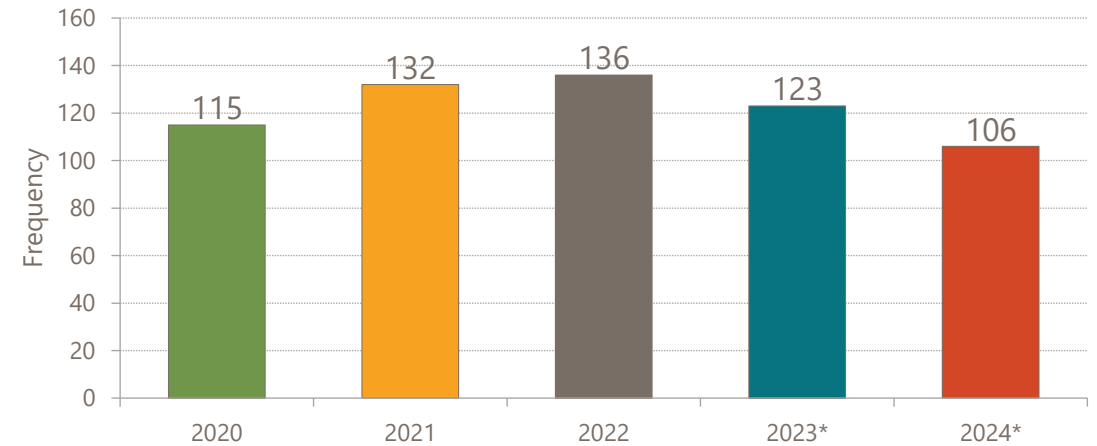
Health & Human Services

UNINTENTIONAL DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS, 2020-2024

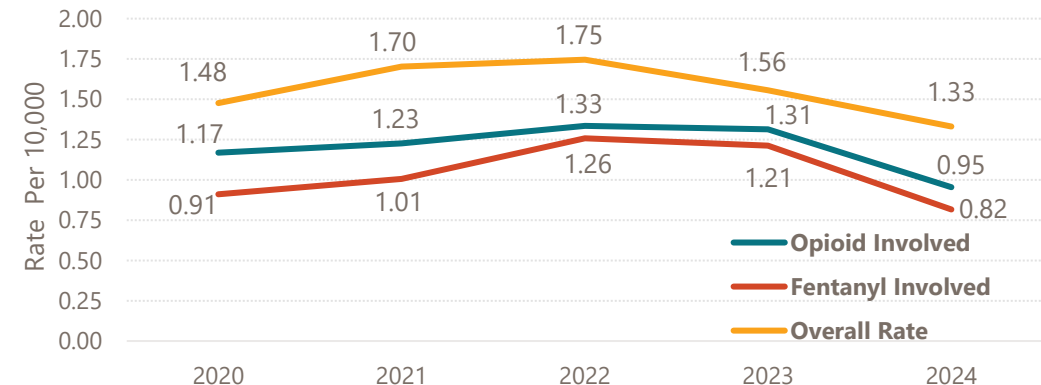
Between 2020 to 2022 there was an increase in drug overdose deaths in North Dakota, but provisional 2024 data shows a 22% decrease from a peak in 2022.

- The overdose death rate increased from **1.48 per 10,000** in 2020 to **1.33 per 10,000** in 2024, which is a **10% decrease** during that five-year time period.
- On average, **2** North Dakotans **die each week** from an unintentional drug overdose.
- **Two-thirds** of overdose deaths were **males**.
- Most overdose deaths were **under the age of 39 years**, with an **average age of 37.1 years**.
- Over **74%** of deaths occurred at their **residence**.
- **30%** of the overdose deaths had **alcohol present** in their toxicology results.

Overdose Deaths by Year

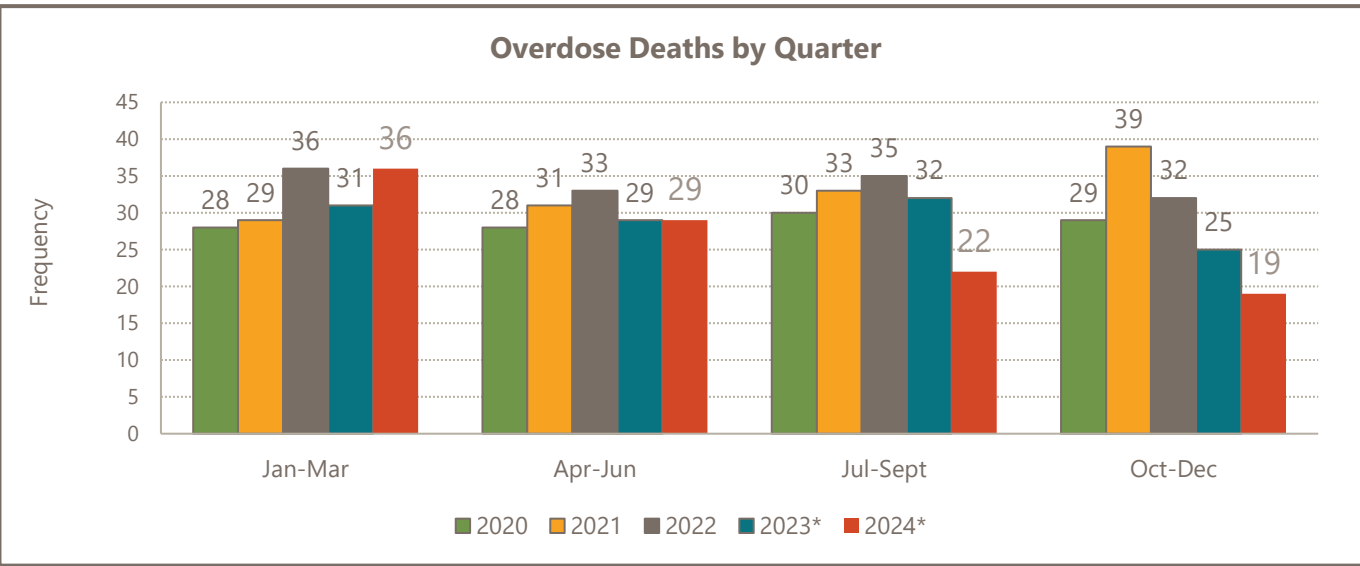


Overdose Deaths Rate Per 10,000



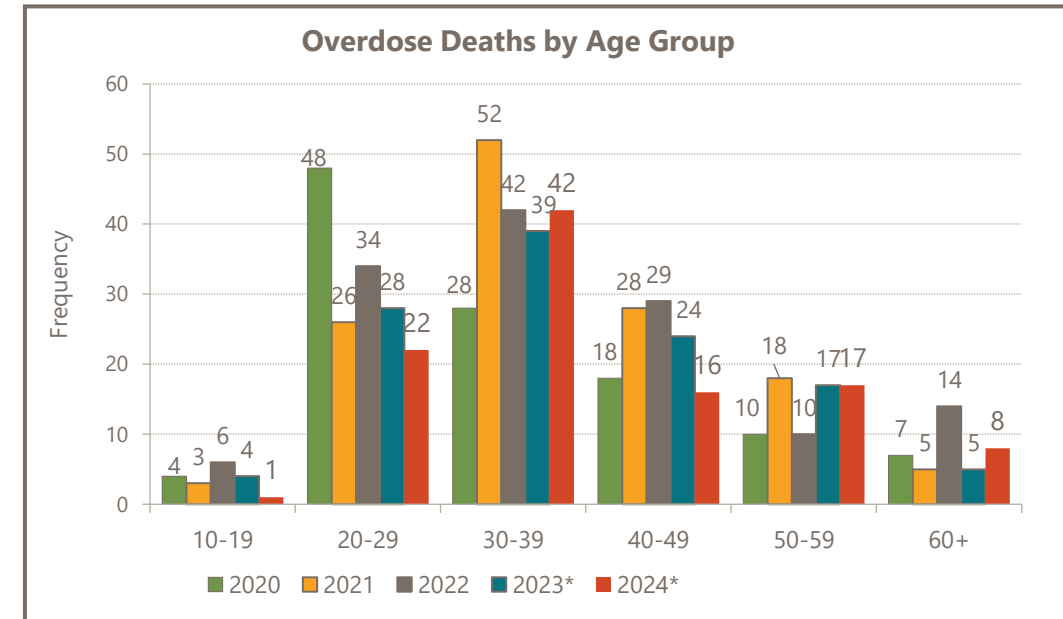
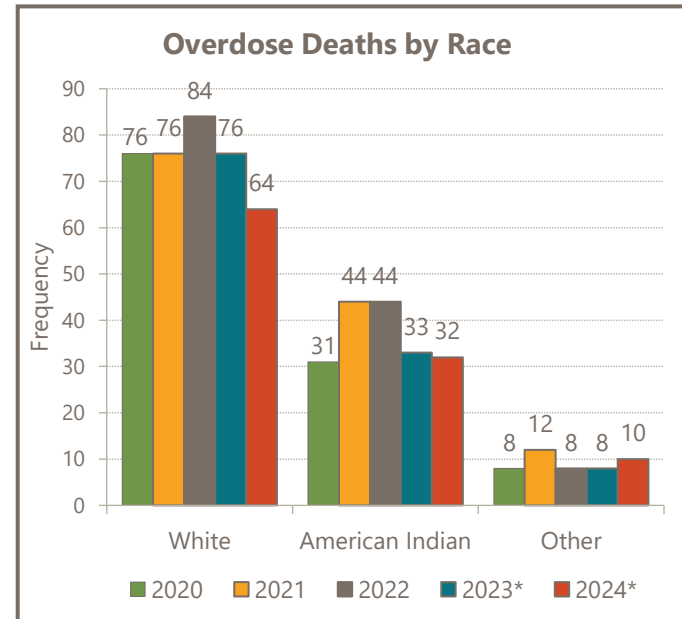
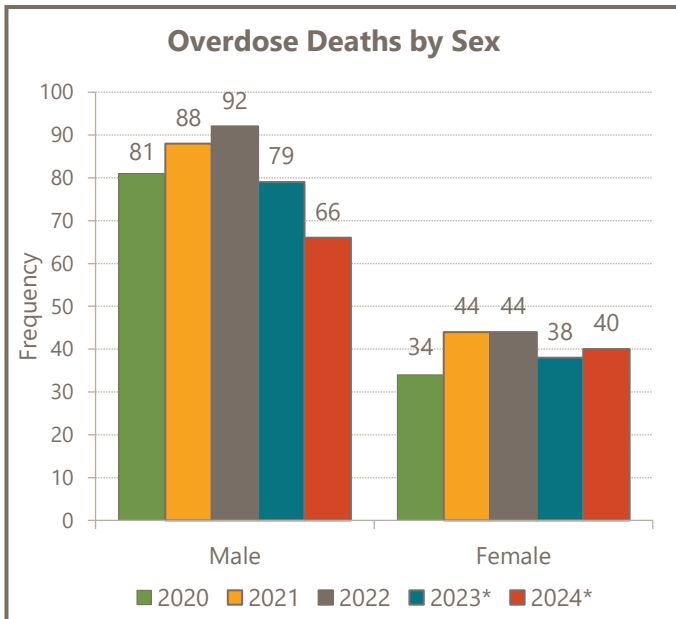
*Preliminary Data for 2023, 2024, and 2025

**Data through August 4, 2025



- From 2020-2024, the overdose death rate for **males** was **2.1 per 10,000** compared to **females** at **1.1 per 10,000**.
- From 2020-2024, the overdose death rate for the **American Indian (AI) population** was **10.5 per 10,000** compared to the **White population** at **1.2 per 10,000**.

Demographic Characteristics of Unintentional Drug Overdose Deaths



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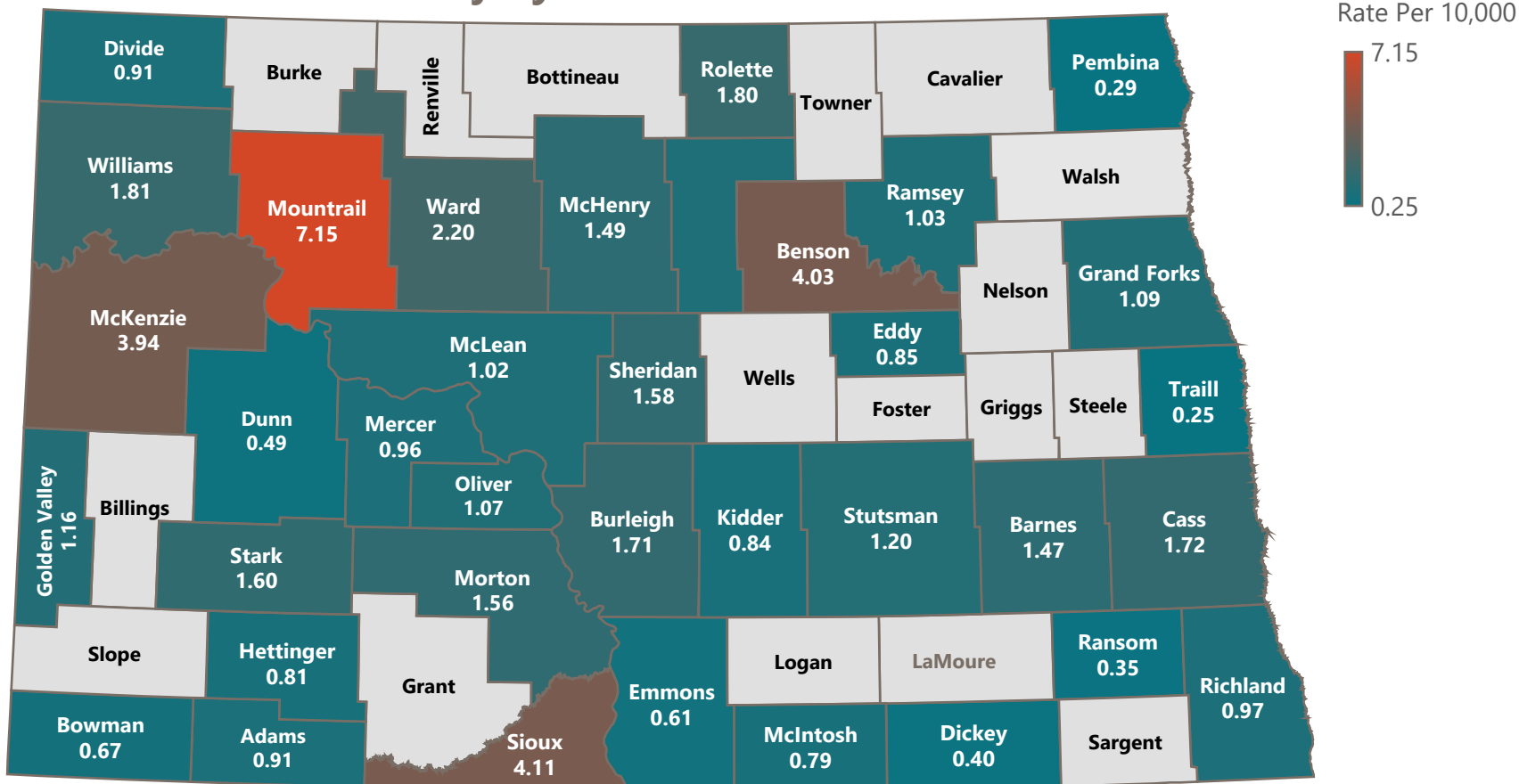
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UNINTENTIONAL DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS, 2020-2024

36 counties in North Dakota (ND) have recorded an overdose death since 2020.

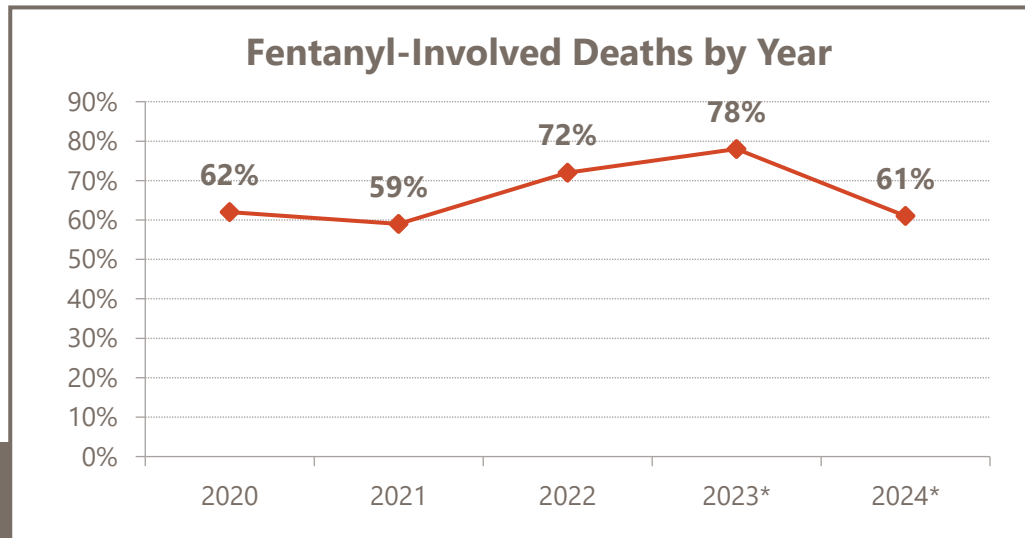
Mountrail, Sioux, Benson, and McKenzie Counties have the highest rates of overdose deaths in ND since 2020 with over **2x** the state overdose death rate.

Overdose Deaths per 10,000 by County Where the Injury Occurred, 2020-2024



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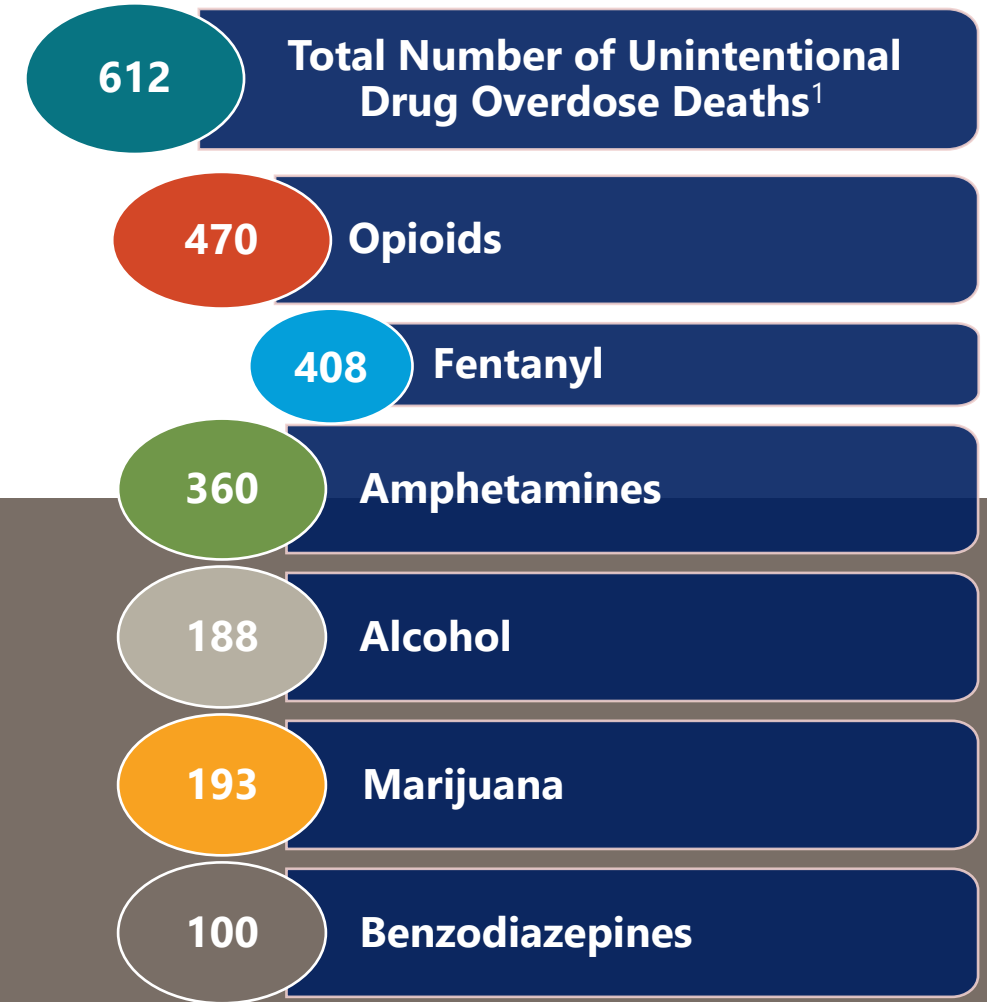
Majority of the deaths had more than one substance (polysubstance) identified in the toxicology results. The most common two-substance combination were **opioids and amphetamines (33%)**.



Fentanyl-Involved Deaths

Fentanyl-involved overdose deaths have risen significantly since 2020 to as high as **78%** of the drug overdose deaths in 2023. However, preliminary data shows a **32% decrease** in fentanyl-involved overdose deaths from 2023 to 2024.

Substances Involved in Drug Overdose Deaths 2020-2024*



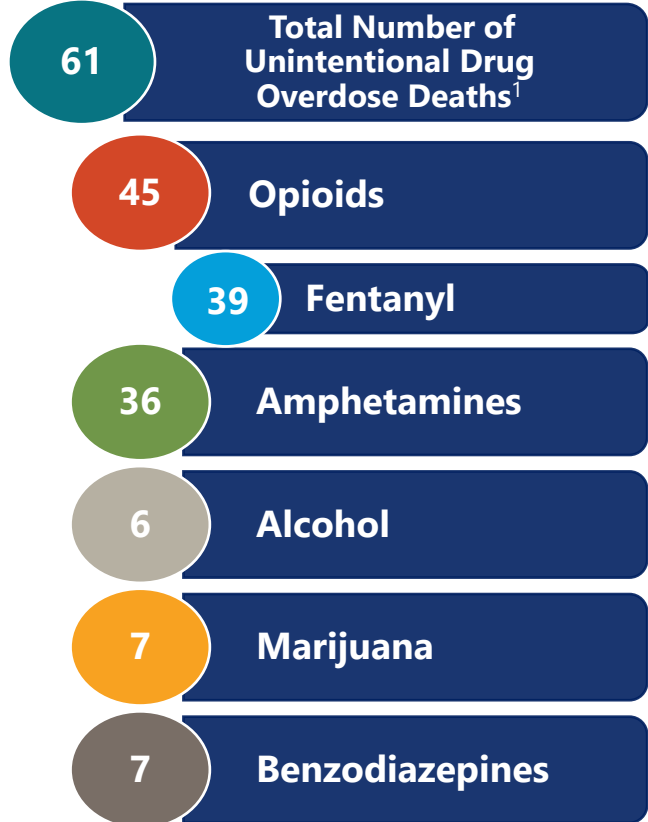
¹More than one substance may be present in a single case, so subsets will not equal the total.

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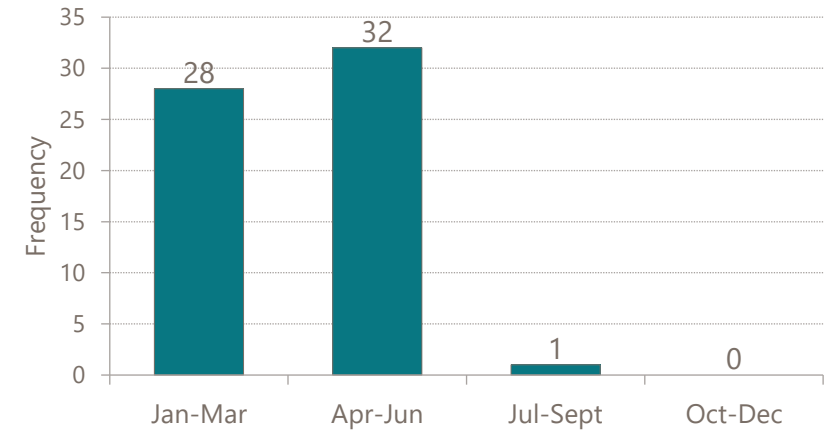
UNINTENTIONAL DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS, 2025

Substances Involved in Drug Overdose Deaths August 4, 2025*

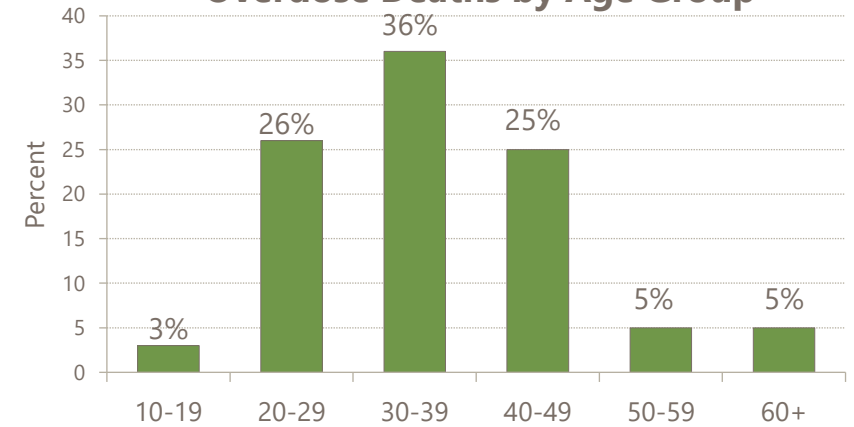


- 74% of overdose deaths were **males**.
- Most overdose deaths were **under the age of 39 years**, with an **average age of 36.9**
- Almost **40%** of the overdose deaths were in the **American Indian population**.
- 75%** of the overdose deaths occurred at their **residence**.
- Approximately **10%** of the overdose deaths had **alcohol** present in their toxicology results.
- Around **39%** had a **combination of opioids and amphetamines** in their toxicology results.
- Four** overdose deaths had **xylazine (non-opioid tranquilizer)** identified in their toxicology results.

Confirmed Overdose Deaths by Quarter



Overdose Deaths by Age Group



¹More than one substance may be present in a single case, so subsets will not equal the total.

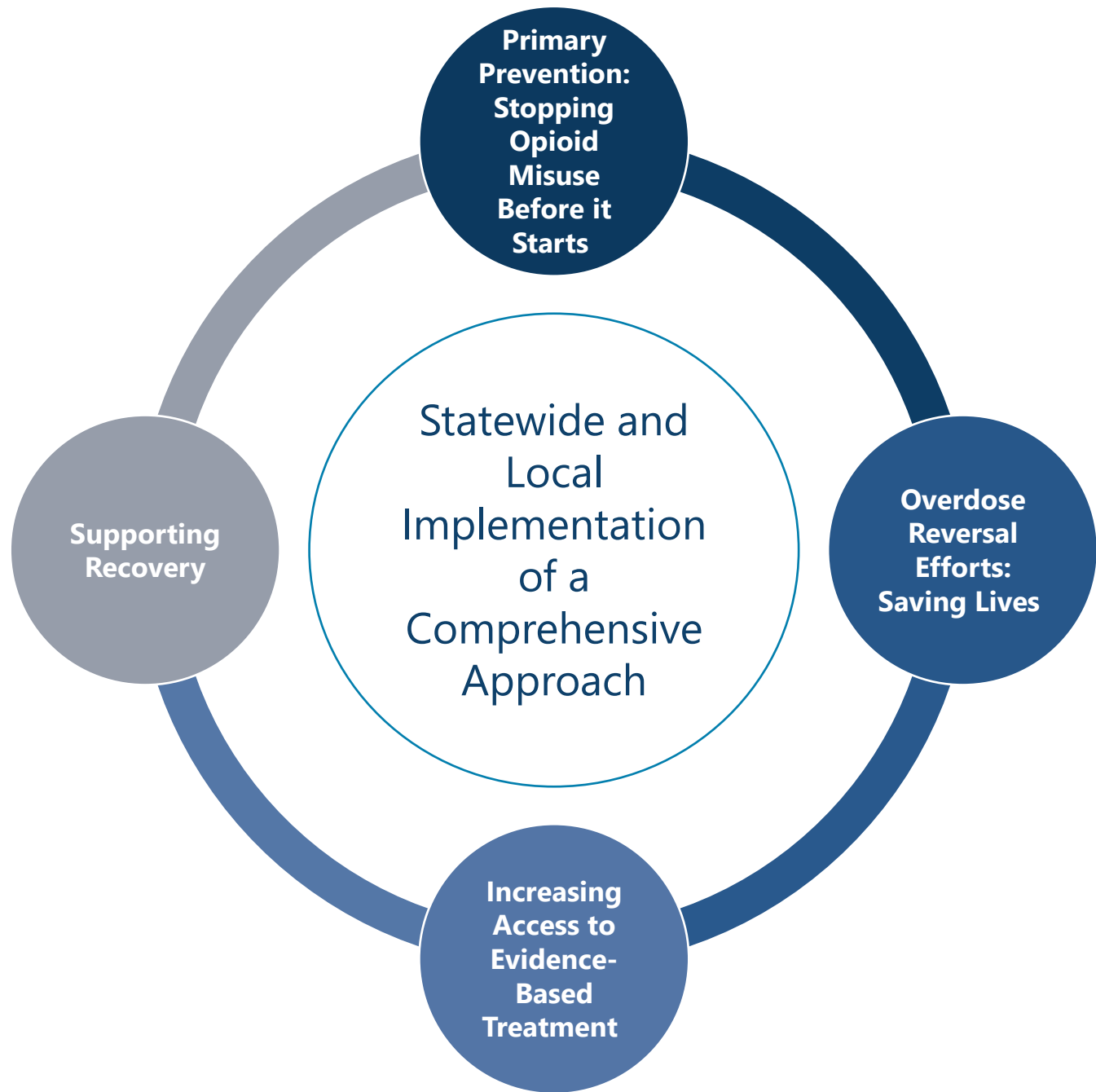
DATA SOURCE

North Dakota Violent Death Reporting System (NDVDRS) is a CDC funded, state-based surveillance program that collects data on violent deaths (homicides, suicides, accidental firearm deaths, deaths of undetermined intent, deaths from legal intervention, and terrorism). NDVDRS collects data on violent deaths from a variety of sources including death certificates, coroner/medical examiner reports, law enforcement reports, crime laboratory reports, and toxicology results.

- Although not funded through this program, unintentional drug overdose death information is also collected and investigated as time allows.

Efforts to address opioid use, misuse, addiction and overdose





North Dakota Opioid Settlement

- ND has received \$22.7 million in opioid settlement funds and is expected to receive an additional \$40 million over the next 18 years.
- \$8M appropriated 2023-2025 and 2025-2027 biennium.
- Opioid Settlement Grant

2023-2025 biennium
14 awards

2025-2027 biennium
18 awards

Opioid Settlement Fund (OSF)
2023-2025 Biennium

OSF GRANT

14 applicants awarded funds (total of \$7,053,787) from February 2024 – June 2025:

- Central Valley Health District
- Community Connect Providers
- Community Health Services
- Endsover Elder Living
- First District Health Unit
- Heartview Foundation
- Nelson-Diggs District Health Unit
- North Dakota State University Opioid and Naloxone Education (ONE) Program
- Northeast Central Judicial District Drug Court in Grand Forks/Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
- Richland County Treatment Court
- Sanford Medical Center Fargo
- Training Academy of Addiction Professionals /Heartview Foundation
- USairMED - Healthy Families North Dakota
- Valley City Public Schools

OSF GRANT OUTCOMES

Overdose Prevention

- Over 12,000 naloxone and syringe test strips and 600 naloxone kits distributed.
- Tribal programs collected 393lbs of unused medications and installed 180 naloxone/education boxes.

Expanded Access to Treatment and Recovery Services

- Nearly 2,000 individuals were directly engaged with through efforts
- Services were delivered statewide, including tribal communities, rural areas, and justice-involved populations.
- 2 new outpatient programs and 1 recovery house were established

Improved Health & Well-Being of Individuals Who Received Services

- Employment: At least 122 individuals gained or improved employment.
- Housing: Over 120 individuals experienced more stable housing.
- Education: Improvements reported in multiple programs, particularly among justice-involved participants and parents in recovery.
- Family Reunification: Notably, 10 mothers reunited with their children through recovery housing.

Workforce Development

- Strengthened the behavioral health workforce:
 - 17 new addiction counselors
 - 22 new clinical training sites and 31 new clinical supervisors onboarded.

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HHS awards Opioid Settlement grants to support prevention, treatment and recovery

Wednesday, April 16, 2025 - 01:00 am

North Dakota Health and Human Services (HHS) has announced the recipients of the latest round of Opioid Settlement Fund grants. These awards support efforts across North Dakota to prevent opioid misuse, expand access to treatment and recovery services, and enhance the behavioral health workforce.

"Opioid settlement funds allow us to invest in programs that save lives, support recovery and build healthier communities," said Christopher Joseph, chair of the Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee and general counsel for the Governor's Office. "We're proud to partner with organizations doing the vital work of prevention, treatment and recovery every day across the state."

The current grant cycle follows North Dakota's continued participation in national opioid settlements with manufacturers and distributors. The state is projected to receive approximately \$60 million over 18 years, which must be used in alignment with national settlement guidelines to address the impact of the opioid crisis.

The North Dakota Legislature appropriated funds to HHS for the 2025-2027 biennium to continue expanding access to evidence-based services. Entities applying for funding were encouraged to align their proposals with priority recommendations from the Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee. These priorities included:

- Expanding community-based treatment and recovery services
- Increasing access to services within jail and correctional settings
- Supporting prevention strategies through youth and community coalitions
- Enhancing the behavioral health workforce
- Implementing Syringe Service Programs

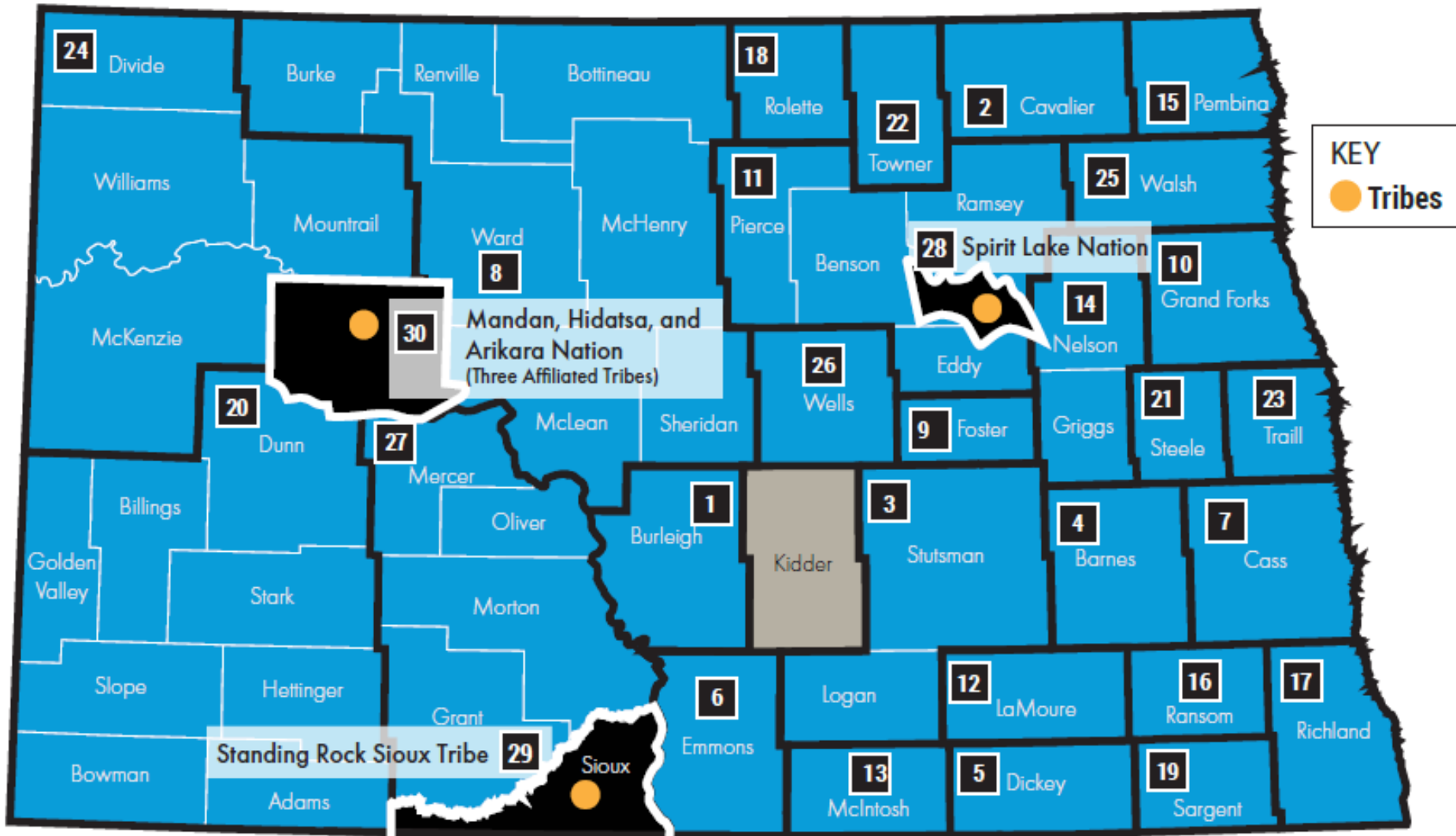
The following organizations were selected to receive funding for their proposed initiatives:

- Heartview Foundation, \$128,890 - Develop and implement a plan to establish an Opioid Treatment Program and a peer support specialist program in Dickinson.
- ND Training Academy for Addiction Professionals (TAAP), \$2,496,862 - Enhance North Dakota's behavioral health workforce by expanding addiction counselor training, providing college scholarships and offering paid internships.
- North Dakota State University ONE Program

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Community-Level Implementation

State Opioid Response (SOR) Grant



Primary Prevention: Stopping Opioid Misuse Before it Starts

ONE Program

Partnership with NDSU School of Pharmacy

Pharmacists in the program receive tools to screen for risk of opioid use disorder or accidental overdose and after identifying patient needs, are able to provide interventions and resources to safely use prescribed opioids.

There are currently **75 pharmacies** actively participating in the program

From October 2024 – July 2025

- **6,616** individuals were screened

Promote medication safety

Local community grantees are distributing safe medication disposal products, hosting take back events, and providing education through messaging

From October 2024 – July 2025

- **4,542** safe medication disposal products have been distributed
- **11** take back events have been held

Evidence-based prevention and safe medication education in schools

- From October 2024 – July 2025, **1,703** children receive education

OPIOIDS

TAKE CARE, BE AWARE.



Every aspect of the opioid crisis requires great care...

- from knowing what's in your prescription pain meds,
- to securing them and disposing when needed,
- to knowing the signs of an overdose,
- to having naloxone on hand,
- to be there if someone reaches out for help

Campaign Launched November 2020

Overdose Reversal Efforts: Saving Lives

Naloxone distribution

From October 2024 – July 2025

27,330 Naloxone two-dose kits were distributed in North Dakota through:

state-wide naloxone distribution

community distribution

pharmacy distribution

877 known successful overdose reversals using naloxone occurred

Increasing Access to Evidence-Based Treatment and Supporting Recovery

Increasing access to Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) for individuals who are incarcerated

Partnership with ND DOCR

From October 2024 to July 2025:

- **99 individuals** received sublocade injections prior to release from prison

Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs)

There are four licensed OTPs in North Dakota:

- Fargo
- Grand Forks
- Minot
- Bismarck

As of 8/13/2025, there were **1,263 active participants**

Other general treatment and recovery efforts

- Recovery Housing Program
- SUD Voucher
- Free Through Recovery
- Community Connect
- Recovery Talk
- Peer Support Certification
- State-Operated Behavioral Health Clinics (Human Service Centers)



Contact Information

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www.hhs.nd.gov/opioids