**Issue brief: Nation’s drug-related overdose and death epidemic continues to worsen**

*Updated November 12, 2021*

The nation’s COVID pandemic made the nation’s drug overdose epidemic worse. This issue brief highlights media and other reports showing increases in drug overdose mortality and other concerns relating to access to evidence-based care for substance use disorders, patients with pain as well as harm reduction services. The news articles and reports below cite data from multiple and varied sources, including national, state and local public health agencies, law enforcement, emergency medical services, hospitals, treatment centers, research journals and others. Every state has reported a spike or increase in overdose deaths or other problems during the COVID pandemic. One prevailing theme is the fact that the epidemic now is driven by illicit fentanyl, fentanyl analogs, methamphetamine, and cocaine, often in combination or in adulterated forms. Overdose related to prescription opioids and heroin remain high and also are increasingly contaminated with illicit fentanyl.

Among AMA advocacy, resources and recommendations:

- **AMA letter to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.** Require all health insurance programs, including Medicare and Medicare Advantage, Medicaid, the plans offered on the federal and state health exchanges, and health benefit programs serving veterans, military members and families, federal employees, Native Americans, and others to remove arbitrary restrictions for patients who benefit from opioid therapy. June 2020.
- **AMA-Manatt Health national policy roadmap** urges use of best practices that already exist at the local, state and national levels that have helped reduced drug-related harms and improved patient outcomes. December 2020.
- **AMA comments on Biden Administration’s 2022 National Drug Control Strategy.** Among the AMA’s recommendations in support of the strategy: Reduce barriers to medications to treat substance use disorders; broaden access to a wide range of harm reduction services, including naloxone, sterile needle and syringe exchange services, and drug checking supplies; require all health insurance programs to remove arbitrary restrictions for care for patients with pain; make use of best practices that already exist; and take steps to develop and support a national, standardized reporting system for key metrics related to drug use. July 2021.
- **Recommendations from the AMA Substance Use and Pain Care Task Force and AMA 2021 Overdose Epidemic national report** Updated recommendations that highlight physicians’ actions as well as additional steps that must be taken to have a meaningful impact on reducing drug-related mortality and improving patient outcomes. September 2021
- **AMA issue brief on key considerations for employers during the drug overdose epidemic.** This includes reviewing benefit plans for patients and families with substance use disorders, mental illness and/or pain; promoting harm reduction at work; and reducing stigma.

See below for news and other reports from all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

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National reports

- The Biden team is scrambling to slow a crushing wave of drug overdose deaths. [https://www.npr.org/2021/10/27/1049245787/biden-hhs-tackle-drug-overdose-deaths] October 27, 2021
- Overdose deaths are so high that the Biden team is embracing ideas once seen as taboo. [https://www.npr.org/2021/10/27/1049245787/biden-hhs-tackle-drug-overdose-deaths] October 27, 2021
- DEA Safety Alert: Sharp Increase in Fake Prescription Pills Containing Fentanyl and Meth. DEA Warns that International and Domestic Criminal Drug Networks are Flooding the United States with Lethal Counterfeit Pills. [https://www.dea.gov/alert/sharp-increase-fake-prescription-pills-containing-fentanyl-and-meth] September 27, 2021
- Patients on high doses of opioid analgesics risk overdose when tapering study finds. [https://www.pharmacist.com/Pharmacy-News/patients-on-high-doses-of-opioid-analgesics-risk-overdose-when-tapering-study-finds] August 26, 2021
- As opioid epidemic rages, an overdose antidote is in short supply; Pfizer says manufacturing issue led to problems producing injectable Narcan. [https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/08/02/metro/opioid-epidemic-rages-an-overdose-antitode-is-short-supply-ri/] August 2, 2021


• The Opioid Crackdown is Hurting People in Pain. [https://washingtonmonthly.com/2021/06/15/the-opioid-crackdown-is-hurting-people-in-pain/] June 15, 2021


• Chronic pain can be burdensome. Isolation during the pandemic can make it worse. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/chronic-pain-pandemic-isolation/2021/05/07/9ec0c7112-addc-11eb-b476-c3b287e52a01_story.html] May 9, 2021


• One in five pharmacies blocks access to key medication to treat addiction. [https://news.ohsu.edu/2021/04/26/one-in-five-pharmacies-blocks-access-to-key-medication-to-treat-addiction] April 26, 2021

• Overdose Deaths Surged in Pandemic, As More Drugs Were Laced With Fentanyl. [https://www.delawarepublic.org/post/overdose-deaths-surged-pandemic-more-drugs-were-laced-fentanyl] April 22, 2021

• The Health 202: Overdose deaths may have topped 90,000 in 2020. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/04/07/health-202-overdose-deaths-may-have-topped-90000-2020/] April 7, 2021


• House reshapes approach to mental health and addiction. [https://www.rollcall.com/2021/03/16/house-reshapes-approach-to-mental-health-and-addiction] March 16, 2021


81,230 overdoses set record for such deaths in a 12-month period, CDC says. https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/81230-overdoses-set-record-for-such-deaths-in-a-12-month-period-cdc-says/2021/01/22/a8b29e7a-5e06-11eb-a976-bad6431e03e2_story.html January 25, 2021


• ‘Cries for help’: Drug overdoses are soaring during the coronavirus pandemic. https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/07/01/coronavirus-drug-overdose/ July 1, 2020

• Expanded Telehealth Helps Communities Address Opioid Use Disorder During Pandemic; Practitioners see benefits for patients and providers, especially in rural areas.* https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2020/07/01/expanded-telehealth-helps-communities-address-opioid-use-disorder-during-pandemic July 1, 2020


• Despite the Challenges, We Must Fight Harder to Address the Nation’s Opioid Epidemic; Patrice A. Harris, MD. https://morningconsult.com/opinions/despite-the-challenges-we-must-fight-harder-to-address-the-nations-opioid-epidemic/ June 17, 2020.


• The pandemic may fuel the next wave of the opioid crisis.  

State reports

1. Alabama

• As drug overdose deaths increase, law enforcement carrying life-saving medicine.  

• What’s up with all those purple flags planted beside a Huntsville street?  

• Fatal overdoses skyrocket in Alabama.  

• Overdose deaths are up 31.3% in Alabama.  
  https://whnt.com/news/overdose-deaths-are-up-31-3-in-alabama/  May 21, 2021

• Opioid overdoses increased 20% in Ala. in 2020.  
  https://www.wbrc.com/2021/04/21/opioid-overdoses-increased-ala/  May 4, 2021

• Health officials raise the alarm over overdose deaths in Birmingham area.  

• Opioid deaths increased in Jefferson County in 2020.  

• Drug overdoses climbed in Alabama during pandemic.  

• Overdoses on the rise in pandemic.  

• Opioid overdoses on the rise since pandemic began.  

• Drug Overdoses Increase During the Pandemic.  

• Madison County seeing a spike in overdoses, deaths amid pandemic.  

2. Alaska

• Alaska overdoses and deaths rise as global pandemic overshadows state opioid epidemic.  

• Alaska reports increase in drug-related overdoses.  

• Overdose deaths in Alaska have been on the rise since the pandemic began, report says.  

3. Arizona
• Governor Ducey Fights To Protect Arizona.

• The Connection Between Snapchat and Fentanyl.

• Arizona teens are overdosing at alarming rates.

• Tragedies Pile up With Drug Overdoses Surging Amid Pandemic.

• ‘Lost in Phoenix’ gives raw glimpse into Phoenix’s opioid epidemic.

• Sheriff’s Office saw increase in overdose calls in 2020.

• Pima County reaches of overdose deaths this year.

• 1/4 of Arizona voters say the opioid crisis has become less important to them following the pandemic, reveals survey. https://prescottenews.com/index.php/2020/10/28/1-4-of-arizona-voters-say-the-opioid-crisis-has-become-less-important-to-them-following-the-pandemic-reveals-survey/ October 28, 2020


• Flagstaff police report spike in fentanyl overdoses, deaths.

• Tucson’s rise in drug overdose deaths could be linked to pandemic.


• The battle of addiction during the time of novel coronavirus: Mental anguish, idle hands may be recipe for relapse. https://www.yourvalley.net/stories/the-battle-of-addiction-during-the-time-of-novel-coronavirus,154044 April 20, 2020

4. Arkansas

• Chronic pain patients decry federal guidelines at 6th state Capitol rally.
guidelines-at/ October 27, 2021 (subscription required)


5. California


- Fentanyl overdoses, deaths are up in Riverside County. Many don’t know they’ve taken it. https://www.desertsun.com/story/news/health/2021/07/30/fentanyl-overdoses-deaths-rise-riverside-county/8043736002/ July 30, 2021


6. Colorado
Street drugs containing fentanyl circulating in Boulder, officials say.  
https://www.9news.com/article/news/health/fentanyl-drugs-boulder-xanax-oxycodone/73-0528ece1-0081-4938-9b75-0892ca2a3caa  February 6, 2021

Denver and Colorado Set New Fentanyl and Overdose Death Marks.  

Overdose deaths in US on track to break all-time record.  

Deaths in Colorado rose 20% during first 6 months of pandemic, reflecting COVID-19's broader toll on health.  

Drug overdoses in Colorado surged along with stress and loneliness caused by the pandemic.  

Colorado sees drug overdoses rise with coronavirus-related stress.  

Pueblo diversion program showing success.*  

How the pandemic is impacting another health crisis: opioid addiction.  

Fentanyl And Meth Fuel Record Colorado Overdose Deaths Amid Coronavirus Pandemic.  

Opioid crisis in Colorado could get worse amid pandemic.  
https://apnews.com/bf1c11ac45d63808ffae945e750cd81 June 28, 2020

After COVID-19 addiction treatment may never be the same.  

Struggling with addiction in quarantine? You’re not alone.  

7. Connecticut


Echo of pandemic isolation continues to impact addiction crisis in Connecticut.  


‘A Perfect Storm for Anybody Struggling’ CT Saw 1,374 Deadly Drug Overdoses in 2020.  


With over 1,000 Connecticut deaths last year, opioids demand even greater attention during pandemic. https://ctmirror.org/2020/07/09/with-over-1000-deaths-last-year-opioids-demand-even-greater-attention-during-pandemic/ July 9, 2020

8. Delaware


9. District of Columbia

- Rise in fatal drug overdoses in D.C. region likely tied to pandemic, officials say. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/drug-overdose-washington-coronavirus/2020/08/20/2a4c64b8-e0a4-11ea-ade1-28daf1a5e919_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/drug-overdose-washington-coronavirus/2020/08/20/2a4c64b8-e0a4-11ea-ade1-28daf1a5e919_story.html) August 21, 2020

10. Florida

- The Epidemic Within the Epidemic: Tampa Bay’s Opioid Crisis. Preliminary Assessment. [https://www.tampabay.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/project%20opioid%20preliminary%20assessment_05.10.21_0.pdf](https://www.tampabay.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/project%20opioid%20preliminary%20assessment_05.10.21_0.pdf) April 15, 2021
abuse-mental-health-20200918-kuesqudc2yb6rkovph2nuwjgbi-story.html September 18, 2020

- Experts: Coronavirus Contributing To Increase In Substance Abuse.  

- Overdose calls up 40% during COVID-19 pandemic; treatment centers seeing relapses in long-time sober patients.  

- Manatee County reports 44% increase in opioid overdoses since last year.  

- Fake pills laced with fentanyl are causing overdoses in west Pasco, deputies say.  

- Jacksonville overdose calls increased 20% in March.  

11. Georgia

- A critical shortage of a lifesaving drug is fueling overdose deaths in Georgia.  

- ‘Perfect storm’: In Georgia, rising opioid overdoses don’t discriminate.  

- Officials: Fentanyl overdoses spreading across Georgia.  
  https://apnews.com/article/georgia-health-fe27a85f6f92ad24b5383e81411fc7da May 16, 2021

- Fentanyl-related deaths on the rise in the Peach State.  
  https://www.wtvm.com/2021/05/06/fentanyl-related-deaths-rise-peach-state/ May 6, 2021

- Some Georgia Hospitals Are Reporting A Rise In Trauma Cases.  
  https://www.wabe.org/some-georgia-hospitals-are-reporting-a-rise-in-trauma-cases/ October 5, 2020

- How to maintain emotional wellness during COVID-19.  

- Updated Suspected Drug Overdose Increases in Georgia Amid COVID-19.  

- ‘An Epidemic Within This Pandemic’: Reported Drug Overdoses Rise In Georgia Amid COVID-19, Groups Say.  

- DPH warns of overdose increases in Georgia amid COVID-19.  

- Health chief warns of drug overdose increase during pandemic.  

12. Hawaii
• Fentanyl from Mexican cartels coming into Hawaii as overdoses rise. https://www.khon2.com/local-news/fentanyl-from-mexican-cartels-coming-into-hawaii-as-overdoses-rise/ May 19, 2021
• More homeless residents dying from meth overdoses. https://abc17news.com/news/national-world/2021/04/01/more-homeless-residents-dying-from-meth-overdoses/ April 1, 2021

13. Idaho

• Notes from the Field: Opioid Overdose Deaths Before, During, and After an 11-Week COVID-19 Stay-at-Home Order — Cook County, Illinois, January 1, 2018—October 6, 2020. https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7010a3.htm?s_cid=mm7010a3_w March 12, 2021


Local accidental overdose deaths are up during pandemic. https://foxillinois.com/news/local/local-accidental-overdose-deaths-are-up-during-pandemic October 26, 2020


Pritzker Administration Announces Over $2 million in Fines for Major Health Insurance Companies Violating Illinois Mental Health Parity Laws CIGNA Healthcare of IL, UnitedHealthcare, CIGNA Health and Life, HCSC, and Celtic found to be in violation of Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act https://www2.illinois.gov/IISNews/21819-IDOI_Press_Release.pdf July 15, 2020


15. Indiana


16. Iowa


17. Kansas

- National increase in drug overdose deaths leads KDHE to educate residents about Naloxone. https://www.wibw.com/2021/08/06/national-increase-drug-overdose-deaths-leads-kdhe-educate-residents-about-naloxone/ August 6, 2021

18. Kentucky


• ‘Don’t give up’ After years of decline, Lexington’s overdose deaths are rising fast. https://www.kentucky.com/news/local/counties/fayette-county/article245379110.html August 31, 2020


• OPD, DCSO records increase in overdoses on altered pills. https://www.14news.com/2020/05/26/opd-seeing-increase-overdoses-altered-pills/ May 27, 2020

19. Louisiana

• Overdose deaths rose 56% during pandemic in Louisiana, CDC reports. https://www.wafb.com/2021/10/15/overdose-deaths-rose-56-during-pandemic-louisiana-cdc-reports/ October 15, 2021


• Opioid-related overdose deaths continue to rise in Lafayette Parish, and fentanyl a big reason why. https://www.theadvocate.com/acadiana/news/article_dd5b697a-13a6-11eb-9087-7b523df99843.html October 23, 2020


• People who use drugs are more vulnerable to coronavirus. Here’s what clinics are doing to help. https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/coronavirus/article_f80cf77e-84fa-11ea-88d5-2b37dc9dd966.html May 3, 2020

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20. Maine
- Penobscot County continues to see a disproportionate share of Maine’s overdose deaths. https://observer-me.com/2021/09/10/news/penobscot-county-continues-to-see-a-disproportionate-share-of-maine's-overdose-deaths/ September 10, 2021

21. Maryland
- Garrett County among 4 to see decrease in opioid deaths. https://www.times-news.com/community/garrett-county-among-4-to-see-decrease-in-opioid-deaths/article_21c02288-eeec-11eb-9595-27aba2ea007f.html August 1, 2021
• Opioid Use, Fentanyl Deaths Spike During Pandemic.  
https://www.marylandmatters.org/2021/04/30/opioid-use-fentanyl-deaths-spike-during-pandemic/  
April 30, 2021

• As opioid deaths remain near record highs, Maryland offers $50 million in new grants.  
October 28, 2020

• Overdoses and alcohol-related deaths rising during pandemic.  
September 23, 2020

• In the shadow of COVID-19, opioid crisis continues unabated attack.  
August 17, 2020

• Drug overdose alert issued in Carroll County.  
July 31, 2020

• Health officials say COVID-19 might be worsening opioid crisis.  
July 7, 2020

• Opioid-related deaths make a disappointing uptick in early 2020, possibly related to coronavirus.  
June 11, 2020

• Pandemic cited as Md. opioid fatalities inch up.  
https://thedailyrecord.com/2020/06/10/pandemic-cited-as-md-opioid-fatalities-inch-up  
June 10, 2020

22. Massachusetts

• Editorial: It’s never been more urgent to give safe injection sites a try.  
https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/09/02/opinion/its-never-been-more-urgent-give-safe-injection-sites-try/  
September 2, 2021

• Opioid-related overdose deaths soar among Black residents.  
May 12, 2021

• Massachusetts Department of Public Health Data Brief: Opioid-Related Overdose Deaths among Massachusetts Residents.  
May 2021

• While doctors prepare to handle rise in opioid cases, access to recovery programs remains limited.  
http://bunewsservice.com/while-doctors-prepare-to-handle-rise-in-opioid-cases-access-to-recovery-programs-remains-limited/  
December 8, 2020

• Overdose Deaths Have Risen in Mass. Amid Pandemic, State Data Show.  
November 16, 2020

• ‘A perfect storm’: Pandemic is making it harder to kick drugs.  
September 30, 2020

• Sounding the alarm: Seeing warning signs of an epidemic within the COVID pandemic (Viewpoint).  
August 30, 2020

• SouthCoast doctors say telemedicine has proven its worth, hope it will continue.*  
https://www.southcoasttoday.com/news/20200528/southcoast-doctors-say-telemedicine-has-
The Pandemic Has Changed Addiction Treatment, Some Hope For Good.*
https://www.wbur.org/commonhealth/2020/05/21/coronavirus-addiction-treatment-changes
May 21, 2020

23. Michigan

- Nationwide naloxone shortage means higher costs in Michigan.
- Michigan drug overdose deaths climbed to record levels in 2020 during pandemic.
- Michigan seeing a rise in overdose deaths due to the pandemic.
- Target 8: Fatal ODs doubled in parts of W. MI at COVID-19’s spring peak.
- Macomb County medical board: EMS opioids overdose treatment up during COVID-19.
- Naloxone kits could end up being lifesavers.
- Michigan to give opioid antidote for free to community groups, residents.
- Push to telehealth means more medication to treat addiction in northern Michigan.*
- 20% increase in patients seeking substance abuse treatment.

24. Minnesota

- Pandemic, homelessness brought record overdose calls in Minneapolis.
- Minnesota drug overdose deaths jumped in pandemic year.
- Duluth police: 20 opioid overdose deaths in 2020.
• New report finds increase in 2020 overdose deaths. [link] December 3, 2020
• DEA: Significant increase in counterfeit pills in Minnesota. [link] August 12, 2020
• In Duluth, ODs spike as pandemic decreases access to aid; The pandemic might be increasing the demand for dangerous drugs. [link] May 31, 2020
• St. Paul Police Issue Alert After 28 Suspected Overdoses In 6 Days, 2 Deaths. [link] March 5, 2020

25. Mississippi
• Substance abuse continues to climb during the coronavirus pandemic. [link] September 20, 2021
• Overdose rates soaring in the pandemic. [link] July 30, 2021
• An in-depth look at the Drug Epidemic in Mississippi. [link] March 20, 2021

26. Missouri
• Half of this year’s drug overdose deaths recorded in Columbia have occurred since Aug. 1. [link] November 11, 2021
• Overdose deaths in Missouri rose nearly 20% in 2020. CDC points to pandemic, fentanyl. [link] July 20, 2021
• Opioid overdose deaths in Missouri up more than 30 percent in 2020. [link] May 19, 2021
• Buchanan County sets annual record in overdose deaths. [link] October 29, 2020
• Missouri’s Fentanyl Problem: State recently topped nation in rate for overdose deaths.
Opioid overdose deaths decline statewide in 2019, but rise for Black men.  

Opioid deaths on the rise for African American men in Missouri.  

New website provides help with drug addiction for St. Louis area residents.  

Springfield area already sees uptick in suicides, ODs. Experts worry crisis is coming.  

27. Montana

- Massive Meth Problem in Montana gets Help from New DPHHS Program.  

- Research Examines ‘Deaths Of Despair’ in Montana.  
https://www.mtpr.org/post/research-examines-deaths-despair-montana  April 25, 2021

- Meth use rose as pandemic hit Montana, other states, urine tests showed.  

- County applies for opioid program.  

- Police blame super-potent heroin for one death, several overdoses.  

28. Nebraska

- Fentanyl related overdose deaths spike in Lincoln and Omaha.  
https://www.1011now.com/2021/08/17/fentanyl-related-overdose-deaths-spike-lincoln-omaha/  August 17, 2021

- DEA warns parents about counterfeit pills in Nebraska before school starts.  

- Nebraska overdose deaths jumped nearly 43% last year.  

- Exclusive: Fentanyl top killer drug in Omaha-area overdoses. That wasn’t the case in 2020.  

- Pills that kill hit Omaha: Fentanyl surprise on the rise.  
29. Nevada

- Nevada overdose deaths continue to climb, reports show.  
  October 20, 2021

- Southern Nevada Health District Advisory: Fentanyl deaths increase in Clark County.  
  August 17, 2021

- Drug overdose deaths hit all-time high in US; local therapists report uptick in new clients.  
  July 16, 2021

- ALARMING RISE: Counterfeit prescription pills containing fentanyl, overdoses in Las Vegas.  
  April 1, 2021

- Nevada placed on “red alert” for risk of death from overdose.  
  December 11, 2020

- Fentanyl overdoses increase in Nevada, Placer counties causing concerns.  
  October 14, 2020

- With opioid-related overdoses on the rise, health providers try preparing everyday Nevadans to respond to a crisis.  
  September 6, 2020

- Fentanyl contributes to a rising death toll in Southern Nevada.  
  July 29, 2020

- Teen overdose deaths point to growing problem.  
  March 4, 2020

30. New Hampshire

- Drug overdose deaths holding steady in New Hampshire.  
  [https://apnews.com/article/health-coronavirus-pandemic-new-hampshire-0e96e44b800e37c31fc36f7f216ac31](https://apnews.com/article/health-coronavirus-pandemic-new-hampshire-0e96e44b800e37c31fc36f7f216ac31)  
  July 22, 2021

- Opioid cases rising in NH, Manchester projects ‘significant’ increase in deaths.  
  [https://www.wmur.com/article/opioid-cases-manchester-nh/36358247](https://www.wmur.com/article/opioid-cases-manchester-nh/36358247)  
  May 6, 2021

- Despite pandemic, fatal overdoses decrease in 2020.  
  January 19, 2021

- Recovery community focuses on NH’s other health crisis.  
  October 5, 2020

- NH has seen at least 200 fatal drug overdoses so far this year.  
  August 26, 2020

- New law requires opioid treatment in county jails.*  
  July 29, 2020
• Opioid overdose reversal drug naloxone to be free at Planned Parenthood.  

31. New Jersey
• Overdose deaths rising and may set record.  
• Atlantic City Is Just The Latest Place To Shut Down Its Needle Exchange Amid A Deadly Rise In US Overdose Deaths.  
• Testa: New Jersey Must Do More to Prevent Overdose Deaths.  
• Mental health, substance use visits to ER reflect ‘a pandemic within a pandemic.’ Greatest toll on the young.  
• New Jersey giving away 72,000 doses of Narcan to combat drug overdoses.  
• Mid Hudson overdoses spike during COVID-19 pandemic.  
• Overdose deaths in NJ may hit record high.  
• Is the COVID-19 pandemic fueling a 20% rise in NJ overdose deaths?  

32. New Mexico
• Abuse of deadly fentanyl on rise among NM teens.  
• Overdose deaths in New Mexico reached all-time high in 2020.  
• New Mexico fentanyl deaths double again from 2019 to 2020.  
  https://apnews.com/article/health-government-and-politics-new-mexico-d00bbec79d1a91a7f112b7cbfc765018  July 16, 2020
• Fentanyl becoming more prevalent in New Mexico, officials say.  
• Incarcerated woman challenges New Mexico Corrections Department’s methadone policy.  
33. New York

• Opioid Addiction, Overdoses on Rise: DA. http://theforumnewsgroup.com/2020/06/05/opioid-addiction-overdoses-on-rise-da/ June 5, 2020
• COVID-19 cited in spike of opioid overdoses; Pandemic has worsened the opioid crisis. More people are dying of overdoses and fewer are being admitted for treatment. https://www.investigativepost.org/2020/05/21/covid-19-cited-in-spike-of-opioid-overdoses/ May 21, 2020
• As overdoses spike, local experts remind people help is available. (Albany, Greene, Rensselaer counties) https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/As-overdoses-spike-Capital-Region-experts-remind-15207385.php April 17, 2020

34. North Carolina
• Naloxone shortage could lead to thousands of overdose deaths. https://www.northcarolinahealthnews.org/2021/10/22/naloxone-shortage-could-lead-to-thousands-of-overdose-deaths/ October 22, 2021
• As drug overdoses proliferate, one obvious and important policy solution stands out. https://www.ncpolicywatch.com/2021/08/31/as-drug-overdoses-proliferate-one-obvious-and-important-policy-solution-stands-out/ August 31, 2021
• Opioid ODs way up, ERs see 46% case hike. https://greensboro.com/rockingham_now/news/opioid-ods-way-up-ers-see-46-case-hike/article_155a410e-fc80-11ea-b36a-a3876ce79885.html September 21, 2020
• Overdoses way up, officials try new approach to fighting drug abuse during pandemic. https://greensboro.com/rockingham_now/news/overdoses-way-up-officials-try-new-approach-to-fighting-drug-abuse-during-pandemic/article_863d0ae7-62b0-51f8-8df3-e9de9396b0db.html August 7, 2020

35. North Dakota


36. Ohio


COVID-19 not slowing drug trafficking, overdose deaths.  

Ohio drug overdose deaths back on rise.  

Overdose Incidents Rose Sharply Around Ohio Valley During Pandemic.  

Coronavirus can’t stem central Ohio opioid abuse.  

Don’t forget the other epidemic; editorial.  

Narcan handed out to step opioid overdose rise amid COVID-19.  

Ohio County Prosecutor: Pandemic Puts More Stress On Families Dealing With Addiction.  

Coroner: 6 overdose deaths in Franklin County Friday.  

Health officials fear COVID-19 could trigger rise in drug overdoses.  

HEALTH ALERT: Canton latest to close its syringe program.  

37. Oklahoma

Opioid crackdown had ‘tremendous fallout,’ with more suicides, drug overdoses among patients, lawmakers told.  

Manslaughter conviction of 21-year-old Oklahoma woman who suffered miscarriage sparks outcry.  

Counterfeit pills laced with fentanyl are driving a spike in Oklahoma deaths.  

Oklahoma Sees Increase In Overdose Deaths From 2019-2020.  

• Authorities investigate additional deaths in Oklahoma linked to fake oxycodone pills. https://www.koco.com/article/authorities-investigate-additional-deaths-in-oklahoma-linked-to-fake-oxycodone-pills/34314735# October 8, 2020


• Deaths caused by fake pills continue to climb in Oklahoma, with links to North Texas. https://www.star-telegram.com/news/local/crime/article243600002.html June 17, 2020

38. Oregon


• Spike in Overdoses Reported in Coos & Lane Counties. https://www.co.lincoln.or.us/hhs/page/spike-overdoses-may-21-2021 May 21, 2021


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- Philadelphia’s overdose crisis hangs in the balance of conflicting city, state and federal officials. 

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  - July 16, 2021
  - May 22, 2021
  - April 21, 2021
  - October 26, 2020
  - September 24, 2020
  - July 30, 2020
  - April 15, 2020

42. South Dakota

  - July 12, 2021
  - November 2, 2020

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WilCo sees spike in opioid overdose calls, counterfeit pills.
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COVID-19 complications likely increasing the severity of Utah’s opioid crisis.

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Experts watching concerning substance use & treatment trends during pandemic.


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