

Drug Overdose Deaths

DESCRIPTION

More than 72,000 Americans died from drug overdoses in 2017, including illicit drugs and prescription opioids—a twofold increase in a decade.¹ Deaths due to drug overdose can be accidental, intentional, or due to overdose of a specific drug/ multiple drugs. Despite the circumstances, deaths due to drug overdose are preventable and lead to personal, family and community suffering. The leading drug categories associated with deaths are opiate pain relievers, heroin, psychostimulants (e.g., methamphetamine), cocaine and benzodiazepines.² Preventing deaths from drug overdose requires efforts among individuals, professional providers, families, neighbors, friends and community to recognize overdose, manage addiction, contain the drugs and other interventions.¹

HOW WE ARE DOING

The number of drug overdose deaths are on the rise nationwide, with the sharpest increases related to fentanyl and fentanyl analogs (synthetic opioids).¹ In Minnesota, the number of deaths due to overdose have risen from 129 deaths in 2000 to 675 in 2016. During that same period, Ramsey County overdose deaths went from 14 in 2000 up to 89 in 2016. The age-adjusted overdose death rate for Ramsey County in 2016 was 17.8 per 100,000 which is higher than other metro counties' rates and Minnesota's rate of 12.3, none of which meet the Healthy People 2020 target of 11.3. Looking back over the past five years, the Ramsey County rate is not rising as quickly as some other metro counties. In 2016, most overdose deaths in Ramsey County were opioid-involved (34), followed by heroin-involved and psychostimulant-involved (each 13 deaths).²

BENCHMARK INDICATOR

Healthy People 2020³: Reduce the number of drug-related deaths.
U.S. Target: 11.3 per 100,000 population.

DISPARITIES

Previously, adults ages 45 to 54, were the group experiencing the most drug overdose deaths in Minnesota, but since 2016, this has shifted to those 25 to 34 years.² The age-adjusted rate of death due to drug poisoning is more than four times greater among American Indian/Alaska Native residents than white residents, and two times greater among African-Americans relative to whites. These rate disparities are some of the highest in the nation.⁴ Men have more deaths and higher mortality rates of drug overdose death compared to women. In 2016, men accounted for 67 percent of drug overdose deaths in Minnesota.²

RISK FACTORS

Risk factors associated with drug overdose mortality include but are not limited to: history of drug abuse/ addiction; injection drug use, street drug use, drug mixing, prescription drug misuse, multiple medication use, and history of mental disorders.^{5,6}

WHAT RAMSEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS DOING

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Information to note

- The age-adjusted overdose death rate for Ramsey County in 2016 was higher than other metro counties' rates and Minnesota's rate.
- See Opioid Misuse and Death section of this document for additional information.

¹ Drug Overdose Death Rates. National Institute on Drug Abuse. <https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics/overdose-death-rates>. Updated August 2018. Accessed August 2018.

² Drug Overdose Deaths among Minnesota Residents 2000-2016. Minnesota Department of Health. http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/healthimprovement/content/documents-opioid/2016DrugOverdoseDeathReport_Final.pdf. Accessed August 2018.

³ Substance Abuse. Healthy People 2020. <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/substance-abuse/objectives>. Accessed August 2018.

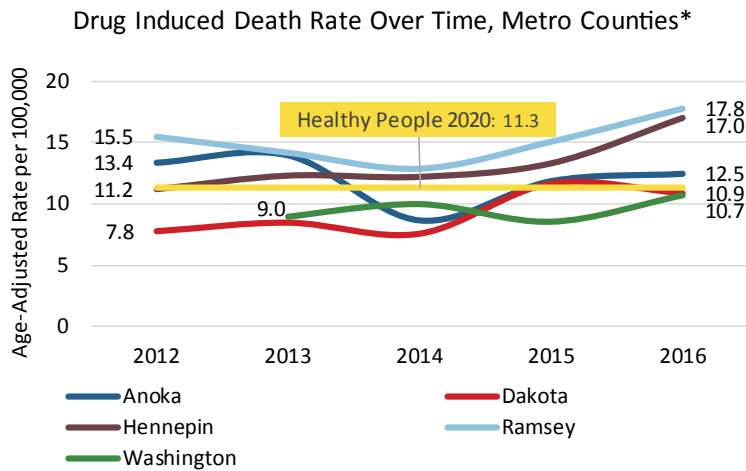
⁴ Rudd RA, Aleshire N, Zibbell JE, Gladden RM. Increases in drug and opioid overdose deaths – United States, 2000-2014. *MMWR*. 2016;64(50):1378-82. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6450a3.htm>. Published January 1, 2016. Accessed August 2018.

⁵ Drug Overdose. Healthline. <https://www.healthline.com/health/drug-overdose>. Accessed August 2018.

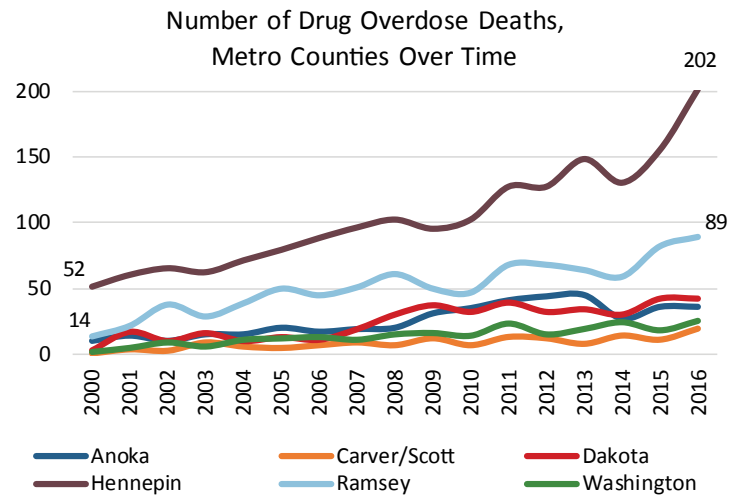
⁶ Heroin Overdose Data. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/heroin.html>. Accessed August 2018.

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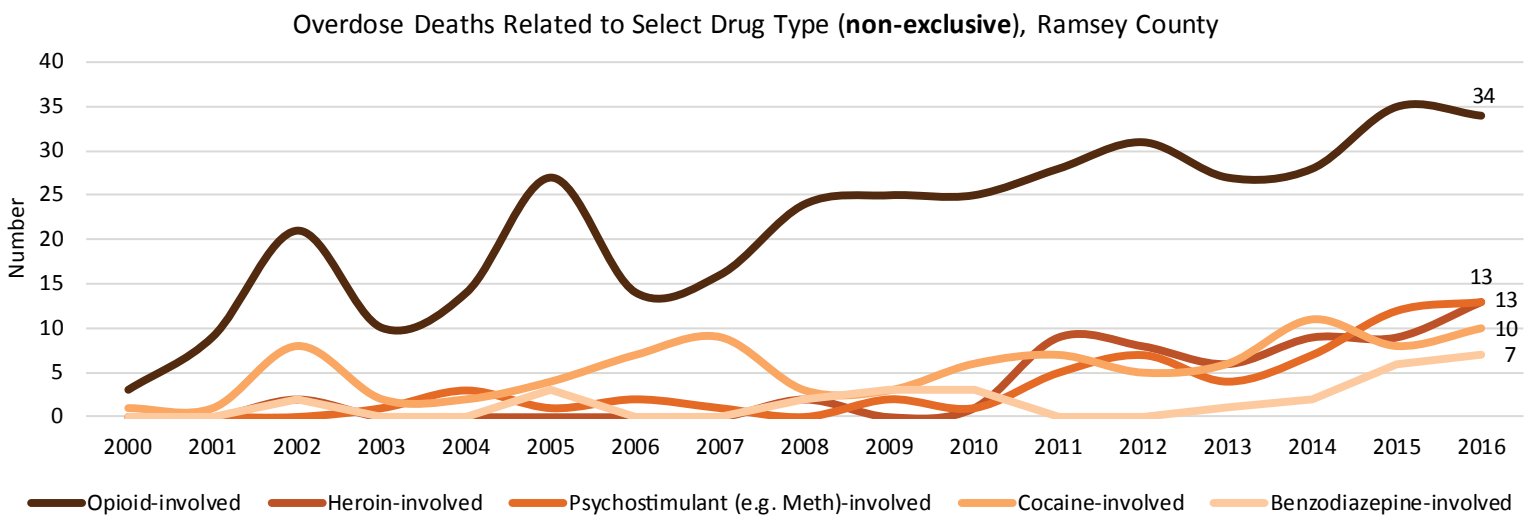
Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health provides data monitoring and reporting for this topic in order to better understand the overall health and current conditions in the community. The information may help inform community partners, policy makers or county program leadership.



*Data not reliable for 20 or less deaths (Carver/Scott Counties and 2012 Washington County)
Source: CDC Wonder.⁷



Source: Minnesota Department of Health.⁸



Source: Minnesota Department of Health.⁸

⁷ CDC Wonder: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://wonder.cdc.gov/>. Accessed August 2018.

⁸ Drug Overdose Deaths Among Minnesota Residents 2000-2016. Minnesota Department of Health Website. http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/healthimprovement/content/documents-opioid/2016DrugOverdoseDeathReport_Final.pdf. Accessed August 2018.