

# Population Health Vital Statistics Brief:

## Drug Overdoses, January - December 2023

The *Population Health Vital Statistics Data Brief* series was created to provide regular updates to the Community Health Assessment and to provide the community with additional important information about population health. For more information on the Community Health Assessment and to access other reports in the *Vital Statistics Data Brief* series, please visit [scph.org/assessments-reports](http://scph.org/assessments-reports)

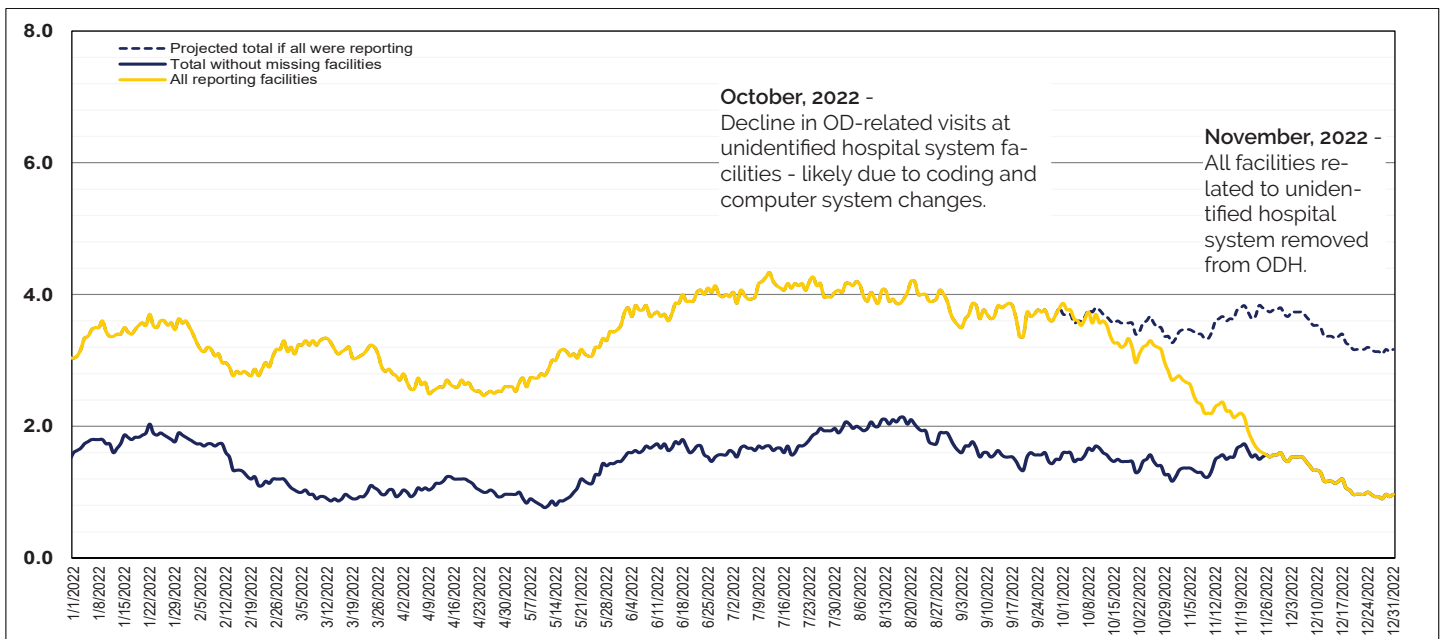


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## Drug Overdose Visits to Hospital Emergency Rooms

From January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023, participating emergency rooms serving Summit County residents have treated an estimated 392 drug overdoses (OD).\* As explained below, this figure is likely an understatement of the actual number of ER visits due to overdose. The facilities missing in 2023 accounted for 54% of all overdoses in 2022. If that same percentage held in 2023, there could have been as many as 730 more overdoses; an estimated total of 1,124 for 2023.

*Interruptions in normal surveillance reporting* -- Beginning in November 2022, one of Summit County's major hospital systems was removed from EpiCenter's emergency room surveillance reporting by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) due to computer system changes as well as upgrades and coding changes made nationally to the standard disease classification system. ODH removed current and historical data for this system until such time as ODH can ensure reporting and historical data is consistent and accurate. As of January 2024, that process is ongoing; no estimated resolution date has been made available. These changes have meant that the daily reporting of overdoses is an understatement of the actual number of overdose-related ER visits that are taking place. For this reason, overdose totals for the last two months of 2022 were projected based on long-term trends for non-reporting facilities. Figure 1 shows the average number of overdoses from 1/1/2022 until 9/30/2022 from all Summit County facilities (gold line). Throughout October, reported cases dropped sharply until the facilities in question were removed from ODH surveillance in November. The dashed blue line shows projected totals for the county had all facilities continued to report as normal.



**Figure 1: Estimated and Projected Overdose-Related ER Visits, 2022** -- Reported 30-day average overdose-related visits from 1/1 to 9/30 are shown, as are projected totals from 10/1 to 12/31/2022 Source: EpiCenter

\* Drug overdose data is retrieved from the state's EpiCenter surveillance tool. "Overdose" cases include all emergency visits by a Summit County resident to any medical provider in which drugs were identified as the cause of traumatic injury. Traumatic injuries due to drugs caused by suicide attempts, allergic reactions to normal medications, or accidental overdoses of everyday drugs (such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen) were removed where identified.

QR code link to SCPH Drug Dashboards



### Demographic Analysis of Drug Overdose ER Visits, 2023

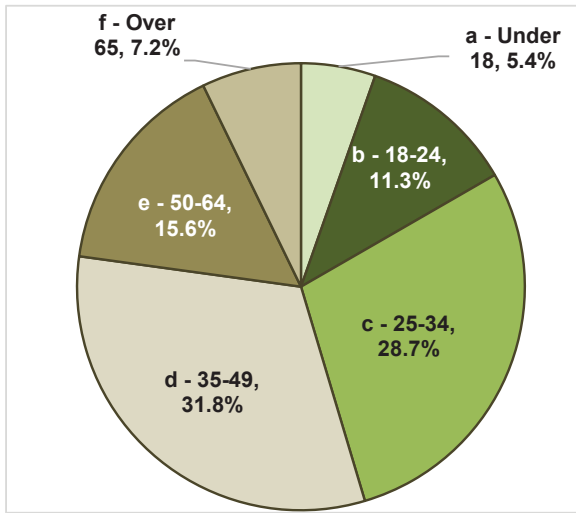


Figure 2 Age of ER Visitors. Source: EpiCenter/SCPH

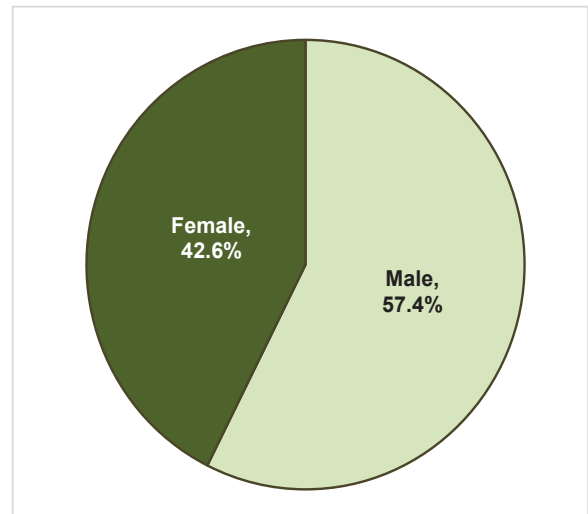


Figure 3: Sex of ER Visitors. Source: EpiCenter/SCPH

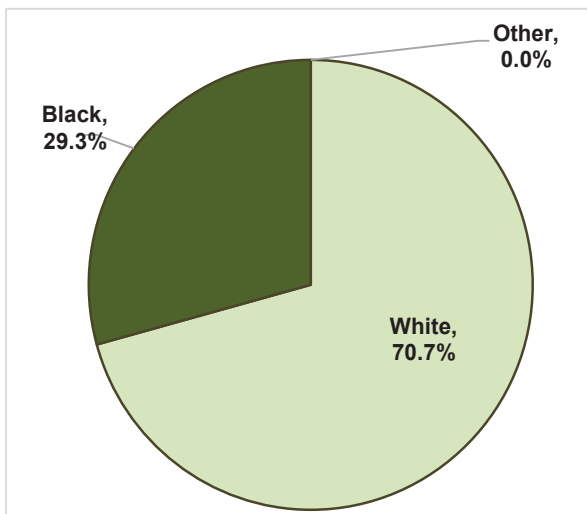


Figure 4: Race of ER Visitors. Source: EpiCenter/SCPH

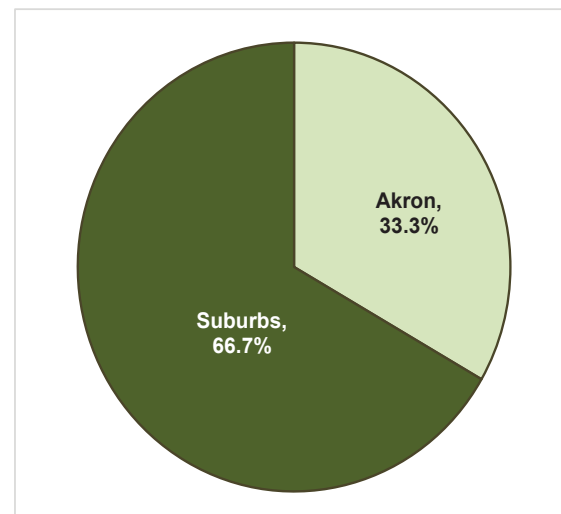


Figure 5: Location of ER Visitors. Source: EpiCenter/SCPH

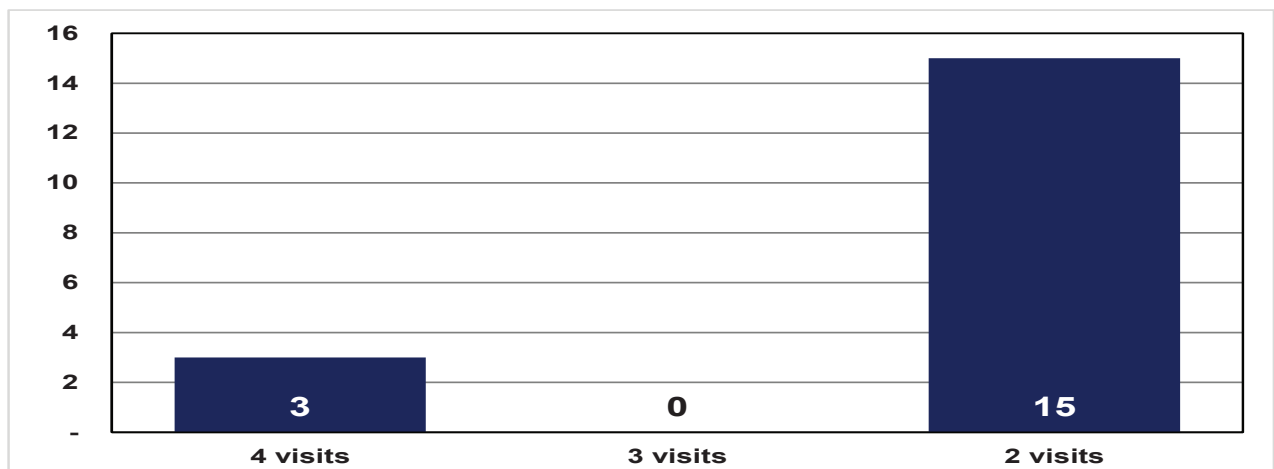


Figure 7: Number of patients with multiple visits in 2023, by number of visits. Source: EpiCenter/SCPH

**Deaths Caused by Drug Overdose, 2023:** As of Dec. 2023, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) reports a total of 186 overdose deaths in 2023. However, these figures are preliminary. Preliminary totals for 2023 from the Summit County Medical Examiner (SCME) show 194 presumed overdose deaths as of the end of 2023. Final figures from both ODH and SCME should be available by mid-2024. Below is a demographic profile for those 186 overdose deaths reported by ODH so far:

**Race:** Nearly three-quarters of OD deaths were White and 24% were Black.

**Age:** Nearly half of all OD deaths were between ages 25 and 44.

**Sex:** More than two-thirds of OD deaths were male.

**Substances involved:** The vast majority of OD deaths involve fentanyl (78%). More than one-third involve methamphetamines, while nearly one-in-three involve cocaine. It should be noted that 86% of overdose victims were found to have taken more than one substance, so percentages will add up to more than 100%.

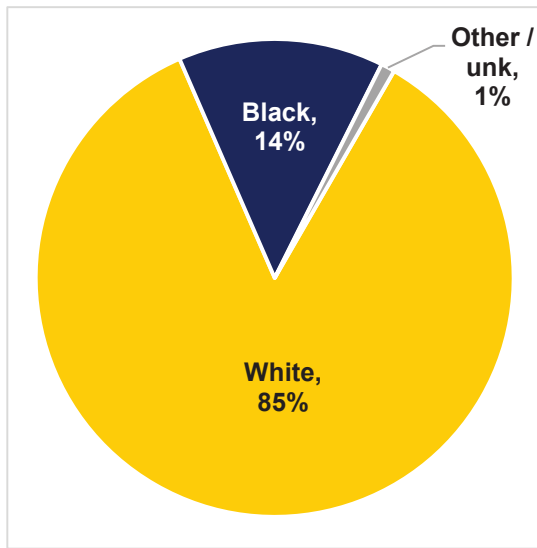


Figure 6: Race of Overdose Deaths, 2023, Source: Ohio Department of Health Death Certificate database, SCPH

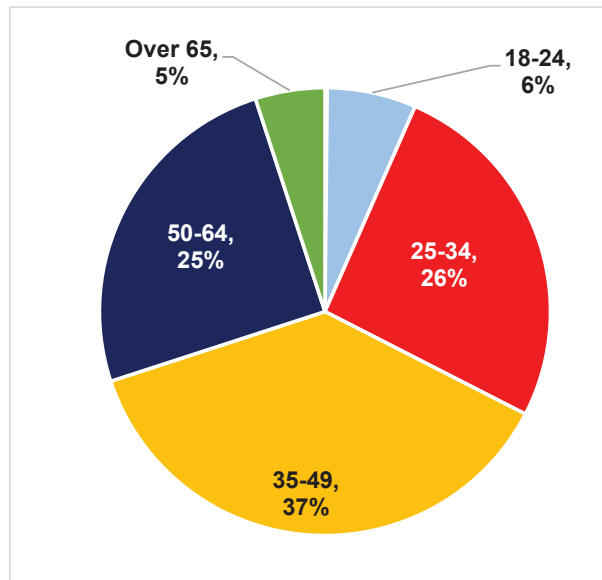


Figure 7: Age of Overdose Deaths, 2023, Source: Ohio Department of Health Death Certificate database, SCPH

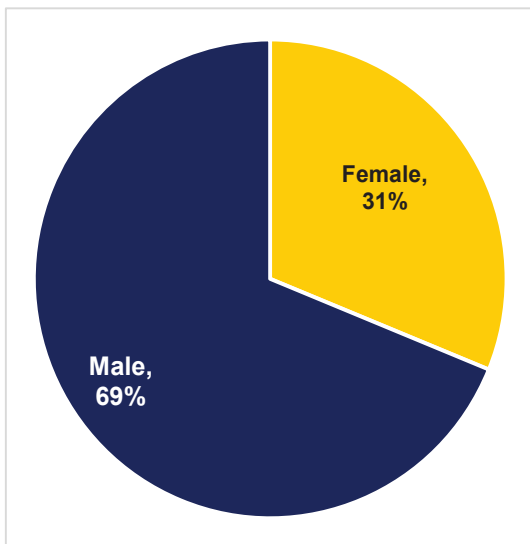


Figure 8: Sex of Overdose Deaths, 2023, Source: Ohio Department of Health Death Certificate database, SCPH

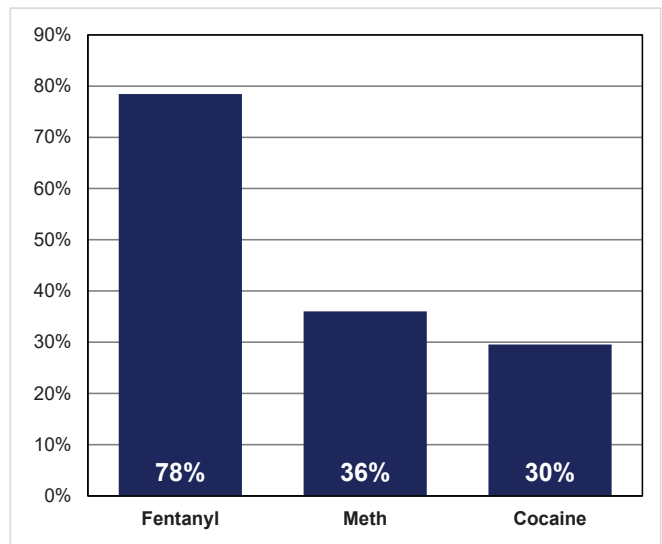
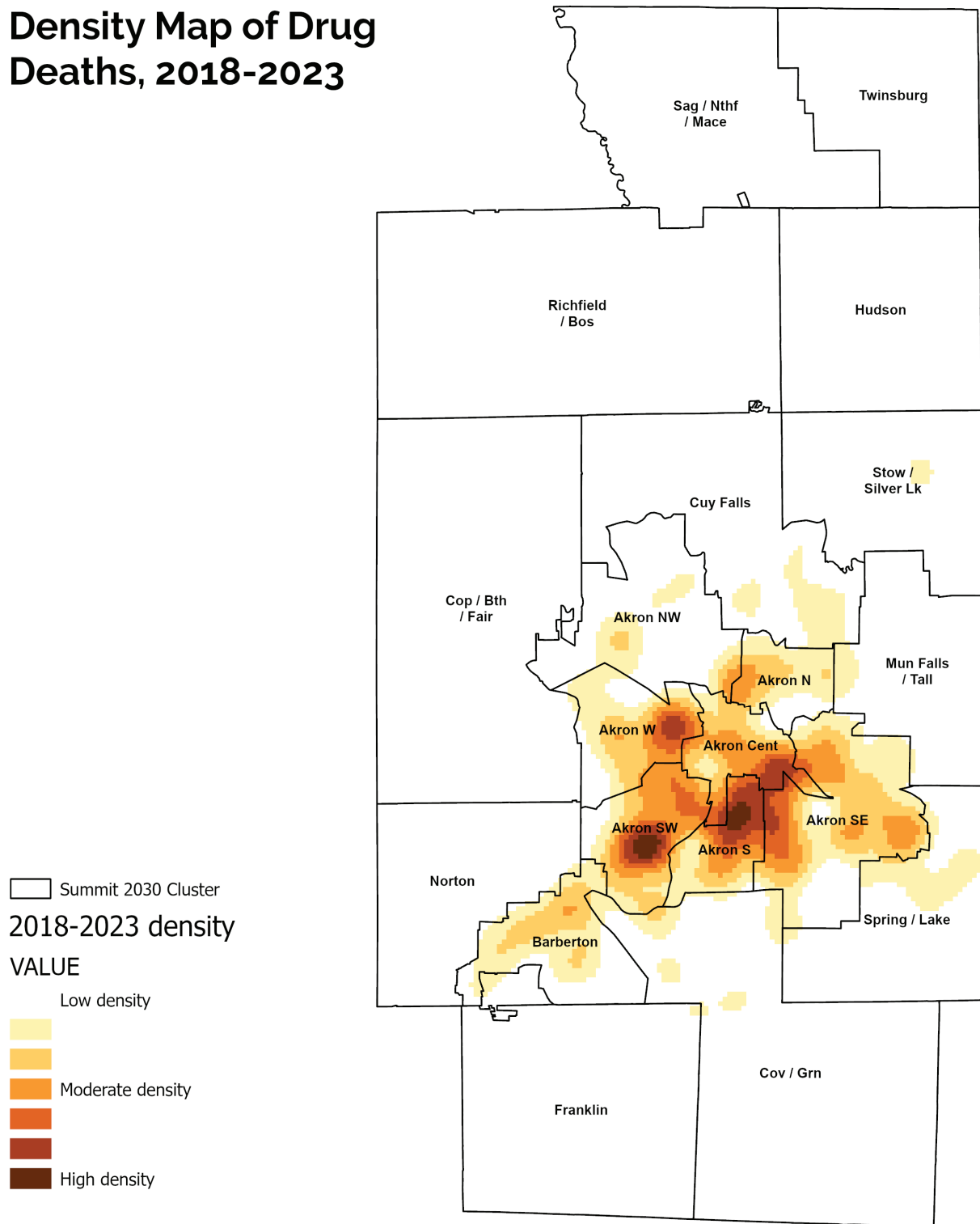


Figure 9: Top 3 Substances Found in Overdose Fatalities, 2023, Source: Ohio Department of Health Death Certificate, SCPH

# Density Map of Drug Deaths, 2018-2023



Map 1: Density Map of OD Deaths 2018-2023  
Source: ODH death certificate database, SCPH

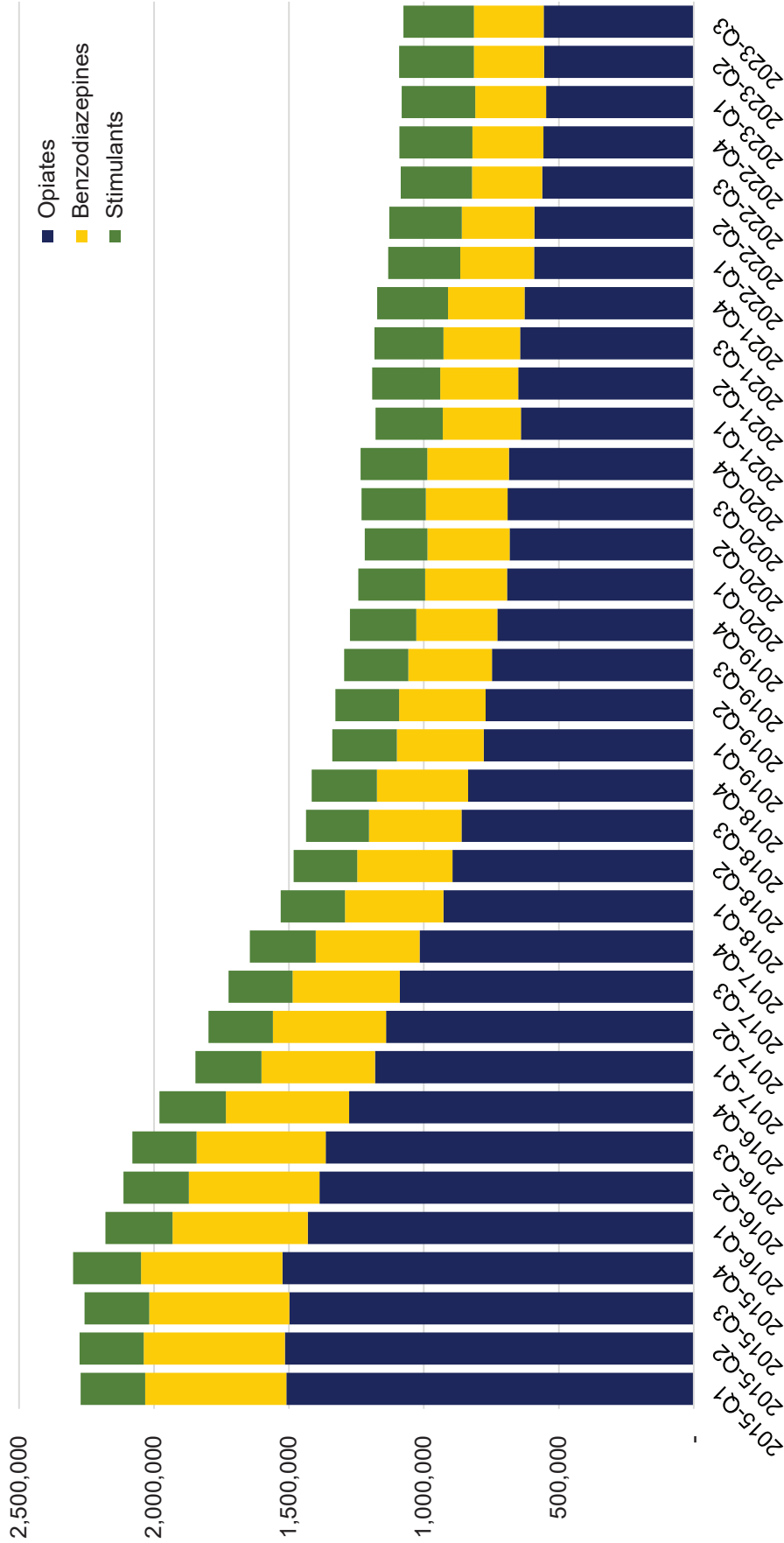


Figure 10: Number Of Doses Of Each Type Of Prescription Drug Per 100,000 Population, By Quarter  
 Source: Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System (OARRS)

Figure 10 presents the number of doses of the three largest categories of controlled prescription drugs tracked by Ohio's OARRS system per 100,000 population. \* "Doses" includes solid dose equivalents only (tablets, capsules and patches). In the 1st quarter of 2015, Summit County had more than 2 million doses of opiates, benzodiazepines, and stimulants dispensed per 100,000 population. About 1.5 million of those doses were opiates. By the 3rd quarter of 2023, that figure had dropped to just over 1 million doses per 100,000 population, 550,000 of which were opiates.

\* The OARRS prescription tracking system was established in 2006 and is housed at the Ohio Board of Pharmacy. According to the OARRS website: "OARRS collects information on all out-patient prescriptions for controlled substances and one non-controlled substance (gabapentin) dispensed by Ohio-licensed pharmacies and personally furnished by Ohio prescribers... OARRS is a tool that can be used to address prescription drug diversion and abuse. It serves multiple functions, including: patient care tool; drug epidemic early warning system; and drug diversion and insurance fraud investigative tool." It is important to note that these figures include doses actually dispensed for all purposes, whether legitimately used or abused.

## Trends In Substance Abuse, Akron-Canton Region

The table below presents data from "Drug Abuse Trends in the Akron-Canton Region, January - June 2023" published by the *Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring Network* (OSAM). The data in this report highlights emerging trends over the same time period in the previous year and provides some insight on how those trends impact today's overdose picture. The report relies primarily on input by focus groups made up of drug users, community professionals, service providers, and law enforcement. The summary of the findings for the Akron-Canton area can be found in the table below:

### Summary of Drug Trends in the Akron-Canton Region, January - June 2023

Drug	Current availability	Availability change	BCI case incidence change	Most available form	MH Urinalysis test results	GPRA intake - % positive
Powdered cocaine	<b>Moderate / High</b>	No change	<b>Increase</b>		3.2%	11.6%
Crack cocaine	<b>High</b>	No change	<b>Increase</b>		3.2%	11.6%
Heroin (unadulterated)	<b>Low</b>	No change	<b>Increase</b>	Brown powdered	0.2%	14.9%
Fentanyl	<b>High</b>	No change	<b>Increase</b>		4.1%	NA
Prescription opioids	<b>Low</b>	No change	No change	OxyContin / Percocet	9.3% (Oxy) / 15.2% (other)	3.9%
Buprenorphine	<b>High</b>	No change	No change		NA	NA
Sedative-Hypnotics	<b>Moderate / High</b>	No change	Xanax ( <b>Increase</b> ) / Klonopin (few cases)	Xanax / Klonopin	7.5%	7.2%
Marijuana	<b>High</b>	No change	No change		19.3%	22.1%
Methamphetamine	<b>High</b>	No change	<b>Increase</b>		5.4%	23.8%

MH Urinalysis - Percent of tests for each substance conducted by Millennium Health on urine samples that were positive for the named substance

GPRA Intake - Percent of people entering publicly-funded SUD treatment programs that reported using the named substance during the past 30 days before intake

The full *Drug Trends Monitoring Report* can be downloaded here:

<https://mha.ohio.gov/research-and-data/data-and-reports/osam/drug-trend-reports>