

The objective of this report is to provide education and increase awareness in the Nashville community about the local drug overdose epidemic.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 2021 Notable Trends

#### Suspected Fatal Drug Overdoses

**Number of Overdose Deaths:** In 2021, there were 712 suspected drug overdose deaths, representing a 15% increase compared to 2020 (previously the deadliest year on record), where 621 overdose deaths were reported.

**Fentanyl:** Seventy-four percent of overdose-related toxicology reports in 2021 detected fentanyl, a synthetic opioid pain reliever that has been the main driver in the increased number of drug overdose deaths in Nashville.

**Polysubstance Epidemic:** The most frequently detected substances in 2021 were fentanyl, cocaine, and methamphetamine.

**Demographics:** Sixty-seven percent of suspected drug overdose deaths were males while the majority of deaths have occurred among 35-44 year olds (28%).

#### Suspected Nonfatal Drug Overdose-related Emergency Department (ED) Visits

**Number of Overdose-related ED Visits:** In 2021, there were 2,583 drug overdose-related ED visits compared to 2,591 visits in 2020 (-0.3% change).

**Drug/Substance Category:** Sixty-one percent of overdose-related ED visits in 2021 involved non-heroin opioids followed by heroin (34%) and stimulants (5%). This finding indicates a continued shift away from heroin and towards synthetic opioids and stimulants in Nashville.

**Demographics:** Approximately 7 out of 10 drug overdose-related ED visits in Nashville were among males. By age group, 34% of drug overdose-related ED visits occurred among individuals 25-34 years old.

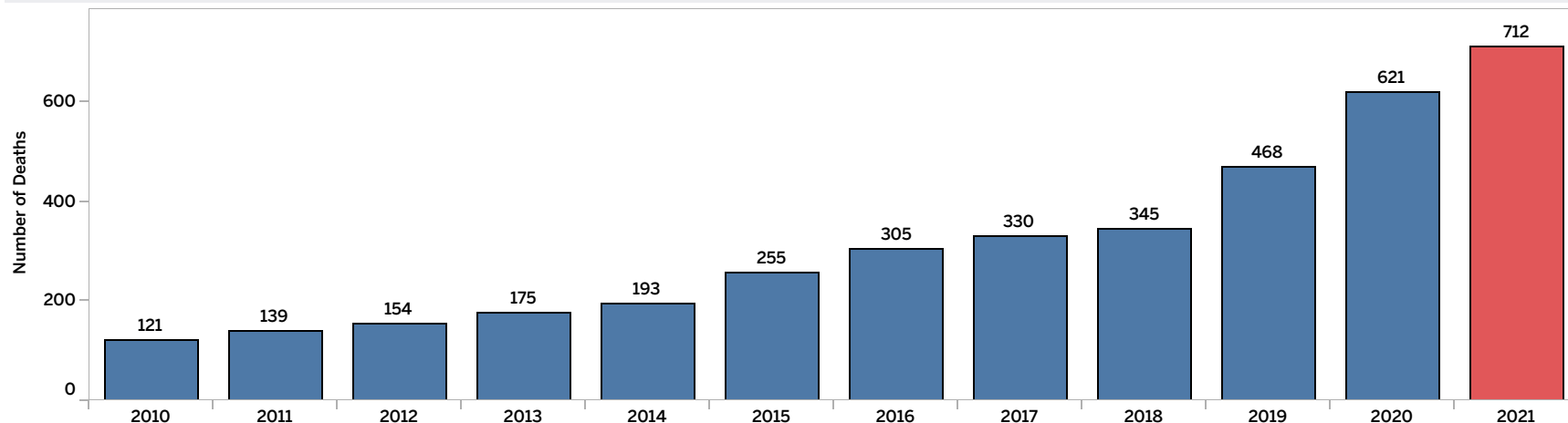
#### Suspected Drug Overdoses Requiring Response by Nashville Fire Department Emergency Medical Services (NFD-EMS)

**Number of Suspected Overdose Incidents Requiring NFD-EMS Response:** In 2021, there 5,746 suspected drug overdoses requiring NFD-EMS response, representing a 1% decrease compared to 2020 where 5,819 incidents were reported.

**Naloxone Administration:** Among suspected drug overdoses where naloxone was given, 34% of incidents during the 4th quarter required multiple doses; during the 3rd quarter of 2021, 28% of such incidents required multiple doses of naloxone.

**Demographics:** Approximately two-thirds of suspected drug overdoses in Nashville were among males. This trend has remained consistent over the last several years. By age group, one-third of all suspected drug overdoses occurred among individuals 25-34 years old.

#### Suspected Fatal Drug Overdoses, 2010-2021 - Davidson County, TN



Note: Data pertaining to suspected drug overdose deaths are not currently finalized (including incidents occurring between October-December 2021). This information will be updated in subsequent reports. These data represent deaths accessed from the Death Investigation and Decedent Information Database that are suspected to be drug overdose-related. Further, these deaths have occurred within Davidson County; cases are included in this total regardless of resident status.

# Quarterly Drug Overdose Surveillance Update | 4th Quarter 2021

Overdose Response Program - Metro Public Health Department of Nashville/Davidson County



## Suspected Fatal Drug Overdoses

2021 | January 1-December 31

### Notable Trends

**Overdose Deaths:** In 2021, there were 712 suspected drug overdose deaths, representing a 15% increase compared to 2020, where 621 overdose deaths were reported.

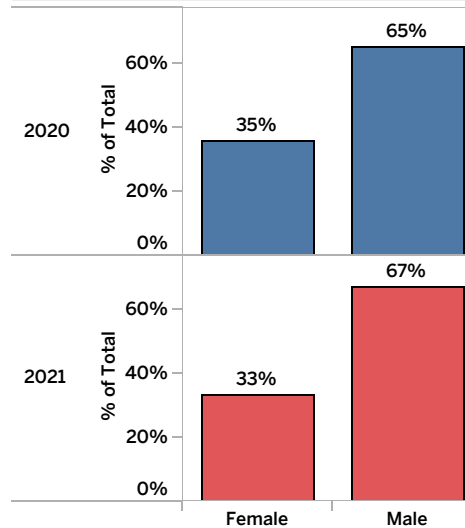
**Fentanyl:** Seventy-four percent of overdose-related toxicology reports in 2021 detected fentanyl, a synthetic opioid pain reliever that has been the main driver in the increased number of drug overdose deaths in Nashville.

**Polysubstance Epidemic:** The most frequently detected substances in 2021 were fentanyl, cocaine, and methamphetamine.

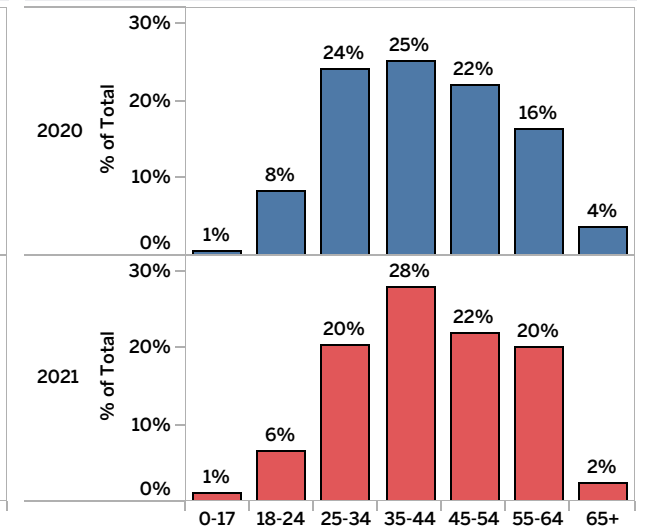
**Emerging Substance:** Fluorofentanyl, a fentanyl analog with reported potency similar to fentanyl, was first detected in Davidson County in the 3rd quarter of 2020. It was the most frequently detected fentanyl analog in 2021.

**Demographics:** Sixty-seven percent of suspected drug overdose deaths were males while the majority of deaths have occurred among 35-44 year olds (28%).

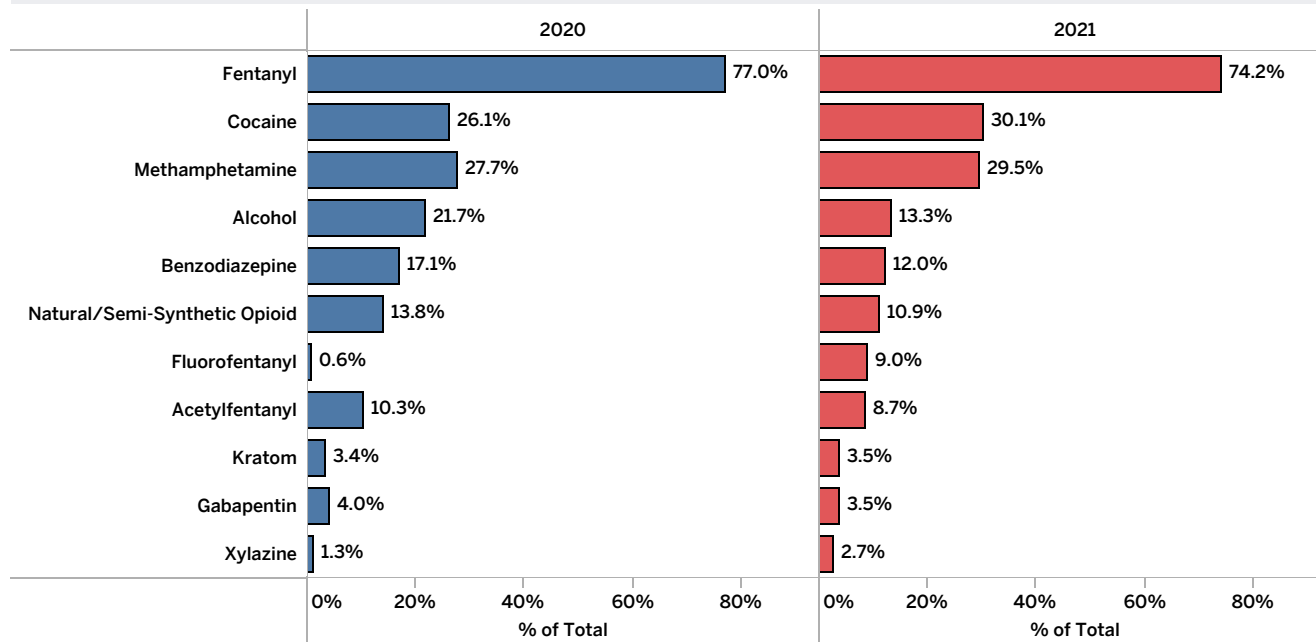
Sex, 2020-2021



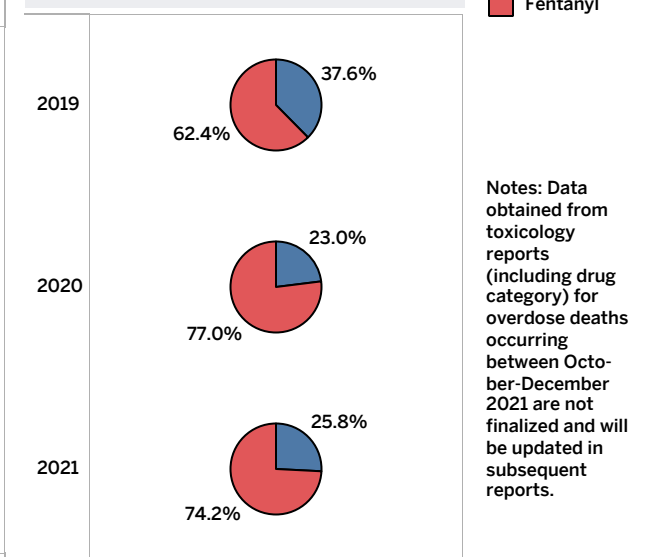
Age Group (years), 2020-2021



Substances Detected among Suspected Overdose Deaths, 2020-2021



Fentanyl Detection among Suspected Overdose Deaths, 2019-2021



Notes: Data obtained from toxicology reports (including drug category) for overdose deaths occurring between October-December 2021 are not finalized and will be updated in subsequent reports.

## Geospatial Trends: Suspected Fatal Drug Overdoses

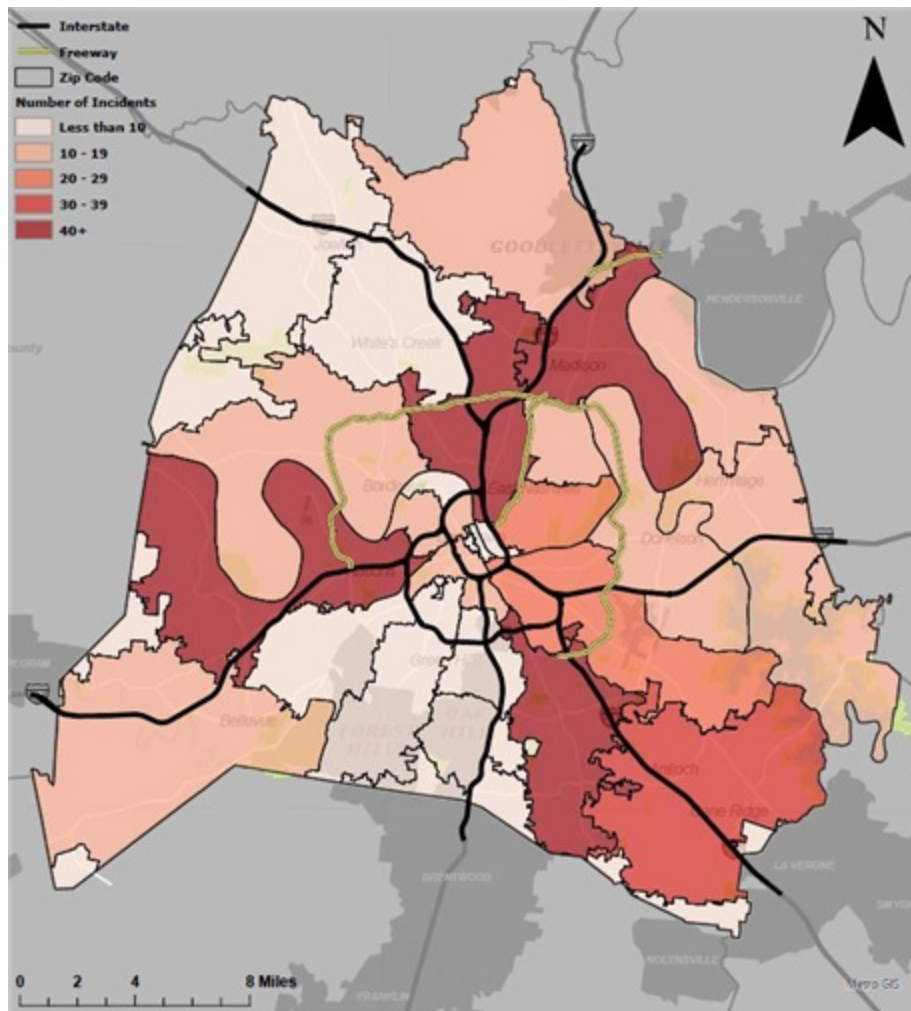
### Suspected Fatal Drug Overdoses

- In 2021, the majority of suspected overdose deaths occurred in ZIP Codes 37115, 37013, 37211, 37207, and 37209.

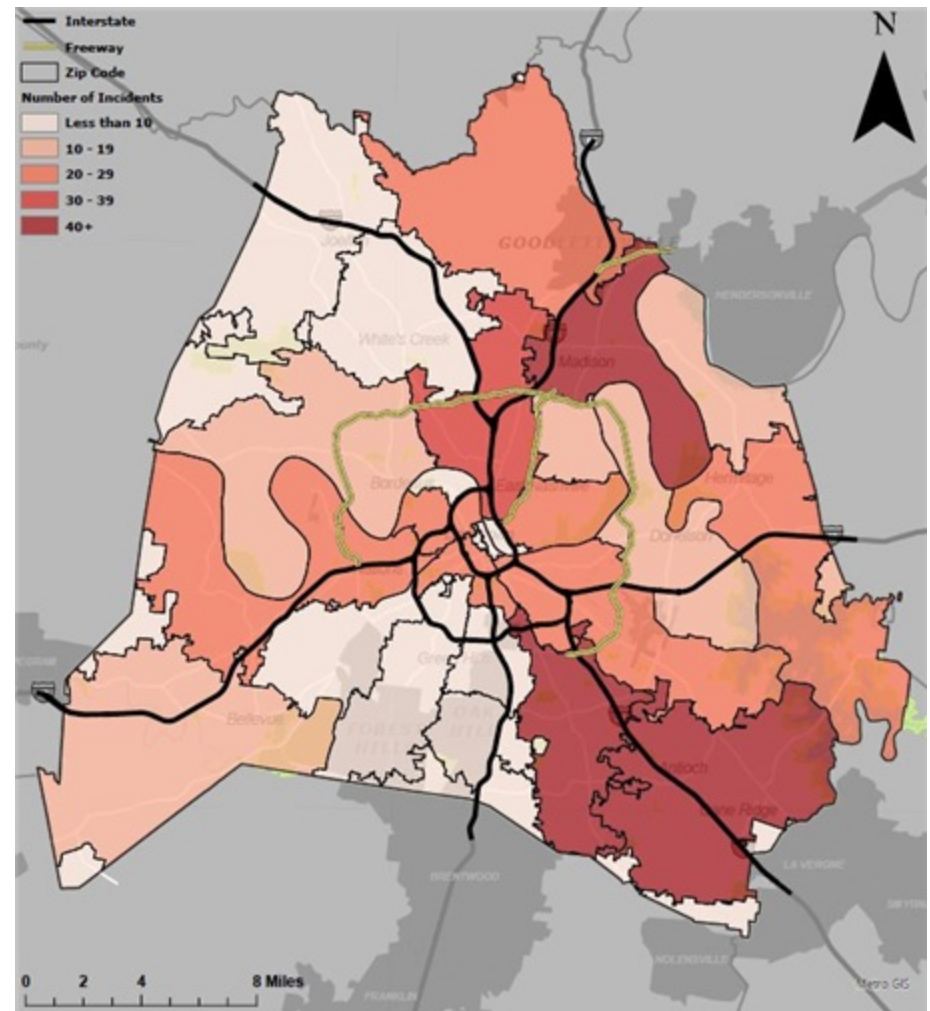
- Compared to 2020, the largest increases in overdose deaths occurred in ZIP Codes 37076 (+93%), 37208 (+73%), and 37013 (+42%); the largest decreases have been observed in ZIP Codes 37209 (-33%), 37207 (-13%), and 37210 (-9%).

Number of Suspected Fatal Drug Overdoses by Injury ZIP Code

January-December 2020



January-December 2021



## Suspected Nonfatal Drug Overdose-related ED Visits

2021 | January 1-December 31

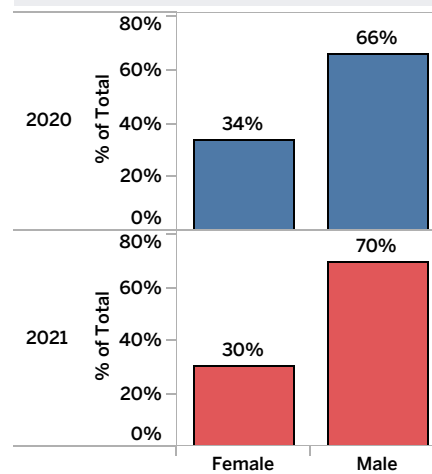
### Notable Trends

**Overdose-related ED Visits:** In 2021, there were 2,583 drug overdose-related ED visits compared to 2,591 visits in 2020 (-0.3% change).

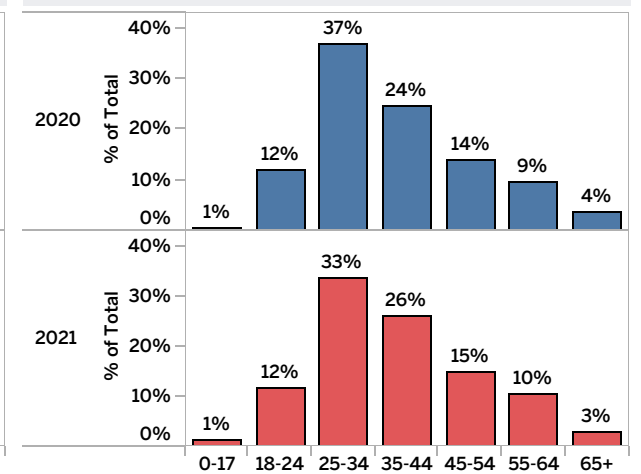
**Drug/Substance Category:** Sixty-one percent of overdose-related ED visits in 2021 involved non-heroin opioids followed by heroin (34%) and stimulants (5%). This finding indicates a continued shift away from heroin and towards synthetic opioids and stimulants in Nashville.

**Demographics:** Approximately 7 out of 10 drug overdose-related ED visits in Nashville were among males. By age group, 34% of drug overdose-related ED visits occurred among individuals 25-34 years old.

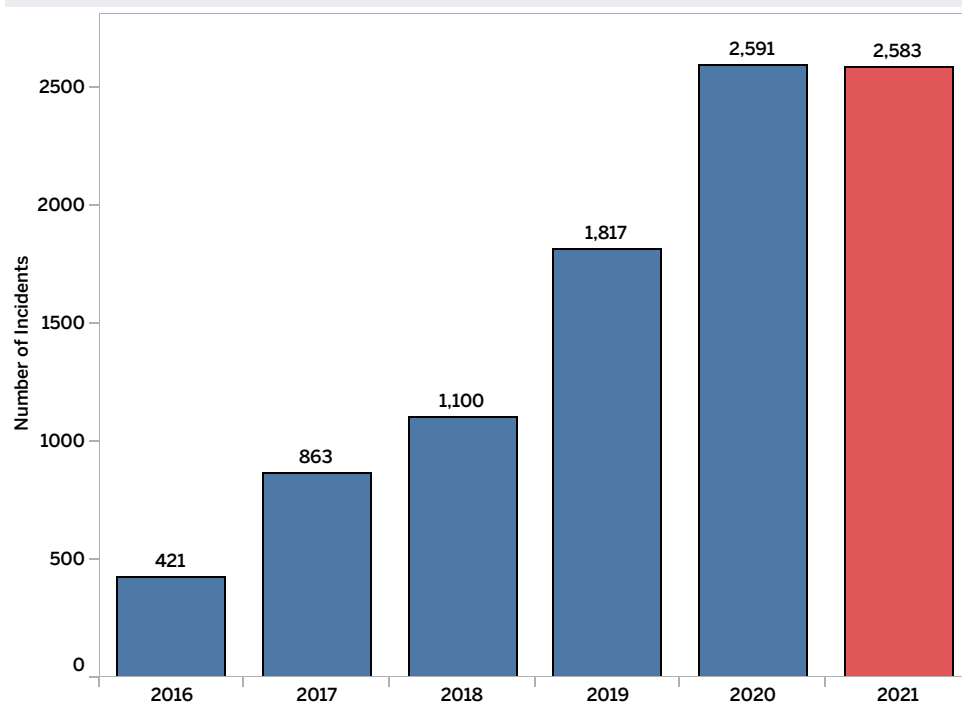
Sex, 2020-2021



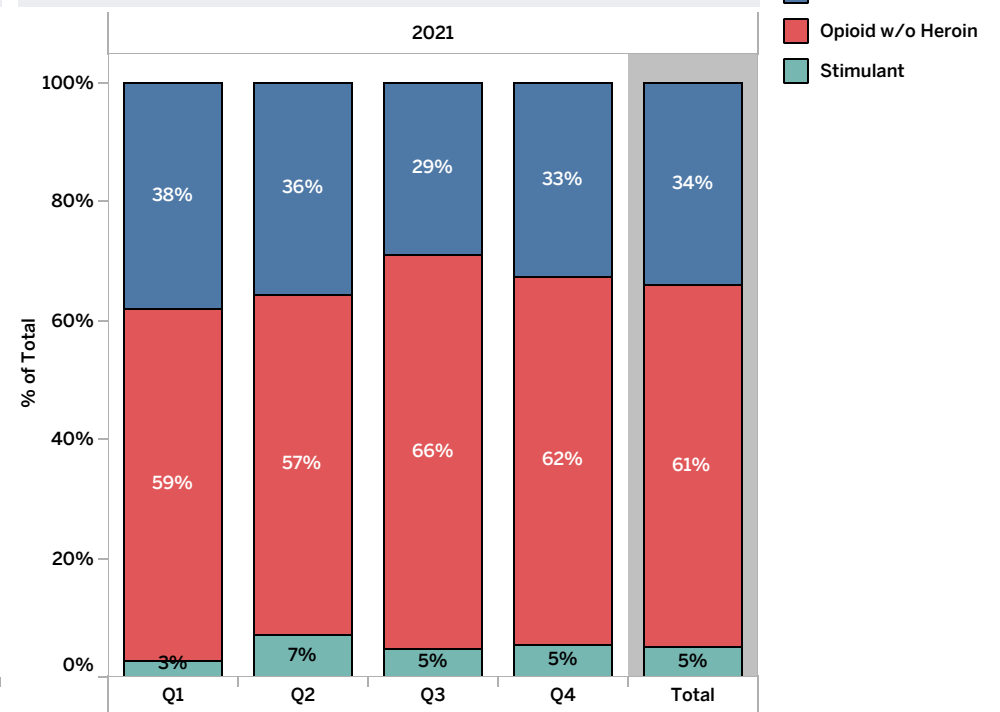
Age Group, 2020-2021



Nonfatal Drug Overdose-related ED Visits - 2016-2021



Drug/Substance Category by Quarter, 2020-2021





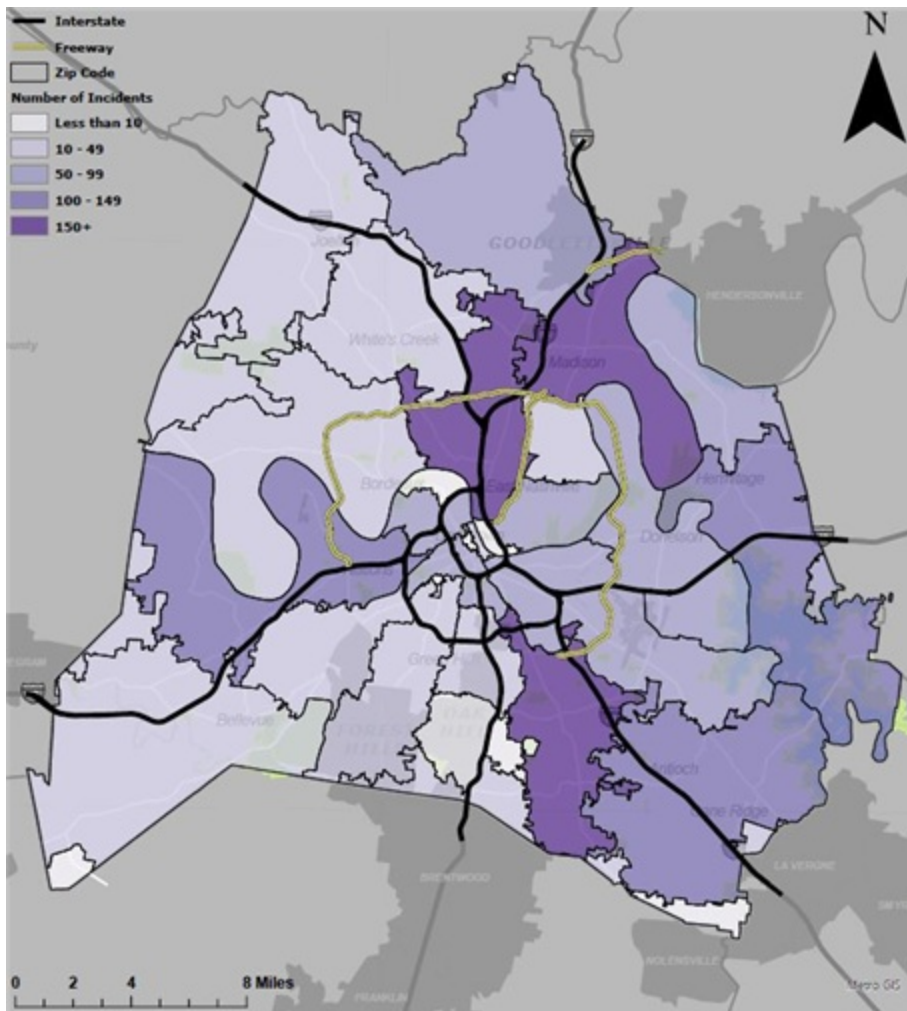
## Geospatial Trends: Suspected Nonfatal Drug Overdose-related ED Visits

### Suspected Nonfatal Drug Overdose-related ED Visits

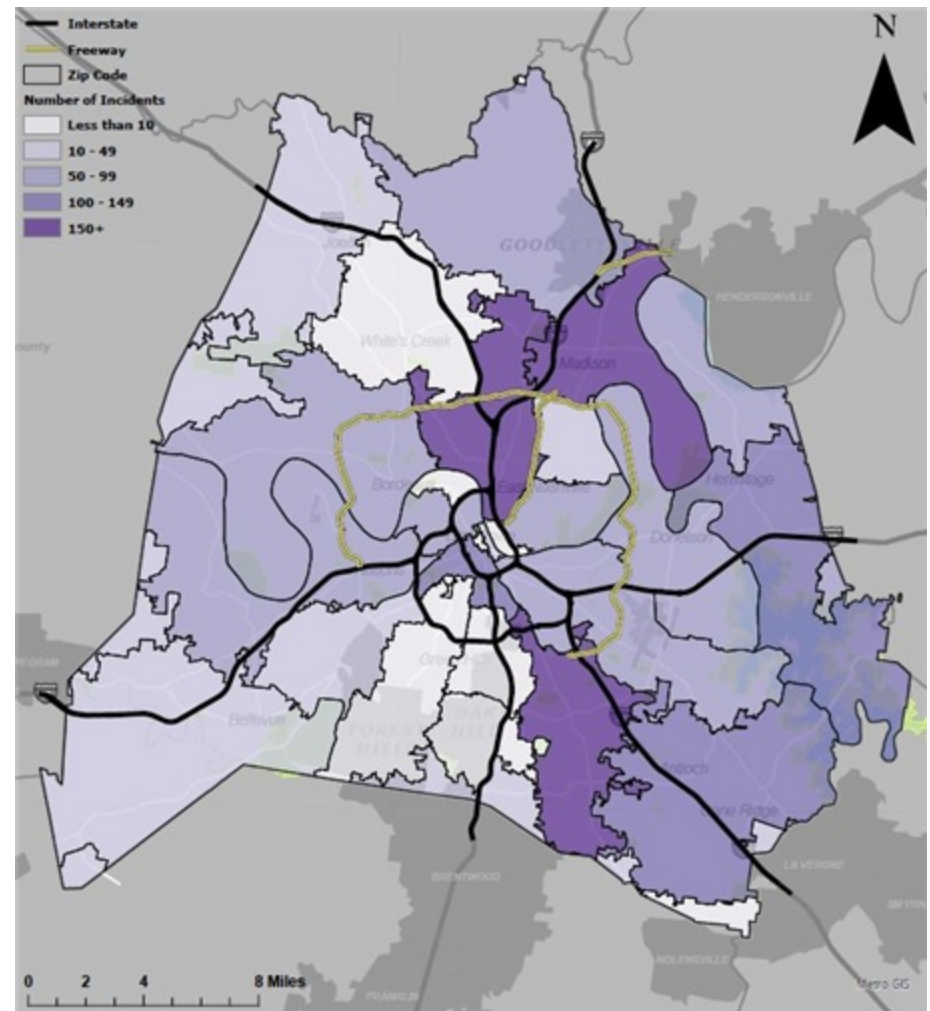
- In 2021, the majority of overdose-related ED visits have occurred among patients from ZIP Codes 37207, 37211, 37115, 37203, and 37076.
- Compared to 2020, the largest increases in overdose incidents have occurred among patients from ZIP Codes 37218 (+91%), 37206 (+38%), and 37086 (+20%); the largest decreases were reported from ZIP Codes 37217 (-45%), 37072 (-21%), and 37013 (-20%).

Number of Nonfatal Drug Overdose-related ED Visits by Patient ZIP Code

January-December 2020



January-December 2021



## Suspected Drug Overdoses Requiring NFD-EMS Response

2021 | January 1-December 31

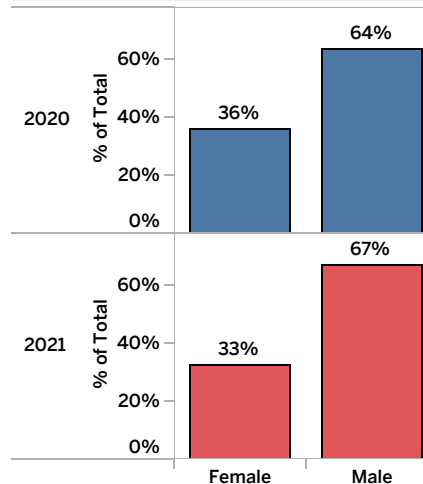
### Notable Trends

**Suspected Overdoses Requiring NFD-EMS Response:** In 2021, there 5,746 suspected drug overdoses requiring NFD-EMS response, representing a 1% decrease compared to 2020 where 5,819 incidents were reported. The highest number of incidents were reported in the 3rd quarter in 2021 (bottom right).

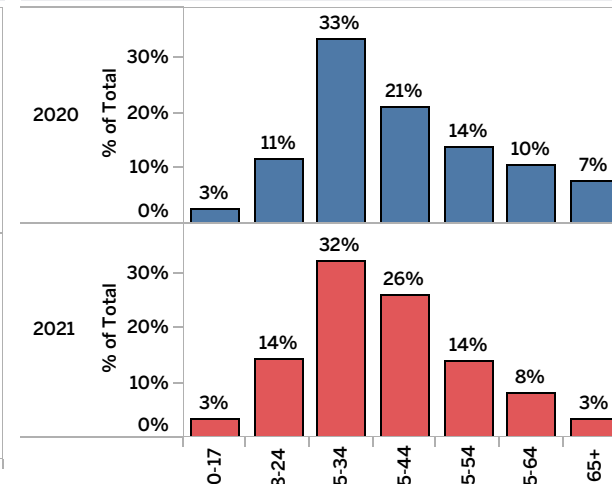
**Naloxone Administration:** Among suspected drug overdoses where naloxone was given, 34% of incidents during the 4th quarter required multiple doses; during the 3rd quarter of 2021, 28% of such incidents required multiple doses of naloxone.

**Demographics:** Approximately two-thirds of suspected drug overdoses in Nashville were among males. This trend has remained consistent over the last several years. By age group, one-third of all suspected drug overdoses occurred among individuals 25-34 years old.

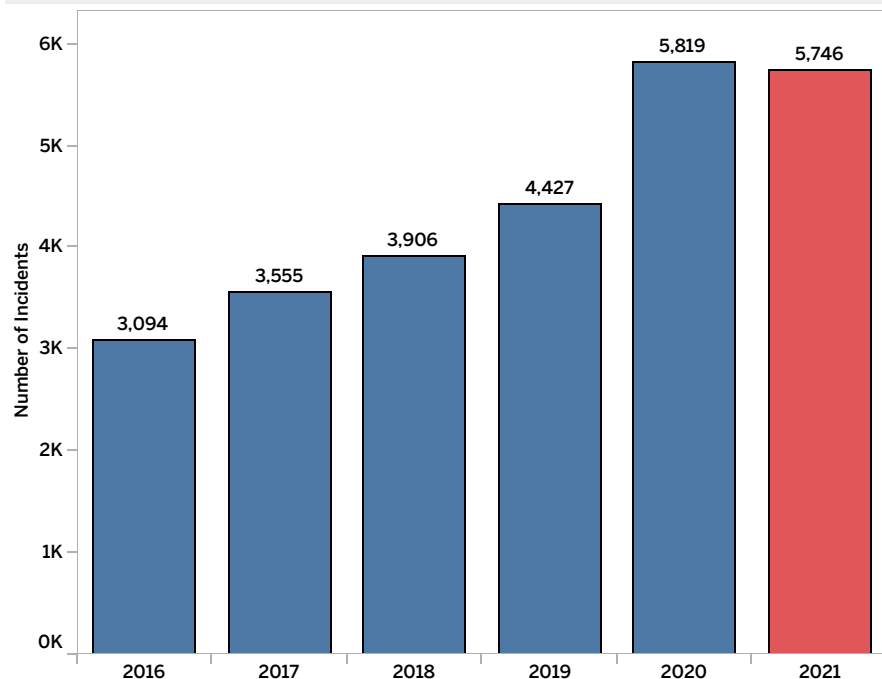
Sex, 2020-2021



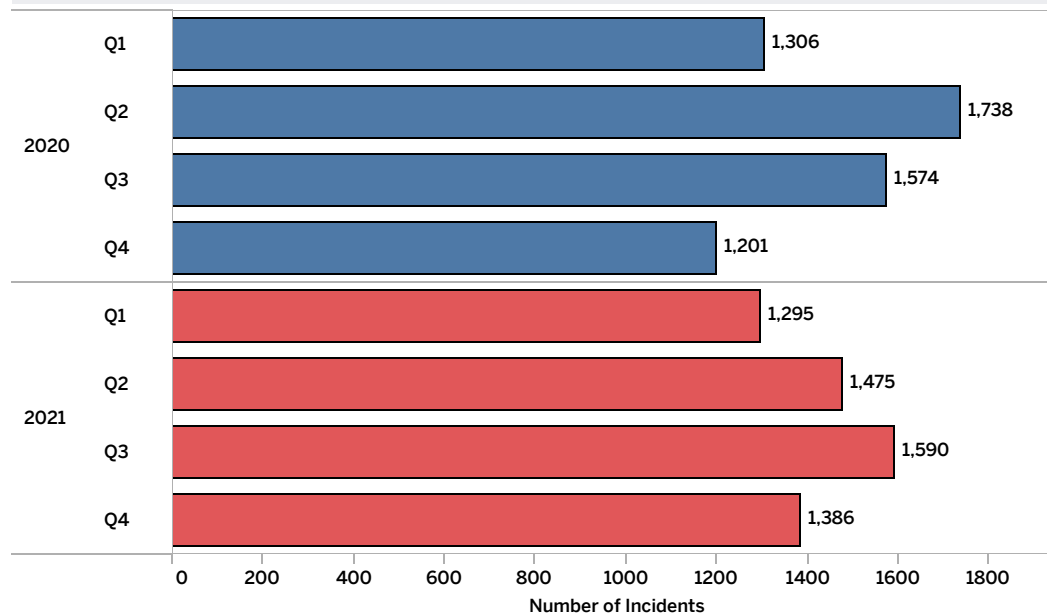
Age Group (years), 2020-2021



Suspected Drug Overdoses Requiring NFD-EMS Response - 2016-2021



Suspected Drug Overdoses Requiring NFD-EMS Response by Quarter, 2020-2021



## Geospatial Trends: Suspected Drug Overdoses Requiring NFD-EMS Response

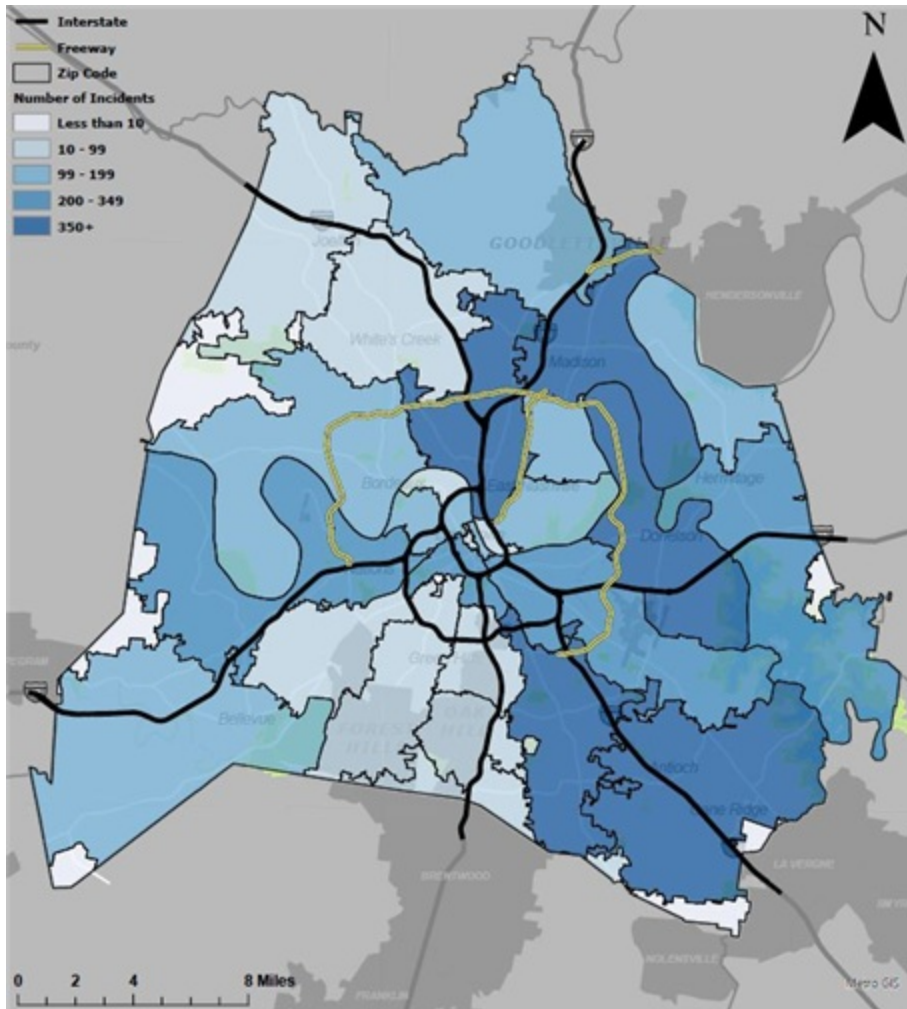
### Suspected Drug Overdoses Requiring NFD-EMS Response

- In 2021, the majority of suspected drug overdoses have occurred in ZIP Codes 37211, 37115, 37207, 37013, and 37214.

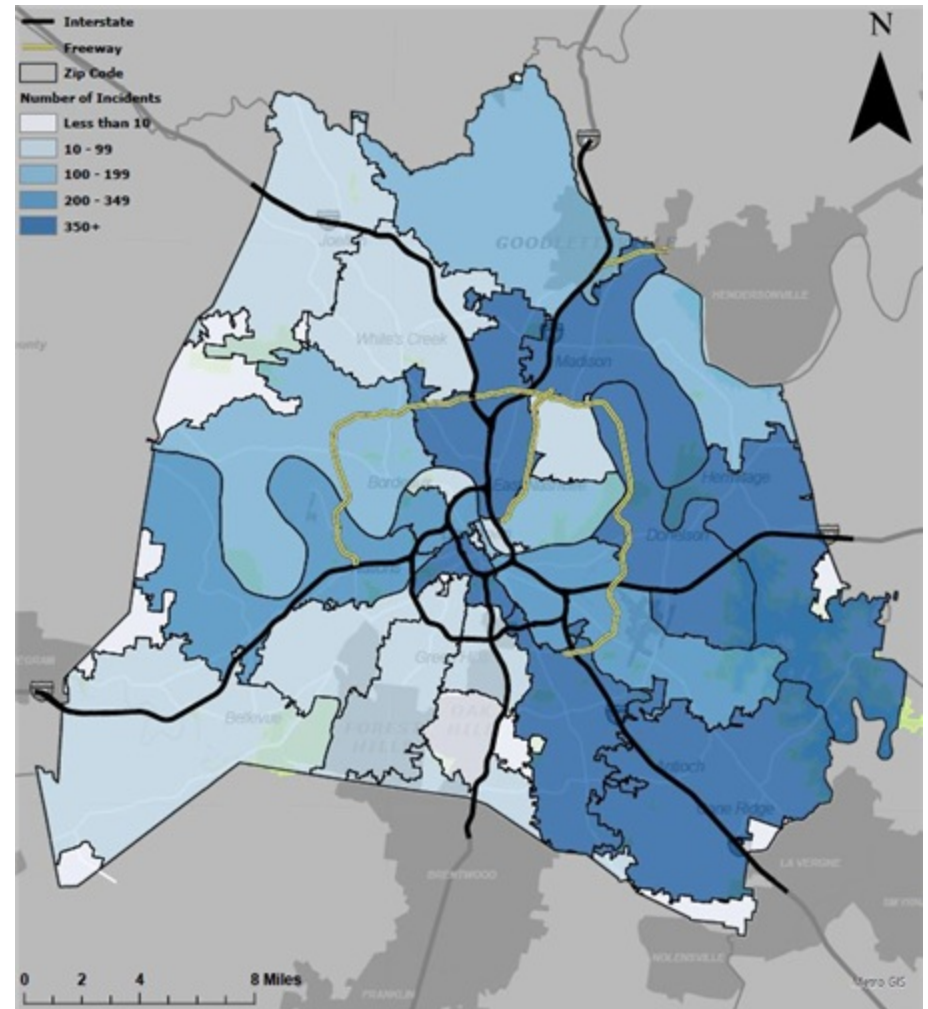
- Compared to 2020, the largest increases in overdose incidents have occurred in ZIP Codes 37219 (+100%), 37205 (+66%), and 37203 (+37%); the largest decreases were reported in ZIP Codes 37027 (-29%), 37138 (-28%), and 37218 (-28%).

Number of Suspected Drug Overdoses Requiring NFD-EMS Response by Incident ZIP Code

January-December 2020



January-December 2021





## Resources for the Public

### Where to Find Help

#### Community Overdose Response Team

For those seeking treatment for drug addiction, the Community Overdose Response Team (CORT) can help. CORT is a free and confidential resource to help find drug and alcohol treatment for individuals who are at risk of an overdose. The service is offered free of charge regardless of health insurance status. The team works with an individual to determine the appropriate level of care (e.g., detox, residential, or outpatient treatment, etc.).

To make a referral or learn more about this resource for our community, **call CORT at 615-687-1701.**

#### Tennessee REDLINE

The purpose of the Tennessee REDLINE is to provide accurate, up-to-date alcohol, drug, problem gambling, and other addiction information and referrals to all citizens of Tennessee at their request even if you do not have health insurance.

- **Phone:** 1.800.889.9789 (toll free 24 hours/7 days)
- **Website:** <https://www.tn.gov/opioids/treatment/how-to-get-help.html>

### Additional Information

#### Naloxone Training

- For naloxone training, **call Nashville STARS at 615-393-6980.**

#### Overdose Signs

- Person is not responsive
- Fingertips or lips turn blue or grey
- Breathing is slow, shallow, or has stopped
- Person is gurgling or making snoring noises

#### What can you do if you see an opioid overdose?

- Call 911
- If you have naloxone, give the person naloxone and perform rescue breathing
- If no response after 2-3 minutes, give a second dose of naloxone
- Do not leave the person alone (help will arrive)
- If the person starts to breathe or becomes more alert, lay the person in the recovery position: put the person slightly on the left side so that their body is supported by a bent knee with their face turned to the side and bottom arm reaching out to stabilize the position

#### SPIKE Auto Text Program

Metro Public Health Department is collaborating with Partnership to End Addiction to implement the SPIKE Auto Text Program in Davidson County. The program will alert you when spikes in drug overdoses occur locally.

**Text SPIKE to 855-9-OD-KNOW (855-963-5669)** and follow the steps to get messages on your phone when overdose spikes occur. This service is FREE. You can learn more at <https://drugfree.org/spike/>.

#### Overdose Response Program – Drug Overdose Information

- **Website:** <https://www.nashville.gov/departments/health/drug-overdose-information>
- Contains various resources in English, Spanish, and Arabic.



**SPIKE Alerts by Text**  
Information that can save lives  
Get alerts about overdoses in your community



Partnership to End Addiction is working with organizations in your community to alert you when spikes in drug overdoses occur locally. This knowledge can help you take action to engage and protect your loved ones struggling with addiction.

**Why it matters:** Spike alerts can prompt families and community members to:

- 1 Have discussions about seeking treatment and/or using substances more safely
- 2 Protect people you care about by getting naloxone and learning how to use it
- 3 Talk to friends or loved ones who are not using substances about the risks of use
- 4 Advocate for and support efforts in your community to prevent overdoses

Text **SPIKE** to  
**855-9-OD-KNOW**  
**(855-963-5669)**

and follow the steps to  
get messages on your  
phone when overdose  
spikes occur.

**How it works:** Health and law enforcement officials can release a "spike alert" to the media in response to a pattern of drug overdoses within a community. Partnership to End Addiction's SPIKE Alerts by Text program informs you when these alerts are issued.



Learn more:  
[drugfree.org/spike](https://drugfree.org/spike)  
or scan QR code to sign up now

Partnership to End Addiction is a nonprofit working to transform how our nation addresses addiction. Learn more at [drugfree.org](https://drugfree.org).





## Footnotes and Supplemental Information

**\*\*If you have information on unusual overdose activity, please contact the Overdose Response Program\*\***

**Opioid.Response@nashville.gov | 615-340-0498**

### Notes

There may be additional fatal/nonfatal drug overdoses reported over this time period in subsequent reports as incidents that occurred between October-December 2021 are not yet finalized. Percent change where the cumulative total is less than 20 were not included due to the instability of calculations.

### Suspected Fatal Drug Overdoses

- Suspected fatal drug overdose data were accessed from the Death Investigation and Decedent Information (DIDI) database and ranged from 01/01/2010-12/31/2021. **Data represent deaths accessed from DIDI that are suspected to be drug overdose-related. Further, these deaths have occurred within Davidson County; cases are included in this total regardless of resident status.**

### Suspected Nonfatal Drug Overdose-related ED Visits

- Nonfatal drug overdose data were extracted from ESSENCE-TN and ranged from 01/01/2016-12/31/2021.
- Nonfatal drug overdose ED visits were captured by syndromic surveillance (ESSENCE-TN) by the following hospitals:
  - Nashville General Hospital, Saint Thomas Midtown Hospital, Saint Thomas West Hospital, TriStar Centennial Medical Center, TriStar Skyline Medical Center, TriStar Southern Hills Medical Center, TriStar Summit Medical Center, and Vanderbilt University Medical Center.
- Updated query language was utilized to capture nonfatal drug overdoses reported to ESSENCE in August 2020. This query was retroactively applied to previous time periods.
- ICD-10-CM diagnosis injury codes, in addition to chief complaint keyword queries, were used to capture nonfatal drug overdoses:
  - Opioid: T40.0, F11.1, F11.2, F11.9
  - Heroin: T40.1
  - Other opioid: T40.2
  - Methadone: T40.3
  - Other synthetic narcotic: T40.4
  - Cocaine: T40.5
  - Other/unspecified narcotic: T40.6
  - Amphetamine: T43.62
- Drug Category (page 3)
  - Opioids excluding Heroin: T40.0, T40.2-T40.4, T40.6, F11.1, F11.2, F11.9
  - Heroin: T40.1
  - Stimulant: T40.5, T43.62

### Suspected Drug Overdoses Requiring NFD-EMS Response

- Suspected drug overdose data were provided by the Nashville Fire Department EMS Database and ranged from 01/01/2016-12/31/2021.