

## Overdose Deaths Continue to Climb in Ohio for ALL Drug Categories

August 2016 - [Ohio Council of Behavioral Health & Family Services Providers](#) Contact: [Lori Criss](#), Associate Director

The Ohio Department of Health released the [2015 Ohio Drug Overdose Data](#) in August. The data clearly shows an increase in deaths from heroin and fentanyl at unprecedented rates. The administration highlighted the progress that is being made from policies and practices implemented in the past four years, namely the reduction in prescription opioids dispensed with 81 million fewer doses dispensed to Ohio patients in 2015 when compared to 2011. Ohio has also increased the use of the overdose reversal drug naloxone with nearly 20,000 doses administered by Ohio EMS in 2015. Without a doubt, policy efforts over the past five years are making an impact, but the sad truth is that in looking back to 2003, unintentional overdose deaths have increased in all categories.

Reports tout that the percentage of prescription opioid related deaths compared to all unintentional overdose deaths declined for the fourth year in a row. That sounds good until looking closer and realizing that the number of people dying from prescription opioid overdose isn't in meaningful decline (only five fewer people died in 2015 than in 2014), but the total number of people overdosing is increasing - almost 200% in the past decade and 21% in the past year, an increase of over 500 people from 2014 to 2015.

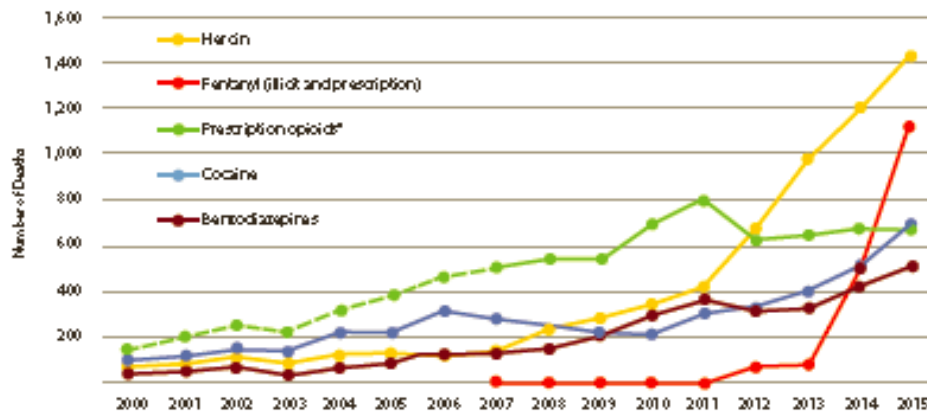
**This chart clearly shows that Ohio has an increasing rate of unhealthy and dangerous alcohol and drug use in all drug categories since 2003.** The age adjusted annual death rate from unintentional overdose death in 2003 was 5.8 people per 100,000 Ohioans. In 2015, that rate increased to 27.7.

<i>Data source: Ohio Department of Health, August 2016</i>	2003 death rate	2015 death rate	# Increased 2003 v. 2015	% Increase since 2003	2014 death rate	2015 death rate	# Increased in one year	% Increase in one year
Heroin	87	1424	1337	1537%	1196	1424	228	19%
Fentanyl*	4	1155	1151	28775%	503	1155	652	130%
Prescription opioids	221	667	446	202%	672	667	-5	-0.75%
Benzodiazepines	38	504	466	1226%	420	504	84	20%
Cocaine	140	685	545	389%	517	685	168	32%
Alcohol	40	380	340	850%	383	380	-3	-0.79%
Methadone	55	108	53	96%	104	108	4	4%
Hallucinogens	7	61	54	771%	49	61	12	24%
Barbiturates	5	19	14	280%	6	19	13	217%
Total unintentional poisonings	1020	3050	2030	199%	2531	3050	519	21%

\*Fentanyl deaths are from 2007 which is the first year they are reported by ODH.

Until 2015, the number of prescription opioid overdose deaths has consistently been higher than any other category of drug since 2003 and increased by 202% from 2003 to 2015. This is a big increase, but loses its shock value when seeing heroin overdose deaths increase by 1,537% and fentanyl with a nearly 29,000% increase. That is not a misprint; it is the cause of rightfully focused attention on the opioid crisis. But also note that between 2003 and 2015, rates of overdose death increased for alcohol (850%), hallucinogens (771%), and benzodiazepines (1,226%). No category showed a decline, and in 2015 Ohio had more overdose deaths from cocaine (685) than from prescription opioids (667).

Figure 5. Number of Unintentional Overdose Involving Selected Drugs, by Year, Ohio, 2000-2015



Source: Ohio Department of Health, August 2016

What we can't forget is that as prevention and treatment resources from state and federal funding began to decline in the late 1990s, this negatively impacted access, capacity, and workforce for a full continuum of behavioral health services. Here's a look at federal block grant funding to Ohio from FY2000 to FY 2016. **When adjusting for inflation, that's a 26% decrease in funds.** ([NASADAD, February 2016](#))

Year	SAMHSA SAPT Block Grant to Ohio	Source
FY2000	\$65,062,200	<a href="https://www.ncjrs.gov/ondcppubs/publications/inventory/oh.pdf">https://www.ncjrs.gov/ondcppubs/publications/inventory/oh.pdf</a>
FY2001	\$65,872,337	<a href="https://www.ncjrs.gov/ondcppubs/publications/inventory/oh.pdf">https://www.ncjrs.gov/ondcppubs/publications/inventory/oh.pdf</a>
FY2002	\$66,599,900	<a href="https://www.ncjrs.gov/ondcppubs/publications/inventory/oh.pdf">https://www.ncjrs.gov/ondcppubs/publications/inventory/oh.pdf</a>
FY2003	\$66,942,269	<a href="https://www.ncjrs.gov/ondcppubs/publications/inventory/oh.pdf">https://www.ncjrs.gov/ondcppubs/publications/inventory/oh.pdf</a>
FY2004	\$71,190,422	<a href="http://www.lsc.ohio.gov/fiscal/cobli/2008/ada.pdf">http://www.lsc.ohio.gov/fiscal/cobli/2008/ada.pdf</a>
FY2005	\$69,779,896	<a href="http://www.lsc.ohio.gov/fiscal/cobli/2008/ada.pdf">http://www.lsc.ohio.gov/fiscal/cobli/2008/ada.pdf</a>
FY2006	\$72,708,900	<a href="http://www.lsc.ohio.gov/fiscal/cobli/2008/ada.pdf">http://www.lsc.ohio.gov/fiscal/cobli/2008/ada.pdf</a>
FY2007	\$73,685,070	<a href="http://www.lsc.ohio.gov/fiscal/cobli/2008/ada.pdf">http://www.lsc.ohio.gov/fiscal/cobli/2008/ada.pdf</a>
FY2008	\$73,000,000*appropriation	<a href="http://www.lsc.ohio.gov/fiscal/cobli/2008/ada.pdf">http://www.lsc.ohio.gov/fiscal/cobli/2008/ada.pdf</a>
FY2009	\$73,000,000*appropriation	<a href="http://www.lsc.ohio.gov/fiscal/cobli/2008/ada.pdf">http://www.lsc.ohio.gov/fiscal/cobli/2008/ada.pdf</a>
FY2010	\$66,891,165 *appropriation	<a href="http://docs.cmhnetwork.org/download.php?id=123">http://docs.cmhnetwork.org/download.php?id=123</a>
FY2011	\$66,298,390	<a href="http://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/samhsafy2013cj.pdf">http://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/samhsafy2013cj.pdf</a>
FY2012	\$67,850,759	<a href="http://www.lsc.ohio.gov/fiscal/cobli/2015/ada.pdf">http://www.lsc.ohio.gov/fiscal/cobli/2015/ada.pdf</a>
FY2013	\$39,645,097	<a href="http://www.lsc.ohio.gov/fiscal/cobli/2015/ada.pdf">http://www.lsc.ohio.gov/fiscal/cobli/2015/ada.pdf</a>
FY2014	\$62,645,080	<a href="http://archive.samhsa.gov/Statesummaries/index.aspx">http://archive.samhsa.gov/Statesummaries/index.aspx</a>
FY2015	\$64,078,971	<a href="http://archive.samhsa.gov/Statesummaries/index.aspx">http://archive.samhsa.gov/Statesummaries/index.aspx</a>
FY2016	\$64,120,596	<a href="http://archive.samhsa.gov/Statesummaries/index.aspx">http://archive.samhsa.gov/Statesummaries/index.aspx</a>

With the release of the 2015 overdose death data, The Governor's Cabinet Opiate Action Team announced several [New Strategies to Fight the Opiate and Fentanyl Crisis in Ohio \(2016-17\)](#). Read them carefully, noting identified strategies to create pathways to treatment and recovery and to prevent drug use before it starts. Many of these strategies, like many already implemented over the past five years, will positively impact unhealthy alcohol and drug use beyond opioids. **But more can and must be done to ensure that strategies and resources deployed today create the necessary capacity and workforce for prevention, treatment, and recovery regardless of the substance used.** The lessons of the last 16 years tell us one thing for sure: if we fail to invest now, we can only expect things to keep getting worse.