



# MIDWEST HIDTA NORTH DAKOTA OVERDOSE REPORT - 2025





## Background Information

The results of the Midwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) 2025 Threat Assessment revealed that fentanyl and methamphetamine were again the top two drug threats to the region.<sup>[1]</sup> This conclusion was made utilizing Midwest HIDTA initiative responses to a law enforcement survey (LES) and public health partner responses to the public health survey (PHS), as well as drug trend and other related information collected over the past 12 months. This is the third year in a row fentanyl was ranked as the number one drug threat.

## Ongoing Causes for Concern

- Law enforcement initiatives in the Midwest HIDTA identify fentanyl as the region's primary drug concern. As the dominant synthetic opioid, fentanyl creates major risks in the area through its connection to criminal activity, widespread accessibility, and elevated overdose potential.<sup>[1]</sup>
- Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) laboratory testing in 2024, revealed 5 out of 10 fentanyl-laced counterfeit prescription pills now contain a potentially lethal dose of fentanyl, down from 7 out of 10 in 2023.<sup>[2]</sup>
- Fentanyl will likely continue to be the greatest driver of drug poisoning deaths. Adulterants such as xylazine and medetomidine are of great concern in the Midwest HIDTA area of responsibility (AOR) and will continue to be, especially as they have an increased impact on poisoning deaths in the region.<sup>[1]</sup>
- The trend continues of mixing fentanyl and other synthetic opioids into other drugs in the region's illicit drug supply, specifically cocaine and methamphetamine, as reported by both law enforcement and public health agencies.<sup>[1]</sup>
- Low-cost, high potency methamphetamine transported from the Southwest Border continues to saturate both rural and metropolitan drug markets, exemplified by methamphetamine being ranked the most available drug in the Midwest HIDTA AOR by LES respondents.<sup>[1]</sup>
- The level of violence and crime surrounding methamphetamine production, trafficking, and use will also remain a threat to both law enforcement officials and the public.<sup>[1]</sup>

## North Dakota Outlook

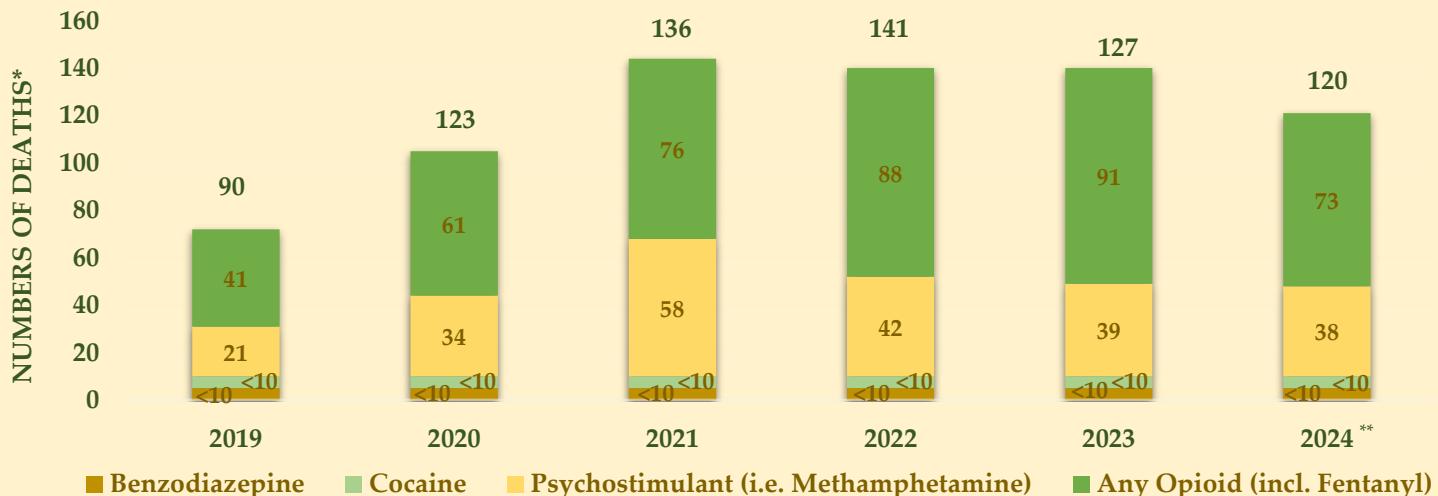
The LES responses for North Dakota varied slightly from the overall Midwest HIDTA results, with methamphetamine being ranked as the primary threat and fentanyl as the secondary threat, while the PHS responses showed fentanyl and methamphetamine to be tied for the primary threat. The North Dakota LES responses indicated the methamphetamine availability and usage were both "high." Similarly, the LES results pertaining to fentanyl in pill form revealed both "high" availability and usage. Whereas the results regarding fentanyl in powder form showed its availability and usage ranged from "moderate" (33.3%) to "high" (66.7%).<sup>[1]</sup>

## North Dakota National Substance Use and Mental Health Services Survey – 2024

As of March 29, 2024, which is the most current survey available, there were 69 treatment facilities in North Dakota, 30 of which were private for-profit (43.5%), 24 private non-profit (34.8%), 8 state government (11.6%), 3 tribal government (4.3%), 1 local/county/community (1.4%), and 3 federal government (4.3%) operated. These facilities were treating 5,188 clients, the vast majority of which were on an outpatient basis, 4,948 (95.4%). These facilities may accept more than 1 type of payment, the following are some of the payment options: cash or self-payment 62 (89.9%), private health insurance 56 (81.2%), Medicare 24 (34.8%), Medicaid 50 (72.5%), IHS/Tribal/Urban (ITU) funds 27 (39.1%), and treatment at no charge or minimal payment for clients who could not pay 27 (39.1%).<sup>[3]</sup>



## North Dakota Overdose Deaths Top 4 Drug Categories 2019-2024 [4]

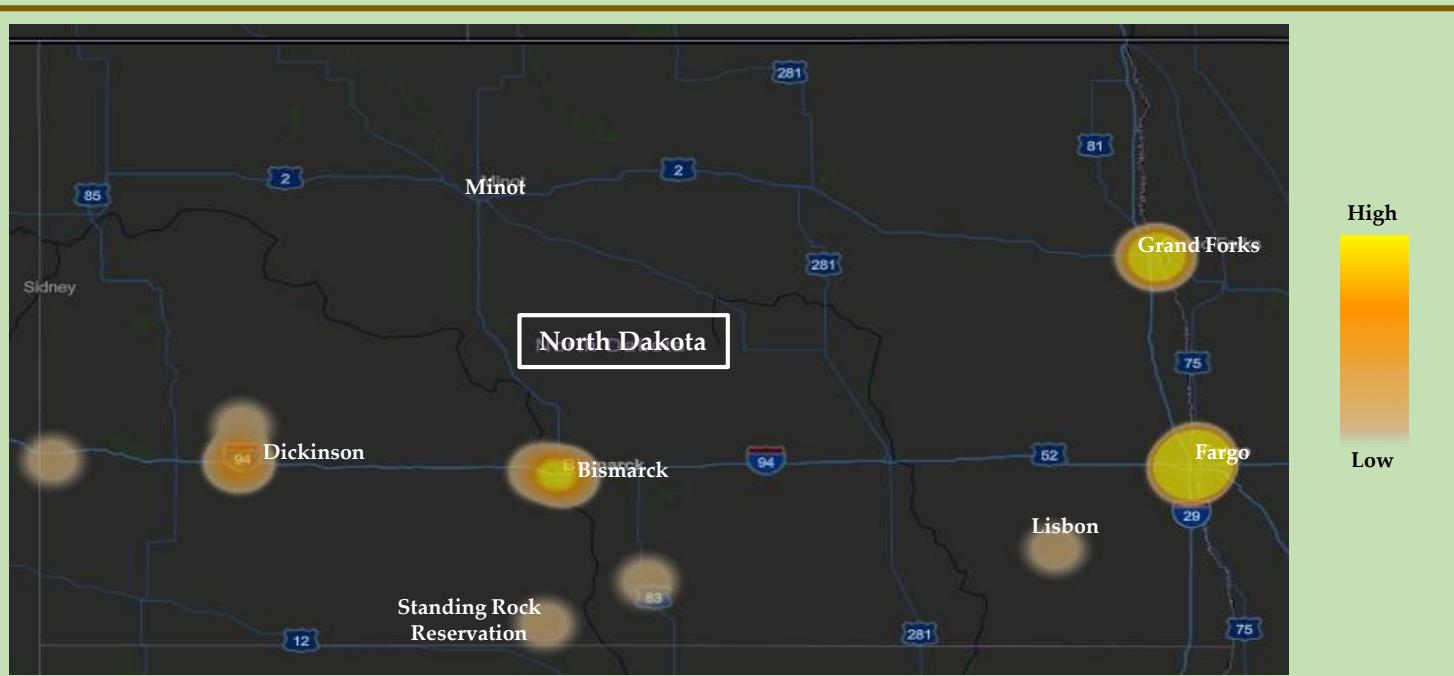


Source: CDC WONDER

\* Deaths can be in more than 1 category due to polysubstance use

\*\*Provisional Numbers

- Overall psychostimulant overdose deaths increased 81% (21 to 38) from 2019 to 2024; an increase of 70.6% (34 to 58) occurred from 2020 to 2021, while a decrease of 27.6% (58 to 42), took place from 2021 to 2022. [4]
- Overall opioid overdose deaths increased 78% (41 to 73) from 2019 to 2024; an increase of 48.8% (41 to 61) occurred from 2019 to 2020, while a decrease of 19.8% (91 to 73), took place from 2023 to 2024. Of these opioid overdoses, 73.5% (316 of 430) were attributed to synthetic opioids. [4]
- From 2019 to 2024, the overall overdose numbers increased 33.3% (90 to 120); the highest annual % increase was from 2019 to 2020, 36.7% (90 to 123), while a decrease of 9.9% (141 to 127) took place from 2022 to 2023. [4]



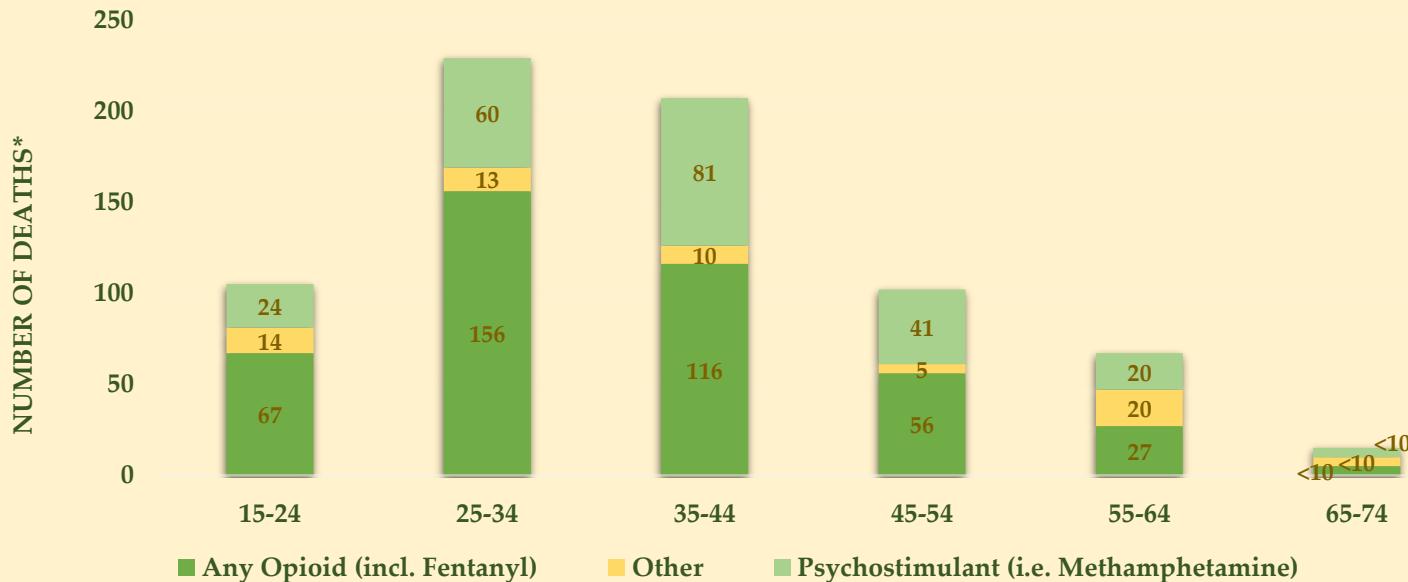
The above heatmap is a visual representation of the 225 suspected overdoses reported to ODMAP from October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025. The use of naloxone was reported at 193 (85.8%) of these incidents.



# MIDWEST HIDTA -NORTH DAKOTA OVERDOSE REPORT - 2025



## North Dakota Overdose Death Rates by Age Group - Top 3 Drug Categories 2019-2024 <sup>[4]</sup>



Source: CDC WONDER

\*Deaths can be counted in more than 1 category due to polysubstance use

- There was an 150% increase in psychostimulant overdose fatalities between age groups 15-24 and 25-34 (24 to 60), and a 51.2% decrease between age groups 45-54 and 55-64 (41 to 20) <sup>[4]</sup>
- There was an 132.8% increase in opioid overdose fatalities between age groups 15-24 and 25-34 (67 to 156), and a 51.8% decrease between age groups 45-54 and 55-64 (56 to 27) <sup>[4]</sup>

## North Dakota Overdose Death Rate by Sex - All Drugs 2019 to 2024 <sup>[4]</sup>



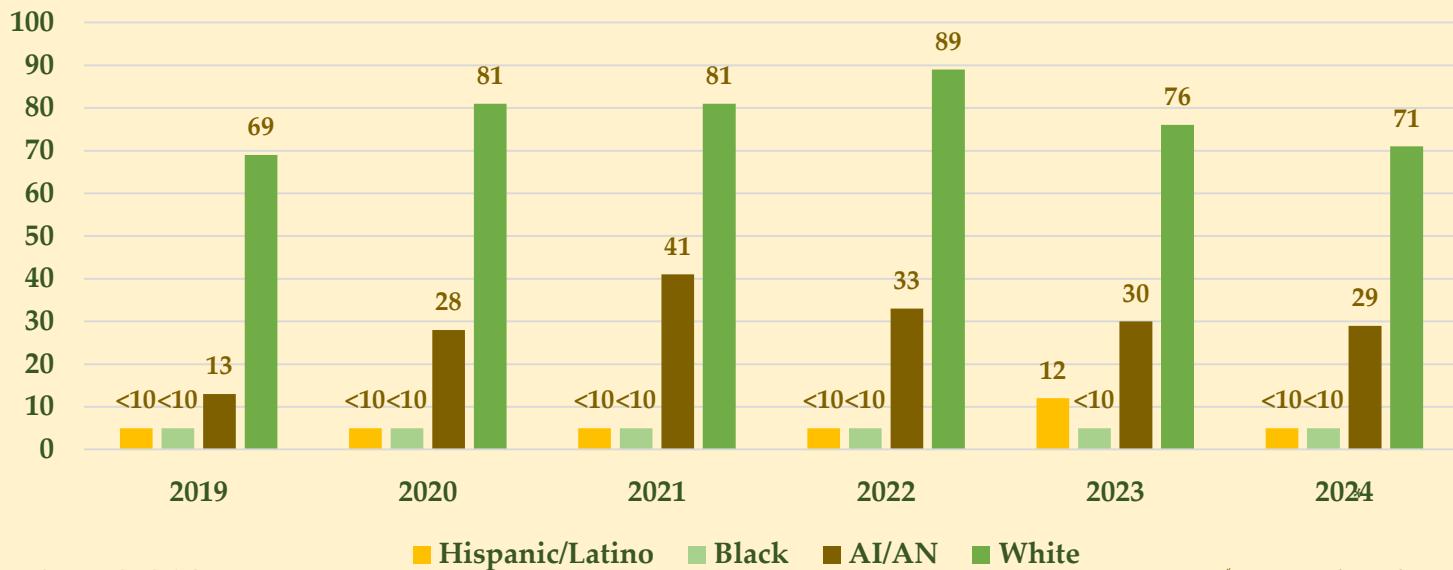
\*Provisional Numbers

- From 2019 to 2024, the number of male overdose fatalities increased 34% (50 to 67), with the largest year to year changes being 2019/2020, +74% (50 to 87), and -14.3% (91 to 78) from 2022/2023 <sup>[4]</sup>
- From 2019 to 2024, the number of female overdose fatalities increased 32.5% (40 to 53), with the largest year to year changes being 2020/2021, +36.1% (36 to 49), and -10% (40 to 36) from 2019/2020 <sup>[4]</sup>



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### North Dakota Overdose Deaths by Race/Ethnicity - All Drugs 2019-2024<sup>[4]</sup>



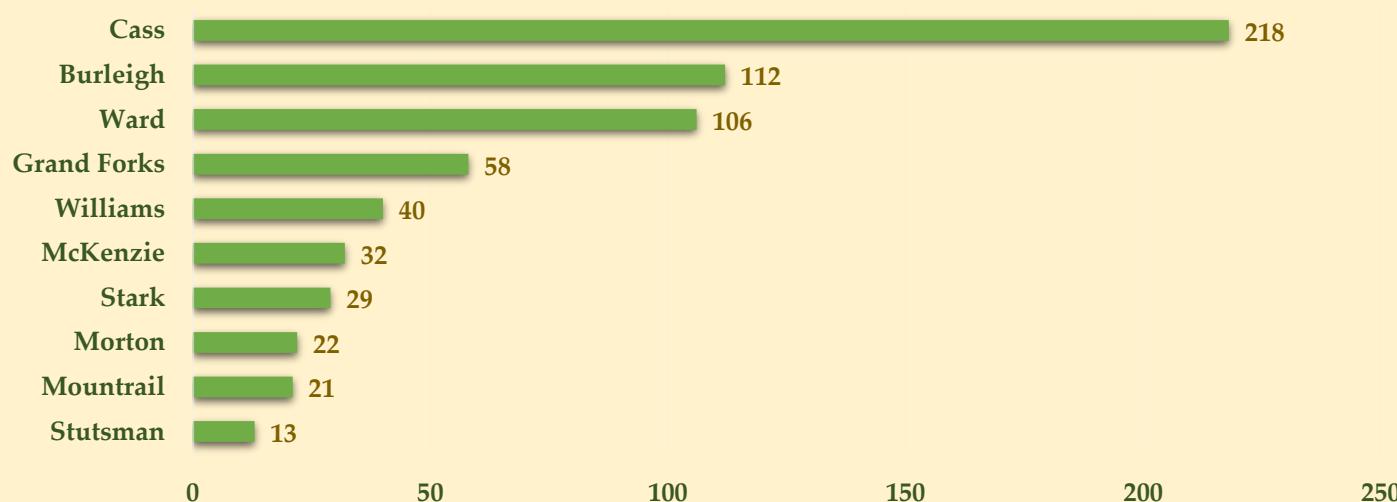
Source: CDC WONDER

\* Provisional Numbers

- From 2019 to 2020, the "AI/AN" (American Indian/Alaska Native) ethnicity group had its largest increase, 115.4% (13 to 28); this ethnicity group had a decrease of 19.5% (41 to 33) from 2021 to 2022. Despite making up only 6.2% of North Dakota's population<sup>[5]</sup>, "AI/AN" comprised 23.6% (174 of 737) of the overdose fatalities from 2019 to 2024.<sup>[4]</sup>
- From 2019 to 2020, the "White" ethnicity group had its largest percentage increase, 17.4% (69 to 81); this age group had a decrease of 14.6% (89 to 76) from 2022 to 2023.<sup>[4]</sup>

### Top 10 Counties with the Highest Mortality Counts - All Drug Types - 2019 to 2024<sup>[4]</sup>

NORTH DAKOTA COUNTIES



Source: CDC WONDER

NUMBER OF FATAL OVERDOSES

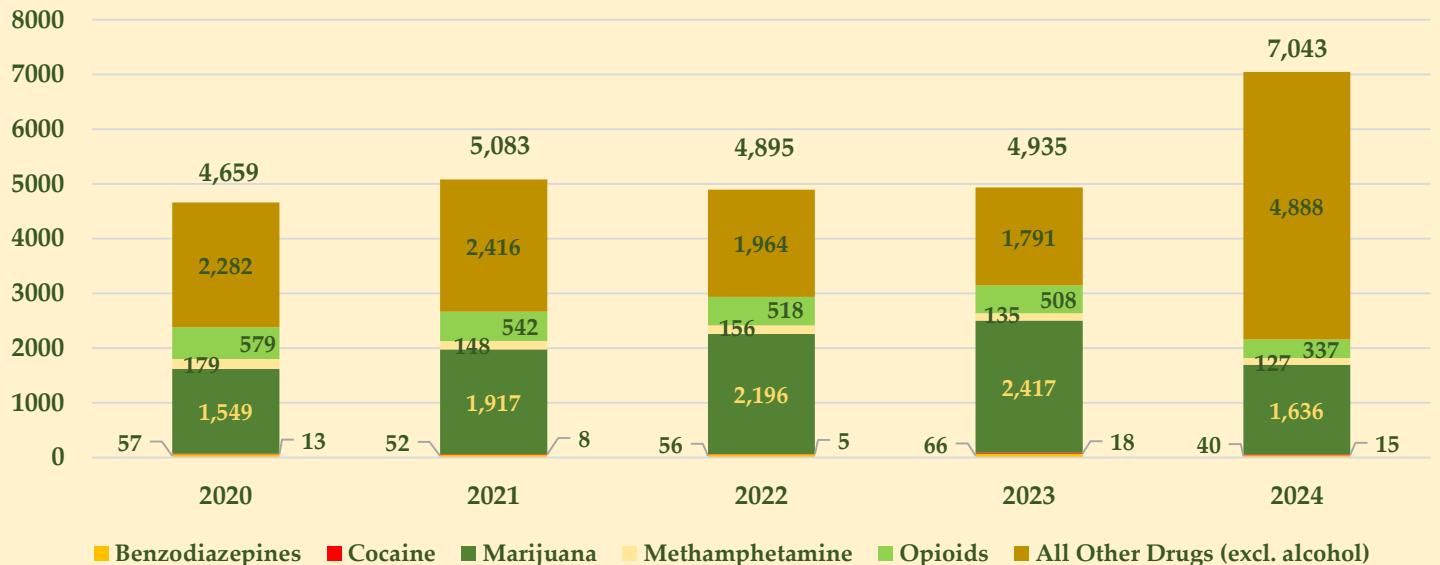
Nine of the top ten counties with the highest fatal overdose counts were also in the top ten most populated counties in North Dakota, with the exceptions being Mountrail, which was ranked 16th in population based on 2025 estimates.<sup>[6]</sup>



# MIDWEST HIDTA -NORTH DAKOTA OVERDOSE REPORT - 2025



## North Dakota Outpatient ESSENCE\* Data 2020-2024 [7]



North Dakota Syndromic Surveillance	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Benzodiazepines	57	52	56	66	40
Cocaine	13	8	5	18	15
Marijuana	1,549	1,917	2,196	2,417	1,636
Methamphetamine	179	148	156	135	127
Opioids	579	542	518	508	337
All Other Drugs (excl. alcohol)	2,282	2,416	1,964	1,791	4,888
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,659</b>	<b>5,083</b>	<b>4,895</b>	<b>4,935</b>	<b>7,043</b>

➤ The drug type with the greatest percentage increase from 2020 to 2024, was "All Other Drugs" 114.2% (2,282 to 4,888). The drug types with the greatest percentage decrease were opioids 41.8% (579 to 337), benzodiazepines 29.8% (57 to 40), and methamphetamine 29.1% (179 to 127). [7]

North Dakota Hospital Discharge Data**	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	Avg. Per Year
Benzodiazepines	37	26	23	17	12	115	23.0
Cocaine	3	8	11	12	6	40	8.0
Methamphetamine	0	0	5	36	35	76	15.2
Opioids	58	46	45	46	35	230	46.0
All Other Drugs (excl. alcohol)	39	44	31	31	29	174	34.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>635</b>	

➤ The drug type with the highest average number of hospital admissions from 2020 to 2024, were opioids, which averaged 46 admissions, followed by "all other drugs," which averaged 34.8 admissions. [8]

- North Dakota (ND) ESSENCE data is an electronic surveillance system that consists of emergency department, urgent care and walk-in-clinic visit information; the numbers represent a syndrome definition that utilizes both ICD-10 codes & chief complaint which looks for key words. These **should not** be considered a true "number of cases." Syndromes may also contain "noise," meaning that the syndrome data may count actual non-related events. NOT every hospital submits ICD and chief complaint, so some visits may be missing. Some hospitals only submit data on ND residents. Transient populations may not be included; therefore, underestimating their impact. Increase in number may be due to actual increases, or it may be due to increase in number of facilities reporting.

\*\*Hospital Discharge Data (HDD) provides information on the hospital-based clinical services for all patients, as well as quality, outcomes and charges of care provided for their patients. This data provides the opportunity to monitor trends and changes in drug poisoning cases discharged from 16 ND hospitals. Due to how data is reported and captured, a single person cannot be de-duplicated throughout the whole data set.



## Naloxone Kits Distributed in North Dakota 2019-2025 [9]



Source: North Dakota BHHHS

- There has been a 350% increase (7,283 to 32,766) in the distribution of naloxone kits from 2019 through 2025 in North Dakota [9]
- In 2025, the kits were primarily distributed to local public health units (15,400), pharmacies (2,387), substance use disorder treatment facilities (2,301), Behavioral Health Division (BHD) events or training (1,785), individual request (1,656), tribal communities/entities (1,629), and local public health units (1,554). [9]

HIDTA INITIATIVE	SEIZED DRUG - YEAR - AMOUNT								
	FENTANYL (GRAMS)			FENTANYL PILLS (GRAMS)			METH/ICE (GRAMS)		
	2023	2024	TOTAL	2023	2024	TOTAL	2023	2024	TOTAL
FARGO DEA TASK FORCE	2,697	8,331	11,028	19,079	5,708	24,787	38,442	31,973	70,415
GRAND FORKS NARCOTICS TF	317	31	348	20,583	5,112	25,695	9,987	23,432	33,419
METRO AREA NARCOTICS TF	533	183	716	21,064	64,507	85,571	23,453	36,020	59,473
ND INTERDICTION SUPPORTS	53	1	54	2,334	15,093	17,427	629	14,736	15,365
TOTALS	3,600	8,546	12,146	63,060	90,420	153,480	72,511	106,161	178,672

- Approximately 139 lbs. of fentanyl pills were seized in 2023 (a lb. of pills converts to approximately 4,500 dosage units (DU)); this equates to 625,500 DU (with 70% containing a lethal dose in 2023) totaling approximately 437,850 potential lethal doses [10]
- Approximately 199.3 lbs. of fentanyl pills were seized in 2024; this equates to 896,850 DU (with 50% containing a lethal dose in 2024) totaling approximately 448,425 potential lethal doses [10]
- Combining the potential lethal doses of non-pill form fentanyl, 6,073,000 doses (2mg is a potential lethal dose per the DEA laboratory), with the total number of potential lethal DU (886,275), equals approximately 6,959,275 potentially lethal doses of fentanyl seized in 2023 and 2024. [10]



## North Dakota Overdose Response Strategy

### 2025 Activity Summary / Collaborative Efforts

The North Dakota Overdose Response Strategy (ORS) team was engaged in a myriad of activities, presentations, and programs throughout 2025; below is a summary of these successes and events:

- North Dakota and Minnesota ORS teams and their respective Drug Demand Reduction Outreach (DDRO) partners presented at the regional DDRO meeting.
- North Dakota ORS is currently drafting an Overdose Spike Alert Response Guide for Fargo Cass Public Health.
- North Dakota ORS program assisted in enrolling eight new registrations to ODMAP.
- North Dakota ORS are active members in several coalition meetings across the state.
- North Dakota ORS completed an Environmental State Scan.
- North Dakota ORS/DDRO and Burleigh County Public Health Unit were invited by the Bismarck Police Department to a Law Day Take Back medication event at the state capitol during the legislative session.
- North Dakota ORS team traveled to Denver, CO to participate in the Mountain Plains Addiction Technology Transfer Center's (MPATTC) advisory board meeting. North Dakota ORS is also engaged in a workgroup for healthcare gaps under the MPATTC.
- North Dakota ORS team presented to the 2025 Midwest HIDTA North Dakota State Advisory Board meeting. The North Dakota ORS team provided an update on the ORS Program, ONE Program, ODMAPS, medically assisted treatment in county correctional centers, and the QR code for naloxone distribution.
- North Dakota ORS team participated in community engagement events throughout the year aimed at working with underserved communities in North Dakota. These events also allowed for inter-agency collaboration between public health and public safety. Individuals and families were provided treatment and educational resources, medication safety, and naloxone administrative instruction.
- North Dakota ORS team, along with North Dakota DDRO attended the Overdose Fatality Review (OFR) National Forum in 2025 in Portland, OR for professional development and OFR team building.
- North Dakota ORS presented a poster at the 2025 Rx Illicit Drug conference. The poster was titled "Examining the effectiveness of the utilization of QR code technology to increase harm reduction and naloxone distribution in North Dakota."



## REFERENCES:

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2. Drug Enforcement Administration, Press Release (December 16, 2024), *Overdose Deaths Decline, Fentanyl Threat Looms*; <https://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2024/12/16/overdose-deaths-decline-fentanyl-threat-looms>
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4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System, Provisional Mortality on CDC WONDER Online Database. Data are from the final Multiple Cause of Death Files, 2019-2023, and from provisional data for years 2024-2025, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. Accessed at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/mcd-icd10-provisional.html> in November 2025.
5. World Population Review, Native American Population by State 2025, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/native-american-population>
6. World Population Review, Population of Counties in North Dakota (2024); <https://worldpopulationreview.com/states/north-dakota>
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9. Knopik, J., Addiction and Prevention Program and Policy Manager, North Dakota Behavioral Health, Health and Human Services, January 2026.
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