



MIDWEST HIDTA IOWA OVERDOSE REPORT - 2025



MIDWEST HIDTA – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DANIEL W. NEILL

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.^[1] 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.^[1]
- 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.^[2]
- 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.^[1]
- 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.^[1]
- Methamphetamine will continue to pose a significant threat to the region with its high levels of demand, use, and its transportation to and through the region.^[1]
- 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.^[1]
- 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.^[1]

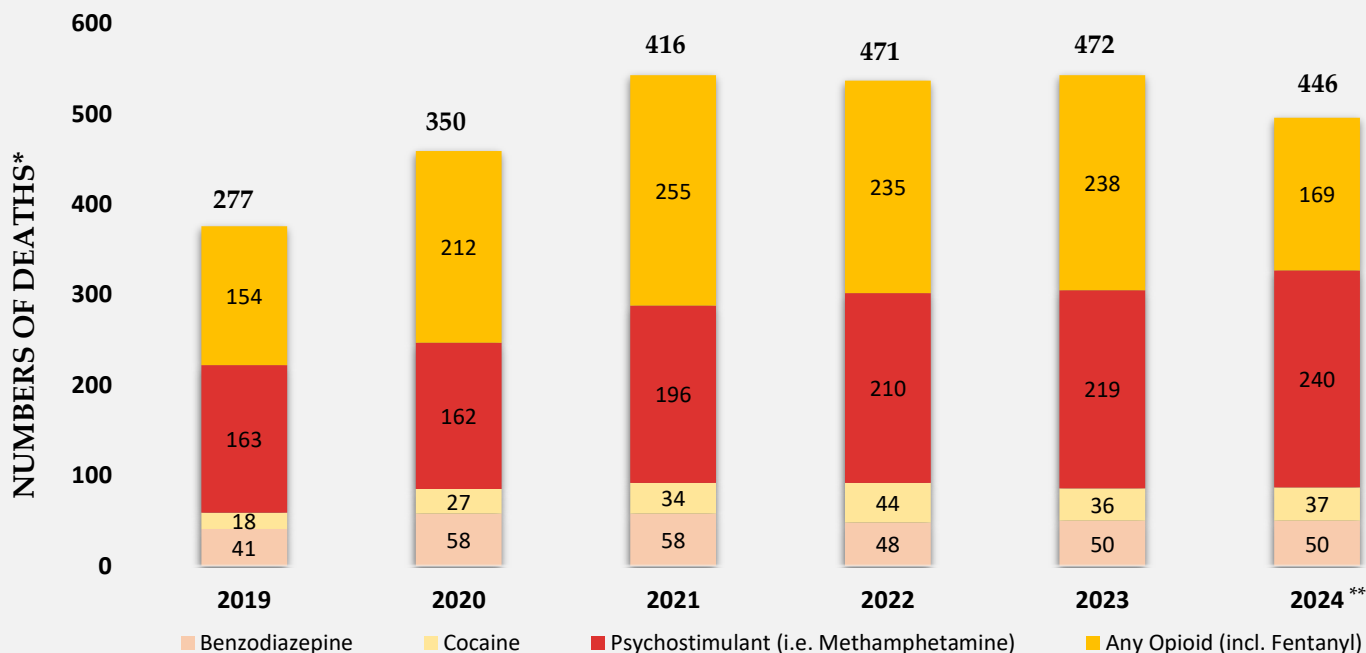
Iowa Outlook

The LES responses for Iowa 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 also ranked methamphetamine as the primary threat. The Iowa LES responses also indicated the availability and usage of methamphetamine in the state were both considered to be "high." The availability of fentanyl in pill form was split between "high" (50%) and moderate (50%), while the availability of powdered fentanyl ranged from "low" (75%) to "high" (25%). Whereas, the usage of fentanyl in pill form was ranged from "moderate" (75%) and high (25%), while the usage of powdered fentanyl was split between "low" (50%) and "high" (50%).^[1]

Iowa National Substance Use and Mental Health Services Survey – 2023

As of March 31, 2023, which is the most current survey available, there were 199 treatment facilities in Iowa, 158 of which were private non-profit (79.4%), 36 private for-profit (18.1%), 1 state (0.5%), and 4 local, county, or community (2.0%) government operated. These facilities were treating 9,018 clients, the majority of which were on an outpatient basis, 8,469 (93.9%). These facilities may accept more than 1 type of payment, the following are some of the payment options: cash or self-payment 98.5% (196), private health insurance 93.5% (186), Medicare 36.2% (72), Medicaid 95.5% (190), and treatment at no charge or minimal payment for clients who could not pay 45.7% (91).^[3]

Iowa Overdose Deaths Top 4 Drug Categories 2019-2024 ^[4]



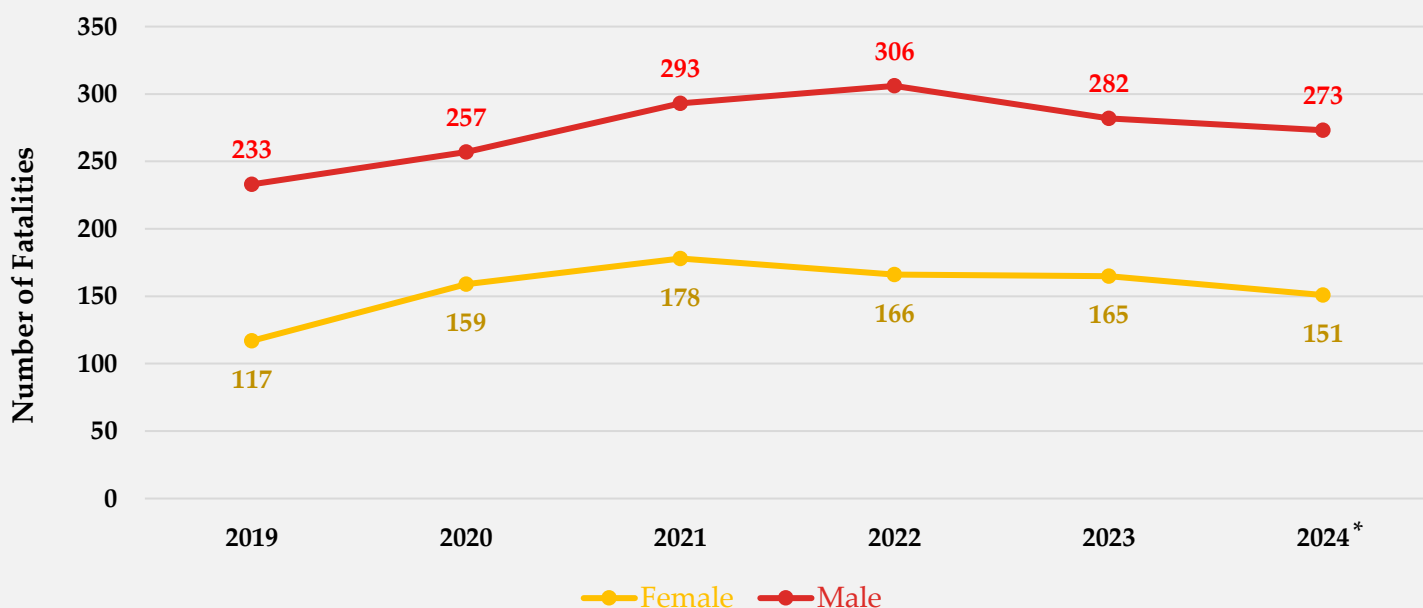
Source: CDC WONDER

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

**Provisional Numbers

- Benzodiazepine overdose deaths increased 21.9% (41 to 50) from 2019 to 2024 ^[4]
- Cocaine overdose deaths increased 105.6% (18 to 37) from 2019 to 2024 ^[4]
- Psychostimulant overdose deaths increased 47.2% (163 to 240) from 2019 to 2024 ^[4]
- Any opioid deaths increased 54.6% (154 to 238) from 2019 to 2023, with a provisional decline of 28.9% (238 to 169), from 2023 to 2024; 78.7% of these were synthetic opioids (994 of 1,263) ^[4]

Iowa Overdose Death Rate by Sex - All Drug 2019 to 2024 ^[4]

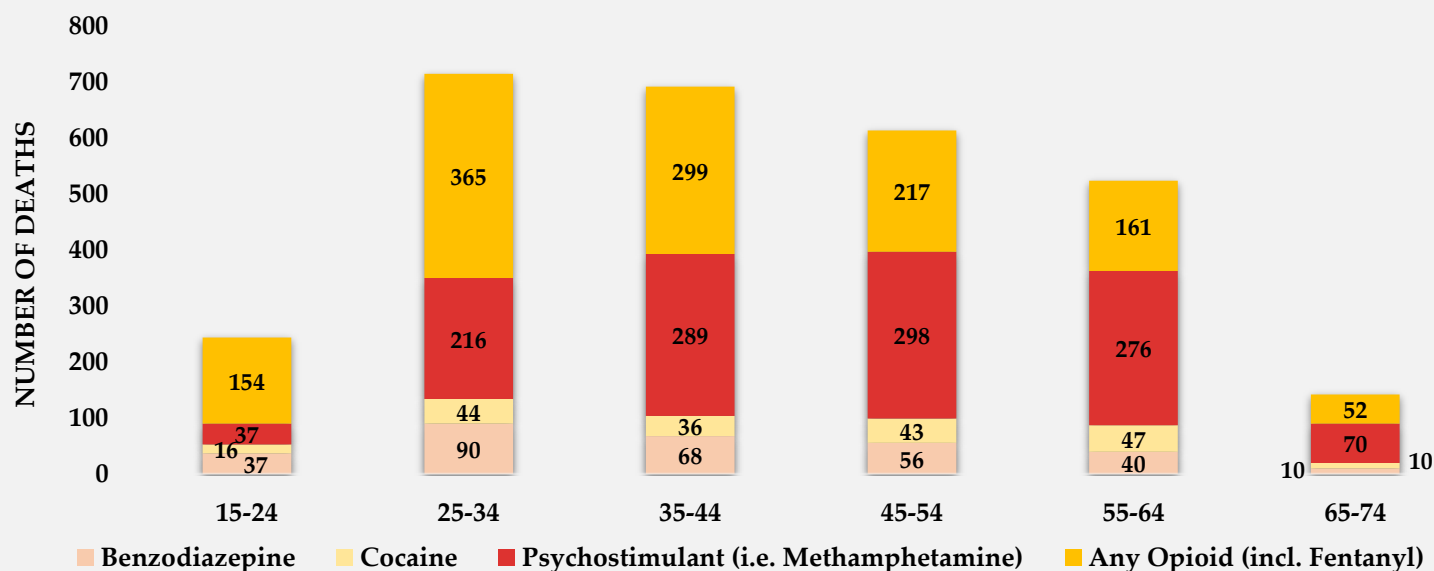


Source: CDC WONDER

*2024 Numbers are Provisional

- From 2019 to 2024, female overdose deaths increased 29.1% (117 to 151); they decreased 8.5% (165 to 151) from 2023 to 2024 ^[4]
- From 2019 to 2024, male overdose deaths increased 17.2% (233 to 273); they decreased 3.2% (282 to 273) from 2023 to 2024 ^[4]

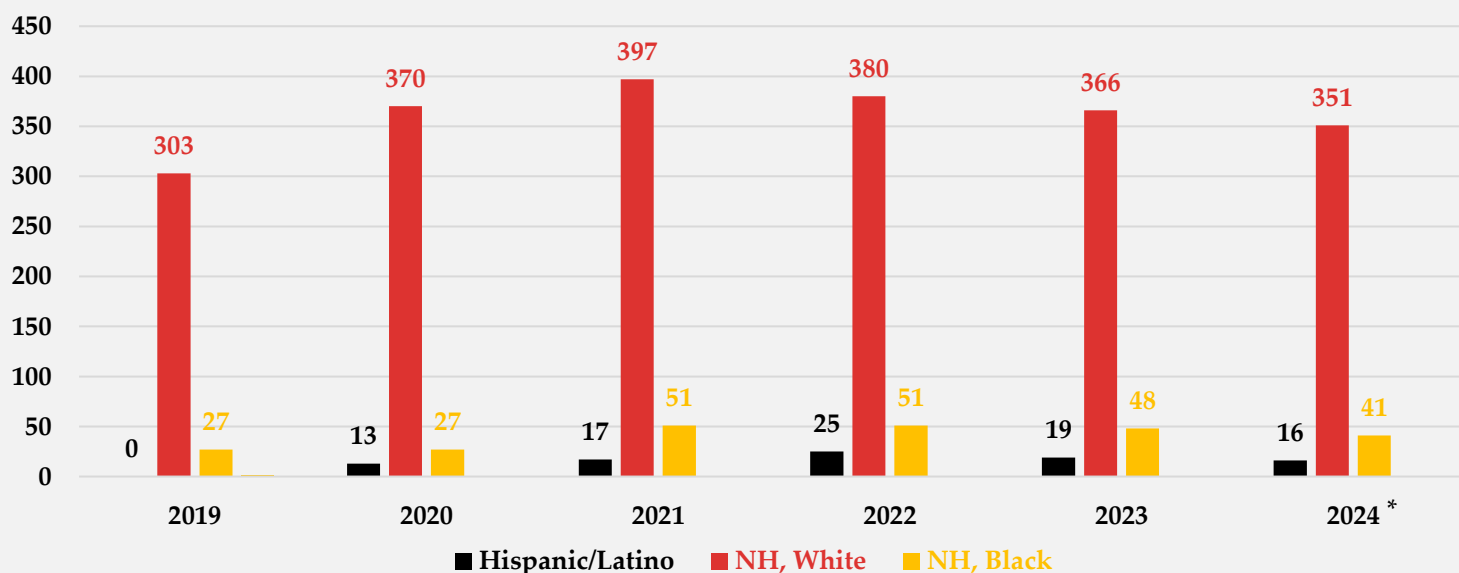
Iowa Overdose Death Rates by Age Group - Top 4 Drug Categories 2019-2024 ^[4]



Source: CDC WONDER

- The largest percentage increase in overdose death rates between age groups, for all drug types, was from 15-24 and 25-34: benzodiazepine +143.2% (37 to 90), cocaine +175% (16 to 44), psychostimulants + 483.8% (37 to 216), and opioids +137% (154 to 365) ^[4]
- The largest percentage decrease in overdose death rates between age groups, for all drug types, was from 55-64 and 65-74: benzodiazepine -75% (40 to 10), cocaine 78.7% (47 to 10), psychostimulants - 74.6% (276 to 70), and opioids -67.7% (161 to 52) ^[4]

Iowa Overdose Deaths by Race/Ethnicity - All Drugs 2019 to 2024 ^[4]

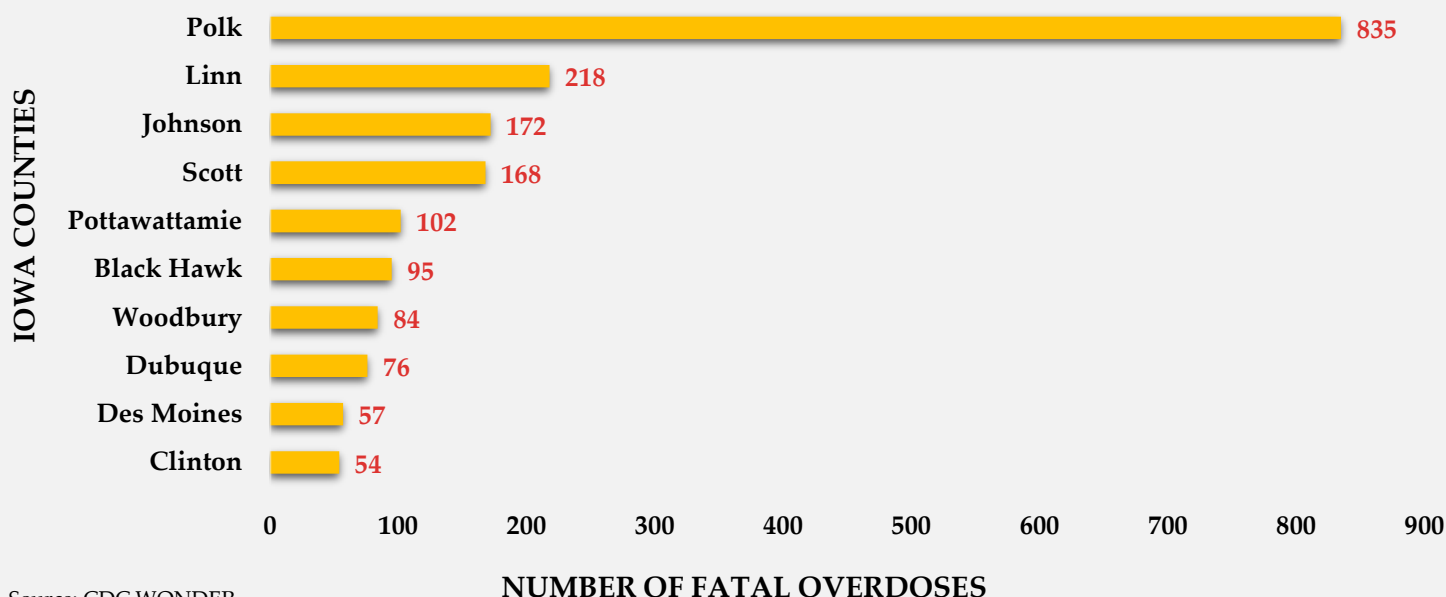


Source: CDC WONDER

*2024 Numbers are Provisional

- From 2019 to 2024, the “NH, Black” ethnicity group had the greatest increase, +51.9.9% (27 to 441); this ethnicity group had a decrease of -14.6% (48 to 41) from 2023 to 2024 ^[4]
- From 2019 to 2024, the “NH, White” ethnicity group increased +15.8% (303 to 351); this age group had the smallest decrease from 2023 to 2024, -4.1% (366 to 351) ^[4]
- From 2023 to 2024, the “Hispanic/Latino” ethnicity group had the greatest decrease, -15.8% (19 to 16) ^[4]

Top 10 Counties with the Highest Mortality Counts - All Drug Types - 2019 to 2024 ^[4]



Source: CDC WONDER

Eight of the top ten counties with the highest fatal overdose counts were also in the top ten most populated counties in Iowa, with the two exceptions being Clinton County, which ranked 12th in population, and Des Moines County, which ranked 16th in population, according to 2025 estimates. ^[5] The four counties with the highest fatal overdose counts were consistent across the top 4 drug categories. ^[4]

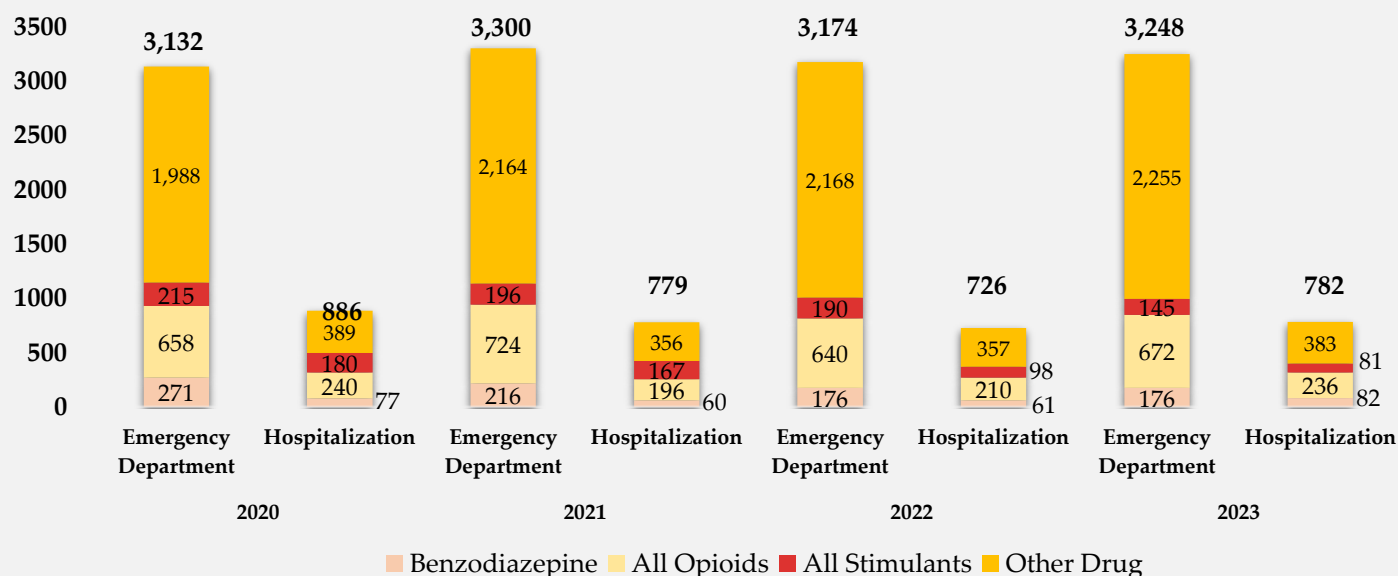
Overdose Deaths – Top 4 Drug Categories – 2019-2024

- Any Opioid OD deaths: Polk (440), Linn (139), Scott (103), and Johnson (67) ^[4]
- Benzodiazepine OD deaths: Polk (89), Linn (39), Scott (29), and Johnson (16) ^[4]
- Cocaine OD deaths: Polk (57), Linn (30), Scott (27), and Johnson (15) ^[4]
- Psychostimulant OD deaths: Polk (426), Linn (80), Johnson (70), and Scott (62) ^[4]

HIDTA INITIATIVE	SEIZED DRUG - YEAR - AMOUNT								
	FENTANYL (GRAMS)			FENTANYL PILLS (GRAMS)			METH/ICE (GRAMS)		
	2023	2024	TOTAL	2023	2024	TOTAL	2023	2024	TOTAL
CEDAR RAPIDS DEA TF	0	1,265	1,265	1,347	1,613	2,960	40,029	43,519	83,548
DES MOINES DEA TF	659	184	843	4,282	3,211	7,493	117,455	46,064	163,519
IOWA INTERDICTION SUPPORT	453	1,000	1,453	7,291	14,270	21,561	68,091	80,259	148,350
MUSCATINE TF	6	3	9	300	410	710	1,180	29,376	30,556
QUAD CITIES MET ENF GRP	466	389	855	86	0	86	33,101	6,885	39,986
TRI-STATE SIOUX CITY DEA TF	2,690	877	3,567	2,169	98	2,267	31,670	38,796	70,466
TOTALS	4,274	3,718	7,992	15,475	19,602	35,077	291,526	244,899	536,425

Over the past two years, these initiatives have seized approximately **4,200,615** potentially lethal doses of the two types of fentanyl reported to Midwest HIDTA. ^[6]

Iowa Nonfatal Overdose Emergency Department Visits & Hospitalizations 2020-2023 ^[7]



Source: CDC DOSE Dashboard

- Hospitalizations involving “All Stimulants” had the greatest decrease between 2020 and 2023, -55% (180 to 81) ^[7]
- Emergency department visits involving “Other Drugs” had the greatest increase between 2020 and 2023, +13.4% (1,988 to 2,255) ^[7]

Iowa Overdose Response Team 2025 Highlights

Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program (ODMAP) Expansion in Iowa:

The Iowa Overdose Response Strategy Team continues to promote the utilization of ODMAP within the State of Iowa. The team has partnered with the Drug Free Communities program, as well as local coalitions, public health agencies and public safety agencies to promote the use of ODMAP in their areas.

As a result, Iowa has over 40 agencies fully enrolled with ODMAP, many of which have enrolled within the last 12 months. In addition, several of these agencies are exploring an application programming interface (API) which automates the transfer of non-personally identifying information to the ODMAP system when responding to suspected overdoses.

Public Health and Safety Teams (PHAST) Development in Iowa:

For the past year, the Iowa ORS team has been collaborating with the Iowa OD2A (Overdose Data to Action) team to implement the development of several PHAST's (Public Health and Safety Team) throughout the state. PHASTs are designed to bring together public health and public safety officials to gain a better understanding of the drug threats, focus on developing public health/public safety relationships in order to customize strategies to reduce fatal and non-fatal overdoses in their communities.

Four counties are enrolled in the PHAST pilot project established by the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. These four teams are finishing module one this summer and are moving onto training for modules two and three in the coming weeks. The Iowa ORS team will continue to offer training, support and guidance as the teams develop.

REFERENCES

1. Midwest HIDTA 2025 Threat Assessment Report; Midwest HIDTA Intelligence Support Center; pages 4, 11-29.
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>
3. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration, National Substance Use and Mental Health Services Survey, 2023 Iowa State Profile, <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/report/2023-n-sumhss-state-profiles>
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, 2018-2022, and from provisional data for years 2023-2024, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. Accessed in September 2025, at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/mcd-icd10-provisional.html>
5. World Population Review, Population of Counties in Iowa (2025); <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-counties/iowa>
6. Frazier, R. (September 2025), Midwest HIDTA Performance Management Process Data, 2024. Kansas City; Midwest HIDTA, Unpublished Data.
7. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Drug Overdose Surveillance and Epidemiology (DOSE) System: Nonfatal Overdose Emergency Department and Inpatient Hospitalization Discharge Data. Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC; 2025, September. Access at: <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/nonfatal/dose/discharge/dashboard/index.html>