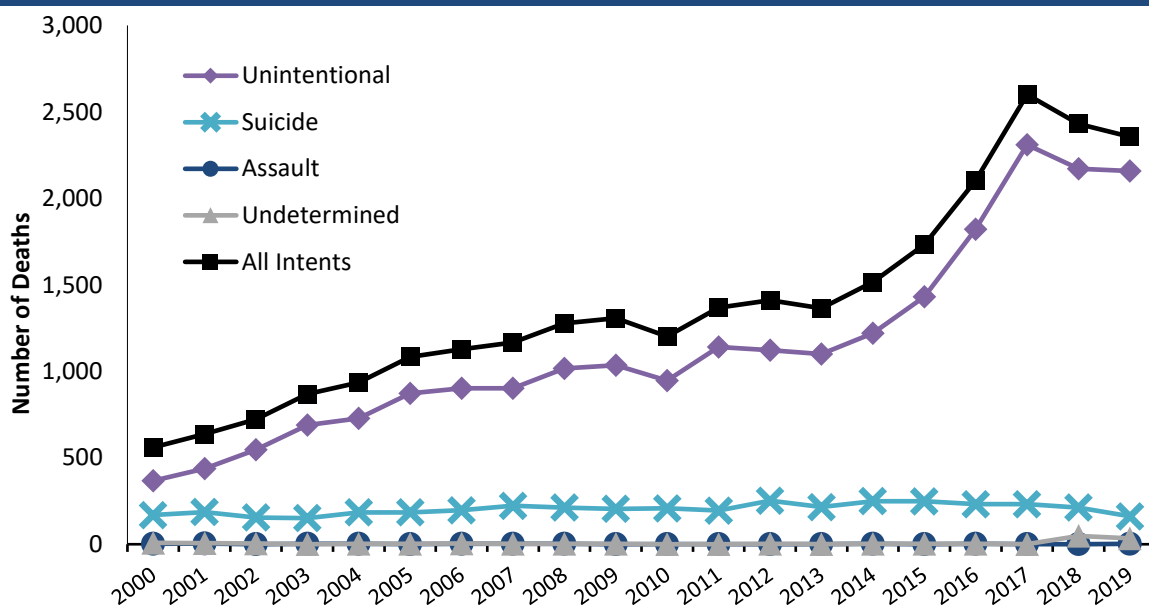


Medication & Drug Overdose Deaths, 2019

An epidemic of unintentional medication and drug overdose deaths continues to affect North Carolina. While the number of these deaths increased by more than 700 percent from 2000 through 2017, numbers have decreased by 7% from 2017 to 2019. The percent of unintentional medication and drug overdose deaths involving multiple substances is on the rise, and we continue to see increases not only in opiate-involved overdose deaths, but also stimulant-involved overdose deaths. It is important to keep in mind that we cannot tell from death certificates if individuals are intentionally using more than one substance. Fentanyl is now present in both opiate and stimulant products, which may be adding to the potency of these products, and in turn, leading to increased risk of unintentional overdose deaths.

Medication and Drug Overdose Deaths by Intent: NC Residents, 2000-2019



Unintentional medication and drug overdose deaths continue to make up the majority of all medication and drug overdose deaths, at 83% in 2019.

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics-Deaths, 2000-2019

Unintentional Medication & Drug Overdose Deaths by Selected Demographics: NC Residents, 2015-2019

| | Number | Percent | Rate |
|-------------------------|--------|---------|------|
| Sex | | | |
| Female | 3,594 | 33.9% | 13.6 |
| Male | 7,022 | 66.1% | 28.1 |
| Race/Ethnicity | | | |
| Hispanic | 242 | 2.3% | 5.0 |
| White* | 8,648 | 81.7% | 26.3 |
| Black* | 1,430 | 13.5% | 12.6 |
| American Indian* | 178 | 1.7% | 29.0 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander* | 37 | 0.3% | 2.3 |
| Other* | 46 | 0.4% | -- |
| Age Group | | | |
| 0-14 | 12 | 0.1% | 0.1 |
| 15-24 | 958 | 9.0% | 13.9 |
| 25-34 | 2,973 | 28.0% | 43.6 |
| 35-44 | 2,630 | 24.8% | 40.6 |
| 45-54 | 2,353 | 22.2% | 34.2 |
| 55-64 | 1,345 | 12.7% | 20.4 |
| 65-84 | 311 | 2.9% | 4.3 |
| 85+ | 34 | 0.3% | 3.7 |

Males continue to die from unintentional overdose at higher rates (28.1 per 100,000 N.C. residents) than females (13.6 per 100,000 N.C. residents).

American Indians and **whites** have the highest rates of unintentional overdose deaths (29 and 26.3 per 100,000 N.C. residents, respectively) among state residents.

Unintentional overdose death rates are highest among ages **25-34** (43.6 per 100,000 N.C. residents) and ages **35-44** (40.6 per 100,000 N.C. residents).

Please note: Demographic overdose rates vary across type of substance involved.

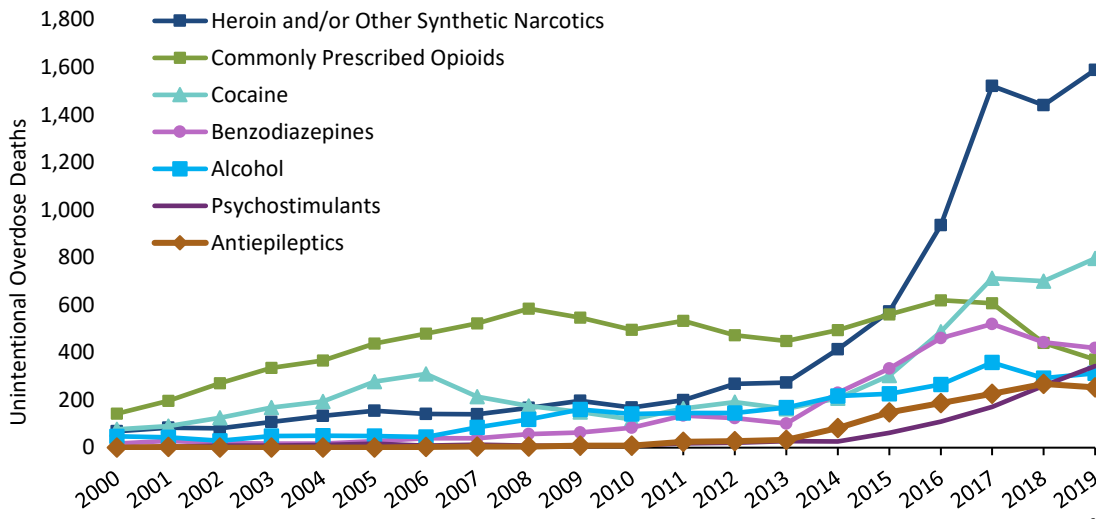
*Non-Hispanic; *Other' includes other and multiple races, and unknown (population value not available, rate not calculated)

**Rates not reported for <5 deaths

^Rates unstable for 5-9 deaths; interpret with caution
Rates are per 100,000 NC residents

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, 2018-2019, unintentional medication/drug overdose (X40-X44)

Substances Contributing to Unintentional Overdose Deaths: NC Residents, 2000-2019

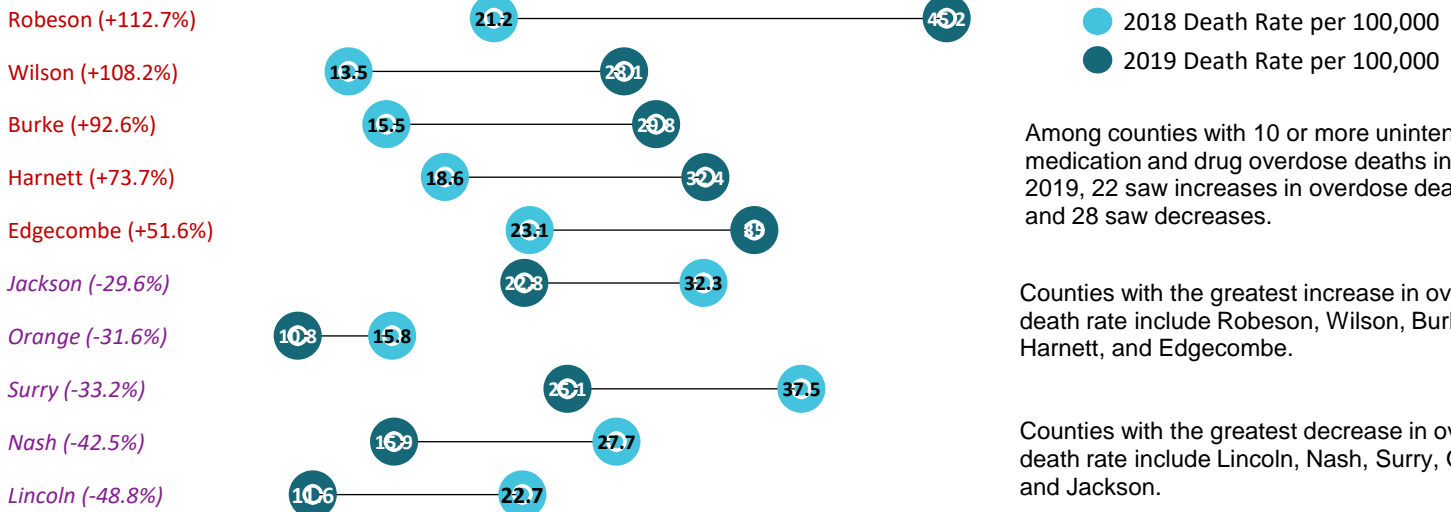


Illicit opioids, like heroin or fentanyl, are the largest contributors to unintentional overdose death, and increased in 2019. Overdose deaths involving cocaine, alcohol, psychostimulants or multiple substances also increased.

Please note: If a death involved multiple substances it can be included on more than one line.

Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics-Deaths, 2000-2019

Largest Increases and Decreases in Unintentional Overdose Death Rate by County, 2018-2019



Among counties with 10 or more unintentional medication and drug overdose deaths in 2018 and 2019, 22 saw increases in overdose death rate, and 28 saw decreases.

Counties with the greatest increase in overdose death rate include Robeson, Wilson, Burke, Harnett, and Edgecombe.

Counties with the greatest decrease in overdose death rate include Lincoln, Nash, Surry, Orange, and Jackson.

Rates are per 100,000 NC residents
Source: NC State Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics-Deaths, 2018-2019

Additional Resources for Addressing Drug Overdose in North Carolina

[North Carolina's Opioid Action Plan 2.0](#)

The OAP was developed with community partners to combat the opioid crisis and will be continuously updated as we make progress on the epidemic.

[North Carolina Opioid Action Plan Dashboard 2.0](#)

Track and monitor the NC Opioid Action Plan data metrics; includes data for the state as well as local counties.

[Syringe Service Programs in North Carolina](#)

List of where to find your local syringe service program, including hours of operation and counties served.

[Naloxone in North Carolina](#)

Provides general information and where to locate naloxone in your community



NC DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Division of Public Health

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