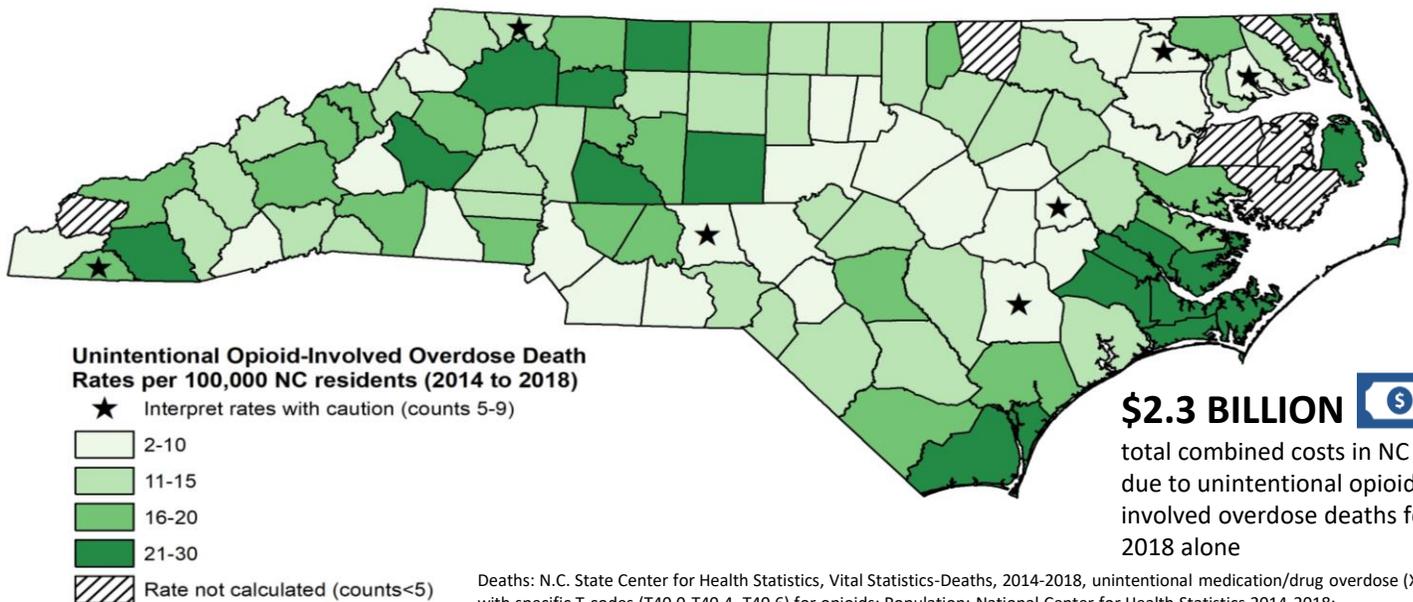


# Opioid-Involved Overdoses, 2018

From 1999 to 2018, more than 14,500 North Carolinians died from unintentional opioid-involved overdose deaths. Opioid-involved overdoses have steadily increased, but in 2018, for the first time in many years, there was a decrease in unintentional opioid-involved overdose deaths and a decrease in visits to the Emergency Department for opioid overdose. Historically, commonly prescribed pain medications (i.e. oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine) were the leading cause of opioid-involved overdose. However, heroin, fentanyl, and fentanyl analogues<sup>^</sup> now contribute to the majority of opioid-involved overdoses. Opioid-involved overdoses are common in both urban and rural areas, and affect a wide range of demographics. Most commonly affected people tend to be white, male, and ages 25 to 54 years old.

<sup>^</sup>Fentanyl analogues are drugs that are similar to fentanyl but have been chemically modified in order to bypass current drug laws.

## Unintentional Opioid-Involved Overdose Death Rates by County, N.C. Residents, 2014-2018



**\$2.3 BILLION**  
total combined costs in NC due to unintentional opioid-involved overdose deaths for 2018 alone

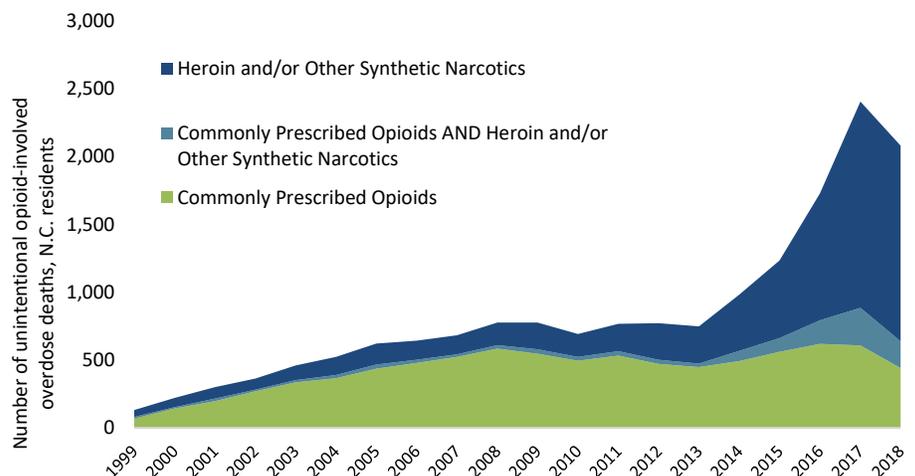
Deaths: N.C. State Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics-Deaths, 2014-2018, unintentional medication/drug overdose (X40-X44) with specific T-codes (T40.0-T40.4, T40.6) for opioids; Population: National Center for Health Statistics 2014-2018; Economic impact: CDC WISQARS for unintentional opioid-drug related poisonings, Cost of Injury Reports, National Center for Injury and Control, CDC. Base year (2010) costs indexed to state 2018 prices for poisoning deaths.

## Unintentional Opioid-Involved Overdose Deaths by Opioid Type, N.C. Residents, 1999-2018

From 2010 to 2017 there was an increase in overdose deaths involving illicit opioids, including heroin and/or other synthetic narcotics.

In 2018 there was a **9% decrease** in unintentional opioid deaths, the first decrease in five years.

In 2018, illicit opioids were involved in approximately 85% of unintentional opioid-involved overdose deaths.



Source: N.C. State Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics-Deaths, 1999-2018, unintentional medication/drug overdose (X40-X44), Heroin and/or Other Synthetic Narcotics: T40.1, T40.4; Commonly prescribed opioids: T40.2, T40.3; This graph does not include cases with only T40.0 (Opium) or only T40.6 (Other and unspecified narcotics);

Note: Commonly prescribed opioids include medications like oxycodone, hydrocodone and codeine. Other synthetic narcotics may represent both prescription synthetic opioids and non-pharmaceutical synthetic opioids because synthetic opioids produced illicitly (e.g., non-pharmaceutical fentanyl) are not identified separately from prescription ('pharmaceutical') synthetic opioids in ICD-10 death certificate codes.



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## Unintentional Opioid-Involved Overdose Deaths by Selected Demographics, N.C. Residents, 2014-2018

	Number	Percent	Rate <sup>^</sup>
<b>Sex</b>			
Female	2,372	34.3%	9.1
Male	4,547	65.7%	18.4
<b>Race</b>			
Hispanic	145	2.1%	3.1
White*	5,941	85.9%	18.2
Black*	669	9.7%	6.0
American Indian*	93	1.3%	15.3
Asian/Pacific Islander*	21	0.3%	1.3
Other**	50	0.7%	--
<b>Age Group</b>			
0-14	8	0.1%	0.1
15-24	705	10.2%	10.3
25-34	2,074	30.0%	31.0
35-44	1,773	25.6%	27.4
45-54	1,501	21.7%	21.8
55-64	748	10.8%	11.5
65-84	104	1.5%	1.5
85+	6	0.1%	0.7

**Males** have twice the unintentional opioid-involved overdose death rate compared to females (18.4 compared to 9.1 per 100,000, respectively).

**Whites\*** have the highest unintentional opioid-involved overdose death rate, at 18.2 per 100,000, followed by **American Indians\*** at 15.3 per 100,000.

Unintentional opioid-involved overdose death rates are highest among adults ages **25-54**, and tend to be lowest among those 0-14 and 65+.

\*Non-Hispanic; \*\*Other includes other races, multiple races and unknown (rate not calculated); <sup>^</sup>Rates are per 100,000 people

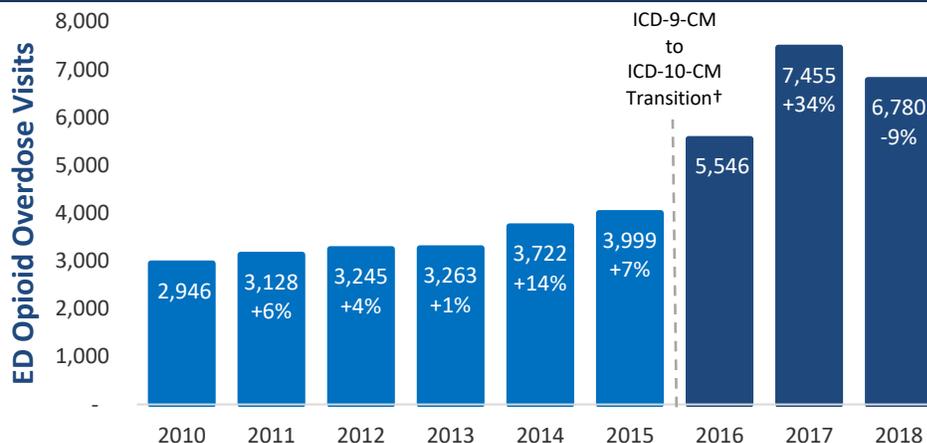
**Source:** N.C. State Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics-Deaths, 1999-2018, unintentional medication/drug poisoning (X40-X44), Heroin and/or Other Synthetic Narcotics: T40.1, T40.4; Commonly prescribed opioids: T40.2, T40.3; Opium: T40.0, Other Unspecified Narcotics: T40.6

## Emergency Department (ED) Opioid Overdose Visits by Year, N.C. Residents, 2010-2018

Opioid overdose ED visits include cases of an opioid overdose by any intent (unintentional, intentional, and undetermined) for North Carolina residents.

From 2010 to 2018, there was a nearly **130% increase** in opioid overdose ED visits. 6,780 in 2018 compared to 2,946 in 2010.

North Carolina experienced a **9% decrease** in opioid overdose ED visits from 2017 to 2018.



**Source:** NC DETECT (statewide ED data), N.C. Division of Public Health & Carolina Center for Health Informatics, UNC Department of Emergency Medicine (UNC DEM), 2010-2018

†ICD-9-CM transitioned to ICD-10-CM in 2015 and the impact on surveillance is unclear, use caution when interpreting trends.

## Additional Resources for Addressing Overdose in North Carolina

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

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](#)

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

### [North Carolina Safer Syringe Initiative](#)

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.



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Injury Epidemiology & Surveillance Unit / 919-707-5425 / [www.injuryfreenc.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.injuryfreenc.ncdhhs.gov) / The N.C. Injury and Violence Prevention Branch is supported by Cooperative Agreement NU17CE925024-01-01 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) / N.C. Division of Public Health / [www.ncpublichealth.com](http://www.ncpublichealth.com) / State of North Carolina / Department of Health and Human Services / [www.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.ncdhhs.gov) / N.C. DHHS is an equal opportunity employer and provider.