2019 Fatal Overdoses in Rhode Island: Data Highlights

Governor Gina M. Raimondo’s Overdose Prevention and Intervention Task Force
April 8, 2020
How Does RIDOH Report on Fatal Drug Overdoses?

- The **Office of State Medical Examiners (OSME)** determines cause and manner of death based on clinical judgment, experience, and consideration of the following:
  - Autopsy results
  - Toxicology testing
  - Scene investigation
  - Medical history

- RIDOH reports on drug overdose deaths where the manner of death is “Accident,” and **does not** include other manners such as suicides, homicides, or undetermined deaths.
Between 2016 and 2019, accidental drug overdose deaths decreased by 8.3%, from 336 in 2016 to **308 in 2019**.
## Bending the Curve

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All-Drug</th>
<th></th>
<th>Opioid-Involved</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counts</td>
<td>336 to 308</td>
<td>314 to 308</td>
<td>290 to 256</td>
<td>272 to 256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Change</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Office of the State Medical Examiners (OSME), Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH). Data updated as of 03/31/2020 pending final validation and are subject to change. Note: Data reflect accidental drug overdose deaths and do not include suicides, homicides, or undetermined deaths.
Most drug overdose deaths occurred in the **White population**.

The **rate** of overdose deaths among **Black persons** fluctuated between 2009 and 2019.

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**2019 Fatal Overdoses**
- White, 87%
- Black, 11%
- Other, 1%
- Unknown, 1%

**Rhode Island Population**
- White, 83%
- Black, 8%
- Other, 12%

*Source: Office of the State Medical Examiners (OSME), Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH). RI Population based on 2017 Census estimates. Data updated as of 03/31/2020, pending final validation and subject to change. Note: Data reflect accidental drug overdose deaths and do not include suicides, homicides, or undetermined deaths. ‘Other’ race category includes Asian, Native Hawaiian, Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander, American Indian.*
A majority of drug overdose deaths occurred among Non-Hispanics.

The rate of overdose deaths among Hispanic persons fluctuated between 2009 and 2019, remaining lower than among Non-Hispanics.

Source: Office of the State Medical Examiners (OSME), Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH.RI Population based on 2017 Census estimates. Data updated as of 03/31/2020, pending final validation and subject to change Note: Data reflect accidental drug overdose deaths and do not include suicides, homicides, or undetermined deaths.
Compared to 2018, **rates** of fatal overdose increased among people between the ages of **25-34** and **45-54**.

Source: Office of the State Medical Examiners (OSME), Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH). Rates calculated using US Census 2017 Estimates. Rates reflect the rate of accidental drug overdose death per 100,000 residents. Data updated as of 3/31/2020, pending final validation and subject to change.

Note: Data reflect accidental drug overdose deaths and do not include suicides, homicides, or undetermined deaths. Data reflect fatal overdoses occurring in Rhode Island among Rhode Island residents.
In 2019, approximately **three out of four (73%)** overdose deaths occurred in **males**.

*Source: Office of the State Medical Examiners (OSME), Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH. Data updated as of 03/31/2020, pending final validation and subject to change Note: Data reflect accidental drug overdose deaths and do not include suicides, homicides, or undetermined deaths*
Substances Contributing to Cause of Death
Select Substances Contributing to Cause of Death: Fentanyl

The proportion of **fentanyl-involved** fatal overdoses decreased for the first time from 2018 to 2019, but remains high.

Source: Office of the State Medical Examiners (OSME), Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH). Data updated as of 3/31/2020, pending final validation and subject to change.

Note: Data reflect accidental drug overdose deaths and do not include suicides, homicides, or undetermined deaths. Data reflect fatal overdoses occurring in Rhode Island among Rhode Island residents. Drug categories are not mutually exclusive.
Select Substances Contributing to Cause of Death: Alcohol

The proportion of fatal overdoses where alcohol also contributed to the death remained relatively stable over time, but has increased in recent years.

Source: Office of the State Medical Examiners (OSME), Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH). Data updated as of 3/31/2020, pending final validation and subject to change.

Note: Data reflect accidental drug overdose deaths and do not include suicides, homicides, or undetermined deaths. Data reflect fatal overdoses occurring in Rhode Island among Rhode Island residents. Drug categories are not mutually exclusive.
Select Substances Contributing to Cause of Death: Cocaine

One in two fatal overdoses in 2019 involved cocaine.

This is an increase from one in four in 2009.

Source: Office of the State Medical Examiners (OSME), Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH). Data updated as of 3/31/2020, pending final validation and subject to change.

Note: Data reflect accidental drug overdose deaths and do not include suicides, homicides, or undetermined deaths. Data reflect fatal overdoses occurring in Rhode Island among Rhode Island residents. Drug categories are not mutually exclusive.
Next Steps

• Find these data and more on these websites:
  • Health.RI.gov
  • PreventOverdoseRI.org

• Continue to Connect People to Harm Reduction Resources and Treatment Options via Street Outreach

• Increase Access to Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) through provider telehealth
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