

# Quarterly Drug Overdose Surveillance Update | End of 1st Quarter 2024

Overdose Response Program - Metro Public Health Department of Nashville/Davidson County

The objective of this report is to provide education and increase awareness in Davidson County about the local drug overdose epidemic.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2024 | Quarter 1: December 31 - March 30

### Suspected Fatal Drug Overdoses

The annual number of fatal drug overdoses in Davidson County has surpassed 700 since 2021. During quarter 1 of 2024, there were 92 suspected drug overdose deaths (35 completed and 57 pending) that occurred in the county. This is comparable to the 1st quarter of both 2018 and 2019.

**Fentanyl:** Fentanyl, a synthetic opioid, was detected in approximately 63% of overdose-related toxicology reports in the first quarter of 2024. Fentanyl is a primary contributor to overdose deaths in Davidson County. Cocaine and methamphetamine were also frequently detected in suspected overdose deaths.

**Demographics:** Males accounted for the largest percentage of suspected drug overdose deaths at 63% percent during 2024. The largest percentage of deaths occurred among those 35-44 year olds (30%).

### Suspected Nonfatal Drug Overdose-Related Emergency Department (ED) Visits (Syndromic Surveillance)

The annual number of suspected drug overdose-related ED visits captured by syndromic surveillance (definition on page 3) peaked during 2020 and has declined gradually in the years since then. Syndromic surveillance captured 278 suspected drug overdose-related ED visits so far in 2024. This is comparable to the first quarter of 2018.

**Drug/Substance Category:** Non-heroin opioids (77%) was the top drug/substance category reported for overdose-related ED visits.

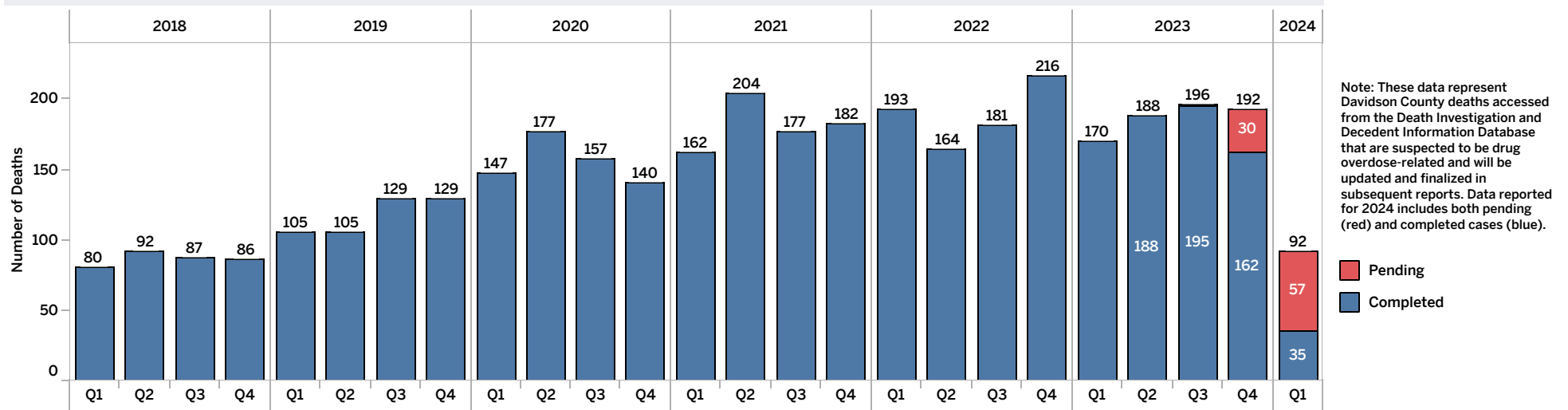
**Demographics:** During 2024, approximately two-thirds of drug overdose-related ED visits in Davidson County were among males, and 31% occurred among individuals 25-34 years old.

### Suspected Drug Overdoses Requiring Response by Nashville Fire Department Emergency Medical Services (NFD-EMS)

The annual number of suspected drug overdoses requiring NFD-EMS response increased from 2016 through 2020 and has remained relatively stable since then. There were 1,045 suspected drug overdoses requiring NFD-EMS response so far in 2024. This is comparable to the first quarter of 2019.

**Demographics:** Males accounted for the largest percentage of NFD-EMS responses (64%), and people in the 25-34 year old age group accounted for 27% of responses.

Suspected Fatal Drug Overdoses by Quarter, 2017-2023 - Davidson County, TN



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## Suspected Fatal Drug Overdoses

2024 | Quarter 1 : December 31 - March 30

### Notable Trends

**Overdose Deaths:** The annual number of fatal drug overdoses in Davidson County has increased each year from 2016 through 2022. During the first quarter of 2024, there were 92 suspected drug overdose deaths. This is comparable to the number of fatalities in the first quarter of 2018 and 2019.

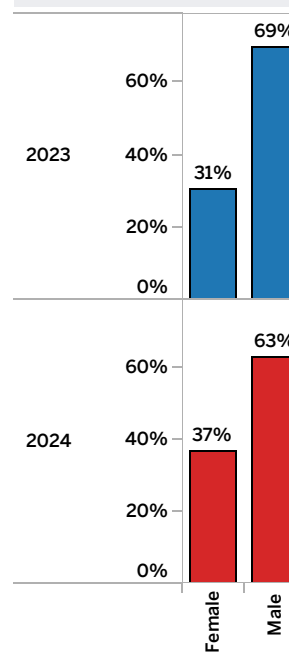
**Fentanyl:** Fentanyl was detected in 62.9% of overdose deaths in 2024. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that has contributed to the increased number of drug overdose deaths in Davidson County.

**Polysubstance Epidemic:** The most frequently detected substances in 2024 were fentanyl, cocaine, and methamphetamine. The percentage of suspected overdose deaths in which cocaine was detected increased by 46.3% in 2024 compared to 2023. Methamphetamine detections have remained relatively stable.

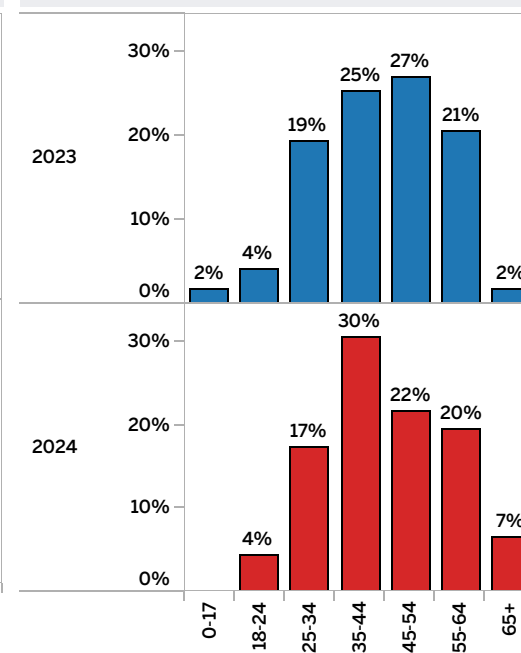
**Emerging Substances:** Emerging substances detected include xylazine and fentanyl analogs (florofentanyl and acetylfentanyl). Xylazine detections increased by 150% this quarter compared to the same time period in 2023.

**Demographics:** Males (63%) and White individuals (60%) accounted for the majority of overdose deaths in 2024. The 35-44 year old age group (30%) represented the highest number of overdose deaths. During the same time period in 2023, the 45-54 year old age group was highest at 27%.

Sex, Q1 2023-2024

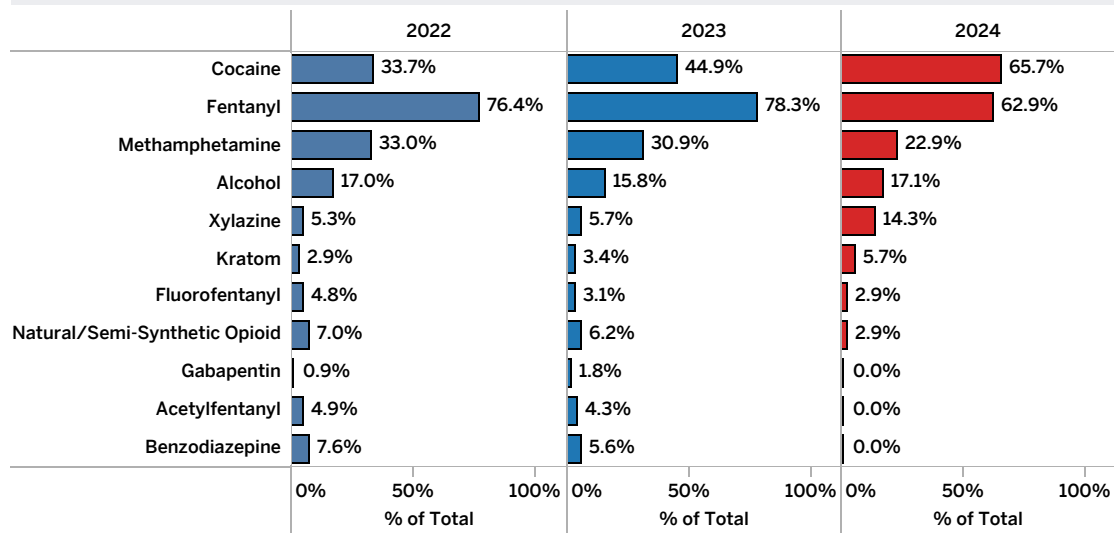


Age Group (years), Q1 2023-2024

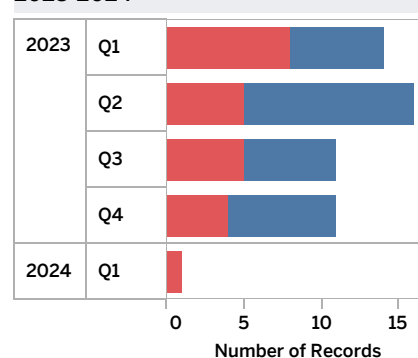


Substances Detected Among Suspected Overdose Deaths in Quarters 1-4 of 2022 and 2023

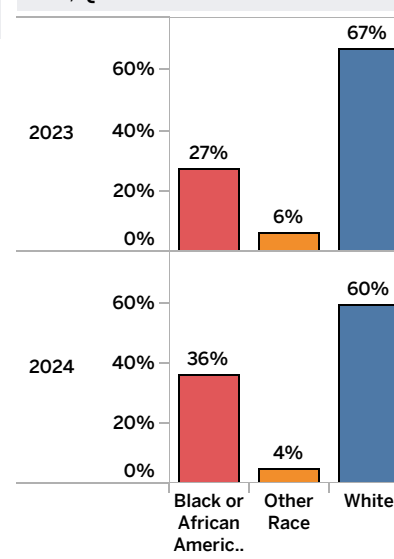
\*2024 are YTD counts



Fentanyl Analog Detection by Quarter, 2023-2024



Race, Q1 2023-2024



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## Suspected Nonfatal Drug Overdose-Related ED Visits (Syndromic Surveillance)

2024 | Quarter 1: December 31 - March 30

### Notable Trends

**Overdose-related ED Visits:** The annual number of suspected drug overdose-related ED visits captured by syndromic surveillance (definition below) peaked during 2020 and declined gradually. So far in 2024, there were 278 suspected drug overdose-related ED visits captured by syndromic surveillance. These numbers are comparable to those reported in the 1st quarter of 2018.

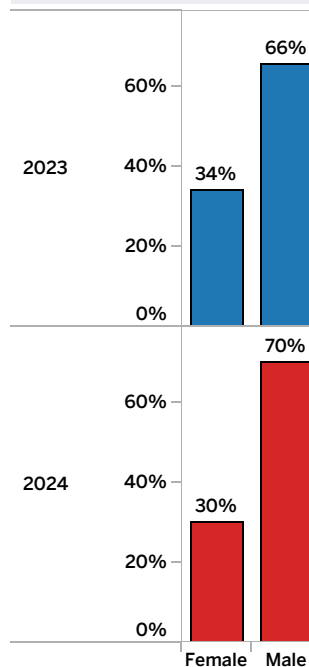
**Drug/Substance Category:** Approximately 77% of overdose-related ED visits in 2024 involved non-heroin opioids. Heroin and stimulants were involved in fewer incidents. This finding indicates a continued shift away from heroin and towards synthetic opioids.

**Demographics:** About 70% of drug overdose-related ED visits in Davidson County during Q1 of 2024 were among males. By age group, 31% of drug overdose-related ED visits occurred among individuals 25-34 years old. Among race groups, the majority of ED visits were among White individuals at 49% followed by Black individuals at 41%.

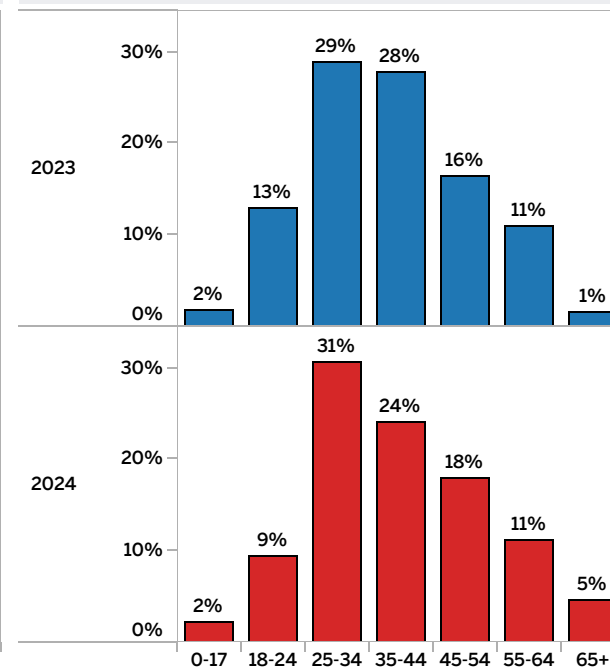
### What is Syndromic Surveillance?

Data collected in syndromic surveillance consists of de-identified information from various health care facilities regarding chief complaints, diagnosis codes, and patient characteristics. These data are reported either to state and local health departments or Health Information Exchanges, which then contribute data to the national syndromic surveillance platform for assistance in identifying early trends in diseases and conditions.

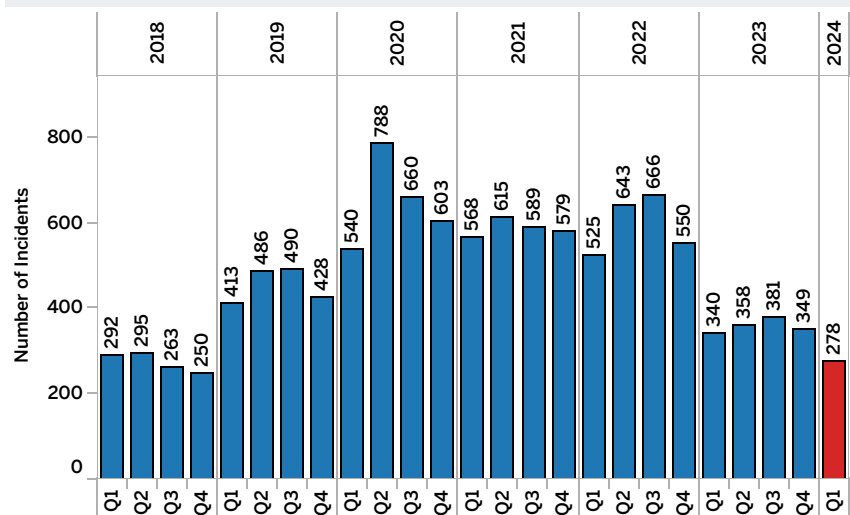
Sex, Q1 2023-2024



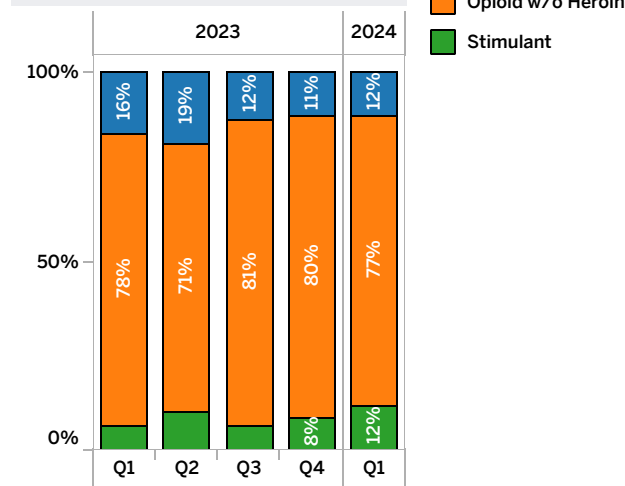
Age Group, Q1 2023-2024



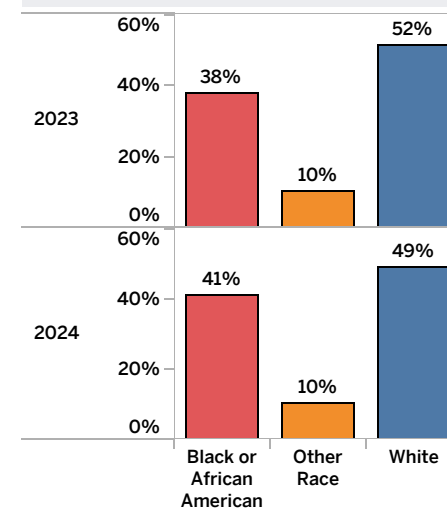
Suspected Drug Overdose-Related ED Visits by Quarter - 2018-2024



Drug/Substance Category by Quarter, 2023-2024



Race, Q1 2023-2024



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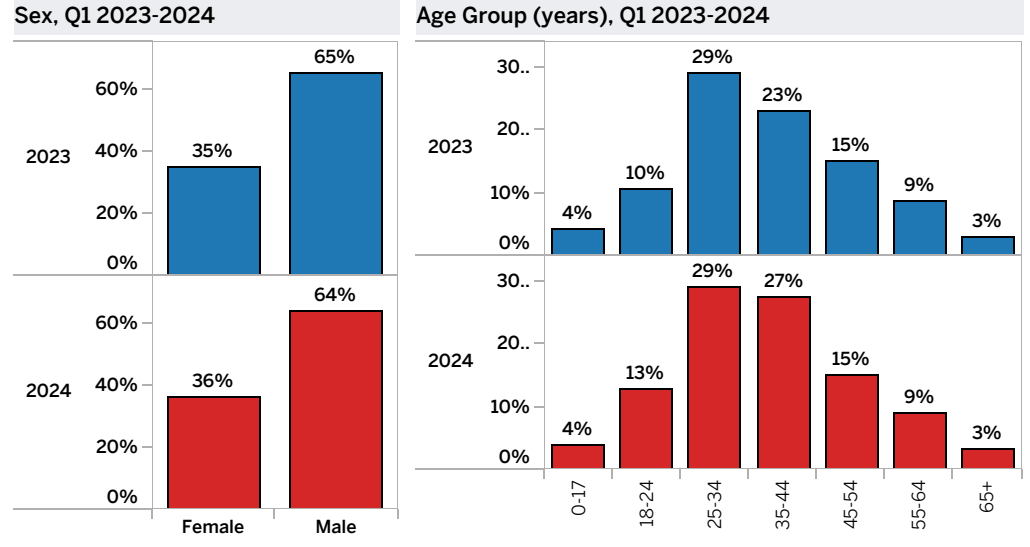
## Suspected Drug Overdoses Requiring NFD-EMS Response

**2024 | Quarter 1: December 31 - March 30**

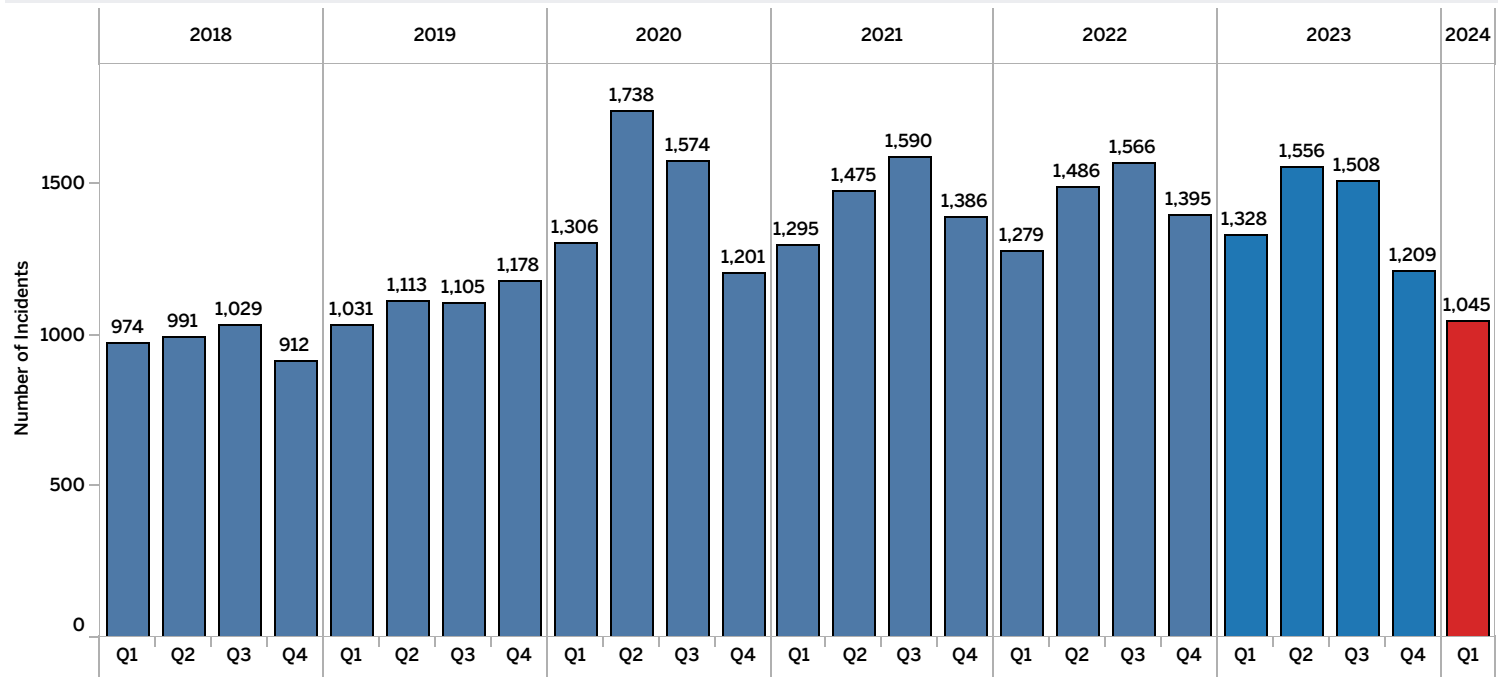
**Notable Trends**  
**Suspected Overdoses Requiring NFD-EMS Response:** The annual number of suspected drug overdoses requiring NFD-EMS response has remained relatively stable since 2020. During 2024, there were 1,045 suspected drug overdoses requiring NFD-EMS response. This is comparable to the numbers reported in 2019.

**Demographics:** Nearly two-thirds of NFD-EMS responses to suspected drug overdoses in Davidson County were among males during 2024. This trend has remained consistent over the last several years. By age group, 27% of all suspected drug overdoses occurred among individuals 25-34 years old. White individuals accounted for 55%, and Black individuals accounted for 35% of NFD-EMS responses during this time period.

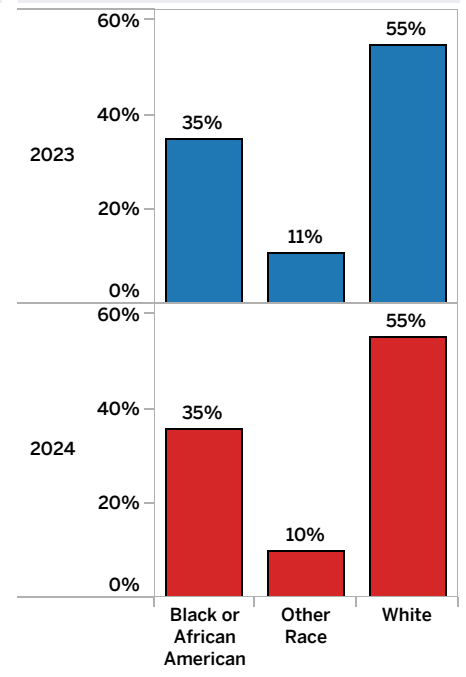
**Naloxone Administration:** During Q1 of 2024, naloxone was administered in 49% of suspected drug overdose incidents to which NFD-EMS responded; this is the same percentage seen in 2023.



Suspected Drug Overdoses Requiring NFD-EMS Response by Quarter - 2018-2024



Race, Q1 2023-2024



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## Footnotes and Supplemental Information

**\*\*If you have information on unusual overdose activity, please contact the Overdose Response Program\*\***

**Opioid.Response@nashville.gov | 615-340-0498**

### Technical Notes

Data for the most recent quarter, December 31 through March 30 of 2024, remain preliminary and may be adjusted in later months. Percent change where the cumulative total is less than 20 were not included due to the instability of calculations.

### **Suspected Fatal Drug Overdoses**

- **Data represent deaths accessed from the Death Investigation and Decedent Information (DIDI) database on 4/4/2024 that are suspected to be drug overdose-related. These deaths have occurred within Davidson County, and cases are included in this total regardless of resident status.** This mortality indicator demonstrates the overall burden on first response, healthcare, and forensic science in addition to the overall magnitude of the overdose epidemic. Counts reported for this metric will likely differ from overdose death counts provided by other agencies that report deaths only among county residents.

### **Suspected Nonfatal Drug Overdose-Related ED Visits**

- Nonfatal drug overdose data were extracted from ESSENCE-TN on 4/4/2024. Syndromic surveillance identifies suspected overdose-related ED visits via chief complaint and discharge diagnosis codes. These incidents do not include laboratory or clinical confirmation.
- Nonfatal drug overdose ED visits were captured by syndromic surveillance (ESSENCE-TN) at the following hospitals: Nashville General Hospital, Saint Thomas Midtown Hospital, Saint Thomas West Hospital, TriStar Centennial Medical Center, TriStar Skyline Medical Center, TriStar Southern Hills Medical Center, TriStar Summit Medical Center, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Vanderbilt Childrens Hospital, and TriStar Century Farms ER.
- Data was obtained through a query of ESSENCE-TN using the Chief Complaint Discharge Diagnosis (CCDD) Categories: CDC Opioid Overdose Version 2 and CDC Stimulant Overdose Version 3. The CCDD field is used to query diagnosis codes and chief complaint free text.

### **Suspected Drug Overdoses Requiring NFD-EMS Response**

- Suspected drug overdose data were provided by the Nashville Fire Department EMS Database on 4/4/2024.

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## Resources for the Public

### Where to Find Help

#### **Community Overdose Response Team**

For those seeking treatment for drug addiction, the Community Overdose Response Team (CORT) can help. CORT is a free and confidential resource to help find drug and alcohol treatment for individuals who are at risk of an overdose. The service is offered free of charge regardless of health insurance status. The team works with an individual to determine the appropriate level of care (e.g., detox, residential, or outpatient treatment, etc.).

To make a referral or learn more about this resource for our community, **call CORT at 615-687-1701**.

#### **Tennessee REDLINE**

The purpose of the Tennessee REDLINE is to provide accurate, up-to-date alcohol, drug, problem gambling, and other addiction information and referrals to all citizens of Tennessee at their request even if you do not have health insurance.

- **Phone: 1.800.889.9789** (toll free 24 hours/7 days)

- **Website:** <https://www.tn.gov/opioids/treatment/how-to-get-help.html>

### Additional Information

#### **Naloxone Training**

- **STARS Nashville, Call 615-393-6980 or visit** <https://starsnashville.org/rops/>.

- **Red Cross** <https://www.redcross.org/>

#### **Overdose Signs**

- Person is not responsive
- Fingertips or lips turn blue or grey
- Breathing is slow, shallow, or has stopped
- Person is gurgling or making snoring noises

#### **What can you do if you see an opioid overdose?**

- Call 911
- If you have naloxone, give the person naloxone and perform rescue breathing
- If no response after 2-3 minutes, give a second dose of naloxone
- Do not leave the person alone (help will arrive)
- If the person starts to breathe or becomes more alert, lay the person in the recovery position: put the person slightly on the left side so that their body is supported by a bent knee with their face turned to the side and bottom arm reaching out to stabilize the position

#### **SPIKE Auto Text Program**

Metro Public Health Department is collaborating with Partnership to End Addiction to implement the SPIKE Auto Text Program in Davidson County. The program will alert you when spikes in drug overdoses occur locally.

**Text SPIKE to 855-9-OD-KNOW (855-963-5669)** and follow the steps to get messages on your phone when overdose spikes occur. This service is FREE. You can learn more at <https://drugfree.org/spike/>.

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## Resources for the Public

### Metro Public Health Department of Nashville/Davidson County Resources

#### Behavioral Health Services:

##### Assessments and Referrals for Substance Use/Abuse and Brief Mental Health Screenings

Assessments and brief Mental Health Screenings are conducted at the Lentz Building – MPHD in suite 110-B, by appointment only Monday thru Friday. There is no fee for the assessment service. Call 615-340-2172 for more information and to make an appointment. Walk-ins will be seen as time permits and given an appointment. Community Agency Representatives may call during business hours (Monday thru Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.) to schedule an appointment for their potential client to be screened in the office. \*Please note that attorney referrals, or child custody case referrals are not accepted for assessments and brief screenings.\*

#### Resources:

- Overdose Response Program – Drug Overdose Information: <https://www.nashville.gov/departments/health/drug-overdose-information>

- Behavioral Health and Wellness Services Resource List:

<https://www.nashville.gov/departments/health/clinical-health-services/behavioral-health-services>

Various resources in English, Spanish, and Arabic.

