

Quarterly Drug Overdose Surveillance Update | End of 1st Quarter 2026

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

2026 | Quarter 1: January 4 - March 28

Suspected Fatal Drug Overdoses

The annual number of fatal suspected drug overdoses in Davidson County peaked at 725 in 2021 and has declined steadily since then. During quarter 1 of 2026, there were 80 suspected drug overdose deaths that occurred in the county, 52 completed (blue) and 28 pending (red). This represents a 35.5% decrease in fatalities compared to the same period in 2025.

Fentanyl: Fentanyl, a synthetic opioid, was detected in approximately 79% of overdose-related toxicology reports in YTD 2026. 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 76% percent in YTD 2026. The largest percentage of deaths occurred among those 45-54 year olds (24%).

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 312 suspected drug overdose-related ED visits in 2026 so far. This represents a 18% increase in ED visits over the same period in 2025.

Drug/Substance Category: Non-heroin opioids (84%) was the top drug/substance category reported for overdose-related ED visits.

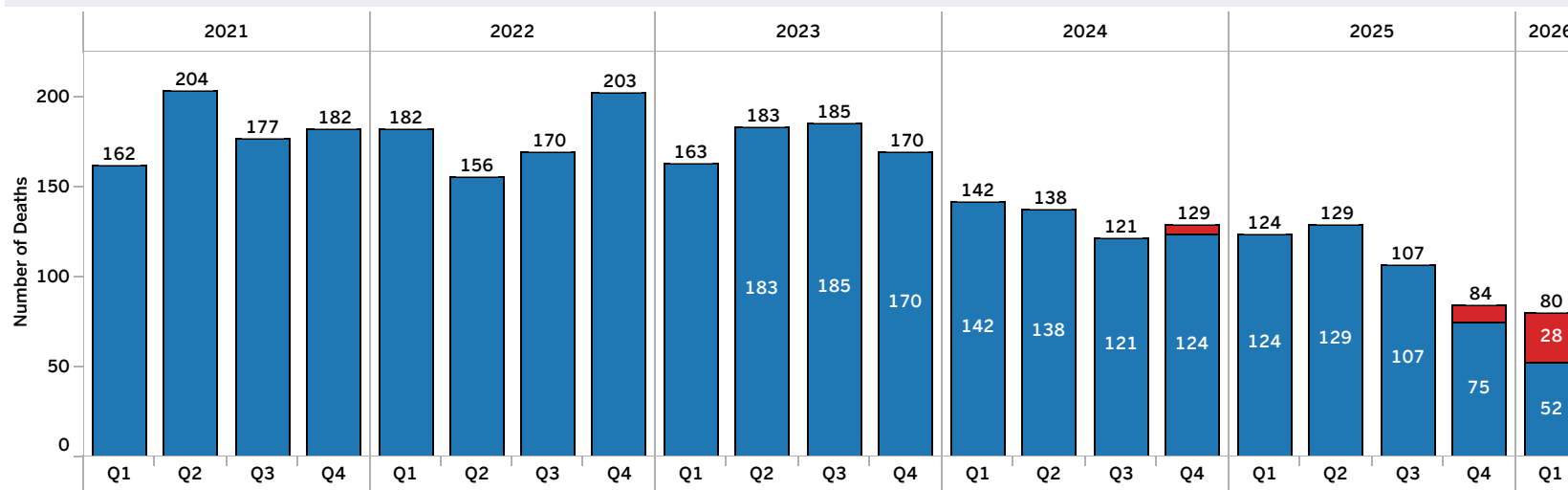
Demographics: During 2026, approximately two-thirds of drug overdose-related ED visits in Davidson County were among males, and 52% occurred among individuals 25-44 years old.

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

The annual number of suspected non-fatal drug overdoses requiring NFD-EMS response has shown relative stability since 2020, with 791 suspected overdoses reported in 2026. This represents an 19% decrease compared to the same reporting period 2025.

Demographics: Males continue to account for nearly two-thirds (61%) of NFD-EMS responses, consistent with trends observed in previous years. Young adults aged 25–34 remain the most affected group, representing 26% of suspected overdoses.

Suspected Fatal Drug Overdoses by Quarter, 2020-2025 - Davidson County, TN



Note: These data represent Davidson County deaths accessed from the Death Investigation and Decedent Information Database that are suspected to be drug overdose-related and will be updated and finalized in subsequent reports. Data reported for 2024 and 2025 includes both pending (red) and completed cases (blue).

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Suspected Fatal Drug Overdoses

2026 | Quarter 1: January 4 - March 28

Notable Trends

Overdose Deaths: The annual number of fatal drug overdoses in Davidson County increased each year from 2016 through 2023, with notable decreases seen since then. During the first quarter of 2026, there were 80 suspected drug overdose deaths. The total for Q1 in 2026 represents a 35.5% decrease compared to the same period in 2025.

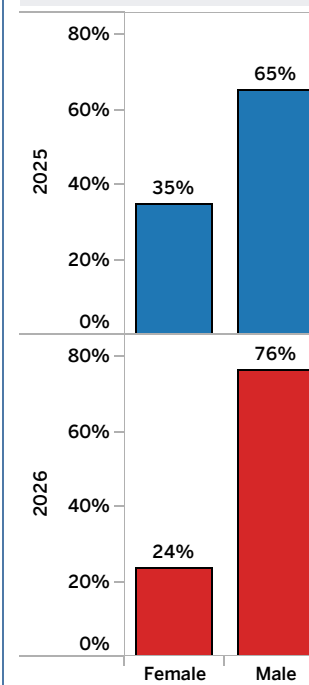
Fentanyl: Fentanyl was detected in roughly 79% of overdose deaths in 2026, a 21.7% increase from 2025. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that has contributed to a high number of drug overdose deaths in Davidson County.

Polysubstance Epidemic: The most frequently detected substances in Q1 of 2026 were fentanyl, cocaine, and alcohol. The percentage of suspected overdose deaths in which cocaine was detected increased by roughly 33% when compared to 2025.

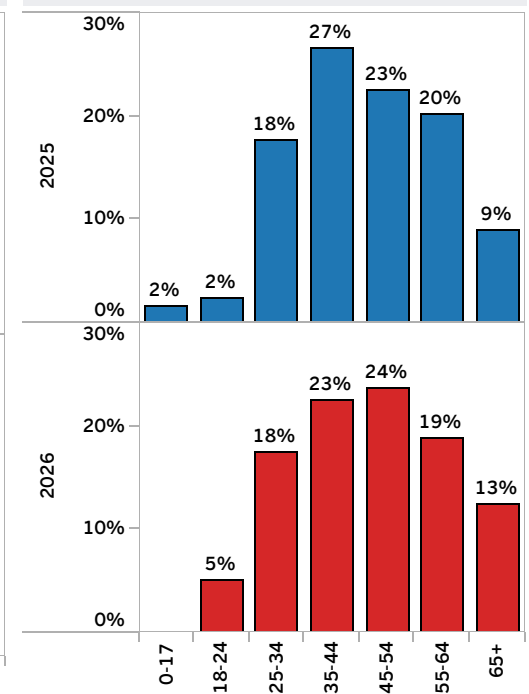
Emerging Substances: Emerging substances detected include xylazine and fentanyl analogs (carfentanil and acetylfentanyl). Xylazine detections have continued but are still below that seen in the same reporting period in 2024.

Demographics: Males (76%) and White and Black individuals (46%) accounted for the majority of overdose deaths in 2025. The 45-54 year old age group (24%) represented the highest number of overdose deaths. The 65+ age group saw overdose deaths increase by 44% in 2026 compared to the same time period in 2025.

Sex, Q1 2025-2026

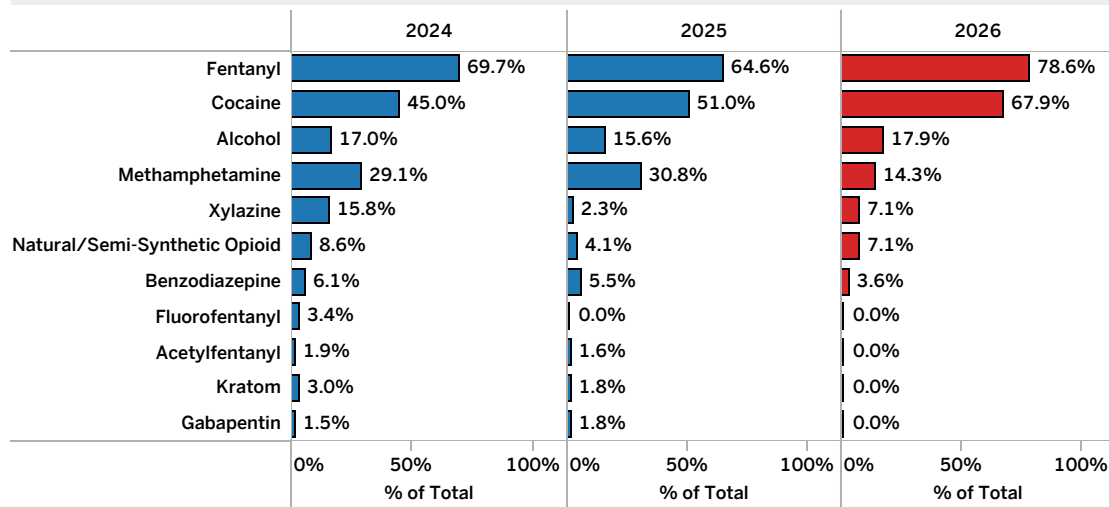


Age Group (years), Q1 2025-2026

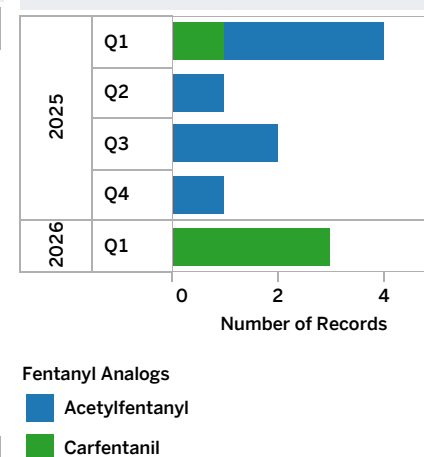


Substances Detected Among Suspected Overdose Deaths in Quarters 1-4 of 2024 - 2026

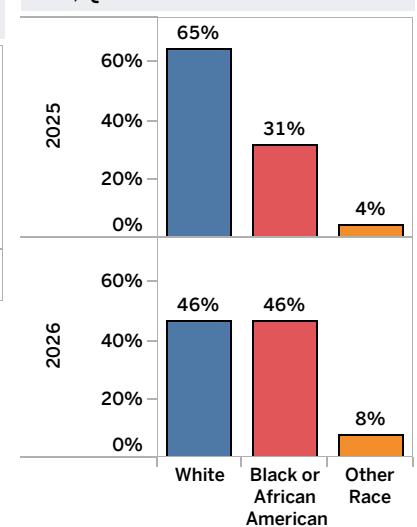
*2026 are YTD counts



Fentanyl Analog Detection by Quarter, 2025-2026



Race, Q1 2025-2026



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

2026 | Quarter 1: January 4 - March 28

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 has since declined gradually. In 2026, there were 312 suspected drug overdose-related ED visits captured by syndromic surveillance. These numbers are about 18% higher than reported in the same reporting period in 2025.

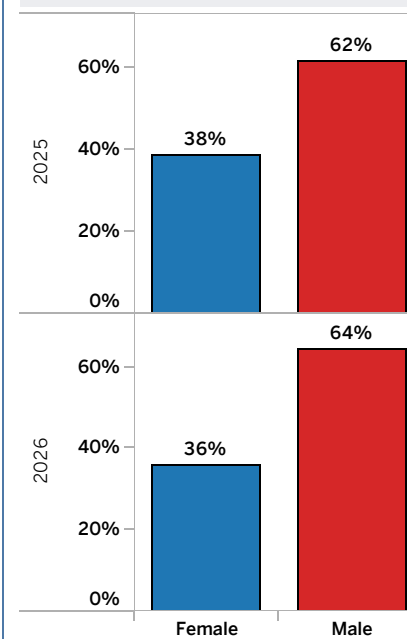
Drug/Substance Category: Approximately 84% of overdose-related ED visits in 2025 involved non-heroin opioids. This finding indicates a continued shift away from heroin and towards synthetic opioids.

Demographics: About 64% of drug overdose-related ED visits in Davidson County during Q1 of 2026 were among males. By age group, 30% of drug overdose-related ED visits occurred among individuals 35-44 years old. Among race groups, the majority of ED visits were among White individuals at 57% followed by Black individuals at 33%.

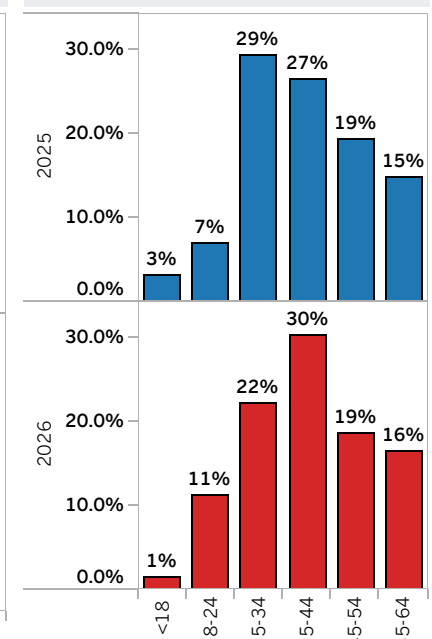
What is Syndromic Surveillance?

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.

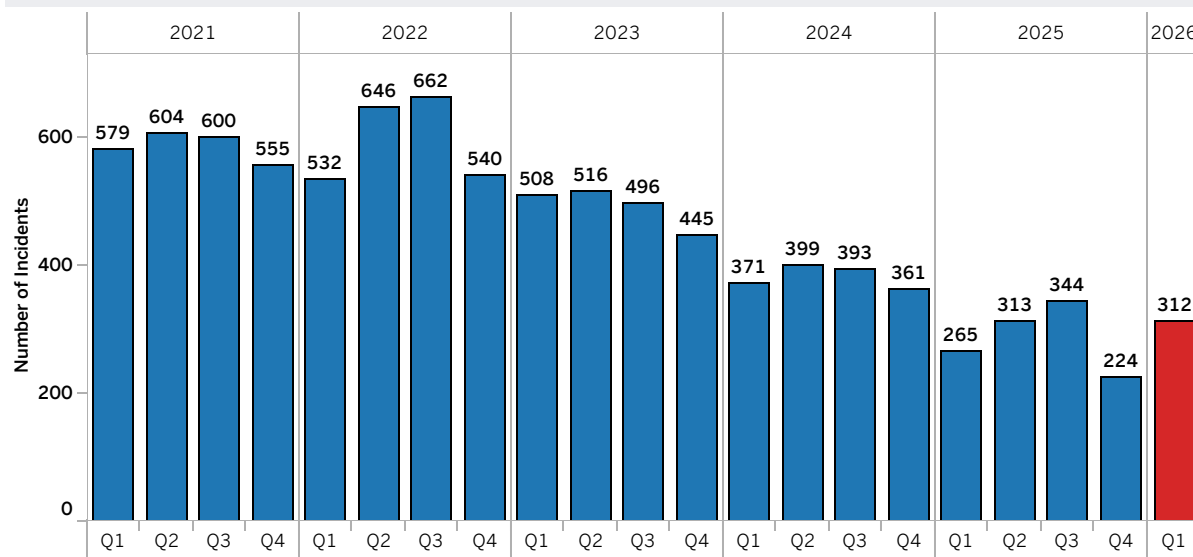
Sex, Q1 2025-2026



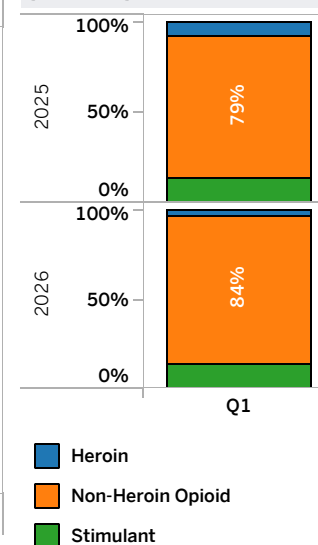
Age Group, Q1 2025-2026



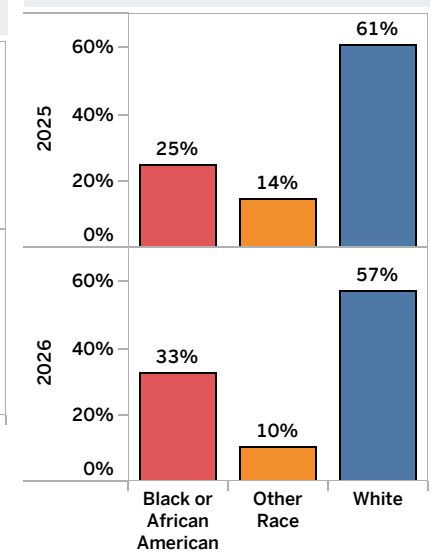
Suspected Drug Overdose-Related ED Visits by Quarter - 2021-2026



Drug/Substance Category by Quarter, Q1 2025-2026



Race, Q1 2025-2026



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Suspected Drug Overdoses Requiring NFD-EMS Response

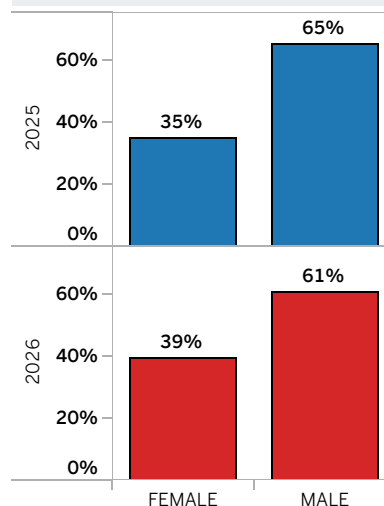
2026 | Quarter 1: January 4 - March 28

Notable Trends

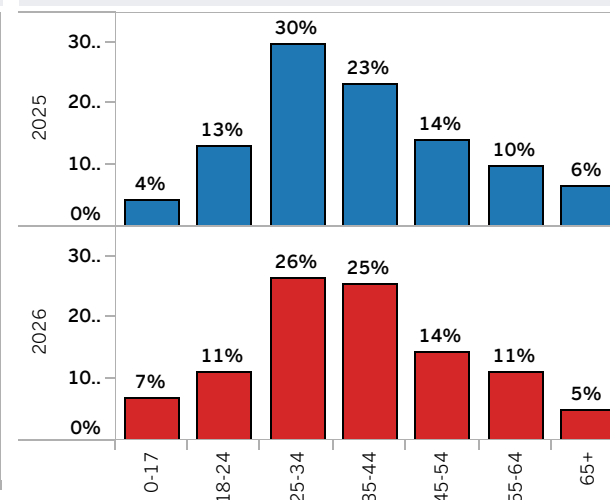
Suspected Overdoses Requiring NFD-EMS Response: The annual number of suspected drug overdoses requiring NFD-EMS declined 667 fewer responses per year from 2024 through 2025. During 2026 Q1, there were 791 suspected drug overdoses requiring NFD-EMS response. This represents a 19% decrease from the same reporting period in 2025.

Demographics: Nearly two-thirds of NFD-EMS responses to suspected non-fatal drug overdoses in Davidson County in 2026 were for males. This trend has remained consistent over the last several years. By age group, 51% of all suspected drug overdoses occurred among individuals 25-44 years old. White individuals accounted for 52%, and Black individuals accounted for 39% of NFD-EMS responses during this time period.

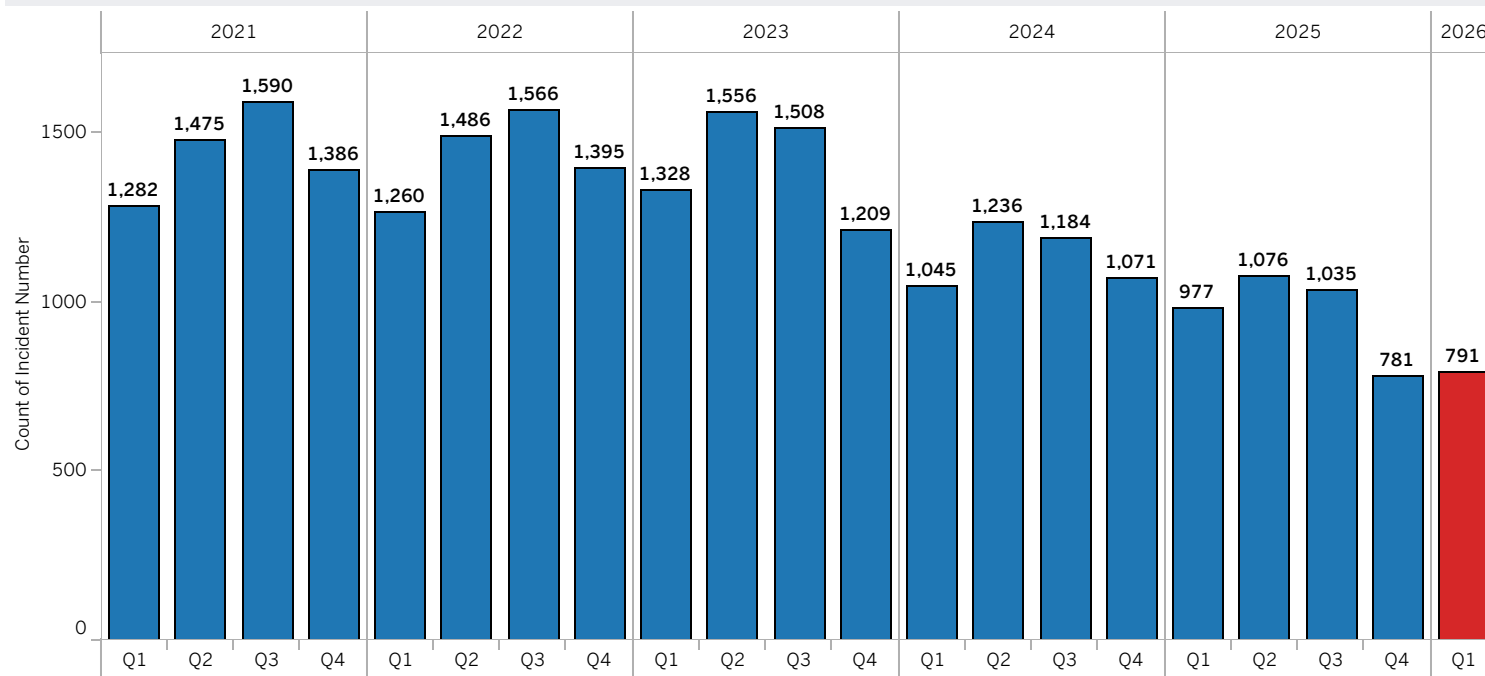
Sex, Q1 2025-2026



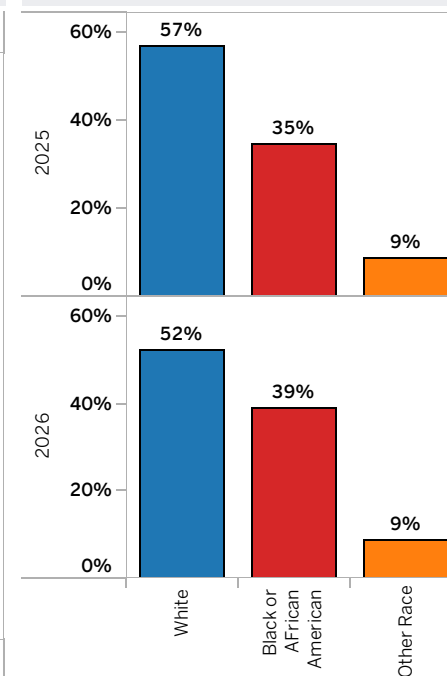
Age Group (years), Q1 2025-2026



Suspected Drug Overdoses Requiring NFD-EMS Response by Quarter - 2021-2026



Race, Q1 2025-2026



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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

Technical Notes

Data for the most recent quarter, January 4 through March 28 of 2026, 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 4/6/2026 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 4/6/2026. 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 4/6/2026.

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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.