

Monthly Opioid Morbidity and Mortality Report

February 12, 2024

The Health Department has been seeing increased involvement of xylazine and gabapentin in fatal opioid overdoses. The table below summarizes the number of fatal overdoses involving these substances in 2023.

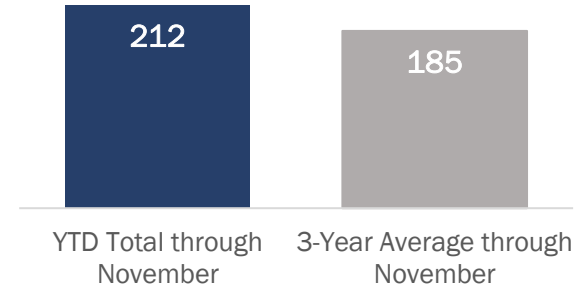
Substances such as xylazine, gabapentin, and other non-opioid drugs cannot be detected with fentanyl test strips. Narcan® (naloxone), a medicine that can reverse an opioid overdose, does not reverse the impact of these substances in an overdose emergency. This can mean a higher risk of death. More information about xylazine is available in this brief: [Xylazine Involvement in Fatal Opioid Overdoses Among Vermont Residents](#).

The increased number of opioid overdose deaths in which non-opioid drugs such as xylazine and gabapentin are present highlights the importance of following the “What should you do during an opioid overdose?” guidance on [KnowODVT.com](#). If an overdose is suspected, call 9-1-1, give naloxone, and start rescue breathing. If non-opioid drugs are involved, naloxone alone may not be effective and additional medical assessment will be needed.

2023	Total Opioid Overdose Deaths	Opioid Overdose Deaths with Xylazine		Opioid Overdose Deaths with Gabapentin	
		Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total
January	18	5	28%	2	11%
February	24	7	29%	3	13%
March	17	6	35%	1	6%
April	25	8	32%	1	4%
May	15	6	40%	2	13%
June	20	6	30%	3	15%
July	27	8	30%	3	11%
August	23	13	57%	2	9%
September	16	2	13%	2	13%
October	19	3	16%	4	21%
November	8	4	50%	0	0%
December					

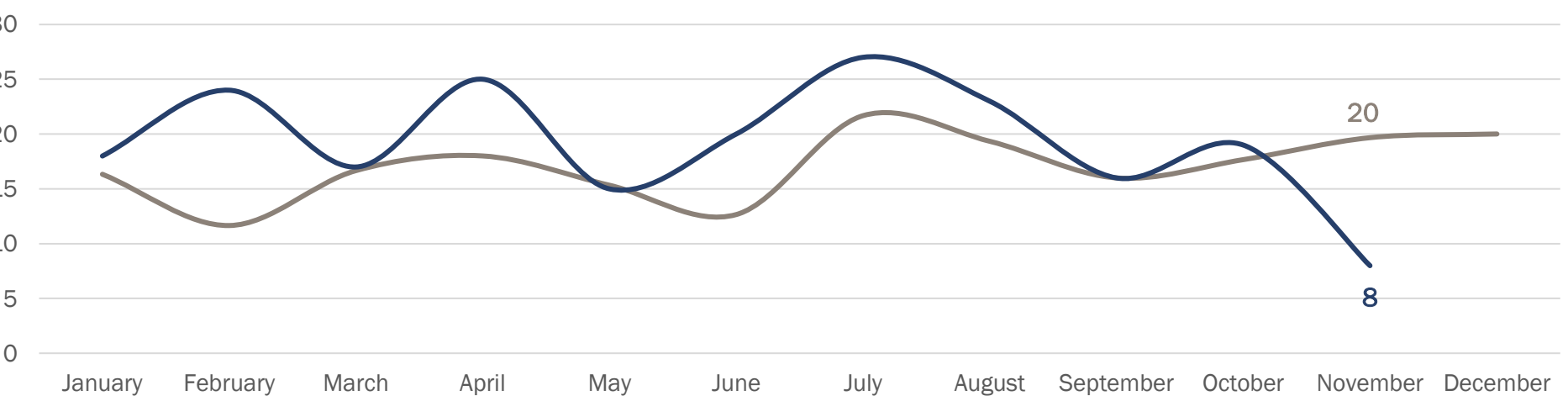
Summary of 2023 Opioid Deaths (to date):

As of the end of November, there have been 212 opioid-related accidental and undetermined deaths among Vermont residents. The number of opioid deaths is higher than the three-year average through November. Essex County currently has the highest rate of opioid deaths (84.4 per 100,000 residents); however, this rate is statistically similar to Vermont overall (32.8 per 100,000 residents).



The number of Vermonters dying by opioid overdose was lower in November this year than in previous years, after being higher in January, February, April, June, July, August and October.

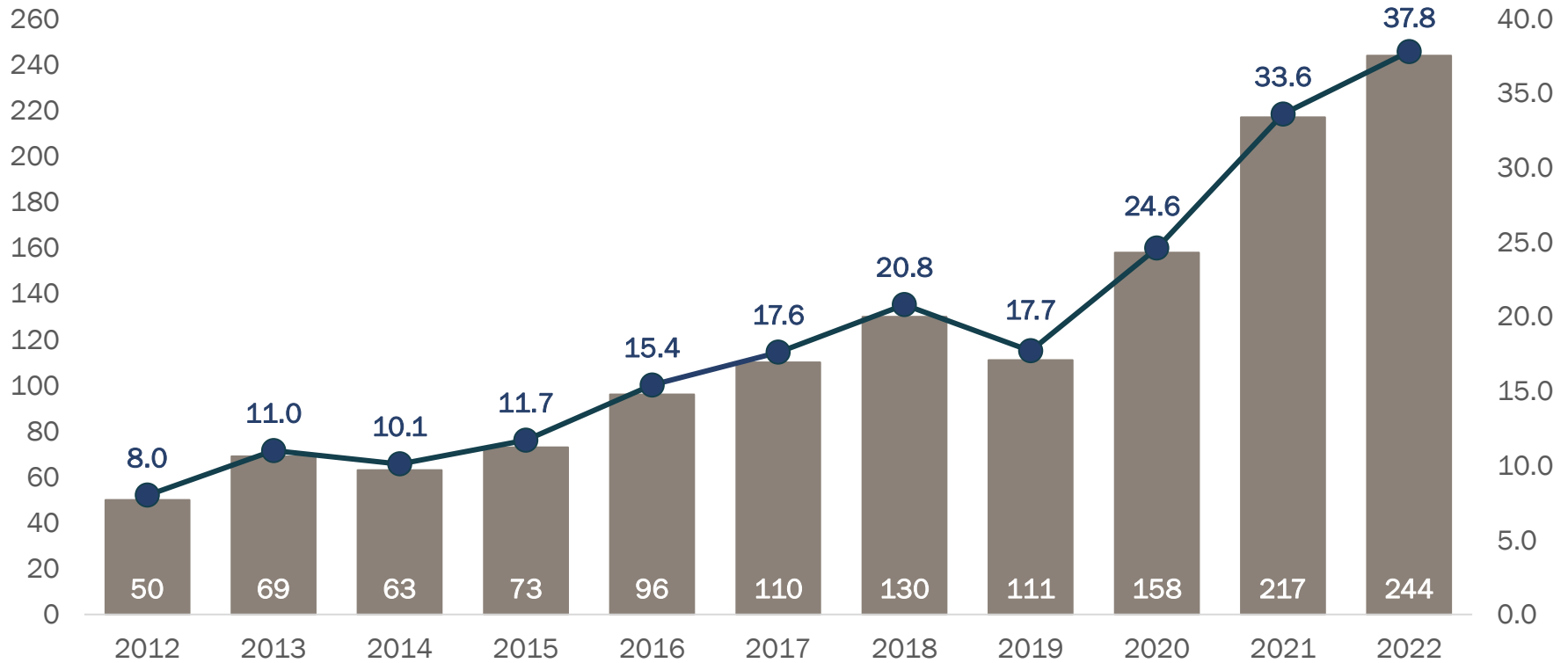
Opioid deaths in **2023** and **3-year averages** by month among Vermont residents*



Source: Vermont Vital Statistics, 2020-2023. All data from 2022 and 2023 are considered preliminary.
*3-year averages are calculated using the years 2020 to 2022.

Please note there is an 8-week lag in reporting opioid overdose deaths. An 8-week lag minimizes the changes in numbers posted. Opioid deaths through the end of November are included in this report. There is 1 pending death certificate in March 2023, 1 pending in April 2023, 1 pending in June 2023, 2 pending in July 2023, 1 pending in August 2023, 1 pending in September 2023, 3 pending in October 2023, and 6 pending in November 2023.

The number and rate per 100,000 of opioid-related deaths over the past 10 years.



*2022 data is preliminary and subject to change.

For more comparisons to previous years: [Annual Opioid-Related Deaths Report](#)

Most opioid-related accidental and undetermined deaths among Vermont residents involve fentanyl.

2023 Month of Death	Total Number of Opioid-Related Accidental and Undetermined Manner Deaths								
	Total*	Fentanyl	Rx Opioid (no fentanyl)	Heroin	Cocaine	Xylazine	Gabapentin	Benzodiazepines	Methamphetamine
January	18	17	6	2	10	5	2	4	0
February	24	23	2	0	17	7	3	3	1
March	17	17	4	0	9	6	1	2	0
April	25	25	5	1	14	8	1	3	1
May	15	14	4	0	6	6	2	5	0
June	20	18	4	2	15	6	3	4	3
July	27	25	3	2	19	8	3	2	1
August	23	21	6	0	11	13	2	5	2
September	16	16	3	0	9	2	2	2	0
October	19	17	2	1	9	3	4	3	4
November	8	8	0	0	5	4	0	1	0
December									
Total Vermont Residents	212	201	39	8	124	68	23	34	12
Vermonters in Vermont	197	187	37	7	118	66	23	31	11
Vermonters Out of State	15	14	2	1	6	2	0	3	1
Non-Vermont Residents	6	6	0	3	3	2	0	0	1

Source: Vermont Vital Statistics. All data from 2023 is considered preliminary.

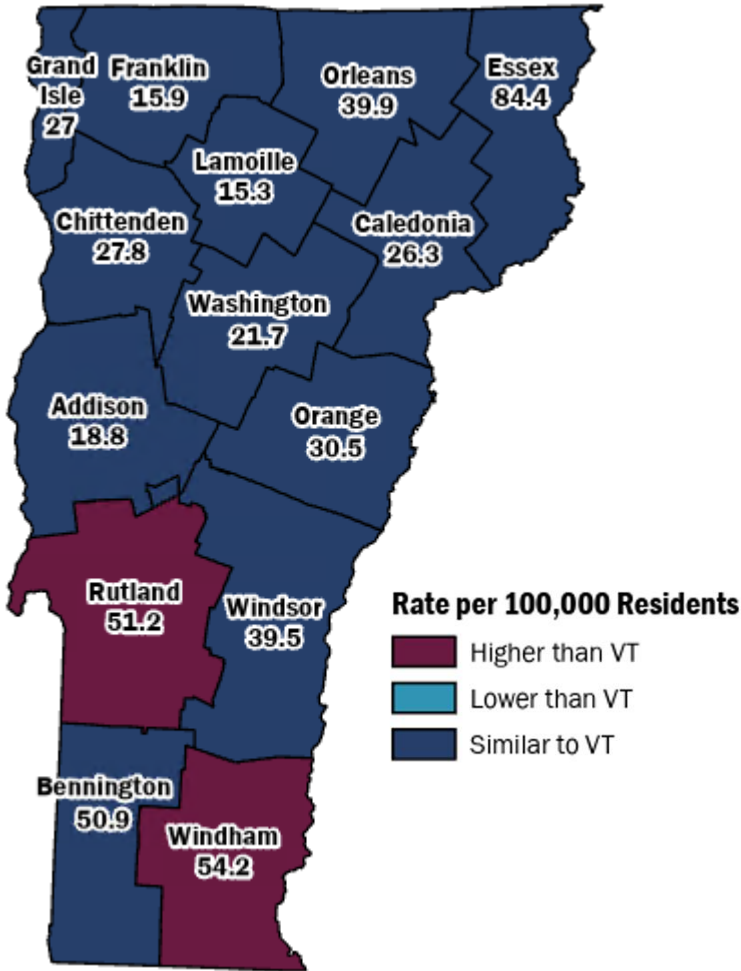
*Involvement of individual substances is not mutually exclusive.

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Deaths

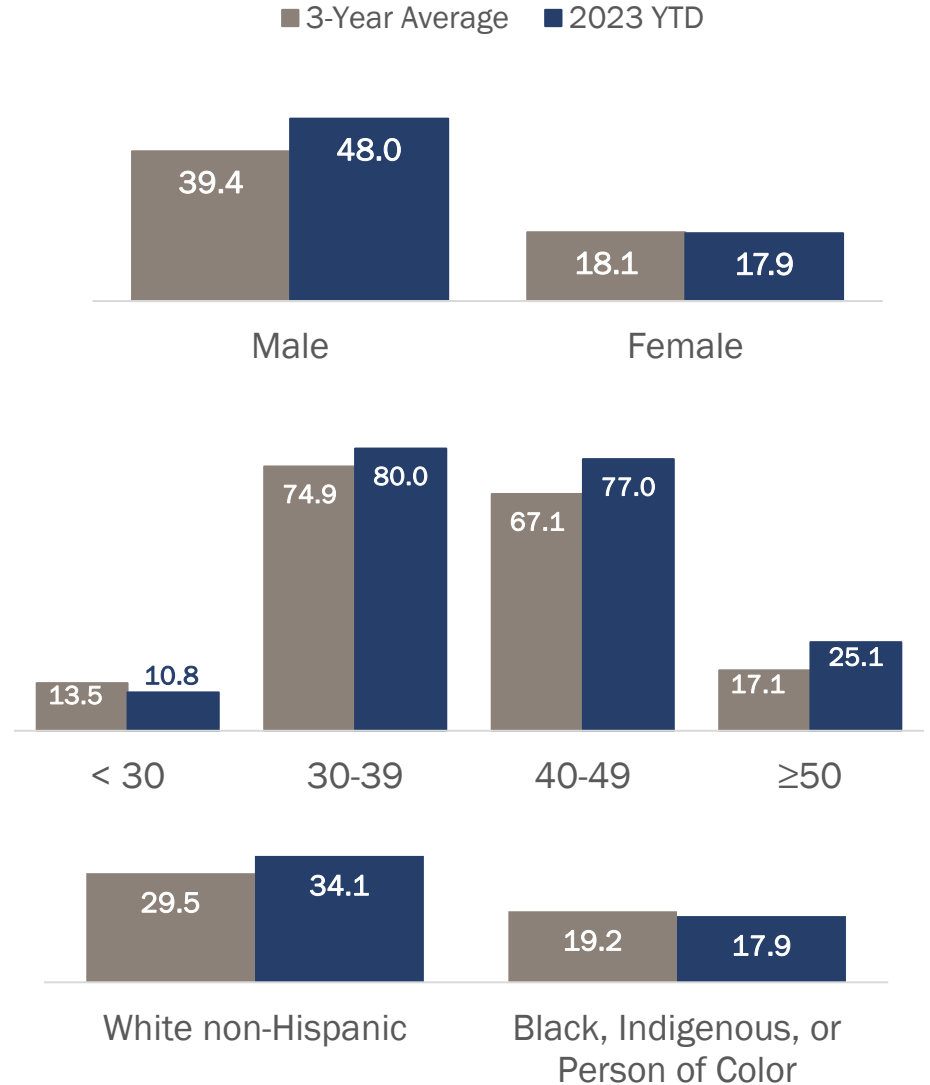
Opioid overdose death rates by county of residence compared to statewide rate (32.8), through November

Opioid overdose death rates per 100,000 Vermont residents



Opioid overdose death rates by sex, age, and race/ethnicity, through November

Rate per 100,000 Vermont residents



Chittenden County has the highest number of opioid-related accidental and undetermined deaths through November.

Number of Opioid Deaths by Month and County of Residence														
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	3-year Avg*
Addison	1	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0		7	4
Bennington	1	1	1	3	1	2	4	1	2	3	0		19	13
Caledonia	0	0	1	2	0	1	2	1	0	1	0		8	10
Chittenden	6	5	6	4	3	8	3	7	2	2	1		47	35
Essex	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0		5	1
Franklin	0	1	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	1	0		8	12
Grand Isle	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0		2	1
Lamoille	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0		4	8
Orange	0	2	1	1	0	0	1	3	0	0	1		9	9
Orleans	1	1	2	0	0	0	4	1	0	2	0		11	8
Rutland	3	2	0	5	1	5	2	2	8	2	1		31	24
Washington	0	1	0	1	4	2	0	2	0	1	2		13	18
Windham	3	2	3	3	2	0	4	3	1	2	2		25	18
Windsor	2	4	1	4	1	1	4	2	1	2	1		23	23
Missing County of Residence	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	1
VT Resident Deaths	18	24	17	25	15	20	27	23	16	19	8		212	185
Vermonters in VT	17	22	14	24	14	20	21	22	16	19	8		197	
Non-Vermont Residents	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0		6	
Pending Death Certificates**	0	0	1	1	0	1	2	1	1	3	6		16	

Note: 2023 data is preliminary and subject to change.

*3-year averages are calculated through November.

**The number of pending death certificates are deaths that have not been assigned a cause of death in Vermont Vital Statistics.

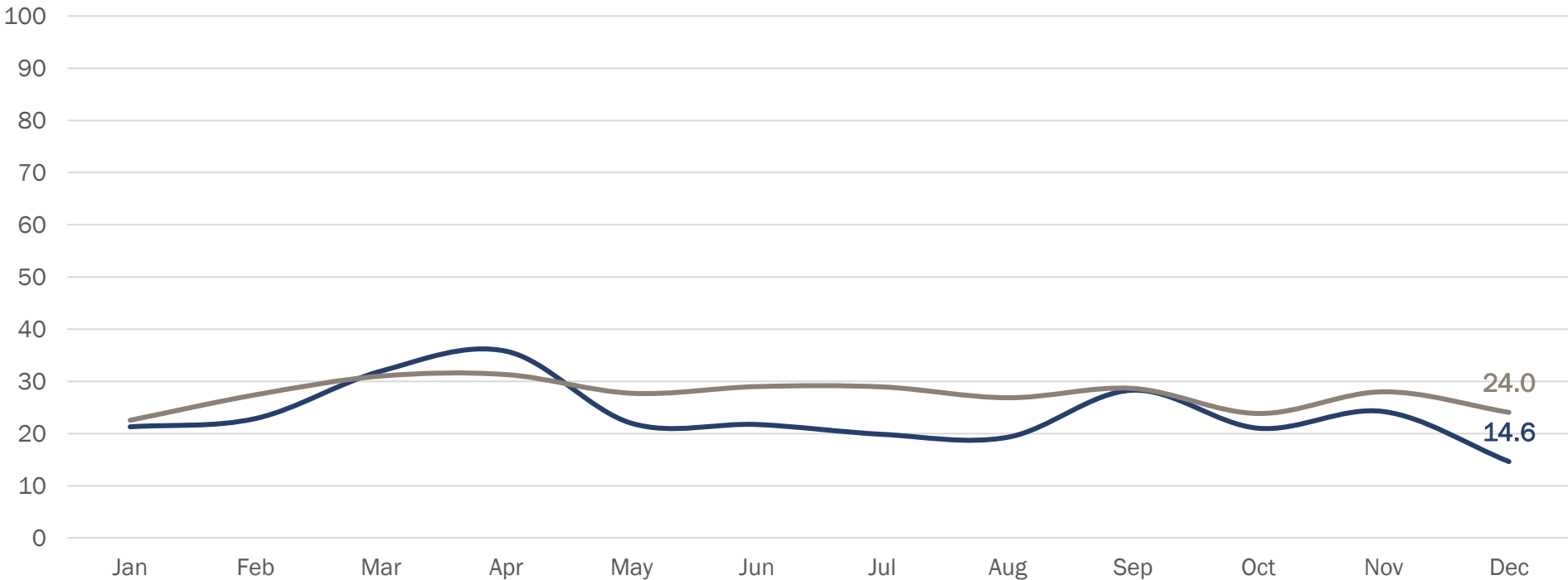
Death certificates that are pending are not necessarily opioid-related deaths.

Syndromic Surveillance

As of February 12th, emergent care visit rates for opioid overdose have been lower than the 3-year average since May 2023, after being higher than previous years in March and April 2023.

Rate of Emergent Care Visits for Opioid Overdose by Month

2023 and 3-year Average Rates of Opioid Overdose Visits per 10,000 ED and Urgent Care Visits*



Source: Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-based Epidemics, 2020-2023.

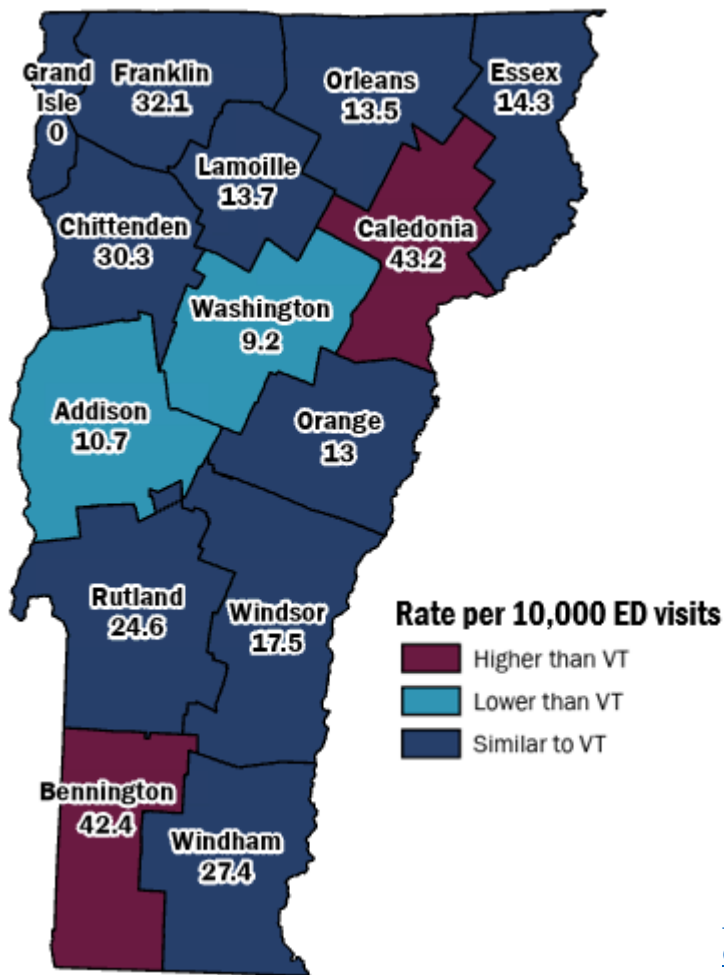
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Opioid overdose is determined using the patient's chief complaint and/or discharge diagnosis.

Syndromic Surveillance

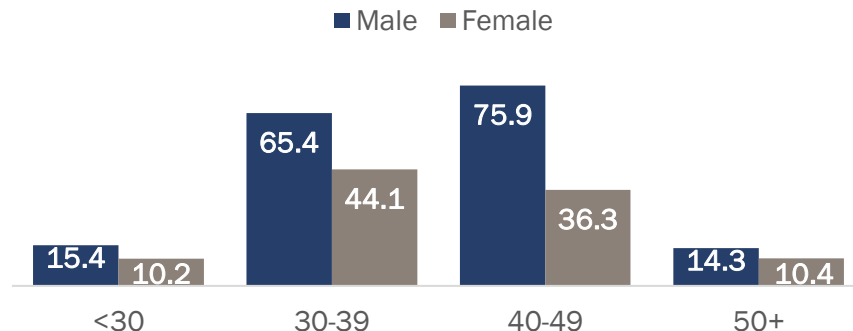
2023 ED visit rates for opioid overdose by county of residence compared to statewide rate (24.3), through November

ED Visit Rates per 10,000 visits.



2023 ED visit rates for opioid overdose by sex and age group, through November

ED Visit Rates per 10,000 ED visits



Summary of 2023 Opioid Overdose-Related ED Visit Data:

- As of February 12th, emergent care visit rates for opioid overdose in 2023 have been lower than the 3-year average since May 2023, after being higher than previous years in March and April 2023.
- The rate of ED visits for opioid overdose is highest among males aged 40-49.
- Compared to the overall rate of opioid-related ED visits in Vermont (24.3 per 10,000 visits), the rate is statistically higher in Bennington County (42.4 per 10,000 visits) and Caledonia County (43.2 per 10,000 visits) and lower in Washington VT County (9.2 per 10,000 visits) and Addison County (10.7 per 10,000 visits)..

For more information about the data, contact: ahs.vdhoverdosedatavt@vermont.gov

For more data on opioid overdoses in Vermont, see the annual brief:

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/document/DSUfatalopioidoverdos ebrief2022.pdf>

For more information on opioids in Vermont: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/alcohol-drugs/by-substance/heroin-and-other-opioids>