

Monthly Opioid Morbidity and Mortality Report

September 11, 2023

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.

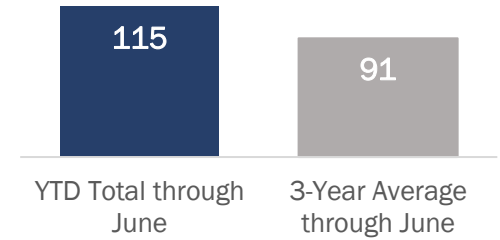
Substances such as xylazine, gabapentin, and other non-opioid drugs cannot be detected with fentanyl test strips. Narcan® (naloxone), a medicine that can reverse an opioid overdose, does not reverse the impact of these substances in an overdose emergency. This can mean a higher risk of death. More information 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	15	5	33%	1	7%
April	25	8	33%	1	4%
May	15	6	43%	2	14%
June	18	6	33%	3	17%
July					
August					
September					
October					
November					
December					

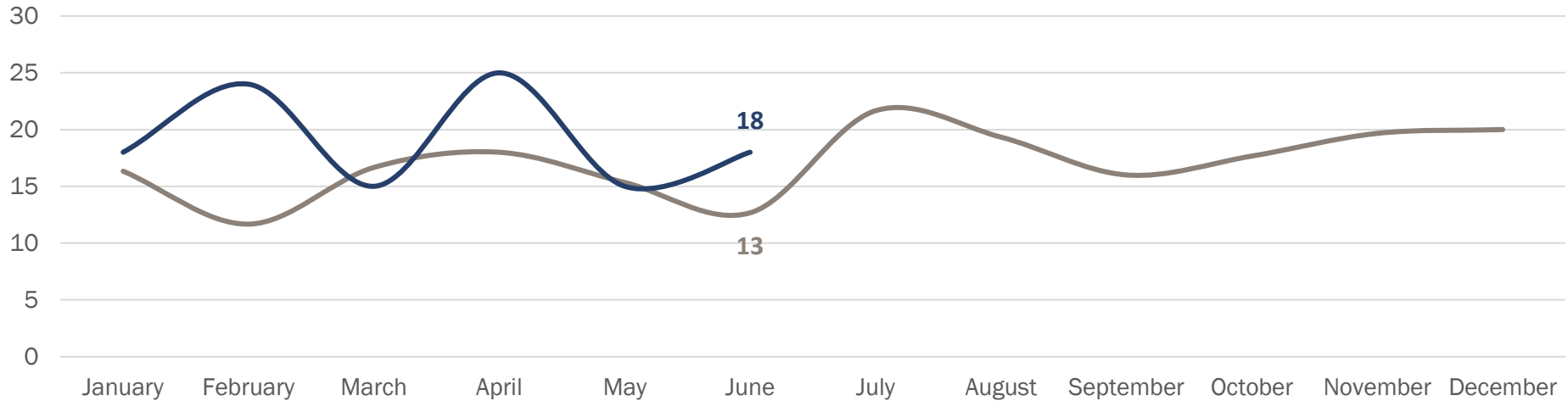
Summary of 2023 Opioid Deaths (to date):

As of the end of June, there have been 115 opioid-related accidental and undetermined deaths among Vermont residents. The number of opioid deaths is higher than the three-year average through June. Essex County currently has the highest rate of opioid deaths (33.8 per 100,000 residents); however, this rate is statistically similar to Vermont overall (17.8 per 100,000 residents).



The number of Vermonters dying by opioid overdose this year was higher in January, February, April, and June than in previous years.

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

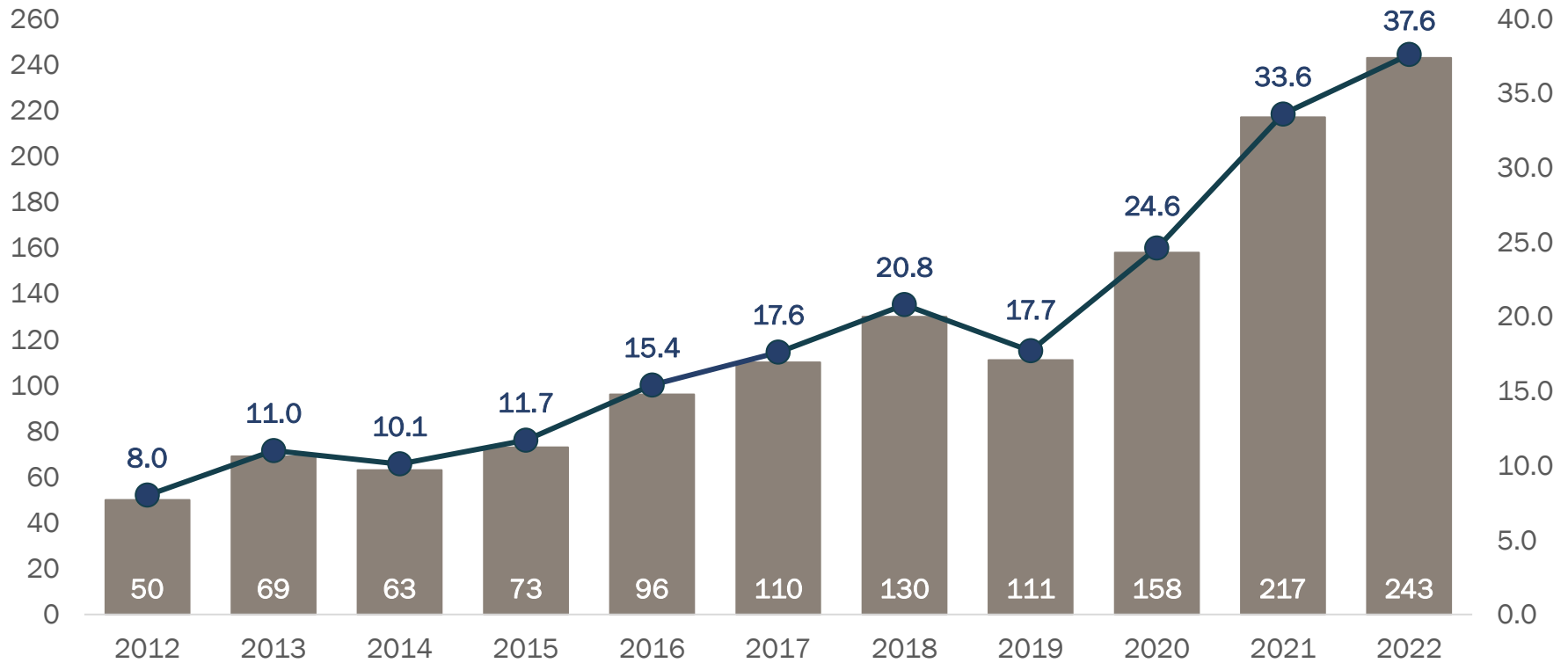


Source: Vermont Vital Statistics, 2020-2023. All data from 2022 and 2023 are considered preliminary.

*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 the end of April are included in this report. There are 5 pending death certificates in March 2023, 4 pending death certificates in April 2023, 2 pending death certificates in May 2023, and 8 pending death certificates in June 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	15	15	3	0	8	5	1	2	0
April	25	25	5	1	14	8	1	3	1
May	15	14	4	0	6	6	2	5	0
June	18	16	4	2	13	6	3	4	2
July									
August									
September									
October									
November									
December									
Total Vermont Residents	115	110	24	5	68	37	12	21	4
Vermonters in Vermont	109	104	24	5	66	37	12	19	4
Vermonters Out of State	6	6	0	0	2	0	0	2	0
Non-Vermont Residents	3	3	0	3	2	2	0	0	1

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

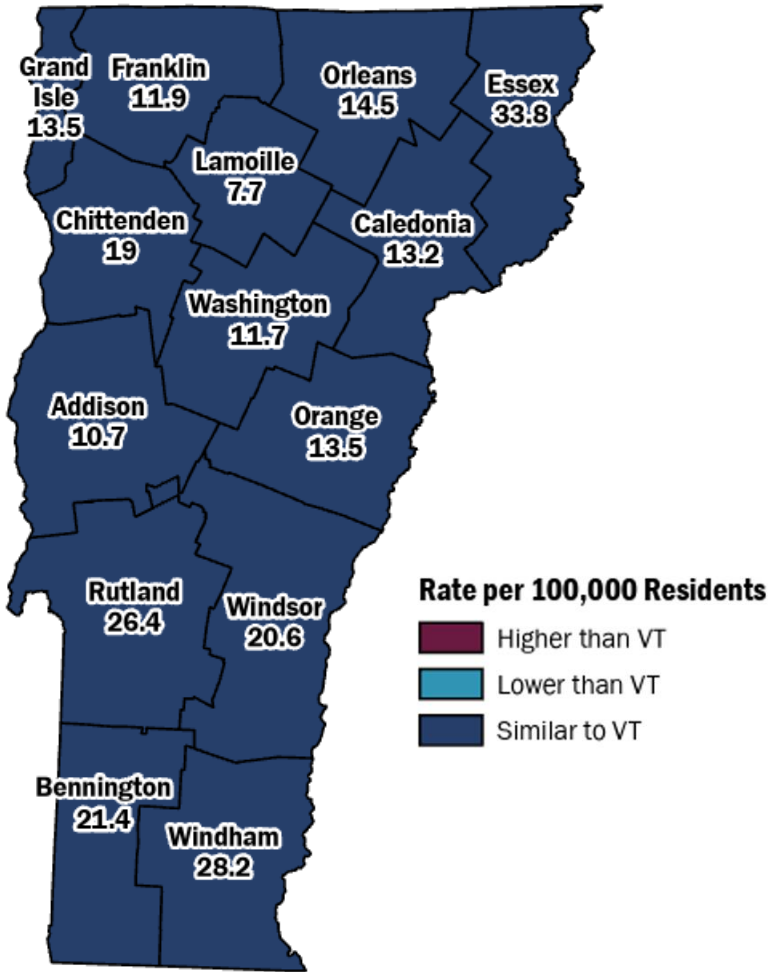
*Involvement of individual substances is not mutually exclusive.

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Deaths

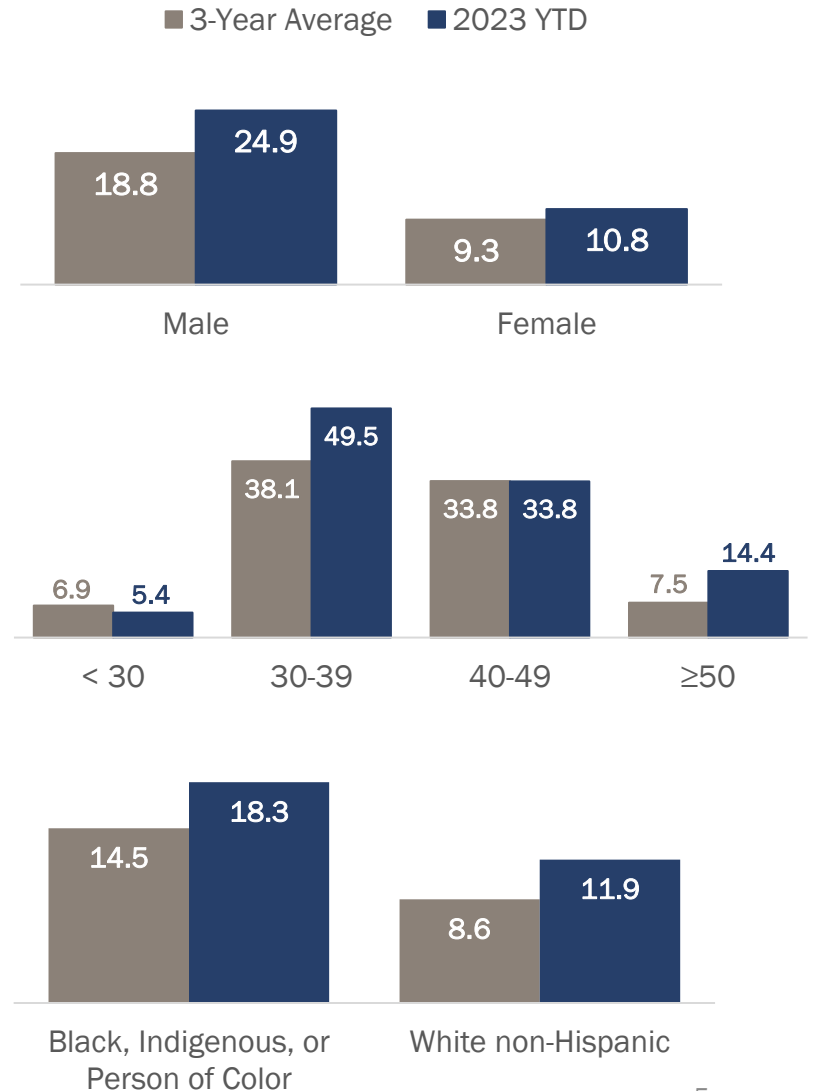
Opioid overdose death rates by county of residence compared to statewide rate (17.8), through June

Opioid overdose death rates per 100,000 Vermont residents



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

Rate per 100,000 Vermont residents



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

Number of Opioid Deaths by Month and County of Residence														3-year
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	Avg*
Addison	1	2	0	0	1	0							4	2
Bennington	1	1	0	3	1	2							8	6
Caledonia	0	0	1	2	0	1							4	5
Chittenden	6	5	6	4	3	8							32	19
Essex	1	0	0	1	0	0							2	1
Franklin	0	1	1	1	2	1							6	7
Grand Isle	0	1	0	0	0	0							1	0
Lamoille	0	2	0	0	0	0							2	3
Orange	0	2	1	1	0	0							4	3
Orleans	1	1	2	0	0	0							4	4
Rutland	3	2	0	5	1	5							16	10
Washington	0	1	0	1	4	1							7	8
Windham	3	2	3	3	2	0							13	9
Windsor	2	4	1	4	1	0							12	12
Missing County of Residence	0	0	0	0	0	0							0	0
VT Resident Deaths	18	24	15	25	15	18							115	91
Vermonters in VT	17	22	14	24	14	18							109	
Non-Vermont Residents	0	1	1	1	0	0							3	
Pending Death Certificates**	0	0	5	4	2	8							19	

Note: 2023 data is preliminary and subject to change.

*3-year averages are calculated through June.

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

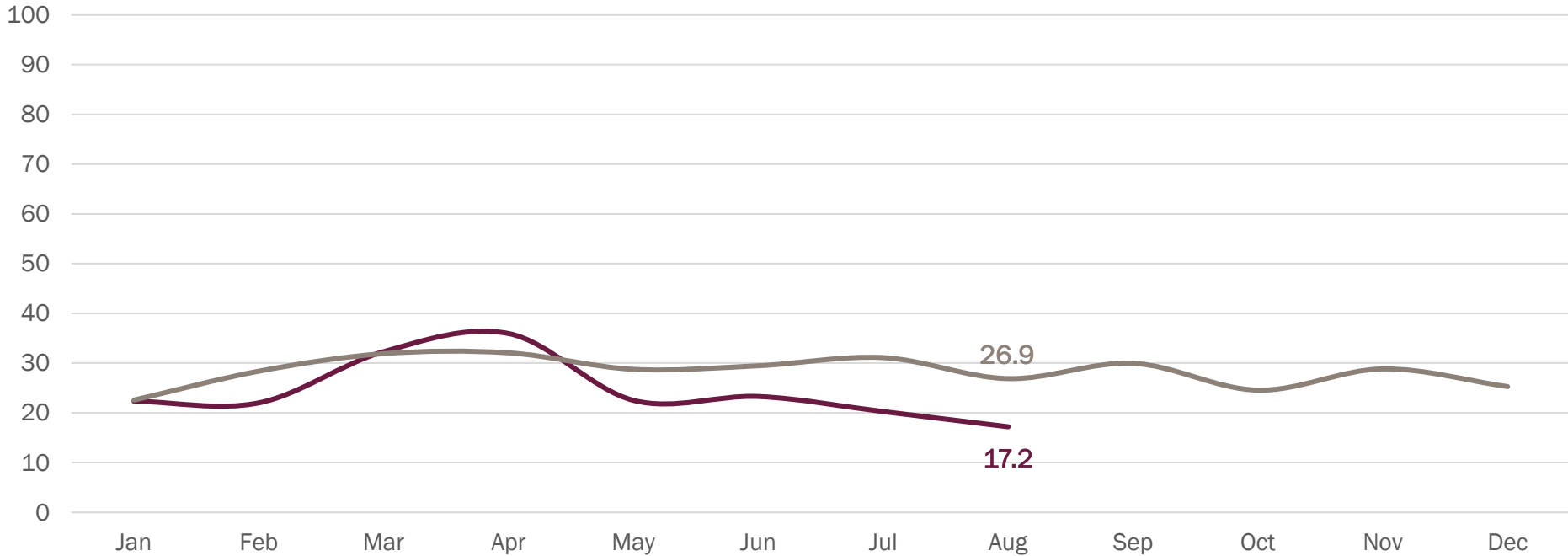
Death certificates that are pending are not necessarily opioid-related deaths.

Syndromic Surveillance

As of September 11th, 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.

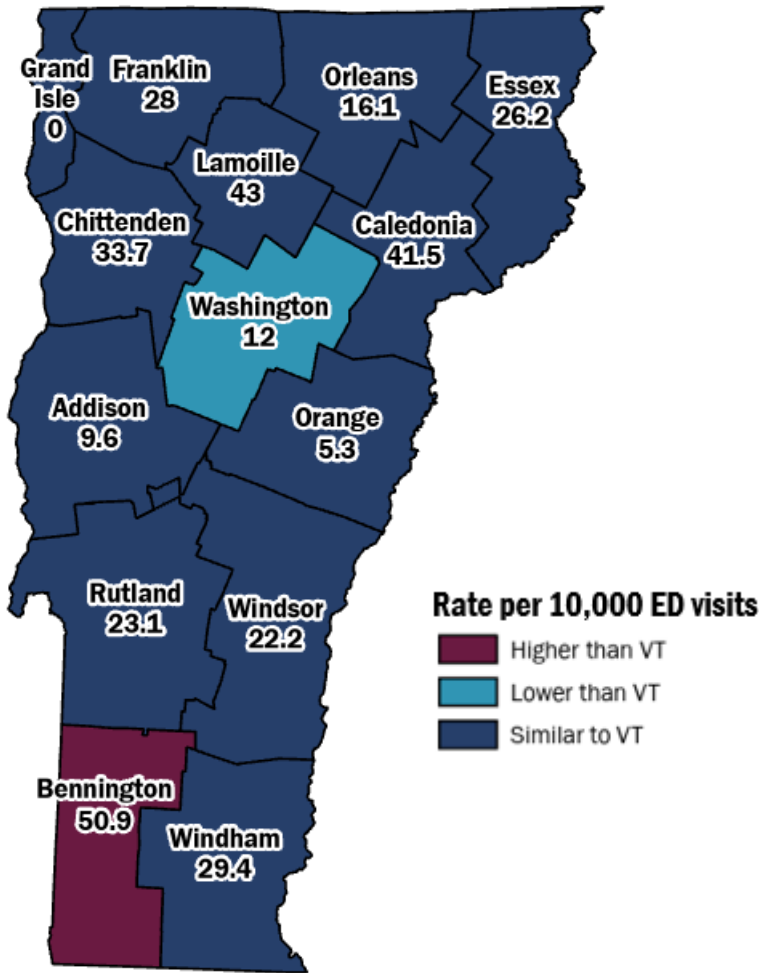
*3-year averages are calculated using the years 2020 to 2022.

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

Syndromic Surveillance

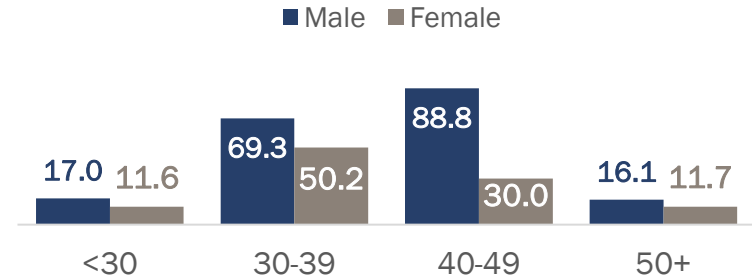
2023 ED visit rates for opioid overdose by county of residence compared to statewide rate (26.8), through June

ED Visit Rates per 10,000 visits.



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

ED Visit Rates per 10,000 ED visits



Summary of 2023 Opioid Overdose-Related ED Visit Data:

- As of September 11th, 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.
- 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 (26.8 per 10,000 visits), the rate is statistically higher in Bennington County (50.9 per 10,000 visits) and lower in Washington County (12.0 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>