



K-SURE

Kentucky Substance Use Research & Enforcement

Using data to drive public safety and public health efforts against substance use across the Commonwealth

Brief: Five Major Overdose-Related Substances in Kentucky,
January 1, 2017–June 30, 2020

Based on data from possession and trafficking citations, drug overdose-related deaths, emergency department visits, hospitalizations, submissions to the state police lab, and general drug overdose-related events



Produced by the Kentucky State Police Intelligence Branch; and, the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center, as bona fide agent for the Kentucky Department for Public Health.

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Data Evaluation Survey



We would like to hear your feedback on the Kentucky Substance Use Research & Enforcement (K-SURE) briefs and other outputs you use.

This will help us improve future K-SURE briefs, stakeholder engagement, and dissemination and audience receptivity.

https://uky.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bDzBAIOXZprzO85

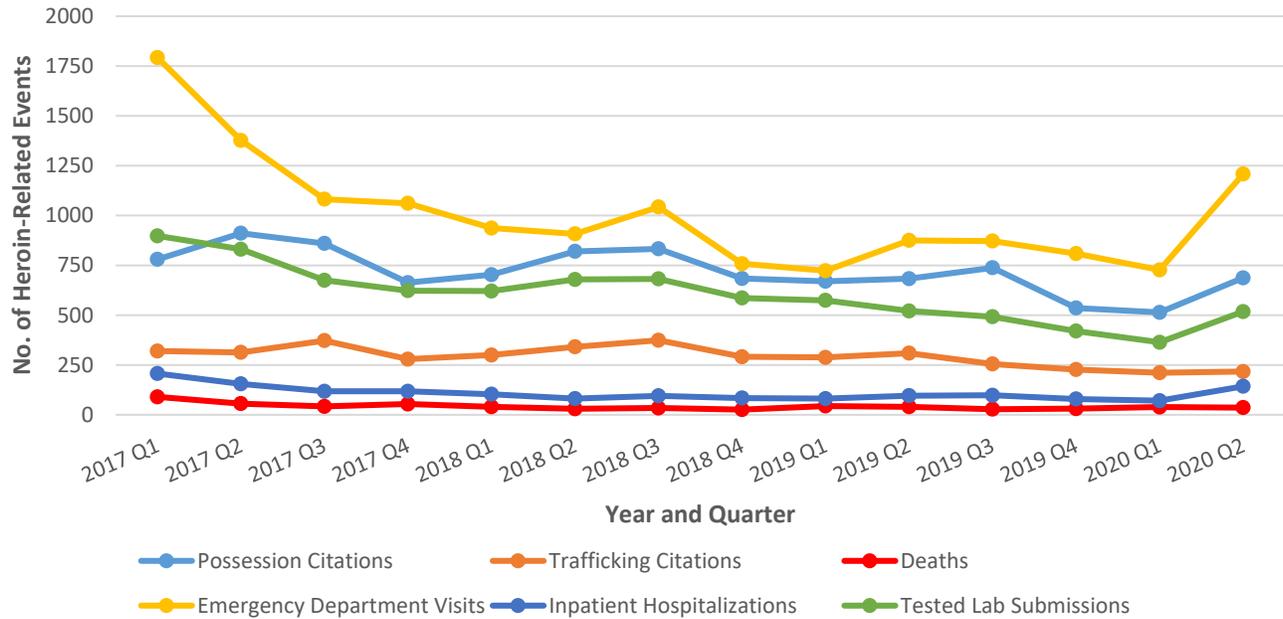


Thank you in advance!

- The K-SURE Team -



Heroin-Related Events



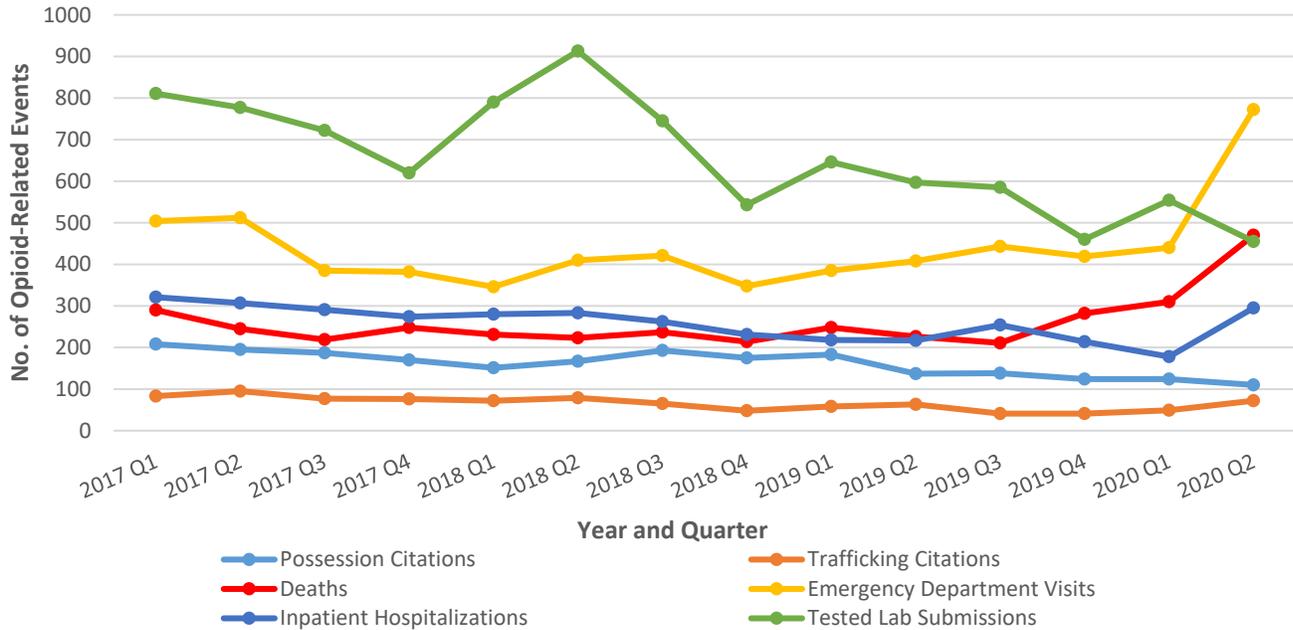
Data are provisional and subject to change. The number of citations could be greater than the number of individuals cited; citations are with over 90% of law enforcement agencies reporting. Deaths are based on drug overdose-related deaths among Kentucky residents. Drug overdose-related hospitalizations represent encounters of care among Kentucky residents and could be greater than the number of individual patients treated in acute care facilities. Drug overdose-related emergency department visits represent encounters of care among Kentucky residents and could be greater than the number of individual patients treated. Tested lab submission data represent those substances submitted to the lab for identification purposes; quantity is not reflected. Lab data represent submissions tested within the corresponding time frame; submission date is not reflected.

Data sources: Kentucky Open Portal System; Kentucky Death Certificate Database, Office of Vital Statistics, Cabinet for Health and Family Services; Kentucky Outpatient Claim Files, Office of Health and Data Analytics, Cabinet for Health and Family Services; Kentucky Inpatient Hospitalization Claim Files, Kentucky Office of Health and Data Analytics, Cabinet for Health and Family Services; Kentucky State Police Crime Laboratory.

Key Findings:

- Heroin possession citations decreased by 11.9% from January 2017 through June 2020. Notably, heroin possession citations increased 33.7% from the first quarter of 2020 through the second quarter of 2020.
- Heroin trafficking citations decreased by 32.2% from January 2017 through June 2020, meanwhile increasing 2.8% from the first quarter of 2020 through the second quarter of 2020.
- Kentucky resident heroin-related deaths declined by six-tenths (60%) from January 2017 through June 2020.
- Both heroin-related emergency department visits and inpatient hospitalizations were reduced by over three-tenths (32.6% and 30.9%, respectively). However, both emergency department visits (66.2%) and inpatient hospitalizations (101.4%) increased from the first quarter of 2020 through the second quarter of 2020.
- Heroin-related tested lab submissions decreased 42.3% from January 2017 through June 2020.
- Overall, there was a 31.3% decrease in total heroin-related events (possession and trafficking citations, deaths, emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and tested lab submissions) from the beginning of 2017 through the end of June 2020.

Opioid-Related Events



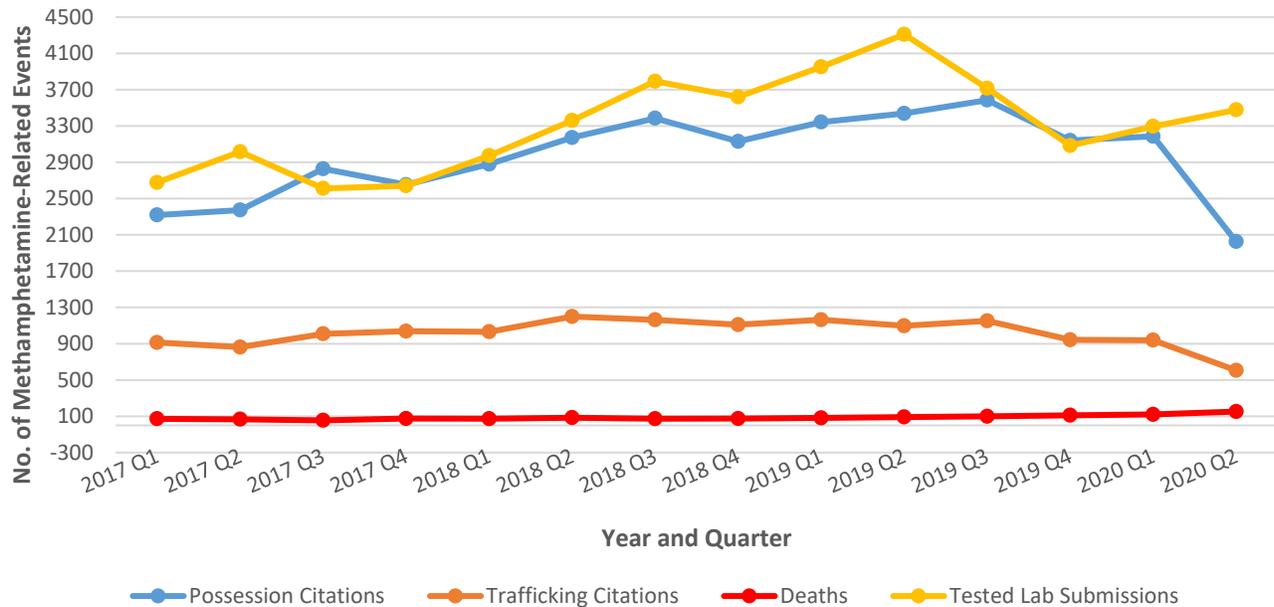
Data are provisional and subject to change. Opioid-related events reflect nonheroin opioids. The number of citations could be greater than the number of individuals cited; citations are with over 90% of law enforcement agencies reporting. Deaths are based on drug overdose-related deaths among Kentucky residents. Drug overdose-related hospitalizations represent encounters of care among Kentucky residents and could be greater than the number of individual patients treated in acute care facilities. Drug overdose-related emergency department visits represent encounters of care among Kentucky residents and could be greater than the number of individual patients treated. Tested lab submission data represent those substances submitted to the lab for identification purposes; quantity is not reflected. Lab data represent submissions tested within the corresponding time frame; submission date is not reflected.

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Key Findings:

- Statewide opioid possession and trafficking citations decreased by 47.1% and 13.3%, respectively, from January 2017 through June 2020. However, opioid trafficking citations increased 46.9% from the first quarter of 2020 through the second quarter of 2020.
- Opioid-related emergency department visits increased by 53.2% from January 2017 through June 2020 and by 75.5% from the first quarter of 2020 through the second quarter of 2020.
- Opioid-related inpatient hospitalizations declined by 8.1% from January 2017 through June 2020; however, inpatient hospitalizations increased 65.7% from the first quarter of 2020 through the second quarter of 2020.
- Kentucky resident opioid-related deaths increased by 62.1% from January 1, 2017, to June 30, 2020. Opioids remain the leading substances identified among drug overdose-related deaths (data not shown).
- There was a 43.9% decrease in tested lab submissions that positively identified opioids from 2017 through June 2020. Opioids accounted for nearly 9% of the total tested submissions to KSP Laboratories from the beginning of 2017 through June 2020 (data not shown).
- Opioids and their adverse effects remain prevalent throughout the Commonwealth, as opioid-related events decreased by only 1.9% from the first quarter of 2017 through the second quarter of 2020.

Methamphetamine-Related Events



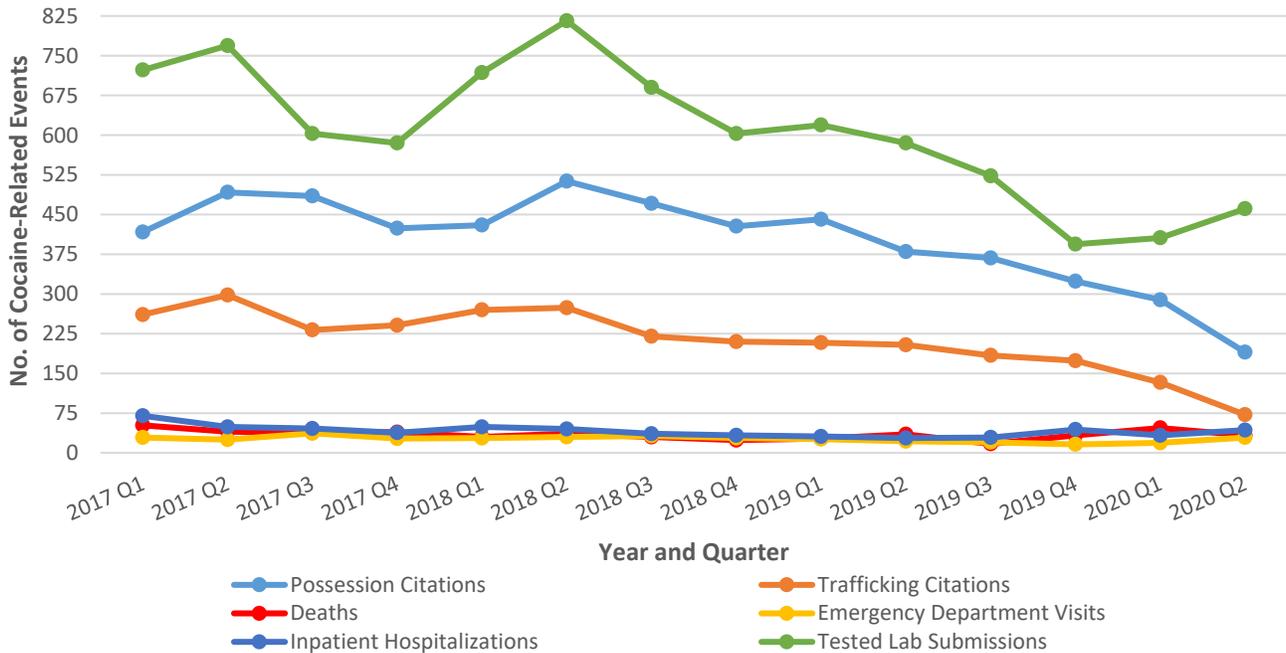
Data are provisional and subject to change. The number of citations could be greater than the number of individuals cited; citations are with over 90% of law enforcement agencies reporting. Deaths are based on drug overdose-related deaths among Kentucky residents. Drug overdose-related hospitalizations represent encounters of care among Kentucky residents and could be greater than the number of individual patients treated in acute care facilities. Drug overdose-related emergency department visits represent encounters of care among Kentucky residents and could be greater than the number of individual patients treated. Tested lab submission data represent those substances submitted to the lab for identification purposes; quantity is not reflected. Lab data represent submissions tested within the corresponding time frame; submission date is not reflected.

Data sources: Kentucky Open Portal System; Kentucky Death Certificate Database, Office of Vital Statistics, Cabinet for Health and Family Services; Kentucky State Police Crime Laboratory.

Key Findings:

- Overall statewide methamphetamine possession citations decreased by 12.6% and trafficking citations by 33.6% from January 2017 through June 2020. A larger decline in possession and trafficking citations was observed (36.4% and 35.4%, respectively) from the first quarter of 2020 through the second quarter of 2020.
- Despite an increase in methamphetamine-related overdose deaths, all of which involve polysubstance use, by 111.1% from the beginning of 2017 through the end of June 2020, deaths increased by only 26.7% from the first quarter of 2020 through the second quarter of 2020.
- Tested lab submissions positively identifying methamphetamine increased by 29.9% from the first quarter of 2017 through the second quarter of 2020, and by 5.5% from the first quarter of 2020 through the second quarter of 2020. Methamphetamine continues to be the most commonly submitted drug to Kentucky State Police Laboratories, accounting for 44.9% of the total tested submissions from the beginning of 2017 through June 2020 (data not shown).
- Methamphetamine use and distribution are a highly prevalent and continue to steadily threaten the Commonwealth's safety and health, as methamphetamine-related events increased overall by 4.7% from January 2017 through June 2020.

Cocaine-Related Events



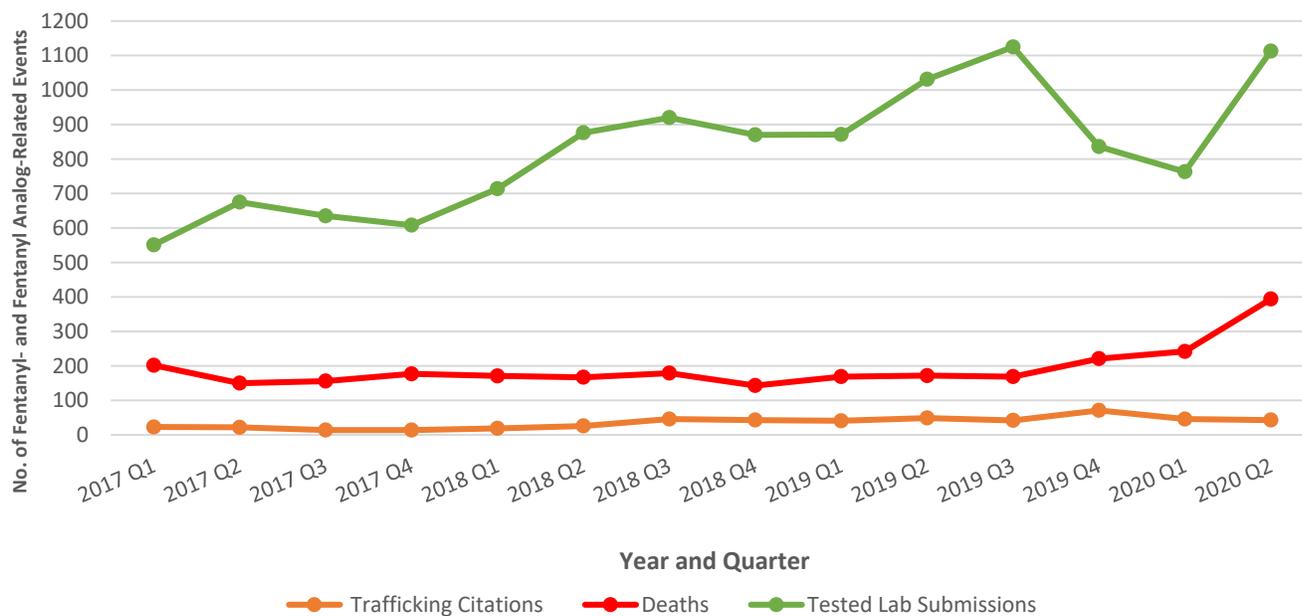
Data are provisional and subject to change. The number of citations could be greater than the number of individuals cited; citations are with over 90% of law enforcement agencies reporting. Deaths are based on drug overdose-related deaths among Kentucky residents. Drug overdose-related hospitalizations represent encounters of care among Kentucky residents and could be greater than the number of individual patients treated in acute care facilities. Drug overdose-related emergency department visits represent encounters of care among Kentucky residents and could be greater than the number of individual patients treated. Tested lab submission data represent those substances submitted to the lab for identification purposes; quantity is not reflected. Lab data represent submissions tested within the corresponding time frame; submission date is not reflected.

Data sources: Kentucky Open Portal System; Kentucky Death Certificate Database, Office of Vital Statistics, Cabinet for Health and Family Services; Kentucky Outpatient Claim Files, Office of Health and Data Analytics, Cabinet for Health and Family Services; Kentucky Inpatient Hospitalization Claim Files, Kentucky Office of Health and Data Analytics, Cabinet for Health and Family Services; Kentucky State Police Crime Laboratory.

Key Findings:

- Statewide cocaine possession and trafficking citations decreased (54.4% and 72.4%, respectively) from January 2017 through June 2020.
- Cocaine-related deaths decreased by 36.5% from the beginning of 2017 through June 2020.
- There was no change in cocaine-related emergency department (ED) visits from January 2017 through June 2020. However, ED visits increased 52.6% from the first quarter of 2020 through the second quarter of 2020.
- Despite a decline in cocaine-related inpatient hospitalizations by 38.6% from the first quarter of 2017 through the second quarter of 2020, inpatient hospitalizations increased 30.3% from the first quarter of 2020 through the second quarter of 2020.
- Tested lab submissions positively identifying cocaine decreased by 36.2% from the first quarter of 2017 to the second quarter of 2020. However, tested lab submissions increased 13.5% from the first quarter of 2020 through the second quarter of 2020. Cocaine accounted for 8.2% of the total tested submissions to Kentucky State Police Laboratories from the beginning of 2017 through June 2020 (data not shown).
- Overall, a 46.6% decrease in cocaine-related public health and safety events was observed from the beginning of 2017 through June 2020.

Fentanyl- and Fentanyl Analog-Related Events



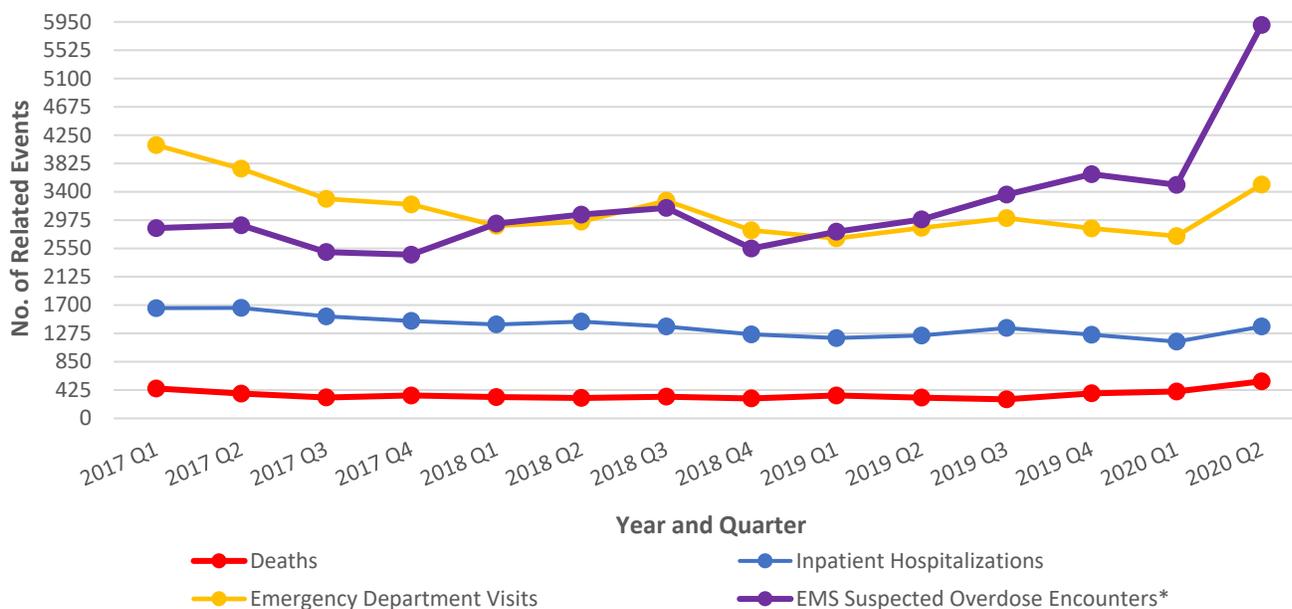
Data are provisional and subject to change. The number of citations could be greater than the number of individuals cited; citations are with over 90% of law enforcement agencies reporting. There are no Kentucky Revised Statute codes for fentanyl possession. Deaths are based on drug overdose-related deaths among Kentucky residents. Drug overdose-related hospitalizations represent encounters of care among Kentucky residents and could be greater than the number of individual patients treated in acute care facilities. Drug overdose-related emergency department visits represent encounters of care among Kentucky residents and could be greater than the number of individual patients treated. Tested lab submission data represent those substances submitted to the lab for identification purposes; quantity is not reflected. Lab data represent submissions tested within the corresponding time frame; submission date is not reflected.

Data sources: Kentucky Open Portal System; Kentucky Death Certificate Database, Office of Vital Statistics, Cabinet for Health and Family Services; Kentucky State Police Crime Laboratory.

Key Findings:

- Statewide fentanyl and fentanyl analog trafficking citations increased 87% from January 2017 through June 2020. However, trafficking citations decreased 6.5% from the first quarter of 2020 through the second quarter of 2020. Citations related to fentanyl and its related analogs may be underestimated for various reasons. Fentanyl- and fentanyl-related analogs are often present in combination with other drug mixtures; however, laboratory testing is often needed to confirm the presence of this substance.
- Fentanyl- and fentanyl analog-related deaths increased by 95% from the beginning of 2017 through June 2020, and by 62.8% from the first quarter of 2020 through the second quarter of 2020.
- Tested lab submissions positively identifying fentanyl and fentanyl analogs increased by 102% from January 2017 through June 2020 and 45.9% from the first quarter of 2020 through the second quarter of 2020. KSP Laboratories continue to see several different fentanyl derivatives, along with poly-drug mixtures including heroin/fentanyl, cocaine/fentanyl, and methamphetamine/fentanyl.
- Fentanyl and fentanyl analogs are highly pervasive in Kentucky—increasing the risk of overdose and exposure to individuals, families, communities, and law enforcement. Fentanyl- and fentanyl analog-related events across Kentucky increased 99.7% from 2017 through the second quarter of 2020.

General Drug Overdose-Related Events



*A large emergency medical services (EMS) agency began reporting to the Kentucky State Ambulance Reporting System starting in January 2018. Data are provisional and subject to change.

Deaths are based on drug overdose-related deaths among Kentucky residents. Drug overdose-related hospitalizations represent encounters of care among Kentucky residents and could be greater than the number of individual patients treated in acute care facilities. Drug overdose-related emergency department visits represent encounters of care among Kentucky residents and could be greater than the number of individual patients treated. EMS suspected overdose encounters, which represent encounters of care and could be greater than the number of individual patients treated, are based on scans of free-text fields and medication fields (for naloxone/Narcan administration with indicated positive response).

Data sources: Kentucky Death Certificate Database, Office of Vital Statistics, Cabinet for Health and Family Services; Kentucky Outpatient Claim Files, Office of Health and Data Analytics, Cabinet for Health and Family Services; Kentucky Inpatient Hospitalization Claim Files, Kentucky Office of Health and Data Analytics, Cabinet for Health and Family Services; Kentucky Board of Emergency Medical Services: Kentucky State Ambulance Reporting System.

Key Findings:

- Statewide drug overdose-related deaths increased by 24.1% from the beginning of 2017 through the second quarter of 2020.
- Emergency department (ED) visits related to drug overdose have decreased 14.5% from January 2017 through June 2020. However, ED visits increased 28.3% from the first quarter of 2020 through the second quarter of 2020.
- Drug overdose-related hospitalizations declined by 16.6% from 2017 through June 2020 and increased 19.7% from the first quarter of 2020 through the second quarter of 2020.
- Emergency medical services (EMS) suspected drug overdose-related encounters increased 106.8% from January 2017 through the end of June 2020. From the first quarter of 2020 through the second quarter of 2020, there was a 68.4% increase in related EMS encounters.
- Overall, small reductions have been observed across the Commonwealth in regards to drug-related public health and safety events from 2017 through the second quarter of 2020; yet drug use, misuse, and distribution are still affecting all Kentuckians.
- Among the law enforcement agencies currently reporting, 490 naloxone doses were administered from January 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020 (data not shown).

K-SURE Data Matrix



	Emergency Department Visits	Inpatient Hospitalizations	Deaths	Possession Citations	Trafficking Citations	Crime Lab Submissions
Heroin	T40.1	T40.1	T40.1	KRS: 35120, 35121, 42195, 42196, 42205, 42206	KRS: 35100, 35101, 42105, 42106, 42376, 42377, 42378, 42379, 42466, 42468, 42470, 42480, 42483, 42486	Tested lab submissions represent those substances submitted to the lab for identification purposes; quantity is not reflected.
Opioid	T40.0, T40.2, T40.3, T40.4, T40.60, T40.69	T40.0, T40.2, T40.3, T40.4, T40.60, T40.69	T40.0, T40.2, T40.3, T40.4, T40.6	KRS: 35220, 35221, 42197, 42198, 42209, 42210, 42237, 42238, 42246	KRS: 35200, 35201, 42109, 42110, 42372, 42373, 42374, 42375, 42435, 42436, 42437, 42438, 42137, 42138	
Methamphetamine			Text scan	KRS: 42187, 42188, 42215, 42216	KRS: 42113, 42114, 42290, 42291, 42364, 42365, 42366, 42367	
Cocaine	T40.5	T40.5	T40.5	KRS: 35320, 35321, 42193, 42194, 42203, 42204	KRS: 35300, 35301, 42103, 42104, 42368, 42369, 42370, 42371	
Fentanyl and Fentanyl Analogs			T404 and text scan; Fentanyl Analogs: Methylfentanyl, Methoxybutyrylfentanyl, Acetylfentanyl,		KRS: 42465, 42472, 42474, 42476, 42478, 42590, 42593, 42596, 42599	

			Acrylfentanyl, Hydroxythiofentanyl, Butyrylfentanyl, Carfentanil, Furanylfentanyl, Para_1, Para_2, U47700			
General Drug Overdoses	T36-T50, T369, T379, T399, T414, T427, T439, T459, T479, T499	T36-T50, T369, T379, T399, T414, T427, T439, T459, T479, T499	X40-X44, X60-X64, X85, Y10-Y14			
Data Sources	Kentucky Outpatient Claim Files, Office of Health and Data Analytics, Cabinet for Health and Family Services	Kentucky Inpatient Hospitalization Claim Files, Kentucky Office of Health and Data Analytics, Cabinet for Health and Family Services	Kentucky Death Certificate Database, Office of Vital Statistics, Cabinet for Health and Family Services	Kentucky Open Portal System, Kentucky State Police	Kentucky Open Portal System, Kentucky State Police	Kentucky State Police Crime Laboratory
Notes	Drug overdose-related emergency department visits represent encounters of care among Kentucky residents and could be greater than the number of individual patients treated. Data are provisional and subject to change.	Drug overdose-related hospitalizations represent encounters of care among Kentucky residents and could be greater than the number of individual patients treated in acute care facilities. Data are provisional and subject to change.	Deaths are based on drug overdose-related deaths among Kentucky residents. Deaths may involve more than one drug. Data are provisional and subject to change.	Possession citations reflect violations of Kentucky Revised Statutes. The number of citations could be greater than the number of individuals cited; citations are with over 90% of law enforcement agencies reporting. Data are provisional and subject to change.	Trafficking citations reflect violations of Kentucky Revised Statutes. The number of citations could be greater than the number of individuals cited; citations are with over 90% of law enforcement agencies reporting. Data are provisional and subject to change.	Lab data represent submissions tested within the corresponding time frame; submission date is not reflected. Data are provisional and subject to change.