



# 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–September 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. You can find

the survey here:

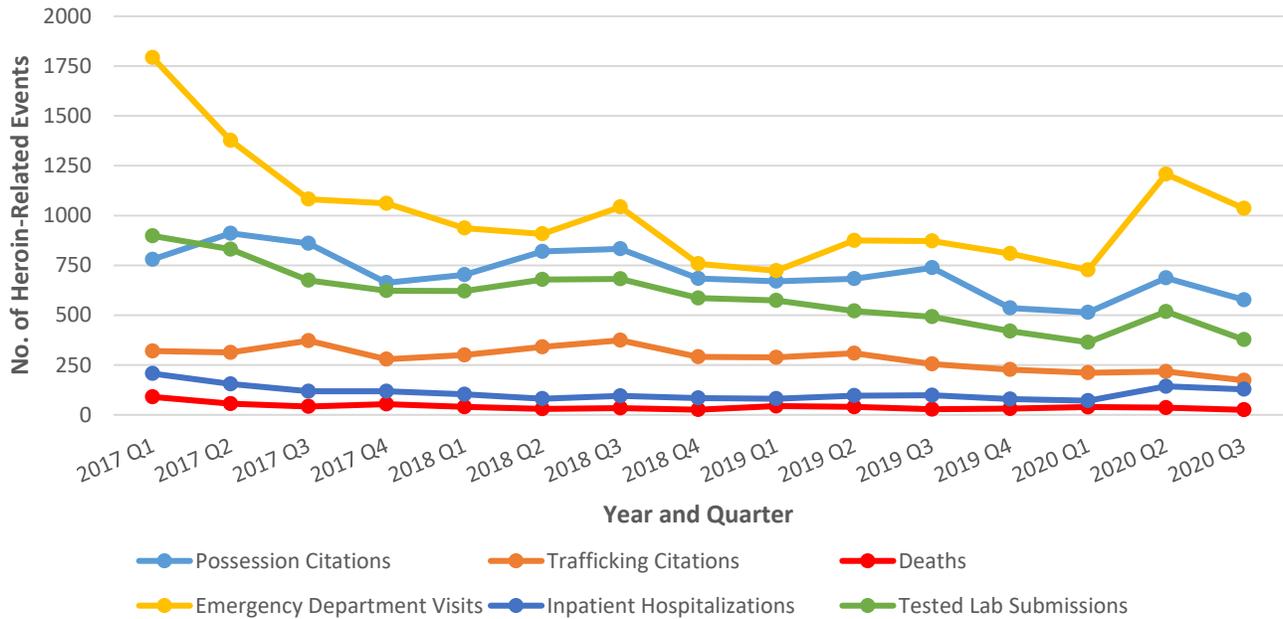
[https://uky.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_bDzBAIOXZprzO85](https://uky.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bDzBAIOXZprzO85)



Thank you in advance!

- The K-SURE Team -

## Heroin-Related Events



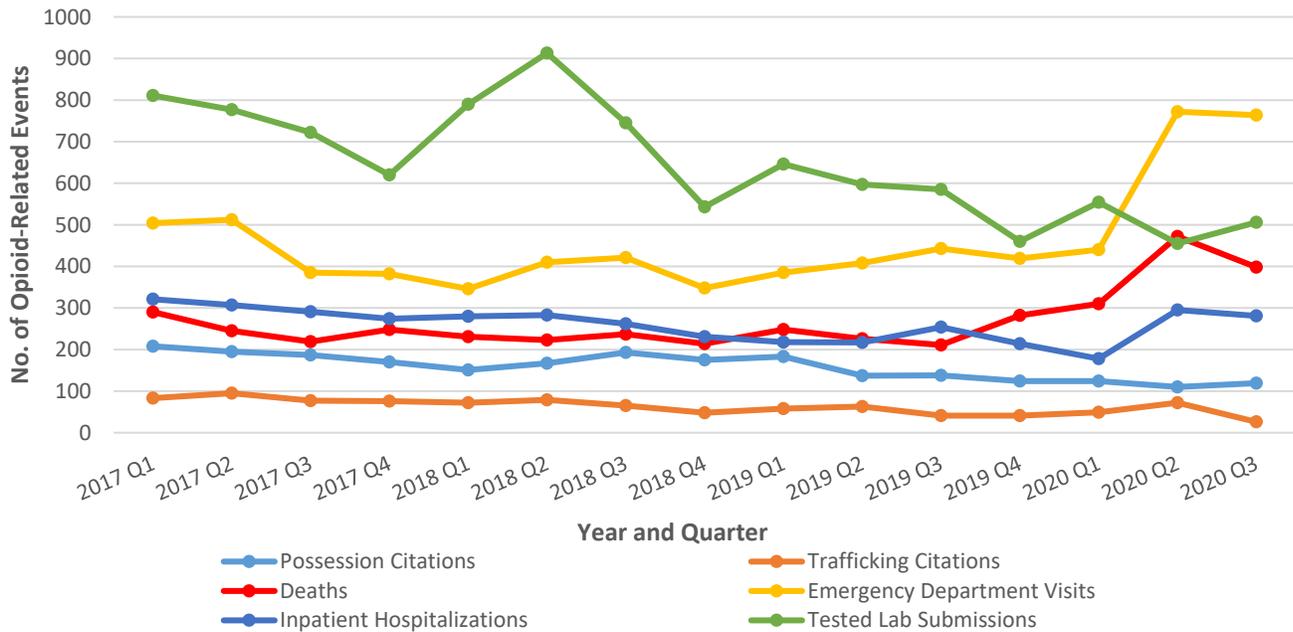
Data are provisional and subject to change. The number of citations could be greater than the number of individuals cited; citations are with over 90% of law enforcement agencies reporting. Deaths are based on drug overdose-related deaths among Kentucky residents. Drug overdose-related hospitalizations 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 26% from January 2017 through September 2020.
- Heroin trafficking citations decreased by 45.9% from January 2017 through September 2020, while decreasing only 20.3% from the second quarter of 2020 through the third quarter of 2020.
- Kentucky resident heroin-related deaths declined by 72.2% from January 2017 through September 2020. However, heroin-related deaths declined 30.6% from the second quarter of 2020 through the third quarter of 2020.
- Both heroin-related emergency department visits and inpatient hospitalizations declined from January 2017 through September 2020 (42.2% and 38.2%, respectively).
- Heroin-related tested lab submissions decreased 58% from January 2017 through September 2020.
- Overall, there was a 43.3% 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 September 2020.

## Opioid-Related Events



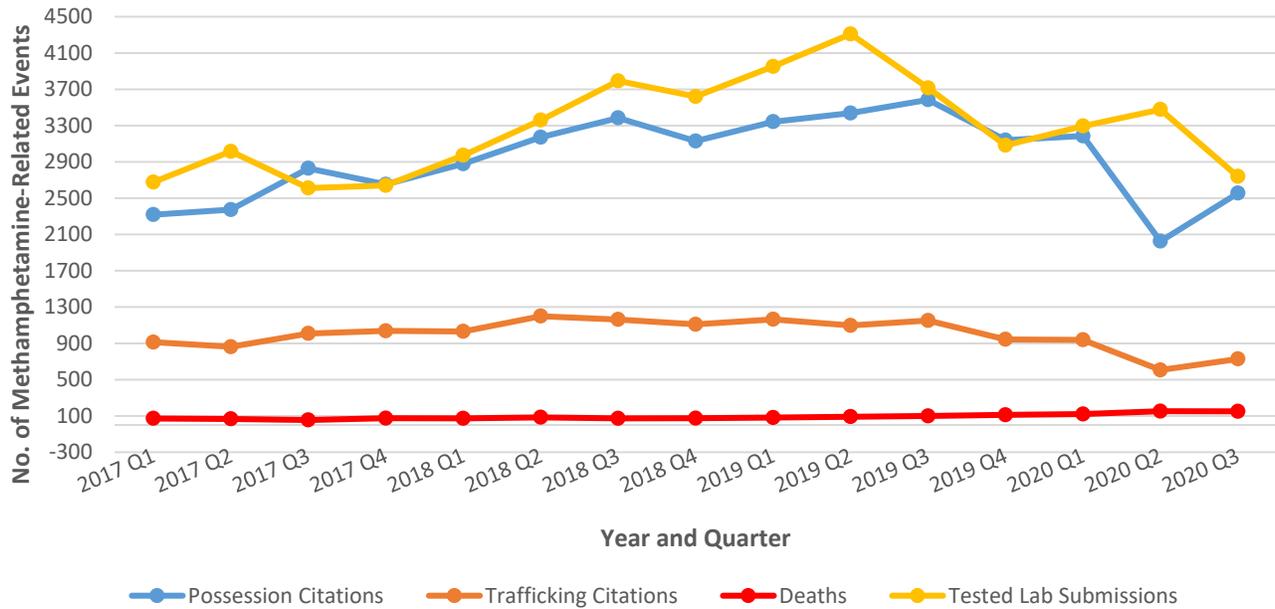
Data are provisional and subject to change. Opioid-related events reflect nonheroin opioids. The number of citations could be greater than the number of individuals cited; citations are with over 90% of law enforcement agencies reporting. Deaths are based on drug overdose-related deaths among Kentucky 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 42.8% and 68.7%, respectively, from January 2017 through September 2020. However, opioid possession citations increased 8.2% from the second quarter of 2020 through the third quarter of 2020.
- Opioid-related emergency department visits increased by 51.6% from January 2017 through September 2020 and decreased by only 1% from the second quarter of 2020 through the third quarter of 2020.
- Opioid-related inpatient hospitalizations declined by 12.5% from January 2017 through September 2020.
- Kentucky resident opioid-related deaths increased by 37.2% from January 1, 2017, to September 30, 2020. A reduction in opioid-related deaths of 15.7% was observed from the second quarter of 2020 through the third quarter of 2020. Opioids still remain the leading substances identified among drug overdose-related deaths (data not shown).
- There was a 37.6% decrease in tested lab submissions that positively identified opioids from 2017 through September 2020. Opioids accounted for 8.8% of the total tested submissions to Kentucky State Police Laboratories from the beginning of 2017 through September 2020 (data not shown).
- Opioids and their adverse effects remain prevalent throughout the Commonwealth, as opioid-related events decreased by 5.5% from the first quarter of 2017 through the third quarter of 2020.

## Methamphetamine-Related Events



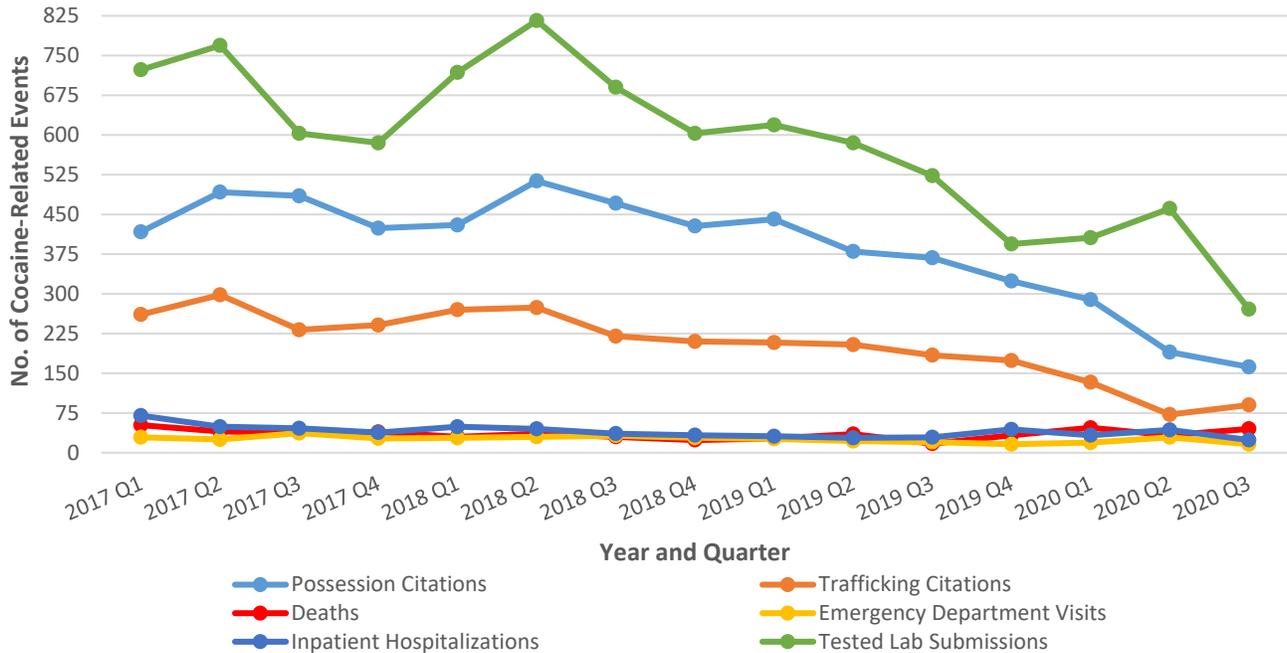
Data are provisional and subject to change. The number of citations could be greater than the number of individuals cited; citations are with over 90% of law enforcement agencies reporting. Deaths are based on drug overdose-related deaths among Kentucky residents. Drug overdose-related hospitalizations 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:

- Methamphetamine possession citations increased by 10.2% and trafficking citations decreased by 20.3% from January 2017 through September 2020. However, both methamphetamine possession and trafficking citations increased (26.2% and 20.1%, respectively) from the second quarter through the third quarter of 2020.
- A large increase (108.3%) was observed among Kentucky resident methamphetamine-related overdose deaths, all of which involve polysubstance use, from the beginning of 2017 through the end of September 2020, whereas a 1.3% decrease in deaths occurred from the second quarter of 2020 through the third quarter of 2020.
- Tested lab submissions positively identifying methamphetamine increased by 2.3% from the first quarter of 2017 through the third quarter of 2020, and declined by 21.2% from the second quarter of 2020 through the third quarter of 2020. Methamphetamine continues to be the most commonly submitted drug to Kentucky State Police Laboratories, accounting for 44.8% of the total tested submissions from the beginning of 2017 through September 2020 (data not shown).
- Methamphetamine use and distribution are highly prevalent and continue to steadily threaten the Commonwealth's safety and health, as methamphetamine-related events increased by 3.2% from January 2017 through September 2020.

## Cocaine-Related Events



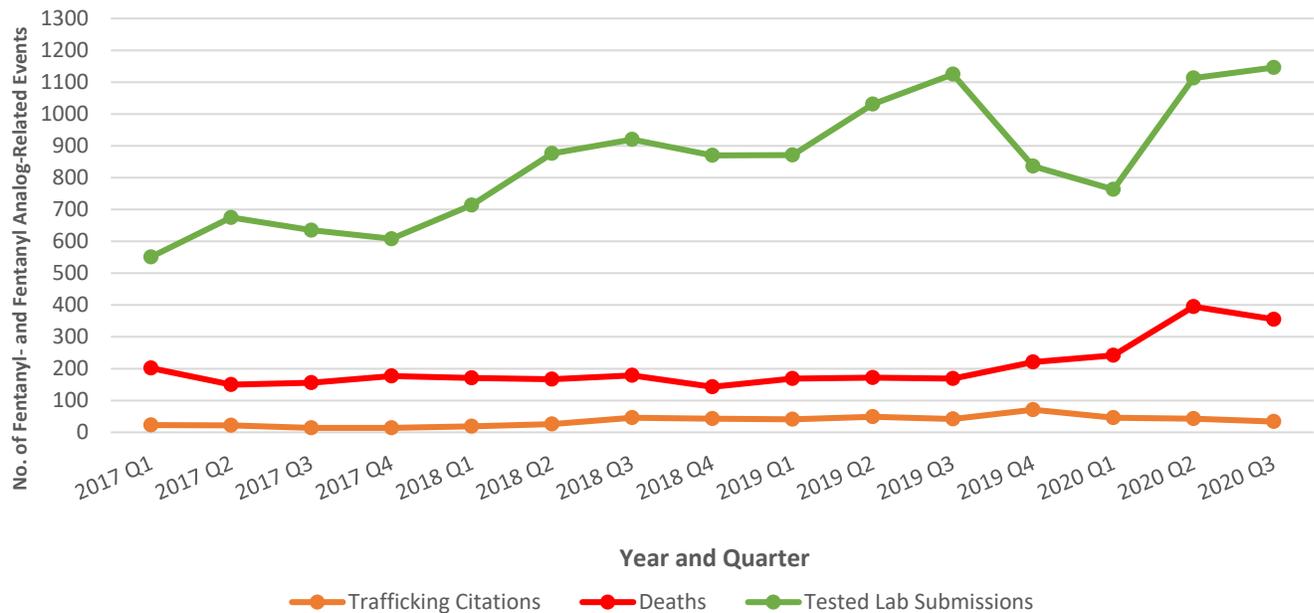
Data are provisional and subject to change. The number of citations could be greater than the number of individuals cited; citations are with over 90% of law enforcement agencies reporting. Deaths are based on drug overdose-related deaths among Kentucky residents. Drug overdose-related hospitalizations 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 (61.2% and 65.5%, respectively) from January 2017 through September 2020. Notably, possession citations decreased 14.7% while trafficking citations increased 25.0% from the second quarter through the third quarter of 2020.
- Cocaine-related deaths decreased by 13.5% from the beginning of 2017 through September 2020. However, a 36.4% increase in cocaine-related deaths occurred from the second quarter of 2020 through the third quarter of 2020.
- Cocaine-related emergency department visits declined 44.8% from January 2017 through September 2020.
- Cocaine-related inpatient hospitalizations decreased by 65.7% from the first quarter of 2017 through the third quarter of 2020. From the second quarter of 2020 through the third quarter of 2020 cocaine-related inpatient hospitalizations decreased 44.2%.
- Tested lab submissions positively identifying cocaine decreased by 62.5% from the first quarter of 2017 to the third quarter of 2020. Cocaine accounted for 8% of the total tested lab submissions from the beginning of 2017 through September 2020 (data not shown).
- Overall, cocaine-related events decreased 60.8% from January 2017 through September 2020.

## Fentanyl- and Fentanyl Analog-Related Events



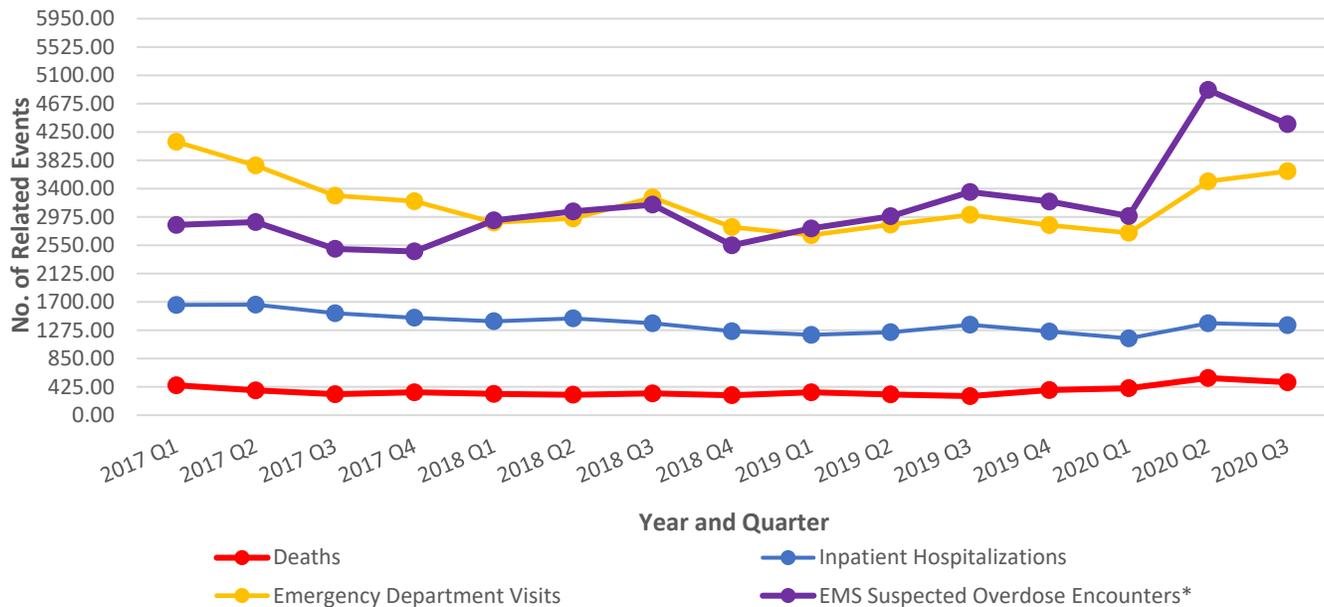
Data are provisional and subject to change. The number of citations could be greater than the number of individuals cited; citations are with over 90% of law enforcement agencies reporting. There are no Kentucky Revised Statute codes for fentanyl possession. Deaths are based on drug overdose-related 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:

- Fentanyl and fentanyl analog trafficking citations increased 47.8% from January 2017 through September 2020. However, trafficking citations decreased 20.9% from the second quarter of 2020 through the third quarter of 2020. Citations related to fentanyl and its related analogs may be underestimated, as fentanyl is often associated with polydrug use and laboratory testing is often needed to confirm the presence of this substance.
- Fentanyl- and fentanyl analog-related deaths increased by 75.7% from the beginning of 2017 through September 2020 and decreased by 10.1% from the second quarter of 2020 through the third quarter of 2020.
- Tested lab submissions positively identifying fentanyl and fentanyl analogs increased by 108% from January 2017 through September 2020, and by 3% from the second quarter of 2020 through the third 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 remain pervasive in Kentucky—increasing the risk of overdose and exposure to individuals, families, communities, and law enforcement. Although fentanyl- and fentanyl analog-related events across Kentucky increased 97.8% from 2017 through the third quarter of 2020, a 1% decrease was observed from the second quarter of 2020 through the third 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 10.01% from the beginning of 2017 through the third quarter of 2020. An 11.6% decrease was observed from the second quarter of 2020 through the third quarter of 2020.
- Emergency department (ED) visits related to drug overdose have decreased 10.8% from January 2017 through September 2020. However, ED visits increased 4.3% from the second quarter of 2020 through the third quarter of 2020.
- Drug overdose-related hospitalizations declined by 18.3% from 2017 through September 2020 and decreased only by 2% from the second quarter of 2020 through the third quarter of 2020.
- Emergency medical services (EMS) suspected drug overdose-related encounters increased 53.0% from January 2017 through the end of September 2020. From the second quarter of 2020 through the third quarter of 2020, there was a 10.5% decrease in related EMS encounters.
- Drug use, misuse, and distribution are still affecting Kentuckians, as a 9% increase was observed from the beginning of 2017 through September 2020. A decrease of 4.4% was observed for general drug overdose-related events from the second quarter of 2020 through the third quarter of 2020.
- Among the law enforcement agencies currently reporting, 618 naloxone doses were administered from January 1, 2019, through September 30, 2020 (data not shown).

# K-SURE Data Matrix



	<b>Emergency Department Visits</b>	<b>Inpatient Hospitalizations</b>	<b>Deaths</b>	<b>Possession Citations</b>	<b>Trafficking Citations</b>	<b>Crime Lab Submissions</b>
<b>Heroin</b>	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.
<b>Opioid</b>	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	
<b>Methamphetamine</b>			Text scan	KRS: 42187, 42188, 42215, 42216	KRS: 42113, 42114, 42290, 42291, 42364, 42365, 42366, 42367	
<b>Cocaine</b>	T40.5	T40.5	T40.5	KRS: 35320, 35321, 42193, 42194, 42203, 42204	KRS: 35300, 35301, 42103, 42104, 42368, 42369, 42370, 42371	
<b>Fentanyl and Fentanyl Analogs</b>			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			
<b>General Drug Overdoses</b>	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			
<b>Data Sources</b>	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
<b>Notes</b>	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.