

OVERDOSE FATALITIES IN KENTUCKY WORKPLACES TRIPLE BETWEEN 2019 AND 2021

By Rebecca Honaker, Research Director, Kentucky Occupational Safety and Health Surveillance Program

The [Kentucky Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation \(KY FACE\)](#) program, part of the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center (KIPRC), investigates work-related fatalities in Kentucky that were caused by an injury, including drug overdose. KY FACE recently released its [annual report for 2021](#), which provides descriptive analysis of Kentucky occupational fatalities for the reporting year.

From 2017 to 2021, KY FACE recorded a total of 47 occupational overdose fatalities. Since 2017, the annual number of occupational overdose fatalities in Kentucky has increased by 260%, reaching its highest number ever recorded of 18 fatalities in 2021.

The highest percentage of occupational drug overdose fatalities during this time period occurred in the trade, transportation, and utilities industry (38%), followed by the manufacturing industry (19%), the construction industry (19%), and the leisure and hospitality industry (11%). The remaining 13% of drug overdose fatalities took place in the professional and business services and public administration industries and were combined due to low counts.

All of the occupational overdose fatalities in the leisure and hospitality industries occurred in 2020 and 2021.

Of the 96 occupational fatalities recorded in Kentucky in 2021, drug overdose fatalities accounted for 19%, compared to 13% (n=12) in 2020 and 8% (n=6) in 2019. The increase in the number of occupational overdose fatalities in 2021 was primarily seen in the trade, transportation, and utilities industry and in the leisure and hospitality industry. Both industries experienced a notable jump in the number of fatal overdoses when compared to previous years and together accounted for 67% of occupational drug overdose fatalities in 2021.

In 2021, nearly 40% (n=7) of occupational overdose fatalities in Kentucky occurred in Jefferson County. Comparatively, there were eight occupational overdose fatalities in Jefferson County in the entire four-year period from 2017 to 2020.

Data presented in this article are derived from the KY FACE database, which collects occupational fatality data from multiple sources, including but not limited to death certificates, OSHA-36 forms, Mine Safety and Health Administration Fatalgrams, newspaper clippings, workers' compensation forms, Kentucky State Police Crash Data, coroner reports, and toxicology reports.

Figure 1. Kentucky Occupational Overdose Fatalities by Year

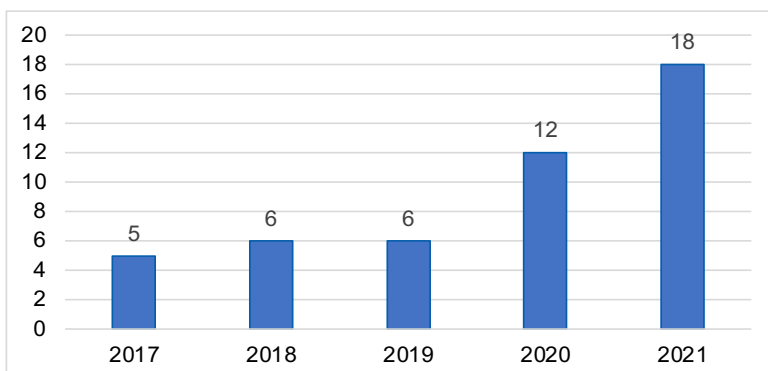
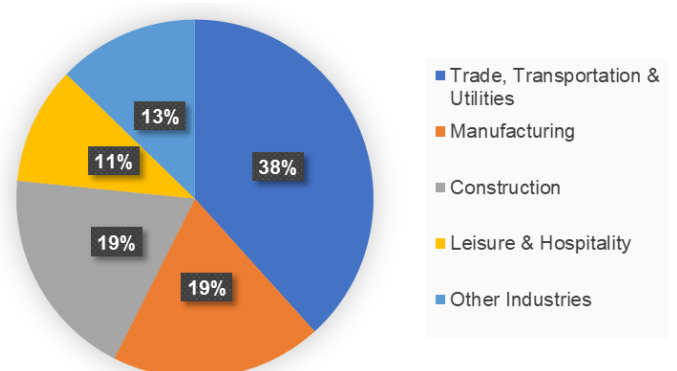


Figure 2. Kentucky Occupational Overdose Fatalities in Kentucky by Industry, 2017–2021



KYOD2A MINI-GRANT SPOTLIGHT: SPARK MINISTRIES

By Jonathan Greene

In 2015, Powell County, Ky., resident Jenell Brewer desperately needed help.

Her daughter had a substance use disorder, and neither Jenell nor her daughter knew what resources were available for either of them to draw on.

Jenell knew she wasn't alone.

One night, she had a spark of an idea—to provide help to families in similar situations in navigating the programs and resources available to people with substance use disorder.

"Ten years ago, no one knew who to turn to," Jenell said. "That's when, as my own daughter was in addiction, I began to help families get the help that they needed by being that starting point for families."



Jenell Brewer, SPARK President/CEO

That idea turned into Special People Advocating Recovery Kentucky (SPARK) Ministries. Today, SPARK helps families in Clark, Madison, Estill, Breathitt, Powell, and Perry counties find treatment for loved ones, connects them with support meetings,

helps with job opportunities, and educates on [Casey's Law](#). In addition, SPARK provides Narcan training and peer support internships to show those on the frontline what peer support is.

Through the current Overdose Data to Action grant, six local health departments received mini-grants to implement evidence-based, evidence-informed, and/or promising practices to prevent drug overdoses in their jurisdictions. Stacy Crase, public health director for mini-grant recipient Powell County Health Department, said she immediately thought of SPARK when she heard about the grant opportunity.

"I knew SPARK was already active with programs, and I wanted to see what they would need if we were able to get a grant and partner together," Stacy said. "I didn't want to reinvent the wheel. I thought the money would be best spent to enhance what was already started with SPARK."

"Jenell and I talked about the peer support program and that many of the peer support specialists were volunteers using their own gas to take people to recovery centers. We thought it would be a great step if OD2A could pay for peer support certification and salary stipends, as well as gas cards for volunteers. It has been really helpful for our syringe exchange to have the partnership of the peer supports, as well."



Jenell credits SPARK's peer support specialists with much of the organization's success.

"Our peer support specialists meet people right where they're at," she said. "They really can relate. They go that extra mile because they've lived that. It doesn't matter if it's the tenth, eleventh, or twelfth time, they continue reaching out because they were there."

"To me, that is amazing to see that lived experience be successful and make a difference in someone else's life."

Wendy Anderson, one of Jenell's daughters and a peer support specialist for SPARK, said it's rewarding to be able to give back and to connect with those who need help.

"People, especially people in addiction, or even families, feel so low and judged. There's a lot of stigma," Wendy said. "I know with me when I was an addiction, if I didn't feel that the person talking to me understood, I didn't open up to them. Building that trust is very important."

Wendy shared a story of meeting a woman at the needle exchange and how she was able to build a connection over several weeks.

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FINDHELPNOW.ORG EXPANDS TO TENNESSEE; MORE STATES INTERESTED

By Jonathan Greene

Tennessee has become the second state to join the substance use disorder (SUD) treatment locator tool [FindHelpNow.org](https://findhelpnow.org). [FindHelpNowTN.org](https://findhelpnowtn.org) joins [FindHelpNowKY.org](https://findhelpnowky.org), which has been visited more than 800,000 times by nearly 400,000 visitors since its launch in 2018.

The goal of FindHelpNow.org is to rapidly link individuals with SUD to available care when they are at that critical moment of readiness. FindHelpNow.org differs from other treatment locator tools in that it includes near-current availability information for each of the treatment facilities, thus eliminating from search results those facilities without available openings.

Visitors to FindHelpNow.org enter basic search criteria to generate a list of SUD treatment facilities with available openings. Additional search filters narrow the search results.

“All searches are location-based; an individual can search for a facility in the town of their choosing and then use over 60 search filters to narrow the search results to the facilities that most closely fit their needs for method of payment, hours of operation, wrap-around services, etc.,” said Leah Dick, the new program manager for FindHelpNow.org.

Kristen Zak, Deputy Director, Overdose Response Coordination Office, Tennessee Department of Health, said Tennessee identified developing a central portal for treatment resources in the state as a goal during their initial application for an OD2A grant

from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“We had received feedback from many programs that intensive efforts were required to develop paper resource directories that quickly became outdated,” she said. “So, while we knew we wanted to prioritize such a project and wrote it into our Overdose Data to Action application, we didn’t really know how to go about creating such a resource and didn’t have any idea what it would cost. Then, we became aware of FindHelpNow.org, began researching the opportunity, and attended the first

The implementation process has each step laid out in detail to prepare jurisdictions on what to expect throughout the process. KIPRC’s team is available for meetings, training, and demonstrations and are always available to answer questions or concerns.

“The development process was streamlined,” Zak said. “There were a number of attributes customized for our site. It was very helpful that the site had already been researched, focus grouped, and more by the KIPRC team. That helped us feel confident about the content.”

Catherine Hines, Research

The screenshot shows the FindHelpNowTN.org website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links: Home, Search, Resources, Help With Terms, FAQs, About, Contact Us, and a phone number 1.800.889.9789. Below the navigation bar, a banner reads 'Call or Text the TENNESSEE REDLINE: 1.800.889.9789 (Toll Free 24/7)'. The main content area has a heading 'Online. In Real-Time. Find Help Now.' followed by descriptive text about finding treatment providers. To the right, there's a search form with fields for 'Who Needs Help?' (dropdown), 'Gender' (dropdown), 'Mental Health Diagnosis' (checkbox), 'Location' (text input with 'Use My Location' link), 'Type of Treatment' (dropdown), and 'Payment' (dropdown). A 'Start Search' button is at the bottom of the form. The background of the page features a scenic image of Tennessee hills.

FindHelpNow conference to learn more. The site was exactly what we envisioned creating, and the development and research had already been done by our neighbor state. So, this was very attractive to us.”

THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

KIPRC, where FindHelpNow.org is based, helps jurisdictions to onboard to the FindHelpNow platform.

Program Manager for FindHelpNow.org, noted that working with Tennessee has been a great opportunity for Kentucky. In addition to being a collaborative and mutually beneficial partnership, the FindHelpNowKY.org platform incorporated some changes to search filters and label changes suggested by Tennessee.

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2022 KENTUCKY HARM REDUCTION SUMMIT VIDEOS POSTED

The following videos from the 2022 Kentucky Harm Reduction Summit, held Aug 10–11 and hosted by Gateway District Health Department in partnership with the Kentucky Department for Public Health, University of Kentucky HealthCare CECentral, and the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center, are now available on the KIPRC website:

- [Employing Persons with a History of Substance Use Disorders Panel Discussion](#)
- [Kentucky's Response to the Opioid Epidemic](#)
- [Queer Benefits](#)
- [KyPQC: First Initiatives Are Successful in Connecting Families Affected by Substance Use to Treatment and Necessary Resources](#)
- [Housing as Harm Reduction](#)
- [988: A Behavioral Health Crisis Line](#)
- [Using ODMAP to Identify Spike Alerts Using Overdose Surveillance](#)
- [Familial Trafficking: The Intersection of Labor Trafficking and Domestic Violence](#)
- [Fentanyl Changed Everything: Bridging the Gap Between 12 Step and Harm Reduction](#)

Additional sessions from the Harm Reduction Summit earn continuing education credits through CECentral:

- [OnPoint NYC: Safe Consumption New York](#)
- [Building a Movement to End the Intersecting Issues of Overdose, Homelessness and Incarceration](#)
- [Potential Sequelae of Injection Drug Use](#)
- [Recovery Capital: Assets, Not Abstinence](#)
- [The Kentucky Opioid Response Effort: Harm Reduction Principles and Strategies](#)
- [Building a Peer Workforce to Support Harm Reduction and Wellness](#)

The target audience for the Harm Reduction Summit lectures includes physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses, pharmacists, social workers, public health professionals, attorneys, peer support specialists, certified alcohol and drug counselors, community health workers, registered environmental health specialists/registered sanitarians, and anyone who might be involved in harm reduction or the treatment of substance use disorders.

For more information on the Kentucky Harm Reduction Summit, contact Chase Barnes, Harm Reduction Program Manager at the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, at chase.barnes@ky.gov. To be notified when registration is open for the upcoming Harm Reduction Summit, [click here](#).

SAVE THE DATE

KENTUCKY HARM REDUCTION SUMMIT

**JUNE 14 - 15, 2023
IN PERSON**

**MADISON COUNTY, KENTUCKY
REGISTRATION OPENS SPRING 2023**

The 2023 Harm Reduction Summit is supported by Cooperative Agreement Number NU17CE924971 funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and awarded to the University of Kentucky Research Foundation and the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center (KIPRC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authorized and does not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the Department of Health and Human Services.



STEPHANIE RAMSEY JOINS KIPRC AS PRODUCTION AND MARKETING COORDINATOR

Please join us in welcoming Stephanie Ramsey, KIPRC's new Production and Marketing Coordinator. Stephanie replaces Jonathan Greene, who is now Associate Director of Marketing and Communications for the University of Kentucky College of Public Health.

As the production and marketing coordinator, Stephanie will be managing KIPRC's marketing and communications as well as contributing articles to *KyOD2A Happenings* and other news outlets.

A native of Oregon, Stephanie graduated with an undergraduate degree in strategic communications, with a minor in psychology, and a master's in business leadership and communications, all from High Point University in North Carolina. Before joining KIRPC, she worked as a communications associate for the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3). MIC3 assists military-connected students transition between schools, so they can transfer their credits



Stephanie Ramsey, KIPRC Production and Marketing Coordinator

and graduate on time.

At MIC3, Stephanie managed two of the commission's committees as well as the social media accounts, website, monthly newsletters, tabling events and conferences, and assisted with cases.

Don't miss future editions of *KyOD2A Happenings*—click the icon at right to subscribe!



And click below to follow us on social media.

—*SPARK Ministries, continued from page 3*

"She was just so broken and beat down and beautiful, and she was really hard-headed like me when I was in my addiction," Wendy recalled. "The woman wanted to go to treatment but she didn't want to leave her boyfriend, and there's not very many co-ed facilities. She really wanted to take her boyfriend, and I was like, 'Well, okay, guys, you can't live in the same room, but maybe you can see each other in meetings.'"

Wendy helped the woman get

clothes, hygiene items, even took her to the hospital for testing, and her persistence eventually paid off: "She went on to treatment and they both completed the program," she said. "They're both in sober living and they're working. She's doing amazing, and it just feels good."

Wendy said it takes a special person to be a peer support specialist.

"Either you want to work in recovery once you get recovered or you want nothing to do with it," she said. "Peer support is a tough job, and you have to know yourself. Not just anybody can do it. I would say if

you're far enough in your recovery and that's something you're thinking about, give it a shot."

To learn more about SPARK Ministries, [click here](#), and the drug overdose prevention work of the Powell County Health Department, [click here](#).

—FindHelpNowTN.org, continued
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“Tennessee, as the first published jurisdiction aside from Kentucky, truly laid essential groundwork for any other jurisdiction that is working to implement FindHelpNow in their area,” Hines said. “All the implementation phases were solidified, and potential technical issues were addressed at the onset to ensure a

smooth process for all other jurisdictions adopting FindHelpNow. Tennessee remains an excellent partner and an example for other jurisdictions onboarding.”

Three more jurisdictions are in the process of being onboarded to FindHelpNow.org. While the FindHelpNow.org website platform is available to all state or local jurisdictions, Hines said KIPRC recognizes that it may not meet the needs of

every jurisdiction. For this reason, KIPRC offers technical assistance to any jurisdiction that decides to develop its own alternative SUD treatment locator website.

Interested jurisdictions can contact the KIPRC team to discuss FindHelpNow and potential implementation at catherine.hines@uky.edu.

KIPRC REPORTS

Kentucky Substance Use Research & Enforcement. [Six Major Overdose-Related Substances and General Overdose-Related Events in Kentucky, January 1, 2017–June 30, 2022](#). K-SURE Brief (No.26), January 2023.

Kentucky Substance Use Research & Enforcement. [Six Major Overdose-Related Substances and General Overdose-Related Events in Kentucky, January 1, 2017–September 30, 2022](#). KSURE Brief (No.27), February 2023.

Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center. [Harm Reduction Program Overview](#). January 2023.

Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center. [Kentucky Injury Indicators, 2021](#). January 2023.

KyOD2A Happenings is produced by the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center, as bona fide agent for the Kentucky Department for Public Health. To comment on the content of this newsletter, contact KIPRCinfo@uky.edu.

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Southern Kentucky Trauma & Addiction Summit

April 26, 2023
Center for Rural Development
Somerset, Kentucky

Program provided by:
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Lake Cumberland District Health Department

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