

At a Glance

Through the Kentucky Drug Overdose Fatality Surveillance System, the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center's Overdose Data to Action surveillance team collects data on fatal drug overdoses from coroners as part of the program's overall overdose data surveillance efforts. But coroners found the traditional methods of transmitting the large volume of data cumbersome and often confused DOFSS with other programs and misdirected the data. To remedy both issues, DOFSS developed a way of submitting the data via a smart phone or computer. Since launching the portal two years ago, coroner participation has almost quadrupled.

What Is the Issue?

The Kentucky Drug Overdose Fatality Surveillance System (DOFSS) is a centralized, multi-source state database managed by the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center (KIPRC) as a bona fide agent for the Kentucky Department for Public Health. It bridges information gaps by combining fragmented records into a single system to track substance-related mortality trends. Crucial to the success of the program is data on overdose deaths from coroners. But due to the continued heavy burden of drug overdoses in Kentucky, staffing and funding issues, as well as the multiple requests for data from other programs and other outside entities, many coroners have become overwhelmed with such requests and find submitting the volume of data to the Kentucky Drug Overdose Fatality Surveillance System (KDOFSS) via traditional methods too time-consuming and cumbersome. Additionally, coroners frequently confuse Kentucky's DOFSS program and data request with other programs and mistakenly send the requested data to other programs.

What Is the Solution?

In an attempt to find a way to make submitting data easier for coroners and to differentiate ourselves from other programs requesting similar data, the Overdose Data to Action—State (OD2A-S) surveillance team at KIPRC developed a new way of using either a smart phone or a computer to submit their data.

The DOFSS Import Portal, launched in February 2024, is a secure HIPAA-complaint database that gives coroners the ability to submit their data securely and electronically to our program in an easy-to-use format via either QR code on their phone or a secure web link on their computer.

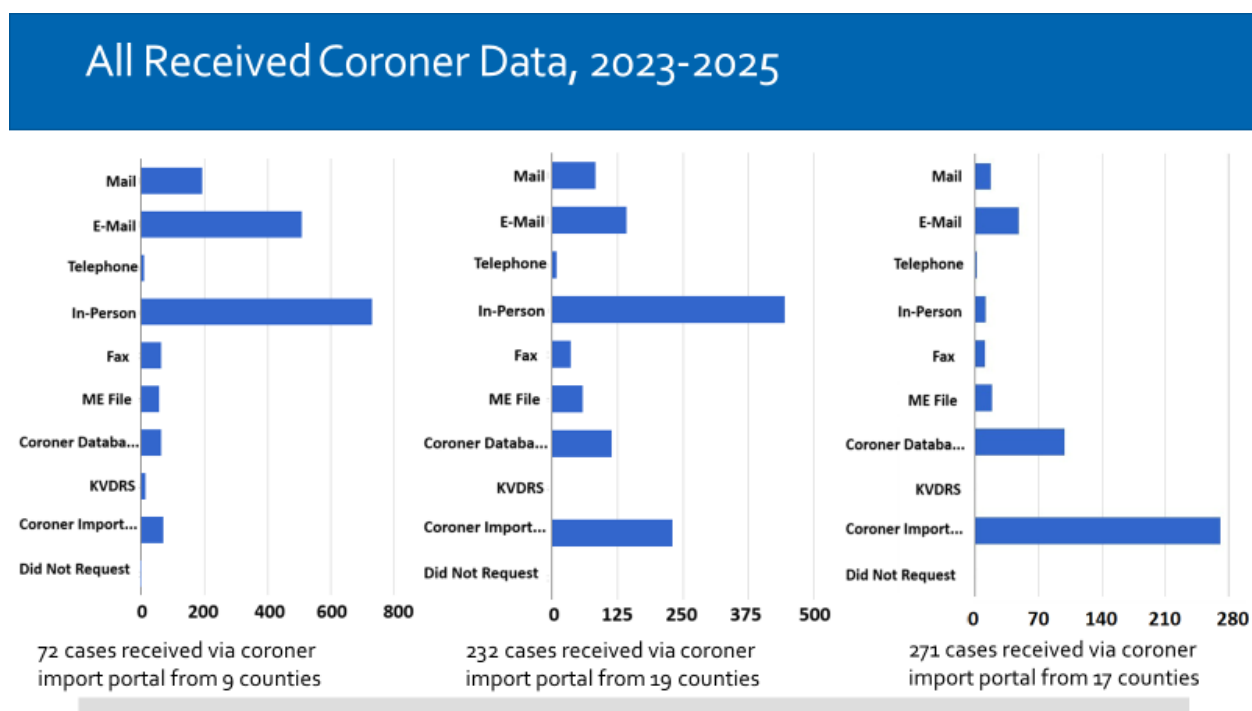
At the Coroner Basic Training, an annual mandatory training for Kentucky coroners, the OD2A-S surveillance team distributed a brochure and contact information request and gave a brief training with detailed instructions on how to access and utilize the portal. Coroners were shown how they now can take photos of their completed reports or other relevant data and use the QR code to upload them to the secure portal. Additionally, coroners were given a web link that utilizes a secure password and enables them to upload their documents from their computer. Coroners were encouraged to utilize the portal as they complete drug overdose cases instead of waiting for our quarterly request, to relieve them of the time-consuming burden of submitting multiple cases at once. The brochure outlined who we are, how we are different from other programs, what we are looking for from their data, how the submission of their data could benefit them, and how to submit their data.

Kentucky's OD2A-S surveillance team also updated all of its informal data request inquiries to include the QR code and web link as a reminder of the coroner's ability to utilize the portal and potentially make the submission of data less cumbersome.

What Are the Results?

Attendees at the Coroner Basic Training were given the option to test the new portal by uploading a contact information document to the portal. As a result of the test, we received the document via the import portal from two counties within 24 hours. Several coroners stated they would begin utilizing the import portal with their next request from our program.

The development of the DOFSS Import Portal and other supplemental materials has shown we are able to equip coroners to utilize existing technology in a new way to make submitting data less cumbersome for coroners. Since its launch in February 2024, the Coroner Import Portal has experienced rapid and consistent growth, with 72 retroactive 2023 cases submitted upon rollout and annual case submissions rising to 232 in 2024 and 344 in 2025. This strong upward trajectory—reflected in an average annual increase of 136 cases—demonstrates expanding county participation and highlights the portal's growing role in streamlining data submission and strengthening statewide public health surveillance efforts.



For more information, visit <https://kiprc.uky.edu/programs/kentucky-overdose-data-action-surveillance-programs>.

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