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Suspected Overdoses in Maine Emergency Departments (Fatal and Nonfatal)

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Executive Summary for Data Through 2021 Q2

This summary describes key results from Maine CDC analysis of patient encounters in Maine emergency departments that Maine CDC classified as suspected unintentional overdoses (fatal or nonfatal) of various classes of drugs using drug-specific ICD-10 diagnosis codes and chief complaints reported by hospitals through syndromic surveillance.

Result #1: Opioid overdoses increased in 2020.

- The total number of opioid overdoses reported through the emergency department were 1,250 in 2019 and 1,471 in 2020. As of Q2 2021, there were 868 emergency department opioid overdoses. This is consistent with past years.

Result #2: Adults aged 35-49 represent a larger share of overdoses in the emergency department compared to previous years.

- In Q3 of 2017, 56% of heroin overdoses were in young adults aged 20-34 years. By Q1 of 2020, 40% of heroin overdoses were in young adults and 49% were in adults aged 35-49.
- In all quarters of 2020 there has been an increase in all overdoses for adults aged 50-64 compared to past years.

Result #3: Slightly more than half of all overdose patients are male, but males make up a disproportionate share of overdoses involving opioids, especially heroin.

- Stimulant overdoses were 75% male in Q2 of 2021.
- Opioid and heroin overdoses were 64% and 63% male, respectively.