



Suspected Overdoses in Maine Emergency Departments (Fatal and Nonfatal)

July 12, 2019

Executive Summary for Data Through 2019 Q1

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 non-fatal) of various classes of drugs using drug-specific ICD-10 diagnosis codes and chief complaints reported by hospitals through syndromic surveillance.

Result #1: Overall, drug overdoses peaked in the third quarter of 2017.

- Drug (any drug) overdoses in emergency departments declined by approximately 7 percent in from 2017 to 2018. The subset of drug overdoses involving opioids of any type declined approximately 14 percent over the same period. Heroin overdoses declined by approximately 21 percent.
- Results for the first half of 2019 show a continuing gradual downward trend, with overall overdoses in the first half of 2019 approximately 8 percent lower than in the second half of 2018, opioid overdoses approximately 13 percent lower, and heroin overdoses approximately 27 percent lower.

Result #2: Slightly more than half of overdose patients are male, but males make up a disproportionate share of overdoses involving opioids, especially heroin.

- 52 percent of any-drug overdoses were male.
- 63 percent of opioid overdoses were male.
- 66 percent of heroin overdoses were male.

Result #3: Young adults age 20-34 represent a disproportionate share of drug overdoses in emergency departments

- Persons aged 20-34 accounted for 33 percent of any-drug overdoses, 45 percent of any-opioid overdoses, and 56 percent of heroin overdoses
- Heroin Overdoses are rare in patients younger than 20 and older than 49. Less than 12% of heroin overdoses involved patients outside of the 20-49 age group.