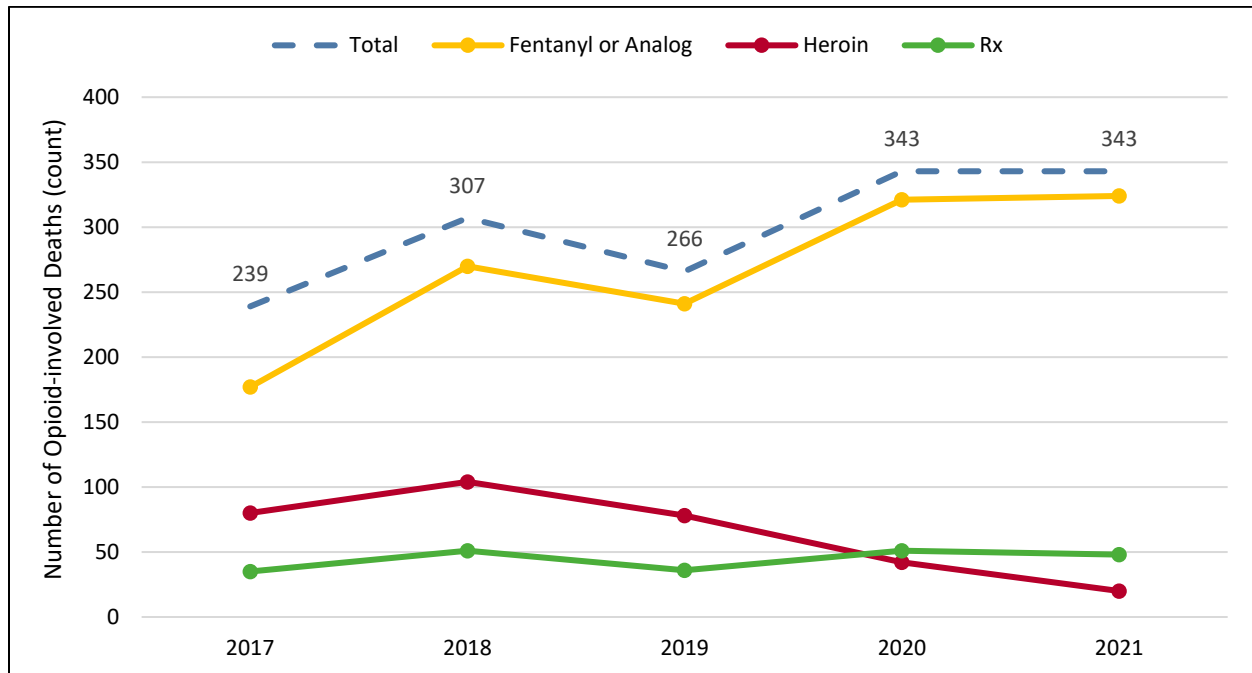


This brief is a yearly update on opioid-related deaths in St. Louis County. While visuals show 5-year trends, the primary focus of this report will be the most recent data in 2021. The mortality data utilized in this brief was provided by the St. Louis County Medical Examiner's office.

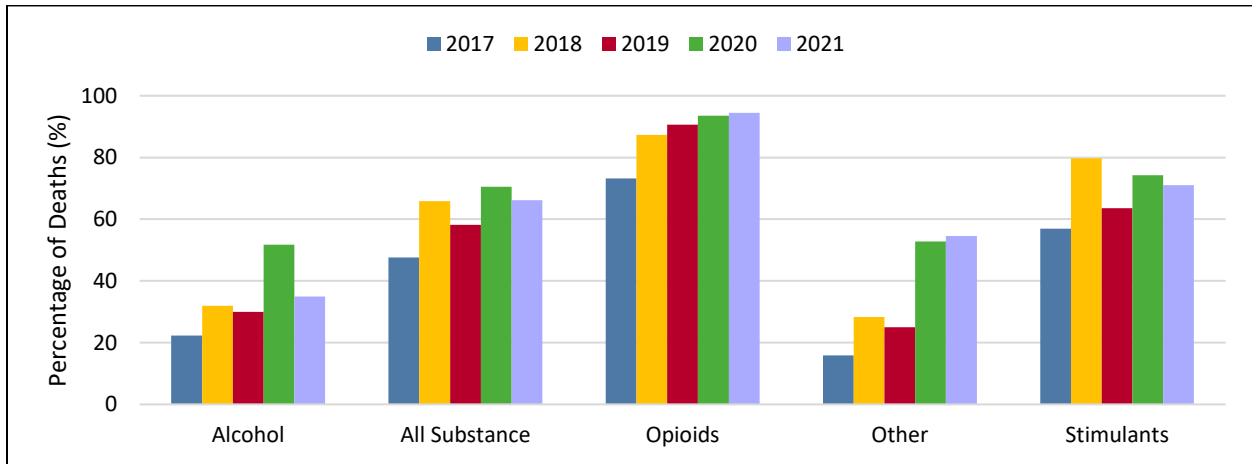
Figure 1. Opioid-related Deaths Occurring in St. Louis County, 2017-2021.



- In 2021, 343 people died from opioid-related causes in St. Louis County, the same number as in 2020. In three of the last five years the county has recorded 300 or more opioid-related deaths.
- Opioids were present in 70% of substance-involved deaths that occurred in 2021. Opioids are the substances most often involved in deaths and are driving much of the growth in substance-involved deaths over the last 5 years.
- The drugs that most often contributed to opioid-related deaths were fentanyl or synthetic fentanyl analogs.
- Acetyl fentanyl, meta/ortho fluorofentanyl, acrylfentanyl, butyrylfentanyl, methoxyacetyl fentanyl, and valeryl fentanyl are the main analogs appearing in the data.
- An emerging issue in the opioid-related death data is the pairing of xylazine, a veterinary sedative, with fentanyl. Fourteen deaths in 2021 involved these two substances together.
- The presence of heroin continues to decrease. Heroin-related deaths are down 52% from 2020.
- 48 deaths in 2021 involved prescription opioids, remaining near the 5-year average of 44 deaths per year.
- The opioid-related mortality rate for St. Louis County was 37.4 deaths per 100,000 population in 2021.
- Men were much more likely than women to die from opioid-related causes. Men had a mortality rate of 56.0 per 100,000 population, compared to a rate of 20.4 per 100,000 population for women.

The role of fentanyl in opioid-related deaths and substance-involved deaths as-a-whole continues to be a primary concern.

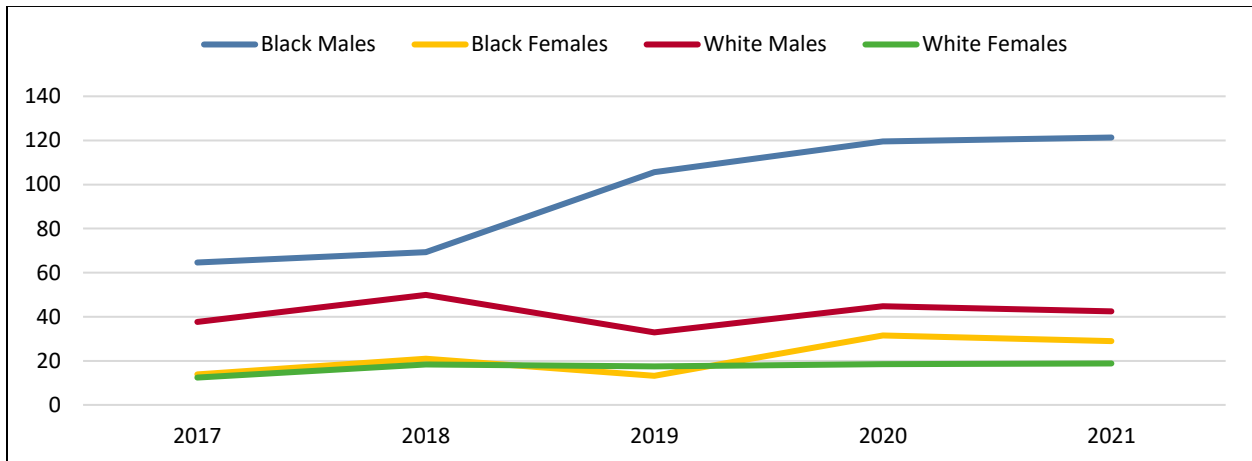
Figure 2. Fentanyl Involvement as a Proportion of Deaths Across Substance Groups, 2017-2021.



- The presence of fentanyl in deaths involving each drug category in each year is displayed on the left.
- Fentanyl involvement increased across the 5-year reporting period.
- In 2021, fentanyl was present in 94.5% of opioid-related deaths and 66.1% of all substance-involved deaths.
- In 2021, fentanyl was present in at least 50% of deaths linked to each of the drug classes except for alcohol.

Racial disparities in substance-involved mortality hold true in opioid-related deaths.

Figure 3. Age-adjusted Mortality Rates by Race and Sex, 2017-2021.

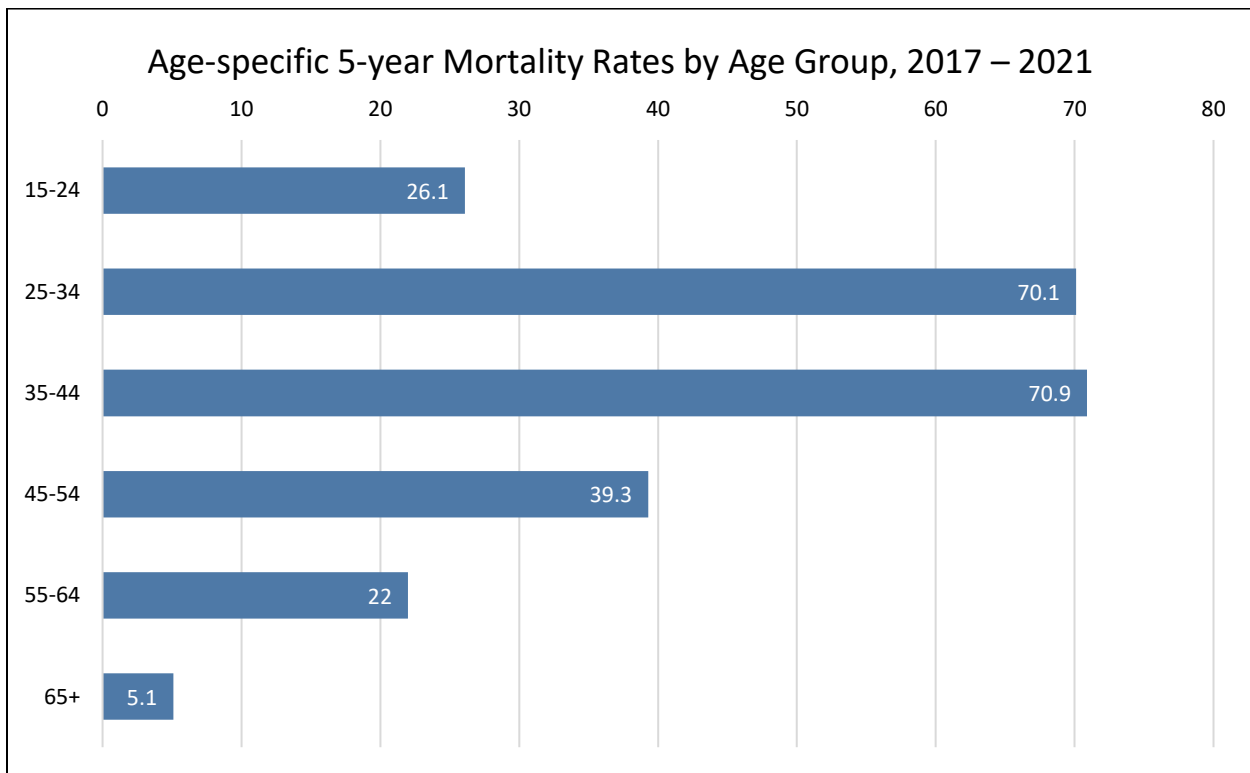


- In 2021, Black men experienced the highest opioid-related mortality rate at 121.3 deaths per 100,000 population.
- The 2021 increase in mortality among Black men continues a growing gap between Black males and other race and sex groups.
- White men experienced the second-highest rate, with 42.5 deaths per 100,000 population.
- Opioid-related deaths among white men and Black women declined slightly from 2020 to 2021.

- Black women had a mortality rate of 29.0, down from 31.5 per 100,000 population in 2020.
- The mortality rate for white women has held consistently around the 5-year average mortality rate of 17.0 per 100,000 population.

Individuals in the 25-34 and 35-44 age groups experienced the highest rates of opioid-related mortality

Figure 4. Age-specific 5-year Mortality Rates by Age Group, 2017-2021.



- Persons aged 25-34 died from opioid-related causes at a rate of 70.1 per 100,000. Those aged 35-44 had a rate of 70.9 per 100,000 population.
- Individuals in the 45-54 and 15-24 age groups had the third and fourth highest rates respectively as seen in Figure 4.
- All 9 of the deaths of persons under the age of 15 in 2021 involved an opioid.

The map below displays opioid-related mortality rates by the ZIP code in which the death occurred from 2017-2021. It is clear to see that opioids are affecting all of St. Louis County.

Mortality rates were highest in the Inner North and Outer North regions of the county.

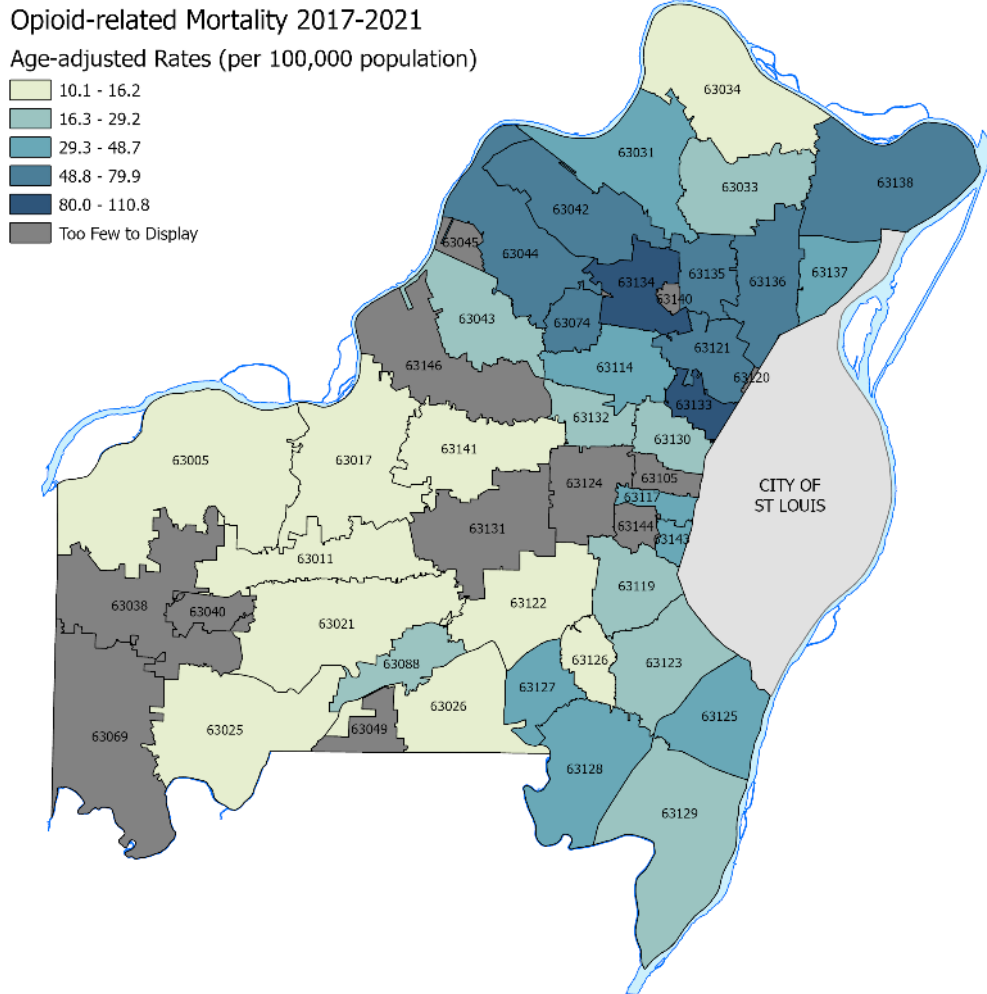
ZIP codes 63133 and 63134 had the highest rates of opioid-related mortality across the 5-year period, at 110.8 per 100,000 population and 99.6 per 100,000 population, respectively.

The largest number of deaths over the 5-year period occurred in ZIP code 63136, with 144 deaths total.

Three ZIP codes in South County have rates higher than others within the sub-region: 63125, 63128, and 63127.

Central and West County regions had the lowest mortality rates.

St. Louis County Opioid-related Overdose Mortality by Zip Code of Occurrence, 2017-2021



This Map was produced with 2017-2021 opioid-related mortality data provided by the St. Louis County Medical Examiner's Office. Rates in the following zip codes should be interpreted with caution due to an RSE >30 (63005, 63025, 63034, 63126, 63127, 63132)

For questions and comments related to this brief please email CAdams@stlouiscountymo.gov

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