

# Overdose Data to Action Cuyahoga County, Ohio

Cuyahoga County Board of Health &  
Begun Center, Case Western Reserve University

Overdose data surveillance is intended to generate insight to drive more effective prevention and response activities by providing timely dissemination of drug overdose related trends.

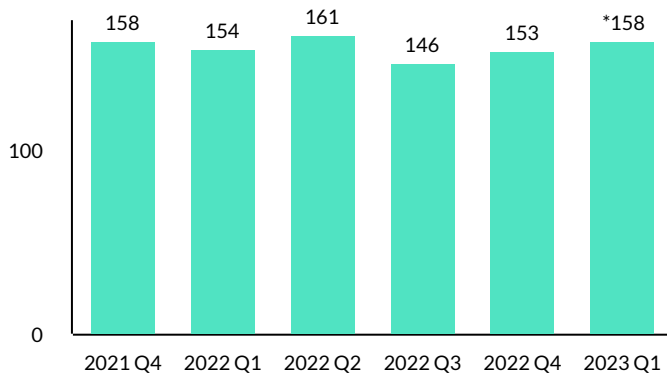


## Overdose Deaths

Total Drug Related OD Deaths

Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office Records

↑ 3.3%



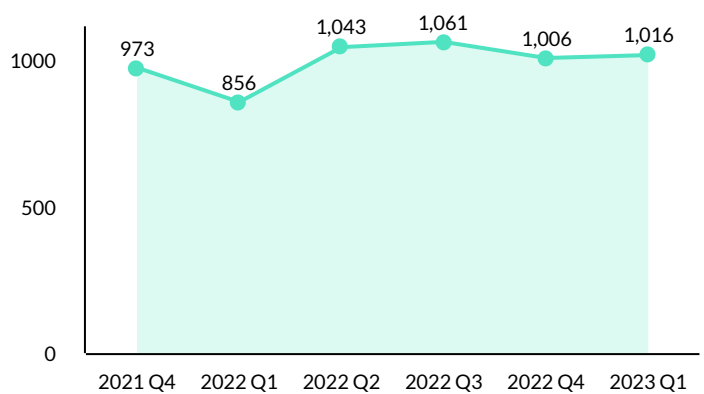
\*These data are preliminary and subject to change.



## Emergency Room Visits

Suspected Drug ODs in ERs

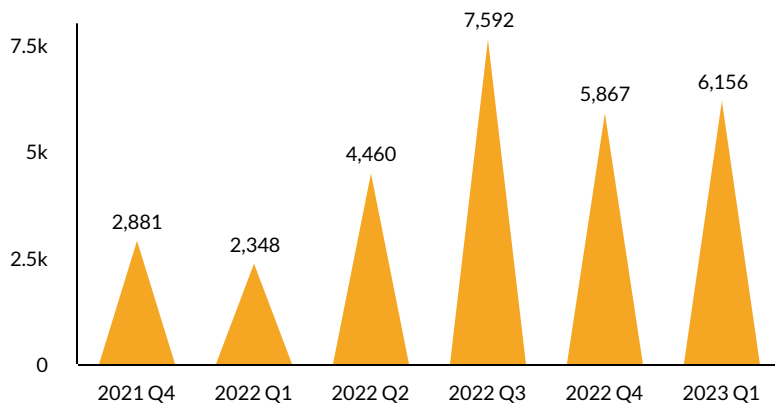
↑ 1.0%



## Project DAWN

Naloxone Kits Distributed

↑ 4.9%



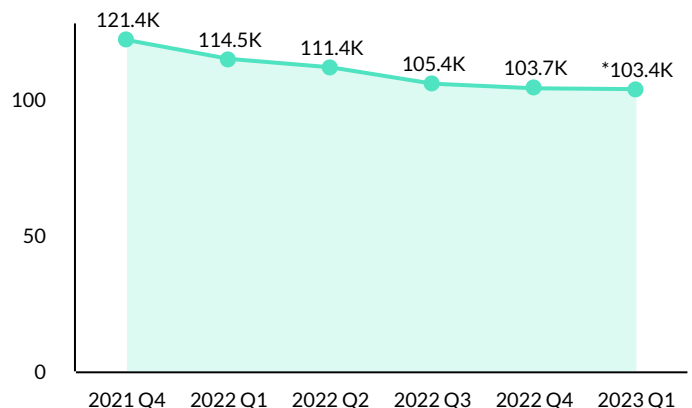
These data represent state registered Project DAWN programs distributing naloxone in Cuyahoga County. It is not required to register as a Project DAWN program to distribute naloxone in Ohio.



## Opioid Prescribing

Opioid Prescriptions Dispensed in Cuyahoga County, OH

↓ 0.37%



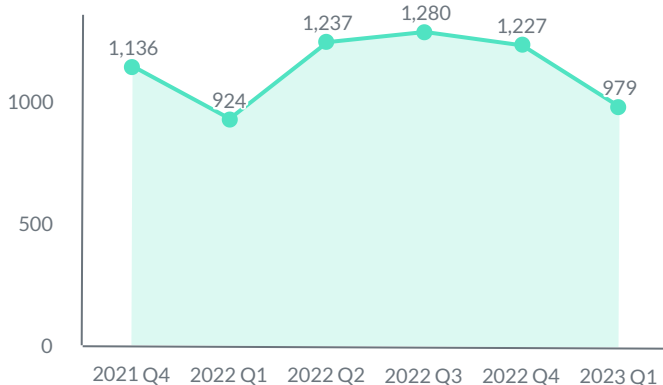
\*The number of opioid prescriptions dispensed will likely increase as data continues to be reported to the Board of Pharmacy



## EMS Naloxone

Number of Naloxone Doses Administered

↓ 20.2%

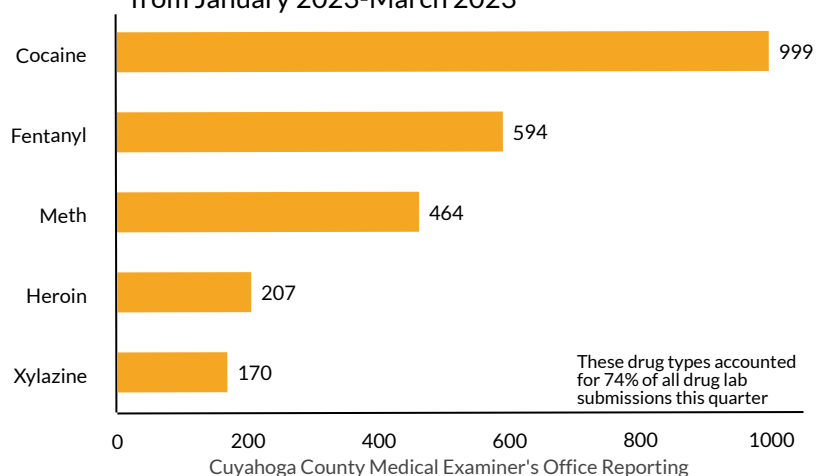


EMS Naloxone administrations are provided by agencies reporting to Ohio EMS



## Drug Seizure & Lab Testing

Number of Lab Submissions by Drug Types from January 2023-March 2023



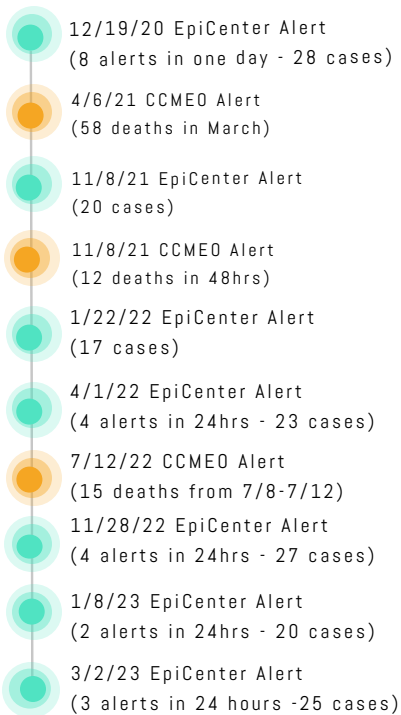
These drug types accounted for 74% of all drug lab submissions this quarter

Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office Reporting



## Overdose Alert Periods

(December 2020 - Present)



The overdose alert periods are a combination of non-fatal overdose anomaly (spike) detections reported by the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, also known as EpiCenter Alerts, and fatal overdose public health alerts issued by the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office, shown on a timeline.



## Highlight

**Governor DeWine Authorizes Emergency Classification of Xylazine as Schedule III Controlled Substance**



On March 28th, 2023, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine signed an executive order directing the State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy to immediately classify xylazine as a Schedule III controlled substance. This executive order makes Ohio one of the first states in the nation to schedule xylazine as a controlled substance drug. Xylazine is a central nervous system depressant used in veterinary settings as a sedative, anesthetic, and muscle relaxant. The substance, which is not approved for human consumption, has increasingly been found in the illicit drug supply in Ohio, including Cuyahoga County. The substance is frequently mixed with heroin, fentanyl, or new synthetic opioids (NSOs) such as nitazene.

The emergency order was driven by intelligence gathered as part of an early detection process developed by the Ohio Narcotics Intelligence Center (ONIC) in partnership with Recovery Health, the State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy, and local drug toxicologists and chemists. In 2022, ONIC intelligence led Governor DeWine and the State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy to add nine emerging dangerous substances to Ohio's controlled drug schedule. Xylazine is the first dangerous substance added to Ohio's controlled drug schedule in 2023. To learn more, please see executive order using the link below.

[Source: Executive Order 2023-08D](#)



## Important Findings / Trends

Increases or decreases are from Q4 2022 to Q1 2023 unless otherwise stated.  
2023 data are preliminary and subject to change

### Counterfeit Prescription Pill Presence in Cuyahoga County:

Cuyahoga County law enforcement personnel continue to report prescription opioid pills as a cause of suspected drug overdoses. Counterfeit pills have flooded the illicit drug market; DEA reported in a public safety message that "of the fentanyl-laced fake prescription pills analyzed in 2022, six out of ten now contain a potentially lethal dose of fentanyl."<sup>1</sup>

### Quarter over Quarter:

Overall, fatal overdoses increased slightly by 3.3% over the last quarter. There were zero carfentanil related deaths in quarter 1 of 2023.<sup>2</sup> There was a very slight increase of 1% for persons presenting to emergency departments for suspected drug overdose.<sup>3</sup>

There was a very slight decrease (.37%) in opioid prescribing this quarter.<sup>4</sup> There was a 4.9% increase in the number of Project DAWN naloxone kits distributed in quarter 1 of 2023.<sup>5</sup> EMS naloxone administrations decreased by 20.2%.<sup>6</sup>

From January to March 2023, cocaine ranked highest in the number of lab submissions (999) to the Cuyahoga County Regional Forensics Science Lab (CCRFS), followed by fentanyl (594). Cocaine increased by 9% and fentanyl decreased by 6% from last quarter, methamphetamine lab submissions increased by 19%, and heroin lab submissions increased by 15% from last quarter.<sup>2</sup> The CCRFS is seeing an increase in xylazine drug seizures; we will now monitor xylazine lab submissions along with the other drug types listed above.

Cuyahoga County Board of Health

<https://www.ccbh.net/overdose-data-dashboard/>

#### Data Sources and Notes:

1 DEA Public Safety Alert: <https://www.dea.gov/alert/dea-laboratory-testing-reveals-6-out-10-fentanyl-laced-fake-prescription-pills-now-contain>

2 Heroin and Fentanyl Related Deaths in Cuyahoga County. March 2023 Update. Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office. Available

at [https://cuyahogacms.blob.core.windows.net/home/docs/default-source/me-library/heroin-fentanyl-cocaine-deaths/2023/march2023-heroinfentanyl.pdf?sfvrsn=f986d913\\_3](https://cuyahogacms.blob.core.windows.net/home/docs/default-source/me-library/heroin-fentanyl-cocaine-deaths/2023/march2023-heroinfentanyl.pdf?sfvrsn=f986d913_3)

3 Emergency Department Visits for Suspected Drug Overdose Among Cuyahoga County Residents. EpiCenter. Ohio Department of Health. Data used for this report is accessed by the Cuyahoga County Board of Health. Similar data is available to the public at <https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/violence-injury-prevention-program/Suspected-OD-Dashboard2>

4 Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System. Ohio Board of Pharmacy. Available <https://www.ohiopmp.gov/County.aspx>

5 Ohio Department of Health, Violence and Injury Prevention Section - Project DAWN Monthly Distribution Logs. Analyzed by Cuyahoga County Board of Health.

6 Ohio EMS. Naloxone Administration Doses, by County. "Naloxone Watch" Available <https://www.ems.ohio.gov/#gsc.tab=0>

7 U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Drug Seizures. Drug Seizure Statistics. <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/drug-seizure-statistics>