

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
JUSTICE & PUBLIC SAFETY CABINET



2018 Overdose Fatality Report

KENTUCKY OFFICE OF DRUG CONTROL POLICY

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# Introduction

Substance abuse, particularly the diversion and abuse of prescription drugs along with heroin and illicit fentanyl, remains one of the most critical public health and safety issues facing Kentucky. For years, the annual number of Kentuckians who died from drug overdoses steadily climbed to a peak of more than 1,400 in 2017, exacting a disastrous toll on families, communities, social services and economic growth.

In 2018, the toll was likewise devastating. Yet, the Commonwealth also saw signs that the overall trend in overdose deaths may be changing direction. For the first time since 2013, overdose deaths among Kentucky residents declined, **falling from 1,477 in 2017 to 1,247 last year – a 15 percent decrease equivalent to 230 lives.** When the totals include individuals who died in Kentucky but were not residents, the decrease is similar – **1,566 in 2017 reduced to 1,333 in 2018, a decrease of 233 deaths.**

We believe this reversal is due in large part to a number of program and policy initiatives underway in Kentucky, including the statewide use of prescription drug monitoring programs, expanded availability of naloxone and substance abuse treatment, and the enactment of laws specifically addressing the availability of prescription medications. The most recent of these laws, House Bill 333, limited opioid prescriptions for acute pain to a three-day supply with certain exceptions. The law also increased penalties for trafficking in heroin, fentanyl and fentanyl analogues.

In addition, the Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet and Operation UNITE launched a new substance abuse call center to connect people across the state with drug treatment. The KY HELP Call Center provides referrals to both public and private treatment providers in real time.

Kentuckians struggling with a substance use disorder, either themselves or within their families, can call 1-833-8KY-HELP (1-833-859-4357) toll-free to speak with a live specialist about treatment options and available resources. The specialists conduct a brief screening assessment in order to connect callers with the most relevant treatment services as quickly as possible. Options include everything from medication-assisted treatment to faith-based care, and the specialist helps callers work through all the variables, such as location and cost.

The Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center (KIPRC) also partnered with the Office of Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin and the Kentucky cabinets for Health and Family Services and Justice and Public Safety to create [www.findhelpnowky.org](http://www.findhelpnowky.org). The website provides a vital link for Kentucky health care providers, court officials, families and individuals seeking options for substance abuse treatment and recovery. It offers real-time information about available space in treatment programs, and guides users to the right type of treatment for their needs. The site is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Along with these efforts, the Bevin administration in 2017 launched the “Don’t Let Them Die” campaign, a public awareness effort to spread information on substance use disorder, the call center, drug treatment and naloxone. The campaign included a website and educational announcements on television and radio.

\* \* \*

House Bill 1 mandates that the Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy, in cooperation with the Kentucky Medical Examiner's Office, prepare and publish an annual public report to the Secretary of the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet to include:

- (1) The number of drug-related deaths;
- (2) The decedent's age, race, and gender, but not his or her name or address;
- (3) The counties in which those deaths occurred;
- (4) The scientific, trade, or generic names of the drugs involved; and
- (5) The method by which the drugs were obtained, when available.

This report was compiled utilizing data from the Kentucky Medical Examiner's Office, KIPRC, and the Kentucky Office of Vital Statistics (OVS).

KIPRC, with support from the CDC, launched the **Drug Overdose Technical Assistance Core (DOTAC)** to support local health departments, community coalitions, and state and local agencies in their efforts to address substance misuse, abuse, and overdose. DOTAC's goal is to support and enhance local agencies' and community organizations' access to timely local data and analytical results on controlled substance prescribing, drug related morbidity and mortality trends.

More information on the available data, analytical and community services is available at <http://www.mc.uky.edu/kiprc/dotac/index.html>

**Note:** The Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy (ODCP) will change its reporting methodology next year to emphasize Kentucky residents who died from overdoses. This will make comparisons with CDC data more useful. ODCP will still calculate the number of non-residents who died in Kentucky as a result of an overdose; however, the primary data set will focus on Kentucky residents only.

## **Key findings from 2018 include<sup>1</sup>:**

**Kentucky overdose fatalities decreased in 2018. Overdose deaths of Kentucky residents, regardless of where the death occurred, and non-residents who died in Kentucky, totaled 1,333 as reported to the Office of Vital Statistics in June 2019. Of those, 1,247 were Kentucky residents<sup>2</sup>. That's compared to 1,477 resident overdose deaths counted in the 2017 report. A review of the 1,298 resident cases autopsied by the Kentucky Medical Examiner's Office and toxicology reports submitted by coroners indicates that in 2018:**

- Residents ages 35 to 44 were the largest demographic in overdose deaths, followed by 25-34.
- Autopsies and toxicology reports from coroners show that approximately 188 resident overdose deaths involved the use of heroin in 2018, down from 270 percent from 2017.
- Fentanyl and fentanyl analogues were involved in 786 resident overdose deaths. That accounts for nearly 61 percent of all deaths, up from 52 percent in 2017, when 763 people died with fentanyl or its analogues in their system.
- Jefferson County had the most resident overdose deaths of any county with 337, down from 426 in the 2017 report.
- The largest increase in resident overdose fatalities occurred in Pike County, where deaths increased by five. Other counties with increases include Warren County by four and McCracken by three.
- The largest decrease occurred in Jefferson County, which had 89 fewer Kentucky resident fatalities in 2018 compared to the previous year. Other counties with significant declines include Kenton County, which declined by 24, Campbell County, which declined by 14, Nelson by 13 and Jessamine by 12.
- Morphine was detected in 432 resident cases, and Monoacetylmorphine (heroin) in 211.
- Alprazolam was detected in approximately 214 cases, down from 269 in 2017; gabapentin in 255 cases, down from 363 in 2017; methamphetamine in 428 cases, up from 357 in 2017; oxycodone in 110 cases, down from 157.

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<sup>1</sup> This report was compiled by the most current data supplied by KIPRC and will change as additional toxicology reports are submitted

<sup>2</sup> The stated statistics are presented from toxicology of overdose deaths of Kentucky residents

- **Using data from the Kentucky Office of Vital Statistics the top five counties for resident overdose deaths by county, age adjusted per capita, were:**

1) Boyd County	60.49
2) Madison County	57.62
3) Kenton County	56.43
4) Clark County	51.16
5) Campbell County	49.43

- **The top five counties for resident, heroin-related overdose deaths were:**

1) Jefferson County	84
2) Fayette County	36
3) Kenton County	14
4) Boyd County	7
5) Campbell County	6

- **The top five counties for resident, fentanyl-related deaths were:**

1) Jefferson County	229
2) Fayette County	117
3) Kenton County	71
4) Boone County	39
5) Campbell County	32

## Overdose Deaths by County

Kentucky County Resident Age-Adjusted Drug Overdose Mortality Rate		
County	Overdoses	Age-Adjusted Drug Overdose Mortality Rate
Kentucky	1247	29.16
Adair	<5	Suppressed
Allen	<5	Suppressed
Anderson	6	Suppressed
Ballard	0	0.0
Barren	6	Suppressed
Bath	<5	Suppressed
Bell	8	Suppressed
Boone	43	32.73
Bourbon	6	Suppressed
Boyd	27	60.49
Boyle	5	Suppressed
Bracken	<5	Suppressed
Breathitt	<5	Suppressed
Breckinridge	<5	Suppressed
Bullitt	27	34.74
Butler	<5	Suppressed
Caldwell	<5	Suppressed
Calloway	<5	Suppressed
Campbell	47	49.23
Carlisle	0	0.0

Produced by the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center, as bona fide agent for the Kentucky Department for Public Health. June 2019. Data source: Kentucky Death Certificate Database, Kentucky Office of Vital Statistics, Cabinet for Health and Family Services. This report was supported by Cooperative Agreement Number 6 NU17CE002732-04, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the Department of Health and Human Services.

<sup>1</sup> Numbers <5 were suppressed according to state data release policy.

<sup>2</sup> Rates based on counts <10 were suppressed according to state data release policy.

<sup>3</sup> Rates based on counts <20 are unstable and should be interpreted with caution.

<sup>4</sup> Data are provisional and subject to change.

<b>Kentucky County Resident Age-Adjusted Drug Overdose Mortality Rate</b>		
<b>County</b>	<b>Overdoses</b>	<b>Age-Adjusted Drug Overdose Mortality Rate</b>
Kentucky	1247	29.16
Carroll	<5	Suppressed
Carter	10	40.27
Casey	5	Suppressed
Christian	<5	Suppressed
Clark	19	51.16
Clay	5	Suppressed
Clinton	<5	Suppressed
Crittenden	0	0.0
Cumberland	0	0.0
Daviess	13	12.28
Edmonson	<5	Suppressed
Elliott	<5	Suppressed
Estill	5	Suppressed
Fayette	121	38.04
Fleming	<5	Suppressed
Floyd	11	34.62
Franklin	16	32.56
Fulton	0	0.0
Gallatin	7	Suppressed
Garrard	<5	Suppressed

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Kentucky County Resident Age-Adjusted Drug Overdose Mortality Rate		
County	Overdoses	Age-Adjusted Drug Overdose Mortality Rate
Kentucky	1247	29.16
Grant	9	Suppressed
Graves	<5	Suppressed
Grayson	5	Suppressed
Green	<5	Suppressed
Greenup	15	44.95
Hancock	0	0.0
Hardin	17	14.41
Harlan	6	Suppressed
Harrison	5	Suppressed
Hart	6	Suppressed
Henderson	5	Suppressed
Henry	6	Suppressed
Hickman	0	0.0
Hopkins	<5	Suppressed
Jackson	<5	Suppressed
Jefferson	281	37.25
Jessamine	18	36.58
Johnson	5	Suppressed
Kenton	91	56.43
Knott	<5	Suppressed

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Kentucky County Resident   Age-Adjusted Drug Overdose Mortality Rate		
County	Overdoses	Age-Adjusted Drug Overdose Mortality Rate
Kentucky	1247	29.16
Knox	<5	Suppressed
Larue	0	0.0
Laurel	14	23.92
Lawrence	<5	Suppressed
Lee	<5	Suppressed
Leslie	<5	Suppressed
Letcher	7	Suppressed
Lewis	<5	Suppressed
Lincoln	9	Suppressed
Livingston	0	0.0
Logan	<5	Suppressed
Lyon	<5	Suppressed
Madison	46	57.62
Magoffin	<5	Suppressed
Marion	0	0.0
Marshall	<5	Suppressed
Martin	<5	Suppressed
Mason	<5	Suppressed
McCracken	11	17.06
McCreary	<5	Suppressed

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<b>Kentucky County Resident Age-Adjusted Drug Overdose Mortality Rate</b>		
<b>County</b>	<b>Overdoses</b>	<b>Age-Adjusted Drug Overdose Mortality Rate</b>
<b>Kentucky</b>	1247	29.16
<b>McLean</b>	<5	Suppressed
<b>Meade</b>	<5	Suppressed
<b>Menifee</b>	<5	Suppressed
<b>Mercer</b>	<5	Suppressed
<b>Metcalfe</b>	<5	Suppressed
<b>Monroe</b>	<5	Suppressed
<b>Montgomery</b>	13	44.03
<b>Morgan</b>	<5	Suppressed
<b>Muhlenberg</b>	<5	Suppressed
<b>Nelson</b>	6	Suppressed
<b>Nicholas</b>	<5	Suppressed
<b>Ohio</b>	<5	Suppressed
<b>Oldham</b>	9	Suppressed
<b>Owen</b>	9	Suppressed
<b>Owsley</b>	<5	Suppressed
<b>Pendleton</b>	9	Suppressed
<b>Perry</b>	9	Suppressed
<b>Pike</b>	16	26.76
<b>Powell</b>	7	Suppressed
<b>Pulaski</b>	10	16.65

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Kentucky County Resident Age-Adjusted Drug Overdose Mortality Rate		
County	Overdoses	Age-Adjusted Drug Overdose Mortality Rate
Kentucky	1247	29.16
Robertson	0	0.0
Rockcastle	6	Suppressed
Rowan	7	Suppressed
Russell	6	Suppressed
Scott	15	28.03
Shelby	10	22.31
Simpson	0	0.0
Spencer	<5	Suppressed
Taylor	8	Suppressed
Todd	<5	Suppressed
Trigg	<5	Suppressed
Trimble	<5	Suppressed
Union	<5	Suppressed
Warren	17	14.01
Washington	<5	Suppressed
Wayne	<5	Suppressed
Webster	<5	Suppressed
Whitley	7	Suppressed
Wolfe	<5	Suppressed
Woodford	8	Suppressed

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## Kentucky Resident Overdose Death by Age Group

Count of Kentucky Drug Overdose Deaths by Age Group	
Age Group	Overdoses
0-4	0
5-14	0
15-24	79
25-34	314
35-44	335
45-54	285
55-64	194
65-74	31
75-84	7
85+	<5

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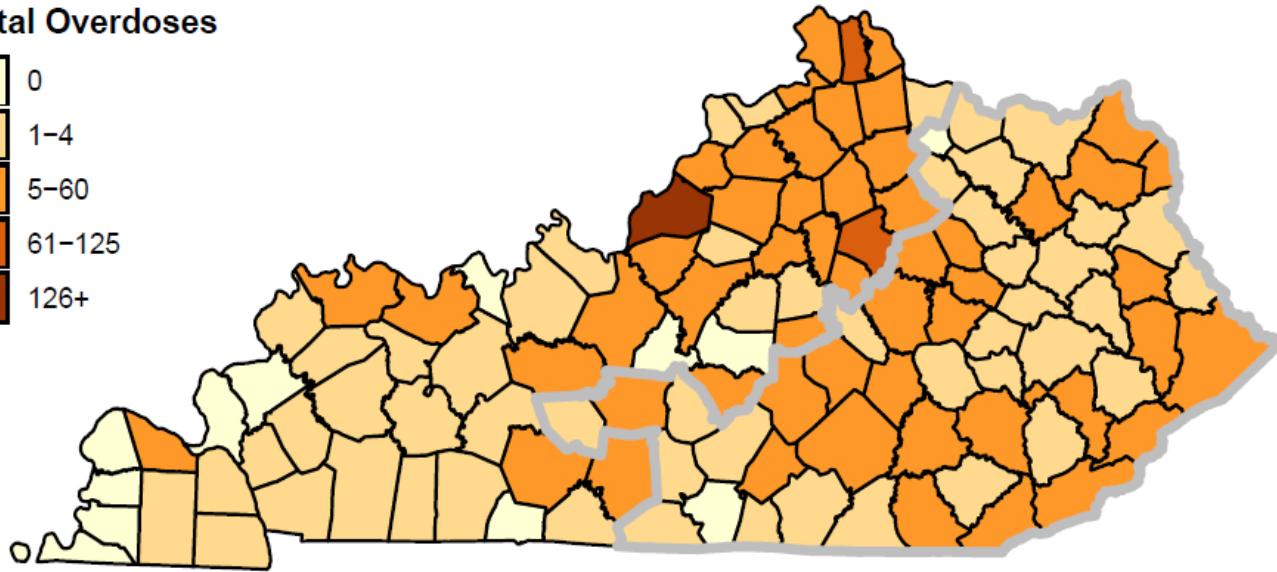
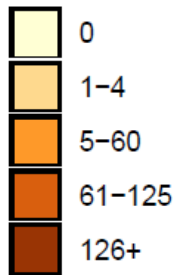
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## Count of Drug Overdose Deaths by County of Residence, Kentucky, 2018

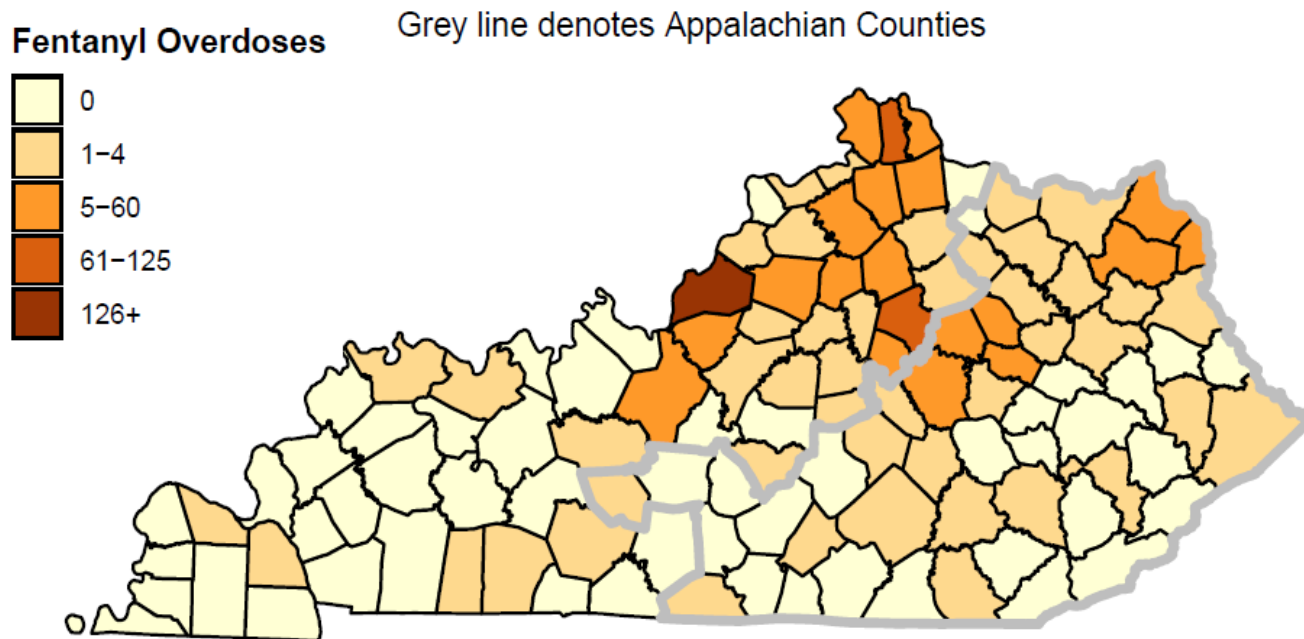
Grey line denotes Appalachian Counties

### Total Overdoses



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## Count of Fentanyl Overdose Deaths by County of Residence, Kentucky, 2018



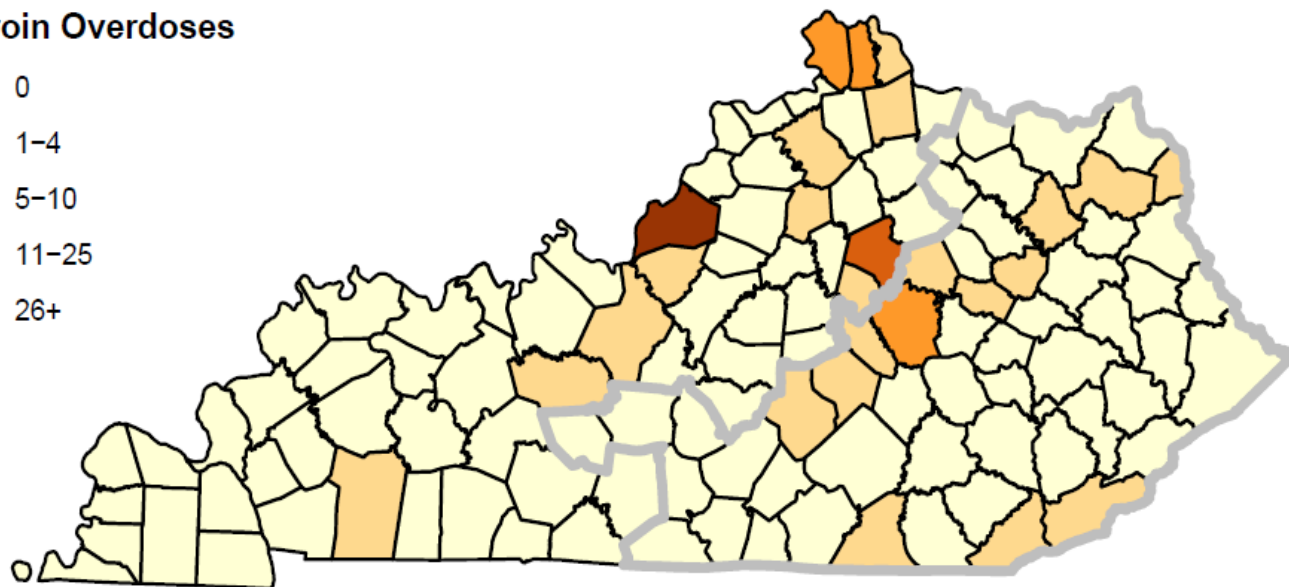
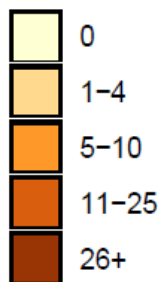
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## Count of Heroin Overdose Deaths by County of Residence, Kentucky, 2018

Grey line denotes Appalachian Counties

### Heroin Overdoses



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## Drugs Associated with Fatalities in 2018

Drug	Counts
1	3
1-DIFLUORETHANE	3
10-MONOHYDROXYOXCARBAZEPINE	1
4-ANILINO-N-PHENETHYL-4-PIPERIDINE (ANPP)	152
4-ANPP	148
5F-ADB	6
5F-MDMB-PINACA	1
6-AMINOACETYLMORPHINE	1
6-MONOACETYLMORPHINE	188
7-AMINOCLONAZEPAM	124
9-HYDROXYRISPERIDONE	1
A-OH-ALPRAZOLAM	130
A-OH-ALPROZOLAM	1
A-OHALPRAZOLAM	1
ACEDTYLFENTANYL	1
ACETAMINOPHEN	9
ACETONE	7
ACETYLFENTANYL	167
ACRYLFENTANYL	2
ADB-FUBINACA	1
ALPRAZOLAM	214
AMIODARONE	4
AMITRIPTYLINE	5
AMLODIPINE	5
AMPHETAMINE	338
BACLOFEN	1
BENZOYLECGONINE	2
BENZOYLECGONINE	191
BENZOYLECGONONINE	1
BENZOYLECOGONINE	2
BENZOYLEECGONINE	1

Drug	Counts
BENZOYLEGONINE	1
BENZTROPINE	1
BEZOYLECGONINE	3
BUPRENORPHINE	48
BUPROPION	2
BUTALBITAL	7
BUTRYLFETANYL	1
BUTYRLFENTANYL	1
BUTYRYLFENTANYL	9
CAFFEINE	19
CARBON MONOXIDE	2
CARFENTANIL	3
CARISOPRODOL	1
CETIRIZINE	1
CHLORDIAZEPOXIDE	4
CHLOROPHENYLPYPERAZINE	5
CHLORPHENIRAMINE	1
CIS-3-METHYLFENTANYL	1
CITALOPRAM	6
CLOMIPRAMINE	1
CLONAZEPAM	23
COCAETHYLENE	9
COCAINE	47
CODEINE	135
COMPLICATIONS METH INTOXICATION	1
COTININE	32
CYCLOBENZAPRINE	4
CYCLOPROPYLFENTANYL	13
DEMOXEPAM	1
DESMETHYLLOPERAMIDE	1
DEXTGROMETHORPHAN	1
DEXTROMETHORPHAN	5
DIAZEPAM	47
DIHYDROCODEINE	2

Drug	Counts
DILTIAZEM	1
DIPHENHYDRAMINE	11
DOXYLAMINE	3
DRUG NOT LISTED	5
DULOXETINE	4
EDDP	40
EPHEDRINE	1
ETHANOL	207
ETHYLENE GLYCOL	1
ETIZOLAN	1
FENATANYL	1
FENTANYL	619
FLUOXETINE	4
FURANYLFENTANYL	1
GABAPENTIN	255
HYDROCODONE	131
HYDROMORPHONE	139
HYDROXYCHLOROQUINE	1
HYDROXYZINE	2
IBUPROFEN	2
ISOPROPANOL	2
LAMOTRIGINE	3
LEVETIRACETAM	2
LIDOCAINE	2
LOPERAMIDE	1
LORAZEPAM	15
MDMA	5
MEPROBAMATE	6
METHADONE	48
METHAMPHETAMINE	428
METHANOL	2
METHOXYACETYLFENTANYL	4
METOPROLOL	3
MIRTAZAPINE	1

Drug	Counts
MOPRHINE	1
MORPHINE	374
NALOXONE	1
NALOXONE+	9
NICOTINE	20
NOBUPRENORPHINE	1
NORBUPRENNORPHINE	1
NORBUPRENORPHINE	67
NORCLOMIPRAMINE	1
NORDIAZAPAM	1
NORDIAZAPEM	1
NORDIAZEPAM	71
NORDOXEPIN	1
NORFENTANYL	359
NORFLUOXETINE	4
NORPRENORPHINE	1
NORPROPOXYPHENE	1
NORSERTRALINE	5
NORTRAMADOL	10
NORTRIPTYLINE	8
O-DESMETHAYLTRAMADOL	1
O-DESMETHYLTRAMADOL	27
O-DESMETHYLVENLAFAXI	1
O-DESMETHYLVENLAFAXINE	4
OLANZAPINE	2
OXAZEPAM	59
OXCARBAZEPINE	1
OXYCODONE	110
OXYMORPHONE	87
OXYMORPHONW	1
OYCODONE	1
PARA-FLUOROBUTYRYLFENT	1
PARA-FLUOROBUTYRYLFENTANYL	1
PAROXETINE	1

Drug	Counts
PHENOBARBITAL	1
PREGABALIN	1
PROMETHAZINE	1
PROPOFOL	1
PROPRANOLOL	2
PSEUDOEPHEDRINE	9
QUETIAPINE	5
SALICYLATES	1
SERTALINE	1
SERTRALINE	4
TEMAZEPAM	43
TETRAHYDROFURANFETANYL	1
THC	149
THC-COOH	237
TIZANADINE	2
TOPIRAMATE	6
TRAMADOL	47
TRAZODONE	5
VENLAFAXINE	4
WARFARIN	1
Z	1
ZOLPIDEM	7

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