

# 2019 Overdose Fatality Report

## Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy



## **Commonwealth of Kentucky**

### Justice & Public Safety Cabinet

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## Introduction

Substance abuse, particularly the diversion and abuse of prescription drugs along with heroin, methamphetamine and illicit fentanyl, remains one of the most critical public health and safety issue 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.

After a fifteen percent decline in overdose deaths in 2018, the toll once again is devastating in 2019, with an uptick of approximately five percent. Overdose deaths among Kentucky residents increased by 69 deaths to 1,316 an increase from 1,247 in 2018.

The Office of Drug Control Policy believes the increase is due to a rise in illicit fentanyl and its analogs within the drug supply. The problem is also exacerbated by the widespread availability of potent inexpensive methamphetamine.

In 2017, the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet in partnership with Operation UNITE established a substance abuse call center to connect people across the state with drug treatment services. 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 specialist will 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 will help callers work through all the variables, such as location and cost.

The Office of Drug Control Policy and the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center (KIPRC) also collaborated with the Cabinet for Health and Family Services and Justice and Public Safety Cabinet 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 based upon their needs. The site is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

\* \* \*

House Bill 1 mandates that the Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy, in cooperation with the Kentucky Office of the Medical Examiner, prepare and publish an annual public report for the Secretary of the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet and 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 Office of the Medical Examiner, 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 has changed its reporting methodology this year to focus on Kentucky residents who died from overdoses. This will make comparisons with CDC data more useful.

## **Key Findings from 2019 include<sup>1</sup>:**

**Overdose deaths of Kentucky residents, regardless of where the death occurred totaled 1,316 at the time of this report, compared to 1,247 in 2018, an approximate five percent increase. A review of the resident cases autopsied by the Kentucky Office of the Medical Examiner and toxicology reports submitted by Kentucky coroners indicates that in 2019:**

- Residents in the age group of 35 - 44 were the largest demographic in overdose deaths, followed by the age group of 45 - 54.
- Autopsies performed by the Kentucky Office of the Medical Examiner and toxicology reports submitted by Kentucky coroners show that approximately 166 resident overdose deaths involved the use of heroin in 2019, a decrease from 188 in 2018.
- Fentanyl was involved in 759 cases, approximately 58% of all overdose deaths for the year. Acetylfentanyl was involved in 419 cases, approximately 32% of all overdose deaths for the year.
- Jefferson County had the most resident overdose deaths of any county with 319 reported, an increase from 281 in 2018.
- The largest increase in resident overdose fatalities occurred in Grant County, where deaths increased by eight. Other counties with increases include Nelson, Oldham, and Pike County, which all increased by seven.
- The largest decrease of overdose deaths occurred in Fayette County, which had 22 fewer Kentucky resident fatalities in 2019 compared to the previous year. Other counties with a significant decrease in the number of overdose deaths include Kenton by 13 and Campbell by 11.
- Morphine was detected in 397 resident cases, an increase from 374 in 2018 and Monoacetylmorphine (heroin) was detected in 166 cases, a decrease from 188 in 2018.
- Alprazolam was detected in approximately 165 cases, a decrease from 214 in 2018.
- Gabapentin was detected in 292 cases, an increase from 255 cases in 2018.
- Methamphetamine was detected in 517 cases, an increase from 428 in 2018.
- Oxycodone was detected in 170 cases, an increase from 110 cases in 2018

<sup>1</sup> This report was compiled by the most current data supplied by KIPRC and will change as additional toxicology reports are submitted. The stated statistics are presented from toxicology of overdose deaths of Kentucky resident

**Data compiled by the Kentucky Office of Vital Statistics**

**Most resident, overdose deaths by county: (age adjusted, per capita)**

1) Estill	80.99
2) Grant	77.41
3) Boyd	64.56
4) Greenup	61.96
5) Anderson	50.96

**Most resident, heroin-related overdose deaths by county:**

1) Jefferson	61
2) Fayette	17
3) Bullitt	8
4) Pulaski	5
5) Warren	5

**Most resident, fentanyl-related deaths by county:**

1) Jefferson	204
2) Fayette	20
3) Madison	15
4) Kenton	14
5) Boone	12

**Most resident, methamphetamine- related overdose deaths by county:**

1) Jefferson	97
2) Fayette	20
3) Madison	15
4) Kenton	14
5) Boone	12

## Kentucky County Resident Age Adjusted Drug Overdose Mortality Rate

Kentucky County Resident Age-Adjusted Drug Overdose Mortality Rate		
County	Overdoses	Age-Adjusted Drug Overdose Mortality Rate
Kentucky	1316	30.95
Adair	<5	Suppressed
Allen	11	50.46
Anderson	11	50.96
Ballard	0	0.0
Barren	5	Suppressed
Bath	<5	Suppressed
Bell	9	Suppressed
Boone	34	26.58
Bourbon	9	Suppressed
Boyd	30	64.56
Boyle	8	Suppressed
Bracken	<5	Suppressed
Breathitt	6	Suppressed
Breckinridge	<5	Suppressed
Bullitt	29	36.64
Butler	<5	Suppressed
Caldwell	<5	Suppressed
Calloway	7	Suppressed
Campbell	36	37.97
Carlisle	0	0.0

Produced by the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center, as bona fide agent for the Kentucky Department for Public Health. July 2020. 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 NU17CE924971-01-01, 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 in accordance with 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.

County	Overdoses	Age-Adjusted Drug Overdose Mortality Rate
Kentucky	1316	30.95
Carroll	5	Suppressed
Carter	7	Suppressed
Casey	6	Suppressed
Christian	7	Suppressed
Clark	15	44.81
Clay	8	Suppressed
Clinton	<5	Suppressed
Crittenden	0	0.0
Cumberland	0	0.0
Daviess	10	11.04
Edmonson	<5	Suppressed
Elliott	<5	Suppressed
Estill	11	80.99
Fayette	99	31.13
Fleming	<5	Suppressed
Floyd	13	37.12
Franklin	18	35.57
Fulton	<5	Suppressed
Gallatin	<5	Suppressed
Garrard	<5	Suppressed

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County	Overdoses	Age-Adjusted Drug Overdose Mortality Rate
Kentucky	1316	30.95
Grant	17	77.41
Graves	<5	Suppressed
Grayson	<5	Suppressed
Green	<5	Suppressed
Greenup	21	61.96
Hancock	<5	Suppressed
Hardin	22	20.95
Harlan	10	38.51
Harrison	7	Suppressed
Hart	<5	Suppressed
Henderson	0	0.0
Henry	5	Suppressed
Hickman	0	0.0
Hopkins	5	Suppressed
Jackson	<5	Suppressed
Jefferson	319	43.15
Jessamine	22	44.22
Johnson	<5	Suppressed
Kenton	78	47.49
Knott	7	Suppressed

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County	Overdoses	Age-Adjusted Drug Overdose Mortality Rate
Kentucky	1316	30.95
Knox	9	Suppressed
Larue	<5	Suppressed
Laurel	5	Suppressed
Lawrence	<5	Suppressed
Lee	8	Suppressed
Leslie	<5	Suppressed
Letcher	7	Suppressed
Lewis	<5	Suppressed
Lincoln	5	Suppressed
Livingston	<5	Suppressed
Logan	<5	Suppressed
Lyon	<5	Suppressed
Madison	53	62.32
Magoffin	<5	Suppressed
Marion	<5	Suppressed
Marshall	<5	Suppressed
Martin	6	Suppressed
Mason	<5	Suppressed
McCracken	12	19.66
McCreary	0	0.0

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County	Overdoses	Age-Adjusted Drug Overdose Mortality Rate
Kentucky	1316	30.95
McLean	<5	Suppressed
Meade	<5	Suppressed
Menifee	0	0.0
Mercer	5	Suppressed
Metcalfe	0	0.0
Monroe	<5	Suppressed
Montgomery	9	Suppressed
Morgan	<5	Suppressed
Muhlenberg	<5	Suppressed
Nelson	13	32.77
Nicholas	<5	Suppressed
Ohio	<5	Suppressed
Oldham	16	25.36
Owen	7	Suppressed
Owsley	<5	Suppressed
Pendleton	6	Suppressed
Perry	5	Suppressed
Pike	23	42.38
Powell	5	Suppressed
Pulaski	14	22.96

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County	Overdoses	Age-Adjusted Drug Overdose Mortality Rate
Kentucky	1316	30.95
Robertson	<5	Suppressed
Rockcastle	<5	Suppressed
Rowan	<5	Suppressed
Russell	8	Suppressed
Scott	13	22.28
Shelby	14	30.31
Simpson	<5	Suppressed
Spencer	<5	Suppressed
Taylor	6	Suppressed
Todd	<5	Suppressed
Trigg	<5	Suppressed
Trimble	<5	Suppressed
Union	<5	Suppressed
Warren	21	17.92
Washington	<5	Suppressed
Wayne	<5	Suppressed
Webster	0	0.0
Whitley	8	Suppressed
Wolfe	<5	Suppressed
Woodford	9	Suppressed

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# Kentucky County Resident Drug Overdose Deaths by Age

Table 2: Resident Drug Overdose Deaths by Age, 2017–2019

Count of Kentucky Drug Overdose Deaths by Age Group			
Age	2017	2018	2019
5-14	<5	0	<5
15-24	84	79	67
25-34	372	314	298
35-44	422	335	366
45-54	371	288	325
55-64	184	194	198
65-74	33	31	45
75-84	8	7	14
85+	<5	<5	<5

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# Kentucky County Resident Drug Overdose Deaths by Race

**Table 3: Resident Drug Overdose Deaths by Race, 2017–2019**

Count of Kentucky Drug Overdose Deaths by Race			
Race	2017	2018	2019
<b>Black</b>	91	77	105
<b>Other</b>	14	22	20
<b>White</b>	1372	1151	1191

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## Frequency of Substances Found in Resident Drug Overdose Decedent Toxicology Testing, 2019

Table 4: Frequency of Substances Found in Resident Drug Overdose Decedent Toxicology Testing, 2019

Substance	Frequency
FENTANYL	759
4-ANPP	544
METHAMPHETAMINE	517
ACETYLFENTANYL	419
AMPHETAMINE	415
MORPHINE	397
THC	302
GABAPENTIN	292
ETHANOL	197
COCAINE	181
OXYCODONE	170
HEROIN	166
ALPRAZOLAM	165
CODEINE	148
HYDROCODONE	144
CLONAZEPAM	137
HYDROMORPHONE	111
OXYMORPHONE	106
NORDIAZEPAM	88
BUPRENORPHINE	78
OXAZEPAM	75
TEMAZEPAM	64
DIAZEPAM	59
TRAMADOL	59
METHOXYACETYLFENTANYL	48
METHADONE	39
LORAZEPAM	28
COTININE	27
CAFFEINE	21
NICOTINE	20

Substance	Frequency
BUTYRYLFENTANYL	19
DRUG CLASS ONLY	17
DIPHENHYDRAMINE	14
ACETAMINOPHEN	13
HYDROXYZINE	10
PSEUDOEPHEDRINE	9
FLUOXETINE	8
CITALOPRAM	7
NALOXONE	7
QUETIAPINE	7
VENLAFAXINE	7
CARFENTANIL	6
CETIRIZINE	6
BUPROPION	5
TETRAHYDROFURANFENTANYL	5
AMLODIPINE	<5
CHLOROPHENYLPIPERAZINE	<5
IBUPROFEN	<5
LAMOTRIGINE	<5
MIRTAZAPINE	<5
SALICYLATES	<5
SERTRALINE	<5
AMIODARONE	<5
BACLOFEN	<5
CYCLOBENZAPRINE	<5
CYCLOPROPYLFENTANYL	<5
DEXTROMETHORPHAN	<5
DULOXETINE	<5
MDMA	<5
METHANOL	<5
METOPROLOL	<5



Substance	Frequency
NORTRIPTYLINE	<5
ACETONE	<5
AMITRIPTYLINE	<5
BENZTROPINE	<5
BUSPIRONE	<5
CHLORDIAZEPOXIDE	<5
DOXEPIN	<5
DOXYLAMINE	<5
GUAIFENESIN	<5
ISOPROPANOL	<5
NIFEDIPINE	<5
PAROXETINE	<5
PROMETHAZINE	<5
TOPIRAMATE	<5
TRAZODONE	<5
ARIPIRAZOLE	<5
AZITHROMYCIN	<5
BUTALBITAL	<5
CARBOXYHEMOGLOBIN	<5
DIHYDROCODEINE	<5
LEVETIRACETAM	<5
LOPERAMIDE	<5
MEPROBAMATE	<5
METHOCARBAMOL	<5
METOCLOPRAMIDE	<5
MEXILETINE	<5
MIDAZOLAM	<5
MITRAGYNINE	<5
NAPROXEN	<5
OTHER	<5
OXCARBAZEPINE	<5

Substance	Frequency
<b>PARA-FLUOROBUTYRYLFENTANYL</b>	<5
<b>PHENOBARBITAL</b>	<5
<b>TIZANADINE</b>	<5
<b>U47700</b>	<5
<b>VERAPAMIL</b>	<5
<b>WARFARIN</b>	<5
<b>ZIPRASIDONE</b>	<5
<b>ZOLPIDEM</b>	<5

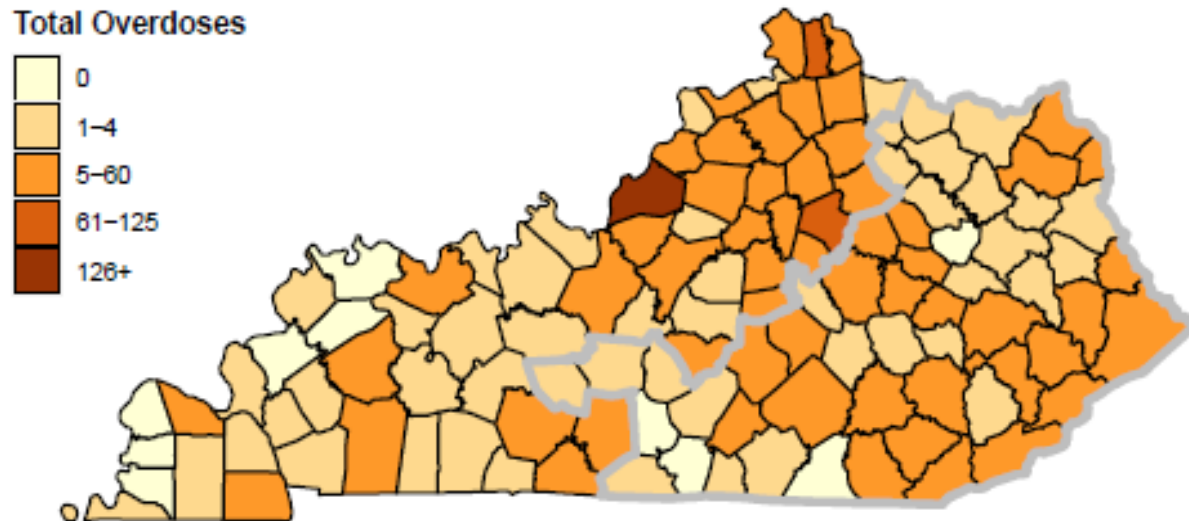
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## Count of Drug Overdose Deaths by County of Residence, 2019

Gray line denotes Appalachian Counties

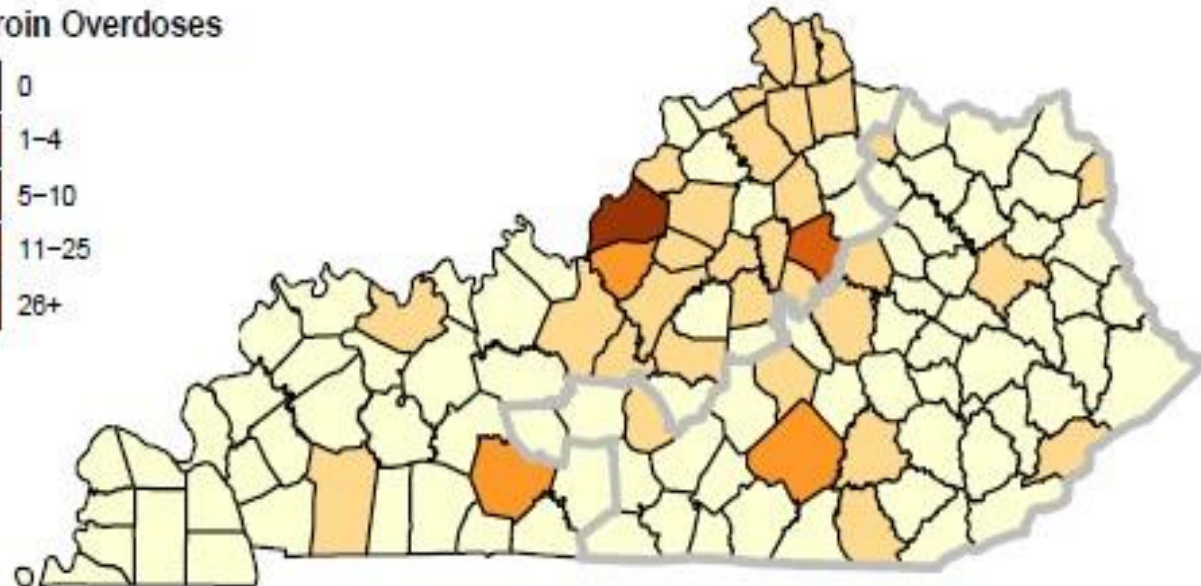
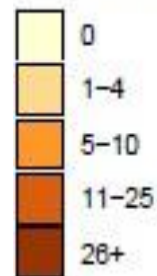


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## Count of Heroin Overdose Deaths by County of Residence, 2019

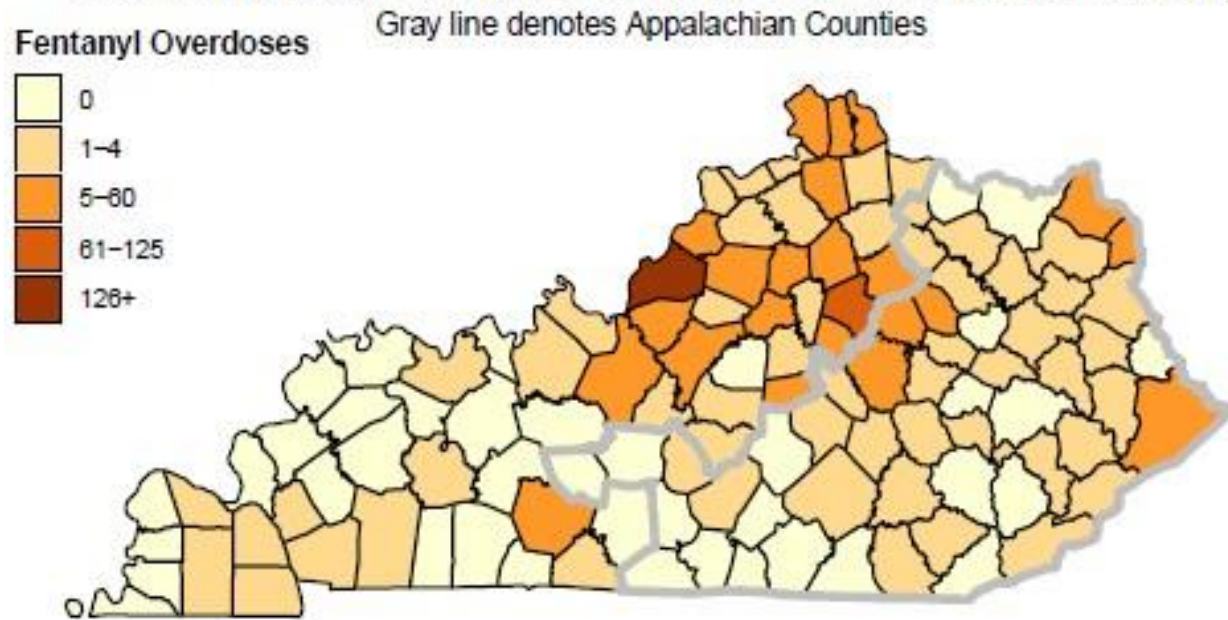
Gray line denotes Appalachian Counties

### Heroin Overdoses



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## Count of Fentanyl Overdose Deaths by County of Residence, 2019

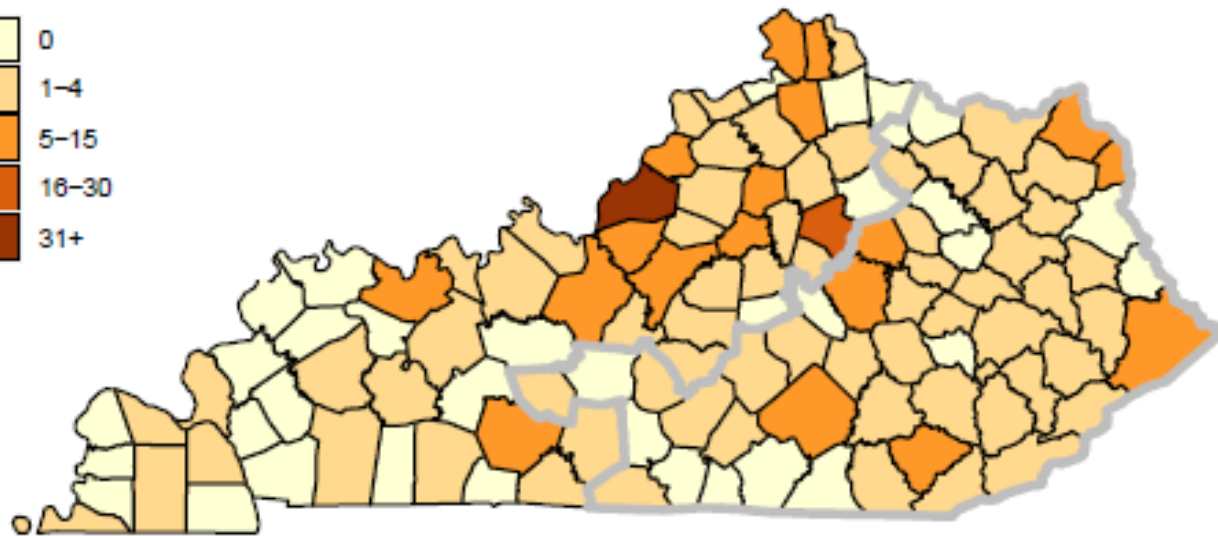
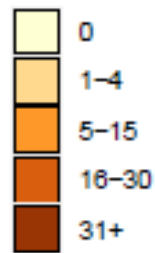


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## Count of Methamphetamine Overdose Deaths by County of Residence, 2019

Methamphetamine  
Overdoses

Gray line denotes Appalachian Counties



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