



Enhanced Safety Guidance: Intersect of Child Welfare and Substance Use

DEVELOPED BY: CT DCF OFFICE OF SUBSTANCE USE, RECOVERY &
INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

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CHILD WELFARE RESPONSE TO ACCIDENTAL POISONINGS

*CT DCF processes featured on NBC Nightly News w/ Lester Holt,
Feb 2023 Kate Snow, Correspondent*

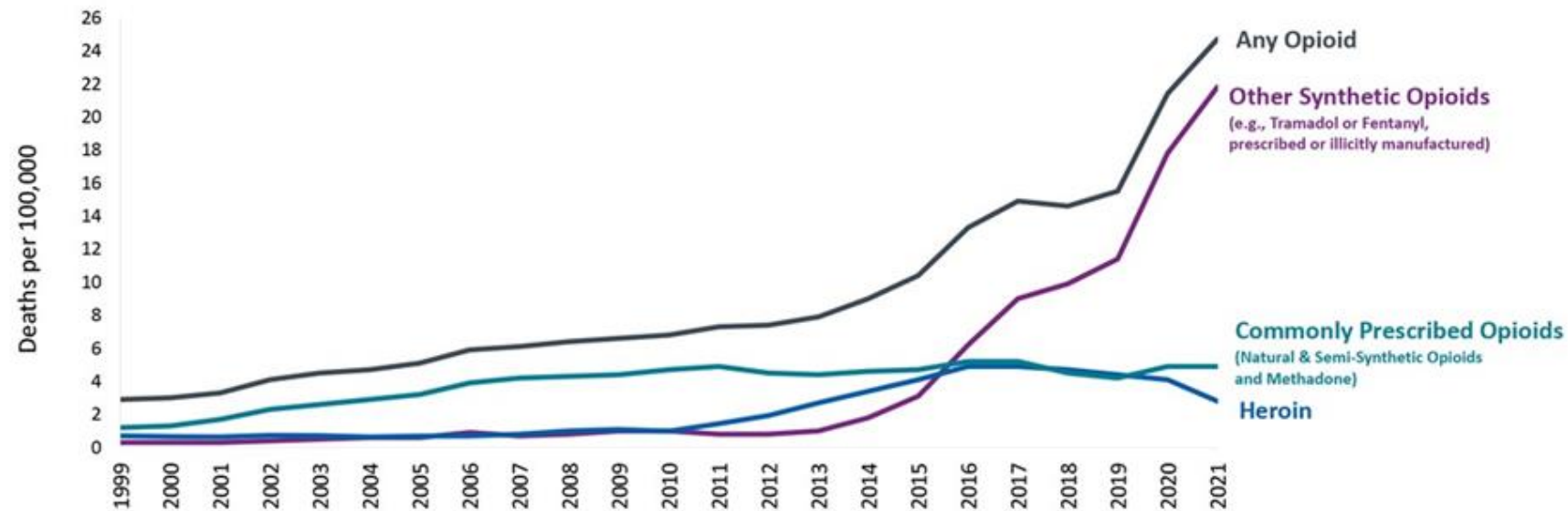
“ I knew I had
to stop for
the sake of
my children. ”

–Tessa

National and Connecticut Data



Three Waves of Opioid Overdose Deaths

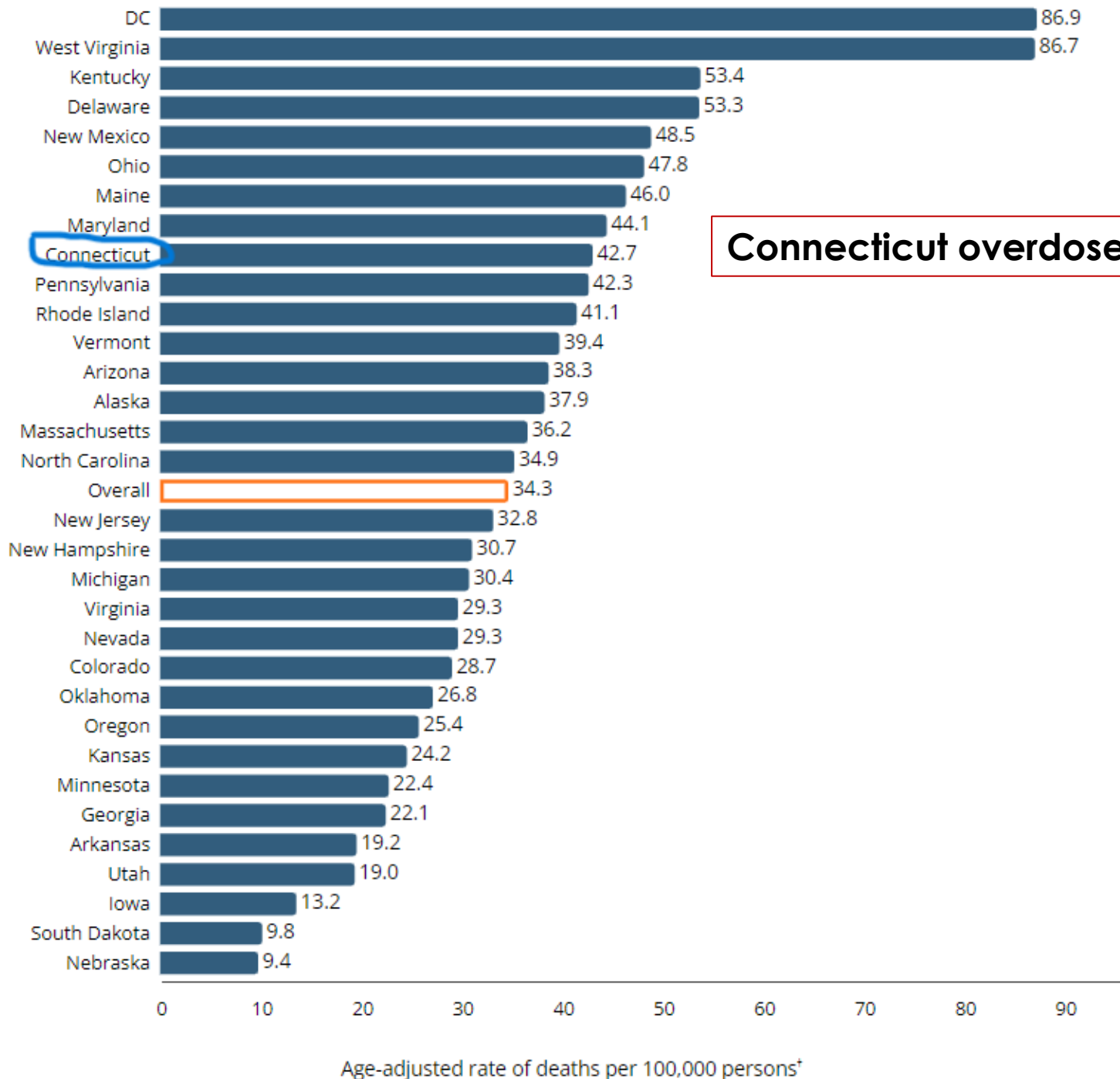


Wave 1: Rise in Prescription Opioid Overdose Deaths Started in the 1990s

Wave 2: Rise in Heroin Overdose Deaths Started in 2010

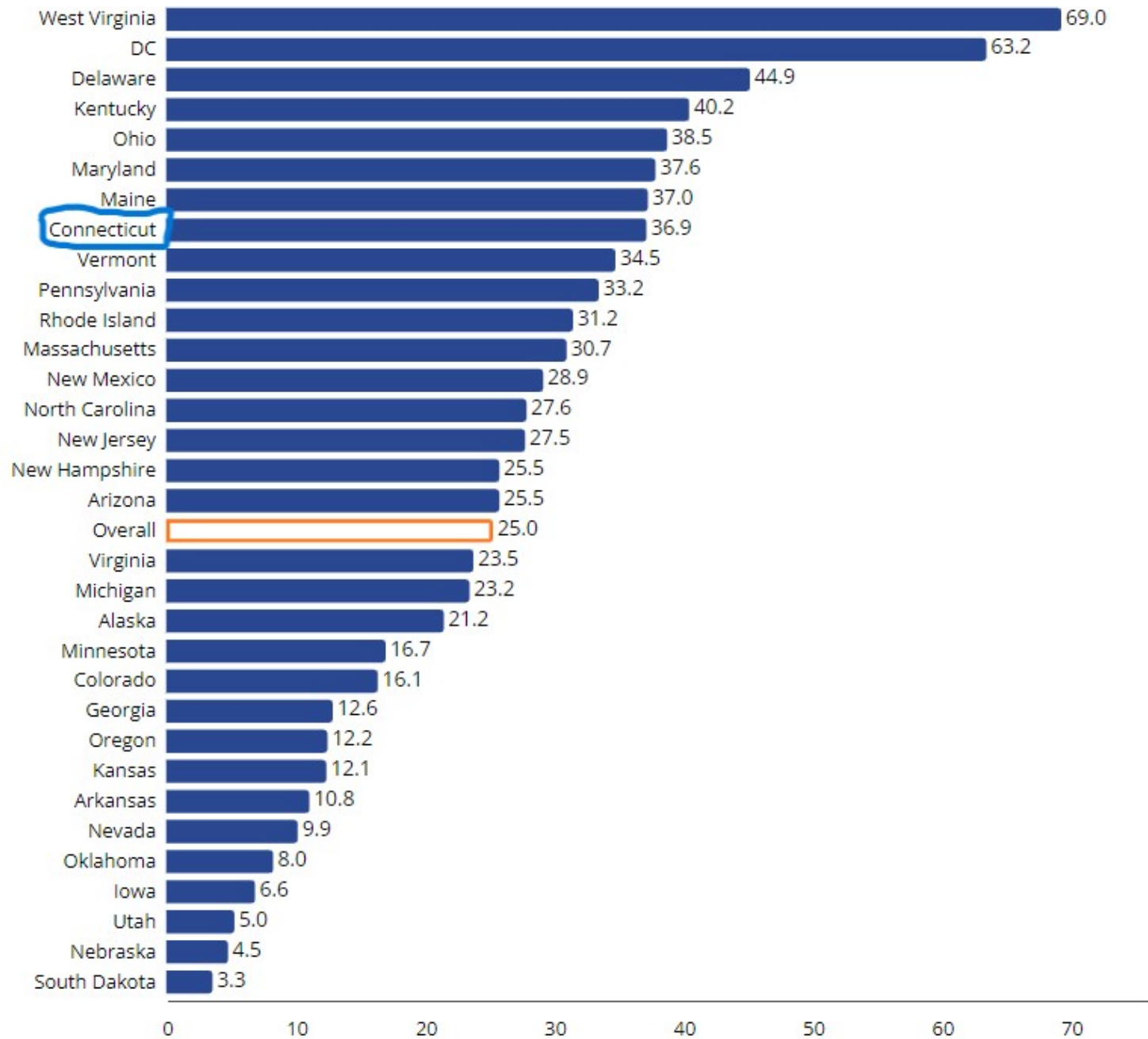
Wave 3: Rise in Synthetic Opioid Overdose Deaths Started in 2013

SOURCE: National Vital Statistics System Mortality File.



Connecticut overdose deaths in 2021: 1530.

Overdose death rates,
Connecticut vs. US,
all drugs,
CDC, 2021

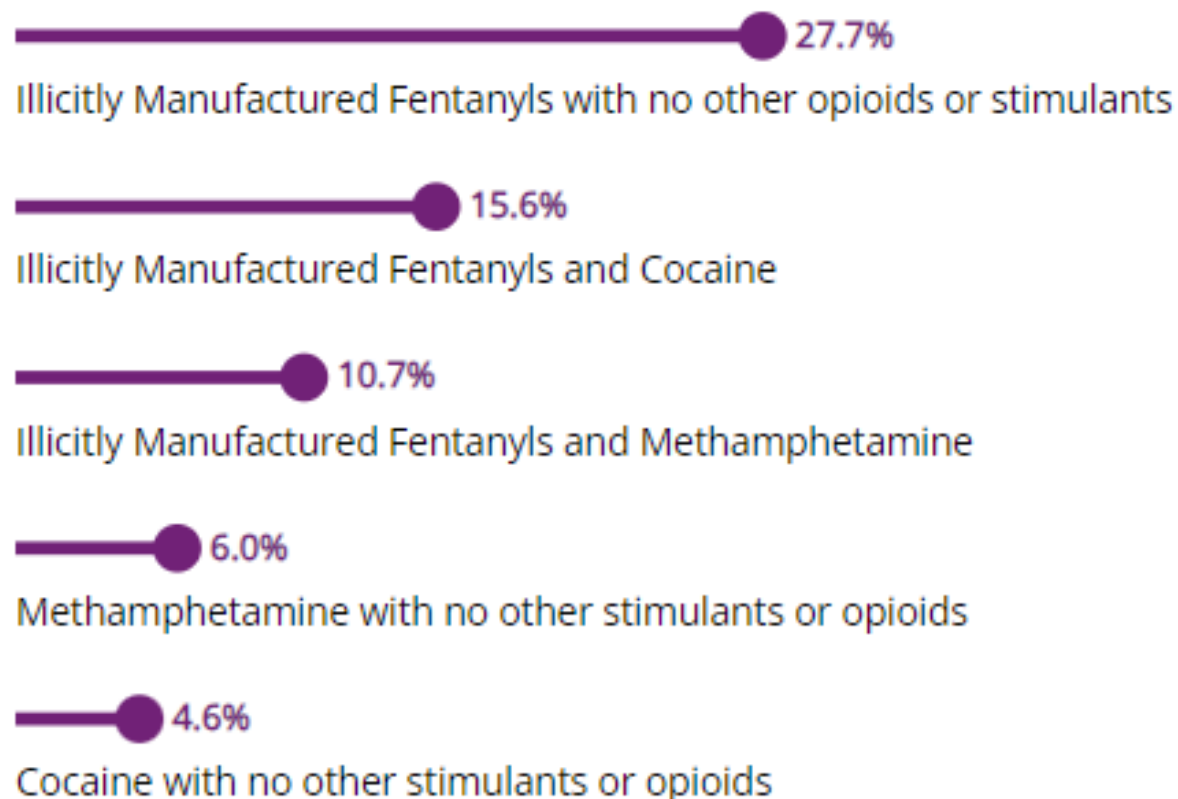


Age-adjusted rate of deaths per 100,000 persons†

**Overdose death rates,
Connecticut vs. US,
illegally-manufactured
fentanyl,
CDC, 2021**

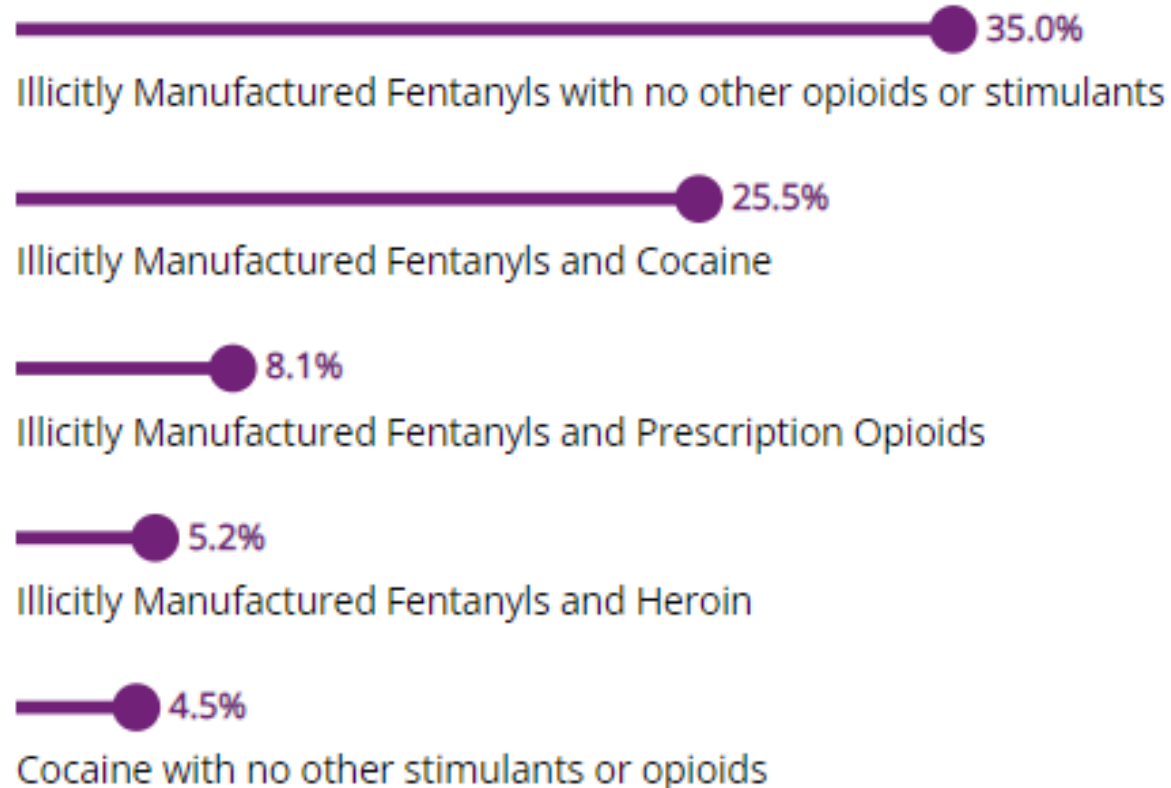
Percentages of overdose deaths involving the most common opioids and stimulants alone or in combination^g in 2021, Overall (32 jurisdictions)

The five most frequently occurring opioids and stimulants, alone or in combination, accounted for 64.6% of overdose deaths. The specific breakdown is represented below.



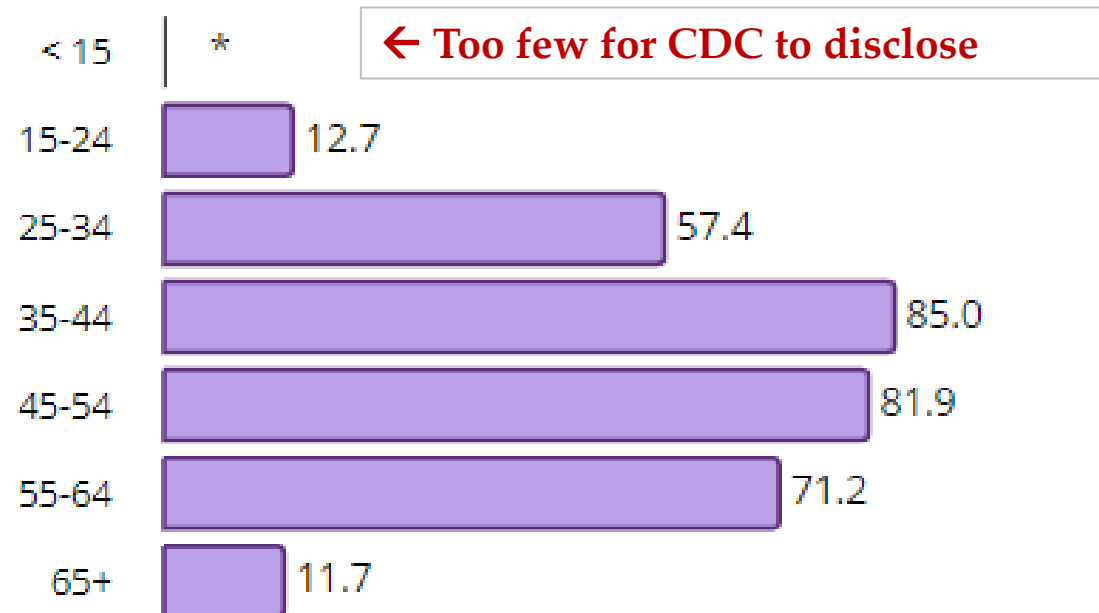
Percentages of overdose deaths involving the most common opioids and stimulants alone or in combination⁸ in 2021, *Connecticut*

The five most frequently occurring opioids and stimulants, alone or in combination, accounted for 78.2% of overdose deaths. The specific breakdown is represented below.



Who died of a drug overdose? (Connecticut, 2021)

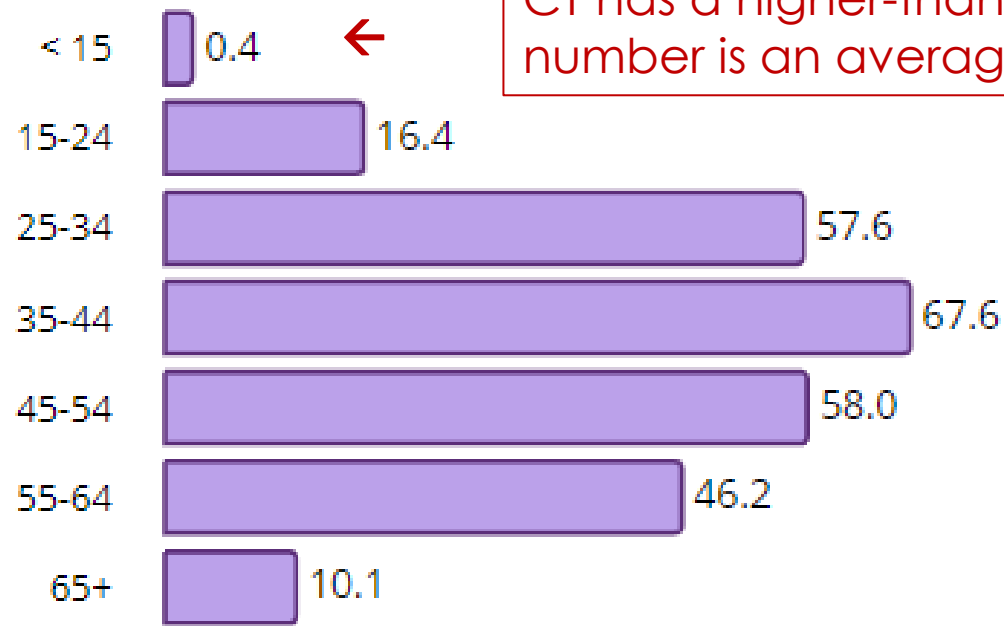
By Age (In Years)



- Rate per 100,000 population
- CDC data

Who died of a drug overdose? (32 Reporting Areas, 2021)

By Age (In Years)



If we apply this rate to Connecticut, that's 1-2 deaths per year of children under 15. It may be higher, since CT has a higher-than-average rate of opioid use. This number is an average and will vary year to year.

- Rate per 100,000 population
- CDC data

What were the circumstancesⁱ surrounding overdose deaths in 2021, *Connecticut*?

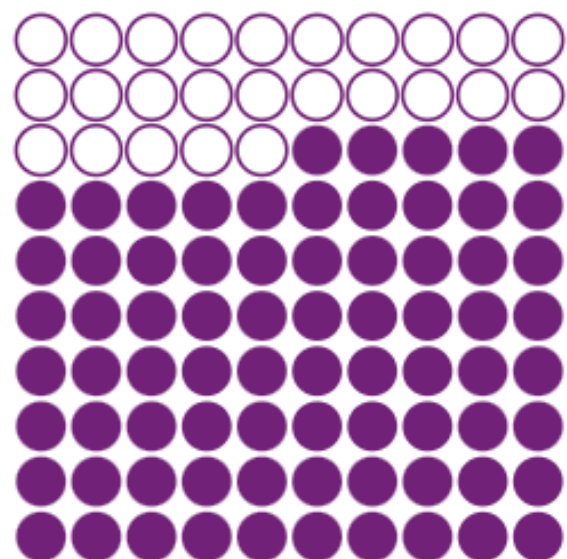
Connecticut

2021

11

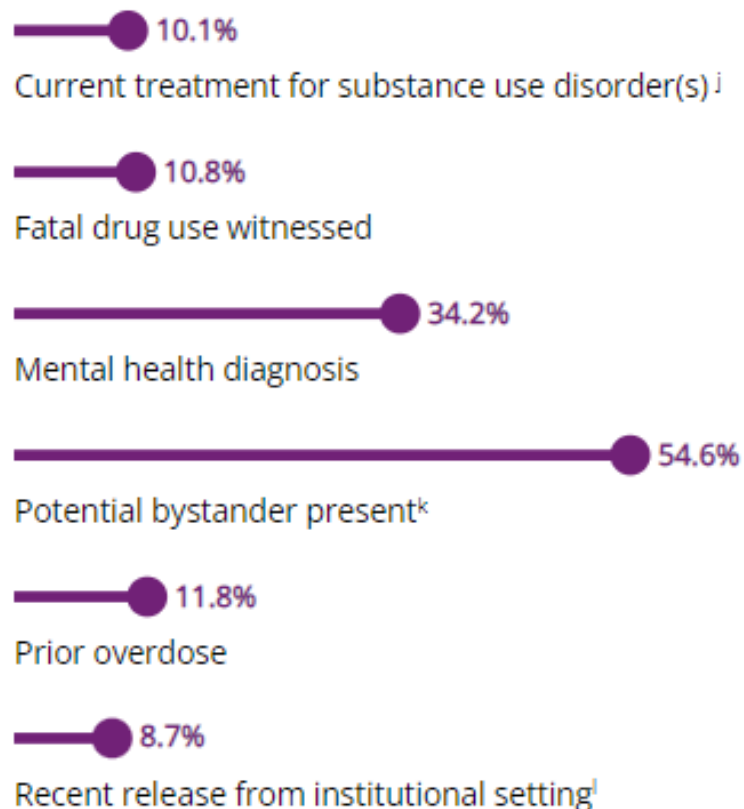
Potential opportunities for intervention^a in 2021, *Connecticut*

Potential opportunities for intervention include linkage to care or life-saving actions at the time of the overdose.



75.7%

of drug overdose deaths had at least one potential opportunity for intervention



Circumstance percentages are only among decedents with an available medical examiner or coroner report

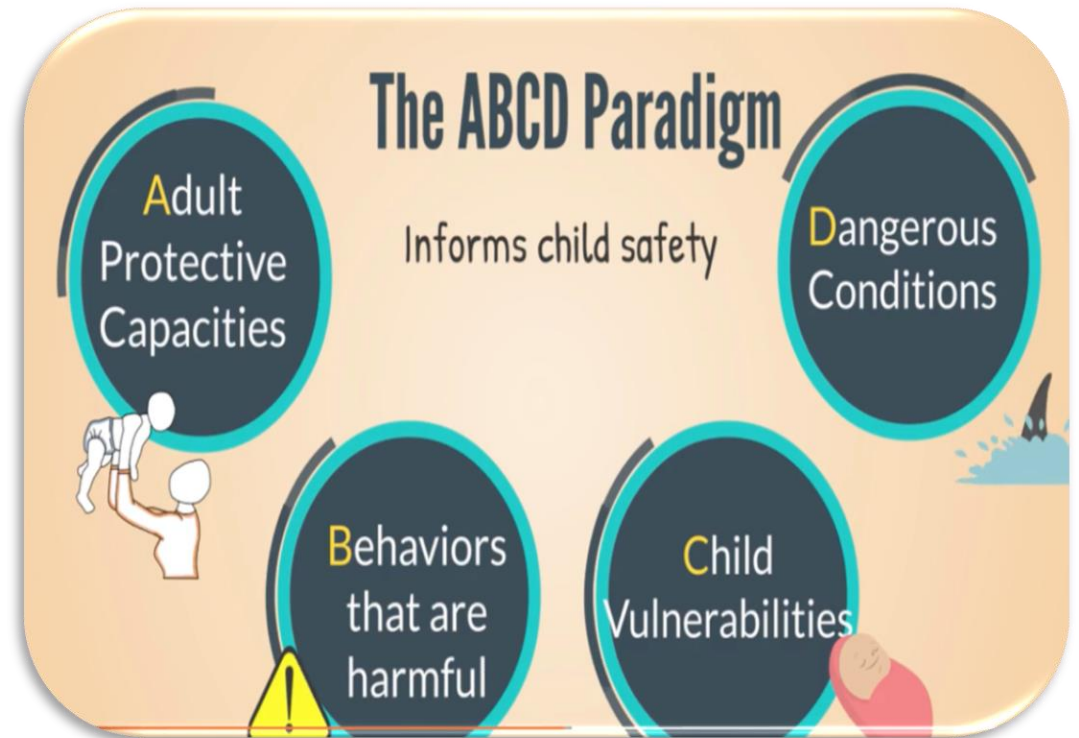
Stakeholder discussion

- ▶ In October 2022, the **Department of Children and Families** (DCF) issued temporary guidance in cases with Fentanyl concerns.
- ▶ CT DCF Senior Advisory Committee was formed
- ▶ Partnership and consultation with the **Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services** (DMHAS) and **CT Harm Reduction Alliance** (CTHRA)
- ▶ Feedback from other Child Welfare jurisdictions across the country facilitated by **National Center of Substance Abuse and Child Welfare** (NCSACW)



Memorandum Overview

- ▶ In response to [parental] overdose deaths, CT DCF continues to focus on early identification of substance use in the home and supporting individuals in accessing treatment quickly to assist in ensuring children's safety.
- ▶ Effective October 2023, the UNCOPE screening tool shall be used at intake during the initial home visit and as needed during the pendency of the case to assess for possible substance use concerns.
- ▶ The tool shall be used in conjunction with Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools and informed by the **ABCD Safety paradigm** to guide next steps.
- ▶ The tool shall be administered in a trauma-sensitive manner; using family-centered engagement.



NEW!

SCREENING RESOURCE AVAILABLE!



Check out the release of the highly anticipated
**Screening for Substance Use in Child
Welfare Using the UNCOPE!**

This short video depicts a child welfare worker administering the UNCOPE screening tool in a situation involving suspected substance use. Viewers will learn how to

- Incorporate this screening in their child welfare practice
- Use motivational interviewing and open-ended questions
- Reflect on responses
- Connect families to the services they need

Scan here to access
the video!



Screening Resource

<https://youtu.be/6B4Z65TQZp4>

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Skill Enhancement

34 training sessions for staff across 14 CT DC Area offices and Careline

Enhanced Skills Consist of:

- ▶ Stigma/Implicit bias
- ▶ Language Matters
- ▶ Motivational Interviewing
- ▶ UNCOPE Screening Tool
- ▶ Impact of substance use on children
- ▶ Implications on case practice
- ▶ Documentation
- ▶ Recognizing Family Recovery



WHAT'S NEXT?

- ▶ Ad hoc group to refine **metrics**
- ▶ Micro learning opportunities
- ▶ **Family Care Plan** training
- ▶ Making **Naloxone** available
- ▶ CT DCF working towards **Recovery Friendly Workplace**
- ▶ Continue tracking **child welfare trends** across the region and country.



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