

Fatal Unintentional and Undetermined Intent Drug Overdose Report

Key Findings About Drug Overdose Decedents, 2019 – February 2024*

- The preliminary data shows that as of 2nd week of February, there are 109 drug overdose deaths in 2024. Fentanyl- (83%) and fentanyl/xylazine- (32%) involved deaths are still a major threat and need for concern as seen in previous years.
- The current monthly report is based on confirmed fatal drug overdose cases from 2019 to January 2024. Data from 2023 and 2024 are preliminary and may change due to pending cases. The period of analysis includes January 2019 through January 2024.
- 2023* data overview:** As of December, there were 1,340 overdose-related deaths in 2023, with 111 in January, 127 in February, 107 in March, 117 in April, 129 in May, 107 in June, 116 in July, 113 in August, 116 in September, 92 in October, 109 in November and 96 in December. Approximately 84% of these deaths (N=1,119) involved fentanyl. Data are subject to change due to pending cases.
- Comparison between 2022-2023*:** There were 1,464 confirmed deaths for 2022. Based on preliminary data there are 1,340 overdose deaths in calendar year 2023*, representing a decrease of 124 deaths (8.5%) compared to 2022.
- Demographic data for 2023*:** Males had a higher mortality rate than females in 2023* (57.1 vs. 17.9 per 100,000 population, respectively). In 2023*, the mortality rate was highest (68.4 per 100,000 population) for the non-Hispanic Black population.
- Place of overdose in 2022 and 2023*:** Most of the decedents overdosed at a residence (either their own or someone else's) in 2022 (76.0%) and 2023* (70.2%).
- Fentanyl-involved drug overdose deaths:** The average percentage of fentanyl- or fentanyl analog-involved deaths was 85% for 2020 to 2023. Data for 2023 are subject to change due to pending cases.
- Xylazine, an animal tranquilizer, in drug overdose deaths:** The lethal xylazine/fentanyl combination, first identified in CT in March 2019, continued to be a problem. In preliminary 2023 data, there were 285 deaths (21.3%) involving xylazine and fentanyl. Prior years are as follows: 2020 (N=141; 10.2%), 2021 (N=298; 19.8%), and 2022 (N=354, 24.2%).
- New and emerging substances:** The Injury and Violence Surveillance Unit (IVSU) from the Department of Public Health (DPH) continues to monitor for other new emerging substances which include, but are not limited to, the designer benzodiazepine family, such as Bromazolam, and the Nitazene family of substances (novel synthetic opioids).

*Data subject to change due to pending cases.

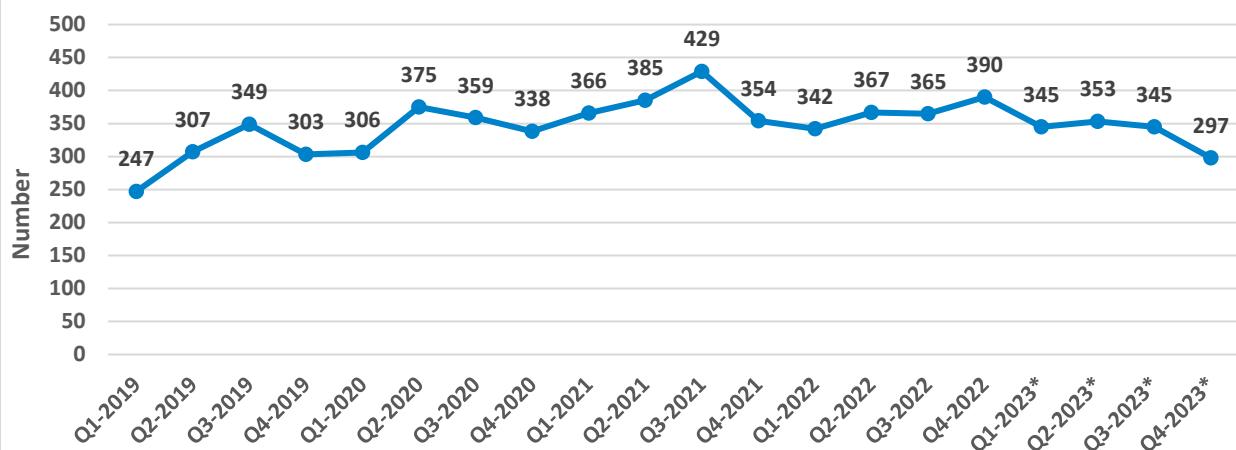
Updated on 3-28-2024; Data Source: Connecticut Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME), per CDC Overdose Data to Action for States grant guidelines for SUDORS data.

For substance use disorder information visit: <https://www.drugfreetct.org>.

For information on the CT DPH Opioids and Prescription Drug Overdose Prevention Program in the Office of Injury and Violence Prevention, visit: <https://www.ct.gov/dph/injuryprevention>.

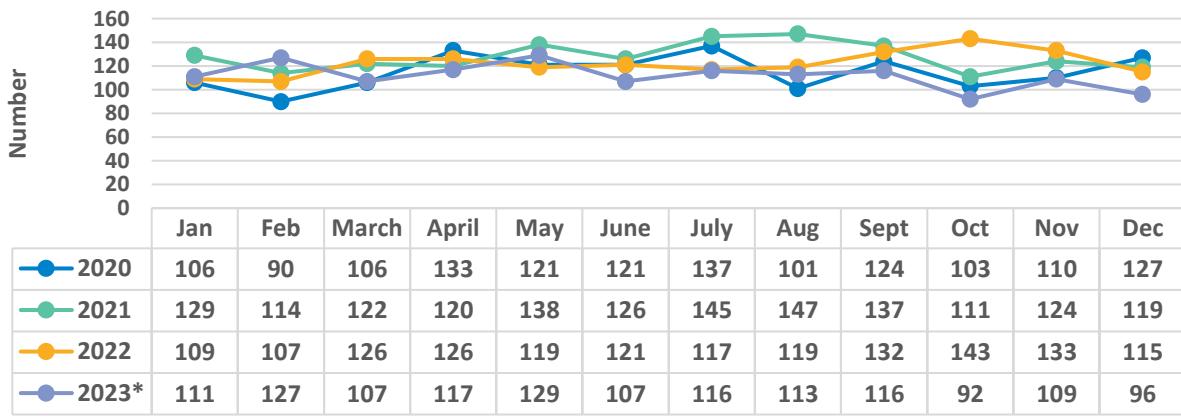
1: Number of Unintentional and Undetermined Intent Drug Overdose Deaths, Connecticut, 2019-December 2023*. Based on preliminary data, there is an 8.4% (N=123) decrease in drug overdose deaths in 2023 compared to the previous year of 2022. The charts below represent counts of confirmed drug overdose deaths by quarter (Figure 1a) and by month (Figure 1b). Quarterly drug overdose data (Figure 1a) show that for years 2019, 2020 and 2022, Quarter 1 had the lowest number of unintentional and undetermined intent drug overdose deaths within each specific year. In 2023, quarter 4 had the lowest number. Monthly data (Figure 1b) show that July and August of 2021 had the highest number of deaths. In 2022, the month of October had the highest number of deaths. Overall, in 2023 the drug overdose death numbers are trending lower compared to previous years. Data for 2023 may change due to the processing of pending cases.

Figure 1a: Number of Unintentional and Undetermined Intent Drug Overdose Deaths, by Quarter, Connecticut, 2019-2023*



*Data subject to change

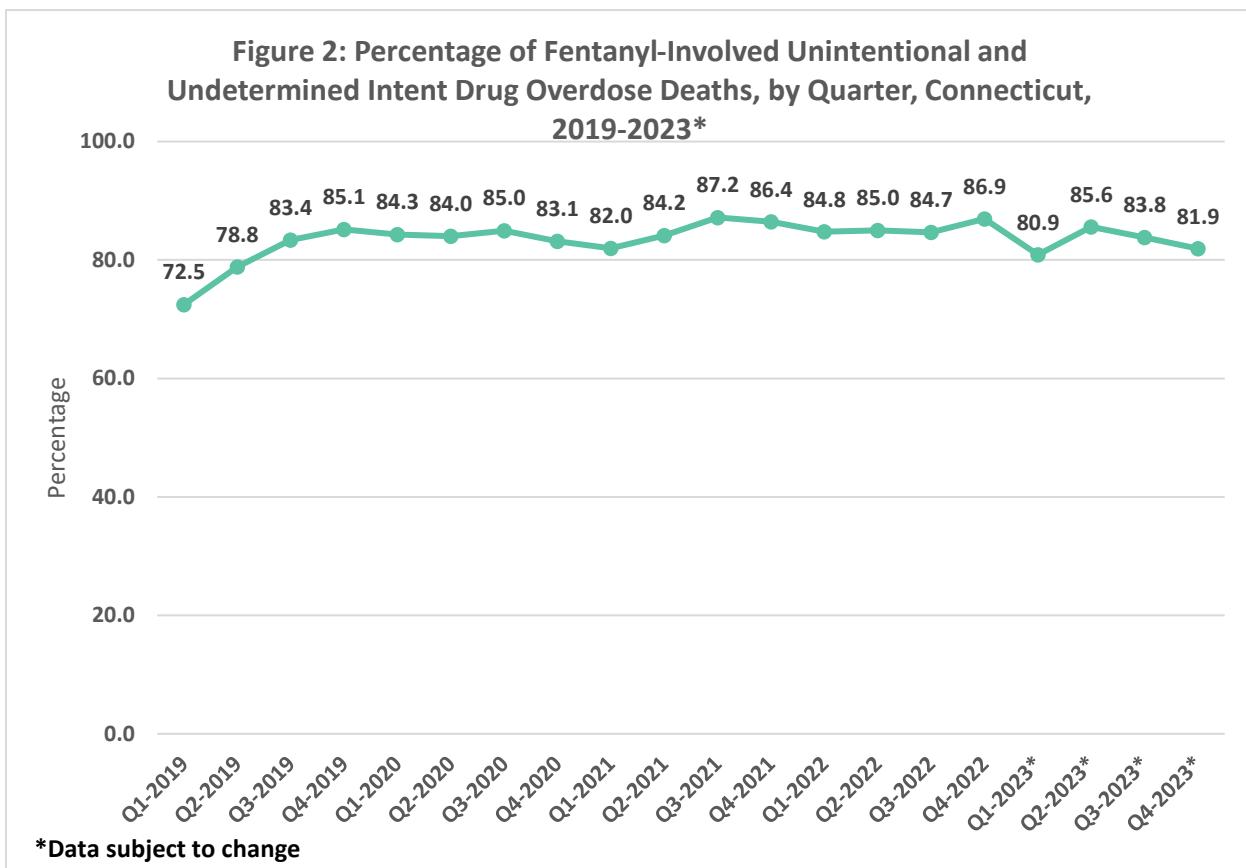
Figure 1b: Number of Unintentional and Undetermined intent Drug Overdose Deaths, by Month, Connecticut, 2020-December 2023*



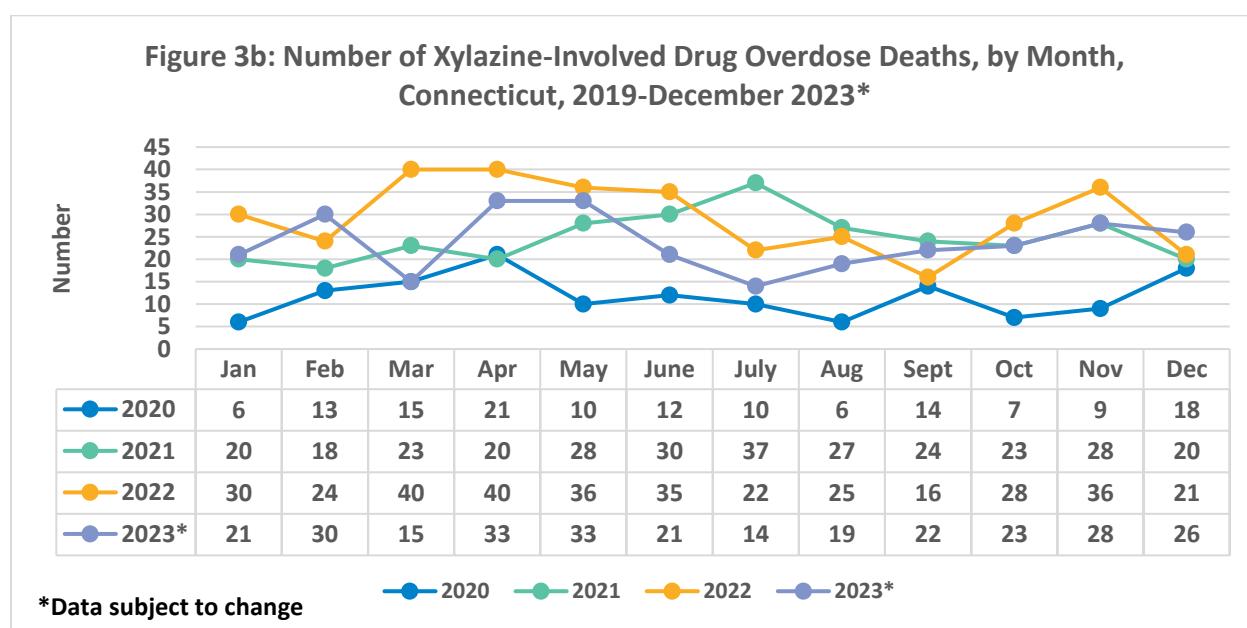
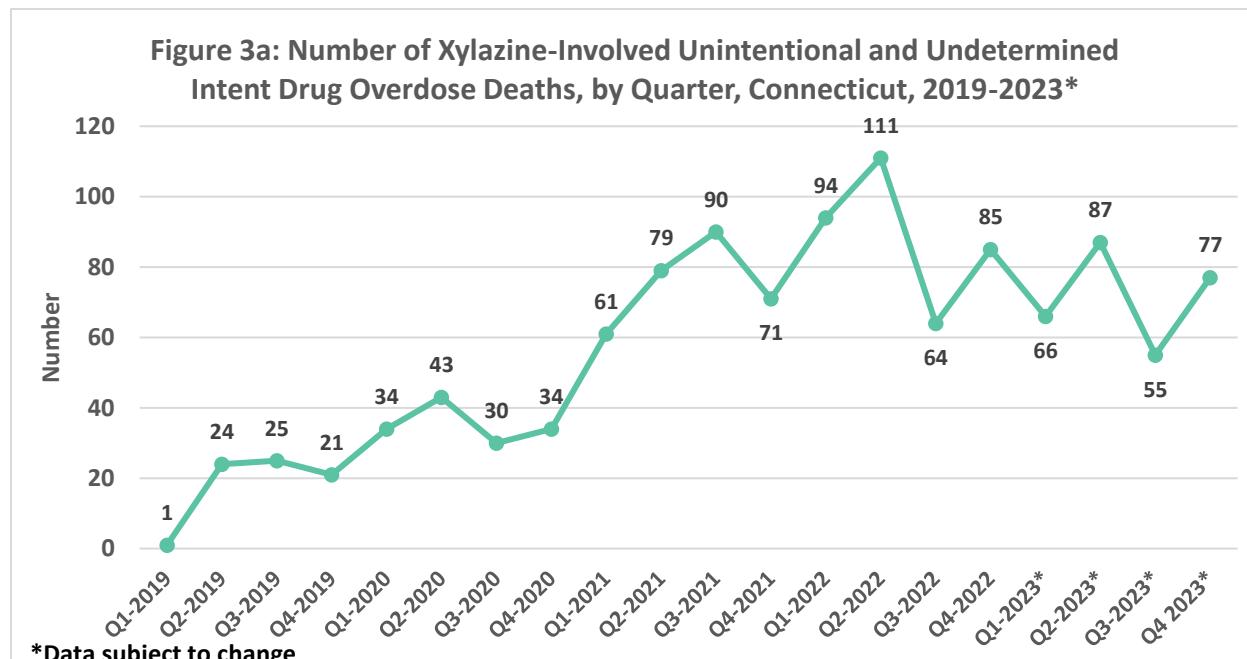
*Data subject to change

—●— 2020 —●— 2021 —●— 2022 —●— 2023*

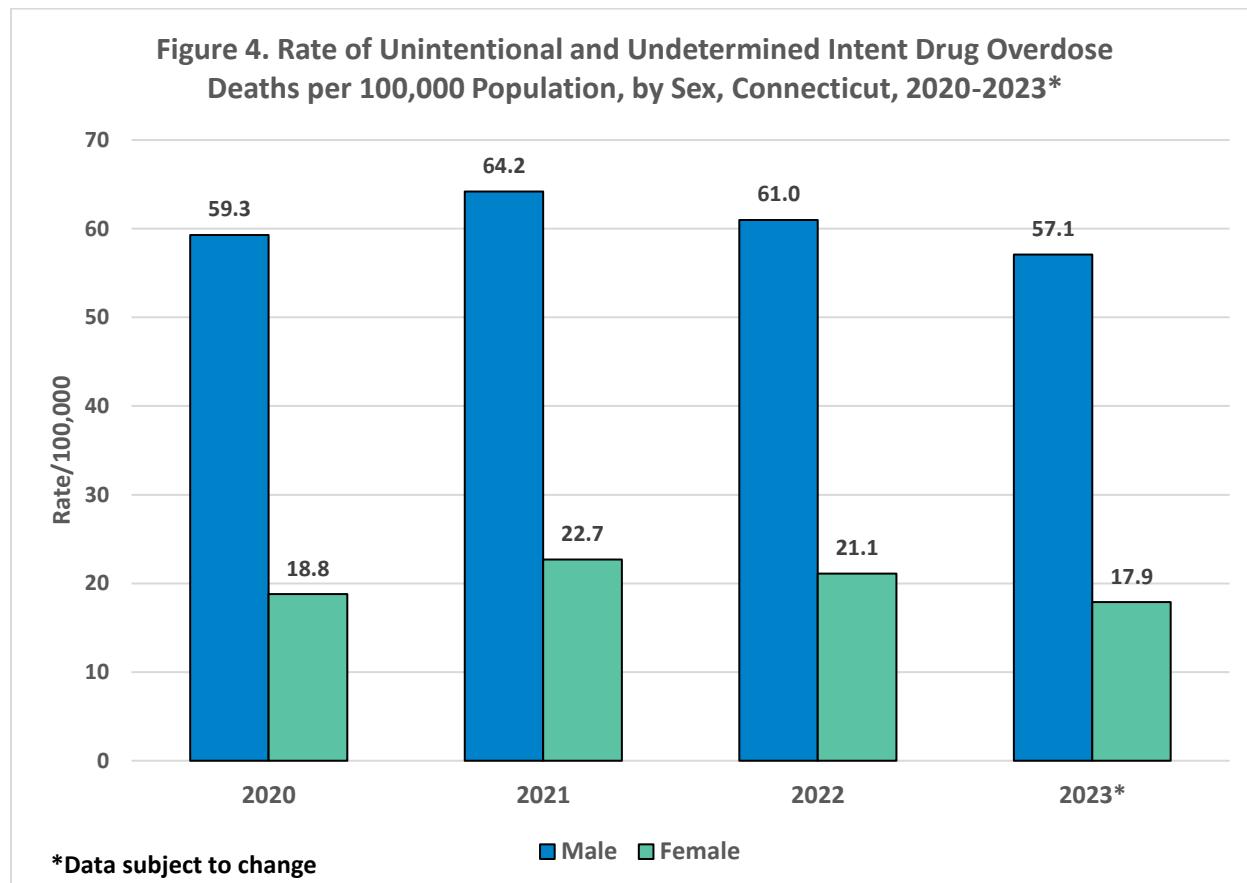
2: Percentage of Fentanyl-Involved Unintentional and Undetermined Intent Drug Overdose Deaths, by Quarter, Connecticut, 2019-2023*. The average percentage of fentanyl-involved deaths remained high between 2019 and 2023*. The chart below represents the percentage of fentanyl-involved drug overdose deaths by Quarter (Figure 2). The average percentage of fentanyl- or fentanyl analog-involved deaths was 80% for 2019 and subsequently increased to 85% in 2020, 2021, 2022. In 2023, 84% of the deaths involved fentanyl but this data may change due to the processing of pending cases.



3: Number of Xylazine-Involved Unintentional and Undetermined Intent Drug Overdose Deaths, Connecticut, 2019-December 2023*. Xylazine, a veterinary sedative not intended for human use is added to illicit drugs for an enhanced effect. In Connecticut, xylazine first emerged as a novel adulterant in fatal drug overdoses in March 2019. The number of xylazine-involved deaths has increased each year between 2019 and 2023*. The charts below represent the number of xylazine-involved drug overdose deaths by quarter (Figure 3a) and by month (Figure 3b). Overall, 2023 shows a lower monthly trend compared to 2022, although 2023 data are subject to change due to pending cases.



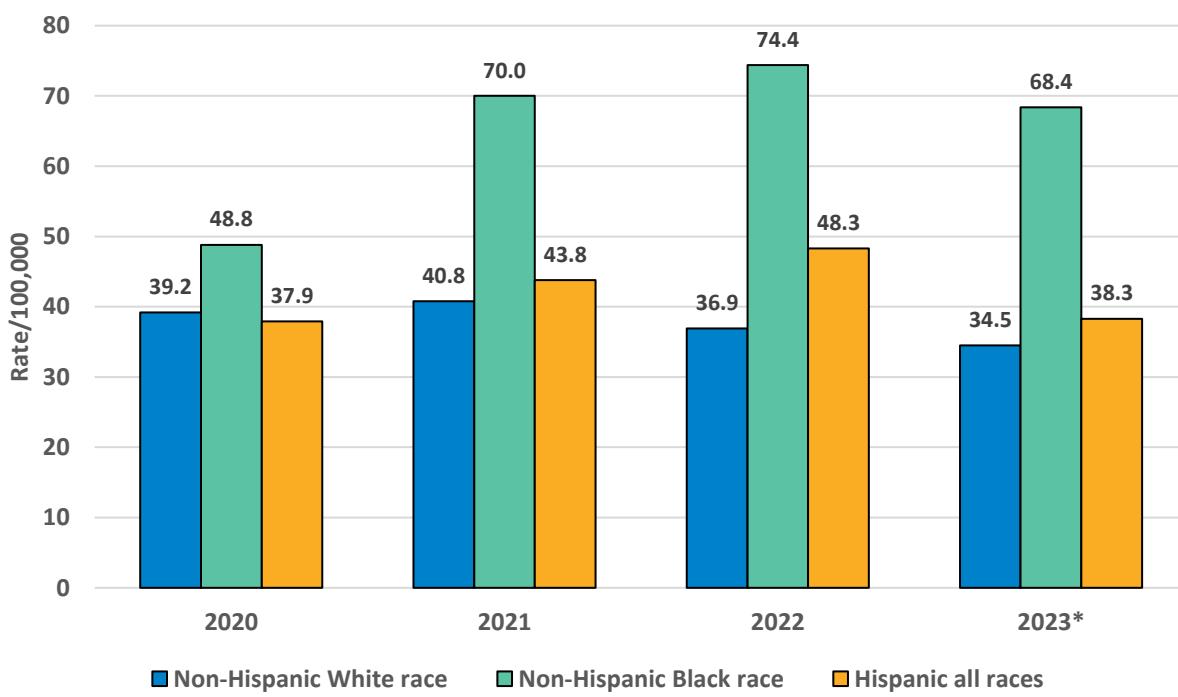
4: Drug overdose death rates were higher in males compared to females during 2020 through 2023*. Rates of unintentional and undetermined intent drug overdose-related deaths were consistently higher among males when compared to females. The bar chart below (Figure 4) represents the rates of unintentional and undetermined intent drug overdose death by sex (rate per 100,000 sex-specific population) during 2020 through 2023*. As per preliminary data for 2023, drug overdose death rates in males and females are trending lower compared to the previous years but this data may change due to the processing of pending cases.



5: Drug overdose death rates were higher among the non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic populations compared to the non-Hispanic White population.

Between 2021 to 2023*, the unintentional and undetermined drug overdose mortality rate increased substantially in the non-Hispanic Black populations compared to 2020. Hispanic population has a lower death rate in 2023 compared to the previous years of 2021 and 2022. The bar chart below (Figure 5) represents the unintentional and undetermined intent drug overdose mortality rate (per race/ethnicity specific 100,000 population) in Connecticut, by race/ethnicity for years 2020-2023*. Overall, year 2023 data shows that rates have decreased across all race/ethnicity populations compared to the previous years, 2021 and 2022, but this data may change due to the processing of pending cases.

Figure 5: Rate of Unintentional and Undetermined Intent Drug Overdose Deaths per 100,000 Population, by Race/Ethnicity, Connecticut, 2020-2023*



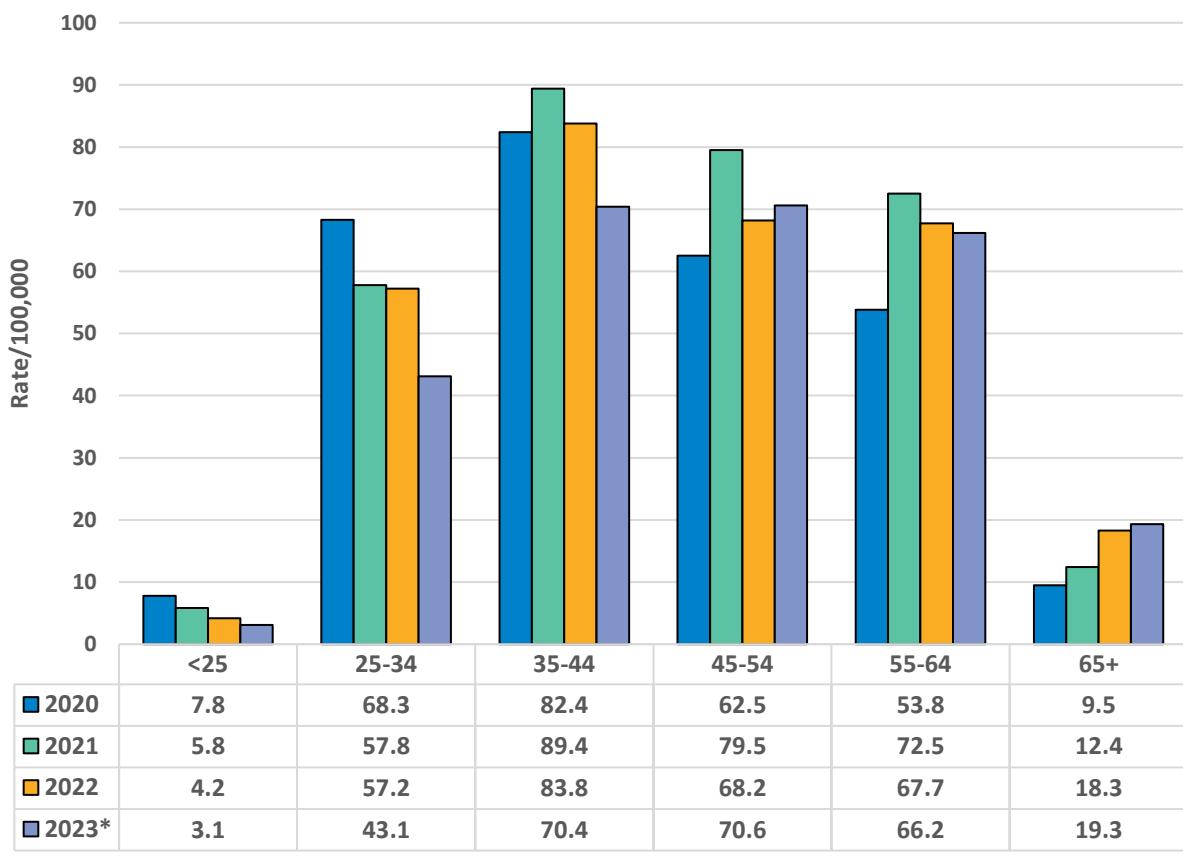
*Year 2023 data are preliminary and are subject to change.

Note: Hispanic ethnicity includes all races.

6: Drug overdose death rates were highest in the 35–44- and 45-54-year-old age groups in Connecticut, 2020-2023*.

Drug overdose death rates were calculated per 100,000 age-specific population and were highest among the middle-aged population, specifically the 35–44, 45–54 and 55–64-year-old age groups in 2020-2023*. There is an increasing trend in drug overdose death rate from 2020 through 2023* for the 65+ year-old age group. The chart below (Figure 6) represents the unintentional and undetermined intent drug overdose mortality rate in Connecticut, by age group, by year for 2020-2023*. Year 2023 data are subject to change due to the processing of pending cases.

Figure 6: Rate of Unintentional and Undetermined Intent Drug Overdose Deaths per 100,000 Population, by Age Group, Connecticut, 2020-2023*

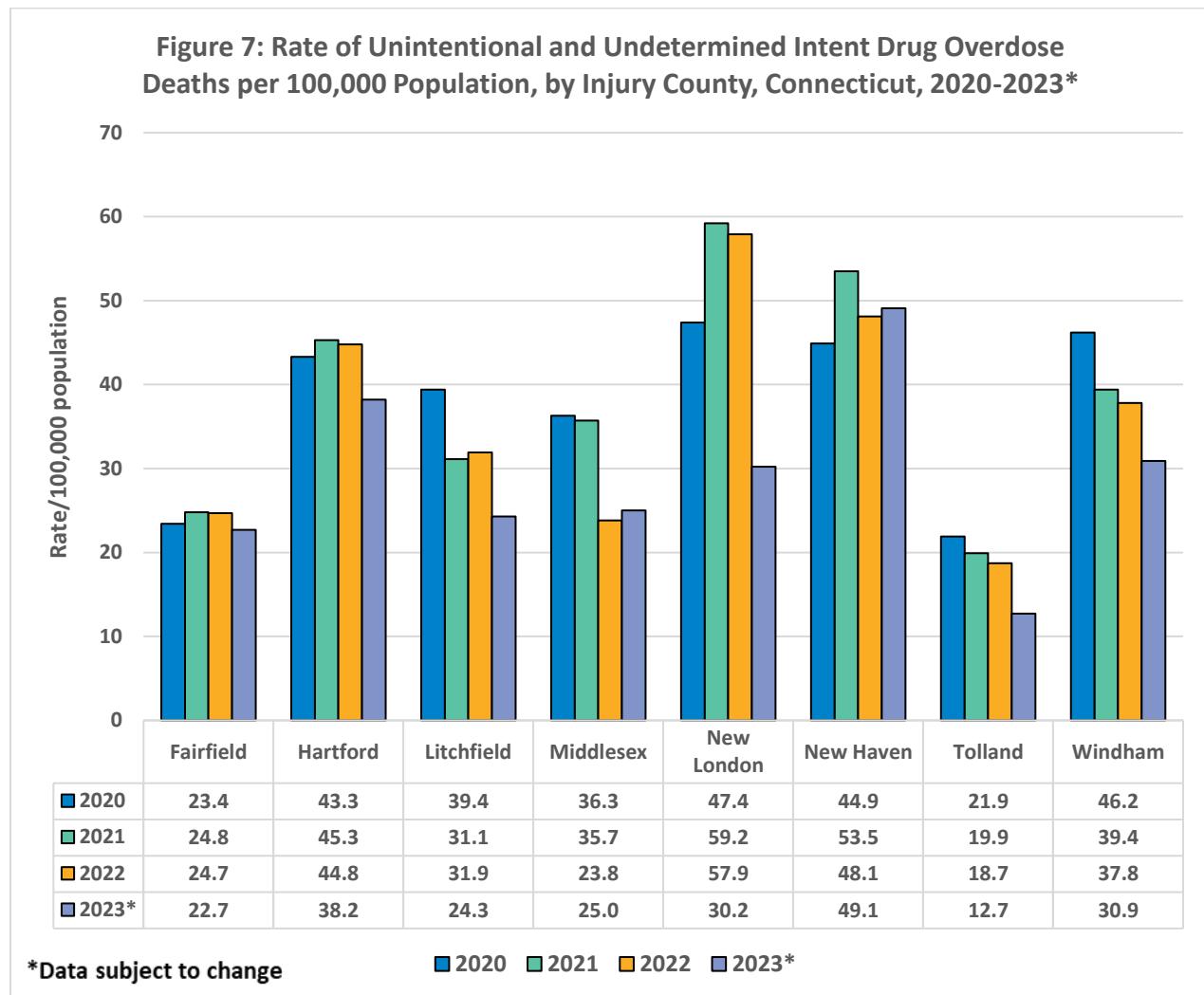


*Data subject to change

■ 2020 ■ 2021 ■ 2022 ■ 2023*

7: Drug overdose death rates in Connecticut, by County of Injury, 2020-2023*

The chart below (Figure 7) represents the unintentional and undetermined intent drug overdose mortality rate in Connecticut, by injury county, for 2020-2023*. The data show that there is a decreasing trend in drug overdose death rates for Fairfield, Hartford, Litchfield, New London, Tolland, and Windham counties in 2023 compared to 2022, whereas there is a slight increase seen for Middlesex and New Haven Counties. Year 2023 data are preliminary and may change due the processing of pending cases.

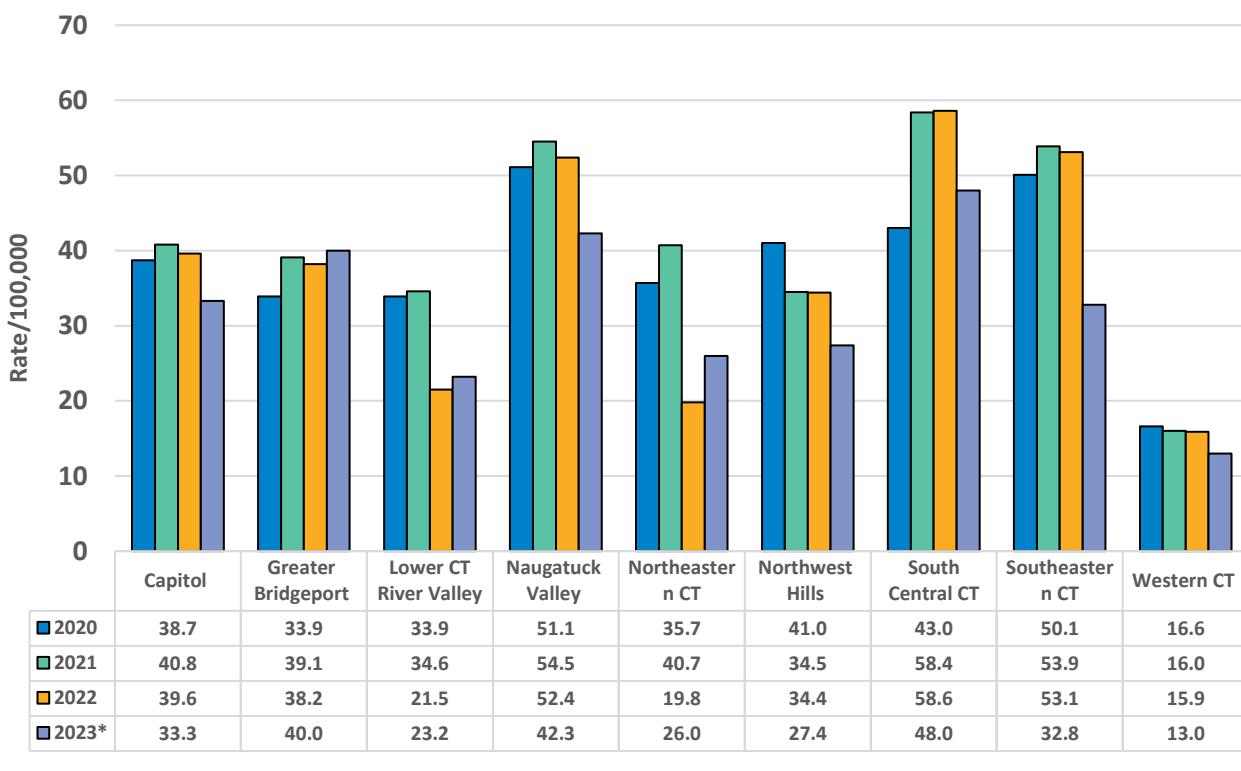


8: Drug overdose death rates in Connecticut, by injury County Equivalent Planning Regions (CEPRs), 2020-2023*:

As shown in the chart below (Figure 8), the South-Central Connecticut CEPR (which includes major cities/towns such as New Haven, West Haven, and Meriden) had the highest drug overdose death rate followed by the Naugatuck Valley CEPR (which includes major cities/towns such as Waterbury and Bristol). The lowest drug overdose death rates were seen in the Western Connecticut CEPR (which includes major cities/towns such as Danbury, Norwalk, and Stamford) and the Lower Connecticut River Valley CEPR (which includes the major city/town of Middletown). Overall, the data from 2020 to 2023* show that Greater Bridgeport is trending upwards over the past 4 years; and Naugatuck Valley, Northwest Hills, and Western Connecticut show a decreasing trend. Year 2023 data are preliminary and subject to change because of pending cases. Please see the following website for more information on the CEPRs: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/06/06/2022-12063/change-to-county-equivalents-in-the-state-of-connecticut>

Rate of unintentional and undetermined drug overdose deaths per 100,000 people, by injury CEPRs, from 2020-2023*.

Figure 8: Rate of Unintentional and Undetermined Intent Drug Overdose Deaths per 100,000 Population, by Injury County Equivalent Planning Region, Connecticut, 2020-2023*



Note about the CEPRs: In 2017, Connecticut requested the US Census Bureau to adopt the State's nine planning regions as county-equivalent geographic units for the purposes of collecting, tabulating, and disseminating statistical data, replacing the State's eight counties. Although the Connecticut planning regions and counties do not align perfectly, there is substantial overlap. The nine CEPRs are: Capitol Planning region, Greater Bridgeport, Lower Connecticut Valley, Naugatuck Valley, Northeastern Connecticut, Northwest Hills, South Central Connecticut, and Western Connecticut. By 2024, all internal and external Census Bureau operations and publications will use the nine new planning region boundaries, names, and codes, except for 2020 decennial census data publications and other datasets referencing the eight legacy counties published before June 1, 2022.



Data last updated 03/28/2024
 Injury and Violence Surveillance Unit
 Community, Health, and Prevention Branch