

2023 Annual Report

Office of Harm Reduction

Erie County Department of Health



**Erie County
Department of
Health**



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Table of Contents

Director’s Remarks, June 2024	3
Office Operations Summary	4
New and Expanded Positions	4
Position Updates	4
Overdose Incident Trends 2022-2023	6
Non-Fatal Overdose Incidents	6
Demographic Trends in Reported Non-Fatal Overdose Incidents	6
Geographic Trends in Reported Non-Fatal Overdose Incidents	8
Fatal Overdose Incidents	11
Demographic Trends in Fatal Overdose Incidents	11
Geographic Trends in Fatal Overdose Incidents	11
Toxicology Trends in Fatal Overdose Incidents	17
Harm Reduction Supplies Distribution Summary	19
Naloxone Kits	19
Substance Test Strips	20
Narcan Emergency Wall Boxes	20
Opioid Prevention Education & Narcan (OPEN) Stands	21
Text for Narcan	21
Syringes/Sharps Disposal	22
Naloxone-Use Training Summary	22
Outreach Summary	23
FR-CARA Grant Updates	23
Office of Harm Reduction Future Initiatives	24
Appendix	25
Table 1: Year-Over-Year Change in Non-Fatal Overdoses by ZIP Code	25
Table 2: Year-Over-Year Change in Fatal Overdoses by ZIP Code	26
Table 3: Harm Reduction Supplies Distribution by Month, 2023	26

Director's Remarks, June 2024

As our office prepared this annual report, I reflected on the origins of Harm Reduction. In the late 1980s, the San Francisco AIDS Foundation (SFAF) launched a campaign targeting IV drug users. In a time before needle exchanges or safe injection sites, the campaign encouraged people who use drugs (PWUD) to sterilize their needles with household bleach before reusing them as a pragmatic way to reduce HIV transmission. While this may seem primitive by current standards, the initiative was a groundbreaking practical example of harm reduction in action.

SFAF created a character to help spread the message – a mascot to give a friendly face to a dire public health crisis. They called him Bleach Man, an anthropomorphic bleach jug wielding a comically large syringe. Bleach Man attended press conferences, appeared on television, and became an icon in one of the cities most affected by the AIDS epidemic. The campaign was a resounding success, with an estimated majority of the city's IV drug users deciding to sterilize their needles.



Edith Springer, who began writing about Harm Reduction in 1992, describes it in the following way...

“Harm reduction is against harm, neutral on the use of drugs per se, and in favor of any positive change as defined by the person making the change.”

Springer instinctively understood that “people need to feel worthwhile and empowered in order to make difficult changes in their lives; starting from the perspective that what one does is bad – or that one’s life is pathological – is a setup for failure.”

Although the Harm Reduction field has evolved over time, there is one central tenet: reduce the risks associated with substance use. One of the key principles underlying this goal is what some have called “radical acceptance.” As a public entity, our office is in a unique position to support this principle in Erie County.

We provide practical resources in the form of naloxone distribution, substance test strips, and sterile injection supplies. We engage the community through public naloxone-use training sessions and direct outreach. We collaborate with external organizations to expand our impact beyond what we could accomplish alone. We provide current data on the evolving nature of this crisis. We are willing to work with elected officials and leaders at every level to accomplish our goals.

The crux of our direct support to PWUD lies with our team of Peer Navigators, who help individuals who are ready find their way through the often-confusing world of counselling and treatment. We also offer support to family members and loved ones of PWUD. We offer support at the infrastructure level – maintaining drug and needle deposition sites and conducting disposal operations. Throughout our efforts, we work to reduce the stigma that likely prevents many from seeking care. We commit to providing non-judgmental, non-coercive services that build trust in health institutions among our target population.

This report summarizes the Office of Harm Reduction’s efforts, as well as recent trends in county-level overdose data. We highlight our robust collaborations with agencies across all harm reduction disciplines – prevention, treatment, recovery, as well as crisis intervention services. These groups stand with us to address the epidemic facing our community. We cannot be successful without them.

We cannot know for certain what the future of this crisis holds. However, we do know that it will involve new models of care, peer support, mobile response units, innovative uses of data to target interventions, and continued partnership development. Finally, we are incredibly excited about the restructured and re-energized Overdose Prevention Task Force, which will undoubtedly play a critical role in many of our efforts.

Stephen White

Director of Harm Reduction

Office Operations Summary

New and Expanded Positions

The Office of Harm Reduction introduced several new positions in 2023 to grow our capacity to fulfill our goals. The new positions are:

- Data Analyst
- Family Coordinator
- Director of Harm Reduction

The number of Peer Navigators expanded to 7 peers as of the end of 2023. Peer Navigators contact recent overdose victims to offer treatment and counseling services, as well as conduct street outreach to locate and offer resources to PWUD.

Position Updates

The following section summarizes updates to projects and initiatives led by specific staff positions:

Overdose Fatality Review (OFR) Nurse

Formerly known as the Opioid Mortality Review Board (OMRB), the OFR Program expanded its scope to investigate all overdoses, reflecting the evolving landscape of substance use within our communities and its direct impact on public health. Led by the OFR Nurse Coordinator, this county-level project is currently being restructured, with efforts focused on standardizing and enhancing program operations. The team will develop a comprehensive policy manual outlining procedures and protocols, establish clear case selection and review process guidelines, and create standardized templates and tools for data analysis and reporting.

Environmental Compliance Specialist

The Environmental Compliance Specialist continues to manage the collection and disposal of sharp hazardous material (sharps) and controlled substances. In 2022 and 2023, the collection and disposal of sharps exceeded 10,000 pounds of material for the first time in the program's history. The administrative overhead associated with this position increased substantially due to changes in management structure. As of 2023, our office will no longer receive data regarding the weight of controlled substances destroyed, but collection and disposal operations will continue as usual. The current Environmental Compliance Specialist is a naloxone-use trainer and regularly leads training sessions for the public.

Public Health Educator

The Public Health Educator led initiatives to improve and expand upon our office's educational materials. The naloxone-use training slides, which all trainers use for virtual and in-person public training sessions, were redesigned. Changes to the presentation focused on new data patterns, making the content more digestible for the public, and updating language/terminology to reflect new guidelines. In light of New York State's legalization of recreational cannabis use, the office created educational materials and a new presentation to inform the public about associated risks. The Consumer Survey, intended to collect information from people who are actively using substances, began a new round of data collection in 2023. Survey responses will be used to inform outreach approaches and educational material design. The Public Health Educator is a naloxone-use trainer and regularly leads training sessions for the public.

Peer Navigators

The Peer Navigator team grew significantly in 2023, allowing outreach to expand to new locations. Outreach is now conducted on a regular basis at 6 locations: St. John Kanty Church near Broadway, the Grant Ferry neighborhood on Buffalo's West side, St. Luke's Mission of Mercy on Walden Avenue, Niagara Street near downtown Buffalo, a site near the intersection of Utica Street and Main Street, and at a charitable organization's headquarters (Friends of Night People) on Hudson Street near Allentown in Buffalo. The team actively builds partnerships with other community organizations and searches for new locations to conduct street outreach. For specific partnership information, see "[Outreach Expansion](#)."

Data Entry Operators

The Data Entry Operators maintain a variety of ongoing office projects in addition to general data input. These projects include filling community orders for harm reduction supplies (e.g. [Text for Narcan](#)), mailing certificates to naloxone-use training attendees, assembling wall boxes, among other duties such as tabling events. Since demand for training sessions and harm reduction supplies has increased significantly in 2023, the work associated with these projects increased. Due to increased volume, orders from the [Text for Narcan](#) line are now their largest task. The office is taking steps to make the workload more manageable (see "[Automation of Text Line](#)").

Family Coordinator

The new Family Coordinator position led several initiatives designed to support families impacted by overdoses. The Family Coordinator organized the Family Support and Advocacy Workgroup, a component of the Opiate Epidemic Task Force. The Family Coordinator also organized several projects and displays that support the office's messaging. In 2023, these included International Overdose Awareness Day, Black Balloon Day, and the Tree of Hope. The current Family Coordinator is a naloxone-use trainer and regularly leads training sessions for the public.

Data Analyst

The new Data Analyst position processes the office's internal and external data. Internally, the Data Analyst tracks metrics regarding naloxone training sessions, outreach events, supply distribution, and peer case follow-up. External data sources include overdose reports received from law enforcement agencies and the Erie County Medical Examiner's Office, which are analyzed and presented in a usable format to inform both educational material content and outreach location planning. The Data Analyst creates detailed maps on a regular basis to inform the ECDOH and County leadership of recent trends.

Overdose Incident Trends

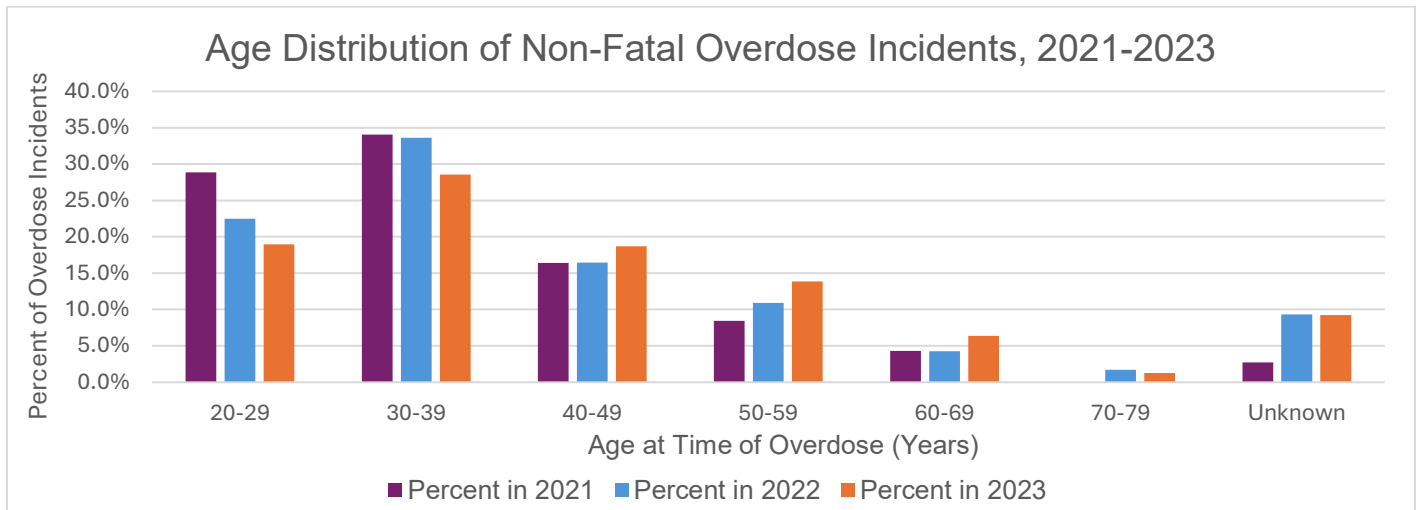
Reported Non-Fatal Overdose Incidents

Non-fatal overdose incidents are tabulated from police reports, which the Office of Harm Reduction receives from the local High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Office. The HIDTA office aggregates police reports from all Erie County law enforcement agencies.

Reported non-fatal overdose incidents decreased 3.6% from 2022 (827) to 2023 (798).

Demographic Trends in Reported Non-Fatal Overdose Incidents

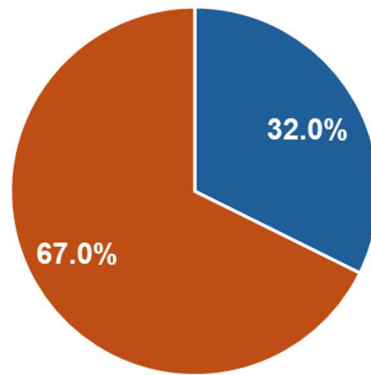
The reported non-fatal overdose incident age distribution shifted slightly older from 2021 to 2023. Individuals younger than age 40 constituted a smaller proportion of reported non-fatal overdose incidents in 2023 (47.5%) compared to 2022 (56.1%). Individuals aged 40 and older constituted a larger proportion of reported non-fatal overdose incidents in 2023 (40.1%) compared to 2022 (33.3%). Overdose reports among the 20-29 years age range decreased precipitously from 2021 (28.9%) to 2023 (19.0%). Reported non-fatal overdose incidents of unknown age remained consistent at approximately 9%.



The reported non-fatal overdose gender distribution shifted more heavily towards males from 2022 (62.9%) to 2023 (68.2%). The gender distribution in 2023 closely resembled the distribution in 2021 (67.0% male). Gender distribution data is displayed on the following page. The number of reported non-fatal overdose incidents in 2023 with unknown gender was less than 5.

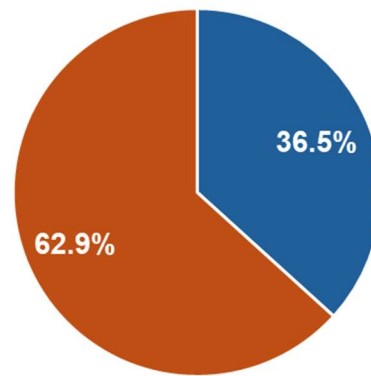
Due to the difficulty law enforcement officers have identifying an individual's race at the site of an overdose, race data is not provided for non-fatal overdose incidents.

Gender Distribution of 2021 Reported Non-Fatal Overdose Incidents



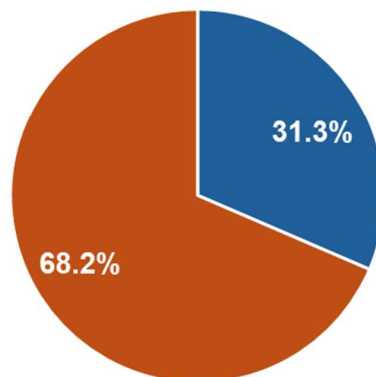
■ Female ■ Male

Gender Distribution of 2022 Reported Non-Fatal Overdose Incidents



■ Female ■ Male

Gender Distribution of 2023 Reported Non-Fatal Overdose Incidents



■ Female ■ Male

Geographic Trends in Reported Non-Fatal Overdose Incidents

The geographic distribution of reported non-fatal overdose incidents in Erie County shifted substantially from 2022 to 2023. Regions south of the City of Buffalo generally saw significant decreases. In 2023, 59.3% of all reported non-fatal incidents occurred in the City of Buffalo, up from 55.9% in 2022. The distribution of reported cases within Buffalo shifted substantially, with fewer occurring near the center of the city and more occurring near the outskirts.

ZIP codes 14201, 14207, and 14225 were in the top five ZIP codes for non-fatal incidents in both 2022 and 2023.

Most Frequent Locations of Non-Fatal Overdose Incidents	2022 Non-Fatal Overdose Incidents	Most Frequent Locations of Non-Fatal Overdose Incidents	2023 Non-Fatal Overdose Incidents
14201 (Downtown/Allentown)	48	14207 (Black Rock/Riverside)	52
14150 (Tonawanda)	45	14213 (Buffalo/Grant Ferry)	50
14207 (Black Rock/Riverside)	44	14225 (Cheektowaga)	41
14225 (Cheektowaga)	44	14201 (Downtown/Allentown)	38
14218 (Lackawanna)	41	14150 (Tonawanda)	34

An abridged data table and map are provided on the following page. See [Appendix](#) for full data table.

ZIP Codes with Increased Reported Non-Fatal Overdose Incidents

14211 (Buffalo, near Genesee Street on the East side) experienced a near three-fold increase from 7 incidents in 2022 to 20 incidents in 2023. A chi-square goodness-of-fit test revealed this increase to be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

14213 (Buffalo, near Grant Ferry on the West side) saw the largest year-over-year increase in absolute terms, with 50 reported non-fatal overdose incidents in 2023, up from 33 incidents in 2022. However, this increase failed to achieve statistical significance based on a chi-square goodness-of-fit test.

14221 (Amherst/Williamsville) exhibited an increase from 17 incidents in 2022 to 28 incidents in 2023.

ZIP Codes with Decreased Reported Non-Fatal Overdose Incidents

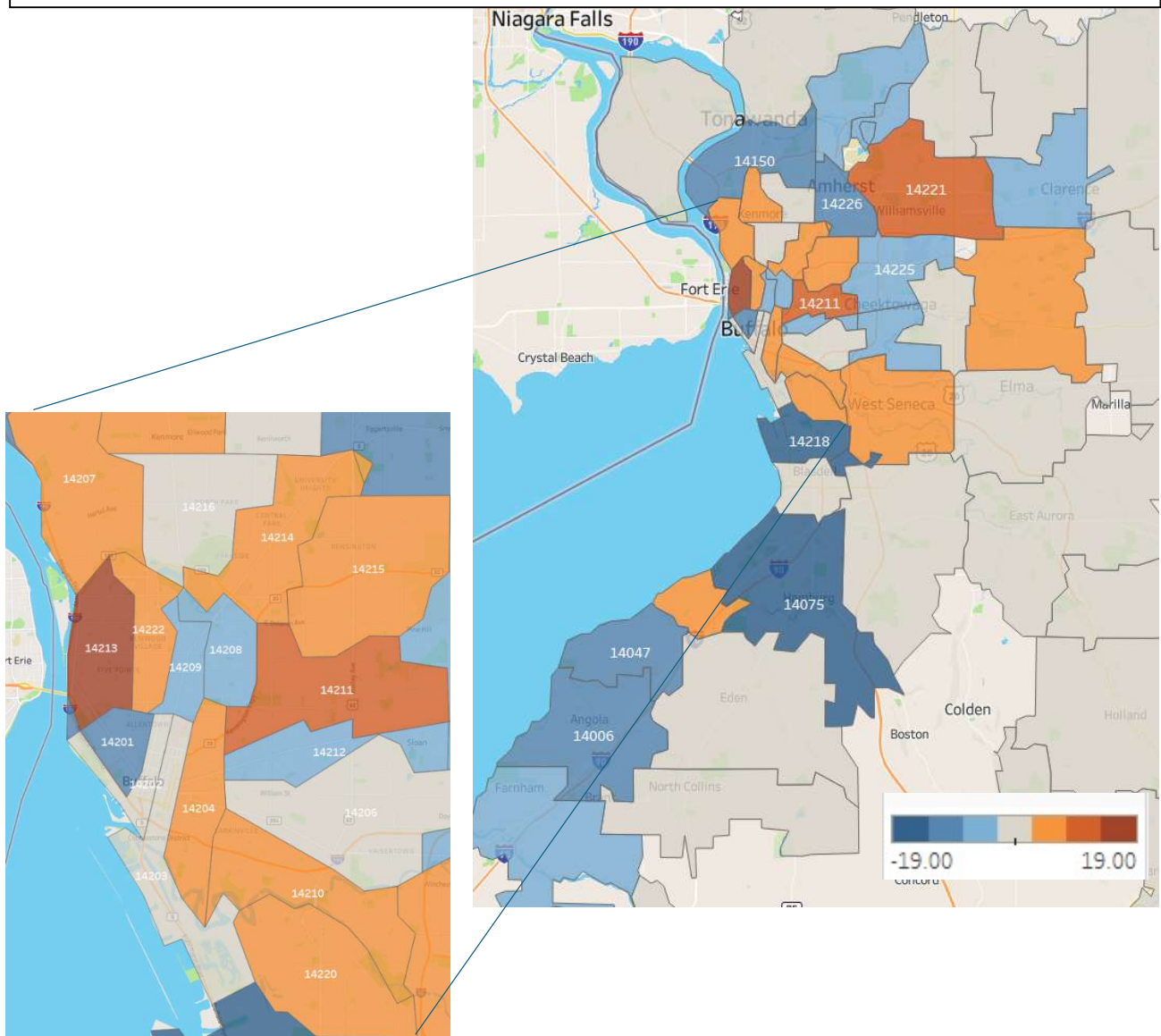
ZIP codes 14218 and 14075 (Lackawanna and Hamburg, respectively), both jurisdictions South of the City of Buffalo, exhibited significant decreases in reported non-fatal overdose incidents. Lackawanna saw a near 50% decrease in reported non-fatal incidents, from 41 incidents in 2022 to 22 incidents in 2023. Hamburg saw a decrease from 34 incidents in 2022 to 19 incidents in 2023. Chi-square goodness-of-fit tests revealed the decreases in each region to be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Other ZIP codes exhibiting large decreases in reported non-fatal overdose incidents include 14226 (Amherst/Eggertsville; 28 incidents in 2022 and 17 incidents in 2023), 14047 (Derby; 12 incidents in 2022 and less than 5 incidents in 2023), and 14006 (Angola; 29 incidents in 2022 and 18 incidents in 2023).

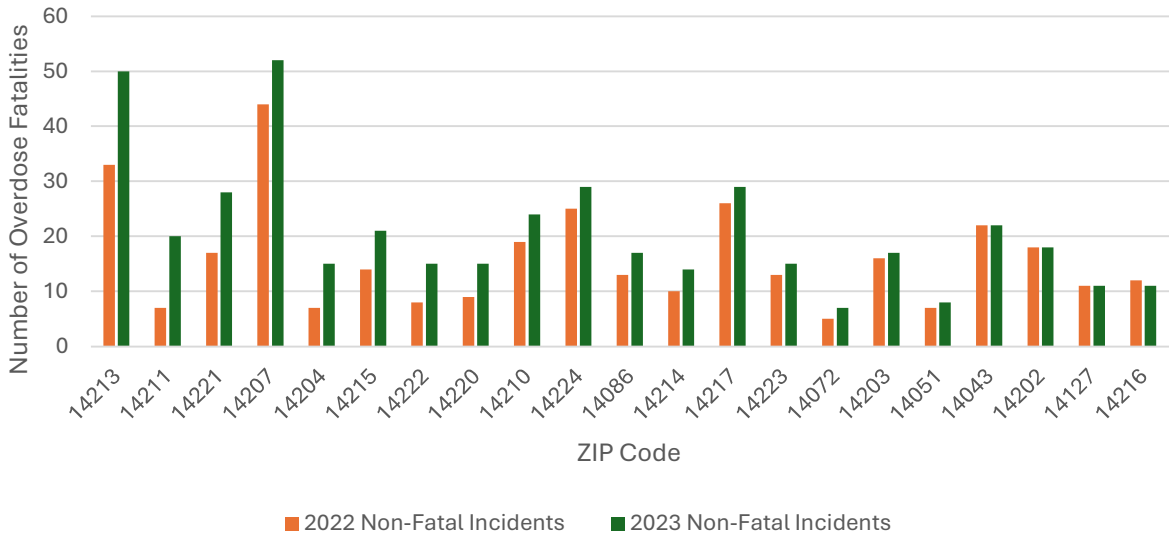
Change in Reported Non-Fatal Overdose Incidents by ZIP Code (Abridged), 2022-2023

Location	ZIP Code	2022 Reported Non-Fatal	2023 Reported Non-Fatal	Change	% Change
Buffalo, Grant Ferry	14213	33	50	17	51.50%
Buffalo, East Side	14211	7	20	13	185.70%
Amherst/Williamsville	14221	17	28	11	64.70%
Buffalo/Cheektowaga	14215	14	21	7	50.00%
Buffalo, Elmwood Village	14222	8	15	7	87.50%
South Buffalo	14220	9	15	6	66.70%
Angola	14006	29	18	-11	-37.90%
Amherst/Eggertsville	14226	28	17	-11	-39.30%
Hamburg	14075	34	19	-15	-44.10%
Lackawanna	14218	41	22	-19	-46.30%

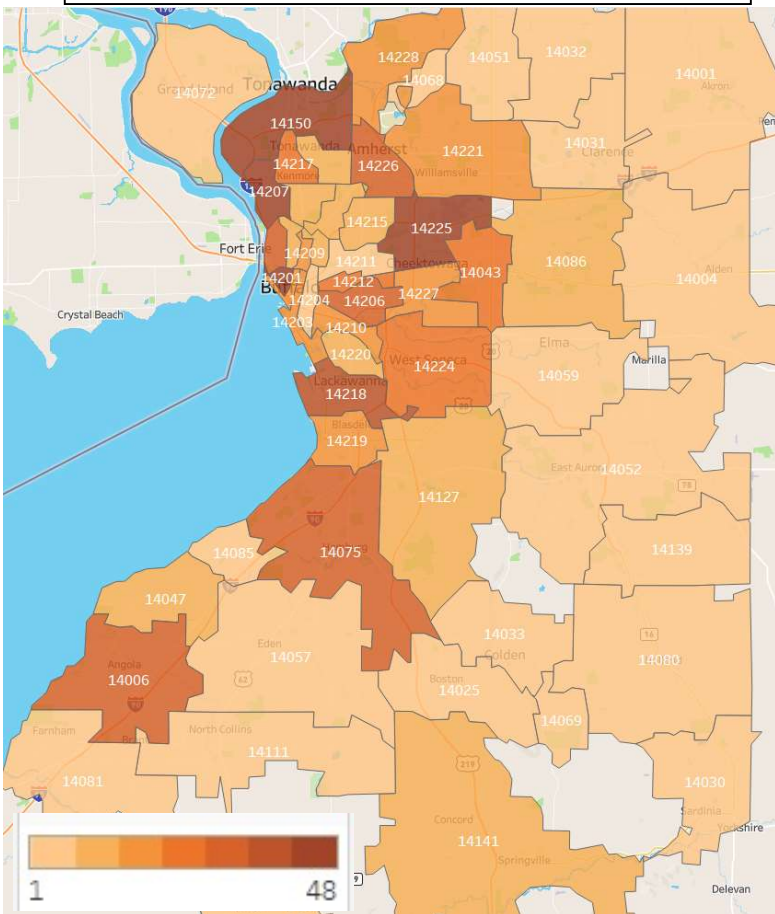
Change in Reported Non-Fatal Overdose Incidents by ZIP Code, 2022 to 2023



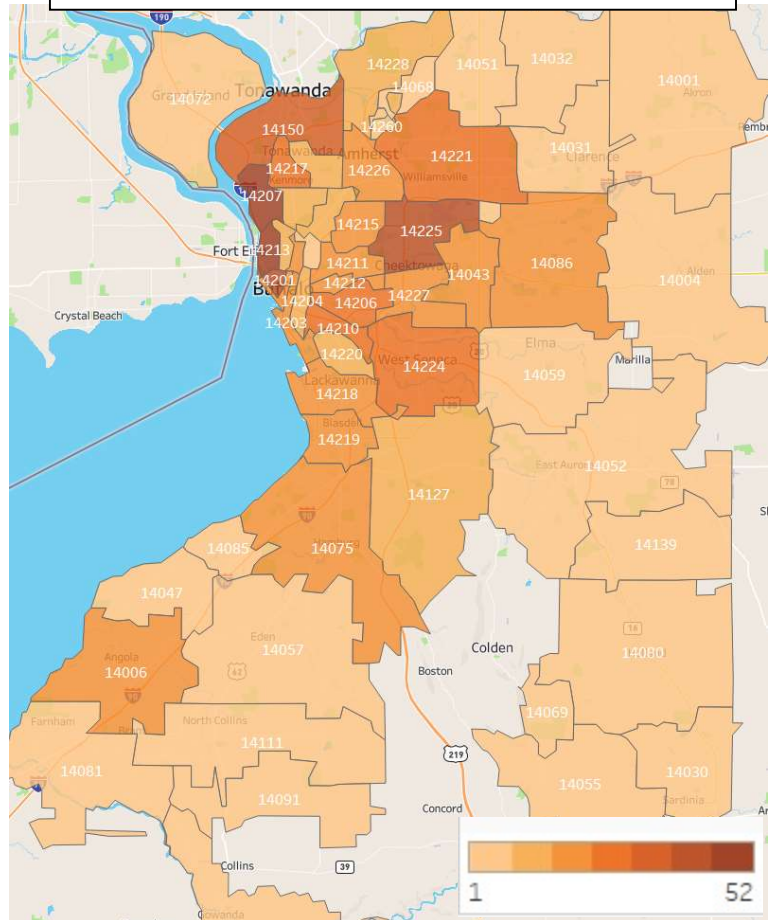
Erie County Non-Fatal Overdose Reports in Selected ZIP Codes, 2022-2023



2022 Reported Non-Fatal Overdose Incidents



2023 Reported Non-Fatal Overdose Incidents



Fatal Overdose Incidents

Fatal overdose incident reporting is based on Erie County Medical Examiner Office investigations. The Medical Examiner determines whether a deceased individual is a suspected overdose victim. Suspected victims undergo toxicology panel testing to determine which, if any, substances were present in the body at the time of death. Suspected overdose deaths are generally assumed to be opioid-related until proven otherwise. Toxicology results usually become available 3 to 6 months after the person's death.

Fatal Erie County overdose incidents increased 15% from 2022 (379) to 2023 (436).

Data are censored for categories with fewer than 5 counts.

Demographic Trends in Fatal Overdose Incidents

The gender distribution of Erie County overdose deaths skews heavily towards men, consistent with historical trends. In 2023, men constituted 70.2% of overdose deaths. The proportion of men among overdose deaths has remained within a very narrow range of 69% to 73% for the past 5 years.

The race distribution of 2023 overdose deaths differed from the race distribution of Erie County. Black/African American individuals represent 14% of Erie County based on 2020 Decennial Census data but constituted 31% of Erie County overdose deaths in 2023. The presence of Black/African American individuals among overdose deaths has increased over time. The proportion of Black/African American nearly doubled from 2018 (13%) to 2021 (25%). Since 2021, the proportion has continued to increase at a more moderate rate (25% in 2021 to 31% in 2023). Race distribution data for 2021 through 2023 is displayed on page 12.

The age distribution trended towards older adults. Individuals aged 60-69 years exhibited the most pronounced proportional increase from 2022 (11.1%) to 2023 (20.0%). Stratifying the overdose death age distribution by race revealed that the increase among the 60-69 years age range was common to both Black/African American and White overdose victims. Among Black/African American overdose deaths, those aged 60-69 years were the largest age demographic (27.7%). Individuals aged 50 and older constituted 59% of Black/African American overdose deaths in 2023. Among White overdose deaths, the proportion aged 60-69 increased from 7.8% in 2022 to 17.2% in 2023. Individuals aged 30-39 years constituted largest age group among White overdose deaths in 2023 (27.5%). Age distribution data for 2021-2023 is displayed on page 13.

Geographic Trends in Fatal Overdose Incidents

Overdose fatalities are concentrated heavily on the East side of Buffalo (14211, 14215, 14212), and to a lesser degree on the West side (14207, 14213).

We see a higher number of fatal overdoses on Buffalo's East side than we would expect given the number of reported non-fatal incidents. Conversely, we see fewer fatal overdoses on Buffalo's West side than we would expect given the number of reported non-fatal overdose incidents.

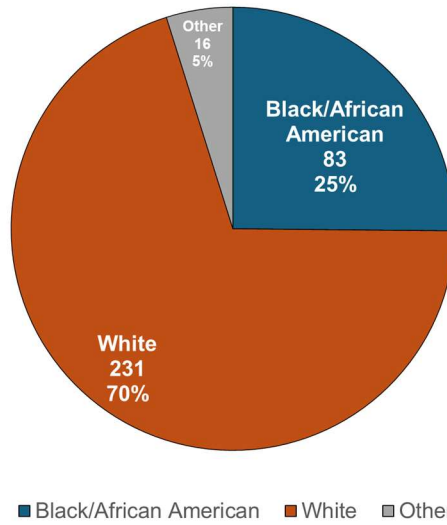
The areas with the most significant increases in overdose fatalities were near Allentown, near Genesee Street on Buffalo's East side, and in South Buffalo.

ZIP codes 14201 (Downtown/Allentown), 14204 (Downtown/East side), and 14220 (South Buffalo) all saw fatalities more than double from 2022 to 2023.

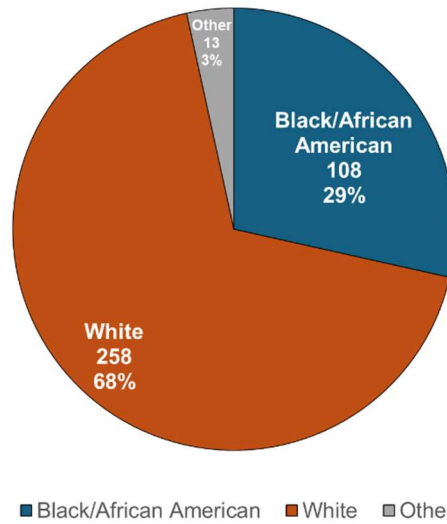
Tables displaying this data, as well as heat maps illustrating where fatal overdose incidents most frequently occur, are displayed on pages 14 and 15.

A table and map displaying the changes in overdose frequency from 2022 to 2023 is provided on page 16.

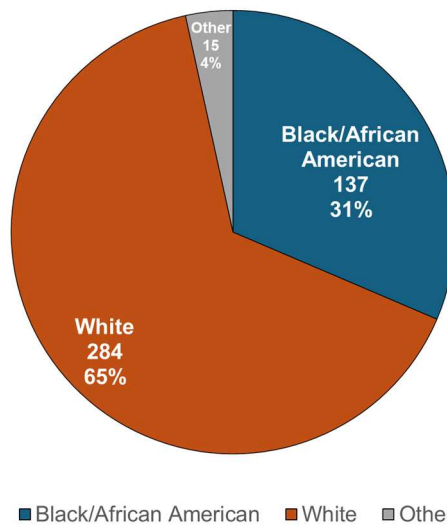
Race Distribution of Fatal Overdoses, 2021

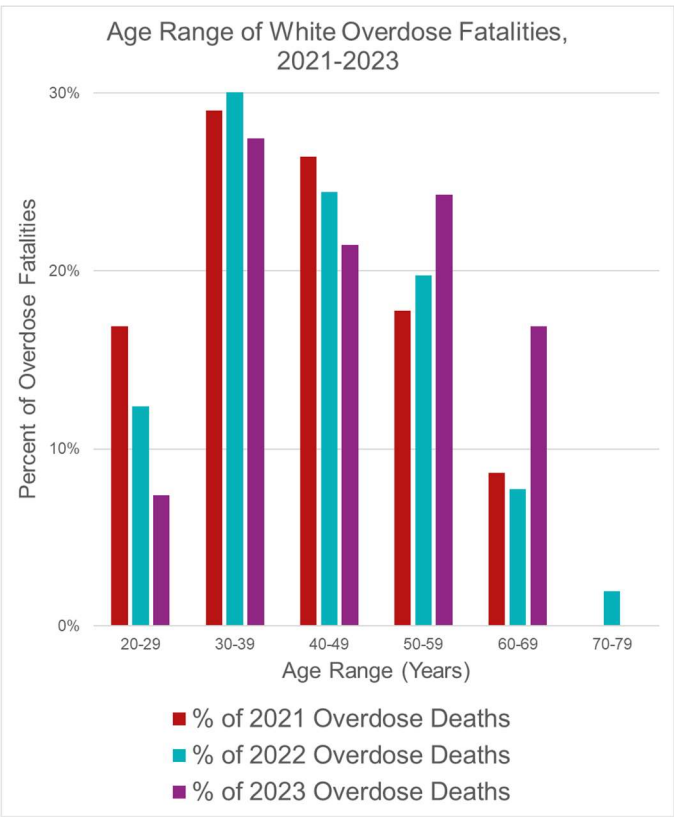
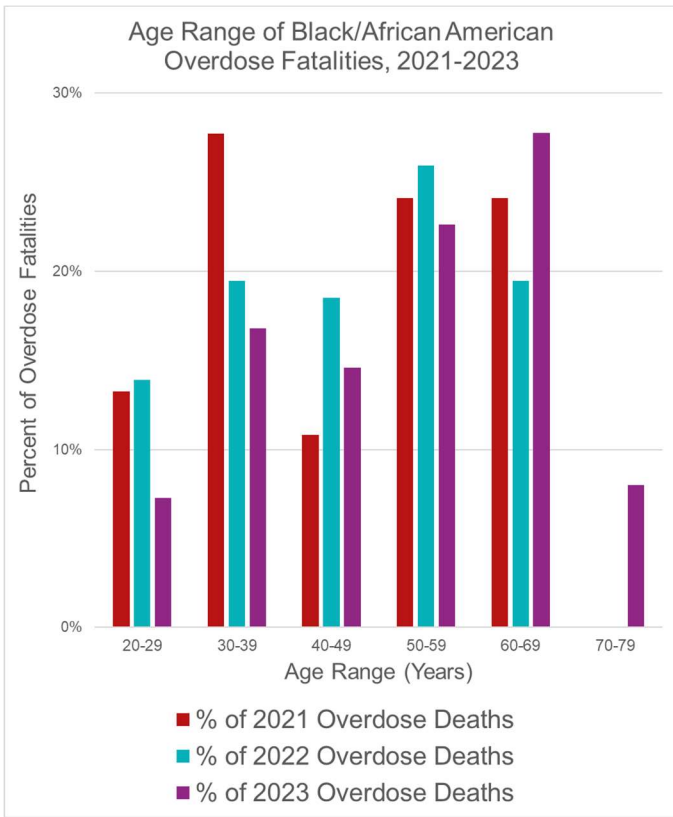
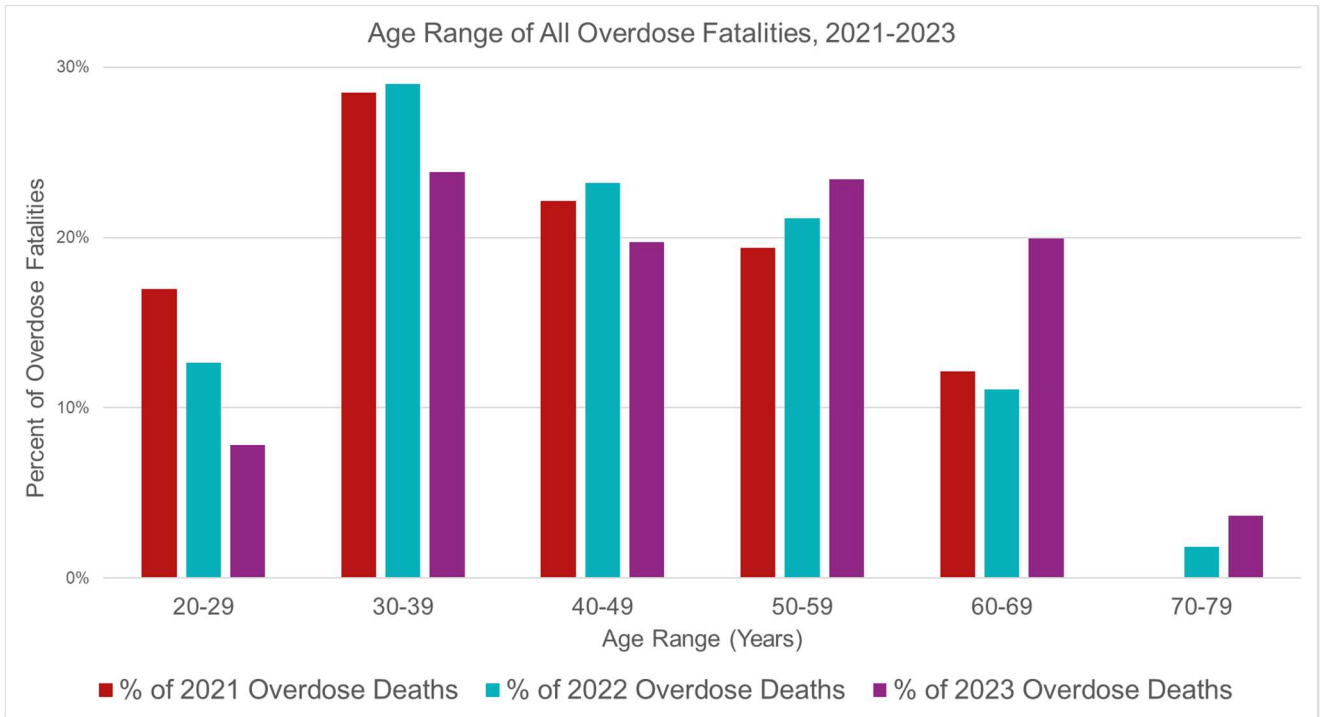


Race Distribution of Fatal Overdoses, 2022



Race Distribution of Fatal Overdoses, 2023



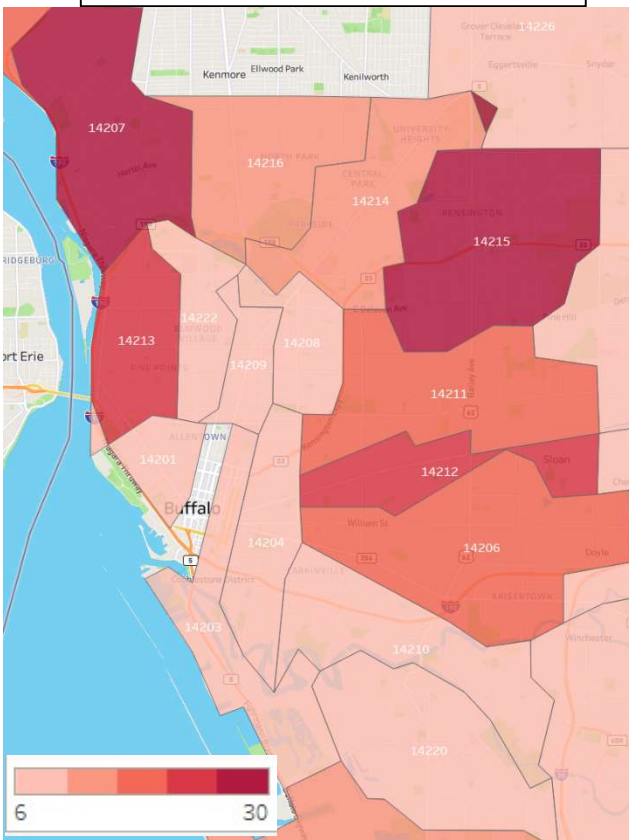


The five ZIP codes with the greatest number of overdoses fatalities were the same in 2022 and 2023.

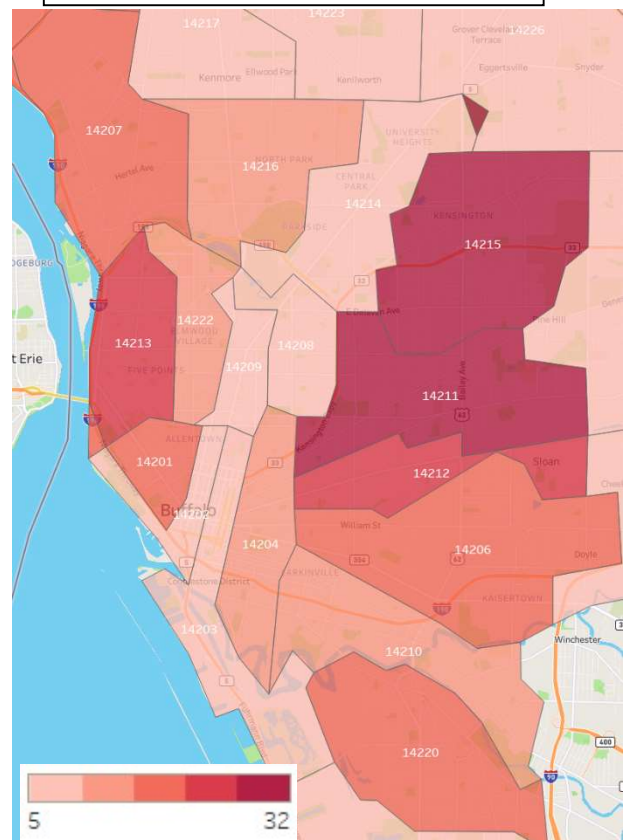
Most Frequent Locations of Fatal Overdoses	2022 Fatal Overdoses
14215 (Buffalo/Cheektowaga)	30
14207 (Black Rock/Riverside)	27
14213 (Buffalo, Grant Ferry)	22
14212 (Buffalo, Broadway)	21
14211 (Buffalo, Genesee Street)	20

Most Frequent Locations of Fatal Overdoses	2023 Fatal Overdoses
14211 (Buffalo, Genesee Street)	32
14215 (Buffalo/Cheektowaga)	31
14213 (Buffalo, Grant Ferry)	26
14212 (Buffalo, Broadway)	25
14207 (Black Rock/Riverside)	22

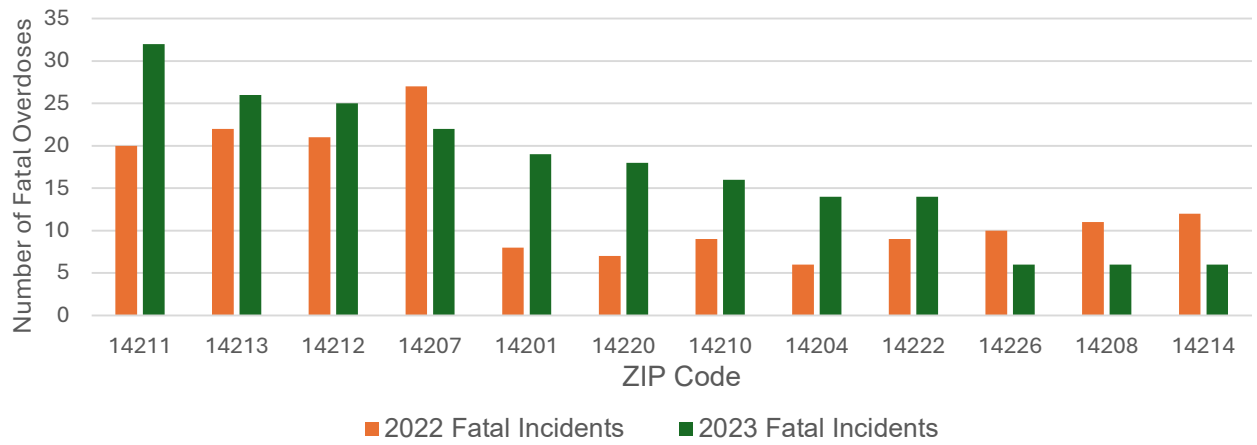
2022 Overdose Fatality Heat Map, City of Buffalo



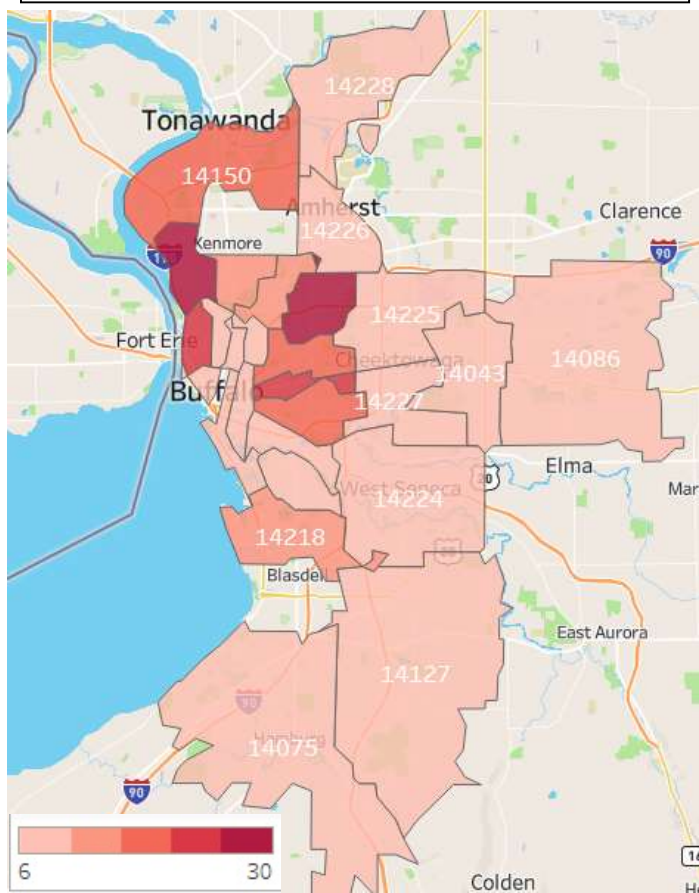
2023 Overdose Fatality Heat Map, City of Buffalo



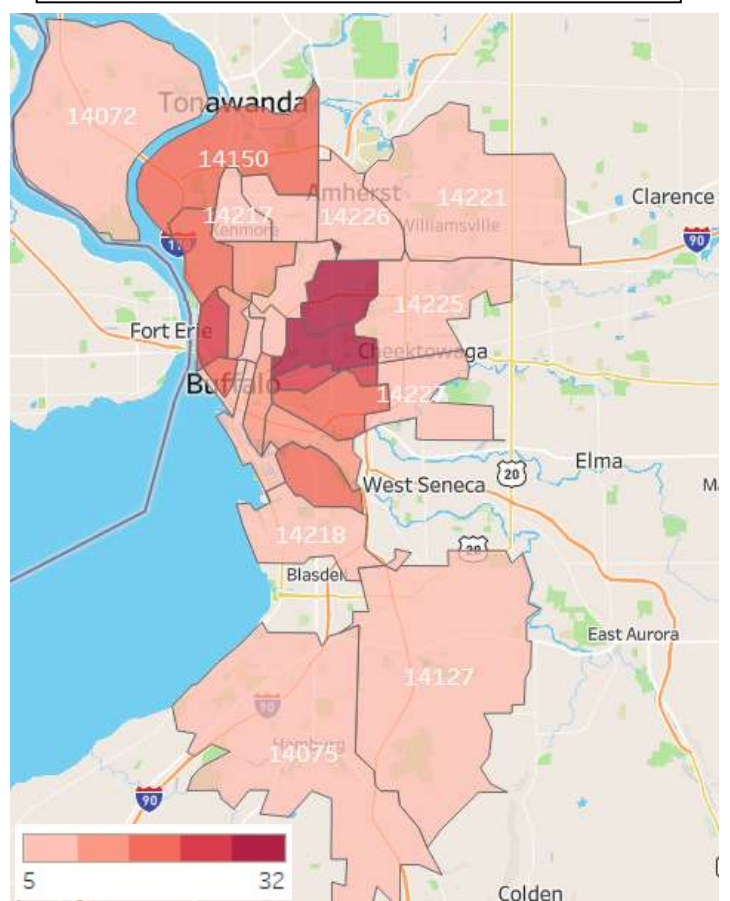
Erie County Overdose Fatalities in Selected ZIP Codes, 2022-2023



2022 Overdose Fatality Heat Map, Erie County



2023 Overdose Fatality Heat Map, Erie County

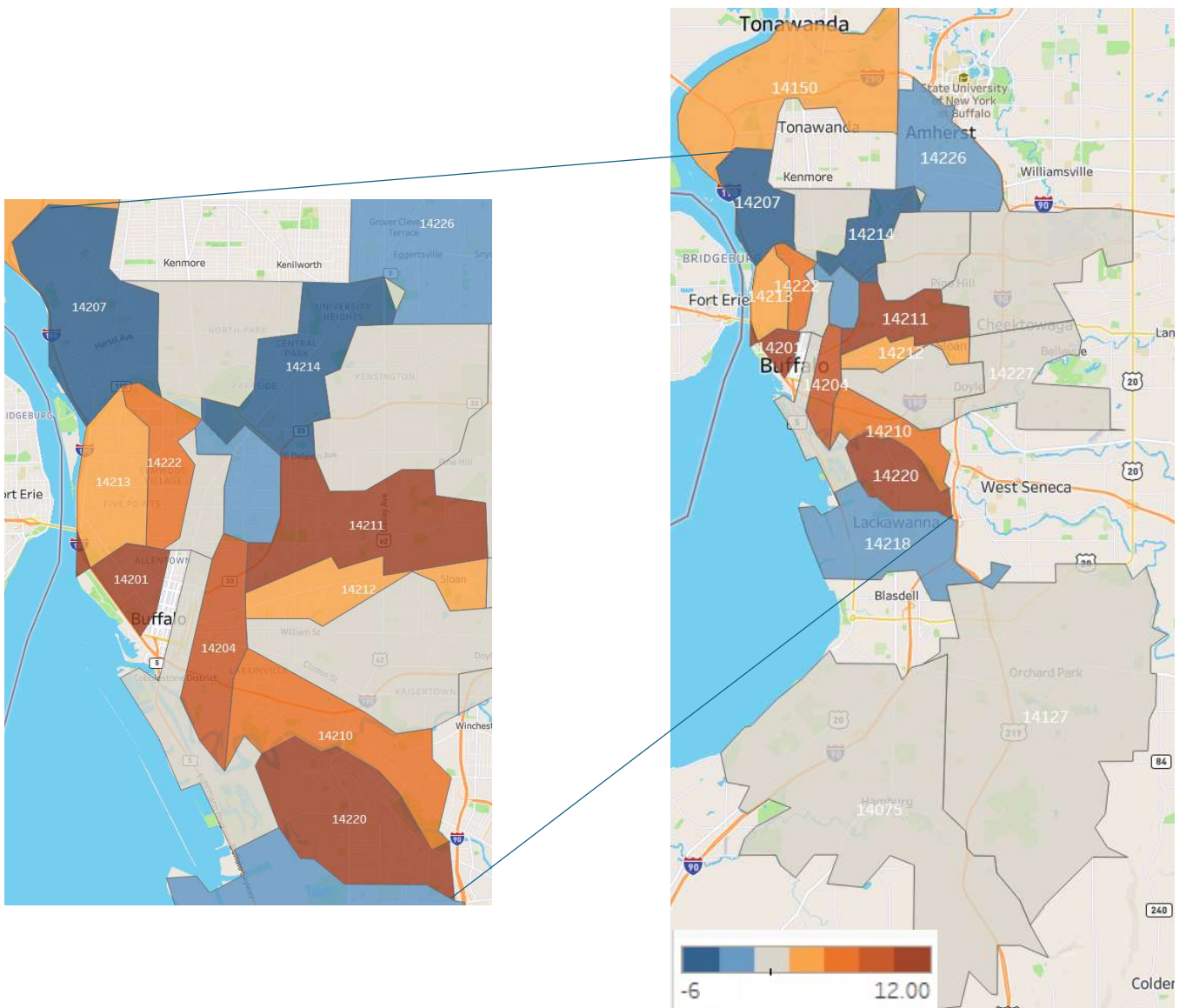


Change in Fatal Overdose Incidents by Location (Abridged), 2022-2023

Location	2022 Fatalities	2023 Fatalities	Change	% Change
14211 (Buffalo, Genesee Street)	20	32	12	60.0%
14201 (Buffalo, Downtown/Allentown)	8	19	11	137.5%
14220 (South Buffalo, South Park Avenue)	7	17	10	142.9%
14204 (Buffalo, Downtown/East Side)	6	13	7	116.7%
14210 (South Buffalo, Seneca Street)	9	15	6	66.7%
14222 (Buffalo, Elmwood Village)	9	14	5	55.6%
14208 (Buffalo, Jefferson Avenue)	10	6	-4	-40.0%
14226 (Amherst/Eggertsville)	10	6	-4	-40.0%
14207 (Black Rock/Riverside)	27	21	-6	-22.2%
14214 (Buffalo, Delaware Park/University Heights)	12	6	-6	-50.0%

See [Appendix](#) for full data table

Change in Fatal Overdose Incidents by ZIP Code, 2022 to 2023



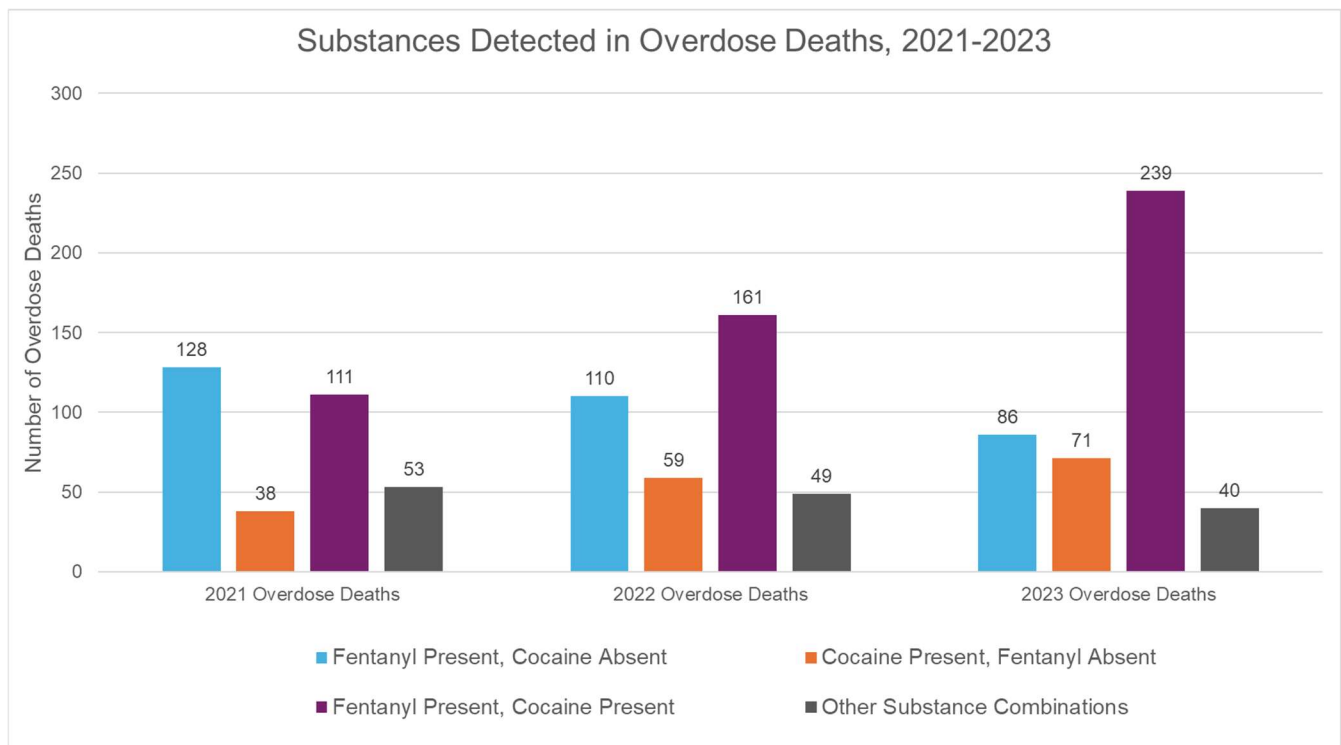
Toxicology Trends in Fatal Overdose Incidents

The Erie County Medical Examiner Office conducts toxicology testing to determine which substances, if any, were present in the person’s body at the time of death.

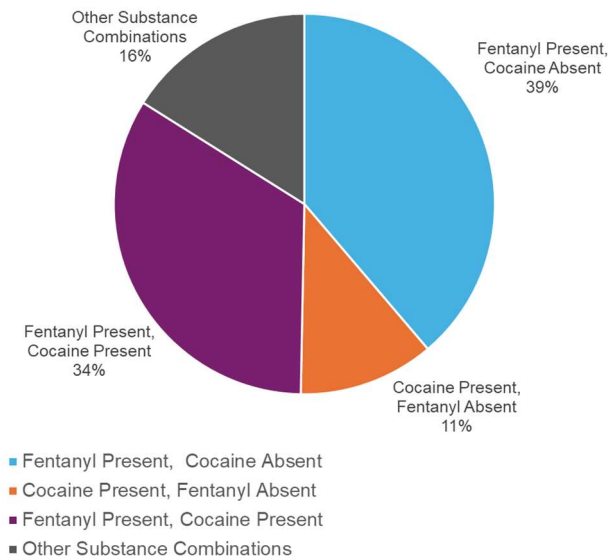
Since 2021, cocaine-related deaths have increased each year. Most cocaine-related deaths are also fentanyl-related. Combining toxicology reports from 2021 through 2023 reveals that 75% of cocaine-related reports also indicate fentanyl detection. Cocaine was detected in 73% of 2023 overdose deaths, up from 58% in 2022.

While fentanyl-related overdose deaths have increased each year since 2021, we see an increasing trend of fentanyl detected simultaneously with cocaine. Among all fentanyl-related death reports in 2023 (325), 74% also indicate cocaine detection. Toxicology reports simultaneously detecting cocaine and fentanyl constituted the majority of 2023 overdose deaths.

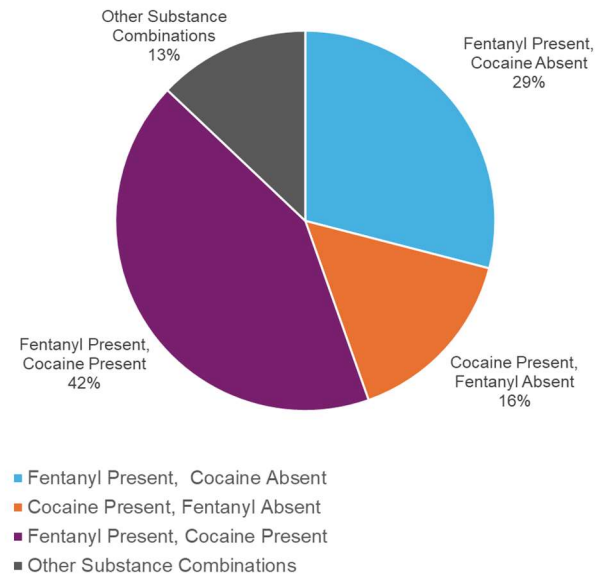
Substances Detected in Overdose Deaths	2021 Overdose Deaths (%)	2022 Overdose Deaths (%)	2023 Overdose Deaths (%)
Fentanyl Present, Cocaine Absent	128 (39%)	110 (29%)	86 (20%)
Cocaine Present, Fentanyl Absent	38 (11%)	59 (16%)	71 (16%)
Fentanyl Present, Cocaine Present	111 (34%)	161 (42%)	239 (55%)
Other Substance Combinations	53 (16%)	49 (13%)	40 (9%)



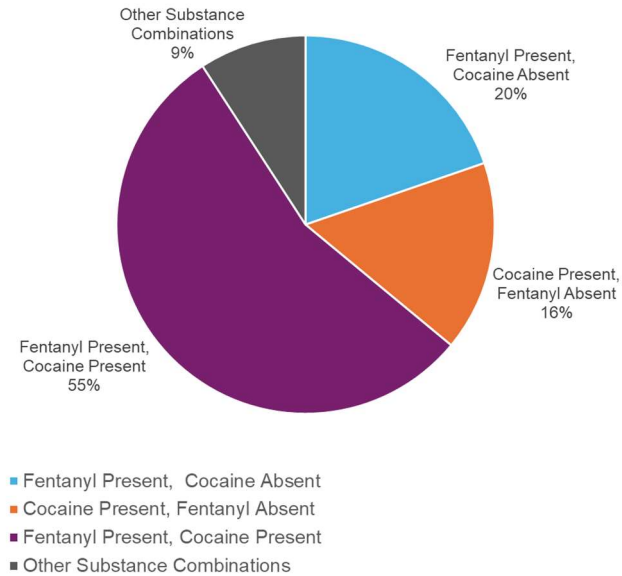
Substances Detected in Overdose Deaths, 2021



Substances Detected in Overdose Deaths, 2022



Substances Detected in Overdose Deaths, 2023



Harm Reduction Supplies Distribution Summary

The Office of Harm Reduction has substantially increased the quantity of distributed harm reduction supplies since its inception. Harm reduction supplies distribution includes all harm reduction materials distributed at training sessions, during outreach, or by organization/individual request. In 2023, the office recorded the largest volume of supplies distributed across all categories.

Supplies Type	Quantity Distributed in 2022	Quantity Distributed in 2023
Naloxone Kits	24,878	44,473
Fentanyl Test Strips	8,500	43,250
Xylazine Test Strips	N/A	3,030
Wall Boxes	785	915
OPEN Stands	N/A	70
Syringes	23,760	39,740
Sharps Containers	N/A	2,269

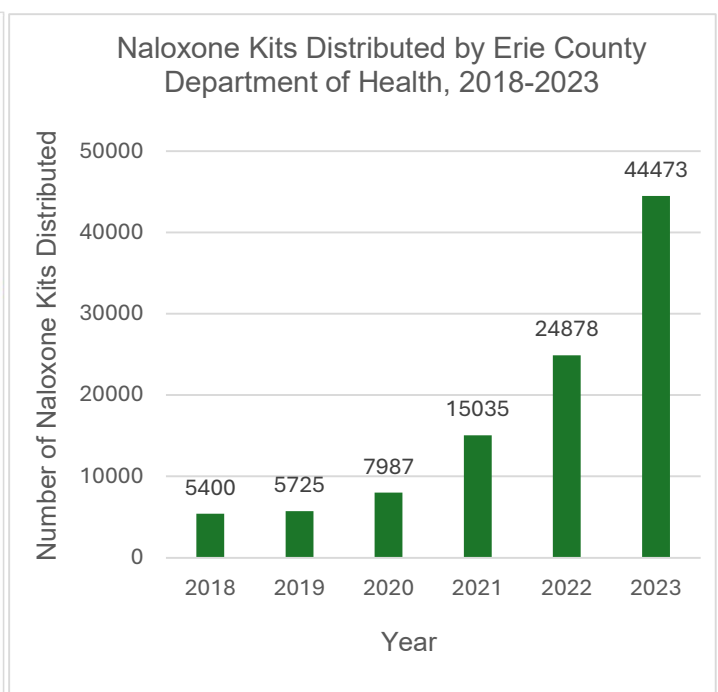
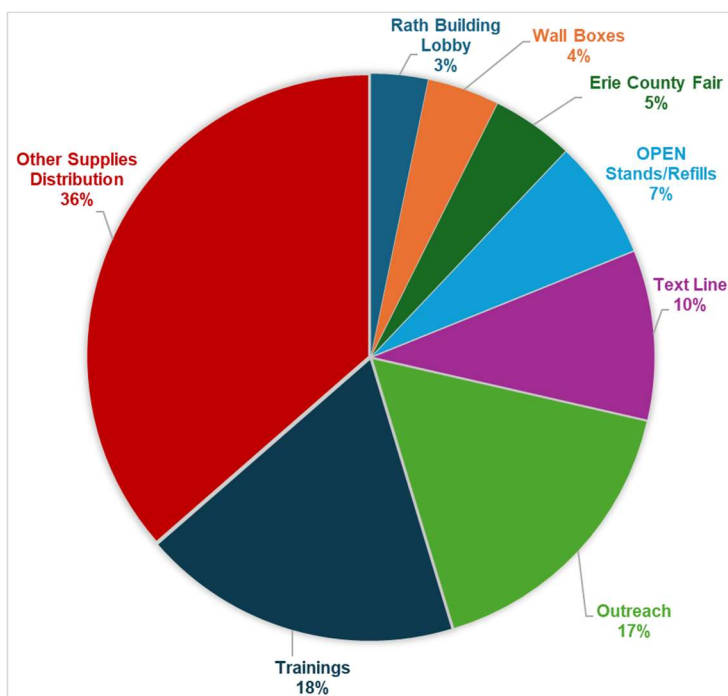
The terms “Narcan” and “naloxone” are used interchangeably throughout this report. Naloxone is the generic name of the opioid antagonist compound that can reverse an opioid poisoning, generally administered as a nasal spray. “Narcan” refers to a specific brand name product developed and produced by Emergent BioSolutions, formerly the only manufacturer of naloxone nasal sprays.

The quantity of supplies distributed each month varies substantially throughout the year. Such variations are related to availability of supplies, weather-based changes in outreach patterns, and user demand. See [Appendix](#) for supply distribution breakdown by month.

Naloxone Kits

In 2023, the Office of Harm Reduction distributed 44,473 naloxone kits, an average of more than 3,600 per month. Naloxone kit demand increased exponentially since the office’s creation. The trend becomes apparent in 2021, where the number of kits distributed almost doubled compared to the year prior. Naloxone kit distribution continues to dramatically increase each year.

2023 Naloxone Distribution by Distribution Type

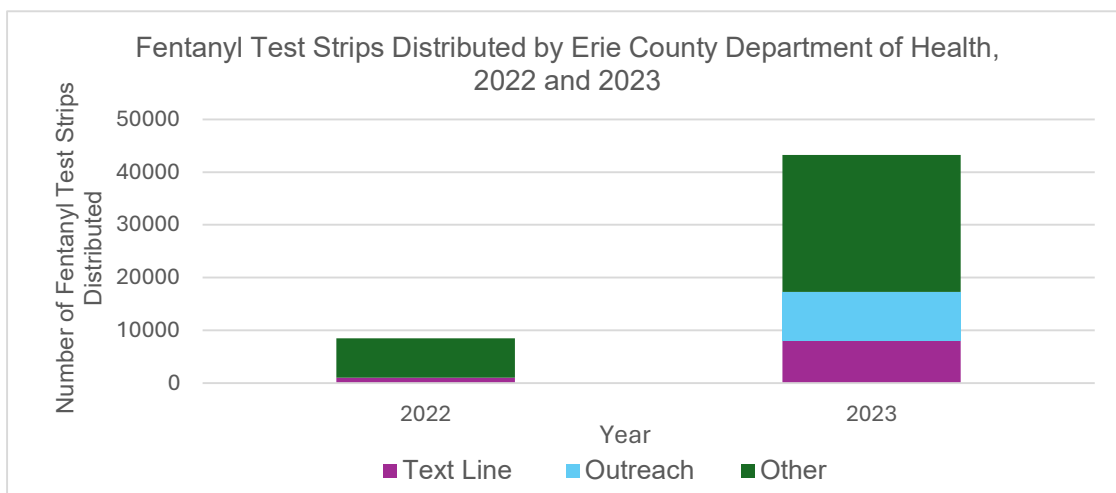


Naloxone kit distribution in 2023 was primarily driven by orders from external organizations such as treatment providers, businesses, and government agencies (included in “Other Supplies Distribution”). Naloxone distributed at training sessions and outreach events collectively contributed slightly over one third of the 2023 total (18% and 17% respectively). The Office of Harm Reduction table at the 183rd Erie County Fair drew significant public attention, with more than 2,000 naloxone kits distributed during the fair.

Substance Test Strips

The Office of Harm Reduction offers two types of substance test strips, intended for substance consumers to detect contaminants.

In mid-2021, ECDOH began stocking fentanyl testing strips. Considering the increasing frequency with which non-opioid substances (particularly cocaine) are contaminated with fentanyl, allowing substance consumers to detect fentanyl is an important component of harm reduction. Fentanyl test strip demand increased dramatically in 2023. More than five times the number of strips were distributed in 2023 (~43,000) compared to 2022 (~8,000).



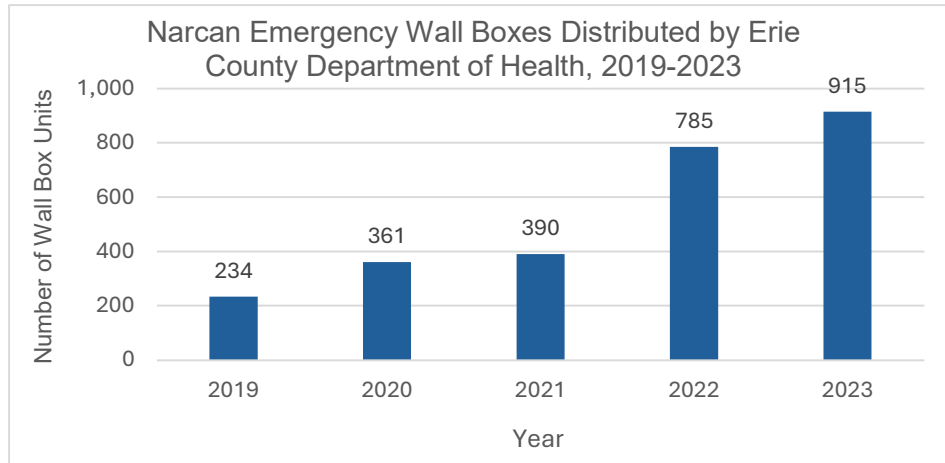
In 2023, ECDOH began stocking xylazine test strips. Xylazine, known colloquially as “tranq”, is a non-opioid sedative increasingly found in street-purchased opioids. Xylazine increases the duration of the mind-altering effect produced by opioid consumption. Xylazine use can lead to necrotic wounds when consumed frequently. Xylazine can also slow breathing and heart rate and lower blood pressure and is especially dangerous when combined with opioids like fentanyl. Hence, xylazine detection contributes to the harm reduction mission. Naloxone will not reverse the effects of xylazine, but naloxone should still be administered in the event of a suspected overdose. In 2023, ECDOH distributed 3,030 xylazine test strips.

Narcan Emergency Wall Boxes

Since November 2019, ECDOH has provided public access Narcan through Narcan wall boxes. Narcan wall boxes were intended for public sites and places where people may congregate. They are not locked - available in an emergency and on demand. Every wall box contains two Narcan kits and a variety of informational literature. The enclosed literature includes how to identify an overdose, naloxone-use instructions, contact information for treatment and counselling, and links to community resources. If the wall box supplies are used, the organization may order refill supplies from ECDOH.



In 2023, wall box demand continued to increase, with 915 boxes assembled and distributed. After a sudden spike in interest in 2022, demand for wall boxes may be tapering.



Opioid Prevention Education & Narcan (OPEN) Stands

ECDOH distributes modified newspaper holders containing harm reduction supplies to businesses and organizations upon request.

“OPEN” is an acronym for “Opioid Prevention Education & Narcan.” Each OPEN stand is stocked with 24 naloxone kits, 50 fentanyl test strips, 10 sharps disposal containers, and literature regarding links to resources and instructions for use of the materials.

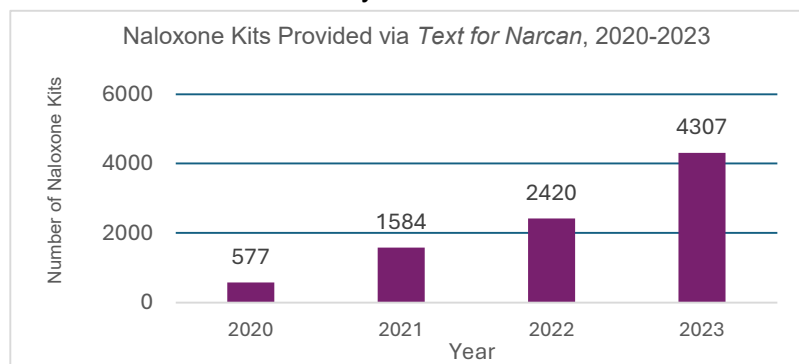
The first OPEN stands were distributed in January 2023, and their demand exceeded the available supply. In total, 70 stands were delivered in 2023: 43 within Erie County, 26 to Niagara County, and one to Orleans County.

The Office of Harm Reduction refills the OPEN stands upon the ordering organization’s request. In 2023, the most active location was the Horizon Health Services Bailey Recovery Center, requiring 6 refills.



Text for Narcan

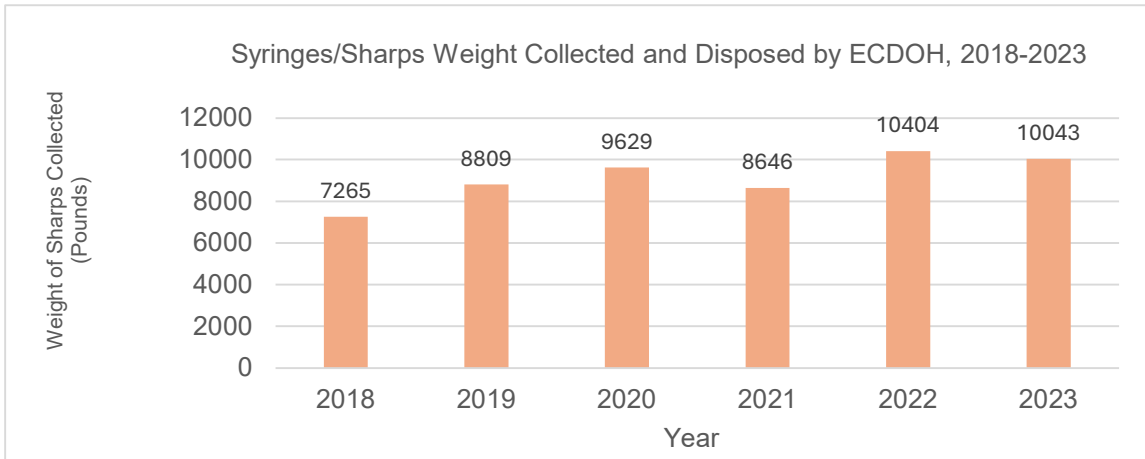
ECDOH started the “Text for Narcan” campaign in April 2020 to make naloxone more accessible during the COVID-19 pandemic. Individuals can text the text line and request harm reduction supplies. ECDOH asks for a mailing address and mails the supplies. Typically, naloxone arrives by mail within one week of placing the order. Since the start of the campaign, the program continues to increase in popularity. In 2023, the office delivered the largest quantity of naloxone kits via the *Text for Narcan* program compared to any other year. In 2023, the naloxone distributed through the program comprised 10% of all naloxone distributed this year. In 2022 our office began offering fentanyl test strips through the text line. Over 8,000 fentanyl test strips were distributed to respondents in 2023, approximately 19% of the total distributed for the year.



Syringes/Sharps Disposal

Since 2002 ECDOH has worked to increase access to appropriate safe disposal of syringes and unused or expired medications. Appropriate disposal is essential to ensure sharps waste does not end up in the community or improperly disposed in regular garbage, where it poses risks to community members and sanitation staff. In 2023, ECDOH collected and disposed of 10,043 pounds of syringe and sharps waste.

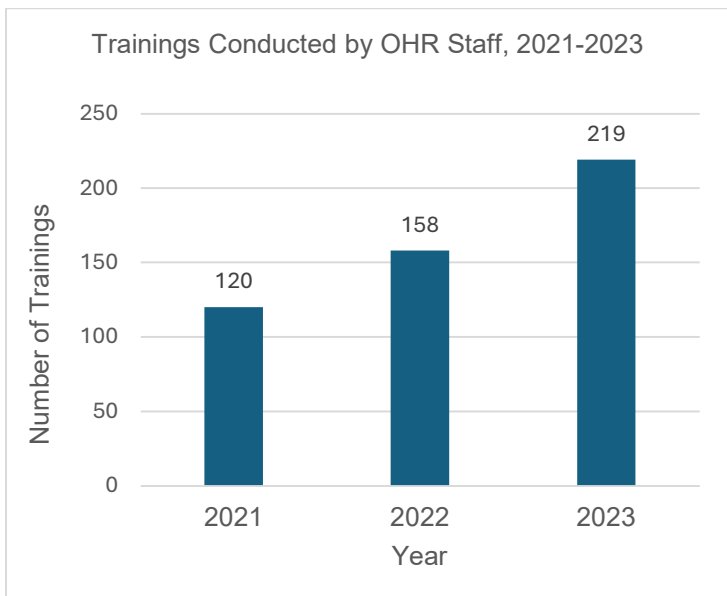
The Office of Harm Reduction also distributes quart-sized sharps containers for personal use, so that hazardous materials can be safely stored until brought to a disposal site. ECDOH maintains sharps disposal kiosks in the community to facilitate widespread safe disposal. In 2023, 2,269 sharps containers were distributed.



Naloxone-Use Training Summary

In 2023, the Office of Harm Reduction conducted 219 naloxone-use training sessions, more than any prior year. In 2023, ECDOH trained 5,729 people, constituting an 88% increase over the prior year.

In 2023 ECDOH distributed 8,123 naloxone kits during naloxone-use training sessions, 18% of the total naloxone kits distributed that year. ECDOH also distributed 6,536 fentanyl test strips during naloxone-use training sessions, 15.1% of total 2023 fentanyl test strip distribution.

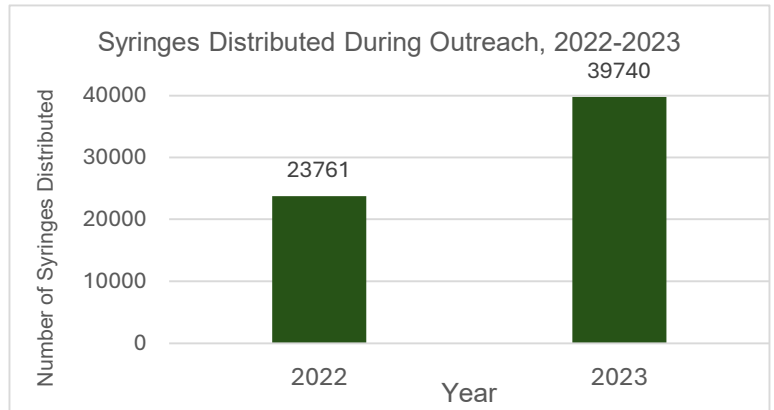
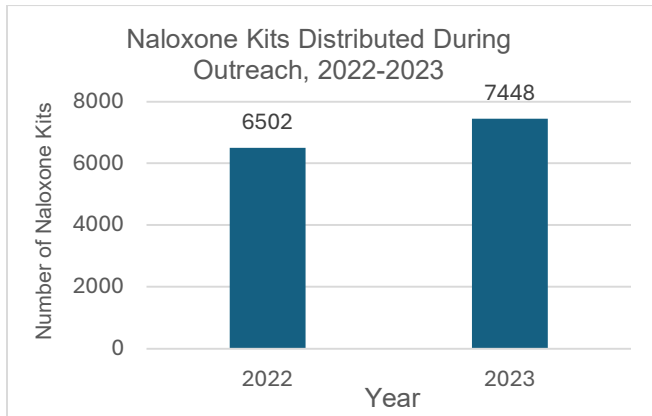


Outreach Summary

The Office of Harm Reduction conducted 187 outreach events in 2023, constituting a 48% increase over the 126 outreach events conducted in 2022. During outreach, the office distributed 7,448 naloxone kits, 7,500 fentanyl test strips, 1,350 xylazine test strips, and 39,740 syringes.

Naloxone kit distribution during outreach in 2023 increased 14.5% over the prior year. Outreach distribution comprised 17% of the total naloxone distributed in 2023 (44,473 kits).

Syringe distribution increased by 67% from 2022 to 2023 (approximately 16,000 more syringes distributed in a one-year span).



The most frequented 2023 outreach locations were Pearl Street (behind the Rath Building), Broadway (at St. John Kanty Church), and the Grant Ferry neighborhood.

FR-CARA Grant Updates

In 2022, the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) awarded the Office of Harm Reduction the First Responders-Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (FR-CARA) grant.

SAMSHA describes the aim of the grant as: "...to provide resources to support first responders and members of other key community sectors on training, administering, and distributing naloxone and other Food and Drug Administration (FDA)- approved overdose reversal medications or devices."

The Erie County grant's stated goals include: providing naloxone-use trainings with a trauma informed approach and trainings around fentanyl exposure safety, providing rescue supplies to First Responders, and placing Wall Boxes in community locations. The grant will also link overdose survivors to treatment via peer navigators and implement a survey of medical professionals regarding low-threshold buprenorphine prescriptions.

Data collection and analysis quality improvement began in 2023.

In June 2023, one Project Coordinator and three Peer Navigators fully staffed the FR-CARA grant.

In August 2023, the grant began funding the Leave Behind Pouch initiative. Leave Behind Pouches are small, zippered pouches that contain two naloxone doses (one kit), two fentanyl test strips, and literature with links to resources and instructions for naloxone and test strip use. ECDOH provides these pouches to First Responders, with the intention that they will leave the pouches at the scene when responding to an overdose. In 2023, the office distributed approximately 600 Leave Behind Pouches to First Responders.

In the grant year spanning October 2022 through September 2023, ECDOH provided 851 First Responders naloxone-use training in 26 training sessions.

Office of Harm Reduction Future Initiatives

Automation of Text Line

Due to a dramatic increase in the “*Text for Narcan*” order volume in recent years, we are working towards automating parts of the order fulfillment process. Currently our Data Entry Operators manually respond to each supply request, individually fill them, and record the order in a database. These tasks consume a large amount of time and effort that could be allocated elsewhere. The process may become unsustainable if orders continue to increase at the current rate. We are proactively collaborating with the Erie County Division of Information and Support Services to fund and maintain an automated text-response server and an order database. We hope to finish developing the system in Summer, 2024.

Task Force Rebranding

With participant input, the Opiate Epidemic Task Force will be rebranded to the Overdose Prevention Task Force in 2024, in line with our office’s expanded mission of preventing all overdoses rather than exclusively opioid-related overdoses. The working groups that comprise the task force are being reorganized, and the task force in general is restructuring to adapt to the changing nature of the crisis.

New Media Campaign Launch

Impact Marketing was selected as a partner to develop a comprehensive harm reduction and overdose prevention awareness campaign. They have experience working on local and statewide public health campaigns, and activities are planned over a two-year period. Impact Marketing will develop and implement marketing tactics designed to reach Erie County residents with useful, appropriate and effective messages about substance use, prevention, treatment and recovery.

Outreach Expansion

The Office of Harm Reduction is increasing efforts to engage community organizations, non-profits, and religious groups, providing them with the necessary tools to join the fight. In 2023, the office developed more partnerships than ever before, specifically in areas with high overdose occurrence. We are partnering with Friends of Night People and St. Luke’s Mission of Mercy, organizations that have a long history of working with our target populations. We have also partnered with Group Ministries on Buffalo’s East Side, providing them with training regarding street outreach and harm reduction supplies to distribute to their neighborhood.

Collaborations with Elected Officials

The Office of Harm Reduction hopes to deepen our collaboration with the Buffalo Common Council members and the City of Buffalo to bring harm reduction services directly to Buffalo residents. The involvement of local officials will be crucial to developing more public support for harm reduction efforts in the areas where they will be most impactful, as well as tailoring our harm reduction approaches to the specific needs of each community.

Appendix

For inquiries regarding the data in this report, please email our Data Analyst at Jason.Meurlin@erie.gov

Table 1: Year-Over-Year Change in Non-Fatal Overdoses by ZIP Code

ZIP Code	2022 Non-Fatal Incidents	2023 Non-Fatal Incidents	Change	% Change
14006	29	18	-11	-37.9%
14043	22	22	0	0.0%
14051	7	8	1	14.3%
14072	5	7	2	40.0%
14075	34	19	-15	-44.1%
14086	13	17	4	30.8%
14127	11	11	0	0.0%
14150	45	34	-11	-24.4%
14201	48	38	-10	-20.8%
14202	18	18	0	0.0%
14203	16	17	1	6.3%
14204	7	15	8	114.3%
14206	31	29	-2	-6.5%
14207	44	52	8	18.2%
14208	8	5	-3	-37.5%
14209	19	16	-3	-15.8%
14210	19	24	5	26.3%
14211	7	20	13	185.7%
14212	25	21	-4	-16.0%
14213	33	50	17	51.5%
14214	10	14	4	40.0%
14215	14	21	7	50.0%
14216	12	11	-1	-8.3%
14217	26	29	3	11.5%
14218	41	22	-19	-46.3%
14219	18	16	-2	-11.1%
14220	9	15	6	66.7%
14221	17	28	11	64.7%
14222	8	15	7	87.5%
14223	13	15	2	15.4%
14224	25	29	4	16.0%
14225	44	41	-3	-6.8%
14226	28	17	-11	-39.3%
14227	20	16	-4	-20.0%
14228	18	15	-3	-16.7%

Data excluded for ZIP codes with fewer than 5 incidents in 2022 or 2023.

Table 2: Year-Over-Year Change in Fatal Overdoses by ZIP Code

ZIP Code	2022 Fatal Incidents	2023 Fatal Incidents	Change	% Change
14075	8	7	-1	-12.5%
14127	7	6	-1	-14.3%
14150	16	18	2	12.5%
14201	8	19	11	137.5%
14203	8	7	-1	-12.5%
14204	6	14	8	133.3%
14206	18	21	3	16.7%
14207	27	22	-5	-18.5%
14208	11	6	-5	-45.5%
14209	8	7	-1	-12.5%
14210	9	16	7	77.8%
14211	20	32	12	60.0%
14212	21	25	4	19.0%
14213	22	26	4	18.2%
14214	12	6	-6	-50.0%
14215	31	31	0	0.0%
14216	13	15	2	15.4%
14218	13	11	-2	-15.4%
14220	7	18	11	157.1%
14222	9	14	5	55.6%
14224	6	5	-1	-16.7%
14225	9	10	1	11.1%
14226	10	6	-4	-40.0%
14227	7	6	-1	-14.3%

Data excluded for ZIP codes with fewer than 5 incidents in 2022 or 2023.

Table 3: Harm Reduction Supplies Distribution by Month, 2023

Month	Naloxone	Fentanyl Tests	Xylazine Tests	Wall Boxes	Open Stands	Syringes
Jan	3178	3,082	0	41	6	2,740
Feb	2604	1,016	0	42	0	2,380
Mar	4386	3,084	0	63	4	3,300
Apr	4379	3,313	0	72	3	2,750
May	4138	4,663	0	88	9	3,667
Jun	3852	4,082	188	122	16	5,280
Jul	1801	2,208	70	22	0	3,270
Aug	5264	4,089	349	272	1	4,390
Sep	4360	4,749	750	57	10	4,090
Oct	3942	6,998	909	83	12	3,930
Nov	3711	3,827	429	21	7	1,570
Dec	2858	2,139	335	32	2	2,373