

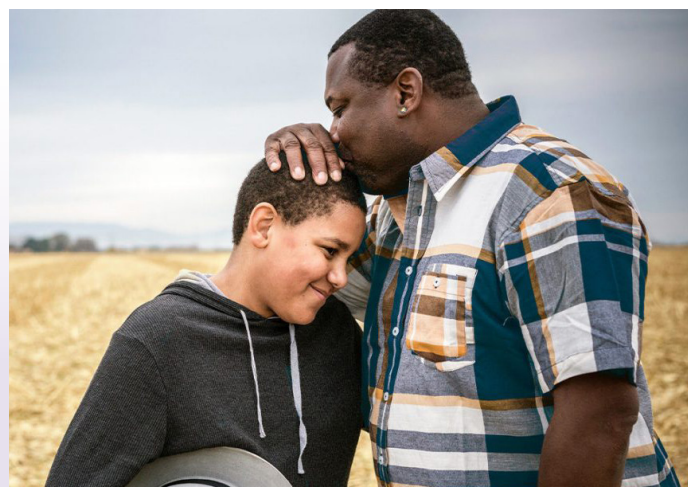
# Chapter 1

## Introduction



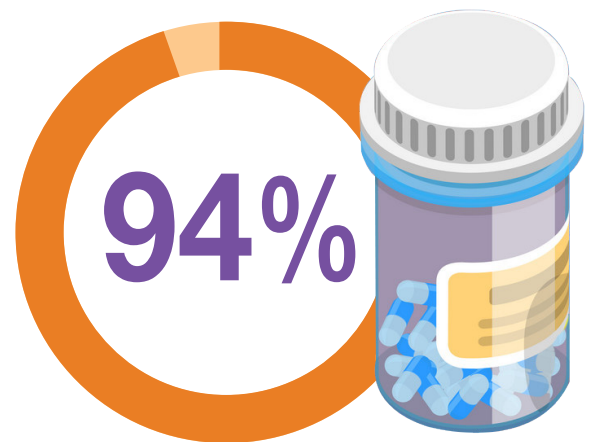
**Preventing drug use and its related harms is a shared responsibility for families, communities, and medical providers.** There are a wide variety of supportive organizations for parents to turn to when they need guidance. Here you'll find information about opioids both nationally and in Connecticut, insight into risk and protective factors for kids, tips for communicating about substance use with children of different ages, recommendations for keeping kids safe at home, options for prevention and treatment, important questions to ask medical providers who might prescribe opioids, and more detailed information about the youth populations that experience heightened risk.

Drug overdose is the leading cause of unintentional death in the United States, with a significant number stemming from opioid use. Medical and non-medical use of opioids increased sharply in the 1990s, causing increases in overdose mortality, rates of emergency room visits for nonmedical use, withdrawal symptoms in newborns exposed to substances in utero, and opioid use disorder (OUD) treatment admissions.



## Connecticut

Over the last several years, Connecticut has seen a steady and alarming increase in the number of overdose deaths and opioid-related emergency room visits. Connecticut's Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) reported a 236% increase in overdose deaths between 2012 and 2019.



**AS OF 2019, OPIOIDS were involved in 94% of unintentional overdose deaths in Connecticut.**

At 31 deaths per 100,000, the opioid epidemic in Connecticut far exceeds the nationwide average of 14 deaths per 100,000 people and is higher than neighboring states: 29 per 100,000 in Massachusetts, 27 per 100,000 in Rhode Island, 27 per 100,000 in Maine, 18 per 100,000 in New Hampshire, and 15 per 100,000 in Vermont. According to the Live Loud campaign, an initiative of Connecticut's Response to Opioid Use Disorder (CROUD), unintentional drug overdose kills more Connecticut residents than motor vehicle accidents every year.

# Who do opioids affect?

Figure 1 shows the unintentional drug overdose mortality rate in Connecticut, by race/ethnicity for 2019 and the first half of 2020 (January – June). During 2019–2020, drug overdose death rates were highest among non-Hispanic White and non-Hispanic Black populations.

Figure 1.

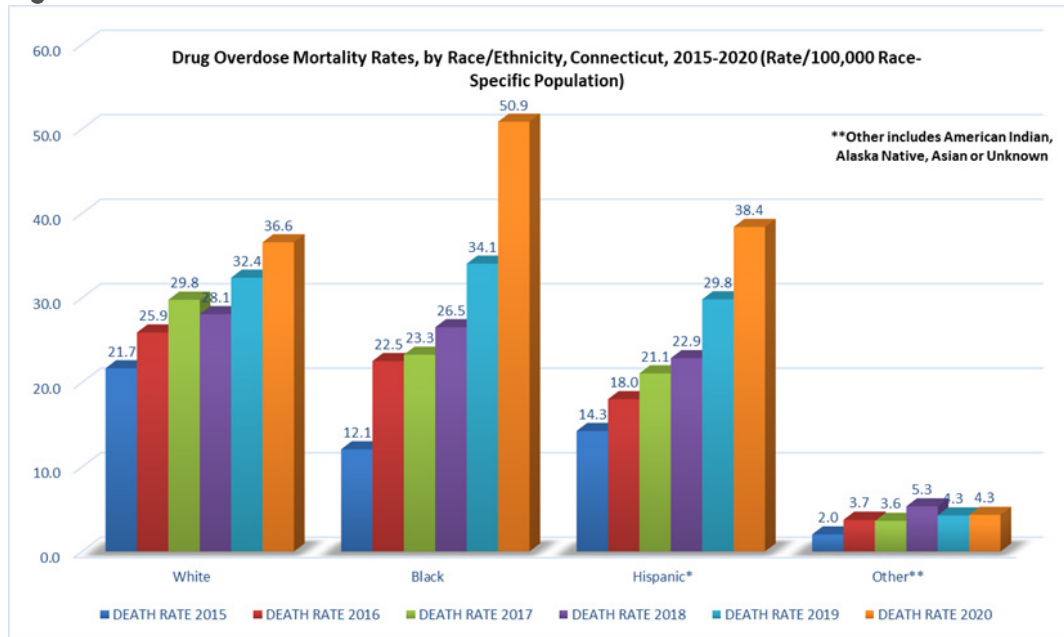
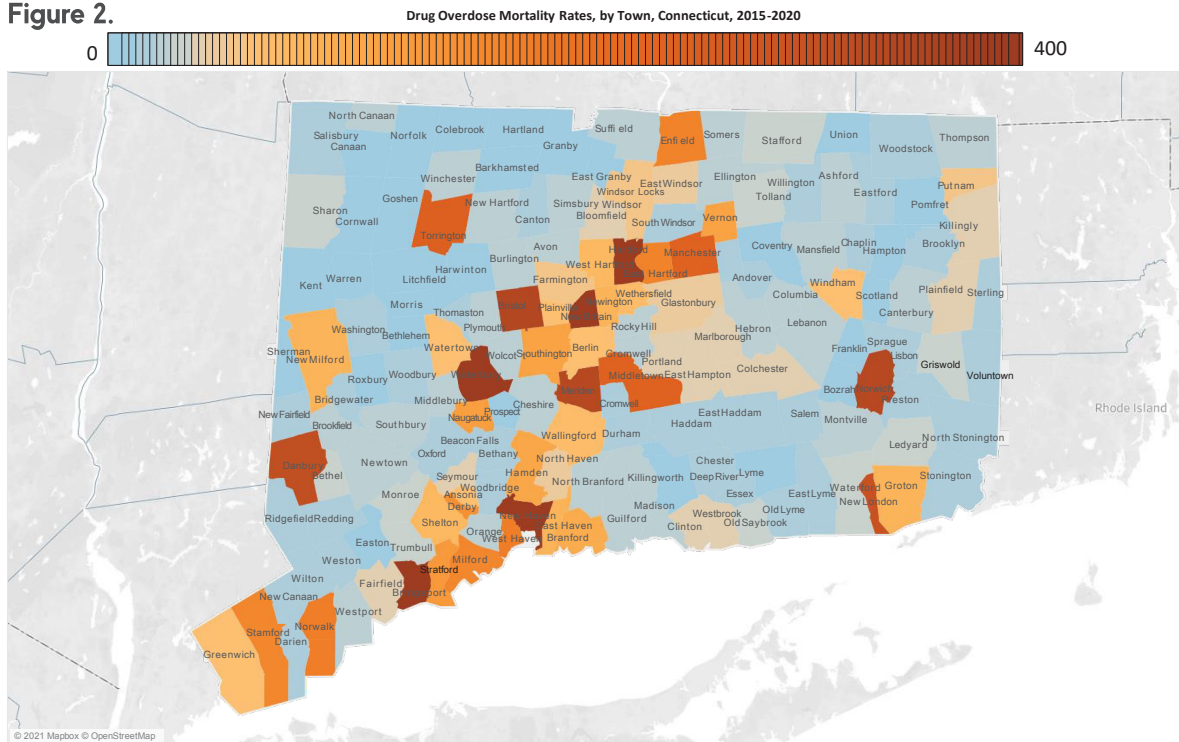


Figure 2 shows drug overdose mortality between 2019–2020. Drug overdose deaths reach across the state. New Haven County (44.2) had the highest rate, followed by Litchfield County (39.9), Middlesex County (39.4), Hartford County (39.2), and New London County (39.2). Unintentional overdose deaths can happen anywhere.

Figure 2.



Map based on average of Longitude and average of Latitude. For pane Average of Latitude: Color shows sum of Death Count 2015-2020 (Sheet1 (deathcount by town 15-20)). Details are shown for Town and Town. The data is filtered on count of Death Count 2015-2020 (Sheet1 (deathcount by town 15-20)), which ranges from 1 to 200. The view is filtered on Town and sum of Death Count 2015-2020 (Sheet1 (deathcount by town 15-20)). The Town filter keeps 169 of 169 members. The sum of Death Count 2015-2020 (Sheet1 (deathcount by town 15-20)) filter includes everything.