

# Philadelphia's Overdose Response 2023

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***[phila.gov/opioids](https://phila.gov/opioids)***

# Opioid Response Unit

- **The Opioid Response Unit (ORU)** operates out of the Managing Directors Office to ensure City departments are operating under a unified response to the overdose crisis.
- Guided by twelve strategic initiatives, the ORU is focused on **preventing overdose, supporting treatment and harm reduction as it relates to chaotic substance use and helping impacted communities recover.**

## The ORU oversees four strategy workgroups

1 Community Support

2 Public Safety

3 Prevention

4 Treatment



# **2023 Action Items**

# PREVENTION



- \* **Develop and implement a data driven Citywide Strategic Harm Reduction Plan to**
  - **Target overdose prevention education** including increased risk due to Fentanyl in drug supply, impacts of Xylazine, polysubstance use, and stimulant overdose risk
  - **Increase awareness and utilization of Naloxone and Fentanyl test strips**
  - **Ensure culturally competent communication strategies**
  - **Offer supportive services to families** impacted by substance misuse
  - **Increase engagement and distribution of harm reduction supplies** to faith-based communities, businesses, supermarkets, and convenience stores

\* **Expand Harm Reduction services citywide with a focus on targeted zip codes**

\* **Sustain Alternative Response Unit (AR-2) and scope expansion of services and interventions that include an EMS component**

**Develop targeted culturally competent curriculum and engagement materials informed by the Citywide Strategic Harm Reduction plan:**

- Juvenile justice, child welfare involvement
- Black Maternal/Family engagement
- Faith-based communities
- LGBTQIA+
- Residents that have Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

# TREATMENT



\* **Launch mobile methadone program** and operate mobile methadone units

\* **Expand access and increase MAT dosage in the Prisons** via DBHIDS contract for Behind the Walls

**Expand 100 Day Challenge mobile wound care pilot** to two mobile wound care vans with expanded geographic reach and after-hours operations

**Scope physical health reimbursement and explore coordination with a federally qualified health care center (FQHC) for mobile wound care**

\* **Scope contingency management model to pilot in 2024** and explore national evidence-based practices specific to abating stimulant use

**Scope process to ensure treatment system agility**, adjust to changes in drug supply and increase in overdoses from polysubstance and non-opiates

*\*OD Stat  
Recommendation*

# PUBLIC SAFETY



**Implement post-arrest, pre-arraignment physical health and behavioral health supports in addition to connections to services**

for all individuals arrested and awaiting arraignment in East Division

**Implement Drug Market Intervention in East Division to disrupt the open-air drug markets in coordination with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies**

**Expand East Division Police Assisted Diversion (PAD) to larger site**  
more suitable for processing and service delivery for PAD arrest referrals

**Ensure safety and security for Free Library and Parks and Recreation programming**  
e.g. Play Parks, Swim Philly, and Play Streets, movie nights, etc.

*\*OD Stat  
Recommendation*

# PUBLIC SAFETY



**Increase data-sharing and public information for the Accelerated Misdemeanor (AMP) court diversion program**

**Support the Philadelphia School District Opioid Task Force's next steps and recommendations** to address safety and quality of life concerns, and increase city services in and around schools impacted by the opioid epidemic

**Coordinate with SEPTA to address safety, security, and quality of life concerns** on transit lines and adjacent to transit hubs

**Increase enforcement of quality-of-life concerns**, focusing on criminal prosecution and civil fines for illegal dumping, and continued coordination of the Nuisance Business Task Force

*\*OD Stat  
Recommendation*

# COMMUNITY SUPPORT

**Launch citywide Opioid Settlement Community Prevention Fund**  
with focus on target zip codes with highest overdoses in 2021

**Sustain Kensington Community Resilience Fund in 2023**  
and build the capacity of grantees via learning communities

**Collaborate with community driven, trauma informed Kensington master planning efforts**  
with equity-focused investments in home repairs, public schools, parks, and safe corridors



**Expand housing opportunities, in addition to the new 100-Day Challenge slots, to increase flow within the system including:**

- Housing Smart Re-entry
- Progress Haven 2
- Housing First Pathways
- Rapid Rehousing: Street to Home
- Shallow Rent: Home \$200
- OUD/Serious Medical Need

**Increase awareness of and simplify access to trauma resources**  
in targeted zip codes with highest fatal overdoses in 2021

# COMMUNITY SUPPORT

**Implement culturally competent community engagement plan** focused on 2021 target OD zip codes

*informed by Prevention strategy group's 2023 Citywide Harm Reduction Plan.*

**\* Scope feasibility, identify an operational framework for a sobering center**

**Sustain weekly Kensington-based Wellness Resource Fair in 2023**

and scope feasibility for expansion to other impacted communities

**Support Public Safety Strategy's Drug Market Intervention (DMI)** with community support and city services at locations where law enforcement interventions occur

*see Public Safety action item*

**Coordinate with PHDC to increase community outreach regarding programs and resources for residents**

e.g. Basic Systems Home Repair, increase applications from targeted zip codes with an increase in fatal overdoses in 2021

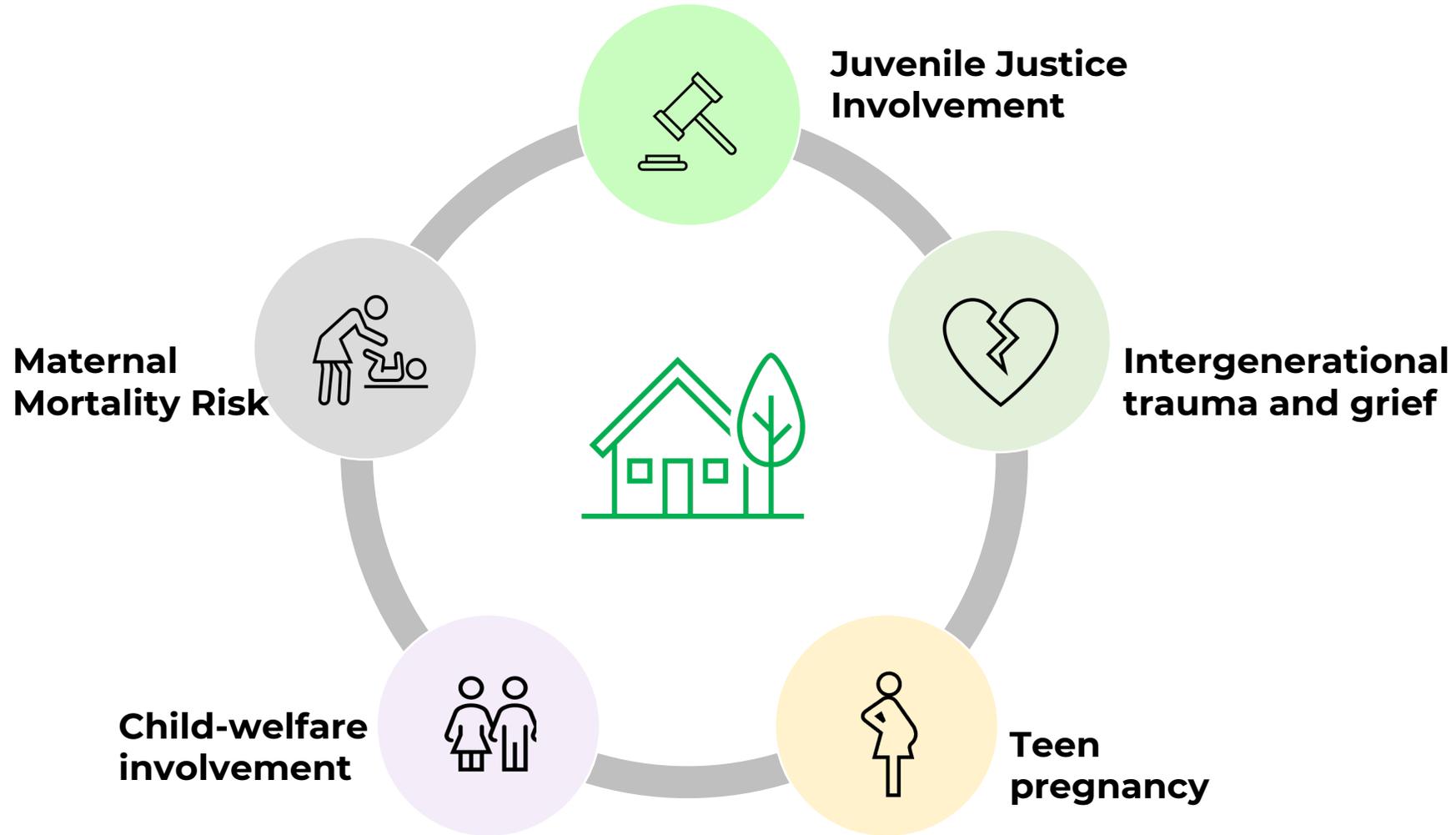


*\*OD Stat  
Recommendation*

There is no thing as a  
“single-issue struggle” because  
**we do not live single-issue lives.**

**– Audre Lorde**

**To understand the overdose crisis,**  
we must recognize the intersectional nature of "systems"

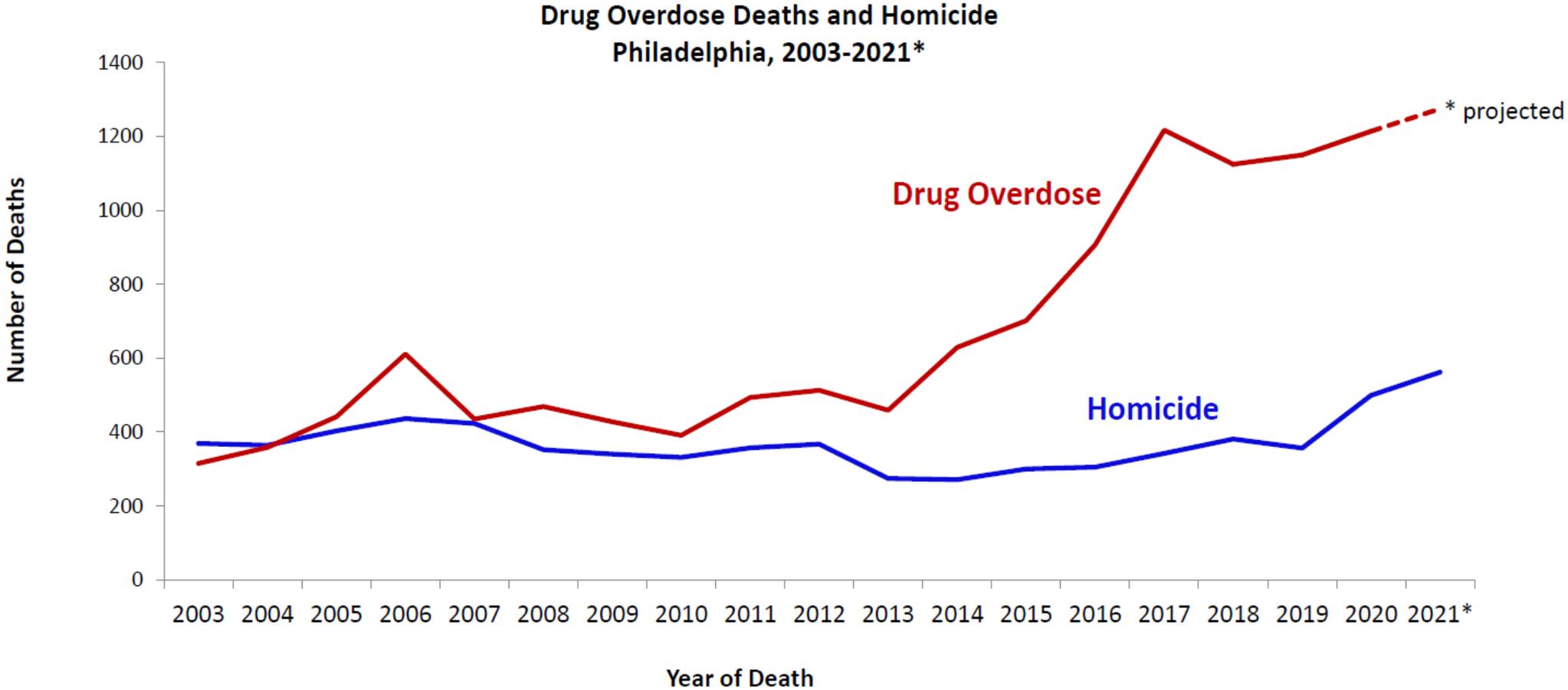




**What is the Drug War?** | Drug Policy Alliance

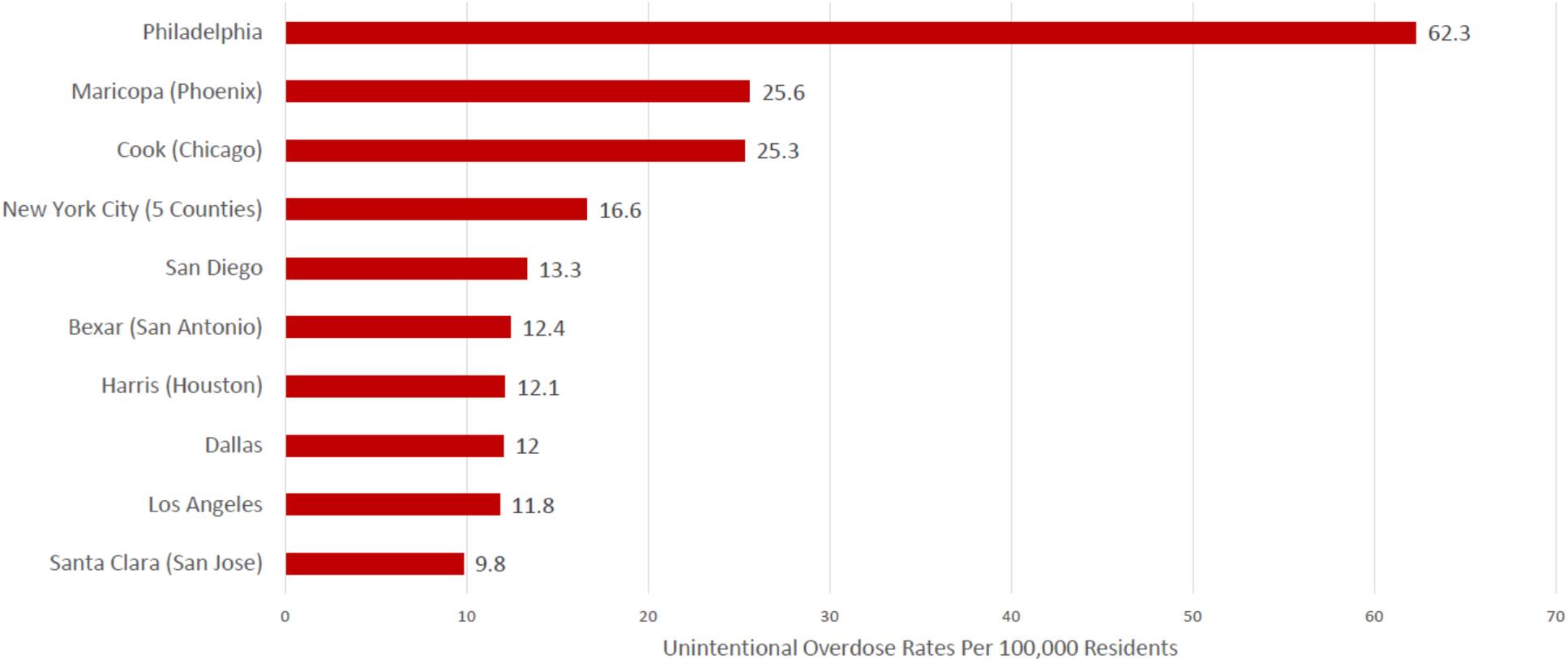
# **Overdose trends in Philadelphia**

# Drug overdoses cause **more than twice** as many deaths as homicides in Philadelphia



# Philadelphia has the **highest** overdose death rate of the largest U.S. cities

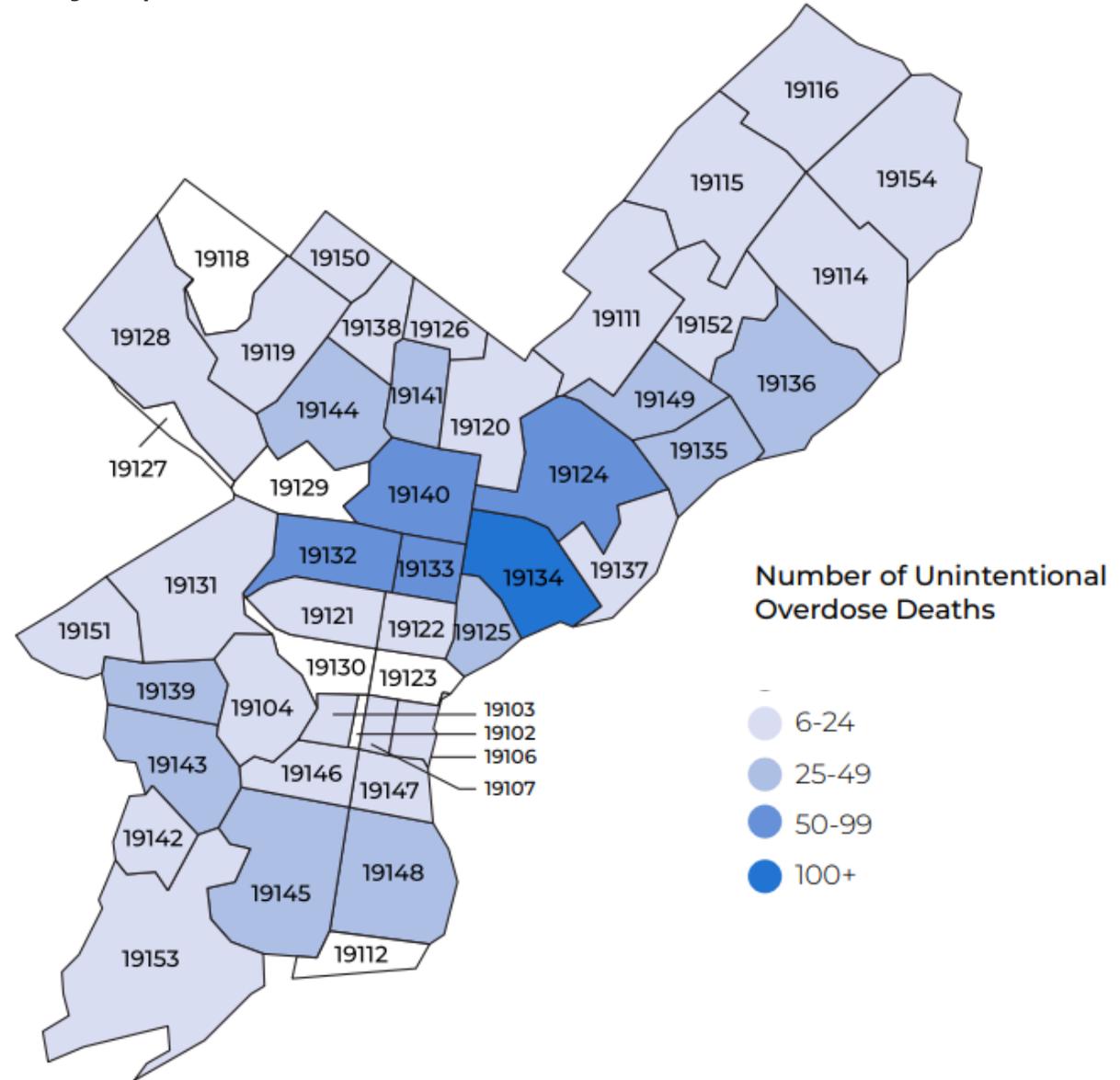
2019 Unintentional Overdose Rates in Counties Associated with Top 10 Largest US Cities



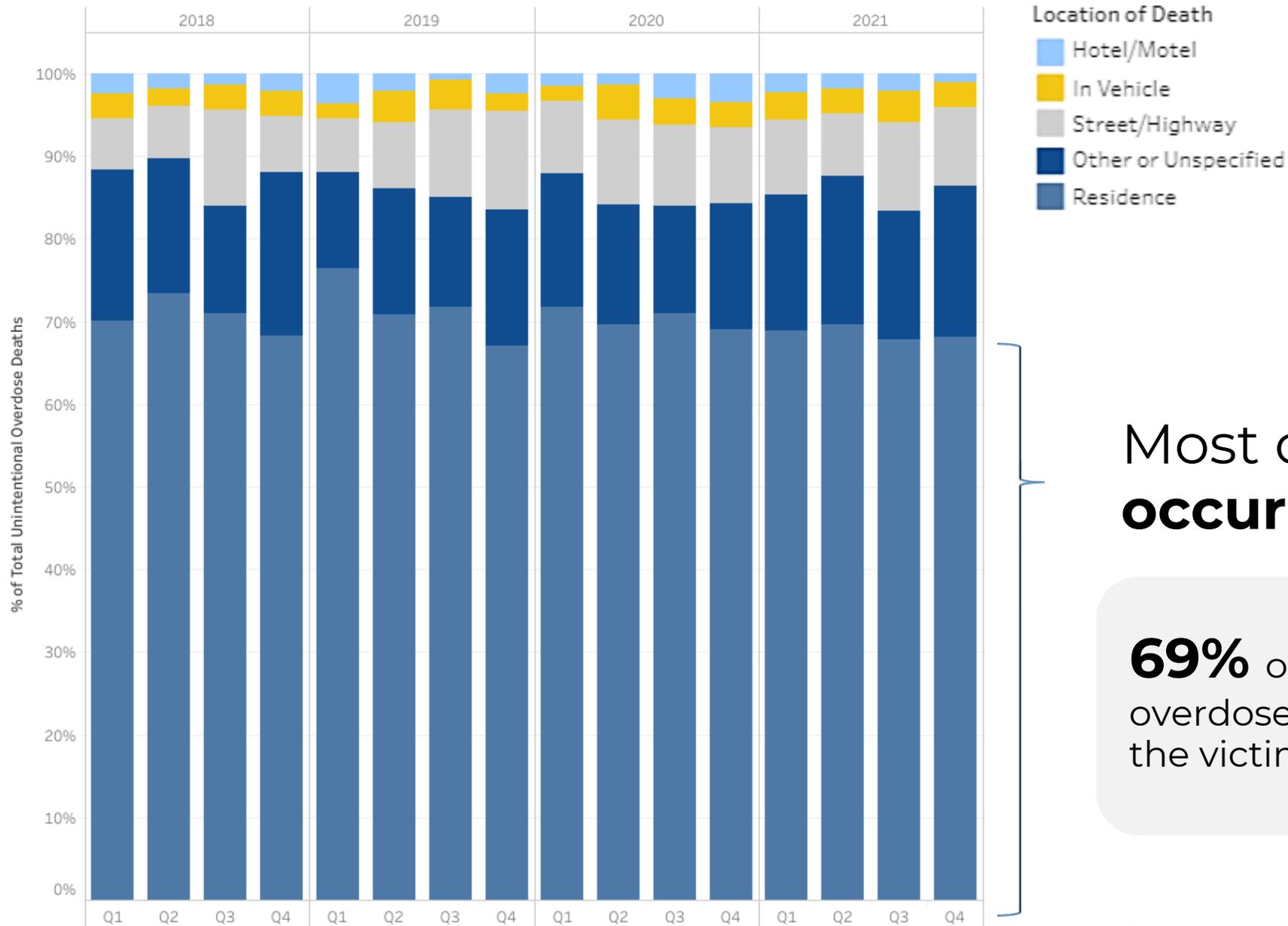
# The overdose crisis is citywide

<b>19134</b>	Kensington
19140	Tioga
19124	Frankford
19133	Fairhill
19132	Allegheny West

Incidence of Unintentional Overdose Deaths by Zip Code, 2021



# Unintentional Fatal Overdoses by Incident Location, 2016-2021



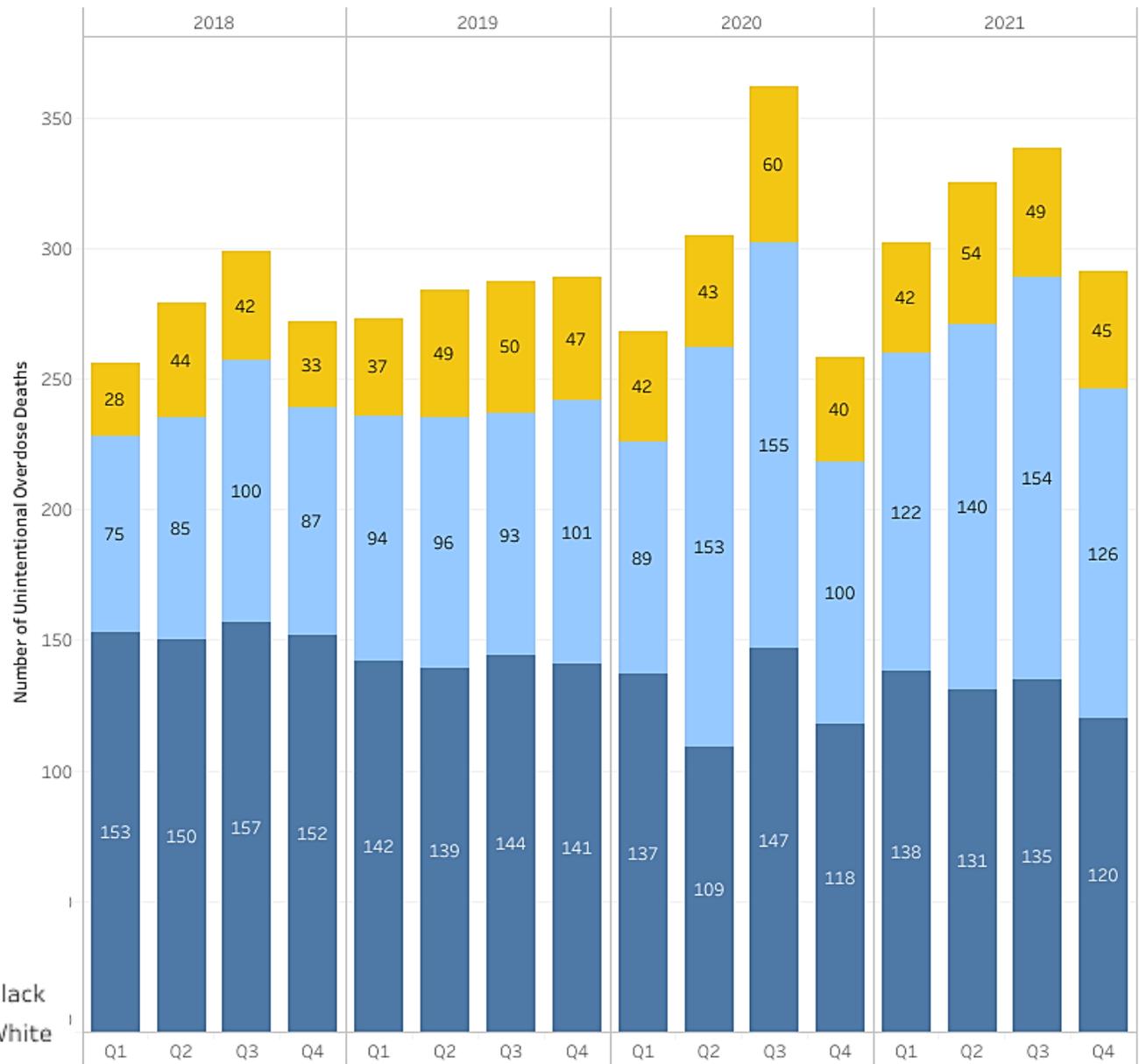
Most overdoses  
**occur at home**

**69%** of unintentional overdose deaths occurred in the victim's residence in 2021.

Unintentional Overdose Deaths by Race and Ethnicity, 2018 - 2021

**42%** of overdoses occurred among **non-Hispanic Black Philadelphians** in 2021

For the first time, this was higher than the number of fatal overdoses among **non-Hispanic White Philadelphians**

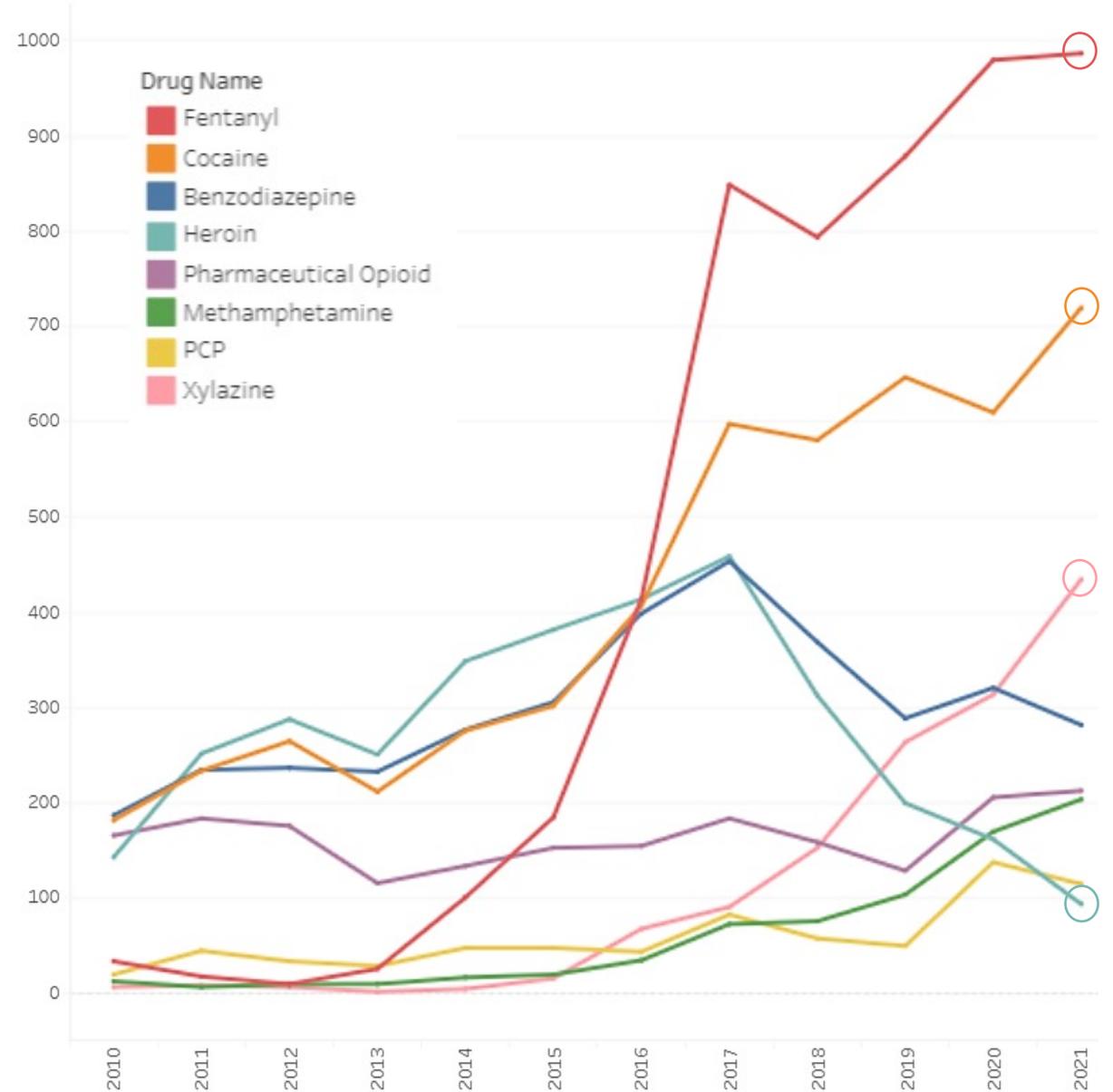


Data Source: Philadelphia Medical Examiner's Office

The changing drug supply is driving overdose deaths

1. Fentanyl
2. Cocaine
3. Xylazine

Unintentional Drug Overdose Deaths by Specific Drugs Involved, 2010-2021



Data Source: Philadelphia Medical Examiner's Office

**What are opioids?**

# OPIOIDS

A BREAKDOWN OF THE INVISIBLE  
OVERDOSE CRISIS IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

**OPIOIDS: A Breakdown of the Invisible Overdose Crisis in the Black Community |**  
DBHIDS

# Opioids are drugs used to control pain



Poppy opium



Substances derived from  
or similar to opium



## Prescription pain relievers

Oxycotin, Morphine,  
Percocet, Vicodin



## Street drugs

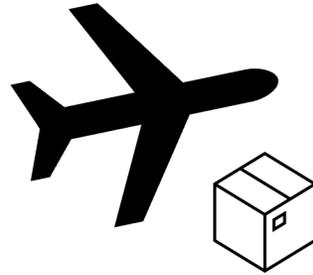
heroin, fentanyl



Methadone  
Suboxone (Bupe)

# What is **fentanyl**?

Fentanyl  
is a synthetic opioid  
**50-100x**  
stronger  
than morphine



Since 2013, illicitly  
manufactured  
**fentanyl** has been  
shipped from  
overseas to U.S.



No drug use is 100% safe.  
Use with someone else around and always have naloxone

**Fentanyl is also found  
contaminating other  
street drugs**, often  
unknown to the user

*Fentanyl has been found  
in these substances:*



# Since 2013, fentanyl has been increasingly found in drug supply

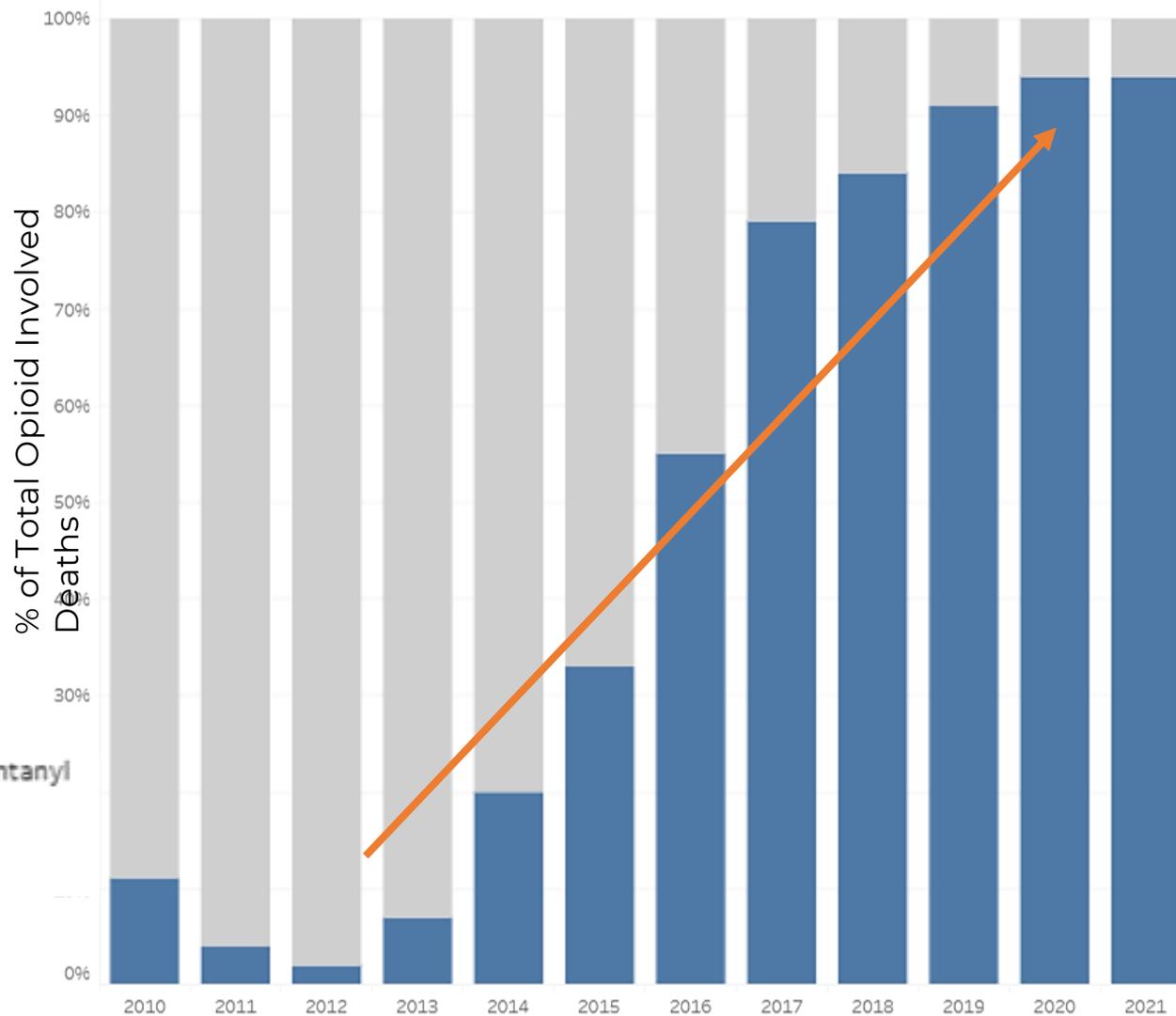
## 94%

of all overdose deaths  
had fentanyl present  
in 2021

## 77%

of drug overdoses  
involving pharmaceutical  
opioid had fentanyl  
in 2021

Percentage of unintentional opioid-related overdose deaths with Fentanyl or a Fentanyl Analog Present (2010-2021)



## What are stimulants? class of drugs

- Includes **cocaine, amphetamines (speed), meth, caffeine** and **nicotine**
- Speeds up messages traveling between the brain and the body, making a person feel more alert
- **Stimulants might be mixed with a depressant** such as opioids, benzodiazepines or alcohol

## What is xylazine? also known as “tranq” or “tranq dope”

- **An animal tranquilizer not approved for human use**
- Has been found cut with fentanyl and cocaine to give a longer-lasting high
- Causes severe skin wounds that can lead to loss of limb if left untreated
- Does not respond to naloxone (Narcan) or other forms of traditional opioid reversal because it is not an opioid

# What is substance use?

**Substance use** refers to any use of drugs

- This includes legal drugs and illegal drugs
- It may include mild, moderate, or severe substance use disorder as well as recreational drug use.

# Why do people use substances?



To feel good



To feel better



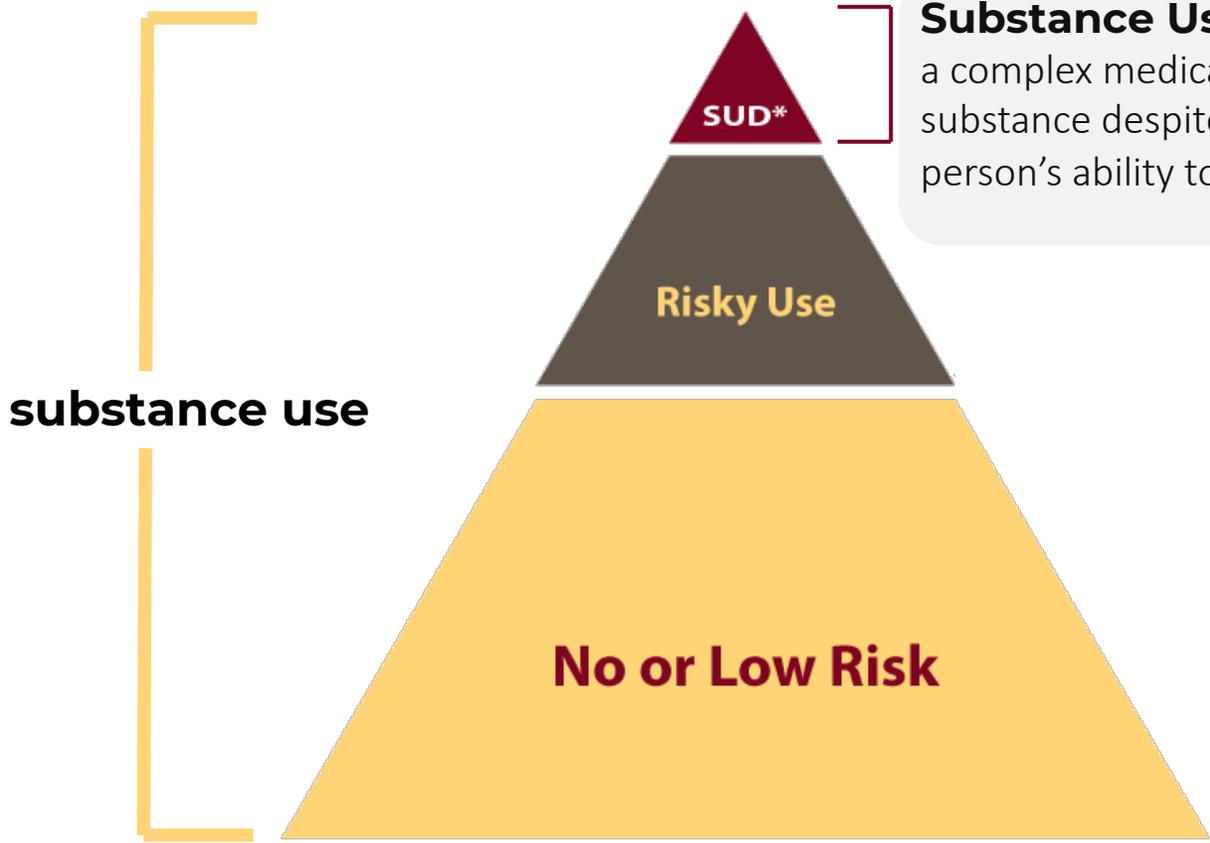
To do better



Curiosity and social pressure



Medical purposes



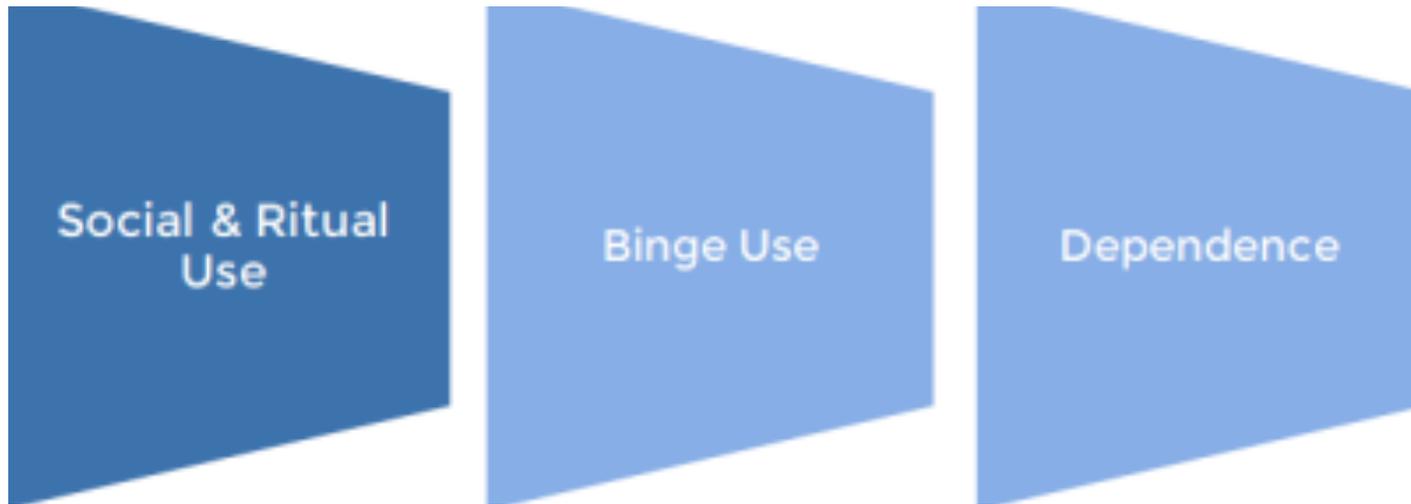
### **Substance Use Disorder (SUD)**

a complex medical condition in which there is intense, uncontrolled use of a substance despite harmful consequences to the point where use impairs a person's ability to function in day-to-day life.

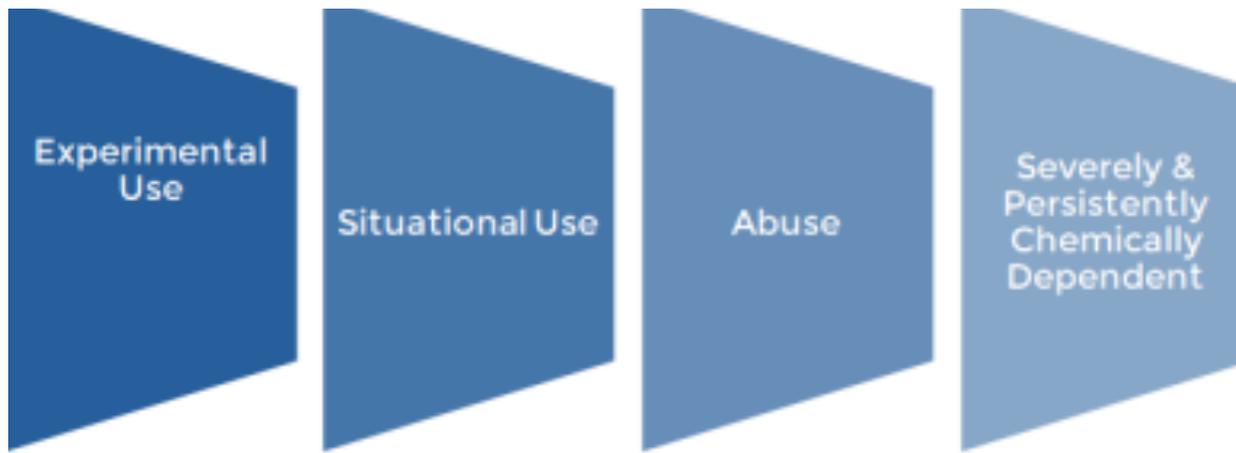
**addiction**, not a clinical term, describes a person's inability to control the impulse to use drugs even when there are negative consequences.

*People who use  
Person with SUD*

\*Substance Use Disorders



**Drug use happens on a continuum**



All types of use involve risk



# **Risk factors** related to substance misuse



Developmental



Environmental



Social



Genetic



Co-occurring disorders

# What **treatment** is available for Opioid Use Disorder?

In Pennsylvania, the gold standard for treating OUD is **Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD)\***

\*Formerly known as Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT): Use of an FDA-approved medication and a behavioral health intervention

## Medications for OUD



### **Buprenorphine** / suboxone

- Daily medication as a film or tablet
- Curbs opioid cravings



### **Methadone**

- Daily medication as pill or liquid
- Curbs opioid cravings & manages withdrawal



### **Vivitrol**

- Monthly injection
- Binds & blocks opioid receptors to reduce cravings
- Daily pill form(Naltrexone)

# How to spot an opioid overdose:

Call 911 immediately if a person exhibits ANY of the following symptoms:

- **Extreme sleepiness**, nodding, or can't stand up
- Slow, irregular or **stopped breathing**
- Not snoring regularly, not catching breath during sleep
- **Gurgling**
- **Pale, grayish or ash-like complexion.**
- **Lips and nails turning blue or purple**

# What to do if someone may be experiencing an overdose:

- If you suspect someone is having an overdose, **call 911 immediately and stay until EMS arrives.**
- You can use **naloxone** to reverse an opioid overdose.

Learn how by signing up for a free training by the health department:



# Resources & Services

If you or anyone you know is interested in services, please call one of the numbers below:

- **Access Treatment:**
  - Call **Community Behavioral Health's Member Services** at 888-545-2600.
  
- **Order free naloxone:**
  - You can access free naloxone, a medication that reverses opioid overdose, by visiting **nextdistro.org**
  
- **Homeless Outreach Hotline**
  - 215-232-1984

# Resources & Services

**If you or anyone you know is interested in services, please call one of the numbers below:**

- **Philadelphia Crisis Line (Suicide and Behavioral Health Crisis)**
  - 988
- **Mental Health & Substance Use Services**
  - 888-545-2600 or visit [CBHPhilly.org](http://CBHPhilly.org)
- **Network of Neighbors (Trauma Support)**
  - 267-233-4837
- **Information, Intervention, Recovery Support Line:**
  - 1(800)-221-6333

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