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To the Honorable JB Pritzker, Governor,
and Members of the General Assembly:

This report provides preliminary details on opioid overdoses in Illinois for the year 2021 and the first two quarters of 2022. Overdose data from the previous years are also provided to allow for comparisons. The Opioid Overdose Semiannual Report consolidates the overdose reporting requirements under the Hospital Licensing Act (210 ILCD 85/6.14g) and the Counties Code (55 ILCS 5/3-3013).

The report includes information on overdose deaths, including heroin and opioid analgesics. Additionally, it includes non-fatal overdose information reported by hospitals to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) as required in the Hospital Licensing Act (210 ILCS 85/6.14g(b)). This semiannual report updates the “Statewide Semiannual Opioid Report – May 2022,” adding more recent data and trends. The 2021 data shared within this report are finalized, but the 2022 data remain preliminary as cases are reviewed. The previous report, “Statewide Semiannual Opioid Report- May 2022” contained preliminary 2021 data and included demographic information for 2021. Those data were finalized with no changes. <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/opioids/idph-data-dashboard/statewide-semiannual-opioid-report-may-2022.html>

In 2021, opioid overdose deaths among Illinois residents increased 2.3% from 2,944 deaths in 2020 to 3,013 deaths in 2021. Additional notable findings from 2021 include the dramatic increase in synthetic opioid deaths in Illinois youths aged 13-17.

Continuous reporting, updates, and information may be found on the IDPH website at <http://dph.illinois.gov/opioids/home> and <https://idph.illinois.gov/OpioidDataDashboard/>.

I hope you find this report informative and useful as we continue working together to address the opioid crisis facing Illinois.

Sincerely,

Sameer Vohra, MD, JD, MA
Director

Statewide Semiannual Opioid Report

Illinois Department of Public Health

February 2023

FATAL OPIOID OVERDOSES

2022 data are still provisional and may change as cases are reviewed.

In 2021, there were 3,717 drug overdose fatalities in Illinois, which is a loss of more than 10 Illinois residents each day and the leading cause of accidental death for Illinois residents aged 18-49. Of these drug fatalities, 3,013 (81%) were caused by an opioid.

Provisional 2022 data (Q1 – Q2) show a 3.3% increase in the number of opioid overdose fatalities when compared to the same time frame in 2021. Monthly trends have remained elevated, with total monthly fatalities in 2022 ranging from 231 to 285 (Fig. 1). The 12-month rolling average has remained steady since autumn 2020 (Fig. 2).

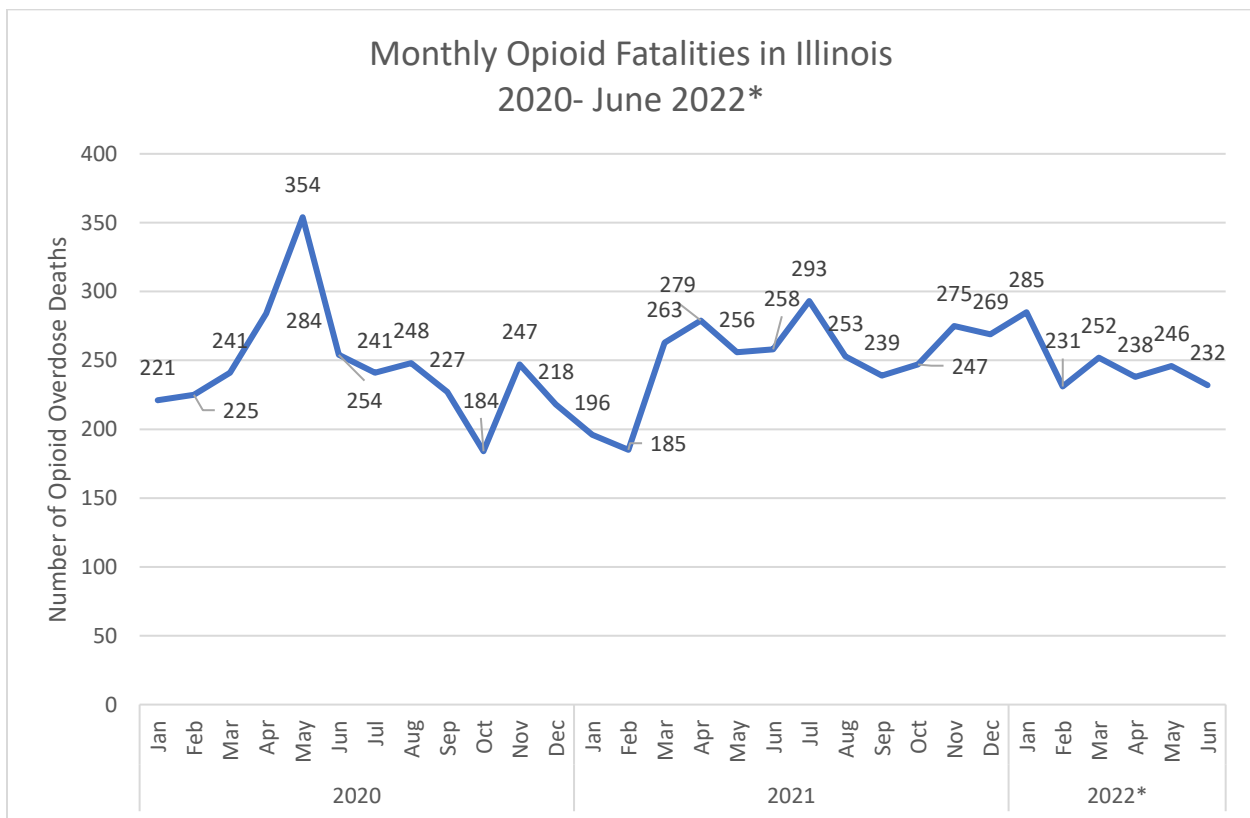


Figure 1. Monthly opioid fatalities in Illinois from 2020- June 2022 as reported by the Illinois Vital Records System, IDPH. *2022 opioid fatalities are provisional and may change as cases are reviewed.

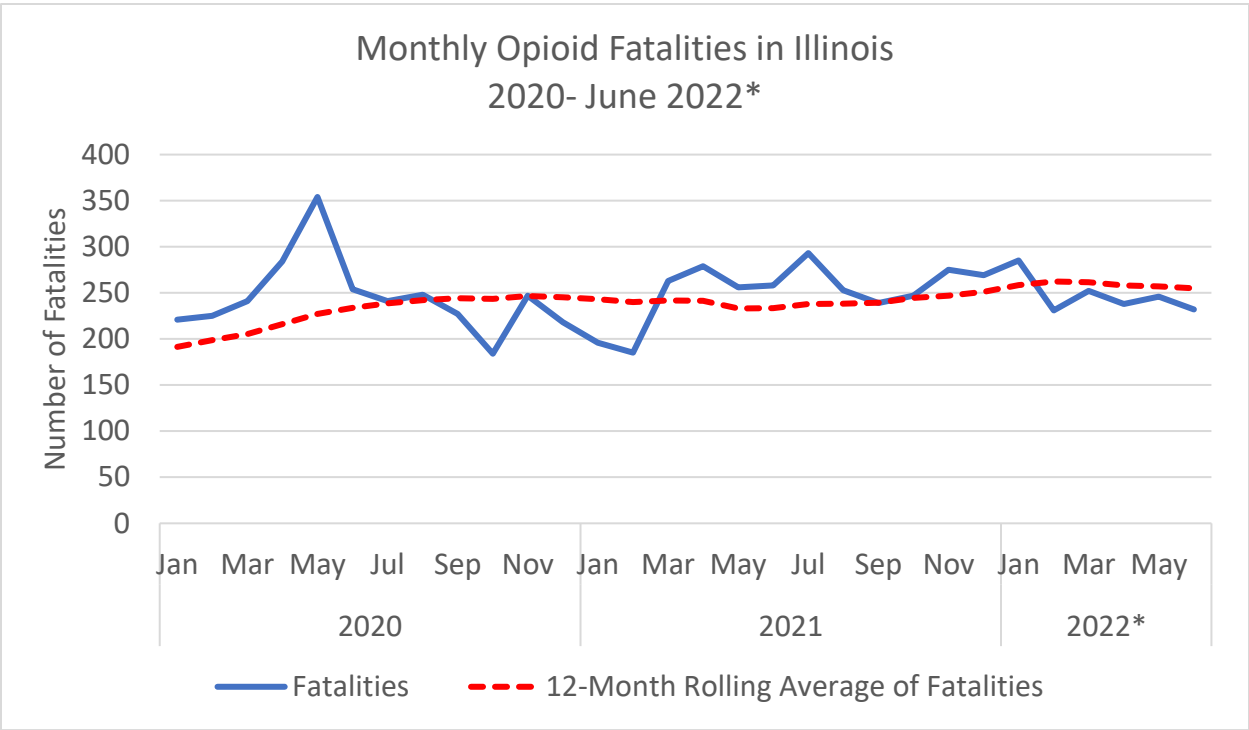


Figure 2. Monthly and 12-month rolling averages of opioid fatalities in Illinois from 2020 - June 2022 as reported by the Illinois Vital Records System, IDPH. *2022 opioid fatalities are provisional and may change as cases are reviewed.

Synthetic Opioid Overdoses in Youth

The number of fatal synthetic opioid overdoses in Illinois youths (age 13-17 years) increased from three fatalities in 2020 to 14 fatalities in 2021.

This is a **367%** increase in the number of synthetic opioid overdoses in Illinois adolescents.

NONFATAL OPIOID OVERDOSES

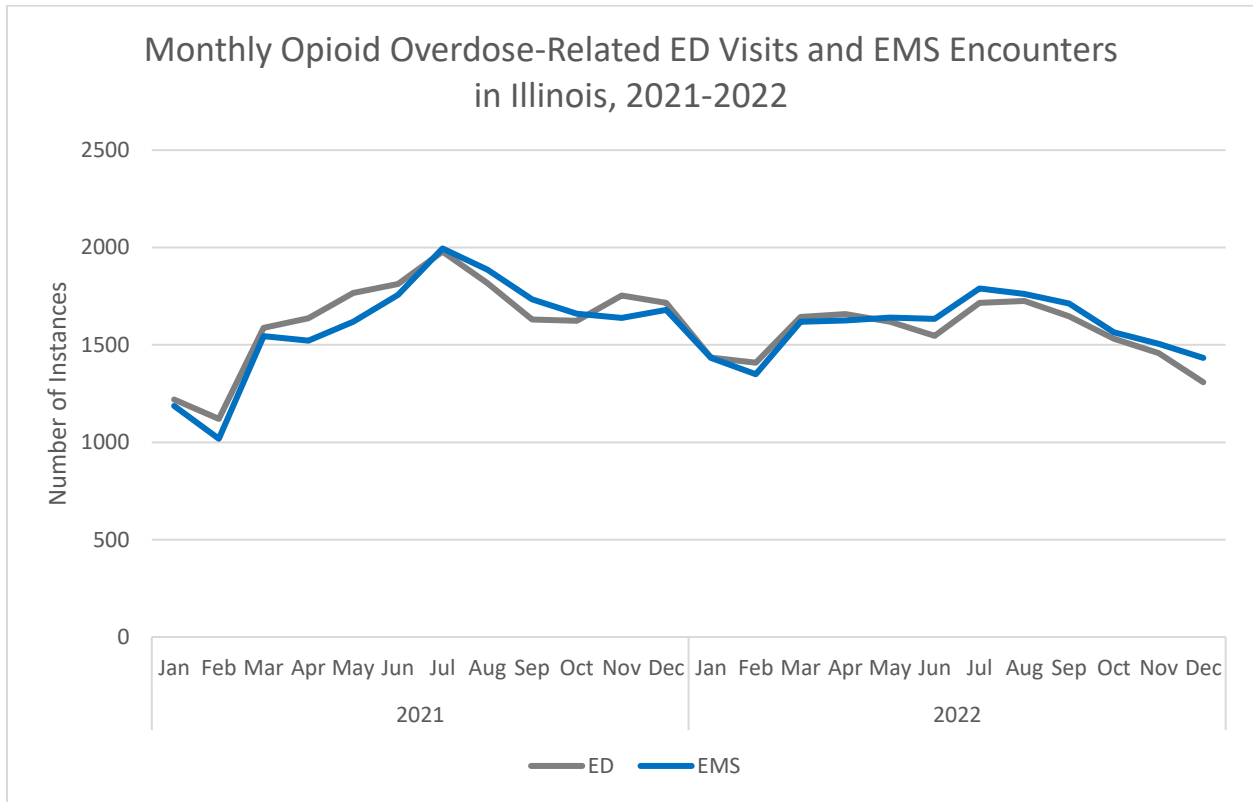


Figure 3. Monthly opioid overdose-related emergency department (ED) visits and emergency medical services (EMS) encounters in Illinois, 2021-2022. ED visits as reported by IDPH Syndromic Surveillance System; EMS encounters as reported by IDPH Prehospital Emergency Medical Services. The ED and EMS numbers have not been deduplicated and a single overdose incident could be counted in both the ED and EMS data, if a person was transported by EMS to an ED.

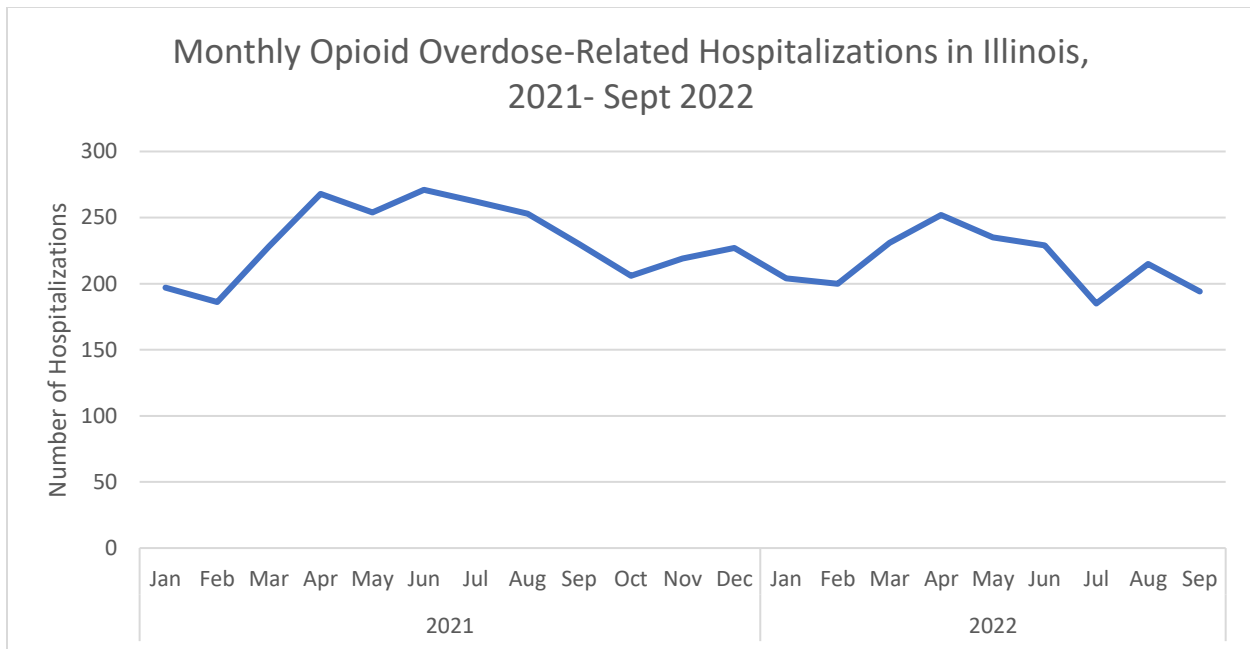


Figure 4. Monthly opioid overdose-related hospitalizations in Illinois in 2021- Sept 2022 as reported by IDPH Hospital Discharge Dataset.

Opioid overdose-related ED visit and EMS encounter trends use near-real time hospital and EMS reporting which allows more a more recent view of the status of overdoses within the state. Monthly opioid overdose-related ED visits and EMS encounters show a slight increase from January 2022 to a peak in July and August. The summer peak was followed by a steady decrease through December 2022 (Fig. 3). Opioid overdose-related hospitalizations are current through September 2022; however, the hospitalization data show a slightly different trend. Opioid overdose-related hospitalizations in 2022 showed a peak in April followed by a general decline through the summer (Fig. 4).

Illicit substances are not regulated and pose significant risk of harm. If taking illicit substances, there are precautions that can be utilized. Consider testing the substance for fentanyl using fentanyl test strips. Carry naloxone and do not use substances alone. Also, be aware that more than one dose of naloxone may be required to reverse an overdose when a synthetic opioid is ingested.

For more information on opioids, visit <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/opioids.html>. If you or a loved one is struggling with substance use, the Illinois Helpline is available at <https://helplineil.org/app/home> , call 833-234-6343, or text “HELP” to 833234.