

Drug Overdose Trends in Clark County, WA

Clark County Public Health

Adiba Ali, Epidemiologist

July 23, 2024, presentation for PHAC



Objectives



Provide overview of data sources and reporting frequency, recommended uses and limitations.

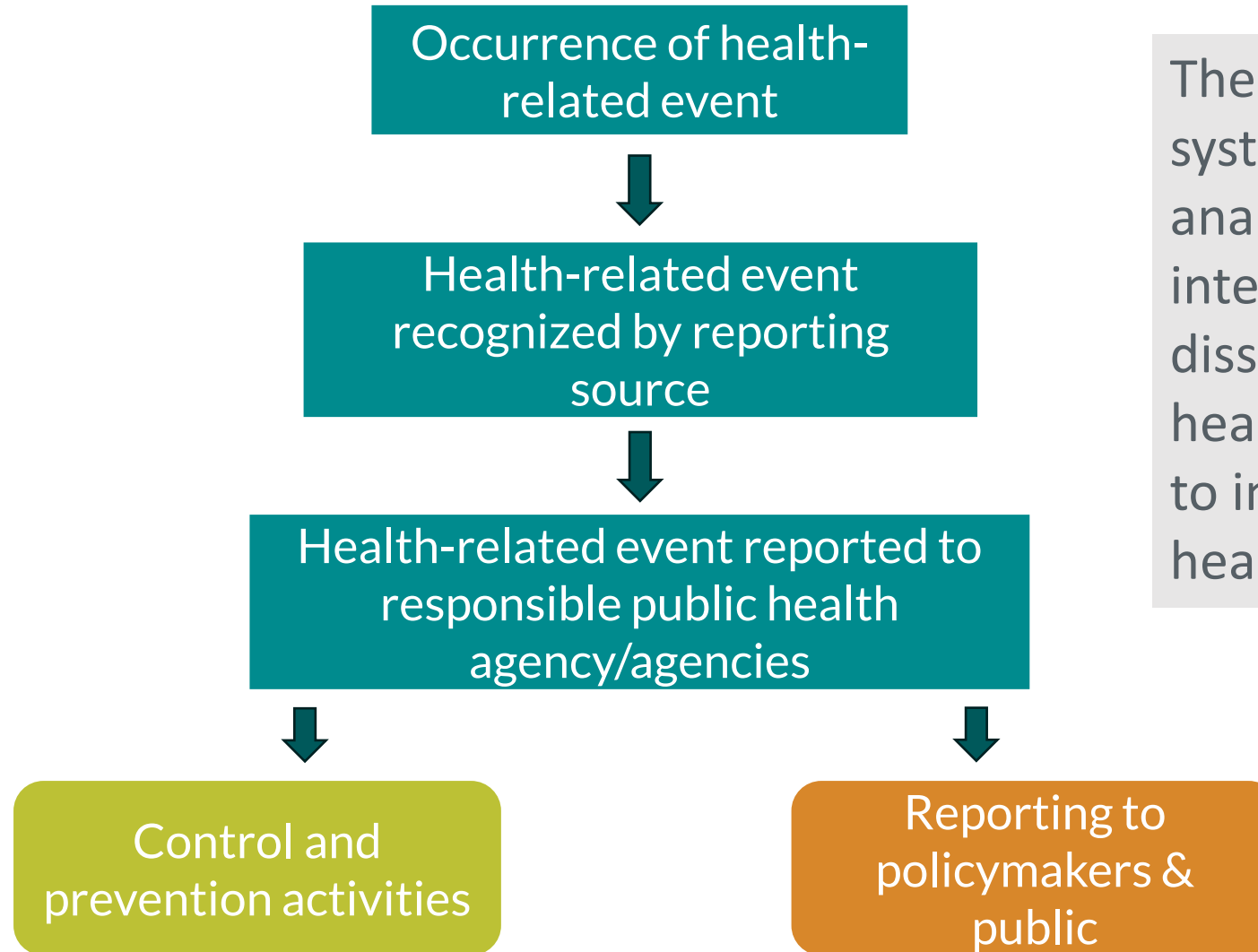


Review fatal and nonfatal overdose trend data.



Share examples of how data is used by public health to inform community prevention efforts.

Public Health Surveillance



The ongoing, systematic collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of health-related data to inform public health practice.



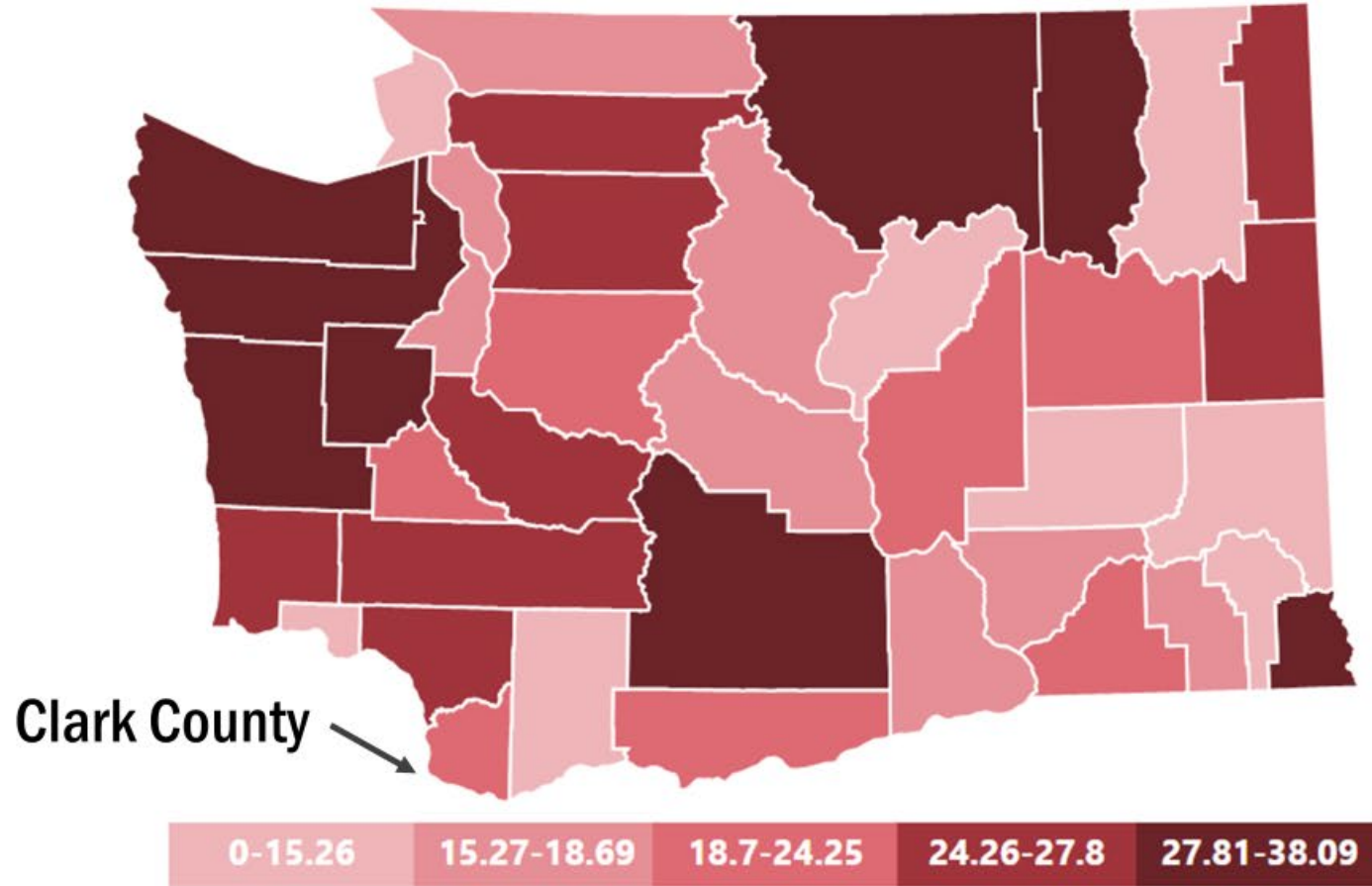
Drug Overdose Data Sources	Clark County Public Health Reporting Frequency
Prescription Monitoring Program	Quarterly
CRESA – 911 calls for overdose	Weekly
Washington Emergency Medical Services Information System (WEMSYS)	Monthly
Rapid Health Information Network (RHINO) - Emergency Dept. Visits	Weekly
Comprehensive Hospital Abstract Reporting System (CHARS)	Annual
Clark County Office of the Medical Examiner	Monthly
Death Certificate Data	Annual
Unintentional Drug Overdose Data (SUDORS)	Annual

Fatal Overdose Data



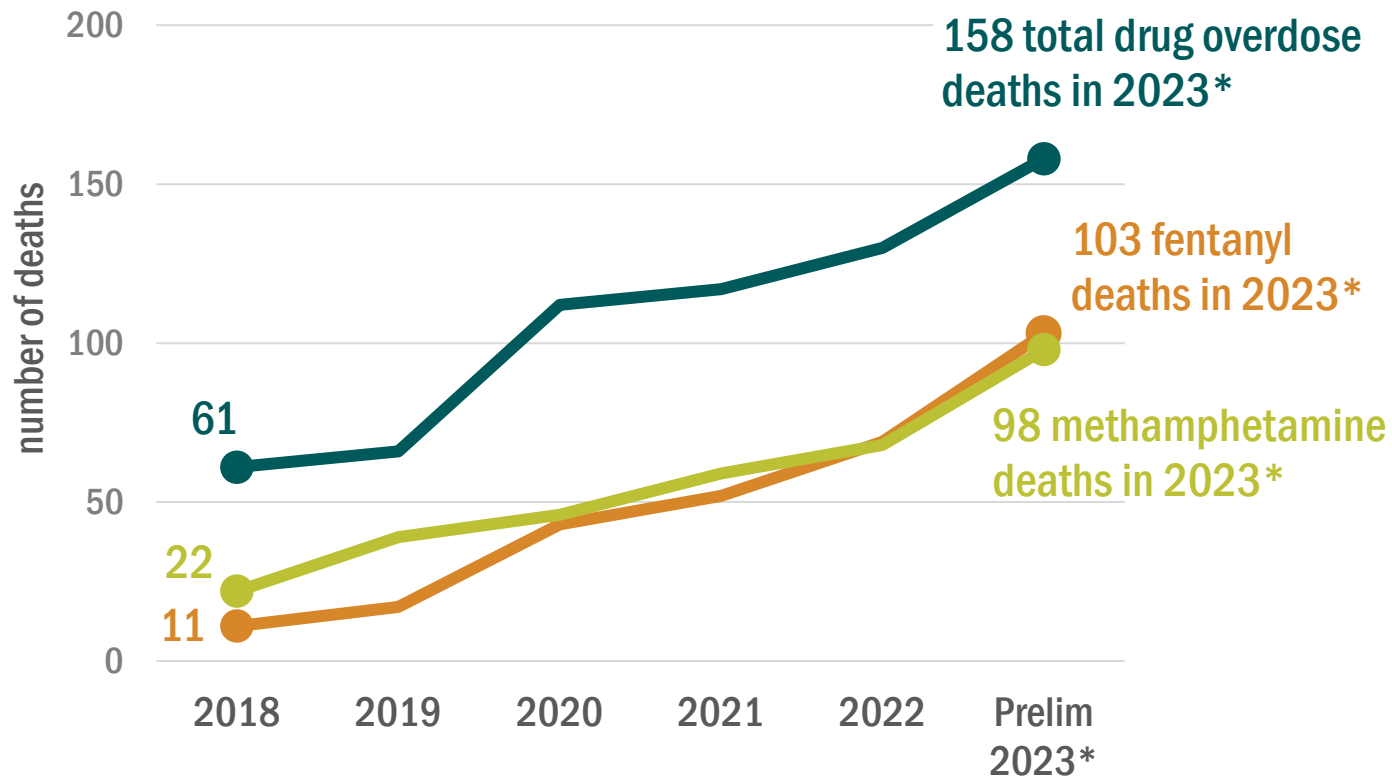
Overdose death rate in Washington State

Age-Adjusted Rate of All Drug and Opioid Overdose Deaths per 100,000 Population,
2018-2022



Overdose death in Clark County

Number of overdose deaths by drug type



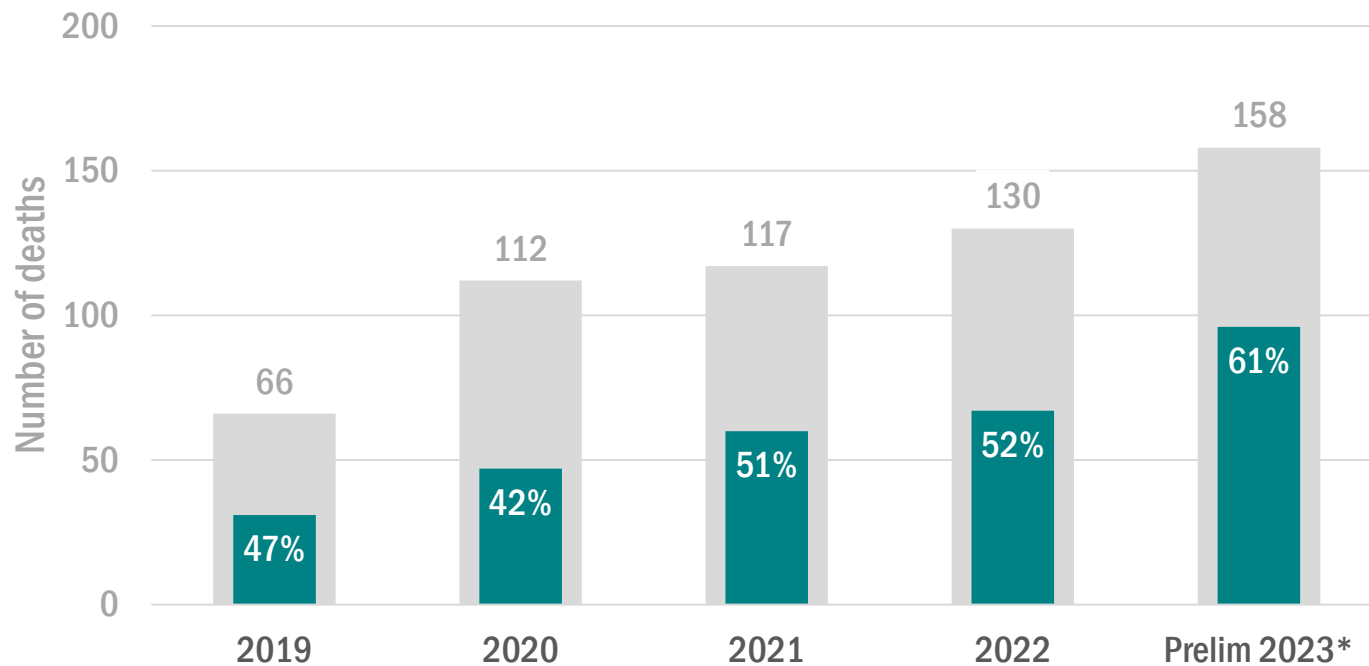
- In Clark County, the **total number of drug overdose deaths** increased by 160% between 2018 and 2023.
- **Fentanyl & methamphetamine** were the most common drugs involved in overdose deaths.

Source: WA State Dept of Health, Center for Health Statistics, Death Certificate data. Data represent deaths among Clark County residents.



Overdose death involving multiple drugs

Number of total overdose deaths & percent of overdose deaths involving multiple drugs



- The **percent of overdose fatalities involving multiple drugs** has been increasing in Clark County.
- In 2023, **61% of all overdose deaths** involved more than one drug.
- The most common drug combinations include **fentanyl & methamphetamine**.

Source: WA State Dept of Health, Center for Health Statistics, Death Certificate data. Data represent deaths among Clark County residents.

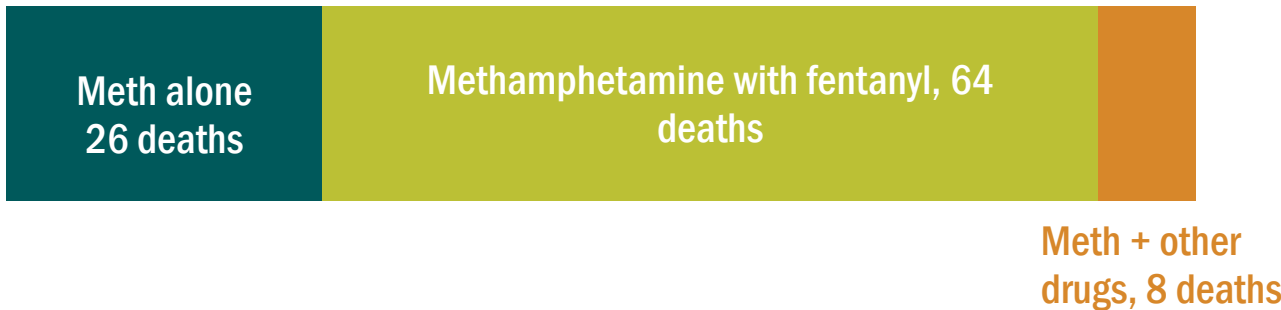


Fentanyl & methamphetamine overdose deaths

Fentanyl involved overdose deaths in 2023, alone or in combination with other drugs



Methamphetamine involved overdose deaths in 2023, alone or in combination with other drugs

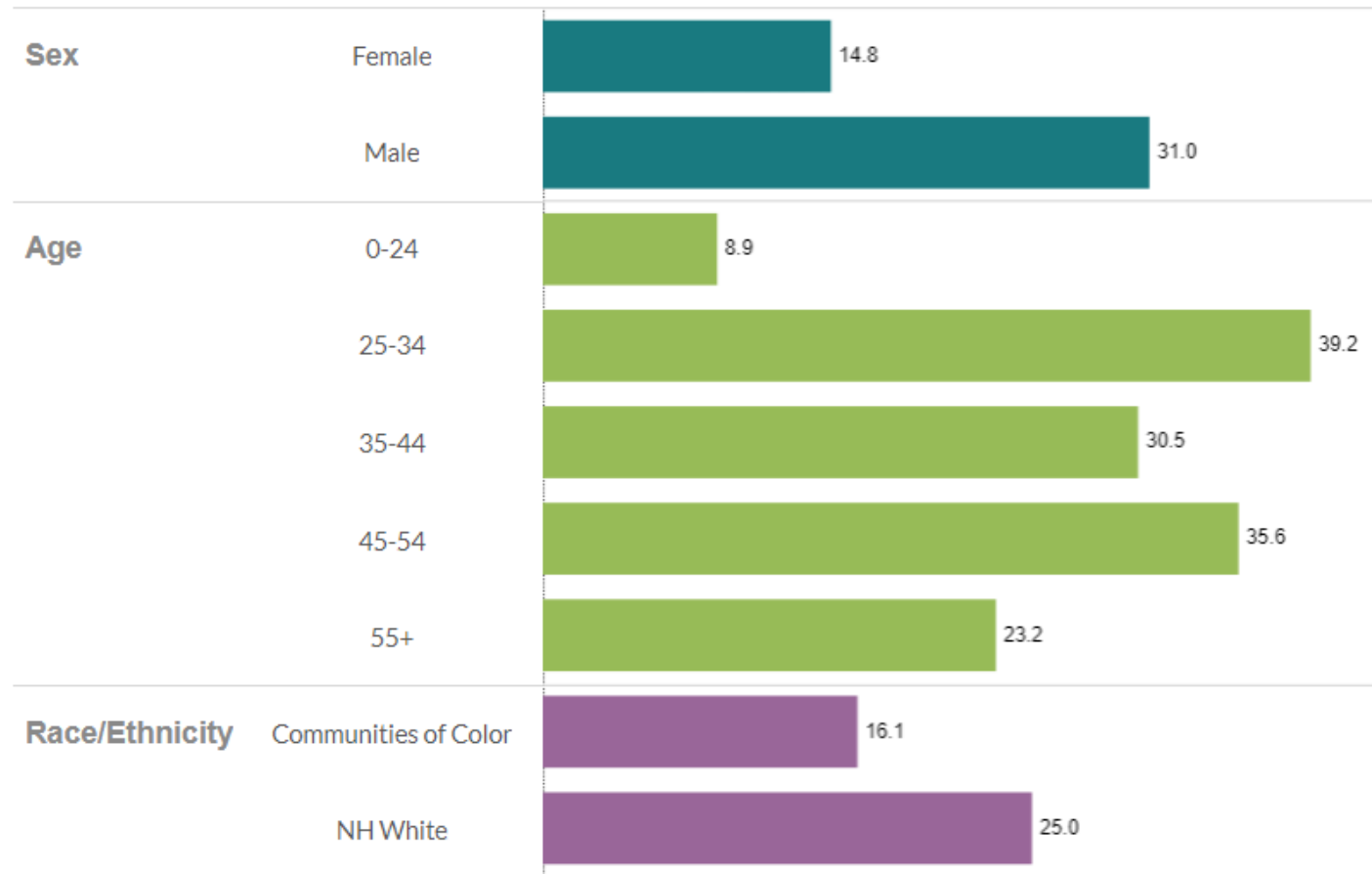


In Clark County in 2023, most overdose deaths involving both fentanyl & methamphetamine.

Source: WA State Dept of Health, Center for Health Statistics, Death Certificate data. Data represent deaths among Clark County residents.

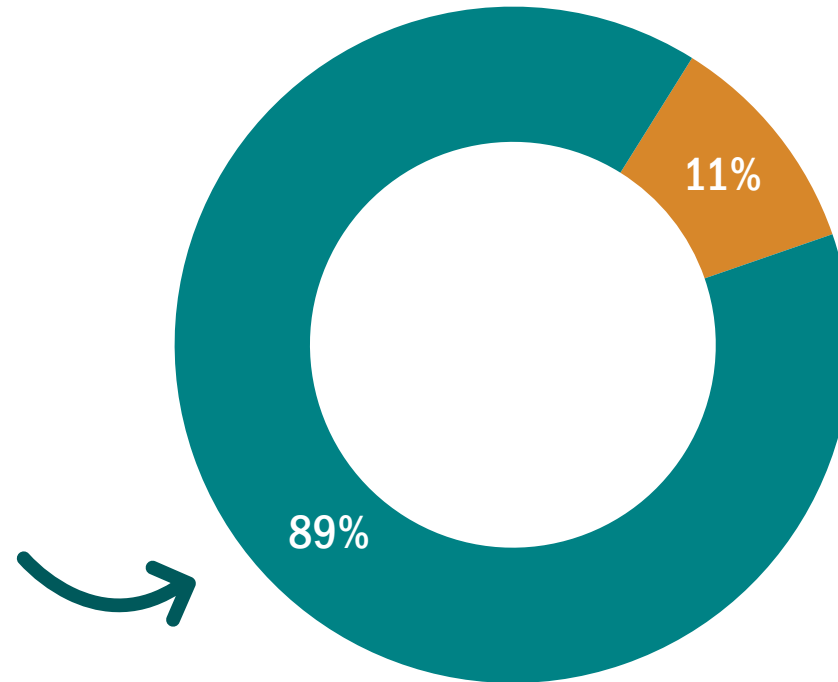


Overdose death rate by demographics, 2018-2022



2023 Clark County overdose deaths by housing status

Housed:
89% of overdose deaths were among people who were **housed**.



Unhoused:
11% of overdose deaths were among people **experiencing homelessness** at the time of death.

*2023 data are preliminary and subject to change. Data represent deaths that occurred in Clark County, regardless of residence.
Data Source: Clark County Medical Examiner data.

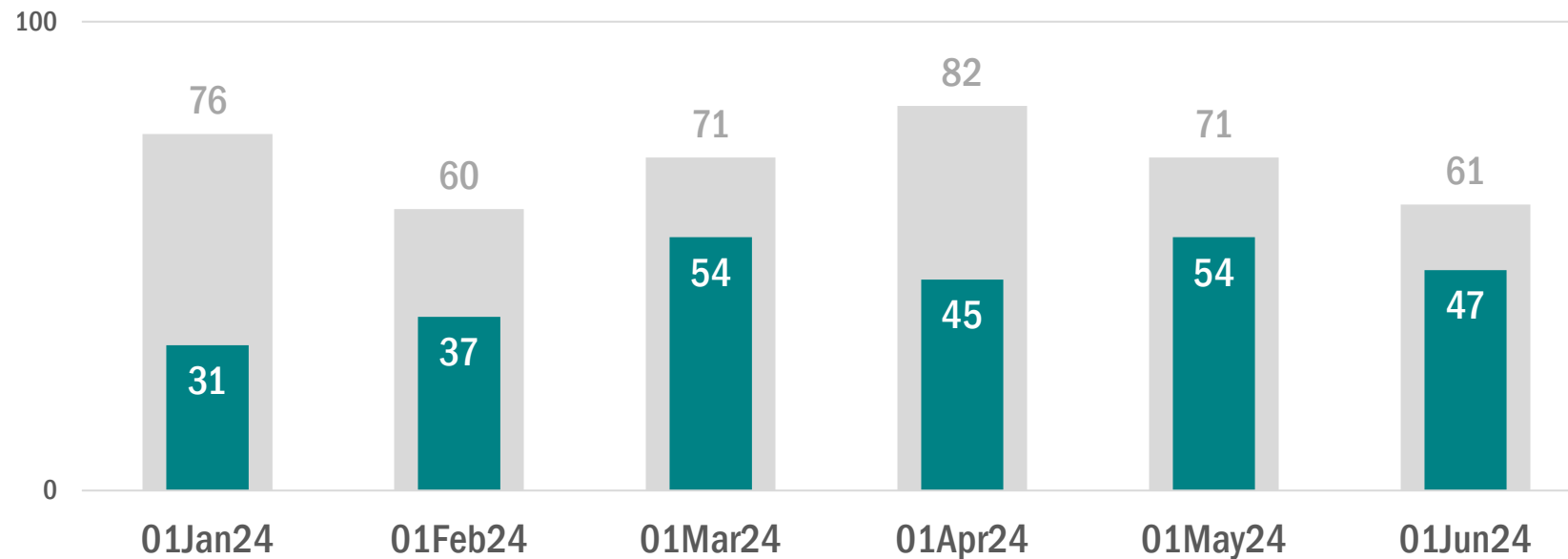


Nonfatal Overdose Data



Nonfatal drug overdose

Number of monthly EMS responses and **emergency department visits** for suspected opioid overdose in Clark County.



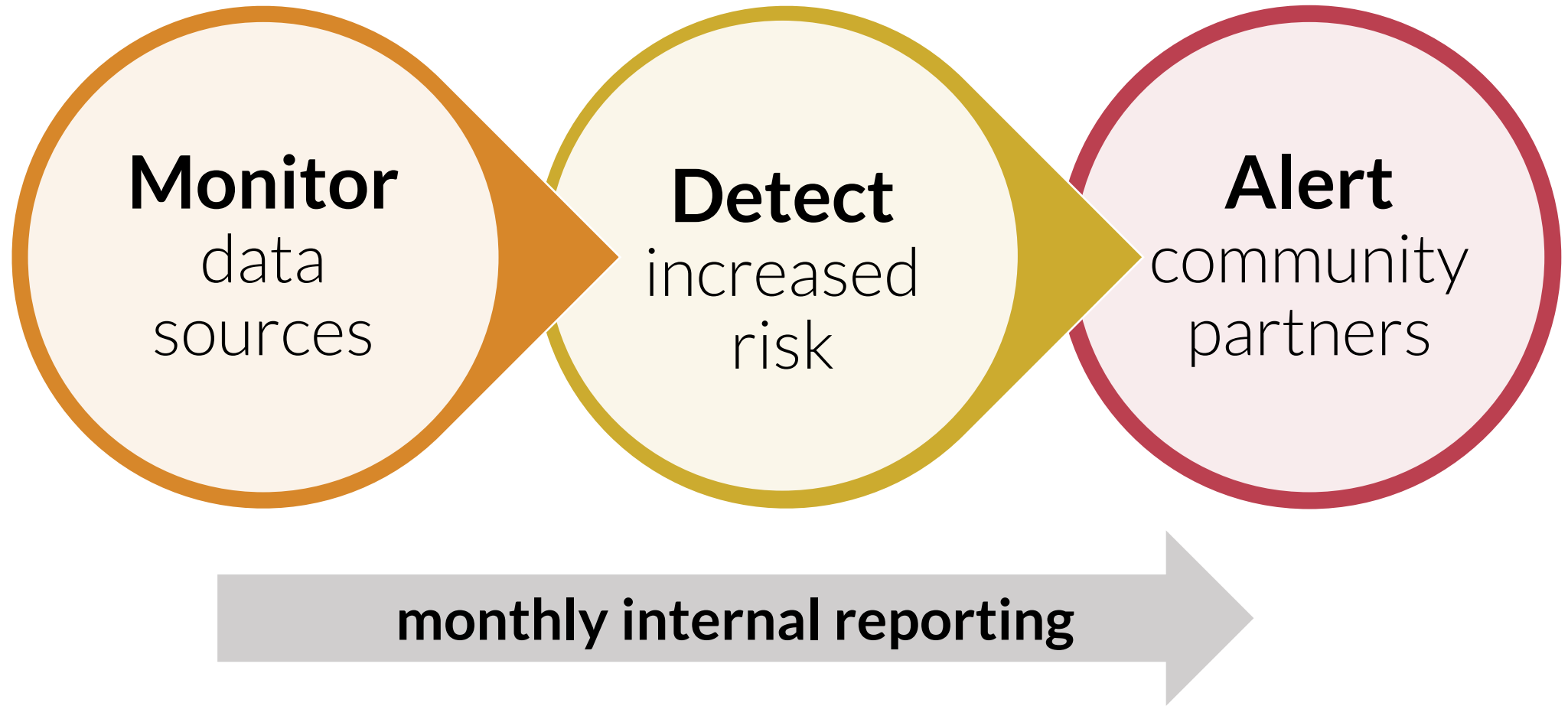
Source: Washington Emergency Medical Services Information System (WEMSIS), National Syndromic Surveillance Program - Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-based Epidemics (ESSENCE)



Data-to-Action



Public Health Overdose Surge Detection & Response Plan



Example community response in 2023

Public Health warns of recent rise in opioid overdose visits to emergency departments

Published Date: Fri, 04/21/2023 - 9:49 AM

Clark County Public Health is warning the community about a recent increase in emergency department visits due to opioid overdoses. Preliminary evidence suggests most of the recent overdoses may be due to fentanyl.

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. Fentanyl may be added to illicit drugs during their production without the drug user's knowledge.

"Anyone who uses powdered drugs or takes pills that were not given to them by a pharmacy should assume they contain fentanyl," said Dr. Alan Melnick, Clark County health officer and Public Health director. "There's no way to know how much fentanyl is in a drug or if it's evenly distributed throughout the batch."

The state Department of Health's emergency department data monitoring system detected a possible cluster of opioid overdoses in Clark County. The information is preliminary but suggests a significant increase in emergency department visits due to suspected opioid overdoses April 15-18. Ten Clark County residents 18 to 72 years old visited emergency departments for suspected opioid overdoses during that timeframe. The primary substance involved appears to be fentanyl; methamphetamine also appears to be involved. None of the overdoses were fatal, and naloxone, an opioid overdose reversal drug, was administered to most of the individuals experiencing overdose.

When administered to someone experiencing an overdose, naloxone blocks the effects of opioids and allows the person to begin breathing again. Naloxone is available at most pharmacies and does not require a prescription. Washington residents can have free naloxone delivered to their home or find community locations providing naloxone, including local naloxone vending machines, by visiting stopoverdose.org.



Illicit Substance Use Prevention: Future Presentations



	Exposure	Prescribed Use	Risk for prescribed misuse and illicit substance use	Substance Use Disorder & Overdose	Treatment & recovery
Goal	Prevent supply of illicit/illegal substances circulating in the community.	Prevent the demand for substances across the community.		Prevent overdose deaths, negative bias, & stigma associated with substance use disorder.	Prevent recurrence of use.
Public Health Strategies	Surveillance & Monitoring -- Multi-Sector Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting – Cross Sector Collaboration and Coordination -- Policy, System and Environmental Change				

Clark County Overdose Dashboard

[https://clark.wa.gov/public-health/overdose-
dashboard](https://clark.wa.gov/public-health/overdose-dashboard)



Questions?

CntyHealthHAE@clark.wa.gov

