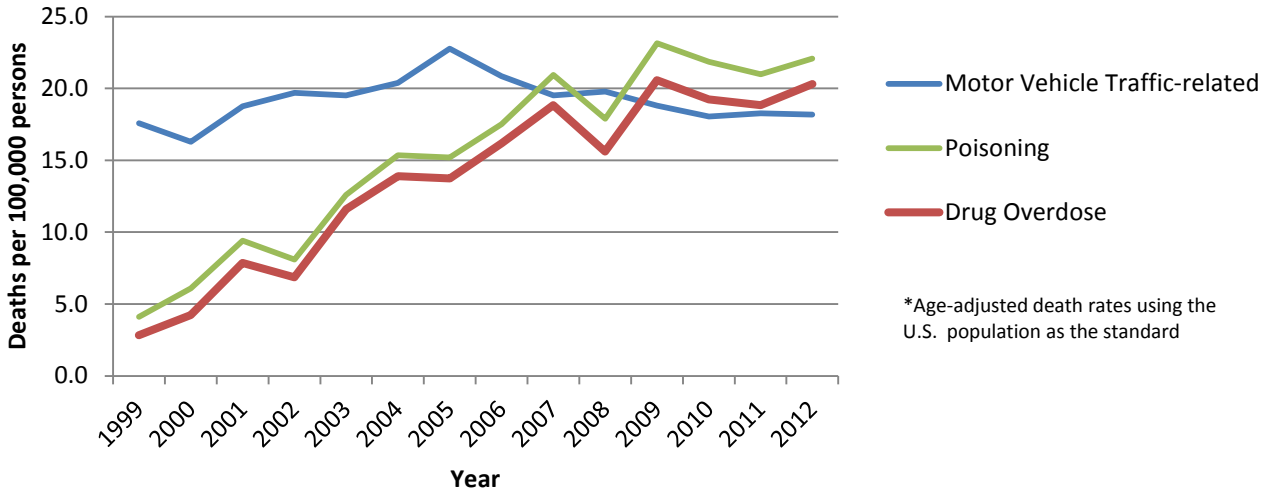
# Oklahoma

## *Special Emphasis Report: Drug Overdose Deaths, 1999-2012*

## A Public Health Crisis Continues

Poisoning is the leading cause of injury deaths in Oklahoma; drugs cause nearly 9 out of 10 poisoning deaths. Drug poisoning deaths, also called overdoses, increased eightfold from 1999 to 2012, surpassing motor vehicle traffic-related deaths in 2009 (Figure 1). In 2012, the poisoning death rate was 22.1 deaths per 100,000 persons, and the drug overdose death rate was 20.3 deaths per 100,000 persons, compared to a motor vehicle traffic-related death rate of 18.2 deaths per 100,000 persons.

**Figure 1. Drug overdose death rates* compared to motor vehicle-related death rates, Oklahoma residents, 1999-2012**




## Drugs Caused 9 out of 10 Poisoning Deaths

In 2012, drugs and medications—prescription drugs, illicit drugs, and over-the-counter medications—were the underlying cause of death for 92% of all poisoning deaths. Of the drug overdose deaths, 84% were unintentional, 7% were suicide or intentional self harm, and for 8% the intent was undetermined. Males had rates 12% higher than females and persons aged 45-54 years had the highest rate of all age categories.

**Table 1. Drug overdose deaths: Demographic characteristics and intent, Oklahoma residents, 2012**

| | | Number | Percent | Rate per 100,000 persons |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | **Female** | 361 | 47% | 18.8 |
| | **Male** | 399 | 53% | 21.1 |
| **Age (in years)*** | **15-24** | 58 | 8% | 10.7 |
| | **25-44** | 300 | 39% | 30.5 |
| | **45-54** | 234 | 31% | 46.2 |
| | **55 and older** | 166 | 22% | 16.7 |
| **Intent** | **Unintentional (also known as "accidental")** | 640 | 84% | 16.8 |
| | **Suicide** | 56 | 7% | 1.5 |
| | **Undetermined** | 64 | 8% | 1.7 |

*0-14 age group not included due to small numbers.

**This document was produced in conjunction with CDC's Core Violence and Injury Prevention Program Under Cooperative Agreement 11-1101.**

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Oklahoma State Department of Health

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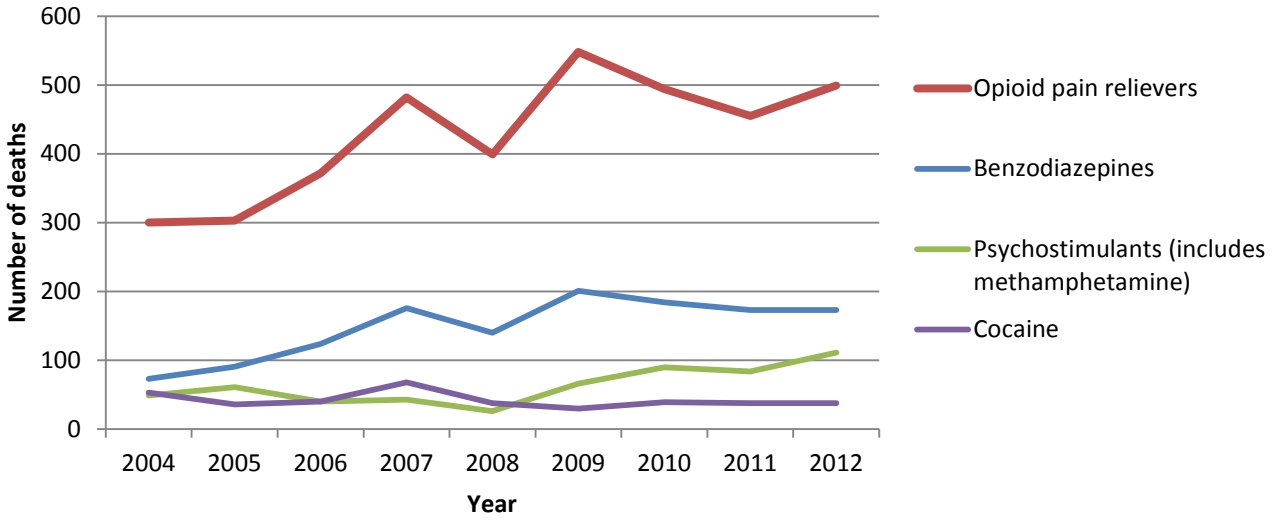
## Opioid Pain Relievers Contributed to 66% of Drug Overdose Deaths

Opioid pain relievers, such as oxycodone or hydrocodone, contributed to 499 (66%) of the 760 drug overdose deaths in 2012. More deaths involved opioid pain relievers than cocaine, benzodiazepines, and methamphetamine combined. These results might be undercounts, because the percent of drug overdose deaths that had only unspecified drug(s) listed as contributing to the death ranged from 4% in 2004 to 5% in 2012.

**Figure 2. Number of drug overdose deaths involving opioid pain relievers and other drugs, Oklahoma residents, 2004-2012**




## Addressing the Issue

- Injury Prevention Service (IPS) staff are involved in multiple program and policy efforts for prescription drug overdose (PDO) prevention involving numerous partnerships.
- IPS efforts are funded by the Core Violence and Injury Prevention Program, Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant, and the Prescription Drug Overdose: Boost for State Prevention grant.
- Drug overdose prevention is a priority area for the Governor and Secretary of Health and Human Services in Oklahoma.
- Statewide activities include:
  - State plan to reduce prescription drug abuse
  - Policy successes: prohibited refills of hydrocodone, first responder and family member access to naloxone, prescription drug monitoring program sharing with public health and mental health departments
  - Creation, distribution, and evaluation of opioid prescribing guidelines
  - Distribution of educational materials as well as educational presentations to the public and providers


**Oklahoma State Department of Health**

**Injury Prevention Service**

**http://poison.health.ok.gov**



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