

Sobering statistics: A timeline of drug overdoses in Madison County

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January 11 2017 7:00 AM



EDWARDSVILLE - Last year, 71 people in **Madison County** died from drug addiction.

That number is less than 2015's grand total of 77 deaths, and both years show a positive trend when compared to 2014's staggering total of 91 overdose-related deaths. These numbers are indicative of a nationwide trend of which Madison County is a part. Heroin addiction across the nation has been a struggle for several law enforcement agencies as well as public health initiatives.

Last year showed a decrease in heroin deaths from a confirmed 43 in 2015 to nine confirmed in 2016 with five pending, making a possible total of 14 heroin-related deaths. fentanyl, a painkiller, which is becoming increasingly popular to abuse, took a confirmed 18 deaths this year with two pending for a possible total of 20 compared with

only seven deaths from that drug reported in 2015. A lethal mixture of heroin and fentanyl claimed seven lives in Madison County during 2016.

"Fentanyl is regarded as being 50 times more powerful than heroin," **Madison County Coroner Stephen P. Nonn** said. Nonn provided an article from CNN regarding the opiate.

According to the article from CNN, heroin dealers are cutting the already-lethal heroin with fentanyl to give their heroin more oomph. When compared with heroin, fentanyl is much more lethal. It is 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine and 30 to 50 times more lethal than heroin. As small of an amount as 0.25 milligrams can kill a human being.

Even coming into contact with fentanyl can cause adverse effects. The drug can easily be absorbed into the skin or accidentally inhaled. According the the CNN article, a New Jersey police officer had shortness of breath, dizziness and slowed breath after coming into contact with the drug.

The "miracle drug" naloxone, which has been used to instantly revive addicts in the deathly grasp of an overdose is not a guaranteed life-saver when fentanyl has been used. Several doses of the expensive drug are required to bring someone from a fentanyl overdose.

"Madison County is reflecting what is going on nationwide with the increase in fentanyl-related deaths," Nonn said in an email. "We continue to battle these epidemics with middle school and high school presentations, participation with the **Partnership for Drug-Free Communities** and public service announcements on radio and television, but the battle continues."



Here are the numbers from Nonn regarding 2016's year in drug overdoses

Total overdoses being investigated: 71

Heroin total: 14 (9 confirmed, 5 pending)

Fentanyl/heroin combination total: 7

Fentanyl total: 20 (18 confirmed, 2 pending)

Fentanyl/methamphetamine combination total: 7

Methamphetamine: 1 (pending)

Prescription total: 16 (13 confirmed, 3 pending)

Cocaine total: 1

Alcohol total: 1

Huffing total: 1

To put those numbers in perspective, Nonn included a summation of overdose deaths in Madison County since 2009, the year when cheap and pure heroin first started showing its ghastly face in the nation. These numbers show several trends, with each year having a clear drug of choice. Last year's narcotic grim reaper was Fentanyl. The year before was heroin, and 2014's massive overdose total of 91 was mostly attributed to prescription drugs. The following are the overdose totals from 2009-2015.

2009

Total: 35

Heroin: 7

Polypharmacy: 8

Methadone: 7

Cocaine: 3

Fentanyl: 3

Oxycodone: 2

Propoxyphene: 1

Hydromorphone: 1

Acetaminophen: 1

Benzodiazepine: 1

Citalopram: 1

2010

Total: 60

Heroin: 18

Morphine: 9

Polypharmacy: 15

Methadone: 3

Venlafaxine: 1

Cocaine: 4

Hydrocodone: 4

Citalopram: 1

Huffing: 1

2011

Total: 53

Heroin: 26

Hydrocodone: 3

Polypharmacy: 7

Bath Salts: 1

Phenobarbital: 1

Huffing: 1

Cocaine: 5

Methadone: 2

Ethanol: 2

Morphine: 2

Fentanyl: 3

2012

Total: 62

Heroin: 21

Insulin: 1

Polypharmacy: 27

Methadone: 4

Cocaine: 1

Methamphetamine: 2

Fentanyl: 3

Phenobarbital: 1

Fluoxetine: 1

Oxycodone: 1

2013

Total: 53

Heroin: 23

Polypharmacy: 9

Methadone: 2

Cocaine: 5

Insulin: 1

Hydrocodone: 3

Alcohol: 1

Fentanyl: 3

Cyclobenzaprine: 2

2014

Total: 91

Heroin: 26

Prescription: 55

Other Illicit: 6

Alcohol: 4

2015

Total: 77

Heroin: 43

Fentanyl: 7

Prescription: 19

Other Illicit: 6

Alcohol: 2