

PEAKS & VALLEYS

2024 Roanoke Valley Substance Use Disorder Annual Report Summary

Summary

The devastating effect of the opioid crisis in the Roanoke Valley has caused a number of overdose death surges, resulting in over 1,200 deaths since 2007 (VDH Vital Statistics). As the predatory prescribing practices of opioids led to increasing overdoses, efforts to curb opioid use caused traffickers to shift the illicit market- first to heroin, then to fentanyl and methamphetamines- with deadly results.

The crisis reached its most recent peak in 2022, tied to factors stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. While overdose rates remain alarming and unacceptable, we are encouraged that the area has since seen an estimated 50% reduction in overdose fatalities.

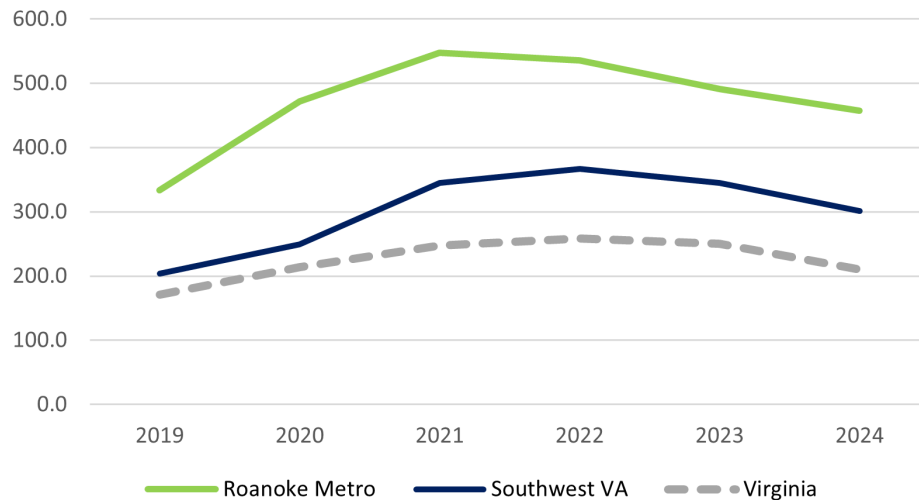


The **Peaks & Valleys Annual Report Summary** is a data surveillance initiative of the Roanoke City & Alleghany Health Districts (RCAHD). It provides high-quality, actionable, local data for those working directly or indirectly to combat the overdose crisis in the Roanoke Metro area (Roanoke City, Roanoke County, Salem). RCAHD convenes key partners for annual data engagement to continue developing strategies to reduce the incidence of overdose and substance-use-related health outcomes.

Roanoke Metro Emergency Department Visits

(source: VDH Syndromic Surveillance)

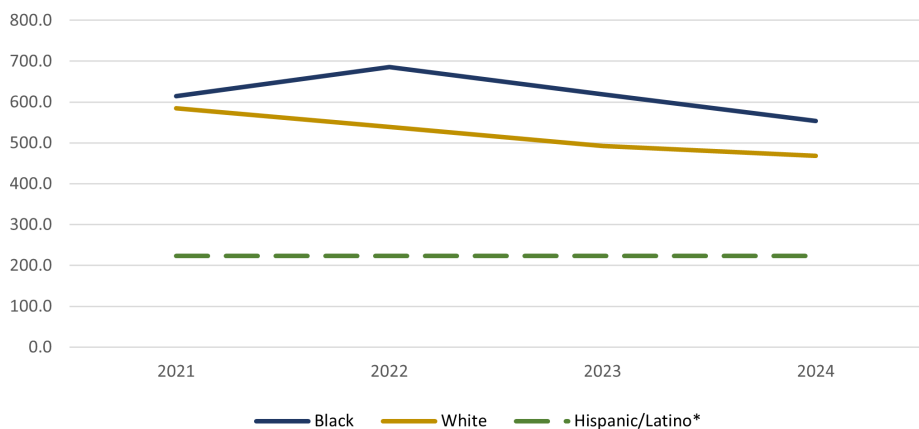
Rate of Emergency Department Visits for Unintentional Overdose, Per 100K Population



2x

Rates of ED visits for unintentional overdose in the Roanoke Metropolitan area (Roanoke City, Roanoke County, and Salem) are over **2 times** the state average.

Rate of Emergency Department Visits for Unintentional Overdose by Race/Ethnicity, Per 100K Population, Roanoke Metro



*The rate of ED visits for Hispanic/Latino individuals is presented as a five-year average to account for small number variability.

Key Takeaways



Men are 2x more likely to visit ED for overdose



Highest rate of ED visits for ODs: 30-44 year olds



Black residents are slightly more likely to visit ED for OD than other races/ethnicities

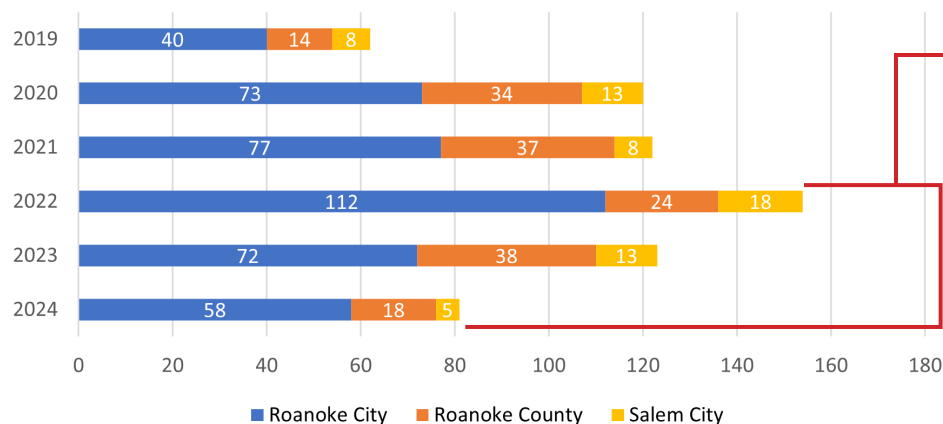


The decline in ED visits for overdose is an encouraging sign, but it remains challenging to quantify actual rates of non-fatal overdoses. The increasing use of overdose-reversing naloxone and other public health strategies may be contributing to the reduced number of ED visits and fatalities from overdose.

Roanoke Metro Deaths from Overdoses

(source: VDH Vital Statistics)

Number of Overdose Fatalities by Locality,
Roanoke Metro



↓ 50%

There has been a 50% decrease in overdose fatalities since 2022 in Roanoke City, where fatality rates had been among the nation's highest. While Roanoke continues to have one of the highest rates of overdose fatalities in the state, sweeping reductions in overdose deaths here and elsewhere are an encouraging trend.

Key Takeaways

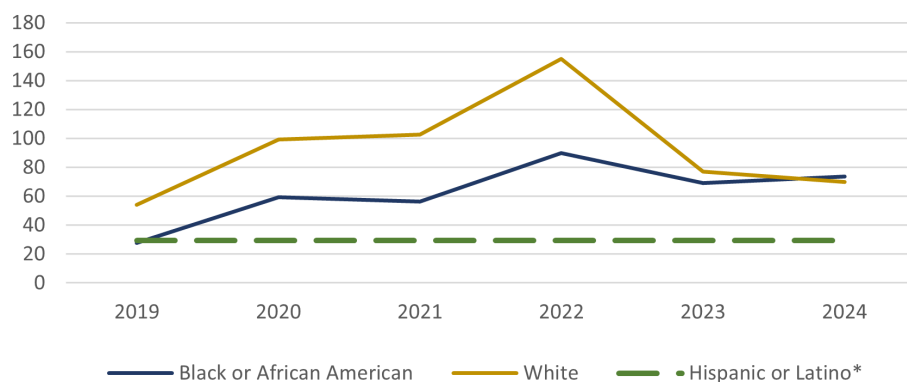


For the first time in five years, Black residents are more likely to die of an overdose than white residents.



In 2024, nearly 80 Roanoke Metro residents lost their lives to unintentional overdose; the majority fueled by the potent opioid fentanyl.

Rate of Overdose Fatalities by Race/Ethnicity, Per
100K Population, Roanoke City



*The rate of emergency department (ED) visits for Hispanic/Latino individuals is presented as a five-year average to account for small number variability.

Data Note: As of May 2025, VDH transitioned to the use of Vital Statistics (death certificate) data as the primary source of overdose fatality rates. These counts are based on the victim's residence at the time of their death; therefore, non-Roanoke Valley residents are excluded. VDH Vital Statistics data used in this report also utilize a more cohesive definition of "unintentional overdose." Additional statistics from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner are also available:

<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/medical-examiner/forensic-epidemiology/>