National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
Arkansas Opioid Summary

Last Updated May 2019
https://www.drugabuse.gov
Drug Overdose Deaths

In 2017, there were more than 70,200 drug overdose deaths in the U.S.—an age-adjusted rate of 21.7 per 100,000 persons. Among these, 47,600 involved opioids. The sharpest increase occurred among deaths involving fentanyl and fentanyl analogs (other synthetic narcotics) with more than 28,400 overdose deaths in 2017.

The age-adjusted rate of drug overdose deaths increased significantly in Arkansas from 2013 (11.1 per 100,000) to 2017 (15.5 per 100,000) but no increase was seen in the past year. While the majority of drug overdose deaths in 2017 involved an opioid, overdose deaths involving opioids are not included for the state because the data reported did not meet inclusion criteria (see Scholl L, et al. MMWR Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 2019;67:1419-1427).

Figure 1. Drug overdose deaths, rate per 100,000 persons, in the U.S. and Arkansas. Source: CDC WONDER
Opioid Pain Reliever Prescriptions

In 2017, Arkansas providers wrote 105.4 opioid prescriptions for every 100 persons (Figure 2)—nearly twofold greater than the average U.S. rate of 58.7 opioid prescriptions (CDC) (Figure 2).

![Figure 2. The U.S. and Arkansas opioid prescribing rate per 100 persons. Source: CDC and IQVIA Xponent 2006–2017.]

Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)

NAS or neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome (NOWS) may occur when a pregnant woman uses drugs such as opioids during pregnancy. A recent national study showed a fivefold increase in the incidence of NAS/NOWS between 2004 and 2014, from 1.5 cases per 1,000 hospital births to 8.0 cases per 1,000 hospital births—that is one baby born with NAS/NOWS every 15 minutes. During the same period, hospital costs for NAS/NOWS births increased from $91 million to $563 million, after adjusting for inflation (Figure 3).

Between 2000 and 2014, the rate of NAS/NOWS in Arkansas increased more than tenfold, from 0.3 per 1,000 hospital births to 3.2 per 1,000
hospital births (Arkansas Department of Health). The rate was four times higher among whites, including Hispanics, (4.1 per 1,000 hospital births) compared to non-whites (1.1 per 1,000 hospital births).

Figure 3. NAS/NOWS Incidence Rate and Hospital Costs for Treatment in the United States. Source: T.N.A. Winkelman, et al., 2018.

**HIV Prevalence and HIV Diagnoses Attributed to Injection Drug Use (IDU)**
U.S. Incidence: In 2016, 9 percent (3,480) of the 39,589 new diagnoses of HIV in the United States were attributed to IDU. Among males, 6.3 percent (2,530) of new cases were transmitted via IDU or male-to-male contact and IDU. Among females, 2.3 percent (950) were transmitted via IDU (CDC).

U.S. Prevalence: In 2016, 991,447 Americans were living with a diagnosed HIV infection—a rate of 306.6 cases per 100,000 persons. Among males, 19.9 percent (150,466) contracted HIV from IDU or male-to-male contact and IDU while 21 percent (50,154) of females were living with HIV attributed to IDU (CDC).

State Incidence: Of the new HIV cases in 2016, 314 occurred in Arkansas. Among males, 6.7 percent of new HIV cases were attributed to IDU or male-to-male contact and IDU. Among females, 4.3 percent of new cases were attributed to IDU (Figure 4) (AIDSVu).

State Prevalence: In 2015, an estimated 5,308 persons were living with a diagnosed HIV infection in Arkansas—a rate of 214 cases per 100,000 persons. Of those, 15.5 percent of male cases were attributed to IDU or male-to-male contact and IDU. Among
females, 18.1 percent were living with HIV attributed to IDU (AIDSVu).

Hepatitis C (HCV) Prevalence and HCV Diagnoses Attributed to Injection Drug Use

- **U.S. Incidence:** In 2016, there were an estimated 41,200 new cases of acute HCV (CDC). Among case reports that contain information about IDU, 68.6 percent indicated use of injection drugs (CDC).

- **U.S. Prevalence:** An estimated 2.4 million Americans are living with HCV based on 2013-2016 annual averages (CDC).

- **State Incidence:** In 2016, there were no reported cases of acute HCV in Arkansas (CDC). Recent data on the number and rate of acute and chronic cases and on how cases are transmitted in the state are unavailable.

- **State Prevalence:** In Arkansas, there are an estimated 22,200 persons living with Hepatitis C (2013-2016 annual average), a rate of 980 cases per 100,000 persons (HepVu).

Additional Resources

- Arkansas Attorney General’s Office, Prescription Drug Abuse
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Opioid Overdose
FY2018 NIH-funded projects related to opioid use and use disorder in Arkansas: 6

Find treatment in Arkansas (SAMHSA)

Notes

1. Not all states collect or report data on the incidence or prevalence of Hepatitis C or on how Hepatitis C is transmitted. When available, the data will be included.

2. Actual acute cases estimated to be 13.9 times the number of reported cases in any year.