

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) **Rhode Island Opioid Summary**

Last Updated March 2019

<https://www.drugabuse.gov>

Rhode Island Opioid Summary

Opioid-Related Overdose Deaths

In 2017, there were 277 overdose deaths involving opioids in Rhode Island—an age-adjusted rate of 26.9 deaths per 100,000 persons, compared to the average national rate of 14.6 deaths per 100,000 persons. The greatest increase was seen in cases related to synthetic opioids other than methadone (mainly fentanyl). Deaths involving fentanyl rose from 12 deaths in 2012 to 201 deaths in 2017. Heroin or prescription opioid-involved overdose deaths declined in the same period from 30 to 14 deaths and from 214 to 569 deaths, respectively. The highest number of deaths in 2017 involved prescription opioids with 646 deaths reported (Figure 1).

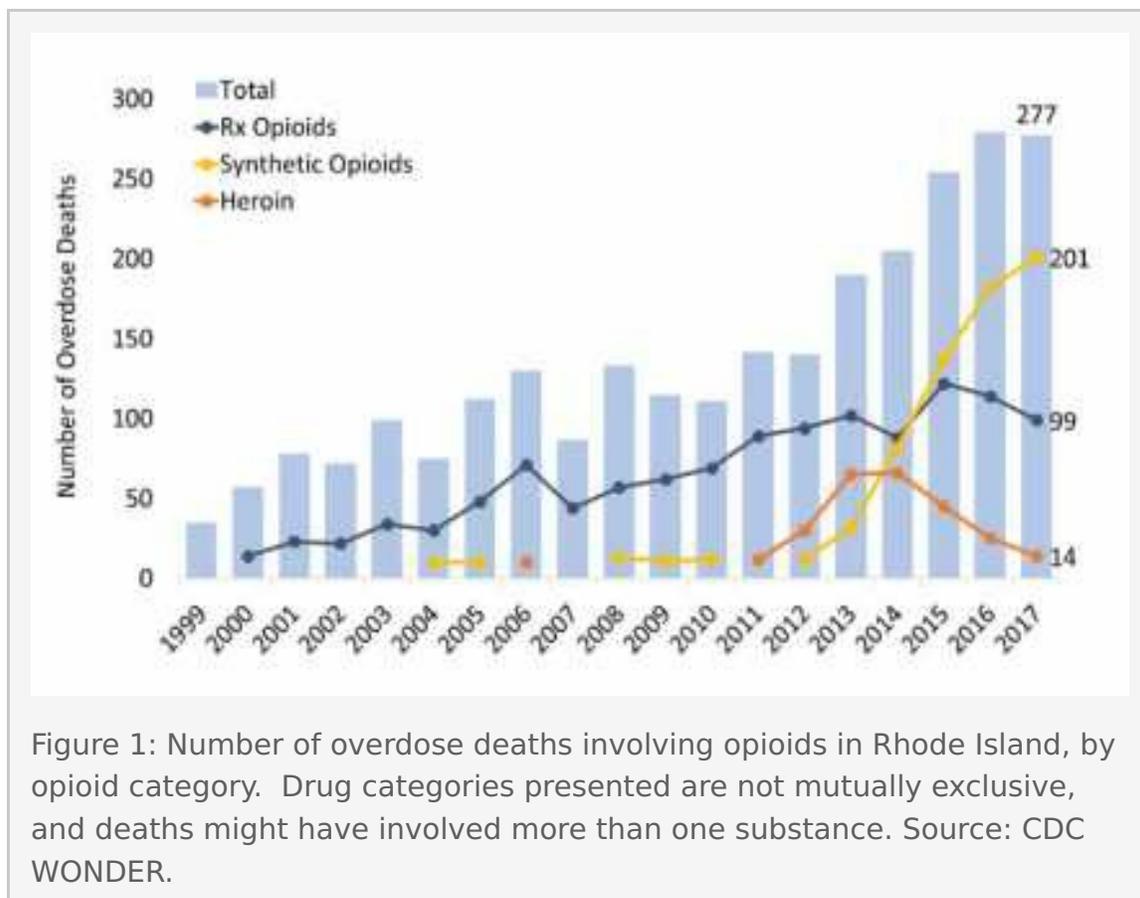


Figure 1: Number of overdose deaths involving opioids in Rhode Island, by opioid category. Drug categories presented are not mutually exclusive, and deaths might have involved more than one substance. Source: CDC WONDER.

Opioid Pain Reliever Prescriptions

In 2017, Rhode Island providers wrote 51.2 opioid prescriptions for every 100 persons (Figure 2), compared to the average U.S. rate of 58.7 prescriptions. This is the lowest rate in the state since 2006 when data became available ([CDC](#)). The age-adjusted rate of deaths involving opioid prescriptions increased overall in the last decade. In past year, however, there was a slight decrease from 10.5 to 8.8 deaths per 100,000 persons.

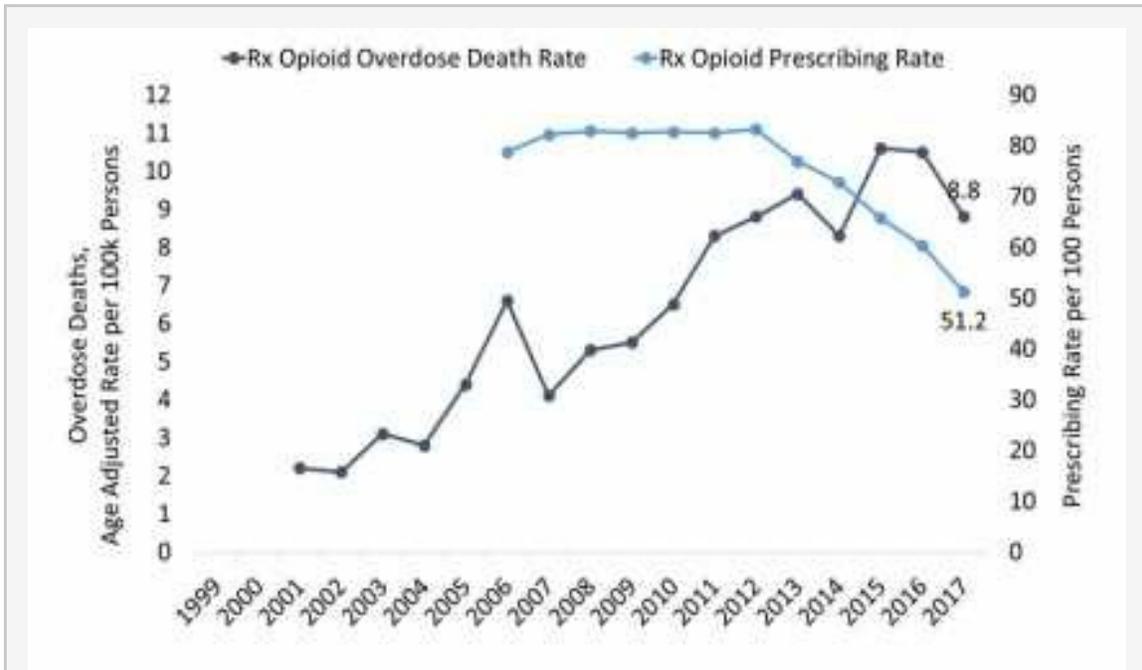


Figure 2. Rhode Island rate of overdose deaths involving prescription opioids and the opioid prescribing rate. Source: CDC and CDC WONDER.

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 in the United States. During the same period, hospital costs for NAS/NOWS births increased from \$91 million to \$563 million, after adjusting for inflation (Figure 3).

There were 9.1 cases of NAS/NOWS per 1,000 hospital births reported in 2016 in Rhode Island ([Rhode Island Department of Health](#)).

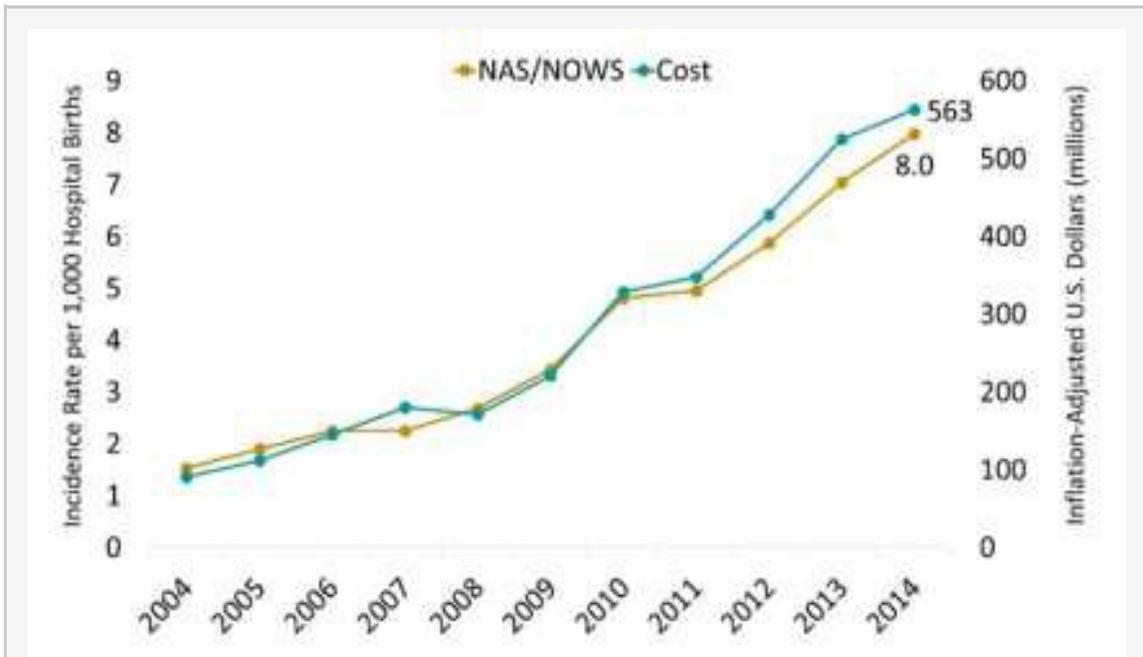


Figure 3. NAS/NOWS Incidence Rate and Hospital Costs for Treatment in the United States. Source: T.N.A. Winkelman, et al., 2018.

HIV Prevalence and HIV Diagnoses Attributed to Injection Drug Use (IDU)

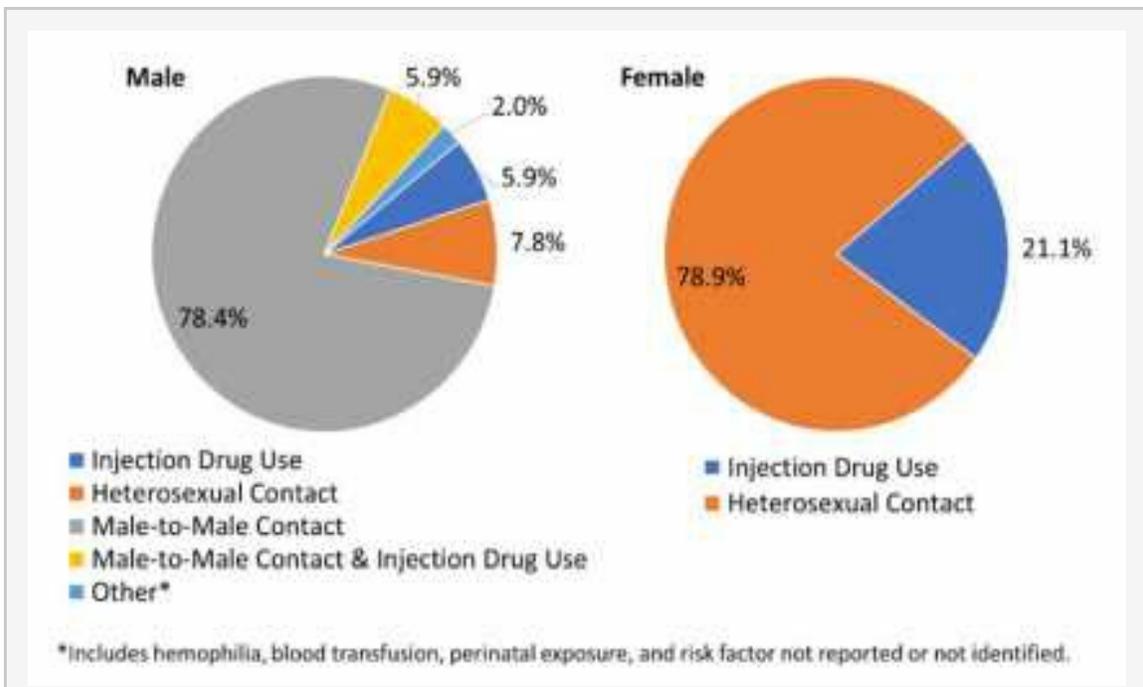


Figure 4. Rhode Island: Estimated percent of male vs. female with new HIV diagnoses, by transmission category, 2016. Source: CDC and www.AIDSVU.org.

- **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, 70 occurred in Rhode Island. Among males, 11.8 percent of new HIV cases were attributed to IDU or male-to-male contact and IDU. Among females, 21.1 percent of new HIV cases were attributed to IDU (Figure 4) ([AIDSVU](#)).
- **State Prevalence:** In 2015, an estimated 2,357 persons were living with a diagnosed HIV infection in Rhode Island—a rate of 259 cases per 100,000 persons. Of those, 22.1 percent of male cases were attributed to IDU or male-to-male contact and IDU. Among females, 30.0 percent were living with HIV attributed to IDU ([AIDSVU](#)).

Hepatitis C (HCV) Prevalence and HCV Diagnoses Attributed to Injection Drug Use¹

- **U.S. Incidence:** In 2016, there were an estimated 41,200 new cases of acute HCV² ([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:** This data is unavailable for the state of Rhode Island ([CDC](#)).
- **State Prevalence:** In Rhode Island, there are an estimated 10,100 persons living with Hepatitis C (2013-2016 annual average), a rate of 1,200 cases per 100,000 persons ([HepVu](#)).

Additional Resources

- State Rhode Island Department of Health, [Drug Overdose Deaths and Prevent Overdose RI](#), [Prevent Overdose](#)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Opioid Overdose](#)



FY2018 NIH-funded projects related to opioid use and use disorder in Rhode Island: 8

[VIEW RESULTS](#)

[Find treatment in Rhode Island \(SAMHSA\)](#)

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 are estimated to be 13.9 times the number of reported cases in any year.