

## Description of Quarterly Reports from the Office of Drug Surveillance and Misuse Prevention

### **Quarterly Overdose Death Data Report**

This report highlights trends in overdose deaths for residents of the county for which the report was created, regardless of which Pennsylvania County the resident died in. Annual counts of overdose deaths are provided, as well as quarterly data trends and demographic rates. Drug combination trends are included for counties with sufficient counts to support breaking down the death data in this way. Counts, and rates associated with counts, between 1 and 5 are suppressed to protect decedent confidentiality. For the purposes of this report, an overdose death is defined as a death related to acute drug toxicity from any illicit, prescription, or over-the-counter drug, alone or in combination, but exclude deaths where alcohol is the only substance contributing to the acute toxicity event. Counts do not include suicides or homicides where someone intended to harm another person by poisoning.

### **Quarterly Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Data Report**

This report highlights trends over time for Opioid, Benzodiazepine, Stimulant, and Buprenorphine Dispensations over time for County residents, as well as two Risky Prescribing measures:

1. The Number of County Residents receiving greater than 90 Average Daily Morphine Milligram Equivalent (MME). This metric is used to assess higher potential for opioid overdose as Average Daily MME between 50–99 has been found to increase risk for opioid overdose two-fold to five-fold compared with dosages of 1–19 MME/day, and dosages  $\geq 100$  MME/day increase risk of overdose up to nine times the risk at 1–19 MME/day<sup>1</sup>.
2. The Number of County Residents receiving greater than 30 days of overlapping opioid and benzodiazepine prescriptions. This metric is also used to assess higher potential for overdose as the use of benzodiazepines with opioids at least doubles the risk of respiratory arrest and death<sup>2</sup>.

Limited demographic data for County residents receiving Opioid prescriptions are also provided.

### **Quarterly Overdose-Related Emergency Department Data Report**

This report pulls data from Pennsylvania’s syndromic surveillance system, EpiCenter, and highlights the count and rate of emergency department visits related to suspected drug overdoses from any illicit, prescription or over-the-counter substance, including alcohol, as well as the subset of overdoses suspected to be related to illicit or prescription opioids. Data is presented for County Residents regardless of where the overdose or emergency room visit occurred. Demographic breakdowns for the most recent quarter of data are also presented for counties with sufficient counts to support breaking down the non-fatal data in this way. Counts, and rates associated with counts, between 1 and 4 are suppressed to protect patient confidentiality. Please note that there are limitations associated with syndromic surveillance, including the fact that many overdose related visits do not include drug specificity, so Suspected Opioid overdoses are likely underestimated, and these are events that do not get investigated by any local or state public health agency so they are estimates used for trend monitoring and should not be considered confirmed events used for “case counting” purposes. Please see our [Overdose Data Technical Notes](#) for additional details on the limitations associated with syndromic surveillance data: <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/Documents/Opioids/OverdoseDataTechnicalNotes.pdf>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/opioids/providers/prescribing/faq.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/Documents/Opioids/PA%20Guidelines%20on%20Benzo%20Prescribing.pdf>