

San Diego County Substance Use and Overdose Prevention Taskforce (SUOPT)

2025 Annual Report Card



San Diego County

Substance Use and Overdose Prevention Taskforce (SUOPT)

2025 Annual Report Card

Report Contents

Introduction 2

Key Findings 3

Overdose Mortality 7

Emergency Department Encounters 12

Prescribing Trends 13

Public Safety 14

Appendices 22

Resources for the Community

San Diego County Access and Crisis Line

Call 1-888-724-7240 or 9-8-8

Free *Confidential* 24/7

2-1-1 San Diego

Call 2-1-1 for substance use and mental health treatment referrals.

It's Up to Us

Visit UP2SD.org for mental health and substance use disorder information and resources.

San Diego County Substance Use and Overdose Prevention Taskforce (SUOPT)

Scan the QR code below or visit www.suopt.org for community and parent fentanyl education and awareness toolkits.



2025 SUOPT REPORT CARD: INTRODUCTION

The San Diego County Substance Use and Overdose Prevention Taskforce (SUOPT) is pleased to present our Annual Data Report, which synthesizes critical information on overdose trends and impacted populations, including mortality, emergency department encounter, and public safety related data. Substance use and overdose continue to impact individuals, families, and neighborhoods across San Diego County.

SUOPT brings together healthcare providers, educators, government officials, law enforcement, non-profit organizations, and residents to reduce substance-related harms and save lives. Through quarterly meetings, members share information, align goals, and strengthen existing community efforts.

Beyond these quarterly gatherings, SUOPT maintains specialized subcommittees that address sector-specific challenges:

- **Healthcare Subcommittee:** Collaborates with physicians, pharmacists, hospitals, and clinics to promote safer medication prescribing practices, particularly for opioids. This group provide recommendations for standards and encourages healthcare providers to utilize tools like California's CURES (Controlled Substance Utilization Review and Evaluation System) to prevent misuse.
- **Safe Disposal Subcommittee:** Educates the public on proper medication disposal methods to prevent unauthorized access and protect the environment. They coordinate drug take-back events and develop resources for both healthcare professionals and community members.
- **Prevention & Education Subcommittee:** Aims to educate people of all ages about the risks of substance use and the resources available for treatment and recovery. This team conducts outreach to policymakers, develops public resources, and creates clear pathways to assistance.
- **Community Resilience Subcommittee:** Addresses underlying factors by strengthening individual and family support systems. Their initiatives include promoting trauma-informed care, harm reduction strategies, and community engagement through events, educational materials, and social media campaigns.
- **Community Response to Drug Overdose (CReDO):** CReDO operates as a closed membership committee designed to provide a confidential space for leaders across public health, public safety, and prevention sectors to exchange information, build trust, and strengthen cross-sector relationships.
- **Data Review Committee:** This multidisciplinary team of experts compiles and analyzes overdose data to produce the annual report card, providing critical insights on trends and patterns to inform prevention, intervention, and response strategies.

We invite you to explore this report and the key findings from this year's data presented on the following pages.



KEY TAKEAWAYS: OVERDOSE MORTALITY DATA

The following highlight major patterns and disparities in overdose-related deaths across San Diego County. These points are intended to support discussion and promote understanding of the data, helping readers recognize emerging trends and inform community response.

OVERALL TRENDS

- County overdose deaths have decreased for the second year in a row—dropping from 1,203 deaths in 2023 to 945 deaths in 2024, a 21 % decrease in just one year (and roughly 25 % below the 2022 peak). Despite the decrease, the 2024 rate is just over double the rate of 2015.

GEOGRAPHIC HOTSPOTS

- In 2024, Central San Diego (103.0 per 100,000), Mountain Empire (96.9), Palomar-Julian (53.3), Lemon Grove (49.8), and Pauma (49.2) had the county's highest overdose death rates, all well above the overall rate of 27.2 per 100,000.

DEMOGRAPHIC DISPARITIES

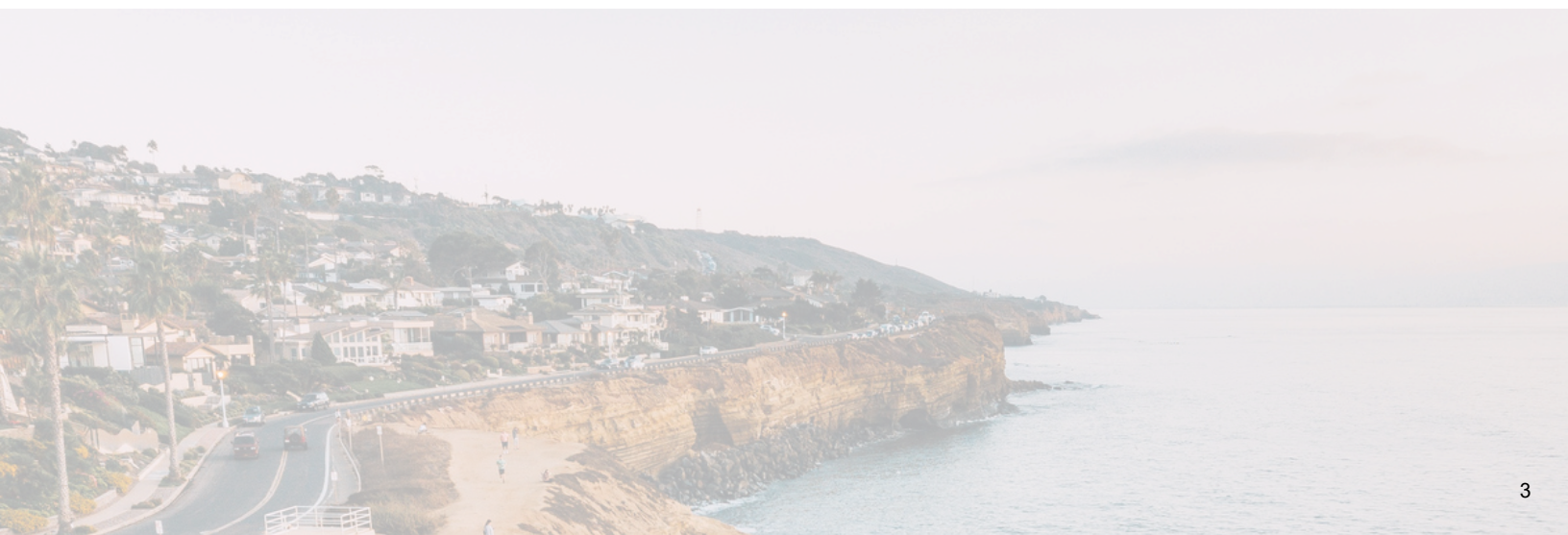
- Men had a death rate of 40.9 per 100,000 in 2024—more than triple that of women (13.3).
- In 2024, Black/African American residents experienced the highest mortality rate (68.6 per 100,000) compared to other racial and ethnic groups.
- Adults aged 45–64 experienced the highest overdose death rate in 2024 (51.7 per 100,000), with rates for those aged 25–44 also exceeding the county average.

SETTINGS AND POPULATIONS

- Homes were the leading setting for overdose deaths in 2024, with 340 (36%) occurring in the decedent's residence and 58 (6.1%) in another person's home. Healthcare facilities followed at 251 deaths (26.6%), while all public locations together accounted for fewer than 200 (31.3%).
- People experiencing homelessness (PEH) accounted for roughly 30% of overdose deaths in 2024.
- For PEH, methamphetamine deaths outnumbered fentanyl deaths every year from 2020 to 2024; counts for both peaked in 2023, and decreased in 2024, yet remain above 2020 levels.

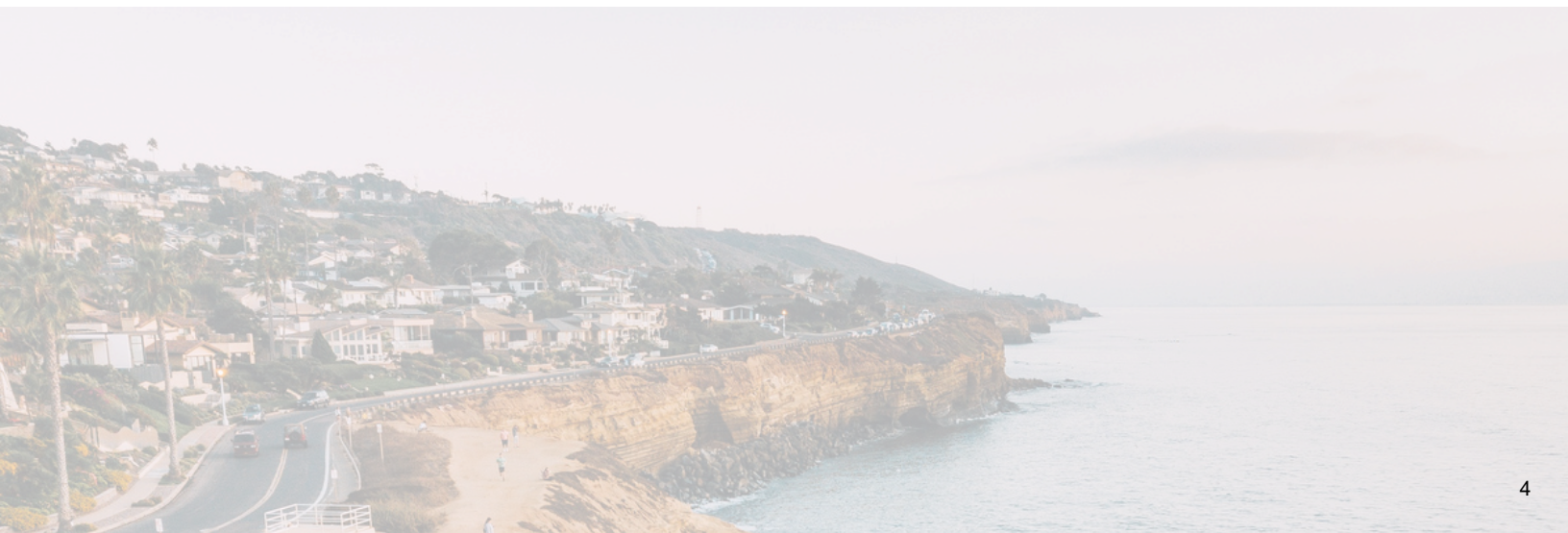
DRUG-SPECIFIC

- Fentanyl's contribution to overdose deaths rose from 23 % of overdose deaths in 2020 to 63 % in 2023, before dropping to 52 % in 2024.
- Nearly all overdose deaths in 2024 (94.5%) involved more than one substance, including alcohol.



KEY TAKEAWAYS: OVERDOSE MORTALITY DATA

	Indicator	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
1	Total Count of all Unintentional Deaths Caused by Drugs (Prescription and Illicit) and/or Alcohol	976	1,309	1,300	1,203	945
	◦ Rate per 100,000 residents	28.1	37.3	37.7	35.3	27.2
2	Unintentional Fentanyl-Caused Deaths <i>Note: Count includes both prescribed and illicitly obtained fentanyl</i>	462	814	814	749	494
	◦ % of Total Unintentional Overdose Deaths (Indicator 1)	47%	62%	63%	62%	52%
	◦ Rate per 100,000 residents	13.8	24.6	23.0	22.0	14.2
3	Unintentional Methamphetamine-Caused Deaths	551	757	803	756	600
	◦ % of Total Unintentional Overdose Deaths (Indicator 1)	56%	58%	62%	63%	63%
	◦ Rate per 100,000 residents	15.6	21.6	23.3	22.4	17.4
4	Unintentional Deaths Caused by Both Fentanyl and Methamphetamine	210	443	495	458	303
	◦ % of Total Unintentional Overdose Deaths (Indicator 1)	22%	34%	38%	38%	32%
	◦ Rate per 100,000 residents	5.9	12.7	14.4	13.6	8.9



KEY TAKEAWAYS: EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT ENCOUNTER DATA

The following summarize key trends in emergency department visits related to drug overdoses across San Diego County. These points are intended to support discussion and promote understanding of the data, helping readers identify areas of concern, disparities among populations, and progress over time.

OVERALL TRENDS

- In the past five years, 2021 marked the peak in terms of the number and rate of all drug overdose-related ED encounters. Both the count and rate declined in 2023 compared to 2021 and 2022. The ED encounter rate decreased by 13.9% from 2021 to 2023 but still remains 4.2% higher than 2019.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Race/Ethnicity

- From 2019 to 2023, all racial groups saw increases in opioid overdose-related ED encounter rates, though the impact varied. NH Black residents had the largest rise at +167%, nearly triple the countywide increase of +58%. Most recent data show a decrease from 2021 for Hispanic and NH White residents. NH API residents experienced a decrease from 2022 to 2023.

Age

- From 2019 to 2023, opioid overdose-related ED encounter rates increased across nearly all age groups, with the most significant surges among adults aged 35 to 44 and 45 to 54—rising by 137% and 107%, respectively.
- Youth under 18 also experienced a notable 81% increase, though their rates peaked in 2021 before declining. Young and middle-aged adults (18–34) saw moderate increases, while rates among individuals 65 and older slightly declined by 1.4%.

Gender

- In 2021, opioid overdose-related ED encounter rates reached their highest point for both males and females—105.4 for males and 43.8 for females per 100,000 people.

Gender (cont.)

- In 2023, the rate among males was still more than double that of females, highlighting an ongoing gender disparity in overdose-related ED encounters. However, it's encouraging to note that since 2021, rates have been steadily declining for both groups.

SUBSTANCE-SPECIFIC TRENDS

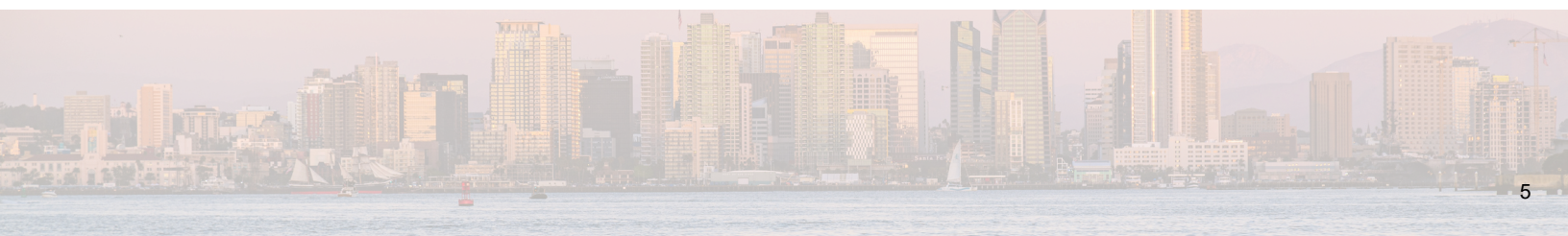
- Amphetamine overdose-related ED encounter rates increased steadily from 2019 to 2021, reaching a high of 13.3 per 100,000 residents. However, a sharp decrease followed, with rates falling to 8.4 per 100,000 in 2022 and decreasing even further to just 6.6 per 100,000 in 2023.

POLYSUBSTANCE USE

- ED encounter rates for nonfatal opioid and amphetamine overdose combined were highest in 2021, reaching 2.4 per 100,000 residents. This was nearly a 98% increase from 2019. Since then, rates have steadily decreased, with 2023 showing the lowest level over the five-year period at just 1.2 per 100,000. The number of encounters also decreased significantly—from 80 in 2021 to only 40 in 2023, marking a 13.8% decrease.

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

- **Youth:** Youth under 18 years old saw an increase in nonfatal amphetamine-related ED encounters while all other age groups saw a decrease over the past five years.



KEY TAKEAWAYS: PUBLIC SAFETY DATA

The following summarize key trends in public safety data related to substance use across San Diego County. These points are intended to support discussion and promote understanding of the data, helping readers identify evolving patterns in enforcement, prosecution, and harm reduction efforts.

FEDERAL PROSECUTION TRENDS

- Federal drug charges involving methamphetamine have shown a consistent downward trend from 2020 to 2024, declining by more than 60% over the five-year period.
- Fentanyl-related federal charges increased through 2022 before declining in subsequent years, with approximately a 30% decrease between 2022 and 2024.

SUBSTANCE USE AND AVAILABILITY

- From 2020 to 2024, self-reported prescription drug misuse declined among both adult and juvenile arrestees. Adult rates dropped from 52% to 41%, while juvenile rates fell from 54% to 34% over the same period.
- Positive methamphetamine tests among adult arrestees declined modestly from 2020 to 2024. However, the vast majority continued to report the drug as easy or very easy to obtain, with perceived access remaining above 84% throughout the period.
- Youth access patterns for prescription drugs appear to be shifting, with 2024 data showing increased reports of buying and stealing medications rather than being given them.

ARREST TRENDS

- Methamphetamine-related arrests accounted for 7% to 13% of total arrests from 2020 to 2024, peaking in 2021 before declining in later years. By 2024, the percentage returned to levels similar to 2020, despite an overall increase in total arrests.

LOCAL PROSECUTION DATA

City Attorney's Office

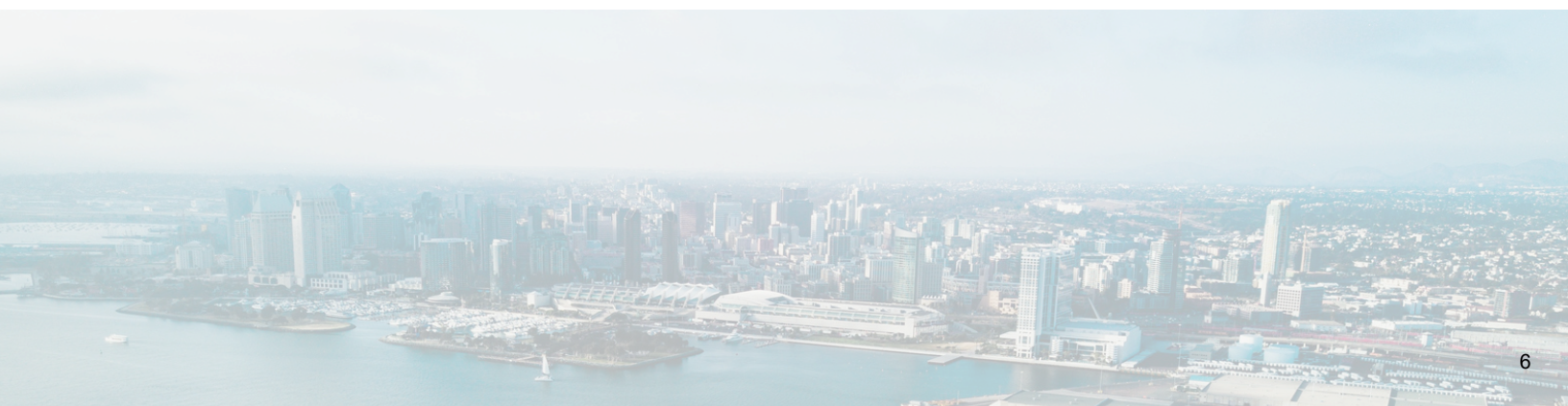
(Misdemeanor Prosecutions)

- Between 2020 and 2024, the San Diego City Attorney's Office filed substantially more misdemeanor possession cases involving methamphetamine than fentanyl, particularly under Health & Safety Code section 11377.
- Methamphetamine-related misdemeanor filings peaked in 2020 and then declined sharply, while fentanyl-related cases increased steadily over the same period, more than doubling between 2022 and 2024.

District Attorney's Office

(Felony Prosecutions)

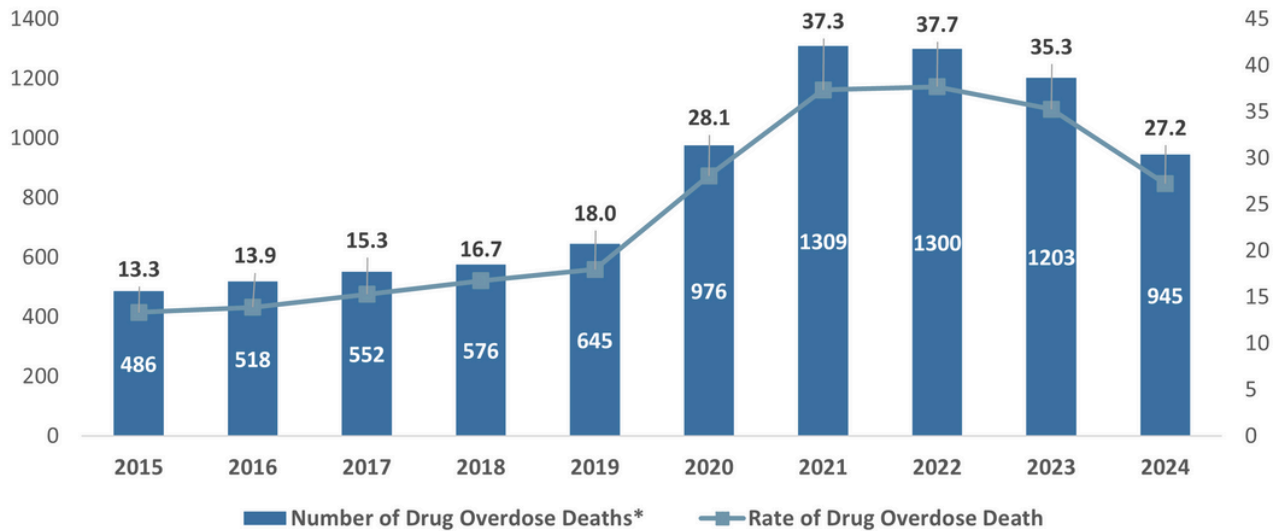
- Between 2020 and 2024, felony-level prosecutions involving methamphetamine consistently involved a higher volume of defendants than those involving fentanyl.
- Misdemeanor methamphetamine possession charges (HS 11377) were especially common, peaking at nearly 4,100 defendants in 2020 and remaining substantial throughout the period.
- Fentanyl prosecutions increased sharply during the same period, with misdemeanor possession charges (HS 11350) nearly doubling between 2021 and 2023.
- Felony methamphetamine and fentanyl sales-related charges trended downward, with the exception of the sale or furnishing of fentanyl (HS 11352) for which the number of defendants charged peaked in 2024.



2025 SUOPT REPORT CARD: OVERDOSE MORTALITY DATA

About the Data: Overdose mortality data from the County of San Diego, Department of the Medical Examiner provide a detailed record of deaths investigated as unintentional drug overdoses. This section includes 2024 data alongside a 10-year trend to illustrate both recent changes and longer-term patterns. A density map highlights geographic areas with higher concentrations of fatalities, helping to identify communities most affected. These findings offer valuable insight for shaping prevention, intervention, and policy efforts aimed at reducing overdose deaths. More detailed data for this section are provided in the appendices as data tables.

Figure 1. Ten-Year Trend in Drug Overdose Deaths Among San Diego County Residents: Counts and Rates*



*Counts are all deaths, regardless of residency status. Rates are among San Diego County residents only (including unhoused or those with missing resident zip codes). Rates are all crude rates.

Figure 1 Interpretation: Overdose deaths in San Diego County increased from 486 in 2015 to a peak of 1,309 in 2021 (about 38 per 100,000 residents), before decreasing to 945 in 2024 (about 27 per 100,000 residents).

Figure 2. Ten-Year Trend in Rate of Drug Overdose Deaths by Substance Among San Diego County Resident (2015-2024)

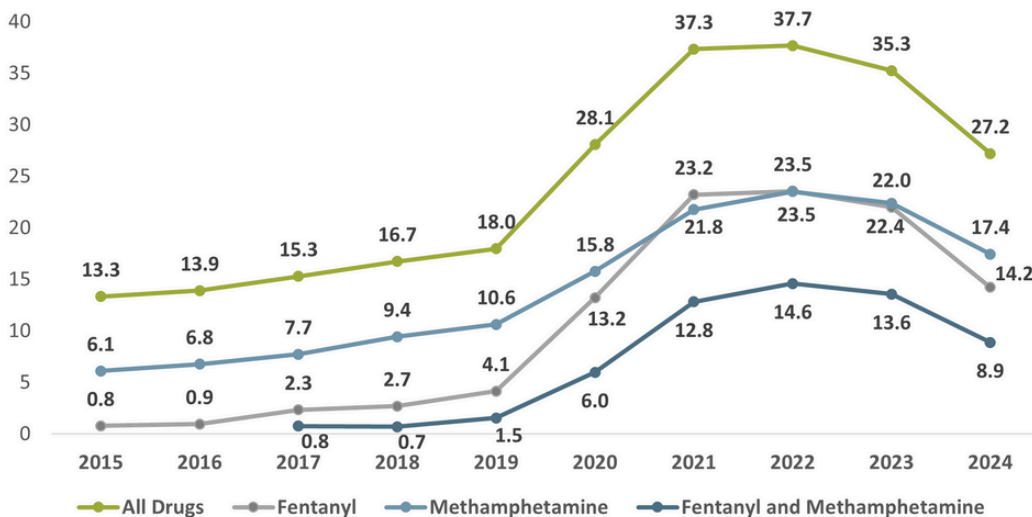
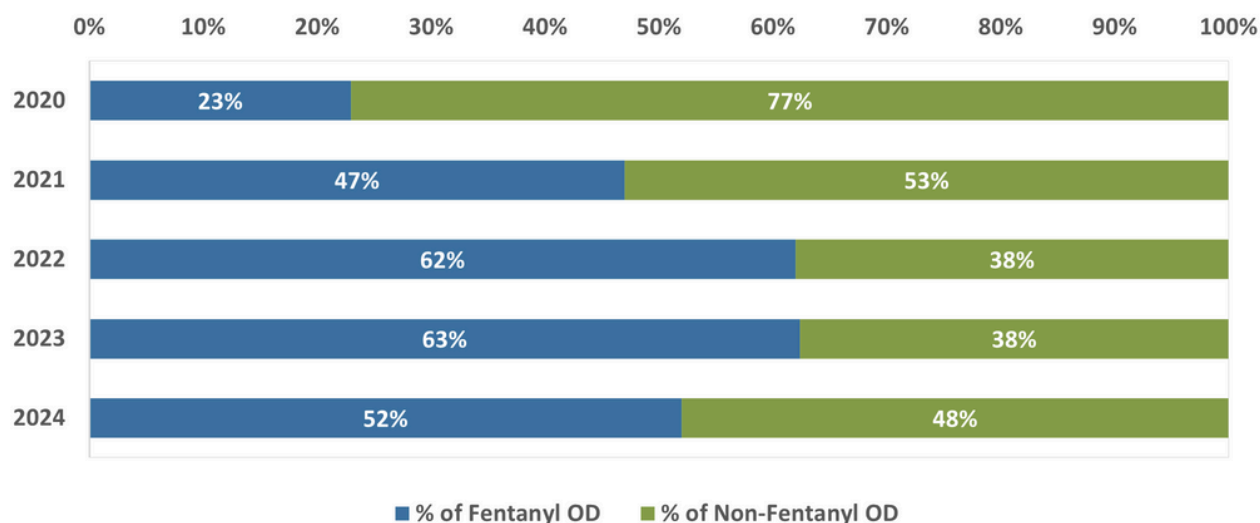


Figure 2 Interpretation: All-drug overdose death rates increased from 13.3 per 100,000 residents in 2015 to a peak of 37.7 in 2022, driven mainly by rises in fentanyl (0.8 → 23) and methamphetamine (6.1 → 23.5) deaths. Since 2022, overdose death trends have decreased for two consecutive years--dropping to 27.2 overall and 14.2 for fentanyl in 2024, with deaths related to methamphetamine being higher than fentanyl deaths with 17.4 per 100,000.

Figure 3. Percent of Drug Overdose Deaths Attributable to Fentanyl in San Diego County, 2020-2024



* Rates are all crude rates

Figure 3 Interpretation: Fentanyl was involved in 23% of overdose deaths in 2020 and rose steadily through 2021–2023, peaking at 63% in 2023. In 2024, fentanyl-related overdoses declined to 52% of drug overdose deaths.

Figure 4. Relationship Between Number of Unintentional Deaths due to Methamphetamine, Fentanyl, and Other Drugs (Prescription and Illicit) in San Diego County, 2024

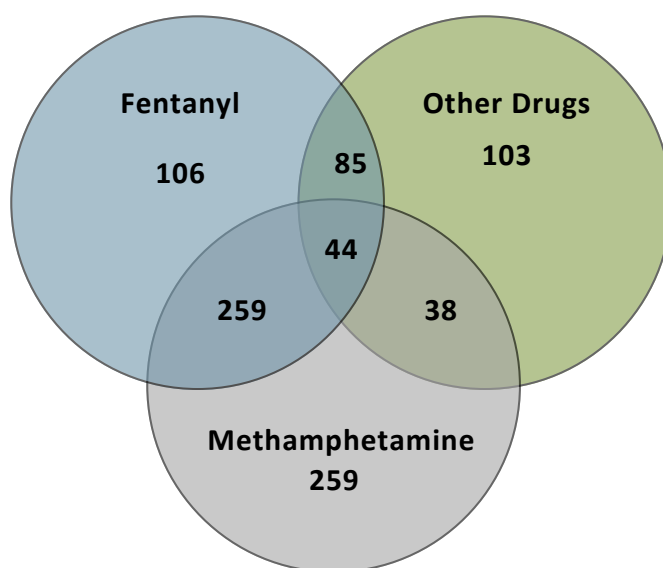


Figure 4 Interpretation: In 2024, 259 (27%) unintentional overdose deaths involved both methamphetamine and fentanyl without other drugs. Additionally, 259 deaths involved only methamphetamine, 106 involved only fentanyl, and 103 involved only other drugs. The overlap between fentanyl and other drugs accounted for 85 deaths, while methamphetamine and other drugs overlapped in 38 deaths. A total of 44 deaths involved all three drug categories. These data show that 426 deaths involved multiple substances, with the combination of methamphetamine and fentanyl being the most common polysubstance pattern.

2025 SUOPT REPORT CARD: OVERDOSE MORTALITY DATA

Figure 5A. Subregional Areas (SRAs) with Overdose Death Rates Exceeding the County Rate*

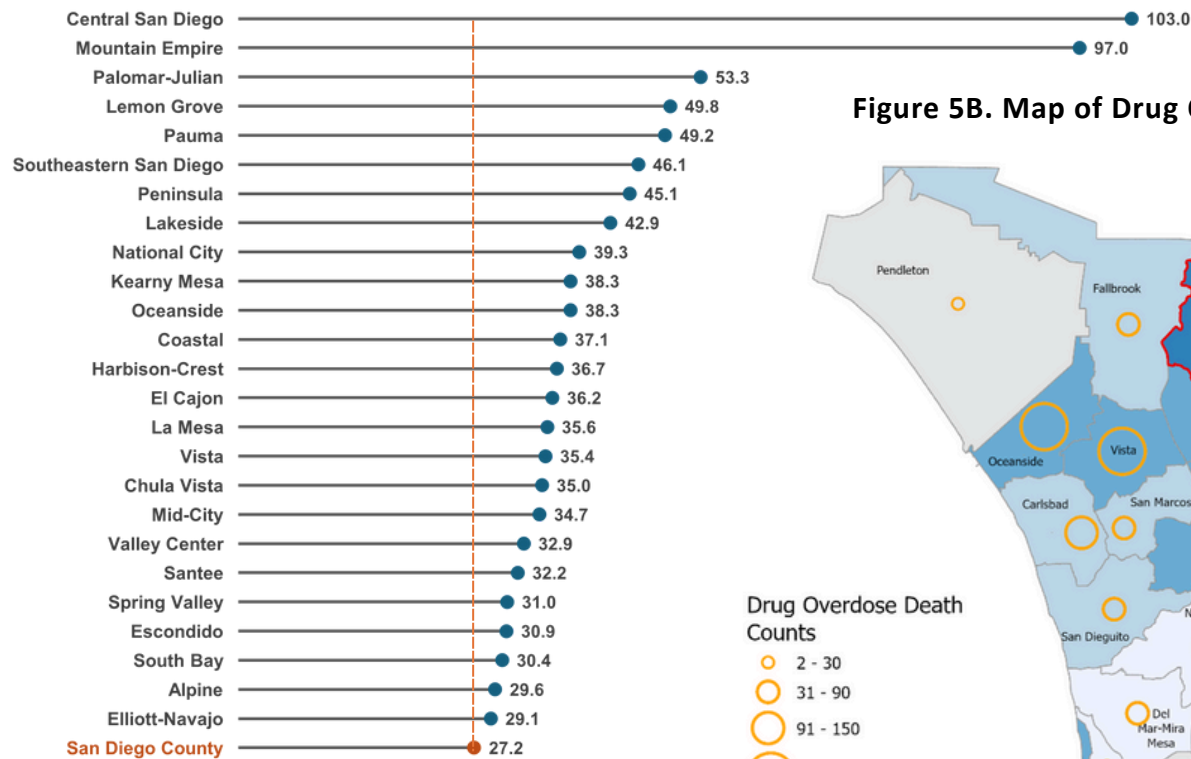
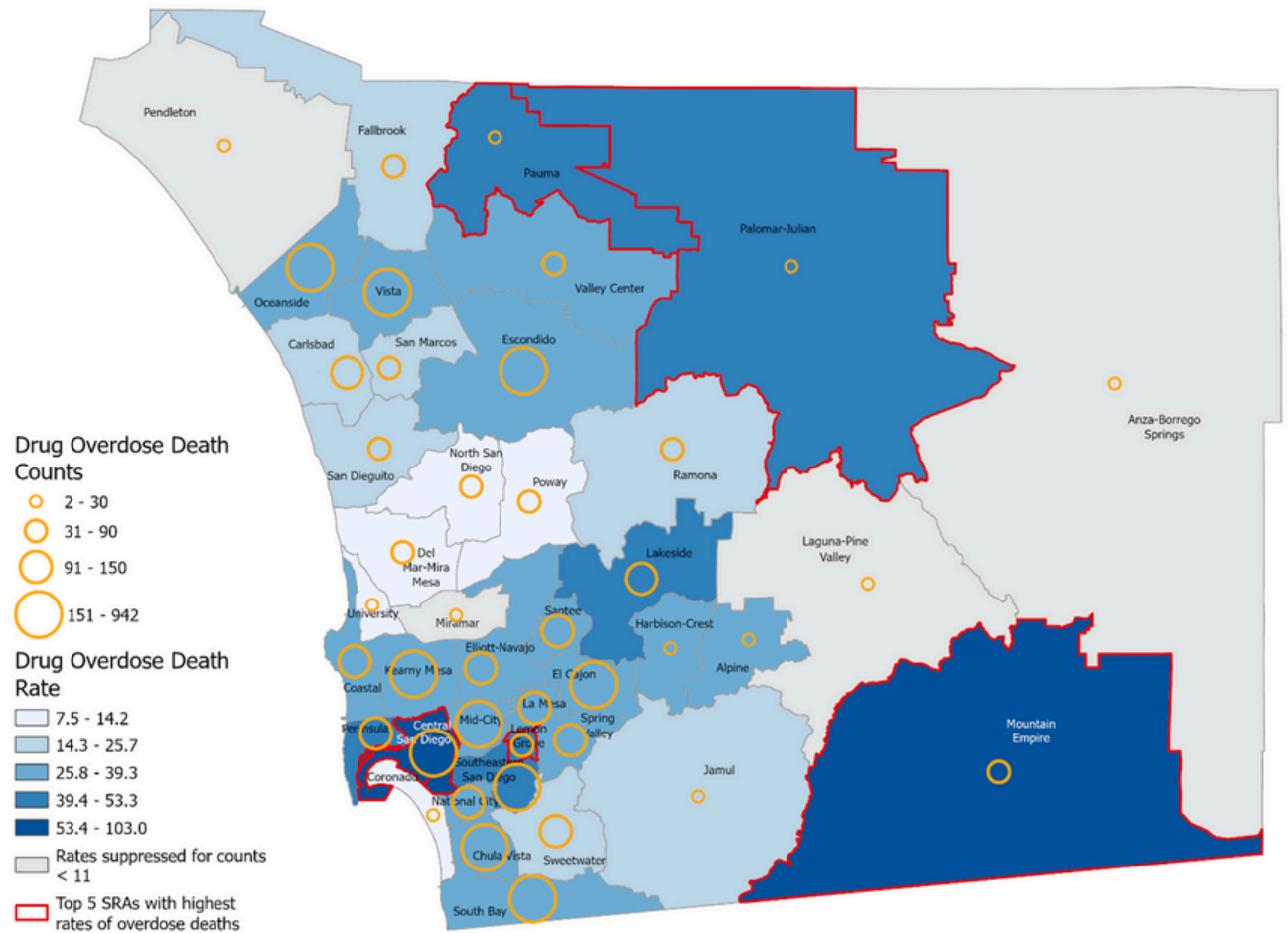


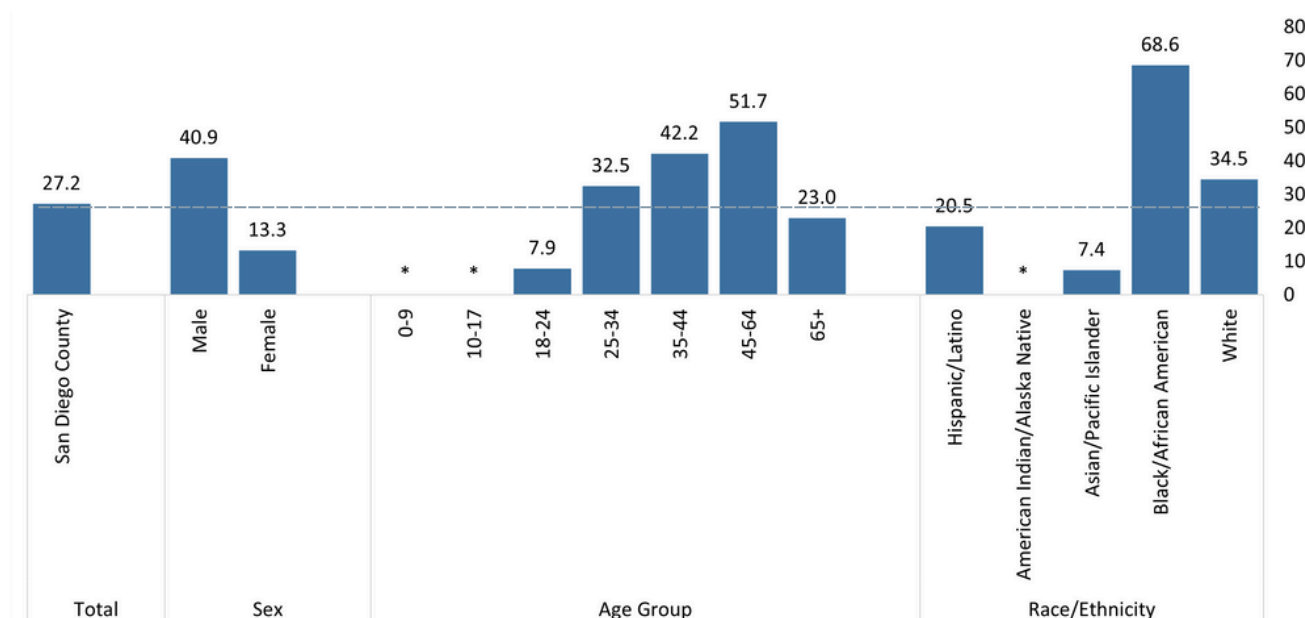
Figure 5A Interpretation: All listed SRAs surpassed the 2024 San Diego County drug overdose death rate of 27.2 per 100,000. The five highest 2024 overdose-death rates were in Central San Diego (103.0 per 100,000), Mountain Empire (96.9), Palomar-Julian (53.3), Lemon Grove (49.8), and Pauma (49.2).

Figure 5B. Map of Drug Overdose Deaths by Subregional Areas (SRAs), 2020-2024*



*Pooled Rate: Combined rate calculated across 2020-2024 to provide a more stable estimate.

† Resident ZIP code was missing for 277 decedents, most of whom were people experiencing homelessness; for these records, the ZIP code of where the overdose occurred was substituted. If the zip code of overdose event was missing, the death zip was used. Rates are among San Diego County residents only (including unhoused or those with missing resident zip codes). Rates are crude rates.

Figure 6. Rate of Drug Overdose Deaths Among San Diego County Residents, 2024*

* Rates are all crude rates

Figure 6 Interpretation: In 2024, overdose deaths were highest among men (40.9 per 100,000) and adults aged 45–64 (51.7), with Black/African American residents facing the highest rate (68.6). Rates for adults aged 18 to 44 and for non-Hispanic White residents were also higher than the overall county rate.

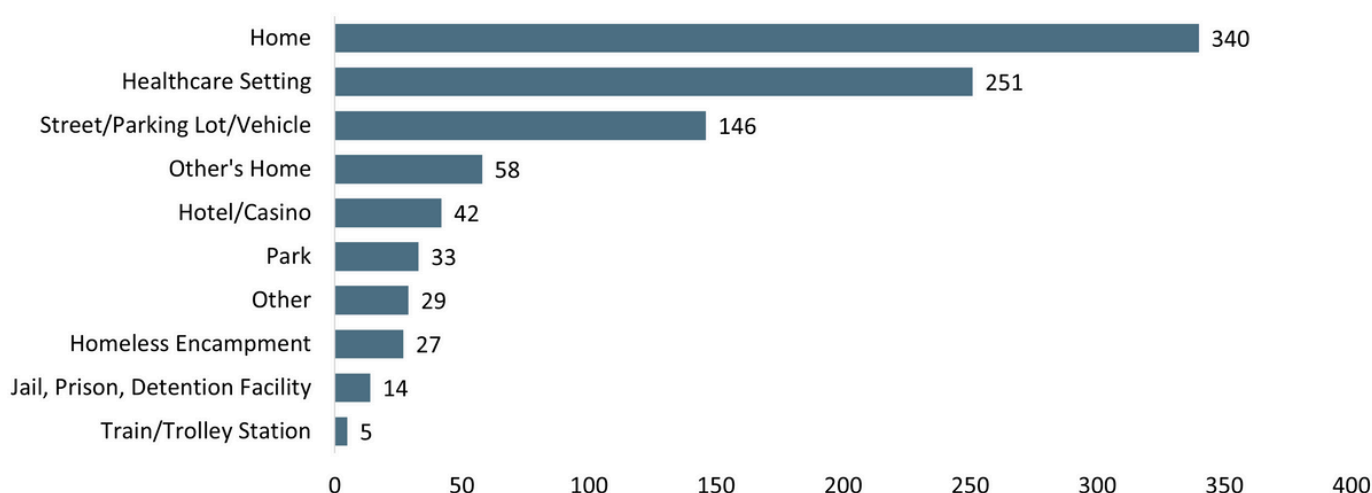
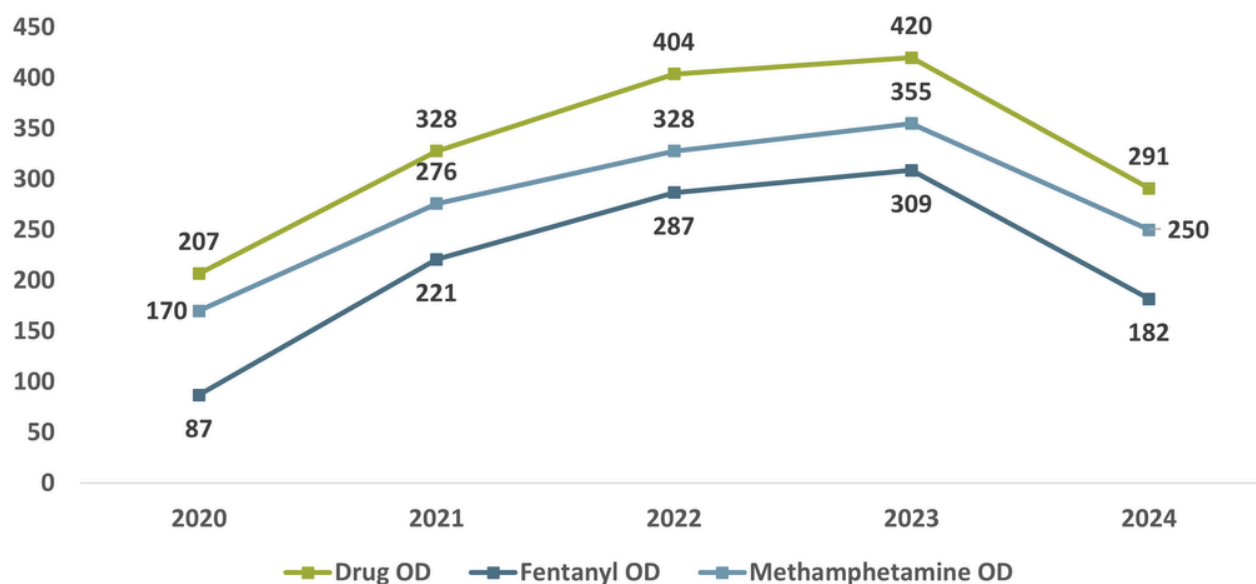
Figure 7. Primary Locations of Drug Overdose Deaths, San Diego County, 2024

Figure 7 Interpretation: Most overdose deaths occurred in private residences, with 340 (36%) in the decedent's own home and 58 (6.1%) in someone else's. Healthcare settings ranked second at 251 (26.6%) deaths, followed by streets, parking lots, or vehicles with 146 (15.5%). Hotels and casinos, parks, homeless encampments, detention facilities, transit stations, and other sites each recorded 42 (15.8%) or fewer deaths, underscoring that fatalities are heavily concentrated in homes and clinical environments.

Figure 8. Number of Drug Overdose Deaths Among PEH in San Diego County by Substance, 2020-2024[†]



[†] Drug categories are not mutually exclusive. A single death may involve more than one drug, so counts for fentanyl, methamphetamine, and the combination category may overlap and will not sum to the total number of deaths.

Figure 8 Interpretation: Drug overdose deaths among people experiencing homelessness increased from 2020 to a 2023 peak (all-drug: 420; fentanyl: 309; methamphetamine: 355) before easing in 2024, when each category decreased by roughly one-quarter. Methamphetamine deaths among PEH remains higher than fentanyl deaths from 2020-2024.

Figure 9. Number of Drug Overdose Deaths Among People Experiencing Homelessness (PEH) in San Diego County, 2024

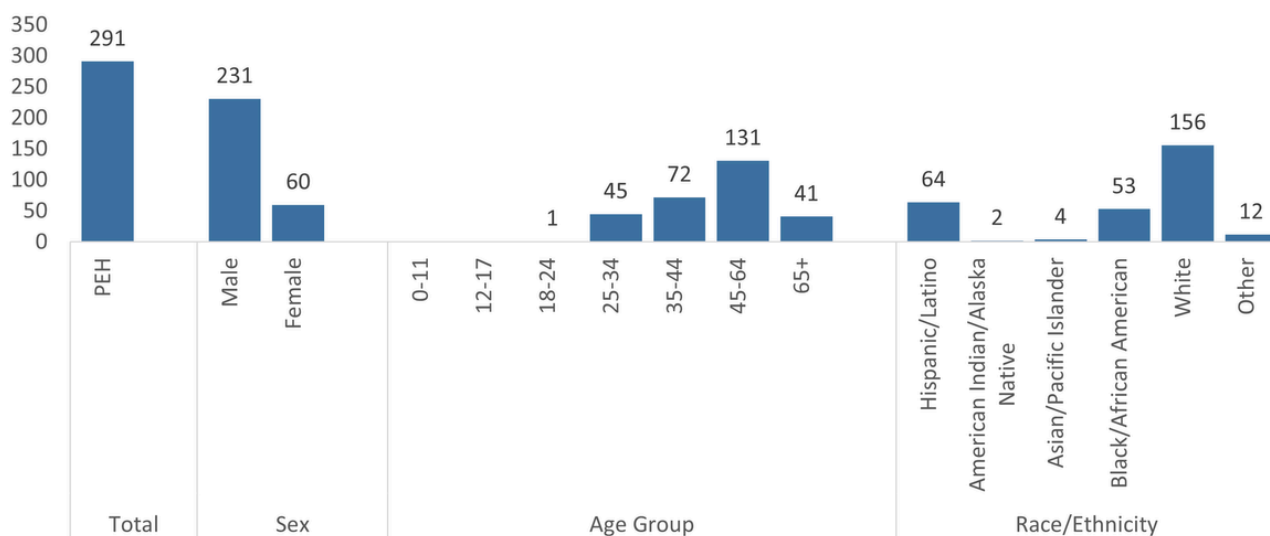


Figure 9 Interpretation: In 2024, people experiencing homelessness (PEH) accounted for roughly 30% of San Diego County's drug-overdose deaths, with the highest numbers occurring among PEH who were men, adults aged 45–64, and non-Hispanic White individuals.

2025 SUOPT REPORT CARD: EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT ENCOUNTER DATA

About the Data Emergency department (ED) encounters provide valuable insight into the acute health impacts of substance use in San Diego County. This section examines ED encounters in 2023 that had a primary diagnosis related to unintentional drug overdose. While this approach captures the most severe and direct impacts, it likely underestimates the full burden, as cases where these substances were mentioned but not listed as the primary reason for the visit are not included. This section presents demographic patterns, temporal trends, and analysis of substance overlaps to inform prevention, intervention, and policy efforts. More detailed data for this section are provided in the appendices as data tables.

Figure 10. Number and Rate* per 100,000 Residents of Nonfatal ED Encounters due to Drug Overdose in San Diego County, 2019-2023

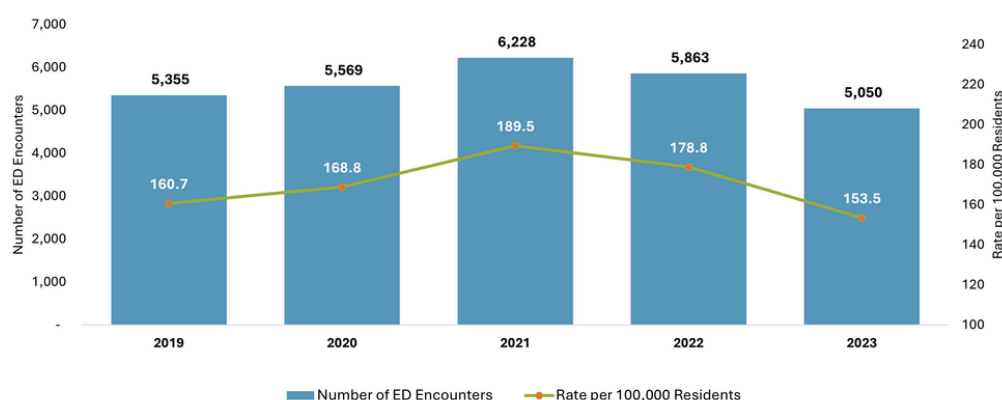


Figure 10 Interpretation: 2021 marked the peak in terms of number and rate of all drug overdose-related ED encounters. Both the count and rate declined in 2023 compared to 2021 and 2022. The ED encounter rate dropped by 13.9% from 2021 to 2023 but still remains 4.2% higher than 2019.

Figure 11. ED Encounter Rates* Due to Nonfatal Drug Overdoses in San Diego County, 2023

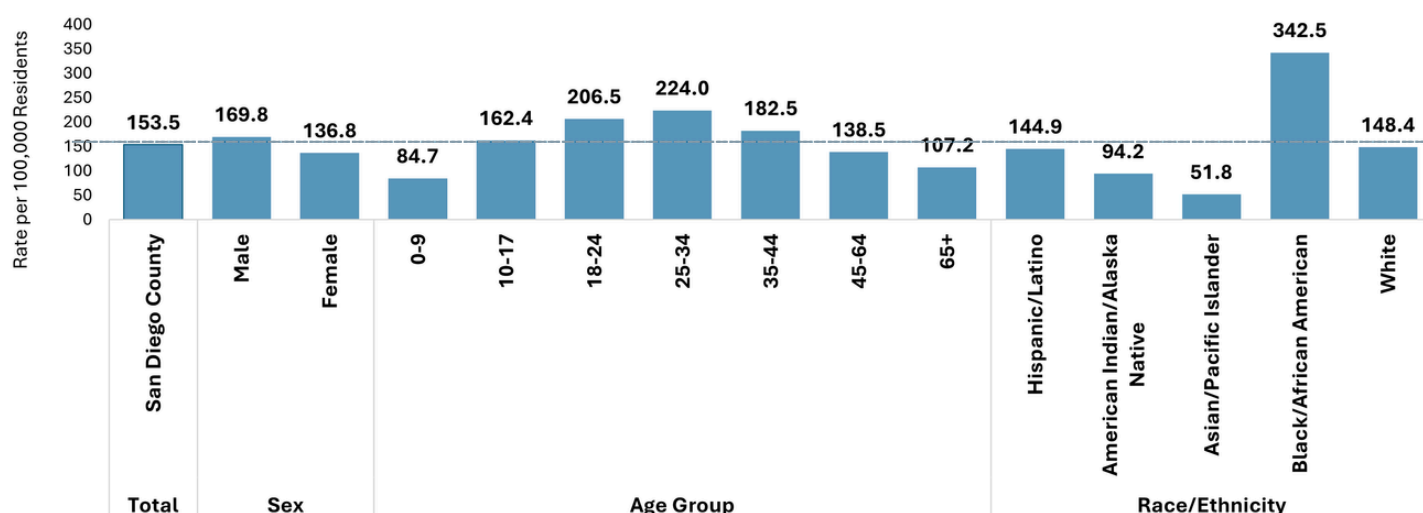


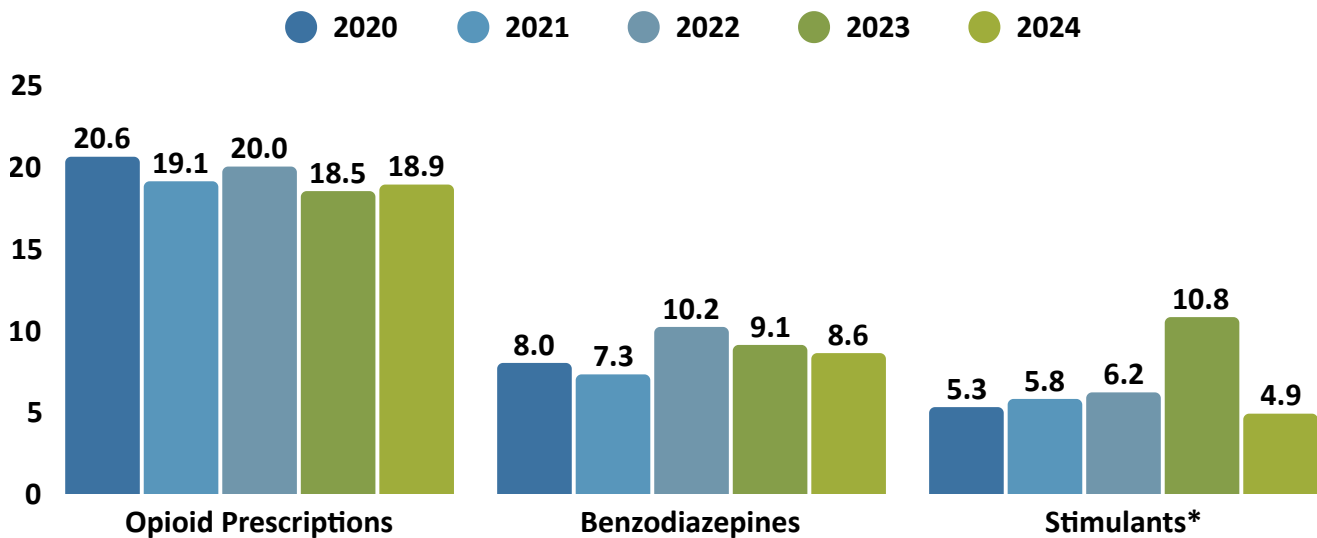
Figure 11 Interpretation: The rate of ED encounters due to nonfatal drug overdose was 153.5 per 100,000 San Diego County residents in 2023. Among all ED encounters due to nonfatal drug overdose, males, those between ages of 25-35 years, and non-Hispanic Black residents had the highest rates.

*Rates include San Diego County residents who were treated in a county facility. ED encounters include those who were admitted into an emergency department in San Diego County and then discharged from the emergency department or subsequently hospitalized.

2025 SUOPT REPORT CARD: PRESCRIPTION MONITORING DATA

About the Data: The Controlled Substance Utilization Review and Evaluation System (CURES) is California's prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP), which collects information on the prescribing and dispensing of controlled substances. This section summarizes CURES data for San Diego County to describe patterns in prescribing. Data reflect prescriptions filled at pharmacies and other dispensers, and may not capture medications obtained outside the healthcare system.

Figure 12. Controlled Substance Prescriptions in San Diego County, Annual Number of Dispensed Pills Per County Resident, 2020-2024



***Important Note About 2023 Stimulant Data:** The substantial increase in stimulant prescriptions reported in 2023 (10.8 pills per resident compared to 6.2 in 2022) appears to be primarily due to changes in the CURES reporting system. The California Department of Justice implemented updates that enhanced capture of certain stimulant medications, including previously unreported formulations such as lisdexamfetamine dimesylate and increased reporting of medications like methylphenidate, Vyvanse, and Adderall. The 2024 data showing 4.98 pills per resident suggests prescribing patterns have returned to expected levels. This reporting artifact should be considered when interpreting trends. *Data Source: California Department of Justice, Controlled Substance Utilization Review and Evaluation System (CURES)*

Figure 12 Interpretation:

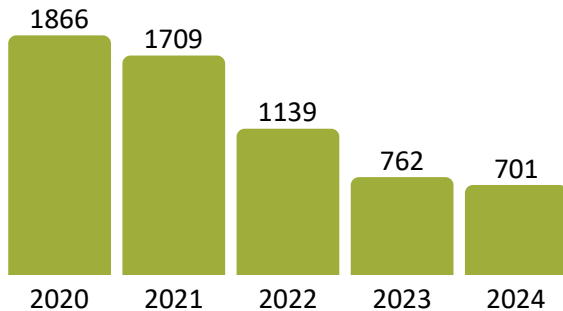
- Opioid prescriptions continued their downward trend, declining from 20.6 pills per resident in 2020 to 18.9 in 2024, representing an 8% decrease over the five-year period.
- Benzodiazepine prescriptions remained relatively stable, fluctuating between 7.3 and 10.2 pills per resident, with 2024 levels (8.6) similar to 2020 (8.0).
- Stimulant prescriptions showed significant variation, with an anomalous spike in 2023 that appears related to reporting system changes rather than actual prescribing patterns (see note below figure).

2025 SUOPT REPORT CARD: PUBLIC SAFETY DATA

About the data: The public safety data presented in this addendum provide insight into law enforcement responses and community-level safety efforts related to substance use in San Diego County. This section examines naloxone administrations by first responders, drug-related arrests, and other public safety indicators from 2024.

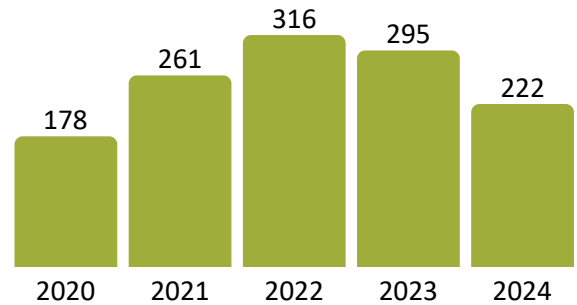
Federal Prosecution-Related Data

Figure 13. Federal Methamphetamine Charges, San Diego and Imperial County, 2020-2024*



Source: United States Attorney's Office

Figure 14. Federal Fentanyl Charges, San Diego and Imperial County, 2020-2024*



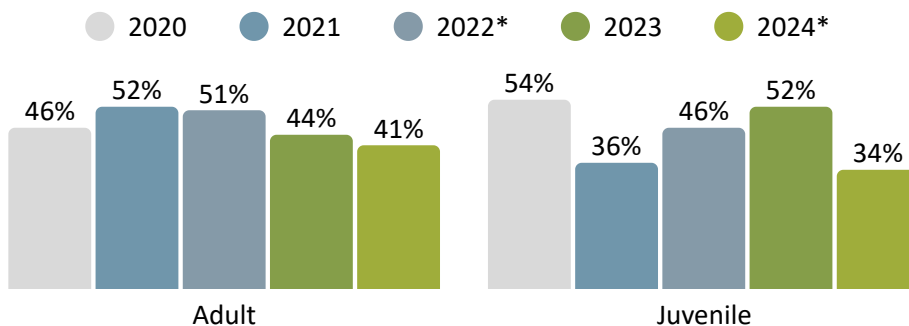
Source: United States Attorney's Office

***Data Note:** Charges included in the count are: 040 - drug trafficking; 045 - simple drug possession; 047 - organized crime drug enforcement task force (OCDETF); and 06F - money laundering/structuring (narcotics).

Figure 13 & 14 Interpretation: Between 2020 and 2024, federal drug charges involving methamphetamine steadily declined each year, dropping by more than 60% over the five-year period. Fentanyl-related charges increased through 2022, peaking at 316 cases, but declined in the following two years.

Use and Availability Data

Figure 15. San Diego County Arrestees Self Report of Prescription Misuse, 2020-2024*



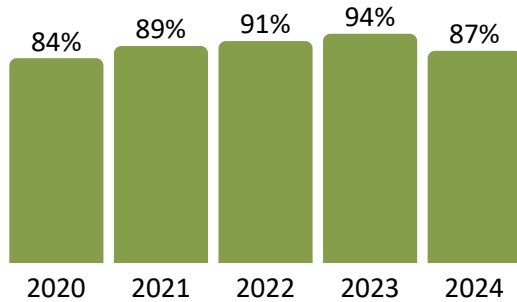
Source: Substance Abuse Monitoring, San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG).

Figure 15 Interpretation: From 2020 to 2024, self-reported prescription drug misuse declined among both adult and juvenile arrestees. Adult rates dropped from 52% to 41%, while juvenile rates fell from 54% to 34% over the same period.

***Data Note:** In 2022–2024, youth were interviewed at East Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility and/or Achievement Centers (Central, Escondido, La Mesa). In 2024, the Youth Transition Center (YTC) was also included. Achievement Center youth, who have not been adjudicated and attend as an alternative to detention, were added to supplement the sample due to fewer bookings at Juvenile Hall. Because of booking procedures at East Mesa, no urine samples were collected; all self-reported data were included.

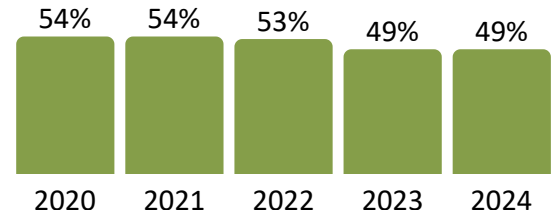
2025 SUOPT REPORT CARD: PUBLIC SAFETY DATA

Figure 16. Percent of Adult Arrestees Reporting Methamphetamine as “Very Easy” or “Easy” to Get, 2020-2024



Source: Substance Abuse Monitoring, San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG).

Figure 17. Positive Methamphetamine Tests Among San Diego County Arrestees, 2020-2024



Source: Substance Abuse Monitoring, San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG).

Figure 16 & 17 Interpretation: From 2020 to 2024, positive methamphetamine tests among adult arrestees declined modestly. However, the vast majority continued to report the drug as easy or very easy to obtain, with perceived access remaining above 84% throughout the period.

Table 1. Arrestee Self-Reported Method of Obtaining Prescription Drugs, 2020-2024

	2019		2020		2021		2023		2024	
	Adult	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile
Given	72%	77%	77%	87%	72%	77%	77%	87%	88%	58%
Bought	62%	56%	50%	51%	62%	56%	50%	51%	39%	75%
Stolen	17%	29%	23%	31%	17%	29%	23%	31%	22%	67%

Source: Substance Abuse Monitoring, San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG).

Table 1 Interpretation: Between 2020 and 2024, most adults who misused prescriptions reported being given the drugs, while youth responses shifted in 2024, with a sharp increase in reports of buying and stealing. This suggests a potential change in access patterns among juveniles that may warrant closer monitoring.

2025 SUOPT REPORT CARD: PUBLIC SAFETY DATA

Arrest-Related Data

Table 2. Number of Arrests and Citations (Misdemeanor and Felony), San Diego Region, 2020-2024*

Year	Total Arrests	Methamphetamine Related Arrests	% of Total
2020	89,497	7,214	8.10%
2021	83,893	10,948	13.10%
2022	89,765	7,378	8.20%
2023	89,122	6,930	7.80%
2024	94,320	7,281	7.70%

Figure 2 Interpretation:

Methamphetamine-related arrests accounted for 7% to 13% of total arrests from 2020 to 2024, peaking in 2021 before declining in later years. By 2024, the percentage returned to levels similar to 2020, despite an overall increase in total arrests.

Source: Automated Regional Justice Information System (ARJIS)

Table 3. Number of Arrests and Citations (Misdemeanor and Felony) for Methamphetamine, San Diego Police Department (SDPD): 2020-2024*

Division	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% Change (23-24)	2024 Rate per 100,000
Central Division	--	927	464	452	690	53%	--
Eastern Division	--	353	166	117	89	-24%	--
Mid-City Division	--	340	211	191	195	2%	--
Northeastern Division	--	63	46	52	28	-46%	--
Northern Division	--	304	152	202	161	-20%	--
Northwestern Division	--	47	13	9	7	-22%	--
Southeastern Division	--	237	123	79	135	71%	--
Southern Division	--	195	100	110	67	-39%	--
Western Division	--	732	305	490	567	16%	--
Other	--	27	32	16	17	6%	--
Grand Total	--	3,225	1,612	1,718	1,956	14%	--

2025 SUOPT REPORT CARD: PUBLIC SAFETY DATA

Table 4. Number of Arrests and Citations (Misdemeanor and Felony) for Methamphetamine, San Diego County Sheriff's Department: 2020-2024*

City or Region	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% Change (23-24)	2024 Rate per 100,000
City of Del Mar	0	5	6	7	7	--	--
City of Encinitas	80	196	243	196	179	-8.70%	292.2
City of Imperial Beach	95	135	73	99	94	-5.10%	360
City of Lemon Grove	84	166	127	230	200	-13.00%	726.8
City of Poway	16	74	94	90	37	-58.90%	76.1
City of San Marcos	159	255	345	343	284	-17.20%	373.7
City of Santee	120	216	133	133	113	-15.00%	189.7
City of Solana Beach	3	19	17	25	7	-72.00%	--
City of Vista	244	477	358	360	518	43.90%	517.4
Sheriff's Unincorporated	1,162	--	--	--	--		280.7
<i>Unincorporated – East Region</i>	--	1,314	858	651	550	-15.50%	--
<i>Unincorporated – North Region</i>	--	813	711	679	719	5.90%	--
<i>Unincorporated – South Region</i>	--	152	72	69	90	30.40%	--
<i>Unincorporated – Central Region</i>	--	71	92	67	43	-35.80%	--
<i>Unincorporated – Other</i>		23	47	34	33	-2.90%	--
Grand Total	1,963	3,916	3,176	2,983	2,874	-3.70%	303.8

2025 SUOPT REPORT CARD: PUBLIC SAFETY DATA

Table 5. Number of Arrests and Citations (Misdemeanor and Felony) for Methamphetamine, All Remaining San Diego County Law Enforcement Agencies: 2020-2024*

Law Enforcement Agency	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% Change (23-24)	2024 Rate per 100,000
Carlsbad	276	274	258	225	216	-4%	187.8
Chula Vista	486	539	428	494	481	-3%	78
Coronado	22	30	19	23	8	-65%	--
El Cajon	528	653	468	364	516	42%	206.1
Escondido	504	1,074	646	434	566	30%	143.5
La Mesa	158	145	118	135	156	16%	355.5
Harbor Police	--	137	49	94	141	50%	--
National City	123	127	102	69	55	-20%	370
Oceanside	1,011	828	502	389	312	-20%	125.4
Grand Total	3,108	3,807	2,590	2,227	2,451	10%	255.1

Tables 2 -5 Data Notes:

- Field (i.e., non-warrant) arrests; 11377/11378/11379 HS (and variants) only.
- Arrest rate per 100,000 population.
- Data reflects the site of the arrest, not the residence of the arrestee. Meaning these data are based on where the arrest occurred, not where the individual arrested resides.
- Rates and percent change not calculated for cells with less than 30 cases or Unincorporated Regions.
- Other includes arrests made outside of an assigned division.

Table 6. Methamphetamine Involvement in Domestic Violence Fatalities: Findings from Case Reviews, 2006-2024

The County of San Diego Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team (DVFRT) selects five to seven domestic violence fatality cases each year for in-depth, multidisciplinary reviews to identify needed improvements in areas such as policy, programming, resource development and awareness. Included in the table below are the findings for current and historical methamphetamine use by the perpetrators and victims in these cases.

	Intimate Partner Victims (n= 138)	Perpetrators (n=138)
Current Methamphetamine Use*	28 (20.3%)	29 (21.0%)
No/Unknown Current Methamphetamine Use	110 (79.7%)	109 (79.0%)
History of Methamphetamine Use**	34 (24.6%)	46 (33.3%)
No/Unknown History of Methamphetamine Use	104 (75.4%)	92 (66.7%)

Source: County of San Diego DVFRT

* Methamphetamine detected at the time of death, as indicated by toxicology screen results.

** Determined when the individual has been known to use methamphetamines at some point in their life, as documented through a review of multidisciplinary case records.

2025 SUOPT REPORT CARD: PUBLIC SAFETY DATA

Local Drug Prosecution Data – City and District Attorneys

The **San Diego City Attorney's Office** handles misdemeanor drug prosecutions, including cases involving possession of fentanyl and methamphetamine within the City of San Diego. This section summarizes criminal complaints filed between 2020 and 2024 under California Health & Safety Code Sections 11350 HS and 11377 HS.

The tables reflect the number of cases filed by year between 2020 to 2024. Some individuals were charged in more than one case during the five-year period, and a single case may include charges for both substances. The City Attorney's Office prosecutes misdemeanor offenses only. Felony charges - such as drug sales, transportation, and manufacturing - are handled by the San Diego County District Attorney's Office and are presented separately.

**Table 7A. Misdemeanor Fentanyl Possession Prosecutions
City Attorney's Office (2020–2024)***

Code Section	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
11350 HS	98	52	98	192	284
11377 HS	12	10	17	44	25

**Table 7B. Misdemeanor Methamphetamine Possession Prosecutions
City Attorney's Office (2020–2024)****

Code Section	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
11350 HS	140	44	45	89	77
11377 HS	1,777	87	203	782	795

Table 7A & 7B Interpretation:
Between 2020 and 2024, the San Diego City Attorney's Office filed substantially more misdemeanor possession cases involving methamphetamine than fentanyl, particularly under Health & Safety Code section 11377.

Methamphetamine-related filings peaked in 2020 and then declined sharply, while fentanyl-related cases increased steadily over the same period, more than doubling between 2022 and 2024.

*** Data notes for tables 7A and 7B:**

- Data reflect misdemeanor-level charges filed by the San Diego City Attorney's Office where the complaint included a single count for possession of fentanyl or methamphetamine.
- Totals represent the number of cases filed, not the number of defendants. Some individuals had multiple cases over the five-year period.
- Code Sections: 11350 HS and 11377 HS under the California Health & Safety Code.
- For example, 724 cases were filed under 11350 HS for fentanyl between 2020 and 2024, involving 647 individuals (77 with more than one case).

2025 SUOPT REPORT CARD: PUBLIC SAFETY DATA

The **San Diego County District Attorney's Office** prosecutes felony drug offenses, including possession for sale, importation, transportation, and distribution, **along with misdemeanor drug offenses occurring outside the City of San Diego**. The following tables summarize the number of defendants charged with fentanyl- and methamphetamine-related **misdemeanor possession offenses** and felony **sales-related** offenses between 2020 and 2024 under various Health & Safety Code sections.

Table 8A. Felony Fentanyl Prosecutions
*District Attorney's Office (2020–2024)**

Code Section	Charge Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
11350 HS	Possession	176	364	495	825	831
11351 HS	Possession for Sale	268	455	418	416	271
11352 HS	Importation	34	61	19	30	23
11352 HS	Sell/Furnish	61	57	53	32	76
11352 HS	Transport for Sale	111	187	182	181	116

Table 8B. Felony Methamphetamine Prosecutions
*District Attorney's Office (2020–2024)**

Code Section	Charge Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
11377 HS	Possession	4,067	2,323	2,134	2,991	3,728
11378 HS	Possession for Sale	767	900	622	606	496
11379 HS	Importation	99	93	31	47	43
11379 HS	Sell/Furnish	76	72	64	52	53
11379 HS	Transport for Sale	383	421	280	265	255

Figure 8A & 8B Interpretation: Between 2020 and 2024, felony-level prosecutions involving methamphetamine consistently involved a higher volume of defendants than those involving fentanyl.

Misdemeanor methamphetamine possession charges (HS 11377) were especially common, peaking at nearly 4,100 defendants in 2020 and remaining substantial throughout the period. Fentanyl prosecutions increased sharply during the same period, with misdemeanor possession charges (HS 11350) nearly doubling between 2021 and 2023.

Felony methamphetamine and fentanyl sales-related charges trended downward, with the exception of the sale or furnishing of fentanyl (HS 11352) for which the number of defendants charged peaked in 2024.

****Data Notes for Tables 8A & 8B**

- Data reflects felony-level charges filed by the San Diego County District Attorney's Office between 2020 and 2024.
- Values represent the number of defendants charged, not the number of charges filed or cases issued.
- A single defendant may be charged with multiple offenses in one complaint; totals across charges should not be summed.
- Data may include defendants charged with multiple types of offenses in a given year.
- All offenses listed fall under California Health & Safety Code Sections 11350, 11351, 11352, 11377, 11378, and 11379.

2025 SUOPT REPORT CARD: PUBLIC SAFETY DATA

Public Safety and Harm Reduction Strategies

Table 9. Drug-Related Naloxone Use Occurrences, 2020-2024

Reporting Agency	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Emergency Medical Services	4,101	6,295	6,971	7,297	5,181
Sheriff's Department: Detention Services Bureau*	116	199	198	83	25
Sheriff's Department: Law Enforcement Services Bureau & Court Services Bureau*	51	83	82	71	32
San Diego Police Department	61	68	118	197	136
Harbor Police Department	--	--	17	13	15
Chula Vista Police Department	--	--	48	54	31
El Cajon Police Department	--	63	50	40	35
San Diego City College Police Department	--	--	6	16	2
La Mesa Police Department	--	--	12	10	17
Carlsbad Police Department	23	112	66	7	4
Escondido Police Department	39	57	81	92	106
Oceanside Police Department		76	73	118	109
National City Police Department	15	43	31	36	23

***Sheriff's Data Notes:**

- "Uses" represent the number of individuals administered Narcan by staff, deputies, or incarcerated persons in patrol, jail, or court settings. Narcan is administered when an opioid overdose is suspected. Beginning in 2023, a medical records review was used to include only jail events confirmed or suspected as overdoses. Incidents ruled out as overdoses (e.g., based on ER diagnosis) were excluded. A "Confirmed Overdose" involves a hospital diagnosis and verified drug test by Sheriff medical staff. An "Unconfirmed Overdose" involves a diagnosis without a verified test. More information: sdsheriff.gov/resources/jail-population-data

Table 10. Pounds of Safely Disposed Medications, 2020-2024

Disposal Location	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Take Back Events	11,100	13,049	8,060	6,313	6,451
Sheriff's Department Collection Boxes	15,494	13,661	11,238	9,776	9,117

Table 10 Interpretation: Over the years there have been a number of new ways for San Diego County residents to dispose of unwanted, expired, or unused medications through pharmacies, mail-in options, and other healthcare facilities. This expanded access to medication disposal options may be one explanation for the decrease in pounds of medications disposed through Take Back Events and Sheriff's Department Collection Boxes.

APPENDIX A - OVERDOSE MORTALITY DETAILED TABLES

Table A1. All Drug Overdose Deaths by Demographic Characteristics, San Diego County, 2020–2024

Drug Overdose Death Data Demographics*	2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate
SD County – All Drug OD Deaths	976	28.1	1,309	37.3	1,300	37.7	1,203	35.3	945	27.2
GENDER										
Male	700	42.3	940	57.0	957	58.2	893	54.0	677	40.9
Female	225	13.7	287	17.5	277	17.0	266	16.3	218	13.3
AGE GROUP (YEARS)										
0-9	0	*	2	*	0	*	2	*	**	*
10-17	5	*	12	3.6	6	*	2	*	0	*
18 to 24	74	23.8	80	26.3	65	21.7	47	15.5	24	7.9
25 to 34	189	39.0	260	54.6	257	55.3	201	43.3	151	32.5
35 to 44	174	39.3	240	53.7	281	62.2	247	54.3	192	42.2
45 to 64	411	52.3	538	69.2	512	66.6	542	70.9	395	51.7
65+	73	14.1	95	17.9	113	20.6	119	21.0	130	23.0
RACE/ETHNICITY										
American Indian/Alaska Native	10	*	23	167.0	7	*	5	*	10	*
Black/African American	102	65.9	125	81.0	124	80.6	157	101.7	106	68.6
Hispanic	168	14.6	254	22.2	320	28.1	315	27.5	234	20.5
White	544	38.1	708	49.8	708	49.9	608	42.7	492	34.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	32	7.6	24	5.8	33	7.9	34	8.1	31	7.4

*Counts are all deaths, regardless of residency status. Rates are among San Diego County residents only (including unhoused or those with missing resident zip codes). Rates are all crude rates.

**Some counts have been suppressed because the circumstances did not meet case definition for an unintentional overdose.

APPENDIX A - OVERDOSE MORTALITY DETAILED TABLES

Table A2. Drug Overdose Deaths by Drug Category and Demographic Characteristics, San Diego County, 2024

Drug Overdose Death Data Drug Category (2024) *	Overall (including alcohol)		Fentanyl†		Methamphetamine		Fentanyl + Methamphetamine	
	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate
SD County – All Drug OD Deaths	945	27.2	494	14.2	600	17.4	303	8.9
GENDER								
Male	677	40.9	372	22.5	233	14.1	677	40.9
Female	218	13.3	96	5.9	59	3.6	218	13.3
AGE GROUP (YEARS)								
0-9	**	*	0	*	0	*	0	*
10-17	0	*	0	*	0	*	0	*
18 to 24	24	7.9	15	4.9	9	*	5	*
25 to 34	151	32.5	117	25.2	80	17.2	67	14.4
35 to 44	192	42.2	130	28.6	115	25.3	80	17.6
45 to 64	395	51.7	177	23.1	282	36.9	119	15.6
65+	130	23.0	28	5.0	87	15.4	20	3.5
RACE/ETHNICITY								
American Indian/Alaska Native	10	*	5	*	7	*	5	*
Black/African American	106	68.6	43	27.8	70	45.3	27	17.5
Hispanic	234	20.5	151	13.2	134	11.7	84	7.3
White	492	34.5	250	17.6	328	23.0	169	11.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	31	7.4	9	*	20	4.8	3	*

*Counts are all deaths, regardless of residency status. Rates are among San Diego County residents only (including unhoused or those with missing resident zip codes). Rates are all crude rates.

**Some counts have been suppressed because the circumstances did not meet case definition for an unintentional overdose.

† Drug categories are not mutually exclusive. A single death may involve more than one drug, so counts for fentanyl, methamphetamine, and the combination category may overlap and will not sum to the total number of deaths.

APPENDIX B - EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT DETAILED TABLES

Table B1. Nonfatal Emergency Department Encounters for All Drug Overdoses by Demographic Characteristics and Drug Category, San Diego County, 2020–2024

Nonfatal ED Encounters Demographics	2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate
SD County – All Nonfatal OD	5,569	168.8	6,228	189.5	5,863	178.8	5,050	153.5	Available in 2027	
GENDER										
Male	2,860	172.6	3,303	200.2	3,135	190.5	2,811	169.8		
Female	2,709	165	2,923	178.35	2,725	166.8	2,237	136.8		
AGE GROUP (YEARS)										
0 to 11	353	82.8	346	87.9	359	84.7	338	84.7		
12 to 17	671	202.6	891	240.5	809	162.4	550	162.4		
18 to 24	902	290	867	263.9	792	206.5	627	206.5		
25 to 34	1,112	229.5	1,392	266.4	1,239	224	1,040	224		
35 to 44	799	180.5	871	194.7	879	182.5	830	182.5		
45 to 64	1,142	145.3	1,230	152.1	1,170	138.5	1,059	138.5		
65+	590	114.2	631	112.2	615	107.2	606	107.2		
RACE/ETHNICITY										
American Indian/Alaska Native	24	180.7	22	159.8	16	116.5	13	94.2		
Black/African American	457	295.2	538	348.7	532	345.6	529	342.5		
Hispanic	1,603	139.8	1,922	168.2	1,904	167	1,657	144.9		
White	2,755	193	2,881	202.5	2,686	189.3	2,114	148.4		
Asian/Pacific Islander	213	50.9	263	63.1	229	55.1	216	51.8		
DRUG CATEGORY										
Opioid	1,466	44.4	2,035	61.9	1,948	59.4	1,842	56		
Amphetamine/ Methamphetamine*	422	12.8	438	13.3	277	8.4	218	6.6		
Opioid and Amphetamine/ Methamphetamine*	37	1.1	80	2.4	59	1.8	69	2.1		

Nonfatal Emergency Department Encounters include patients who were admitted and discharged from the emergency department, as well as those who were admitted into the emergency department and then subsequently hospitalized for inpatient care.

*Beginning in 2022, amphetamine-related diagnoses were updated to include the new ICD-10-CM code for methamphetamine (T43.65). Prior to 2022, amphetamine data included both methamphetamine and prescription amphetamines for ED discharges and hospitalizations.

APPENDIX C - DATA DEFINITIONS

Overdose Mortality Data Definitions

- **Total Count of all Unintentional Deaths Caused by Drugs (Prescription and Illicit) and/or Alcohol.** These deaths are unintentional/accidental overdose deaths in which drugs, medication, and/or alcohol were determined to be a causative factor in death. Additionally, these data represent only deaths examined by the County of San Diego Department of the Medical Examiner and those that had toxicology. There are over 24,000 deaths each year in San Diego County, the Department of the Medical Examiner investigates around 3,900 deaths each year. Source: County of San Diego Department of the Medical Examiner.
- **Unintentional Fentanyl-Caused Deaths.** These deaths are accidental overdose deaths in which fentanyl alone or with other drugs and/or alcohol was a causative factor in death. As opposed to the previous decade in which misused prescription fentanyl caused most of these deaths, in recent years, illicitly manufactured and obtained fentanyl has been responsible for almost all of these deaths. Source: County of San Diego Department of the Medical Examiner.
- **Unintentional Opioid-Caused Deaths (excluding cases that involve fentanyl only).** These deaths are unintentional/accidental overdose deaths in which a prescription or illicitly obtained pharmaceutical opioid drug alone or with other drugs and/or alcohol was a causative factor in death. This indicator excludes those opioid-caused deaths where the only opioid present was fentanyl. Source: County of San Diego Department of the Medical Examiner.
- **Unintentional Methamphetamine-Caused Deaths.** These deaths are accidental overdose deaths in which methamphetamine alone or with other drugs and/or alcohol was a causative factor in death. Source: County of San Diego Department of the Medical Examiner.
- **Unintentional Deaths Caused by Both Fentanyl and Methamphetamine.** These deaths are accidental overdose deaths in which methamphetamine and fentanyl alone or with other drugs and/or alcohol was a causative factor in death. Source: County of San Diego Department of the Medical Examiner.

Emergency Department Data Definitions

- **Drug Overdose Emergency Department (ED) Encounters:** Diagnoses are coded for primary diagnoses of drug poisoning/overdose in the encounter record. ED encounters include patients who were admitted and discharged from the emergency department, as well as those who were admitted into the emergency department and then subsequently hospitalized for inpatient care. Data Source: California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI), Emergency Department and Patient Discharge Data, 2019-2023.
- **Opioid Overdose Emergency Department (ED) Encounters:** Diagnoses are coded for primary diagnoses of opioid poisoning/overdose in the encounter record. ED encounters include patients who were admitted and discharged from the emergency department, as well as those who were admitted into the emergency department and then subsequently hospitalized for inpatient care. Data Source: California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI), Emergency Department and Patient Discharge Data, 2019-2023.
- **Amphetamine Overdose Emergency Department (ED) Encounters.** Diagnoses are coded for primary diagnoses of amphetamine poisoning/overdose in the encounter record; it is likely that most amphetamine mentions among ED discharges and hospitalizations are in fact methamphetamine. ED encounters include patients who were admitted and discharged from the emergency department, as well as those who were admitted into the emergency department and then subsequently hospitalized for inpatient care. Beginning in 2022, amphetamine-related diagnoses were updated to include the new ICD-10-CM code for methamphetamine (T43.65). Prior to 2022, amphetamine data included both methamphetamine and prescription amphetamines for ED discharges and hospitalizations. Source: California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI), Emergency Department and Patient Discharge Data, 2019-2023.
- **Opioid & Amphetamine Overdose Emergency Department (ED) Encounters:** Diagnoses are coded for primary diagnoses of opioid and amphetamine poisoning/overdose in the encounter record. ED encounters include patients who were admitted and discharged from the emergency department, as well as those who were admitted into the emergency department and then subsequently hospitalized for inpatient care. Beginning in 2022, amphetamine-related diagnoses were updated to include the new ICD-10-CM code for methamphetamine (T43.65). Prior to 2022, amphetamine data included both methamphetamine and prescription amphetamines for ED discharges and hospitalizations. Data Source: California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI), Emergency Department and Patient Discharge Data, 2019-2023.