

Iowa Department of Public Health
Division of Behavioral Health/Bureau of Substance Abuse
Opioid Update for Wednesday, October 31, 2018

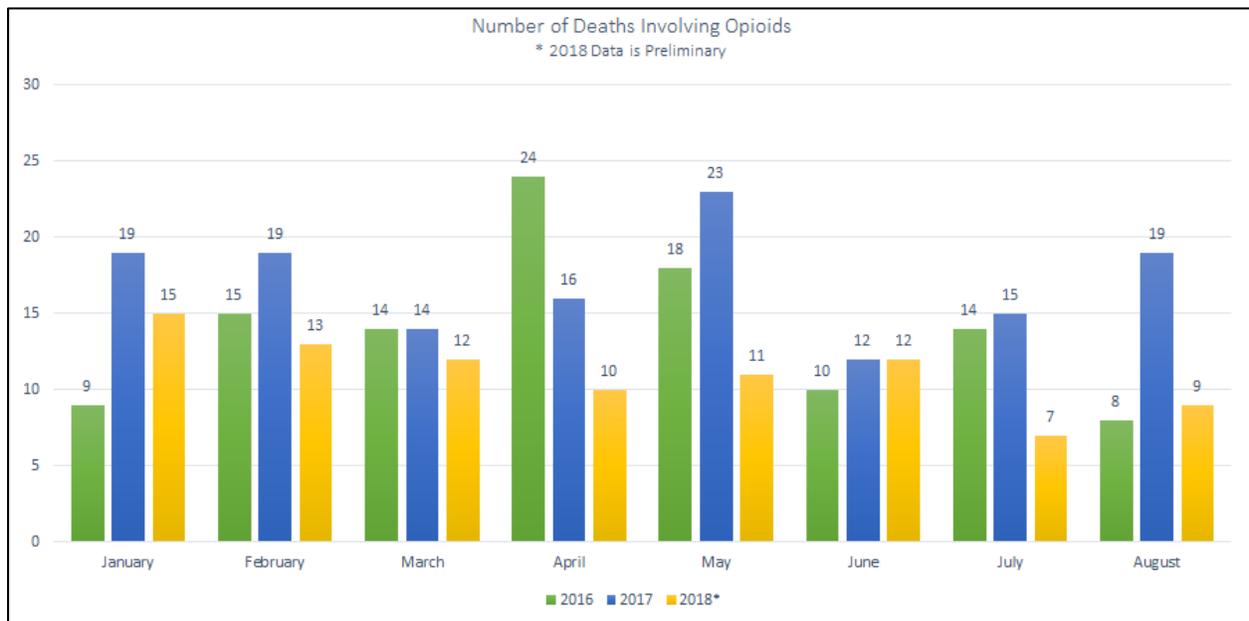
The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) offers the Opioid Update to share information about opioid use and Iowa's efforts to address the national opioid epidemic. Please feel free to submit topics to Julie Jones at julie.jones@idph.iowa.gov.

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Iowa News

Preliminary Data Suggests a Decline in the Number of Iowa Opioid Deaths



According to the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), the number of deaths involving opioids appears to be declining. Preliminary 2018 data provided by the Bureau of Health Statistics indicates a reduction compared to the same time period in 2017.

According to Kevin Gabbert, Opioid Initiatives Director at IDPH, "This information is very encouraging. Even if we had remained at the same number of opioid related deaths in 2018 that we had in 2017, it would have been an improvement when you take into consideration that there was a 14 percent increase in the number of opioid related deaths from 2016 to 2017. The possibility that we could see a reduction from 2017 is even better." Gabbert stressed though, "Preliminary data is not final data. This number could increase based on data verification processes still needing completion, medical examiner reports waiting to be finalized, and additional deaths. We still have a long way to go before the year is over."

When asked about the cause for the potential decline, Gabbert said, “I don’t think you can pick just one cause. We’ve had legislative support that expanded naloxone access. We’ve implemented a Statewide Standing Order making naloxone available without a prescription. We have first responders now carrying naloxone and using it when needed. And we have several community level efforts working to educate persons in a position to assist and prevent further loss.” As important as naloxone is though, Gabbert says, “It is not the solution to the opioid crisis. Iowa has done a great job in other areas as well, like increasing the use of the Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP), reducing the number of opioid prescriptions dispensed, and improving availability of Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT).”

For more information on the reduction in the number of deaths involving opioids, please contact Kevin Gabbert at kevin.gabbert@idph.iowa.gov.

Department Efforts

Approaches to Pain Management Symposium

IDPH sponsored the Approaches to Pain Management Symposium in West Des Moines on October 30. With nearly 100 people in attendance, the symposium provided an overview of a range of non-pharmacological approaches to addressing pain, in addition or as an alternative to the use of opioids. Presentations topics included *Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, Physical Therapy, Nutrition and Exercise, Chiropractic Care, Yoga Therapy, Acupuncture and Stem Cells*.

Opioid News

President Trump Signs the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act

On October 24, 2018, President Trump signed the Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment (SUPPORT) for Patients and Communities Act. The SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act builds on reforms enacted in 2016 as part of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) and the 21st Century Cures Act (Cures Act). It covers multiple federal agencies and includes a host of policy changes, establishes new grant programs, and reauthorizes existing ones.

How the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act will Help Combat the Opioid Crisis:

- Treatment and Recovery: Improve and expand access to treatment and recovery services; provide incentives for enhanced care, coordination and innovation; establish comprehensive opioid recovery centers
- Prevention: encourage non-addictive opioid alternatives to treat pain; improve data to identify and help at-risk patients and families; address high prescribing rates while enhancing prescription drug monitoring programs
- Protecting Communities: give law enforcement tools to get dangerous drugs out of our communities; better intercept illicit opioids at international mail facilities; improve access to federal resources for local communities
- Fighting Fentanyl: better tackle ever-changing synthetic drugs; crack down on foreign shipments of illicit drugs; provide grants for local communities to combat fentanyl

For more information on the SUPPORT Act, please click on the following link: [Opioids](#).