

## For Immediate Release

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# Kansas sees a 54% increase in drug overdoses in first 6 months of 2021

**TOPEKA** – The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) continues to highlight the importance of overdose prevention resources and education amid increased drug overdose deaths in 2021. Provisional surveillance results from the State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS) show that at least 338 Kansas residents have died of drug overdose between January 1, 2021 and June 30, 2021. The tally represents a 54% increase from the 220 drug overdose deaths identified by SUDORS surveillance in the same 6-month time frame in 2020. Provisional data represents the most current estimates and is subject to change.

SUDORS collects information regarding unintentional and undetermined intent drug overdose deaths. It combines various data sources, including death certificates, medical examiner and coroner reports, and law enforcement reports to provide insight into circumstances surrounding overdose deaths. SUDORS is administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and more information can be found on their [website](#).

Of the provisional 338 deaths, 149 involved fentanyl or fentanyl analogs, 149 involved methamphetamine and 40 involved other licit and illicit drugs, such as cocaine, benzodiazepines and prescription opioids. More than one drug can be involved in a fatal drug overdose, so these values are not mutually exclusive.

Fentanyl continues to drive the uptick in fatal drug overdoses in Kansas. This is largely attributed to increased availability, accessibility and use of illegally manufactured fentanyl statewide. Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid that is often combined with other drugs, such as heroin and cocaine, or used as a standalone drug. Due to its potency, fentanyl-involved overdoses have a fast onset and may be difficult to reverse.

There are several resources available to prevent drug overdoses. Recovery from SUD is possible. Those in need of help can call Kansas's SUD hotline at 866-645-8216 or visit [FindTreatment.gov](http://FindTreatment.gov) to locate treatment services. People who use drugs and their support networks have access to naloxone and are trained in overdose recognition and naloxone administration procedures. Naloxone is a medication that reverses the effects of opioid overdoses. Kansas allows pharmacists to dispense naloxone to patients without a prescription pursuant to KAR 68-7-23. Visit [ktracs.ks.gov/pharmacists/naloxone-dispensing](http://ktracs.ks.gov/pharmacists/naloxone-dispensing) to find a naloxone-dispensing pharmacy near you.

DCCCA, Inc. has a naloxone program that is funded by the Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) through the State Opioid Response (SOR) grant. DCCCA has a limited supply of naloxone kits available for those who are unable to access it through a local pharmacy or other means. Additionally, DCCCA offers free naloxone training. Please visit [dcca.org/naloxone-program](https://dcca.org/naloxone-program) for more information.

Please visit [PreventOverdoseKS.org](https://PreventOverdoseKS.org) for resources, epidemiological data, and more information on Kansas's efforts to prevent drug overdoses.

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