

2023 MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE ANNUAL REPORT



HEALTH DISTRICT



Report produced by:
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General Health District
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OVERVIEW

In 2022, Portage County Health District and University Hospitals embarked on a Community Health Assessment (CHA) process, engaging over 35 community partners, including Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County, Kent City Health Department, Family and Community Services, Townhall II, PARTA, and Portage County School Districts.

Following the CHA, these community stakeholders participated in the community health improvement process using CHA data to determine community priorities with accompanying strategies. Mental Health, Substance Use, and Addiction was determined to be a priority in the 2023-2025 Portage County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), along with Chronic Disease and Family, Pregnancy, Infant, & Child Health.

Portage County Health District, in collaboration with community partners, collects and reports local data related to mental health and substance use. The data in this report was provided by the office of the Portage County Coroner. The Coroner's office investigates all deaths which may be caused by suicides or overdoses that occur within Portage County, regardless of where the deceased individual resided. Coroner's reports are public record.

The 2023 Mental Health and Substance Abuse Annual Report was prepared by Olivia Card, Portage County Health District Epidemiologist and Kat Holtz, Portage County Health District Health Educator as a contributor.



RESOURCES

If you or someone you know are having a mental health crisis, you can call **988** or **330-678-HELP (4357)** 24 hours a day, seven days a week. 988 can be texted for help as well.

If you or someone you know is interested in receiving suicide prevention training, call the Portage County Mental Health and Recovery Board at **330-673-1756**. Visit their website **www.mental-health-recovery.org** to find comprehensive resource guides for both mental health and addiction.

For anyone struggling with addiction, call the Townhall II addiction helpline at **330-678-3006**. Please note that Townhall II has recently launched a Problem Gambling Group to more wholly address addiction in our community. For a complete list of their recovery, emergency, and prevention programs, please visit their website www.townhall2.com.

Additionally, you can call United Way at **211** to receive help finding mental health or addiction resources. Portage County Family and Community Services also provides counseling services, and assistance with housing and transportation needs.



24/7 CALL, TEXT, CHAT



PROJECT DAWN AND NALOXONE

What is Project DAWN?

Project DAWN (Deaths Avoided With Naloxone) is a network of opioid overdose education and naloxone distribution programs from the Ohio Department of Health. The Project DAWN program in Portage County is coordinated by Kat Holtz at the Portage County Health District. The goal of the Project DAWN program is to provide access to Narcan as a life-saving resource to anyone who is at risk or anyone who may come in contact with anyone at risk of an opioid overdose.

Participants of the Project DAWN program are provided education on an opioid overdose and a Project DAWN kit, which contains two doses of nasal Naloxone, Naloxone use instructions, one pair of nitrile gloves, and a mouth guard in the event that resuscitation is required.

What is Naloxone?

You may have heard Naloxone referred to as Narcan or Evzio, which are brand names under which Naloxone is frequently sold. The CDC describes Naloxone as, “a drug that can reverse the effects of opioid overdose and can be life-saving if administered in time.”

Will Naloxone reverse any overdose?

Unfortunately, no. Naloxone only reverses overdoses of opioids, which are defined by the CDC as, “natural, synthetic, or semi-synthetic chemicals that interact with opioid receptors on nerve cells in the body and brain, and reduce the intensity of pain signals and feelings of pain.” Examples of opioids include heroin, fentanyl, oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, and morphine.



Who should carry Naloxone?

Anyone who uses opioids, prescribed or not, should carry Naloxone. Additionally, if you have family members, friends, co-workers, clients, or interact with anyone who uses opioids you should always carry Naloxone in case of an overdose. As a reminder, some opioids are prescribed by doctors for pain management. Even when taken as directed, opioids can still cause an overdose.

How can I get a Project Dawn kit?

There are several ways to obtain a Project DAWN kit in Portage County.

- Portage County Health District: Call Kat at 330-296-9919, ext. 107 to schedule a individual or group training, after which a kit will be distributed.
- Portage County Health District Mail Order: Go to <https://portagehealth.net/our-programs/health-education-and-promotion/project-dawn-narcan/>
- Townhall II: Call 330-678-3006 to schedule an appointment.
- Kent City Health Department: Call 330-968-7555 to schedule an appointment.

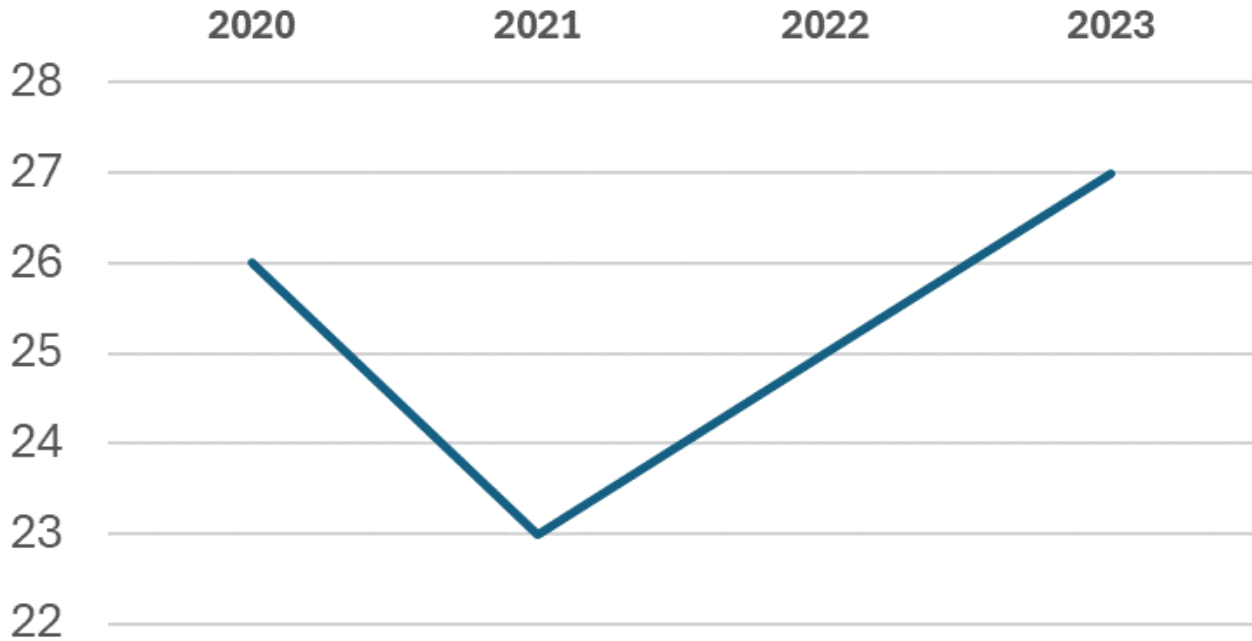
Interested in becoming a Project DAWN Distribution Agency?

Portage County Health District provides trainings to agencies/organizations that are interested in becoming a Narcan distributor (someone who trains others to properly use Narcan and distributes Project DAWN kits). Portage County Health District will supply the resources needed to provide the educational component of Project DAWN program and the Project DAWN kits.



Four-Year Completed Suicide Trend

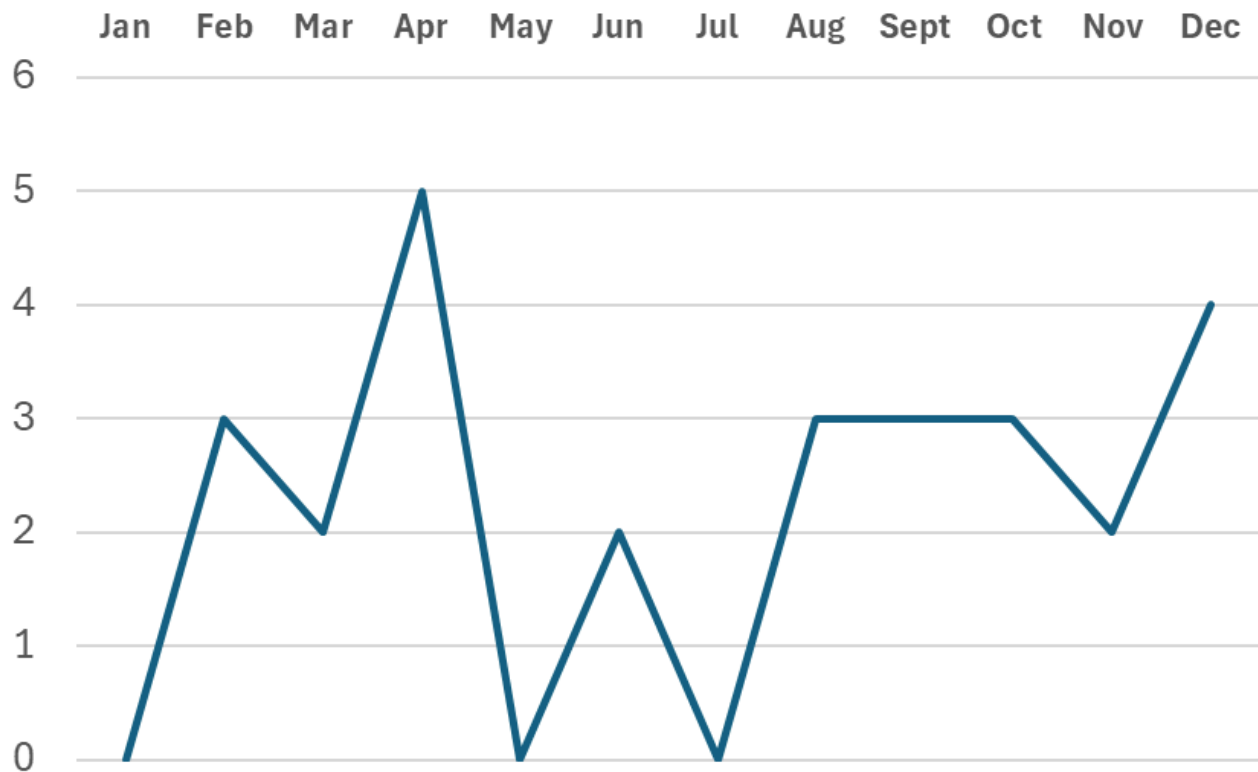
(Figure 1)



(Figure 1) This chart displays the number of suicides completed annually in Portage County from 2020-2023. Unfortunately, the number of completed suicides has risen every year for the last three year. The Portage County Health District encourages all of our community members to familiarize themselves with the mental health resources listed on page 2 of this report, regardless of their mental health status.

Number of Completed Suicides per Month

(Figure 2)

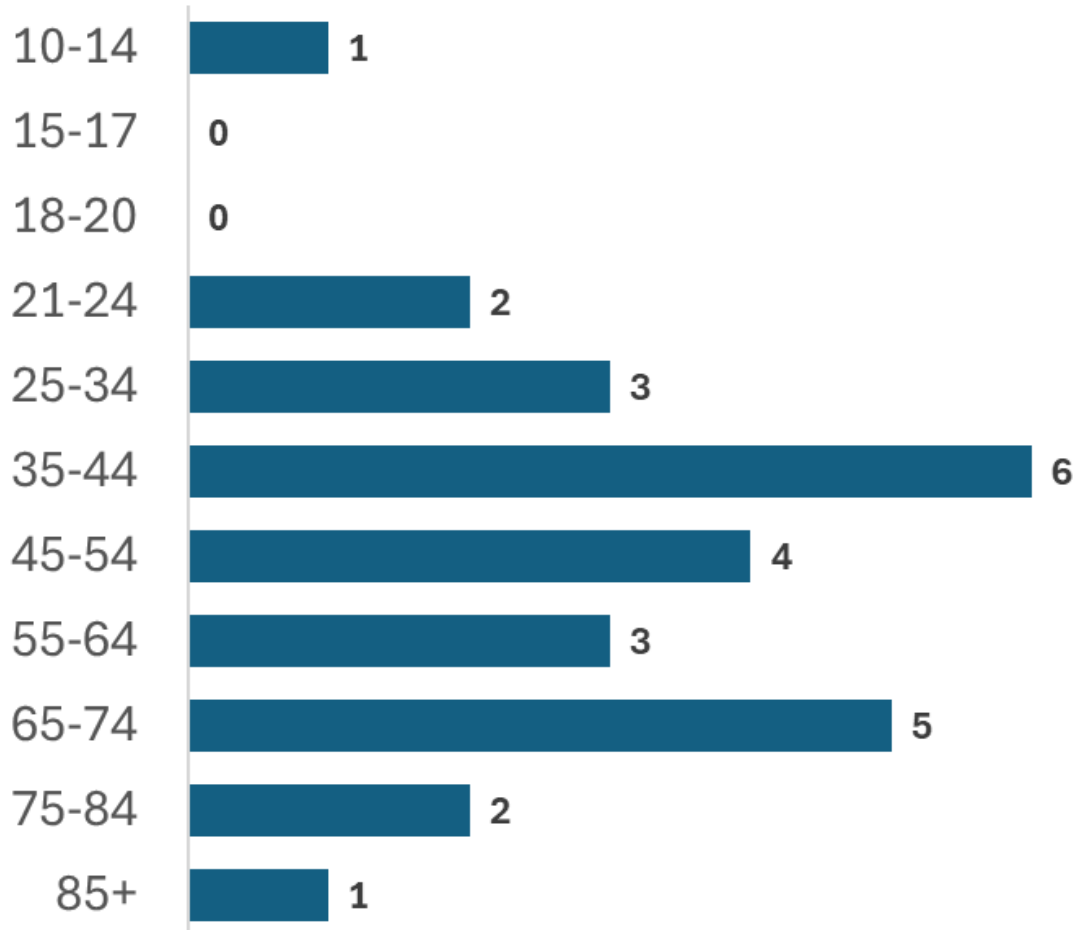


(Figure 2) This chart summarizes the number of deaths ruled as suicides that occurred in Portage County during each month of 2023. As shown in figure 1, there were 27 completed suicides in Portage County in 2023. About half of the completed suicides were carried out with a gun. Potential interventions to reduce suicides completed using firearms may include storing weapons and ammunition separately and in locked safes, regular mental health and depression screenings of gun owners by physicians or therapists, mental health screenings as part of hunting license applications, and pursuing measures to reduce the stigma of receiving mental health treatment at clubs for sportsmen (e.g. rod and gun clubs).



Number of Completed Suicides by Age Group

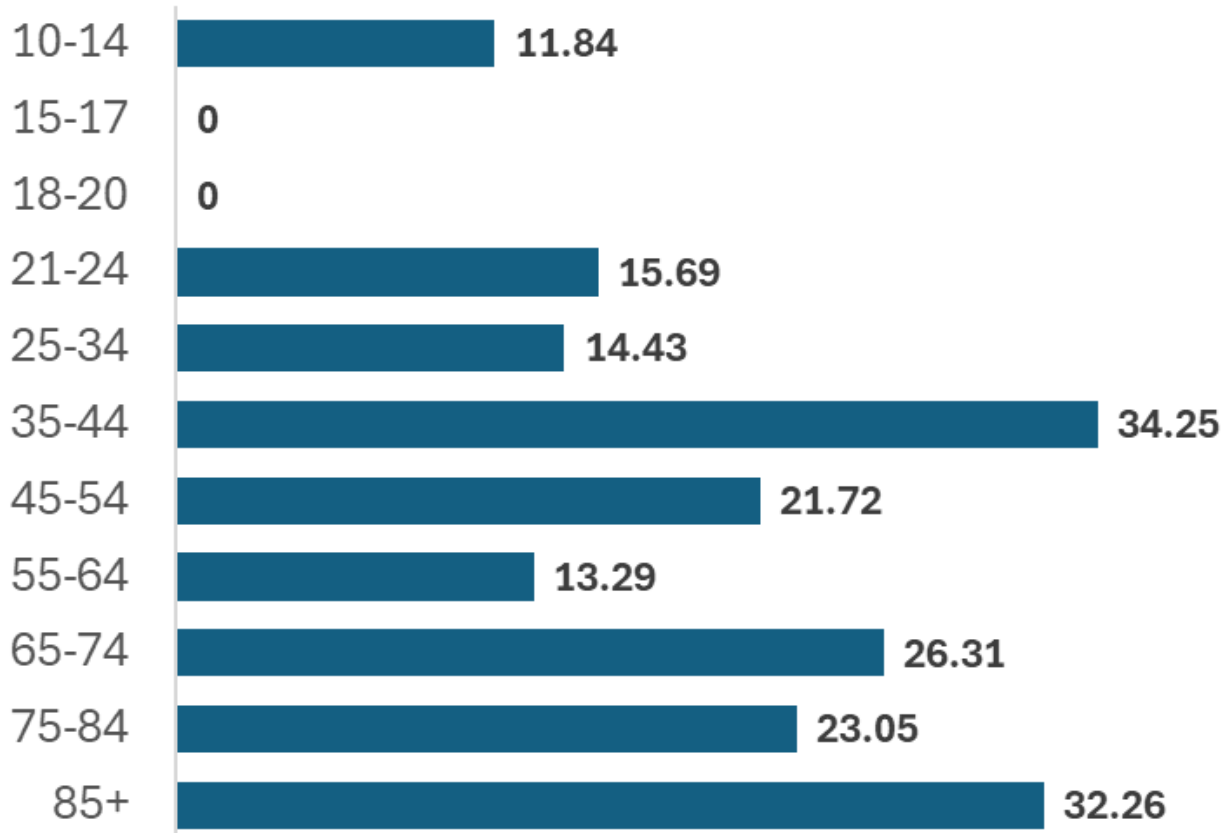
(Figure 3)



(Figure 3) This chart summarizes the number of deaths ruled as suicides for each age group. The highest number of suicides were completed by individuals 35-44 years old, followed by the 65-74 year and 45-54 year age groups.

Completed Suicide Rate (per 100,000 individuals) by Age Group

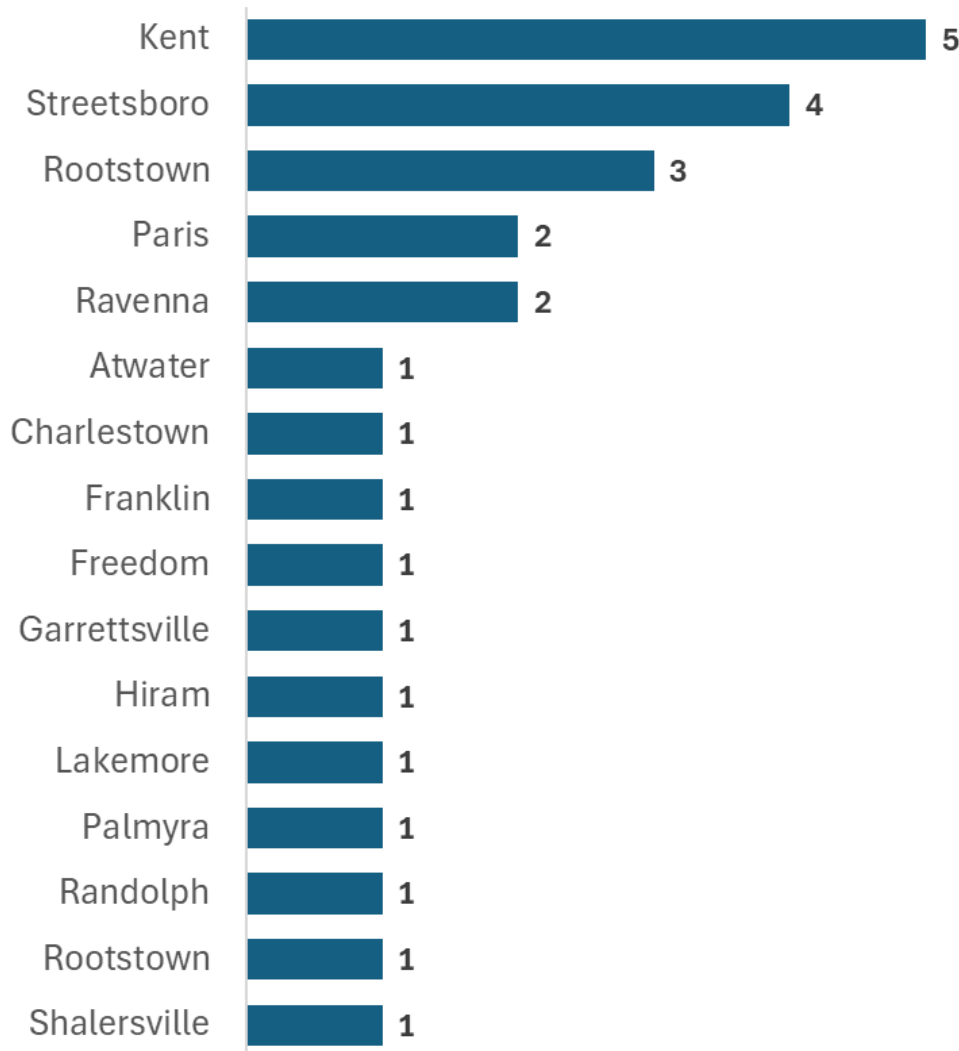
(Figure 4)



(Figure 4) This chart summarizes the rate completed suicides for each age group. The highest rate of completed suicides occurred in the 35-44 year age group, followed by the 85+ year, 65-74 year and 75-84 age groups. This data indicates that there is a need to reach Portage County’s senior citizen population with mental health awareness, training programs, and treatment resources. Staff at senior centers, Veterans Affairs centers, and physician’s offices, as well as religious leaders may choose to undergo suicide prevention training and/or supply clients/congregations with information regarding mental health resources.

Completed Suicide Rate by Place of Residence

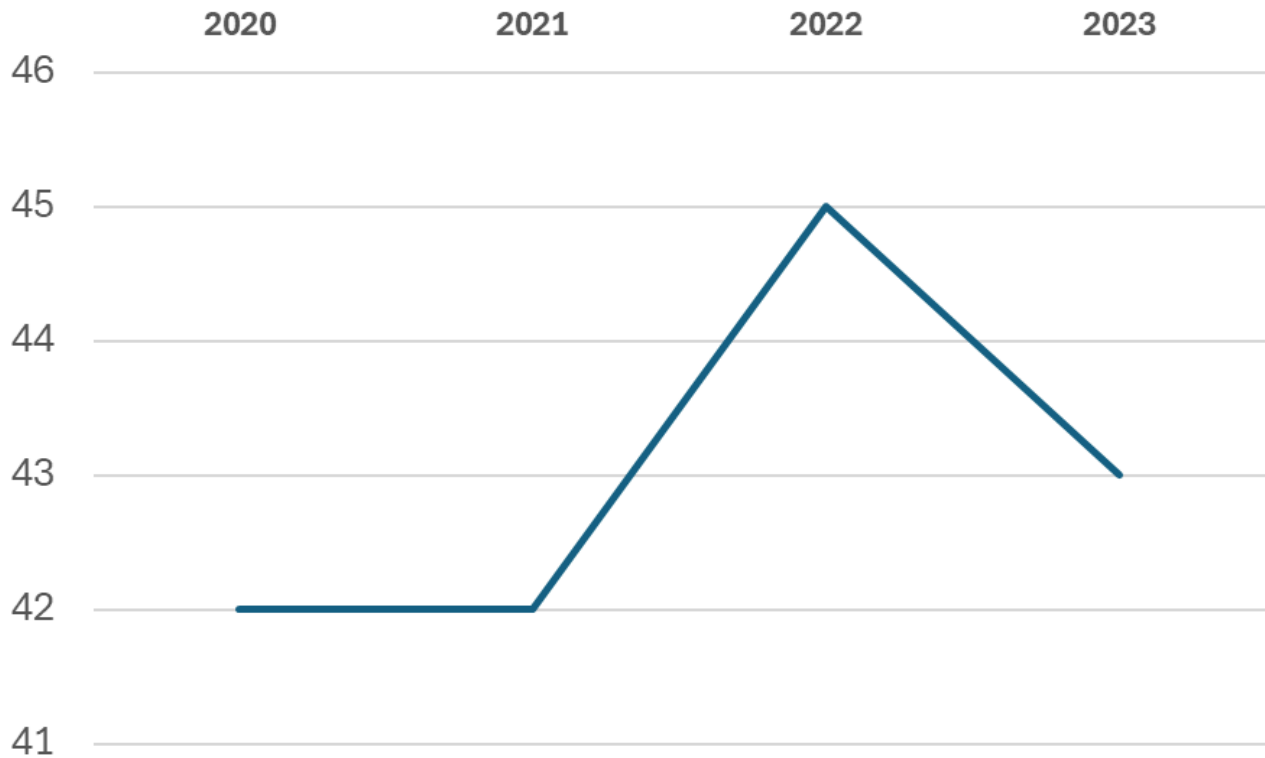
(Figure 5)



(Figure 5) This chart summarizes the place of residence of individuals who completed suicide in Portage County in 2023. As shown in this figure, Kent, Streetsboro and Rootstown are the areas with the highest number of resident completed suicides. These cities may be targeted by community agencies as important recipients of suicide and mental health prevention and education programs. Lakemore is a village located in Summit County. Of the 27 cases summarized in figure 5, 22 individuals completed suicide in the same area in which they resided.

Four-Year Overdose Death Trend

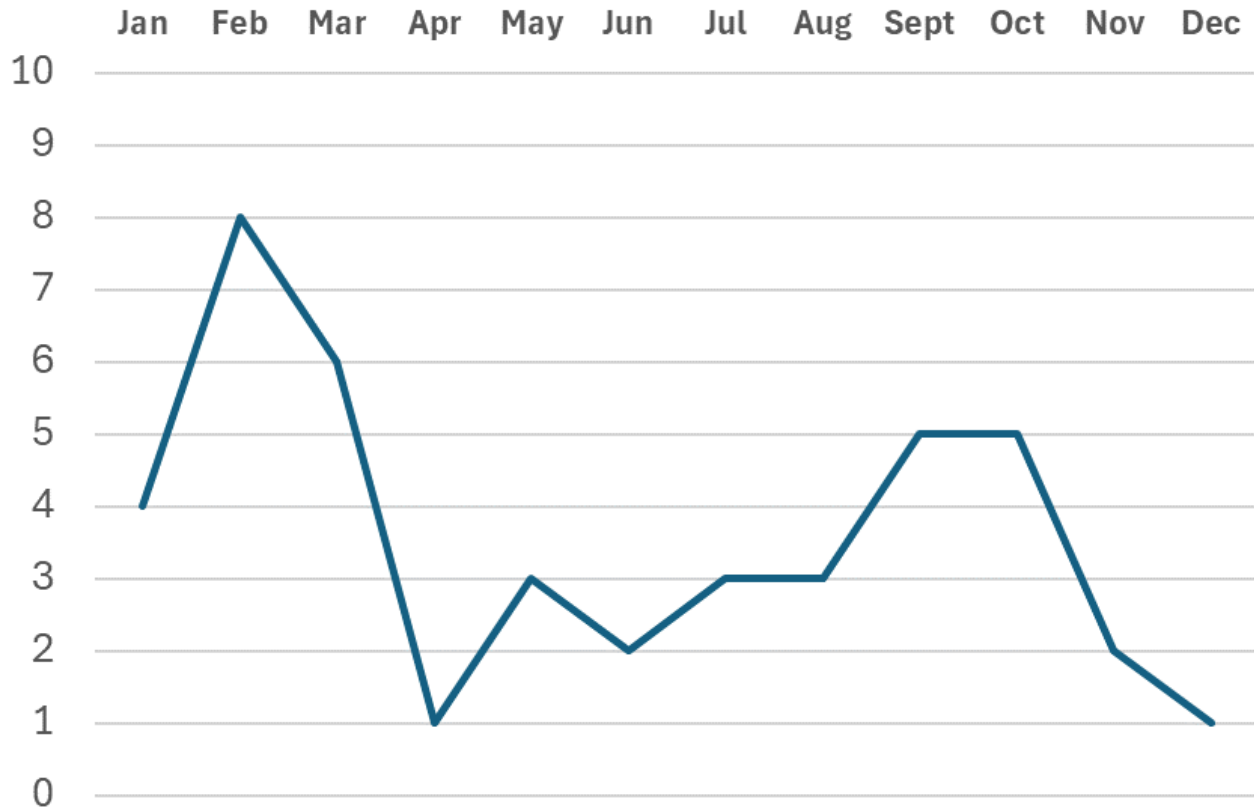
(Figure 6)



(Figure 6) This chart summarizes annual deaths attributed to overdoses in Portage County from 2020-2023. As shown in the figure, there was an increase in overdose deaths from 2021 to 2022. Additionally, although there appear to be fewer overdose deaths reported for 2023, there are still 7 potential overdose death cases pending at the time of writing this report. Thus, the overall trend appears to be a rise in overdose deaths over the last 4 years.

Number of Overdose Deaths per Month

(Figure 7)

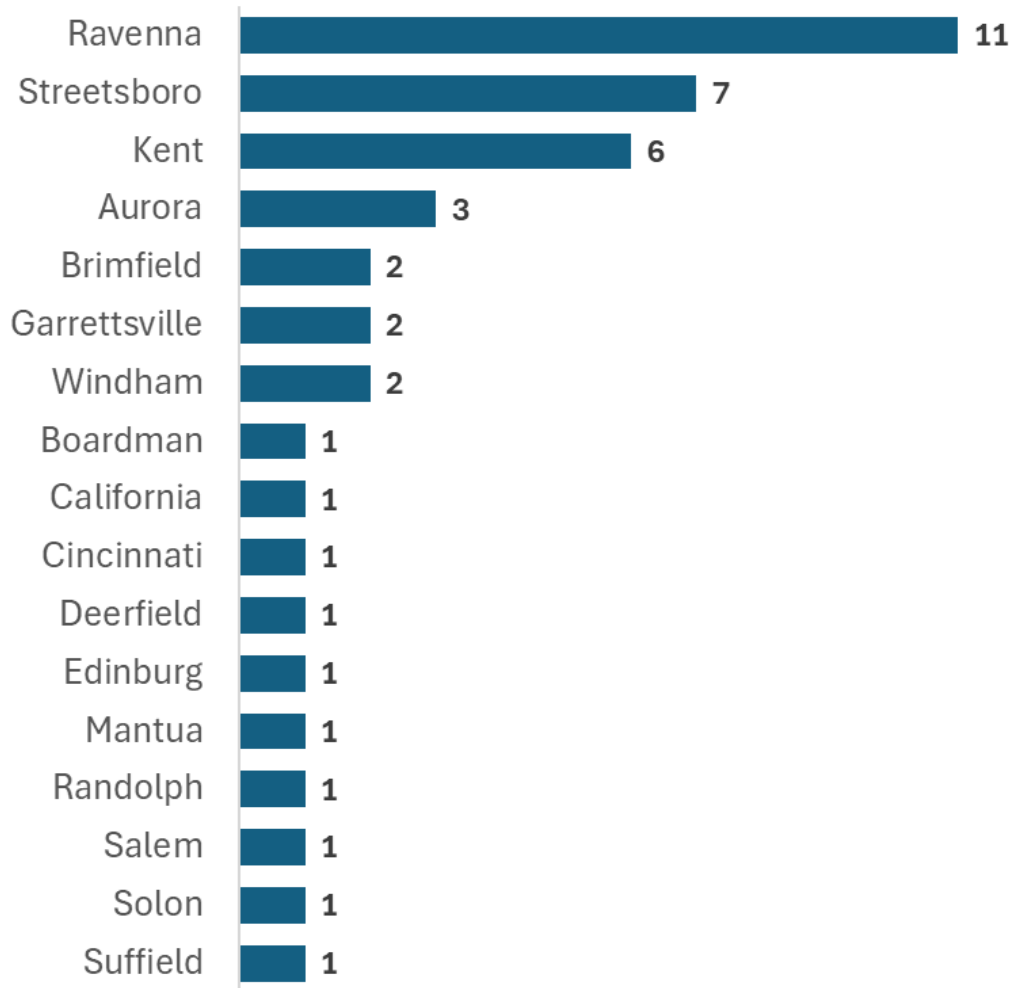


(Figure 7) This chart summarizes the number of deaths attributed to overdoses that occurred in Portage County during each month of 2023. As displayed in figure 6, there were 43 overdose deaths in 2023, with 7 deaths pending as possible overdose deaths. Of the 43 overdose deaths, 36 were caused by drug toxicity, and 7 were caused by blunt-force injuries of someone who was intoxicated. Several of the blunt force injuries reported were motor vehicle accidents, including an ATV accident. No one who has been using drugs or consuming alcohol should operate any motor vehicle including but not limited to motorcycles, cars, ATVs, dirt bikes, etc. For more information on impaired driving, call the Portage County Health District at 330-296-9919 and inquire about the Safe Communities Coalition.



Number of Overdose Deaths by Place of Residence

(Figure 8)

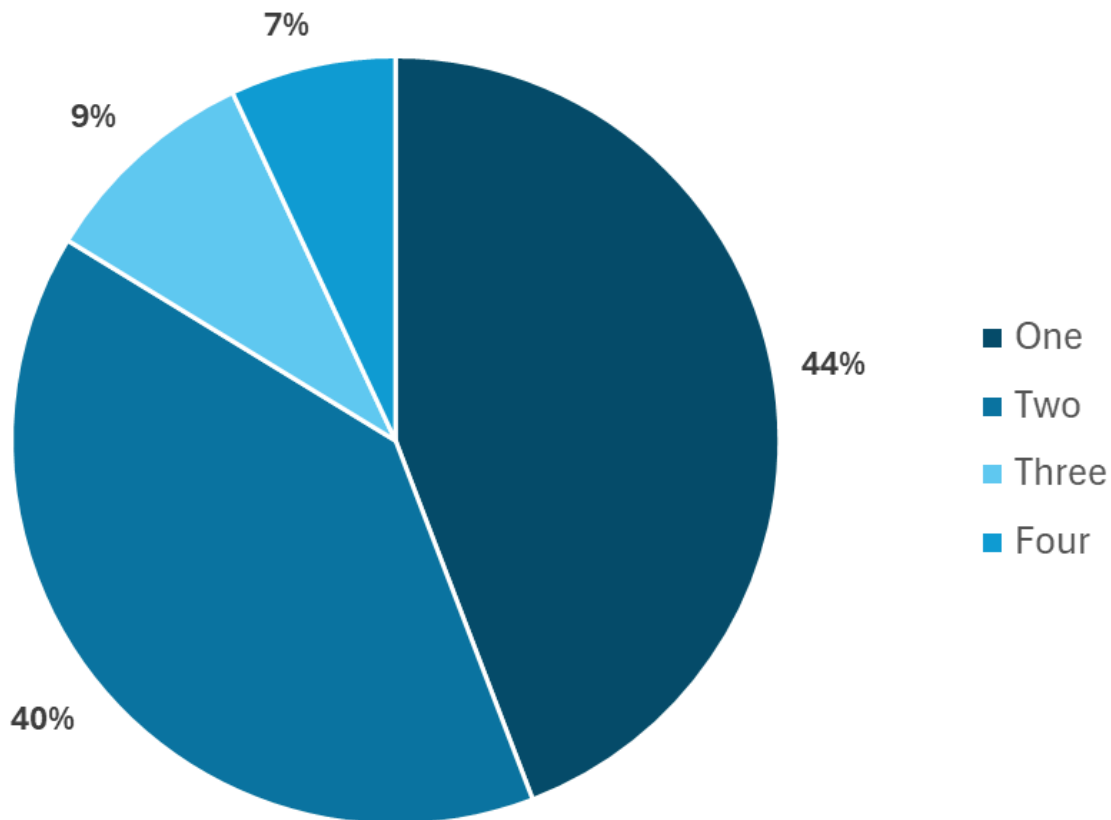


(Figure 8) This chart summarizes the residence location of individuals who died from overdoses in Portage County in 2023. Most individuals who died from overdoses in 2023 lived in Ravenna, Streetsboro or Kent. These cities may be targeted by community agencies as important recipients of substance abuse prevention, education, and treatment programs. Four individuals who died from overdoses in Portage County in 2023 were not permanent residents of the county. Additionally, only four individuals who died from overdoses were pronounced deceased at the emergency room. It is unclear whether that is because most individuals were deceased already when they were discovered, or if medical attention was not sought. If you are ever in doubt regarding whether someone who has recently used drugs or consumed alcohol is overdosing or not, call 911 immediately.



Number of Substances Involved in Overdose Deaths

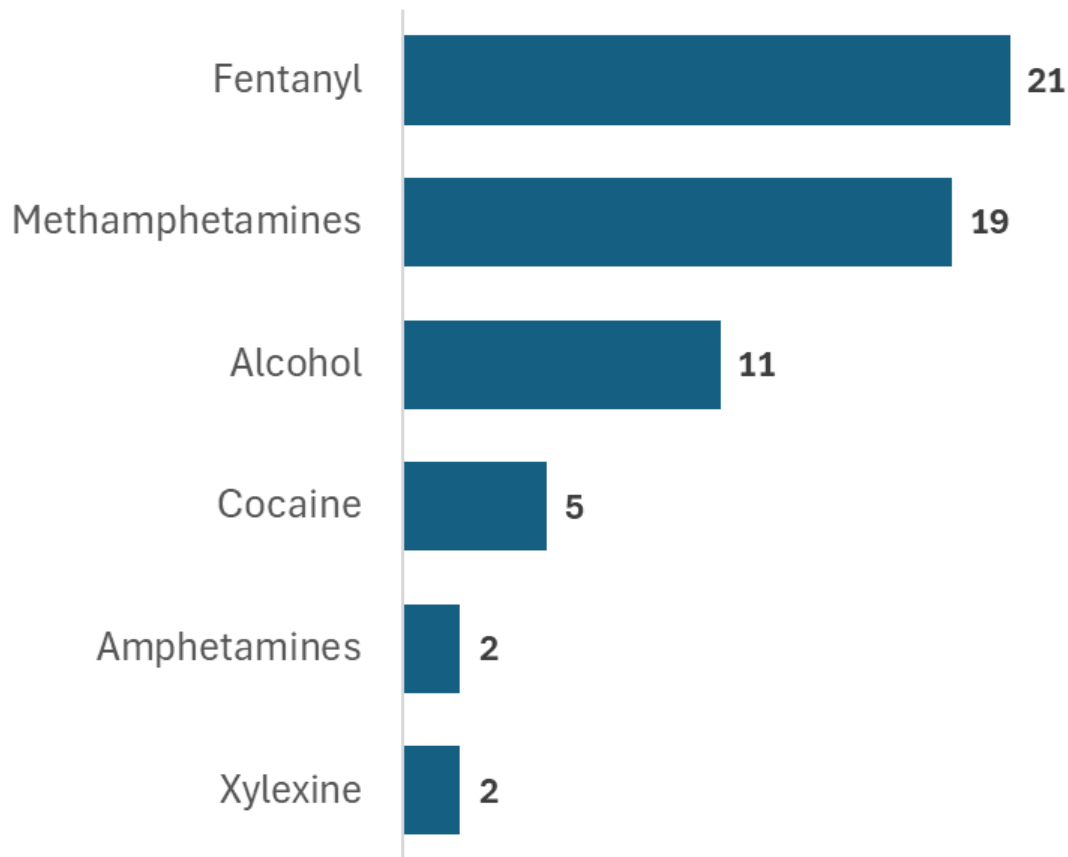
(Figure 9)



(Figure 9) This chart summarizes the percentage of overdose deaths in which the deceased was determined to have used one, two, three or four different drugs, including alcohol. 56% of overdose fatalities occurred when the decedent had used more than one drug. According to the CDC, “whether intentional or not, mixing drugs is never safe because the effects from combining drugs may be stronger and more unpredictable than one drug alone.” Additionally, the CDC states that caution should be exercised even when mixing other drugs with a prescription drug being taken as directed.

Types of Substances Involved in Overdose Deaths

(Figure 10)



(Figure 10) This chart summarizes the number of overdose fatalities that involved each drug. Because multiple drugs were used in over half of the overdose death cases, these numbers will not total to 43, which was the number of overdose deaths in 2023. Additionally, only drugs which were named in more than one overdose death are reported in this figure. In approximately half of the overdose deaths in 2023, fentanyl was used by the decedent. Fentanyl test strips are available at the Portage County Mental Health and Recovery, and the Portage County Health District. Any drugs purchased illegally should be tested for fentanyl. The CDC states that, “illegally made fentanyl is sold through illicit drug markets for its heroin-like effect, and it is often mixed with heroin or other drugs, such as cocaine, or pressed in to counterfeit prescription pills.”