

## **Ross County Overdose Fatality Review – Report for Ohio Department of Health April 1, 2022**

**Background:** The Ross County Health District has been leading our local Overdose Fatality Reviews (OFR) since 2017 under the Drug Overdose Prevention grant through the Ohio Department of Health. With new laws established under Ohio Revised Code 307.63 allowing counties to establish an Overdose Fatality Review Board, the Ross County Board of County Commissioners appointed the Ross County Health Commissioner to establish a drug overdose fatality review committee under the authority of ORC 307.631. This provided Ross County the opportunity to restructure our existing Overdose Fatality Review Board to meet requirements of Ohio Revised Code.

Beginning in October 2021, it took several months for the Ross County Health District and the Health Commissioner to pull together required partners for the committee and to re-establish the OFR Committee. The OFR Committee was able to meet in February 2022 to begin review of overdose deaths that occurred in 2021. Additional changes to data collection, management, and report were made as part of the restructure process for the Ross County OFR committee. As we onboard these changes, we anticipate additional data collection on our 2021 Overdose Deaths. For this report, all data is still being considered preliminary as we continue to review our 2021 overdose deaths and onboard our new Overdose Fatality Review Committee to the review process and data collection.

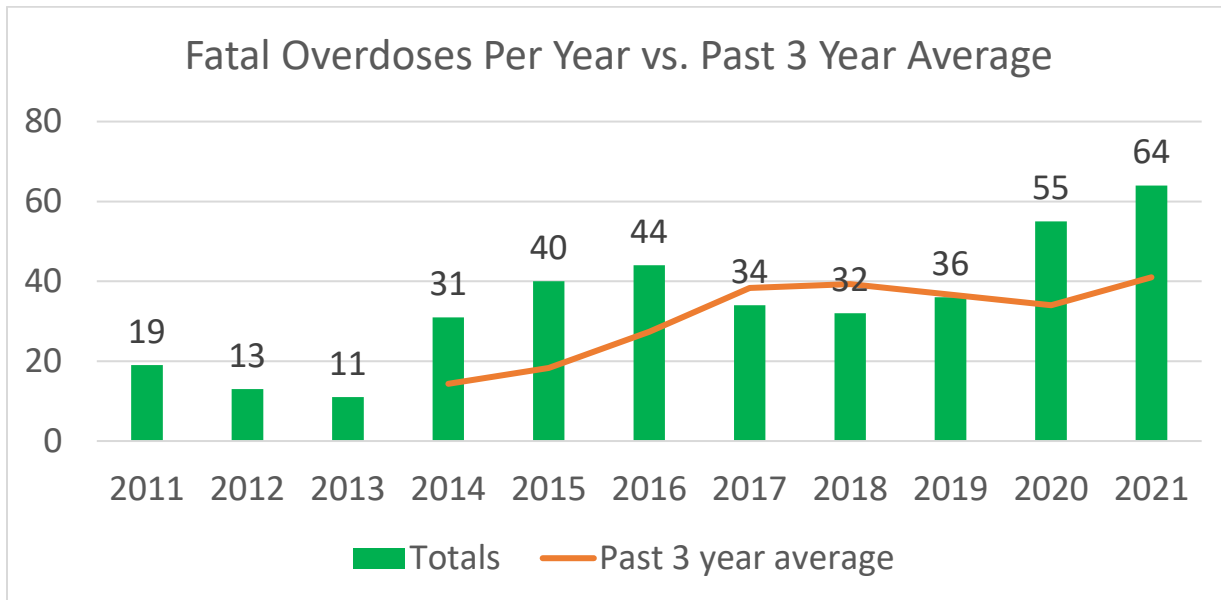
The OFR Committee consists of the following key community partners:

- Garrett Guillozet, Health Commissioner
- Penny Dehner, Director of Paint Valley ADAMH Board
- George Lavender, Ross County Sheriff (or his designee)
- Ron Meyers, City of Chillicothe Police Chief (or his designee)
- Dr. Benjamin Trotter, Ross County Coroner (and his designee)
- Dr. Sanju Mahato, Hopewell Health Center
- Kelly Dennis, Ross County Health District (Public Health Representative)
- Brittany Burns, Ross County Health District's Drug Overdose Prevention Coordinator serves as a coordinator for the OFR committee for record keeping and data collection / management.

### **Ross County 2021 OFR Review Data:**

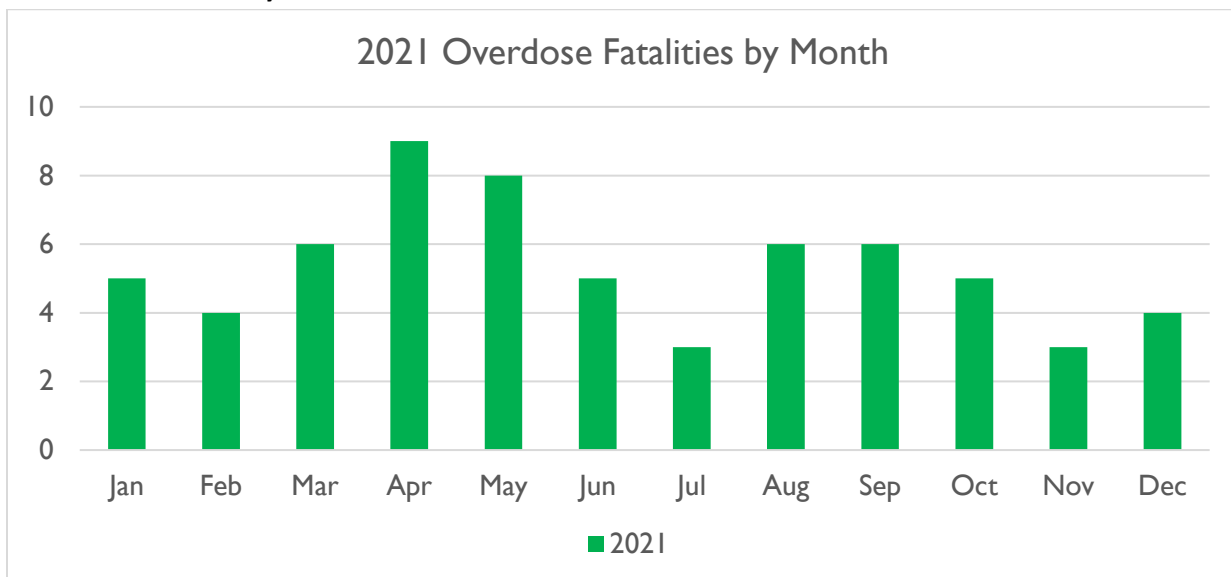
**\*\*all data in this report is considered preliminary and subject to change as we continue to collect data on the overdose deaths and complete the review of all 2021 Overdose related deaths that occurred in Ross County.**

### Overdose Fatalities by Year – 2011 to 2021



**Figure 1:** Overdose Fatalities by year since 2011 - Drug overdose fatalities have continued to increase since 2019 specifically due to the increase presence of fentanyl. 2021 was the worst year on record for overdose fatalities in Ross County with 63 confirmed overdose fatalities.

### Overdose Fatalities by Month 2021



**Figure 2:** Drug overdose deaths per month - During April 2021, Ross County experienced 9 reported overdose fatalities, marking one of the worst months for overdose fatalities since monthly records began to be monitored in 2016.

### Summary of Ross County 2021 Overdose Deaths:

**64 Overdose Deaths (1 death still pending investigation which is not included in this report)**

**29% female, 71% male**

**87.3% White, 12.7% African American**

**100% non-Hispanic or Latino**

**# of 2021 Overdose Deaths Reviewed by OFR Committee as of 4/1/2022 = 23**

### Age of Overdose Fatalities

| Age Groups | Fatalities |     |
|------------|------------|-----|
| 0_4        | 0          | 0%  |
| 5_17       | 0          | 0%  |
| 18_24      | 0          | 0%  |
| 25_44      | 31         | 49% |
| 45_54      | 14         | 22% |
| 55_64      | 15         | 24% |
| 65_74      | 3          | 5%  |
| 75+        | 0          | 0%  |

### Homeless Status of Overdose Fatalities

| Living Situation | Overdoses |     |
|------------------|-----------|-----|
| Homeless         | 7         | 11% |
| Not homeless     | 26        | 41% |
| Unknown          | 31        | 48% |

### Employment Status of Overdose Fatalities

| Work Status | Overdoses |     |
|-------------|-----------|-----|
| Employed    | 14        | 22% |
| Unemployed  | 3         | 5%  |
| Retired     | 5         | 8%  |
| Unknown     | 15        | 23% |
| Blank       | 27        | 42% |

### Marital Status of Overdose Fatalities

| Marital Status               | Overdoses |     |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----|
| Married/Domestic Partnership | 4         | 6%  |
| Divorced                     | 23        | 37% |
| Separated                    | 3         | 5%  |
| Never Married                | 28        | 44% |
| Widowed                      | 3         | 5%  |
| Unknown                      | 1         | 2%  |
| Blank                        | 1         | 2%  |

### Sexual Orientation of Overdose Fatalities

| Sexual Orientation | Overdoses |     |
|--------------------|-----------|-----|
| Heterosexual       | 50        | 79% |
| Lesbian            | 1         | 2%  |
| Other              | 1         | 2%  |
| Unknown            | 2         | 3%  |
| Blank              | 9         | 14% |

### Military Status of Overdose Deaths–

| Military Service | Overdoses |     |
|------------------|-----------|-----|
| Yes              | 6         | 10% |
| No               | 54        | 86% |
| Unknown          | 1         | 2%  |
| Blank            | 2         | 3%  |

**Incomplete data for 2021 Report:** Criminal History, Physical Health Conditions, Mental Health History, History of Substance Use, health insurance status.

**Summary:** 2021 was the worst year on record for Overdose fatalities in Ross County. Since 2019, overdose deaths have continued to be on the rise, partly due to the presence of fentanyl in illicit drugs in Ross County. As our newly re-organized Overdose Fatality Review Board continues to convene, we have goals to improve our data collection, data management, and analysis process to help identify leading factors, trends, and causes of substance use disorder in our community as well as implement strategies to address emergency drug threats in our community that pose risks for overdose fatalities.

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