

Substance Abuse Trends **Alert!**

May 2019

Growing Epidemic - Fentanyl and Fentanyl Analogs

Opioid Overdose as a National Public Health Threat in the United States

[Data from diverse resources](#) indicate that the use of synthetic opioids is a significant public health threat in the United States, particularly the use of fentanyl and fentanyl analogs. [Surveillance data from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) indicate rapid growth in the number of deaths caused by synthetic opioid overdose, predominantly two opioids: fentanyl and fentanyl analogs.

Rapid Increase in Deaths Caused by Overdose of Fentanyl Analogs In Florida

Most recent data from the [Florida Medical Examiners Commission Report](#) indicate that in 2016, of all the deceased Florida residents who underwent examinations, fentanyl analogs were detected in 1206 of them; and this number increased to 1,685 in 2017, a 40% increase in one year. More alarming than this is the number of deaths attributed to an overdose of fentanyl analogs. Of the 1026 deceased Florida residents in 2016, 965 deaths were attributed to the overuse of fentanyl analogs; the number of deaths due to fentanyl analogs overdose increased to 1,588 in 2017, a 65% increase. Furthermore, of all the deceased Florida residents with fentanyl analogs detected, 94% of the deaths were attributed to the overdose.

A Rapid Growing Epidemic of Fentanyl Use In Florida Since 2013

Results from the [2019 Patterns and Trends of Substance Use Within and Across the Regions of Florida](#) indicate that among the deceased Florida residents who were examined, the number of cases with fentanyl detected increased rapidly since 2013 (Figure 1). In 2013, only 292 cases were detected with fentanyl among the deceased Florida residents

through the postmortem toxicology tests. This number increased to 2088 in 2017, a more than seven-fold increase in four years.

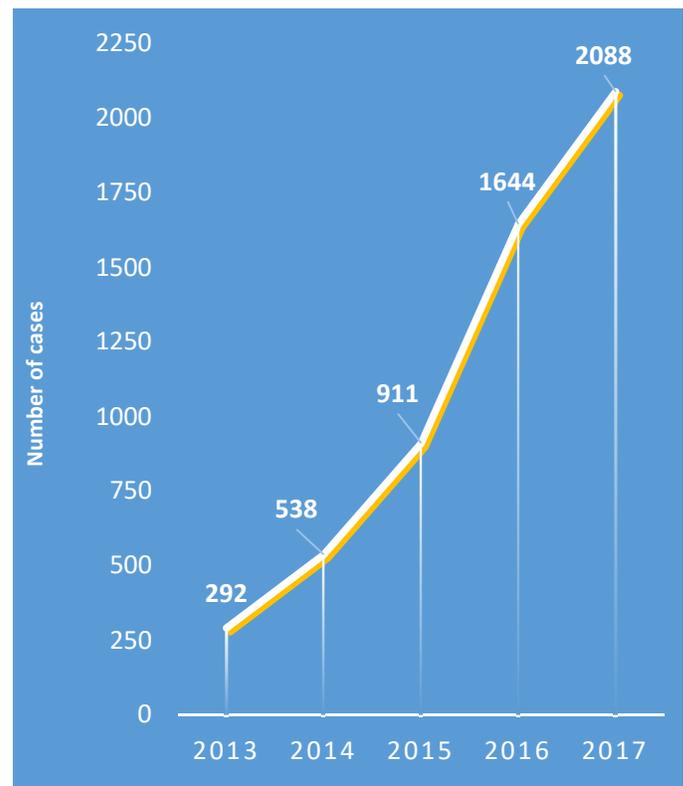


Figure 1. The number of cases with fentanyl detected among the deceased residents in Florida, 2013-17

Opioids as National and State Challenge

[Data from CDC](#) and [research studies published in JAMA](#) indicated that death due to synthetic opioids is directly associated with the observed declines in life expectancy for the US population. [As reported in a study among veteran patients](#) (Zedler et. al, 2014) opioid overdose is associated with many other factors, such as comorbid conditions, a concomitant of other medicine and drugs, making it a challenge for prevention. For more information, please visit:

