

Substance Abuse Trends **Alert!**

May 2019

Cocaine Use Varies Across Florida Regions

[Data from the National Institute on Drug Abuse](#) indicate that cocaine is the second most commonly used illicit drug behind marijuana. Cocaine is a powerfully addictive stimulant Schedule II drug. While focusing on the opioid crisis at both the national and state level, continued vigilance is required in preventing and treating cocaine use in Florida.

Growing trend in cocaine use in Florida slowed after 2016

As documented in the 2019 report of [Patterns and Trends of Substance Use within and across the Regions of Florida](#), the growing trend in both the number of cases with cocaine detected and the number of deaths attributed to cocaine in Florida slowed down from 2016 to 2017. For example, the number of cases with cocaine detected among deceased residents in Florida was 1,834 in 2015; this number was 2,882 in 2016 or a 57% increase from 2015; this number further increased to 3,129 in 2017, or a 70% increase since 2015 but only a 9% increase from 2016. Furthermore, of the Florida residents with cocaine detected, 2012 (64.3%) deaths were due to a cocaine overdose in 2017.

Significant differences in level and trends of cocaine deaths by Managing Entity Regions

Despite a statewide slowing down in the increasing trend after 2016, the level of cocaine use differs between Managing Entity Regions. Figure 1 presents the number of deaths with cocaine detected by the seven Managing Entity Regions. First, BBCBC has the least number of cases (relative to the other six regions) with 88 cocaine deaths in 2017. Second, the three regions with the greatest number of cases in 2017 were CFBHN (695 cases), LSF (642 cases) and SEFBHN (505 cases). Third, regions with more cases detected in 2016

experienced greater declines in the number of cases than regions with fewer cases. Fourth, the three regions (BBCBC, BBHC, and SFBHN) with the least number of cases showed a declining trend from 2016 to 2017.

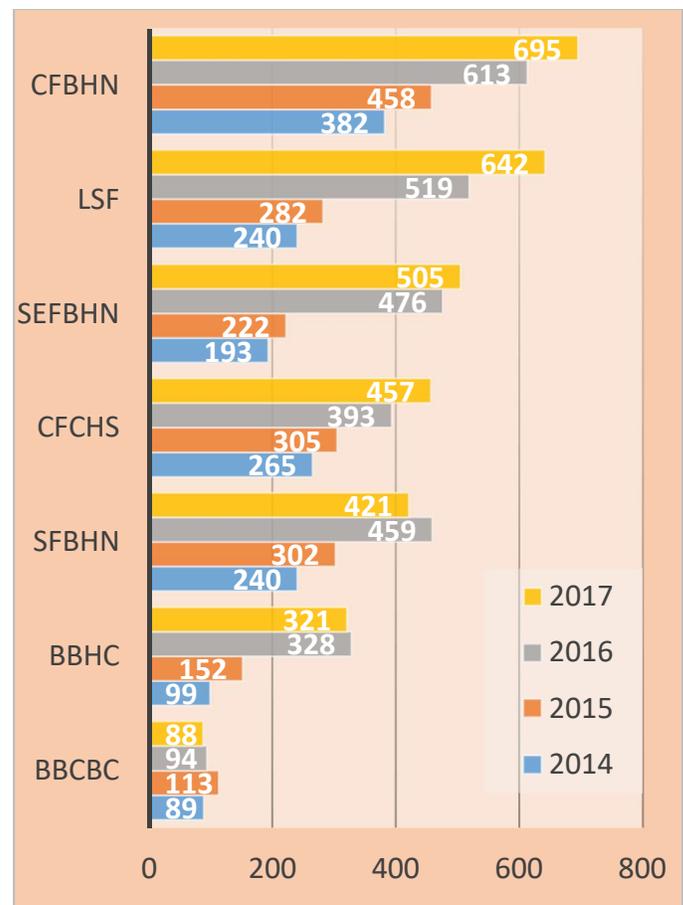


Figure 1. The number of cases with cocaine detected by Florida Managing Entity Regions.

BBCBC: Big Bend; BBHC: Broward Behavioral; SFBHN: South Florida Behavioral; CFCHS: Central Florida Cares; SEFBHN: Southeast Florida Behavioral; LSF: Lutheran Services Florida; CFBHN: Central Florida Behavioral

The between-region differences in the number of cocaine deaths suggest the need to strengthen community-based prevention and treatment efforts to curb cocaine use along with opioids. For more



information on cocaine use in Florida, the U.S. and other countries in the world, please visit:

Resources

- 1) National Institute on Drug Abuse, Advancing Addiction Science (URL: <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/cocaine>).
- 2) 2017 Annual Report of Florida Medical Examiners Commission: Drugs identified in deceased persons by Florida Medical Examiners (URL: <http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/MEC/Publications-and-Forms/Documents/Drugs-in-Deceased-Persons/2017-Annual-Drug-Report.aspx>)
- 3) United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: World Drug Report 2018: Opioid crisis, prescription drug abuse expands; cocaine and opium hit record high (URL: https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2018/June/world-drug-report-2018_-opioid-crisis--prescription-drug-abuse-expands-cocaine-and-opium-hit-record-highs.html).

References

- 1) Patterns and Trends of Substance Use within and across the Regions of Florida. [Annual Report 2019](#).
- 2) Quesada, M. (2019). [Cocaine making a deadly comeback in Florida, according to drug officials. News from Region C Palm Beach County.](#)
- 3) Shiels, M.S., Freedman, N.D., Thomas, D, Gonzlez, A.B. (2018). Trends in U.S. drug overdose deaths in non-Hispanic black, Hispanic, and non-Hispanic white persons, 2000-2015. [Annals of Internal Medicine 168 \(6\): 453-55.](#)

