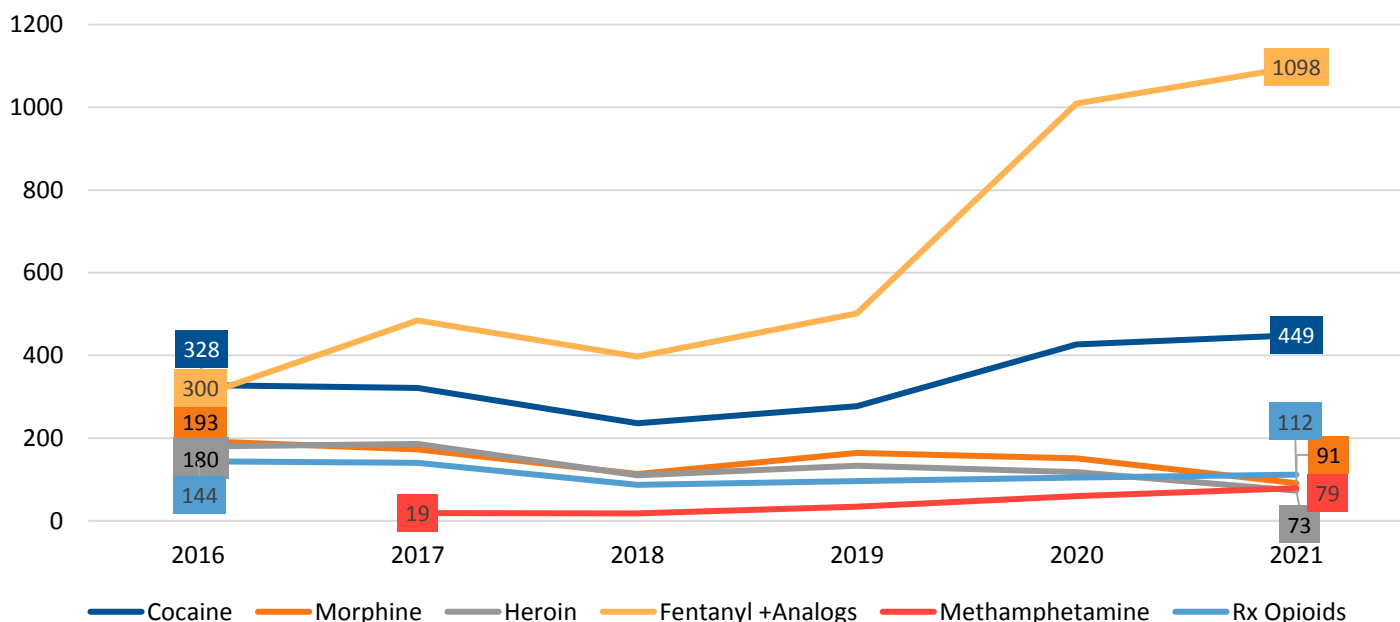


January 2023

Drug Occurrences Among Deceased Persons in Broward County, 2021

The latest data from the Florida Medical Examiners Commission document increasing occurrences of several substances among deceased persons in Broward County during 2021. The graph below shows increases in deaths related to fentanyl and its analogs, cocaine, methamphetamine, and prescription opioids (oxycodone, hydrocodone, and methadone) since 2020. Specifically, compared to 2020, fentanyl and analogs increased by 9%, for 1098 deaths in 2021 compared to 1009 in 2020. There was also a large increase in stimulant-related deaths; 5% for cocaine and 32% for methamphetamine. Prescription opioid deaths increased by 7%. It should also be noted that deaths related to heroin (-38%) and morphine (-40%) were lower compared to 2020, as these substances are largely being supplanted by illicit fentanyl and its analogs.

The continued increase in occurrences of fentanyl and analogs among decedents is concerning, and in 98% of these occurrences, another drug was also present. This supports additional reports that fentanyl is being found in many substances in the county, including cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin, and counterfeit pills designed to mimic prescription opioids and benzodiazepines. Cocaine and methamphetamine-related deaths reached new peaks in 2021. These figures follow state and national-level trends of increasing stimulant use, including use in combination with opioids. Although methamphetamine-related deaths remain lower than other substances, the rapid increase since 2017 is of concern.



Source: Florida Medical Examiners Commission, 2020 Annual Report; <http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/MEC/Publications-and-Forms>

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