

Milwaukee County  
OD-PHAST Update

City-County Heroin,  
Opioid and Cocaine  
Task Force



September 20, 2021

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## Background

- 3-year, grant funded project through federal Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)
- Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program (COSSAP)
- County-level through Medical Examiner's Office
- Focus on preventing overdoses and fatal overdoses in particular
  - Critical with over 540 fatal overdoses in 2020
- Bringing multi-disciplinary partners together

# OD-PHAST Composition

## Overdose Fatality Review (OFR) Team

Multi-disciplinary, in-depth review of individual fatalities to identify gaps in service or barriers to care

## Data Strategy Team (DST)

Multi-disciplinary, analysis of near real-time aggregate data to identify trends in overdose and substance use disorder care and treatment

## Shared Goal

Develop and implement recommendations to prevent future overdoses

# OD-PHAST Capacity Building

1

Expand the role of our Community Resource Dispatcher to include interviews with next of kin

2

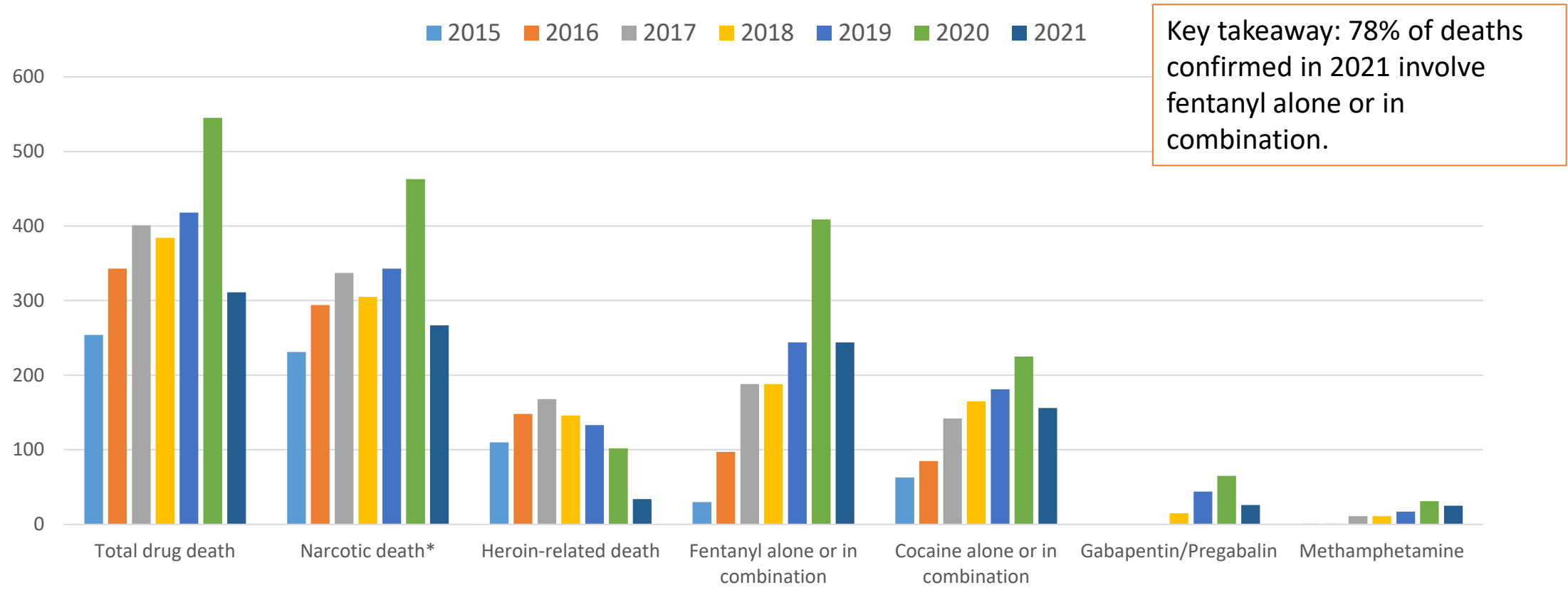
Add a toxicology staff member at the ME Office to increase capacity to deliver timely toxicology findings

3

Connect with the Milwaukee Community Justice Council's Executive Team to expand capacity for recommendation implementation

# Drug Deaths, Milwaukee County, through early September 2021

(sent by the ME office 9/10/2021)



Key takeaway: 78% of deaths confirmed in 2021 involve fentanyl alone or in combination.

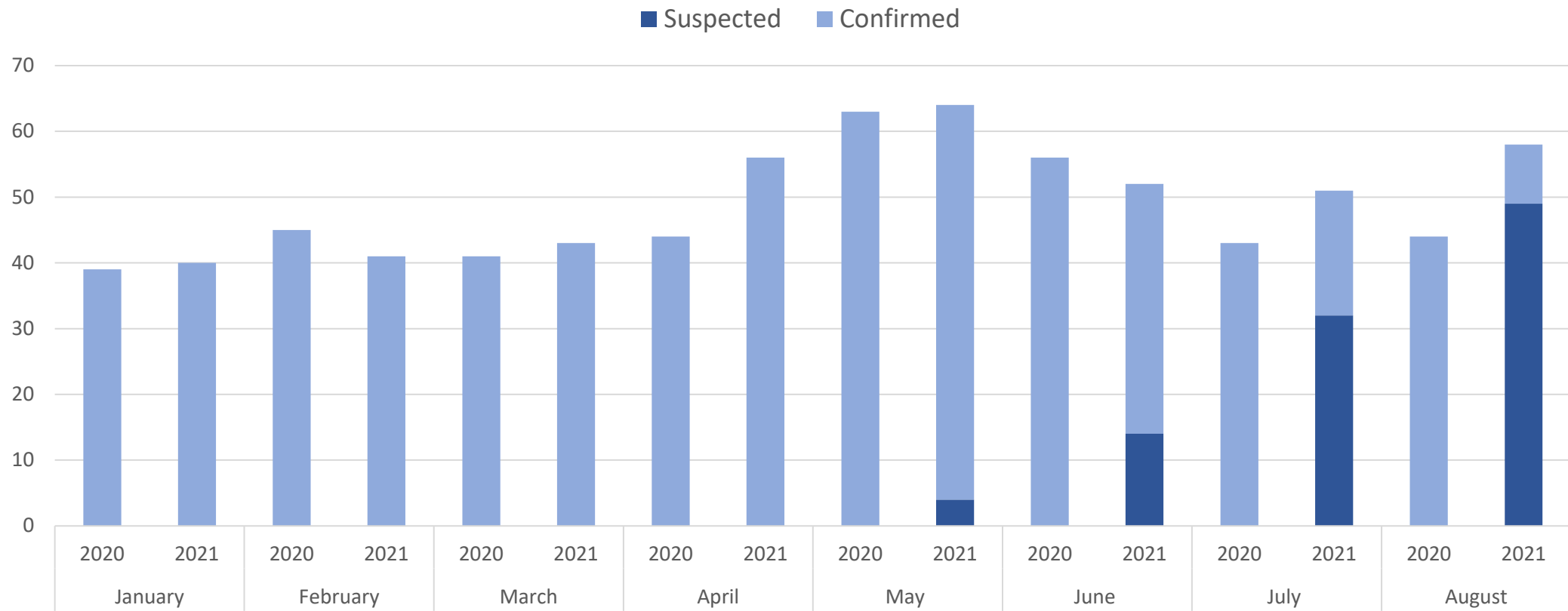
\*Narcotic drug deaths are any in which opioids (morphine, heroin, etc.) or synthetic opioids (oxycodone, fentanyl, etc.) are involved

# Comparison of 2020 to 2021 (sent by the ME office on 9/7/21)

| <b>2020 (Jan. – Aug.)</b><br><small>(confirmed fatal overdoses)</small> | <b>2021 (Jan. – August)</b><br><small>(confirmed + suspected fatal overdoses)</small> | <b>% change</b> |
|---|---|-----------------|
| 375   | (405: 306 confirmed + 99 pending toxicology)  | 8% increase     |

# Comparison of confirmed 2020 overdoses to confirmed + suspected 2021 overdoses, Jan. – Aug.

(as of 9/7/21)



# Overdose deaths involving fentanyl, 2016-2020

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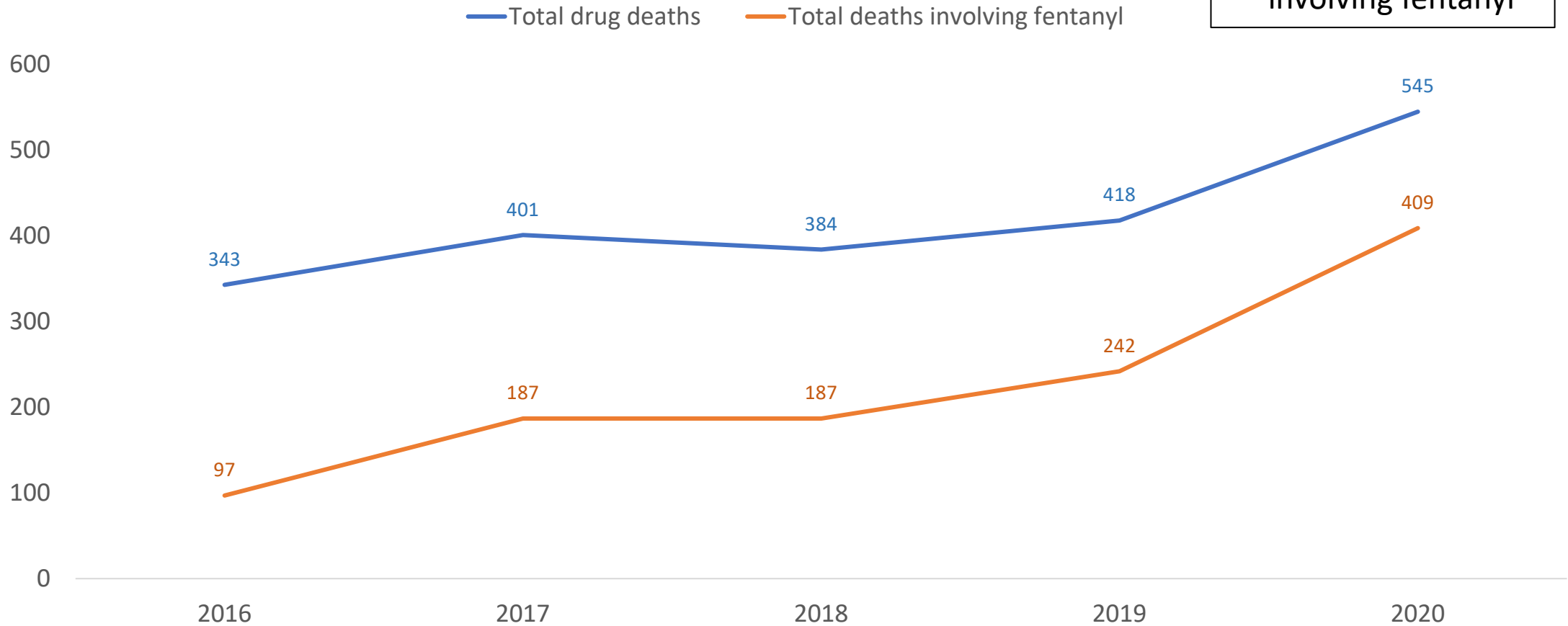
Milwaukee County



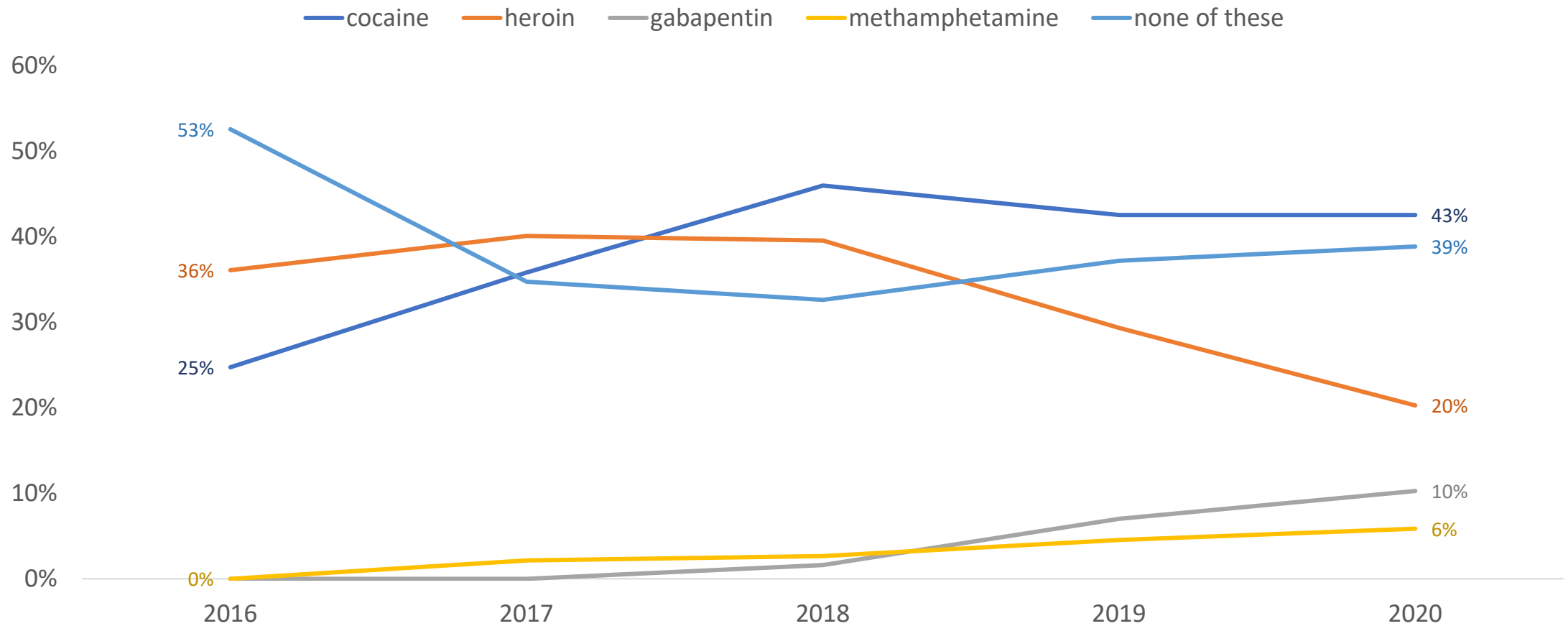
# Fatal overdoses in Milwaukee County, 2016-2020

From 2016 to 2020:

- 59% increase in total drug deaths
- 322% increase in drug deaths involving fentanyl

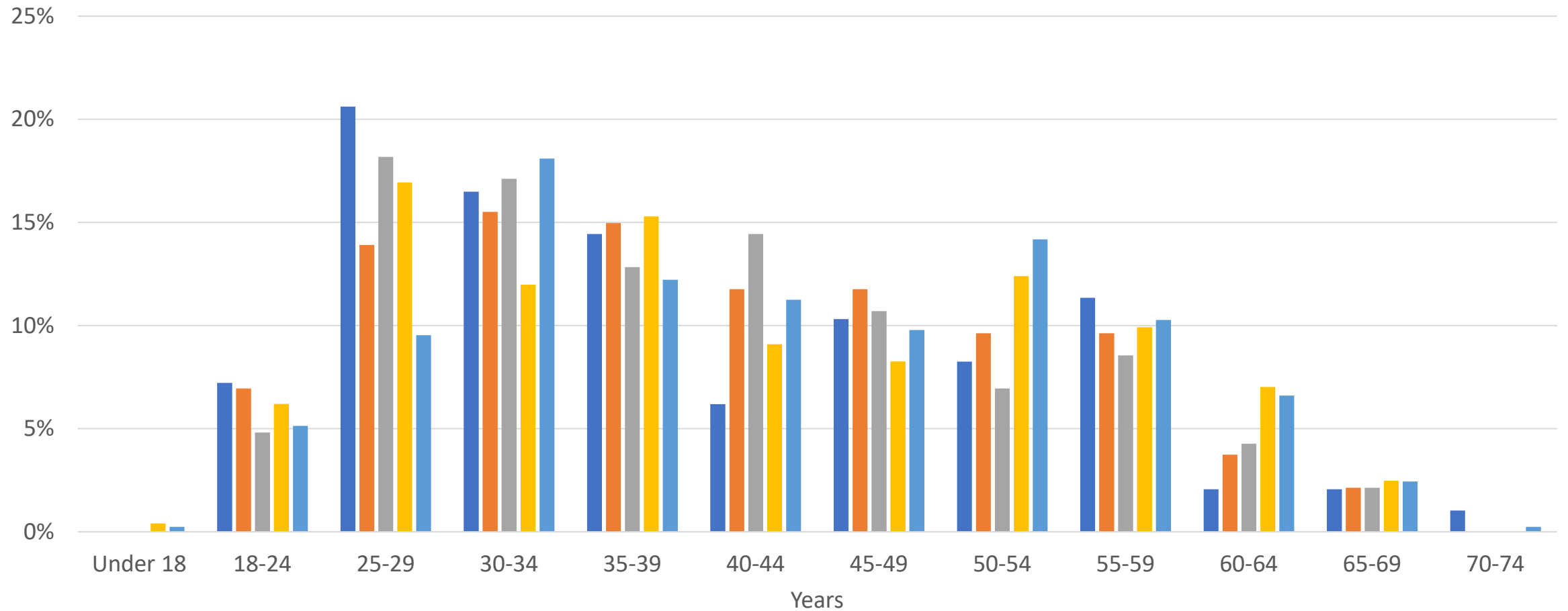


# Percent of deaths involving fentanyl which also included these specified substances

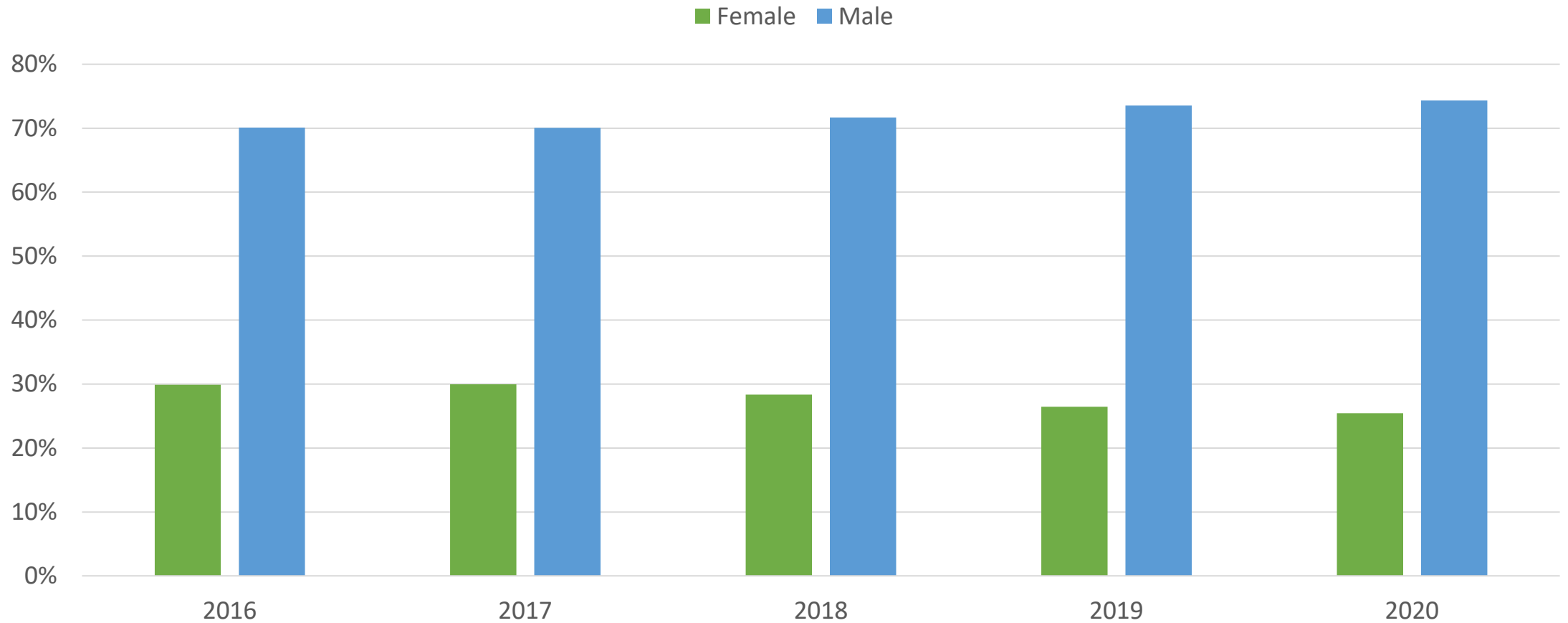


# Percent of deaths involving fentanyl by age group

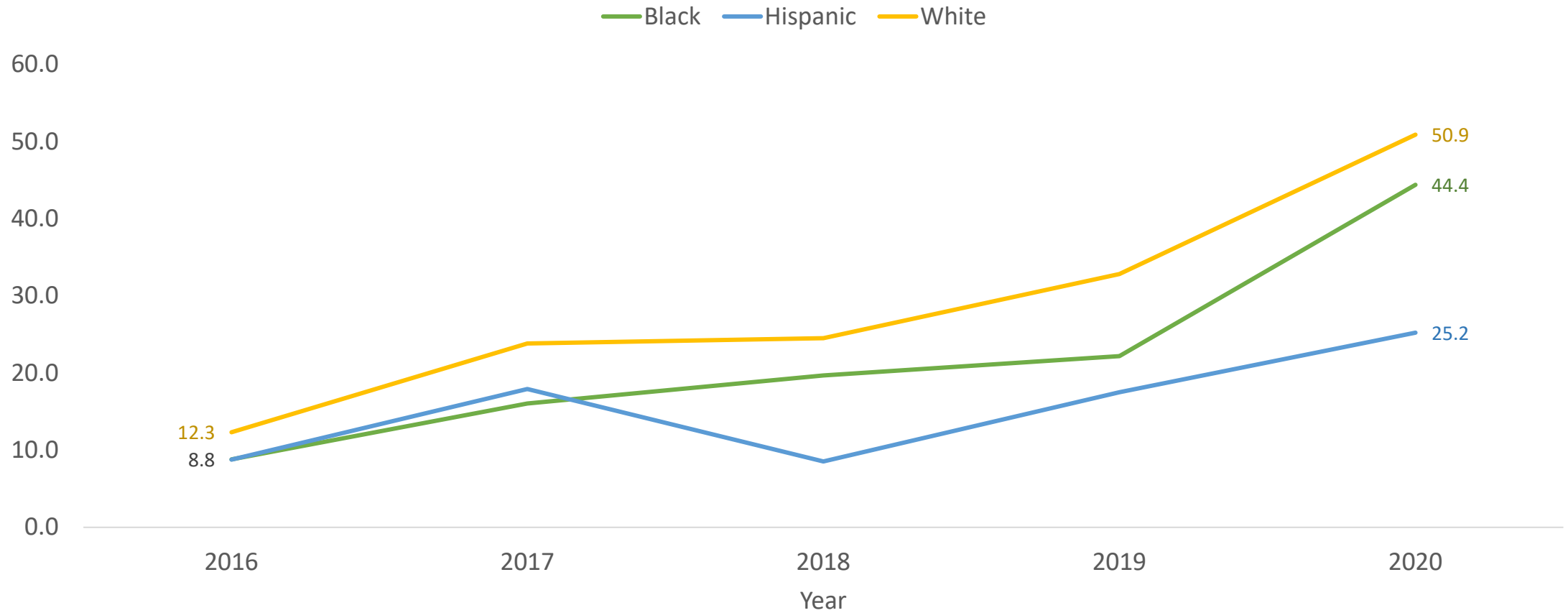
■ 2016 ■ 2017 ■ 2018 ■ 2019 ■ 2020



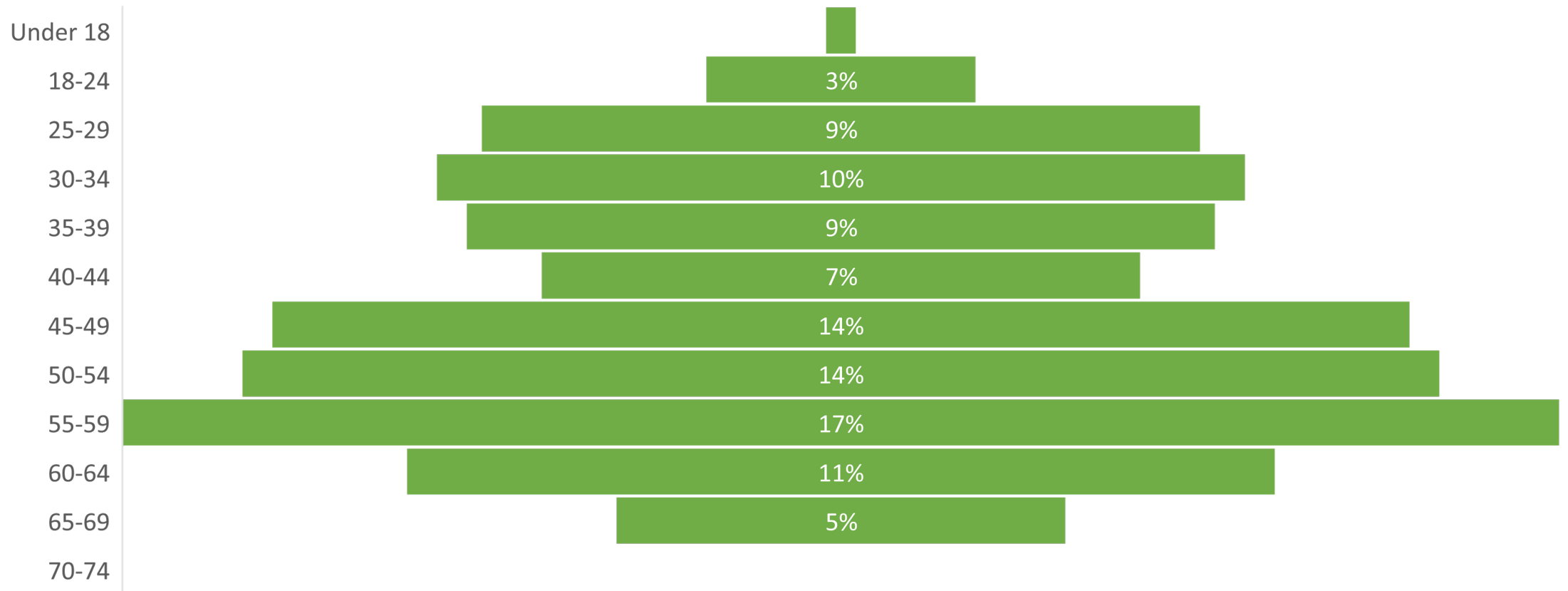
# Percent of deaths involving fentanyl by sex



# Rate per 100,000 of deaths involving fentanyl by select race and Hispanic ethnicity groups

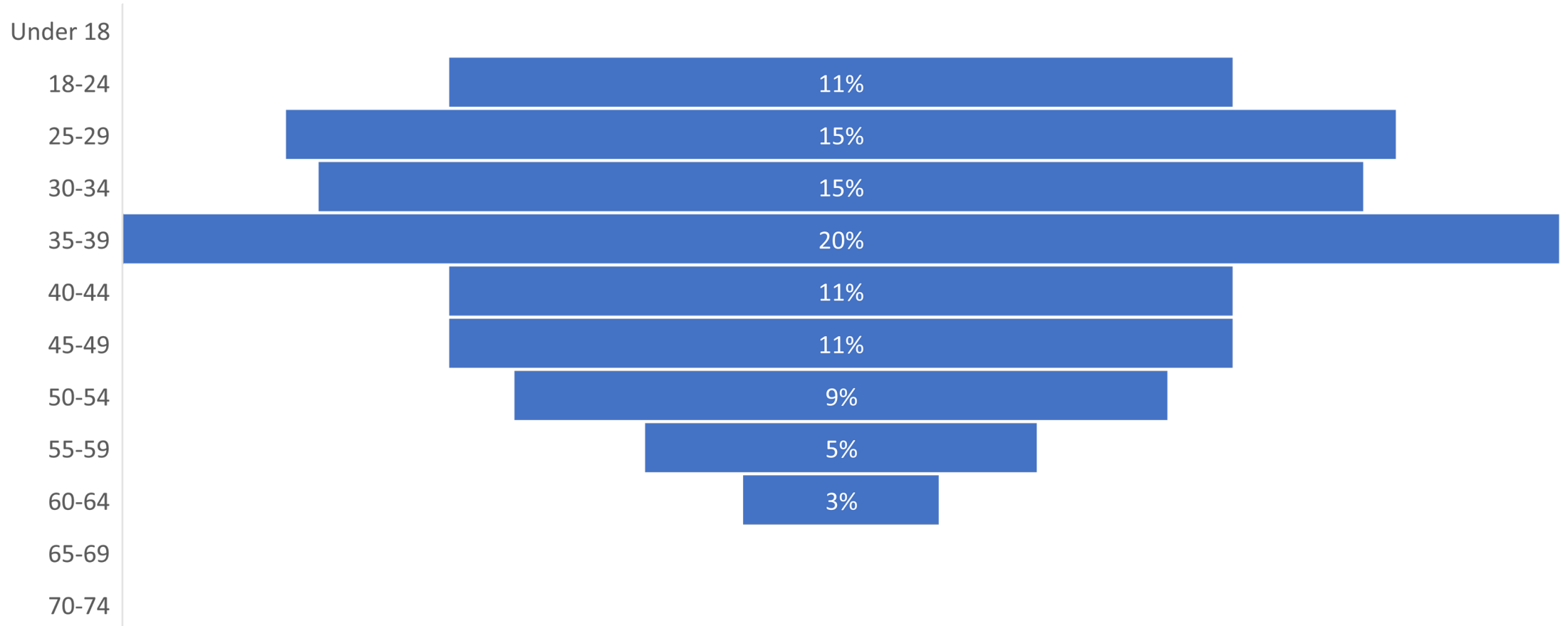


# Percentage of deaths involving fentanyl among black individuals by age group (in years), 2016-2020\*



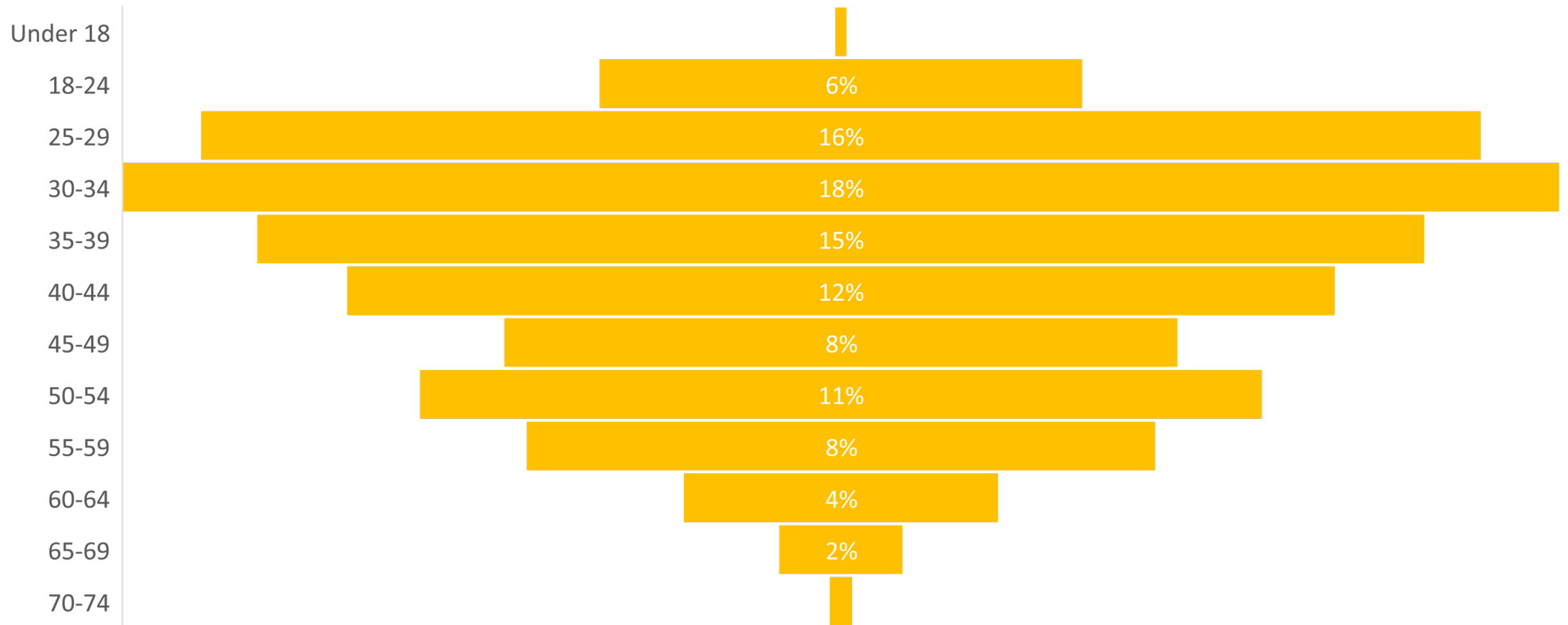
\*The lack of a bar indicates no deaths involving fentanyl among individuals in this age group.

# Percentage of deaths involving fentanyl among Hispanic individuals by age group (in years), 2016-2020\*



\*The lack of a bar indicates no deaths involving fentanyl among individuals in this age group.

# Percentage of deaths involving fentanyl among white individuals by age group (in years), 2016-2020





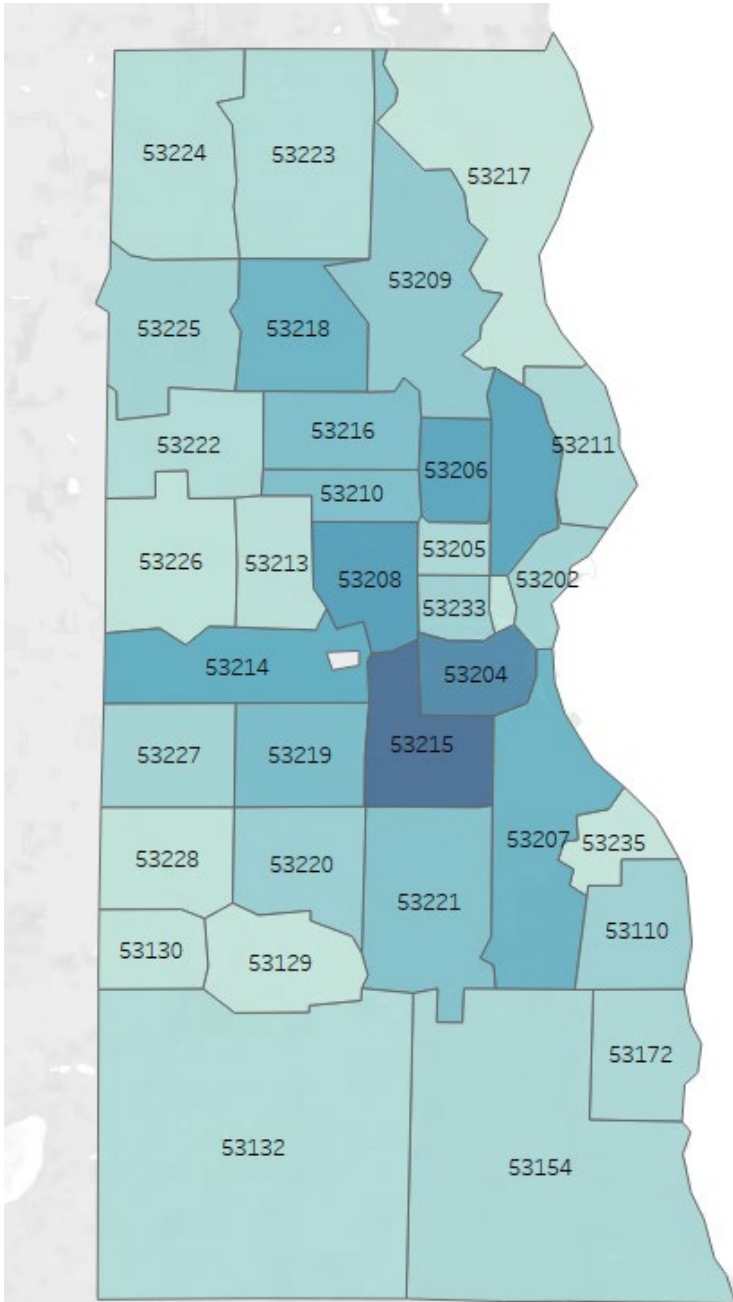
Summary of age distribution by race/Hispanic ethnicity among deaths involving fentanyl, 2016-2020

**Black** – 56% of individuals were age 45-64 years

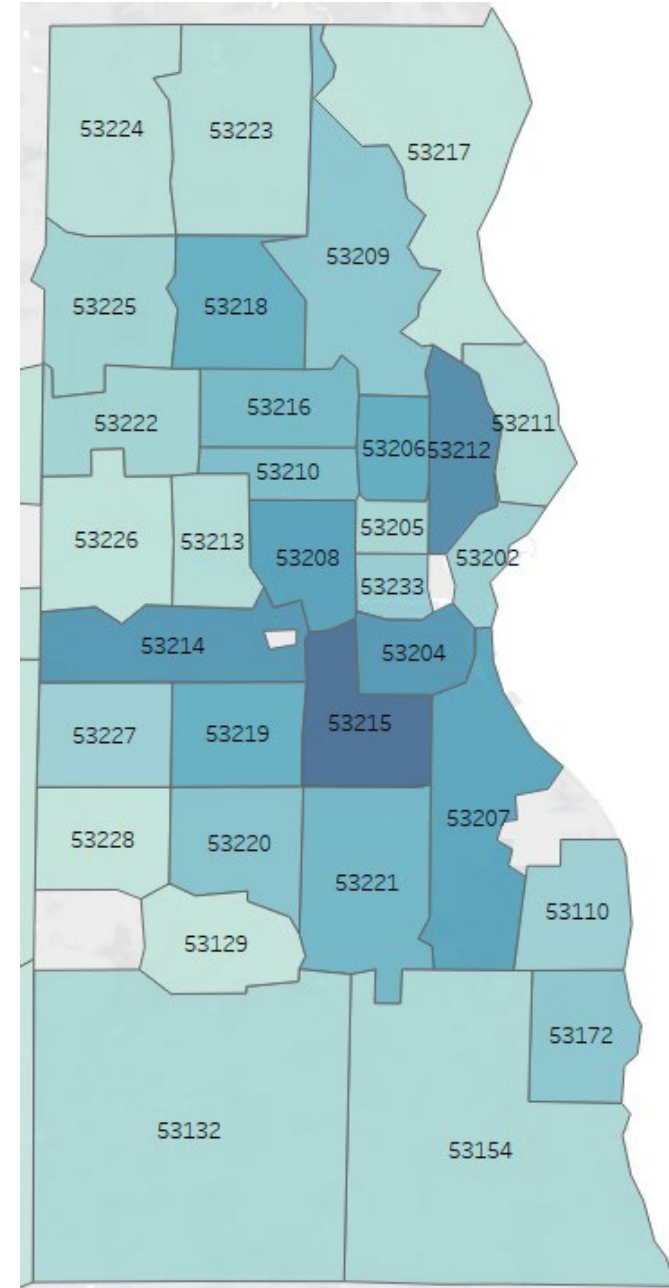
**Hispanic** – 50% of individuals were age 25-39 years

**White** – 50% of individuals were age 25-39 years

Incident zip code



Resident zip code

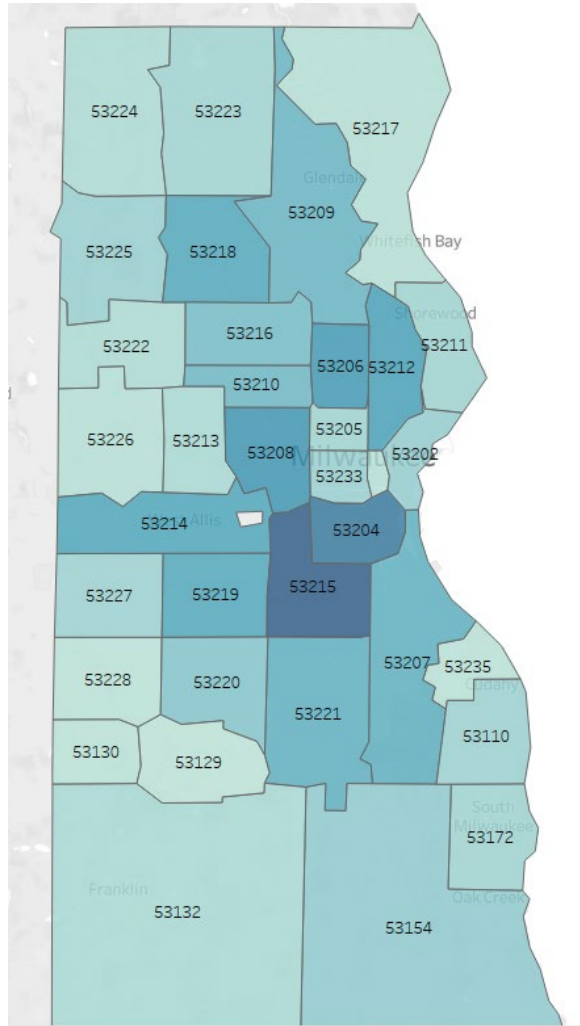


Deaths involving fentanyl by incident and resident zip codes

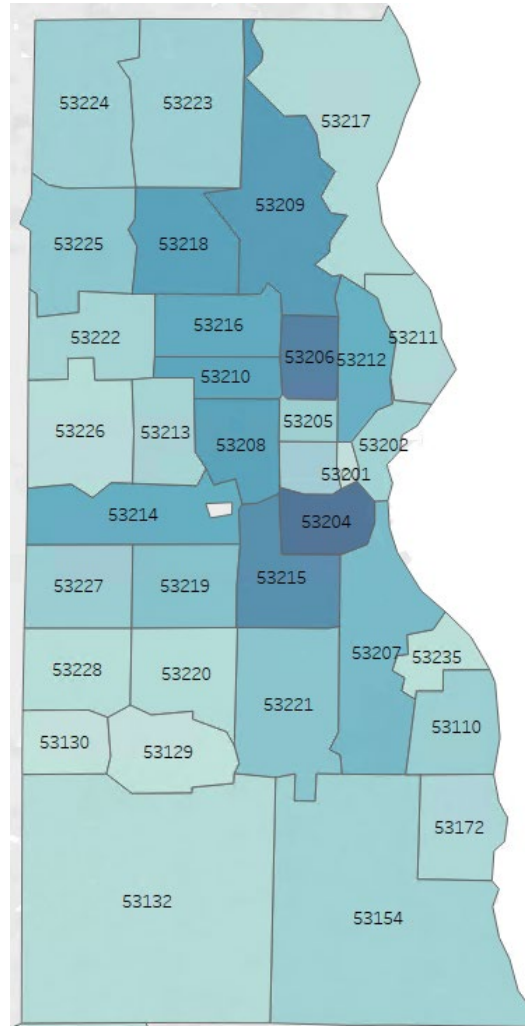
\*95% of decedents were residents of Milwaukee County.

# Concentration of overdoses compared to drug treatment counseling by Milwaukee County zip code

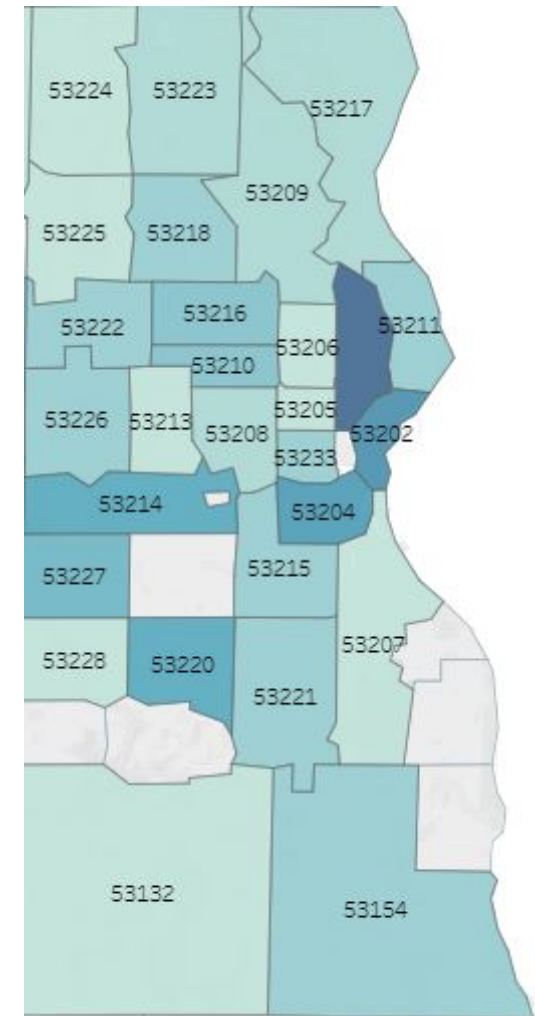
## FATAL OVERDOSES



## NONFATAL OVERDOSES (NALOXONE ADMINISTRATIONS)



## DRUG TREATMENT COUNSELING



# OD-PHAST Guiding Principles

North Star: Our shared goal is to reduce overdoses in Milwaukee County.

We recognize substance use disorder as a chronic, treatable disease.

We will use multi-sector data responsibly to inform response strategies.

We share accountability for reducing overdoses.

Primary themes  
across strengths,  
weaknesses,  
opportunities and  
threats

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# Additional SWOT themes identified

- Strengths
  - Capacity to create a public facing overdose dashboard
  - Capacity for greater access to data through OD-PHAST, especially around hot spots
- Opportunities
  - Peer support specialists provide an opportunity to engage more people in treatment
  - Identify who has what data and how to provide it to the DST
- Weaknesses
  - Peer support specialists need to be seen as experts and paid a living wage
  - Hospital systems need to be involved in efforts like OD-PHAST
  - The wait time for services can be too long
  - Individuals with lived experience are needed on the DST
  - Improved capacity to reach population groups with messaging and services is needed
- Threats
  - Timely identification of drug trends needs to be a priority

# Priorities for the DST

- Build capacity on the DST to share important pieces of information across sectors
- Prevention needs to be at the forefront
- Harm reduction perception needs to be changed
- Stigma reduction
- Focus on weaknesses and threats identified in SWOT analysis
- Get more granular with our data and response
- Bringing in additional partners where significant gaps exist
- Identifying treatment and recovery resources and gaps in access based on location and insurance coverage
- Gather data on navigation through the treatment and recovery system with assistance from IMPACT access points
- Create ad-hoc committees to work on action items outside of the full group setting

# Sample recommendations from OD-PHAST (OFR and DST)

- Investigate whether warm hand-offs are in place when individuals graduate from programs such as drug treatment court.
- Collaborate on a list of treatment options to be utilized by community paramedics in their patient visits.
- Increase awareness of the risks of and harm reduction strategies for fentanyl among individuals whose drug of choice is cocaine.
- Explore possibilities for EMS Community Paramedics to collaborate with DOC for reach out to individuals with substance use disorder releasing from incarceration into community supervision.
- Fentanyl test strips should be more readily available to ensure individuals are aware of the presence of fentanyl in substances they are considering for use.
- Explore prescribing naloxone in the health care setting to any individual who screens positive for potential substance use disorder in addition to co-prescribing naloxone with any opioid prescription.
- Investigate the co-occurrence of cocaine and fentanyl in overdose incidents in Milwaukee County to tailor prevention and intervention strategies.
- Identify ways to educate and increase public support for treatment facilities in Milwaukee.



Local  
recommendations  
with recent  
implementation  
plans

Persons who are incarcerated should be trained in administration of and equipped with naloxone prior to release from incarceration.

Support efforts to utilize community paramedics to follow-up with individuals who have left treatment prior to agreed upon discharge between patient and provider.

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