

Drug Overdose Disparities

Preventing teen deaths to overdose and
patching rural and age disparities





Public Health Concern

The amount of fatal drug overdoses has been trending upwards. This trend also matches the general consumption of gateway drugs by teens. The highest percentages for these issues occur in rural areas with little to no counseling or suicide prevention programs, showing the disparity between rural and urban areas in this problem.

General Drug Trends

01

Statewide Opioid Quick Stats - 2023 Q1

Percent Increase (▲) or Decrease (▼) Since the Previous Quarter

682

▲ 6.9%

Fatal Opioid Overdoses

639

▲ 7.9%

Fatal Synthetic Opioid
(Mostly Fentanyl) Overdoses

3,570

▲ 18.2%

Suspected Opioid Overdose
Emergency Department Visits

4,492

▲ 17.3%

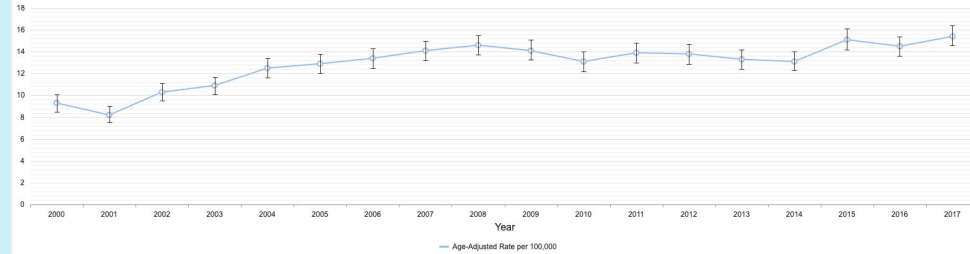
Suspected Opioid Overdose
Emergency Medical Services
Responses

03

02

Drug Overdoses - all fatal drug overdoses combined - Age-Adjusted Rate per 100,000

Geography: State, Time Period: Single Year



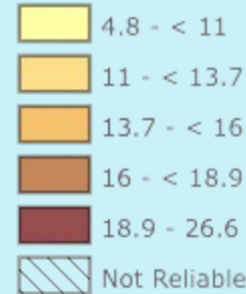
Drug Overdoses - all fatal drug overdoses combined - Age-Adjusted Rate per 100,000

Geography: County, Time Period: 2013-2017



Legend (Measure 1)

Age-Adjusted Rate per 100,000



Drug Trends Explained

01 2023 Q1 State Trends

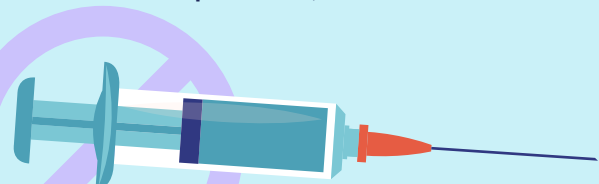
This chart shows the quick trends of Washington and the percent increases. All of the categories increased by a large amount, following the general trends of Washington crimes relating increasingly to drugs. This shows how much drugs have increased in Washington State in general.

02 Drug Overdose Line Graph

This line graph shows the increase in fatal drug overdoses with an age-adjusted rate. In this data, we can see that the line is trending upwards as the years go by. This is a concerning pattern that shows the frequency of drug usage in Washington.

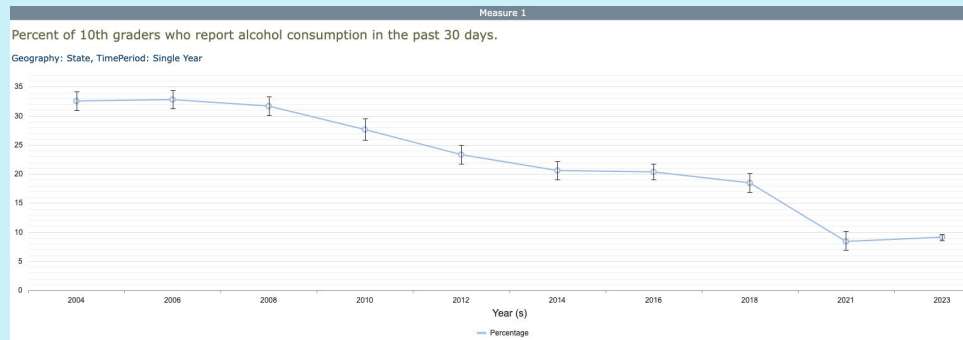
03 Drug Overdose Map

This map graph shows the age-adjusted rate of fatal drug overdoses per county. As you can see, this percentage varies drastically depending on the county. This adds into the disparity portion, which will be discussed at later points in the presentation.

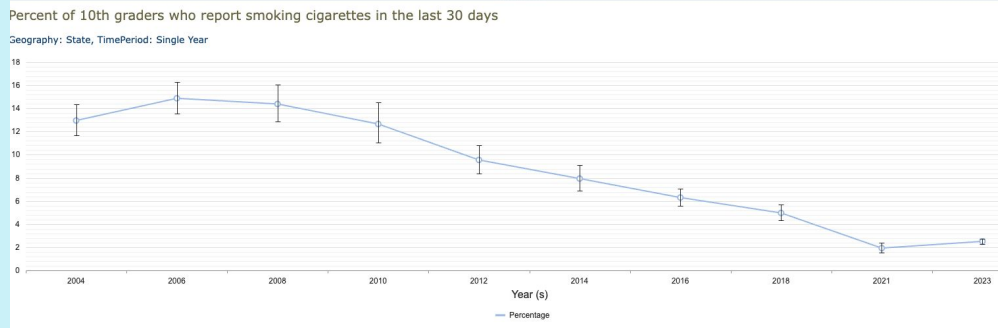


Gateway Drugs for Teens Trends

01

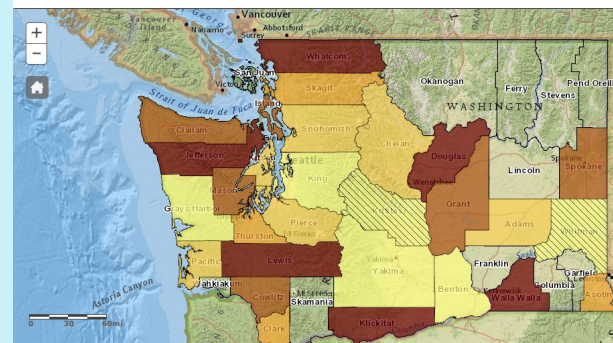


02



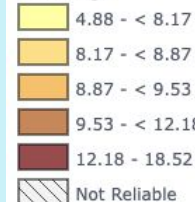
Percent of 10th graders who report alcohol consumption in the past 30 days.

Geography: County, TimePeriod: 2023



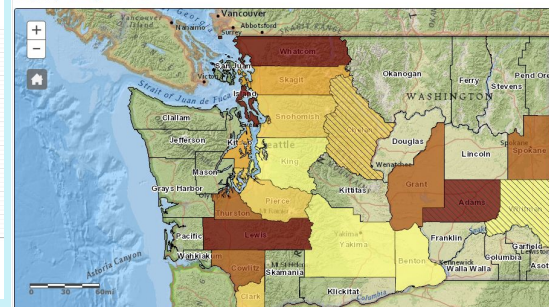
Legend (Measure 1)

Percentage



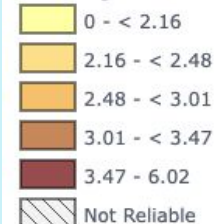
Percent of 10th graders who report smoking cigarettes in the last 30 days

Geography: County, TimePeriod: 2023



Legend (Measure 1)

Percentage



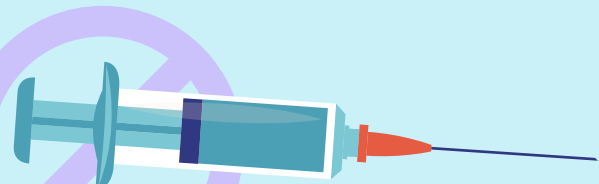
Gateway Trends Explained

01 Alcohol Consumption

These charts are line graphs and a county map of alcohol consumption in the past 30 days by 10th graders in percent. On the line graph, alcohol consumption has steadily been decreasing since 2004 but recently been on an uptick. This correlates with the previous trend observed in the quick stats, where more drug use is becoming prevalent. Alcohol is known as a gateway drug that can lead to the use of more drugs, such as opioids.







02 Smoking Cigarettes

These charts are line graphs and a county map of smoking cigarettes in the past 30 days by 10th graders in percent. Similarly to alcohol trends, 10th graders smoking cigarettes has been steadily been decreasing since 2008 but has gone on an uptick since 2021. According to the NIH, nicotine is a powerful gateway drug into other illicit drugs.



01

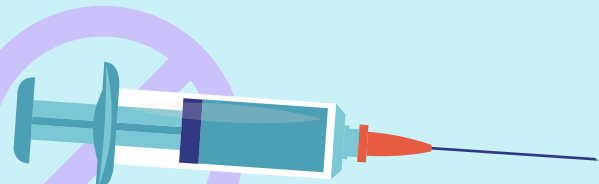


	23.55 - < 29.28
	29.28 - < 31.13
	31.13 - < 32.21
	32.21 - < 35.13
	35.13 - 38.75
	Not Reliable

Mental Health Trends Explained

01 Sad or Hopeless Measure

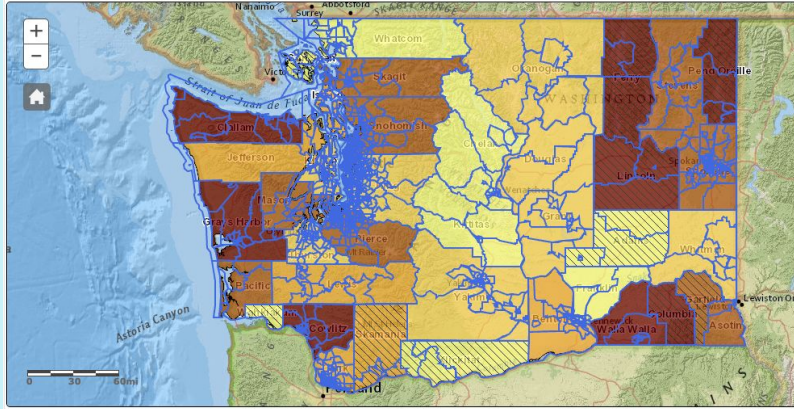
This chart shows the percentage of 10th graders who reported feeling sad or hopeless almost everyday for the past few weeks by county. Generally, the percentage of individuals decreases near the larger, urban cities. This is due to the economic and rural disparity, as will be detailed in the next portion of the presentation.



Disparities in Access: Data

Drug Overdoses - all fatal drug overdoses combined - Age-Adjusted Rate per 100,000

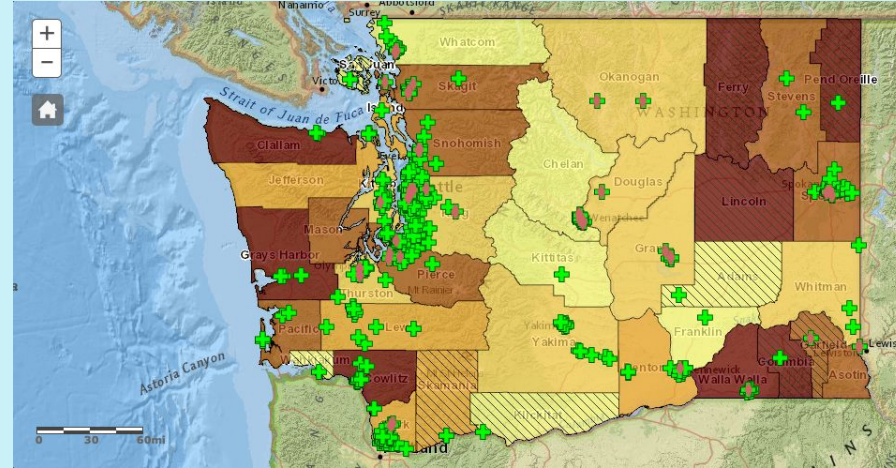
Geography: County, Time Period: 2013-2017



This county map shows the rural urban distribution. In the rural areas, drug overdose percentages are far higher, even for age-adjusted rates.

Legend for the second map:

- Counseling (blue square)
- Grief Support (blue square)
- Healthcare Agencies (red square)
- Rural-Urban Classification (blue square)
- Suicide Prevention Clinics (green square)
- Suicide Prevention Resources (red square)



Additionally, counseling centers, suicide prevention clinics, and suicide prevention resources are mainly available in urban areas. This leads to a disparity in access from rural and urban individuals.

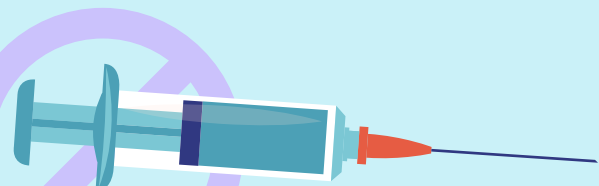
Disparities in Access

01 Rural and Urban Disparity

In the data shown, all trends on the county maps show disproportionately higher rates of drug fatality, sad or hopeless high schoolers, and the use of gateway drugs in high schoolers. All in all, this disparity leads to more high schoolers using drugs in these areas and contributing to the rates of drug fatality. Since suicide prevention resources and counseling are not readily available in rural areas, many teens struggle with accessing the help that could save their life.

02 Age Disparity

Additionally, high schoolers are not fully developed and are more susceptible to factors like peer pressure and stress. For these reasons, they are vulnerable to addiction. In recent times, overdose rates for teens have risen. This disparity leads to a lack of protection state-wide for teenagers who may need extra support when it comes to drugs and stress.



Possible Solutions

More curriculum and lessons about drug usage in schools across WA



Pros:

- Would address age disparity
- Increase drug knowledge no matter the area



Cons:

- Difficult to implement
- Already existing in capacity in most schools

Establish mental health centers/drug related help in rural areas, working with nonprofits and schools to spread the message



Pros:

- Would address both disparities
- Would make the involvement multifaceted and specific



Cons:

- Could be difficult to coordinate

Implement more drug services in rural areas



Pros:

- Would address rural disparity
- Increase drug knowledge no matter the area



Cons:

- Doesn't address root cause
- Doesn't address age disparity

Due to the unique and complex nature of this problem, there are many different possible solutions that could be proposed. However, the second situation more directly encapsulates both disparities and helps promote mental wellbeing everywhere.

Proposed Solution

My proposal is to establish mental health centers/drug related help in rural areas, working with nonprofits and schools to spread the message.

Effects

This would address both disparities and also involve the many parties involved in this issue. Getting schools involved could help education for teenagers in these rural areas, while working with nonprofits could get the education to the general populace. The data has shown that a lack of these centers in rural areas is correlated to mental health issues and high fatalities. Adding these centers would be a big step in reducing both drug fatalities and teenagers who are lonely/hopeless.

1

Impact would be gradual, but effective. If this proposal went into effect, we'd likely see trends similar to the urban counties who have centers.

2

This concept would provide equity for students and the general populace in rural areas with its multifaceted approach.

3

This proposal would help make Washington residents, specifically those in rural areas, healthier and happier.

References

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