**Syndromic Surveillance (SS)**

SS is used as an early detection method for potential clusters or outbreaks, by tracking suspected drug overdose-involved emergency department (ED) visits based on the patient’s chief complaint upon admission and/or discharge diagnosis. Participating Georgia hospitals and urgent care facilities share these SS data within the State Electronic Notifiable Disease Surveillance System (SendSS).

### Top 5 Counties^ with 15 or More Drug* Overdose ED Visits During July 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Monthly Rate^ i per 100,000 Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CARROLL</td>
<td>44.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPALDING</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RICHMOND</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JACKSON</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOUGHERTY</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Statewide, 1,484 ED visits for Drug* overdoses occurred in July 2021, compared to 1,381 in July 2020.**

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Data source: Suspected drug overdose ED/Urgent Care visits by chief complaint upon admission and/or discharge diagnosis reported to DPH Syndromic Surveillance. See data limitations [here](https://dph.georgia.gov/drug-surveillance-unit).

*Drugs may include any over the counter, prescription, or illicit drug.

^Zip code and county are based on patient residence.

Rate indicates visits per 100,000 persons using 2019 Census data as the denominator. Excluded rates for counties with <15 visits.

Percent change data by county excludes counties with less than 3 visits.

\( \text{Color Scale} \)

- Decreasing 1-24% Decrease
- Increasing 1-24% Increase
- 25-49% Decrease
- 25-49% Increase
- 50-74% Decrease
- 50-74% Increase
- 75-100% Decrease
- 75-100% Increase
- >100% Decrease
- >100% Increase

Not Calculatedª

0% [No Change]

Thicker borders represent the 5 highest county rates of Drug overdose ED visits per 100,000 population in July 2021 (see table above)

Note: All data excludes patients ≤14 years of age. Counts represent the number of ED visits instead of the number of patients, therefore, patients with repeat visits may have been counted more than once.

Note: SS data is not the same as emergency department discharge data; drug overdose SS data is limited and based on accuracy of chief complaint and/or discharge diagnosis and what is reported to DPH SS. Data is subject to change due to the current number of participating facilities and/or improvements to data quality. Data shown on this report may not depict the true burden of drug overdose in Georgia.
Drug* Overdose ED Visits by Month, Georgia, 2018-2021

Percent of All Drug* Overdose ED Visits by Age Group˚

- Drug* overdose ED visits in July 2021 were predominantly: Male (52.8%), White (69.7%), and between 25-34 years of age (27.0%).
- 61.5% increase in the count of Drug* overdoses among aged 75+ compared to the same month last year.
- 9% increase in the count of Drug* overdoses among Blacks compared to the same month last year.

Percent of All Drug* Overdose ED Visits by Sex˚:

- 13.3% increase in the count of Drug* overdoses among Males compared to the same month last year.

Percent of All Drug* Overdose ED Visits by Race˚:

Data source: Suspected drug overdose ED/Urgent Care visits by chief complaint upon admission and/or discharge diagnosis reported to DPH Syndromic Surveillance. See data limitations here.

*Drugs may include any over the counter, prescription, or illicit drug.

1Zip code and county are based on patient residence.

2Rate indicates visits per 100,000 persons using 2020 Census data as the denominator. Excluded rates for counties with <15 visits.

3Percent change data by county excludes counties with less than 3 visits.

4Drug Specific Categories are not mutually exclusive and include illicit and prescription drugs. Specific drugs identified using the chief complaint and/or discharge diagnosis fields and are not meant to be comprehensive.

Note: All data excludes patients ≤14 years of age. Counts represent the number of ED visits instead of the number of patients, therefore, patients with repeat visits may have been counted more than once.

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**Syndromic Surveillance Drug Overdose Emergency Department Visits: Georgia, July 2021**

**Opioid-Involved** OD ED Visits by Month, Georgia, 2018-2021

**Heroin-Involved** OD ED Visits by Month, Georgia, 2018-2021

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**Link(s) of interest:**
Georgia Department of Public Health, Updated Suspect Drug Overdose Increases in Georgia Amid COVID-19 – April 2021

Science Direct, Differences and similarities between emergency department syndromic surveillance and hospital discharge data for nonfatal drug overdose, October 2021

Data source: Suspected drug overdose ED/Urgent Care visits by chief complaint upon admission and/or discharge diagnosis reported to DPH Syndromic Surveillance. See data limitations here.

*Drugs may include any over the counter, prescription, or illicit drug.

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‡Rate indicates visits per 100,000 persons using 2020 Census data as the denominator. Excluded rates for counties with <15 visits.

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08/18/2021 [https://dph.georgia.gov/drug-surveillance-unit](https://dph.georgia.gov/drug-surveillance-unit)