



# The State of the Opioid Epidemic

Charlie Severance-Medaris, senior policy specialist, NCSL Health Program

January 7, 2023

# Session Outline

1

Overview of the Epidemic

2

What the Fellowship Covers

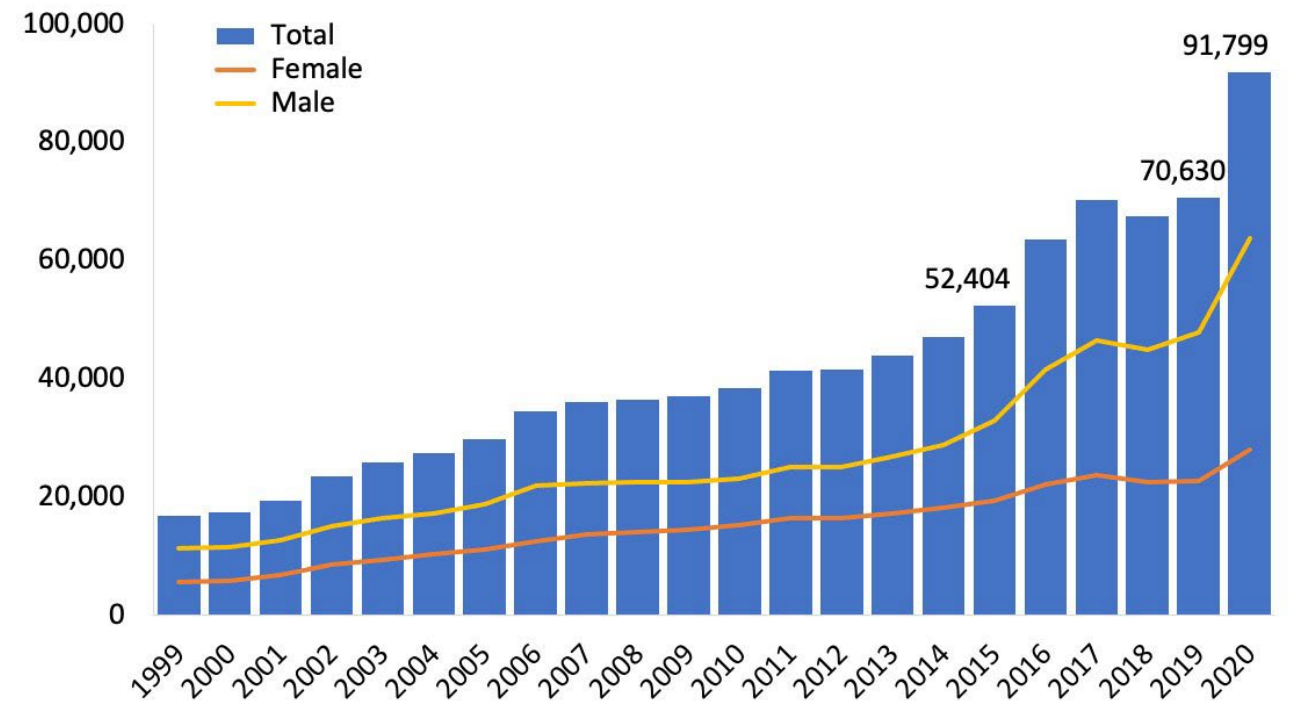
3

Networking Activity!

# Drug Overdose Deaths Since 1999

- Between 1999 and 2021, more than 900,000 people have died of a drug overdose in the US.
  - More than 550,000 deaths attributed to opioids.
- 2 million people with opioid use disorder.
- 10.3 million people misused opioids in 2018.
- More than 20 million people have a substance use disorder.

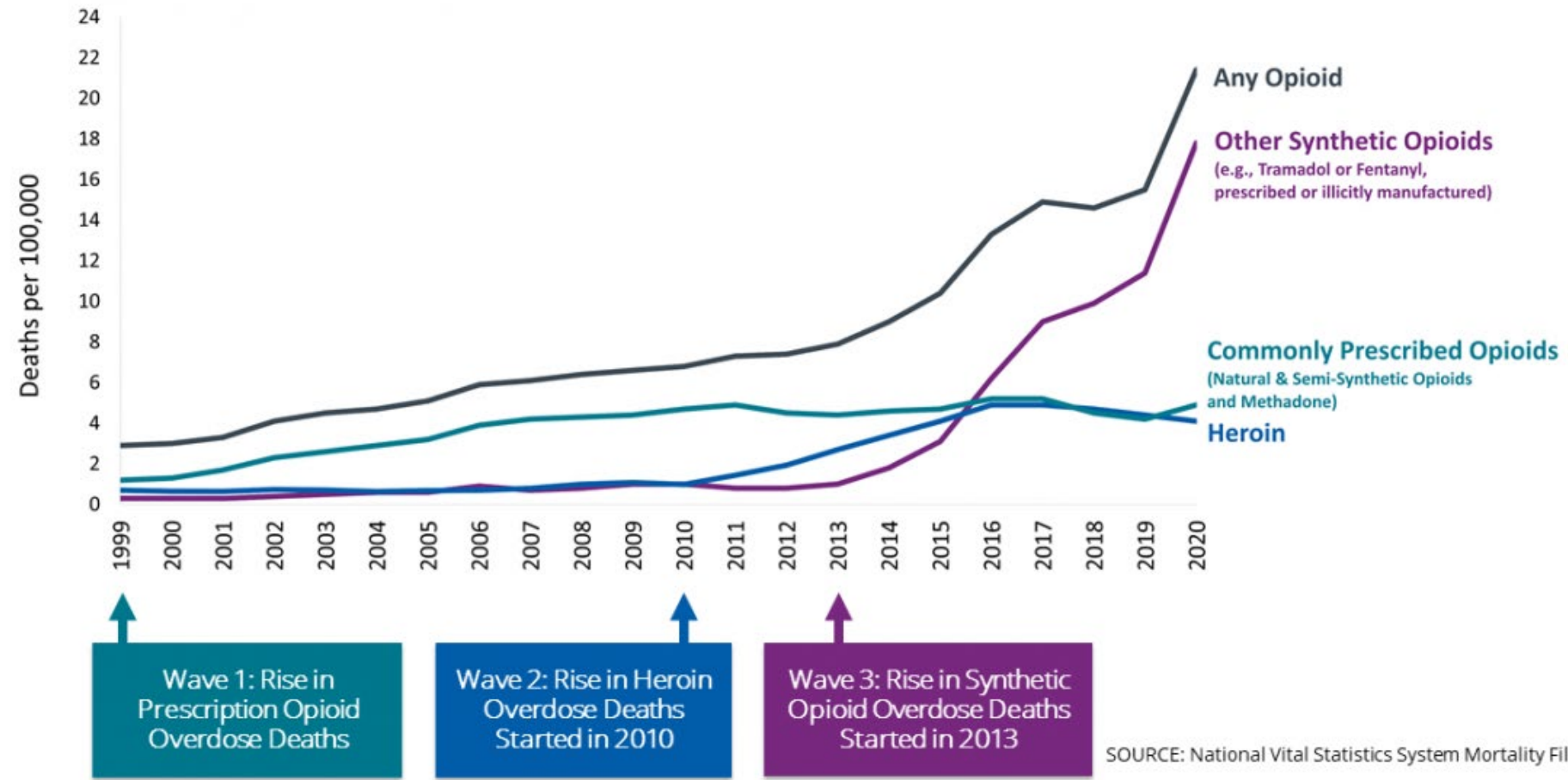
**Figure 1. National Drug-Involved Overdose Deaths\*  
Number Among All Ages, by Gender, 1999-2020**



\*Includes deaths with underlying causes of unintentional drug poisoning (X40–X44), suicide drug poisoning (X60–X64), homicide drug poisoning (X85), or drug poisoning of undetermined intent (Y10–Y14), as coded in the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Revision. Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Multiple Cause of Death 1999-2020 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released 12/2021.

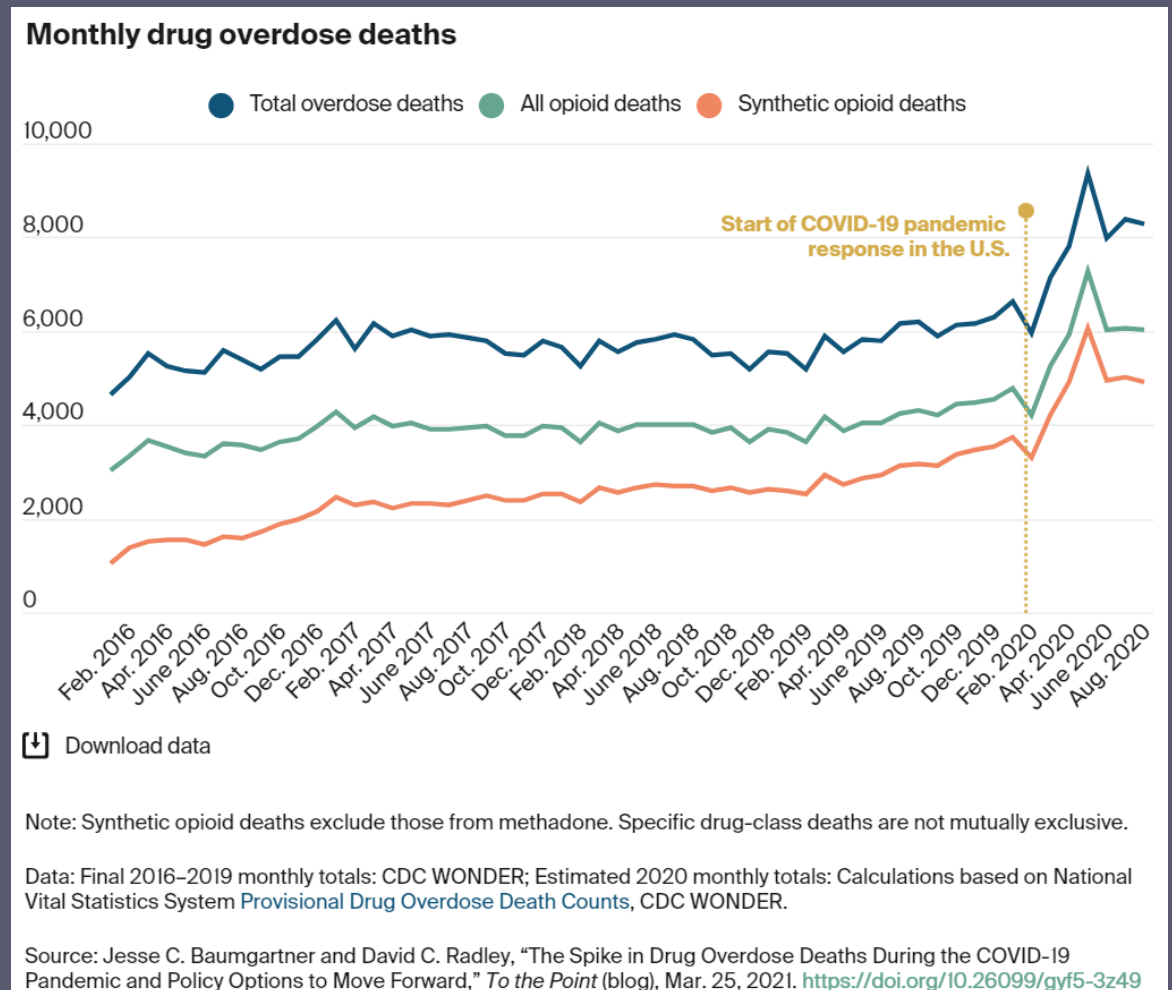
# Origins of the Opioid Epidemic

## Three Waves of Opioid Overdose Deaths



# COVID-19 and the Opioid Epidemic

- Overdose deaths were already rising in early 2019.
- COVID-linked stressors likely made things worse.

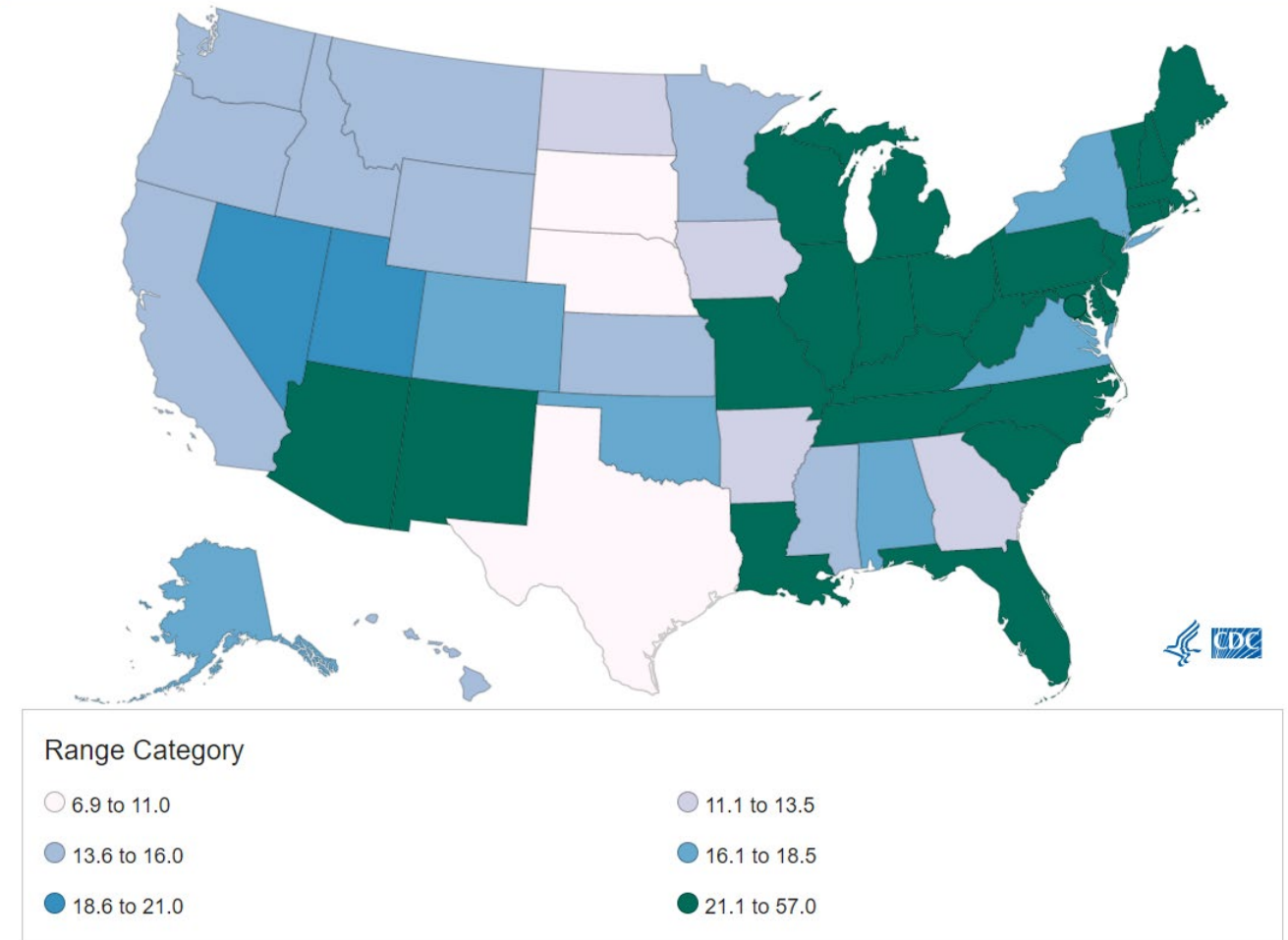




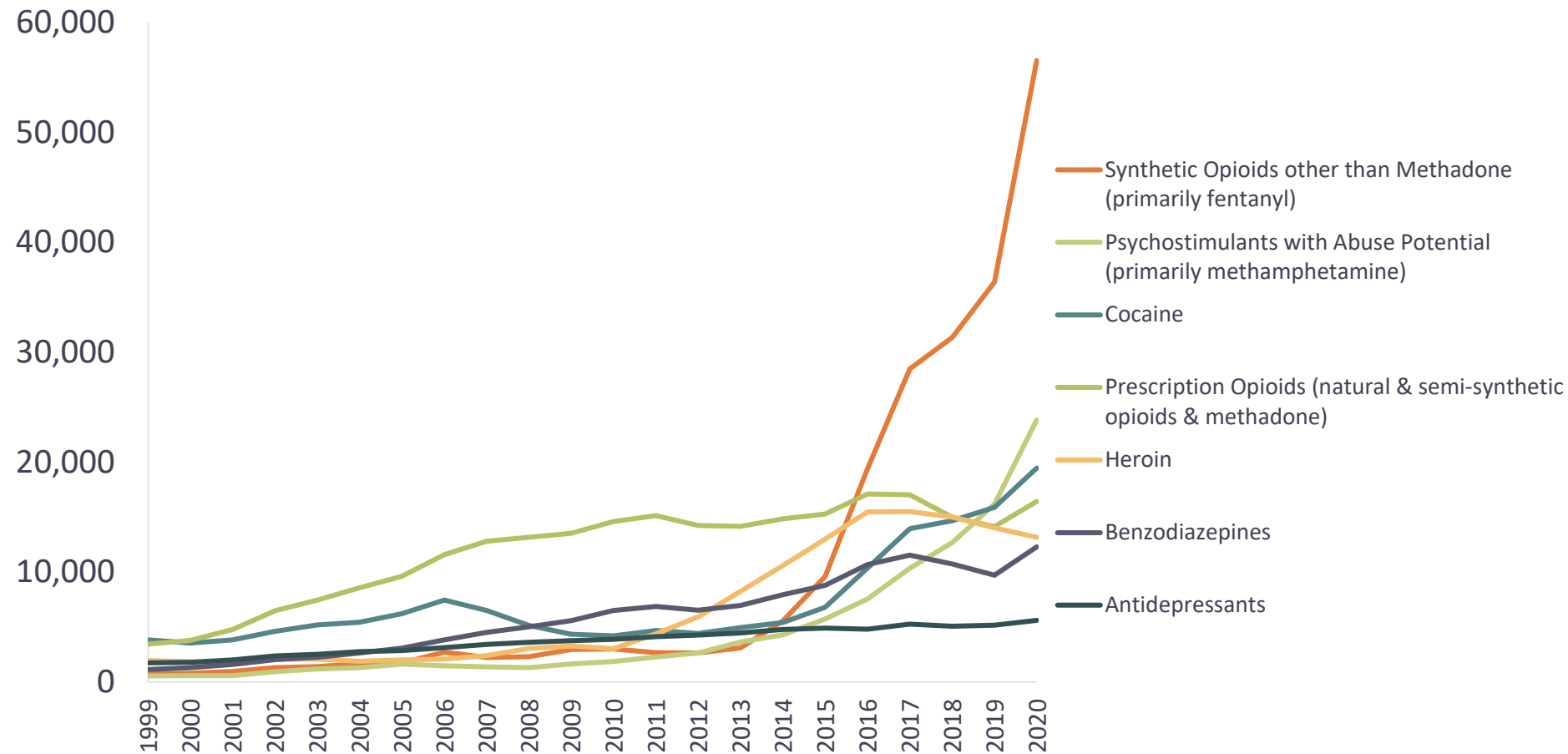
# Most Recent Overdose Data

- There were 107,622 drug overdose deaths in the United States in 2021.
- An increase of nearly 15% from the 93,655 deaths estimated in 2020.
- The 2021 increase was half of what it was a year ago, when overdose deaths rose 30% from 2019 to 2020.
- Overdose deaths involving opioids increased from an estimated 70,029 in 2020 to 80,816 in 2021.

Number and Age-adjusted Rates of Drug Overdose Deaths by State, US 2020



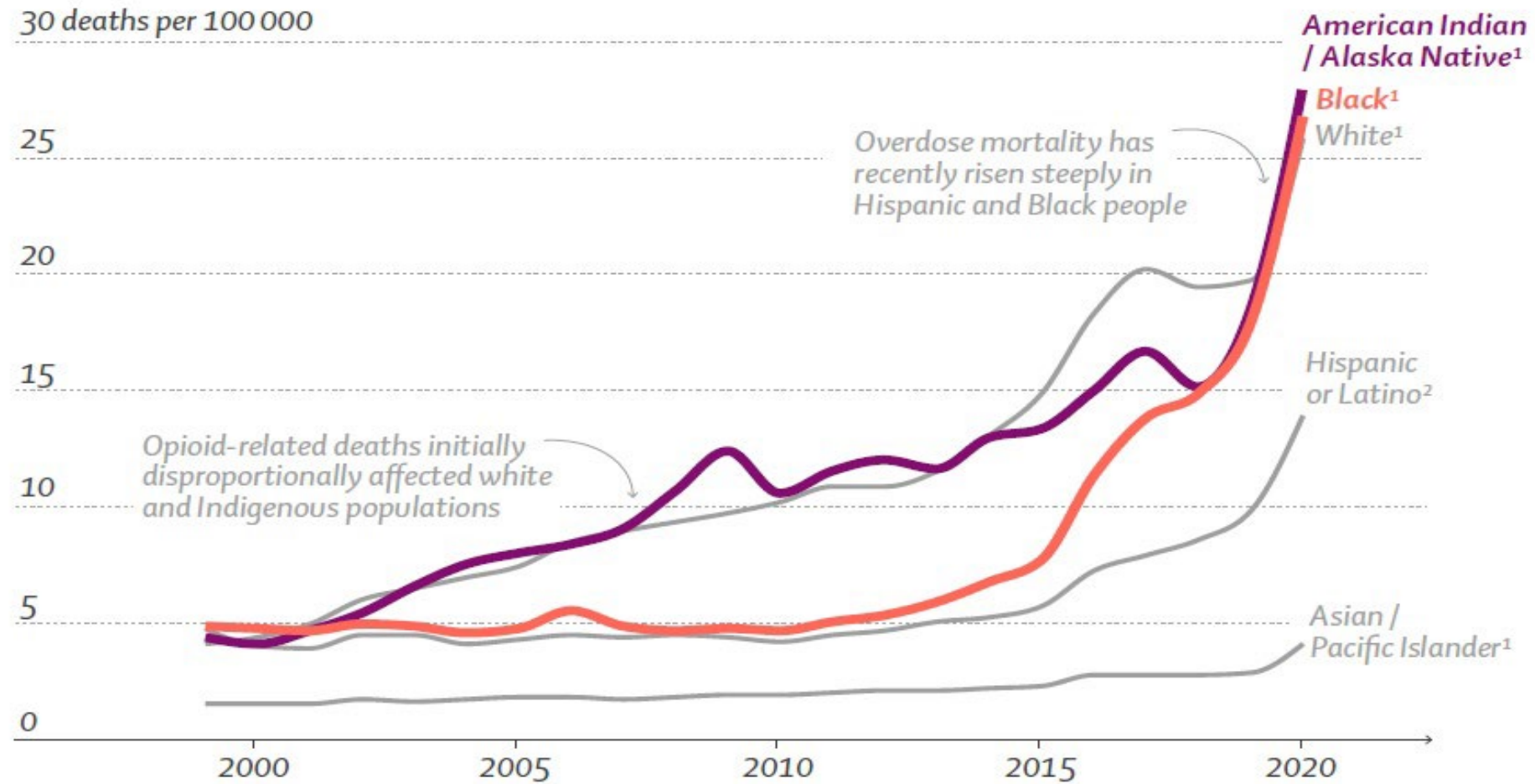
# Figure 2. National Drug-Involved Overdose Deaths\*, Number Among All Ages, 1999-2020



\*Includes deaths with underlying causes of unintentional drug poisoning (X40–X44), suicide drug poisoning (X60–X64), homicide drug poisoning (X85), or drug poisoning of undetermined intent (Y10–Y14), as coded in the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Revision. Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Multiple Cause of Death 1999-2020 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released 12/2021.

# The expanding reach of the opioid crisis

US opioid-involved mortality rate per 100 000 population

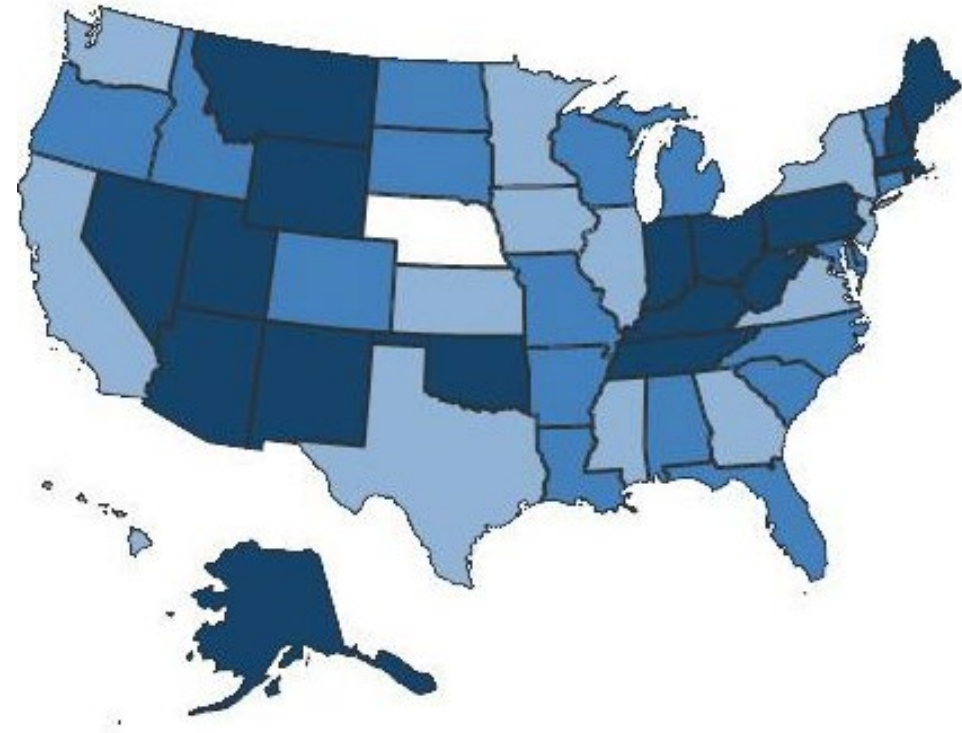


1. non-Hispanic 2. any race

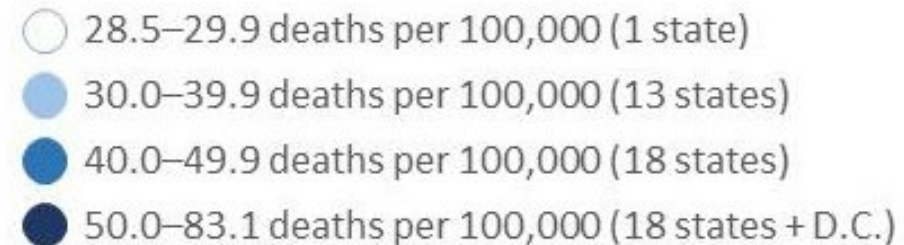


# What are Deaths of Despair?

- US life expectancy is falling.
- COVID-19, overdose deaths and suicide deaths are driving this trend.
- Other causes of death falling.



Deaths by Drugs, Alcohol and Suicide, 2016



# Suicide and Drug Use



Nearly  
**46,000**  
people died by  
suicide in 2020



**1** death every  
**11** minutes

Many adults think about  
suicide or attempt suicide

---

**12.2 million**  
Seriously thought about suicide

---

**3.2 million**  
Made a plan for suicide

---

**1.2 million**  
Attempted suicide

If you or someone you know  
is in crisis, please contact the

**988 Suicide and  
Crisis Lifeline**

- Call or text 988
- Chat at [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org)



# What Does This Mean for the Fellowship?

## **Kickoff Meeting**

---

- Focus on Continuum of Care
  - Moving from prevention to treatment
- Infectious Disease Consequences of the Opioid Epidemic
- Maternal and Child Populations

## **Remainder of Program**

---

- Remainder of Continuum of Care
  - Innovative policies, long-term recovery, housing
- Suicide Prevention
- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Criminal Justice System
- More Maternal and Child Health
- Fellows Priorities!

# Networking Activity!

## ○ Step 1: Divide into four groups:

- Group 1: Experts
- Group 2: Advanced
- Group 3: Intermediate
- Group 4: New

## ○ Step 2: Discuss and Report Out

- All Groups:
  - Introduce Yourself!
- Groups 1 & 2: What is something you are excited to share about what your state has done in this area?
- Groups 3 & 4: What are some things that you are excited learn more about? What are you hoping to take back to your state?