

By the Numbers

Realities of the Opioid Crisis in Alameda County



Three Valleys
**COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**
AMADOR • LIVERMORE • SAN RAMON

While the opioid crisis impacts all demographics across all genders, races, age groups, and communities, the sheer number of overdose deaths due to addiction and substance use disorder is staggering – and disproportionately higher among certain populations. It is a nationwide crisis – as well as one that significantly impacts Alameda County.

Opioids fall into two categories: natural and synthetic. It is the synthetic or laboratory created opioids, such as fentanyl, that are now at the core of much of the substance abuse epidemic. Synthetic opioids focus on the same targets in the brain as natural opioids (e.g., morphine and codeine) to produce analgesic (pain relief) effects. However, fentanyl is a Schedule II controlled substance known to be extremely potent: 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine.¹

An Ongoing Epidemic:

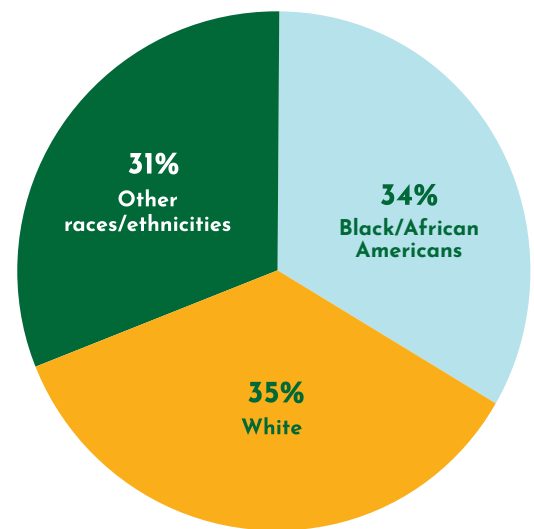
Alameda County continues to see alarming numbers of opioid-related drug overdoses, as evidenced by opioid overdose 911 emergency call statistics.²

636 calls to 911 July - December 2019

1,513 calls to 911 January - December 2020

458 calls to 911 January - April 2021

Disproportionate Effect Across Ethnicities:



In Alameda County, the annual crude mortality rate for 2021 was 12.09 per 100k residents. Synthetic opioid overdose deaths are on the rise and are largely related to fentanyl in California and Alameda County.³ The availability of synthetic opioids such as fentanyl has also led to an unprecedented rise in unintentional fentanyl use from people buying prescription opioids or other recreational drugs laced, or adulterated, with the substance.



Communities in Crisis - with Disparate Consequences

Certain populations are most at risk for opioid addiction and death.

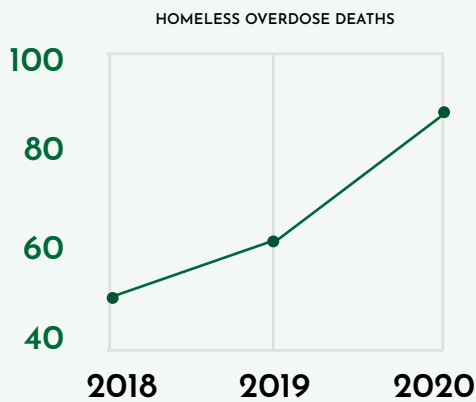


Impact on Youth and Young Adults

California public health experts identified more than 6,000 deaths from fentanyl in 2021. More than 220 of those were among teens ages 15-19. Fentanyl overdose is the fastest growing cause of death for young people in California.⁴ In Alameda County, overdose deaths are impacting people of all ages, between 15-74, with the highest overdose rates for those between ages 25-44.⁵

Leading Cause of Death Among the Unsheltered

Special populations such as individuals over the age of 50 and experiencing homelessness accounted for 30% of all overdose deaths in Alameda County in 2020. 73% of (these or all) overdoses occur outdoors.⁶



Incarcerated Individuals

Opioid use disorder goes largely untreated during periods of incarceration. According to the 2019 census of jails, 15% of individuals in jail screened positive for opioid use disorder, but only 24% of jails were allowed continuation of medications for opioid use disorder while in custody.⁷

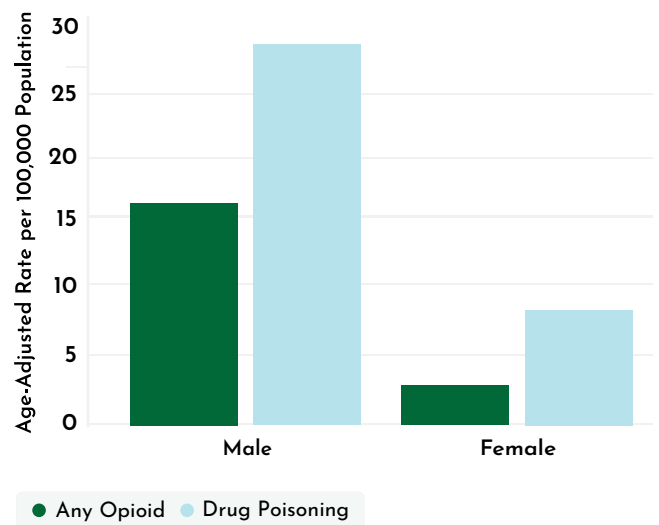
Just as troubling, overdose is exceptionally high once inmates are released from prison. Data shows that recently incarcerated or released individuals who have a history of opioid use disorder often relapse within the first 24 to 72 hours of their release, making them vulnerable to overdoses, poisoning, and even death. The risk of overdose can increase 129 times and is highest the first two weeks after release.⁸

By city / region in Alameda County:



Gender Disparities Exist

In Alameda County, from 2019-2021, opioid and other drug related deaths among men were **3-5 times higher** than among women.



COVID Compounds Crisis

During the height of the pandemic, opioid overdose death rates **increased by 44%** in Black/African Americans. More Black/African Americans died from fentanyl overdoses than from any other drug in 2021 and at far higher rates than Whites or Hispanics. Disruption in access to prevention, treatment, and harm reduction services during the pandemic have likely contributed to this increase.⁹

Intersection of Mental Health, Opioid Overuse, and Unintentional Death

1 in 5 American adults, or approximately 46.6 million people, live with a mental health condition in any given year, and approximately 10.2 million adults have co-occurring mental health and addiction disorders.¹⁰

Risk of opioid addiction is greater among:¹¹

- Youth, specifically in their teens or early 20s
- Individuals experiencing serious depression, anxiety, or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Individuals who perform poorly in school and do not value education
- Individuals living with stressors brought on by unemployment or poverty
- Individuals with a history of sexual abuse

According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, fentanyl is now responsible for more deaths of Americans under the age of 50 than any other cause - including heart disease, cancer, homicide, suicide, and accidents.¹² In 2021, 5,961 Californians died from fentanyl overdose. **That's more than the estimated 4,258 people who died in auto accidents on California roads and more than double the 2,548 killed in homicides. 1 in 5 youth deaths involved fentanyl that year.**¹³

Sources: **1** DEA: Facts About Fentanyl (2021) **2** Alameda County Health Care Services Agency, Overdose Prevention and Opioid Litigation Update (2022) **3** Alameda County Board of Supervisors Agenda (2024) **4** Alameda Unified School District, #OnePillCanKill - Fentanyl Information **5** Alameda County Board of Supervisors Agenda (2024) **6** Alameda County Healthcare Services Agency, Overdose Prevention and Opioid Litigation Update (2022); Alameda County Homeless Mortality Report (2022) **7** Recent Incarceration, Substance Use, Overdose, and Service Use Among People Who Use Drugs in Rural Communities (2023) **8** What Happens When an Addict Goes to Jail? Here's What You Should Know (2016) **9** Alameda County Healthcare Services Agency, Overdose Prevention and Opioid Litigation Update (2022), Vital Statistics Rapid Release, Estimates of Drug Overdose Deaths Involving Fentanyl, Methamphetamine, Cocaine, Heroin, and Oxycodone (2021) **10** National Alliance on Mental Illness, Mental Health Facts in America (2019) **11** Mayo Clinic, How Opioid Use Disorder Occurs (2023) **12** Alameda Unified School District, #OnePillCanKill - Fentanyl Information **13** Addressing the Fentanyl Crisis: What's Being Done on the Peninsula? (2023)

About the Alameda County Opioid Settlement Innovative Mini-Grant Program

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors has selected Three Valleys Community Foundation (3VCF) as the fiscal agent to administer \$3 million dollars in Opioid Settlement Innovative Mini-Grant Program funds. Working closely with Behavioral Health Department, Alameda County Health, 3VCF will invest available resources in county-wide organizations serving individuals and communities that provide access to and prevention treatment for opioid addiction and overdose reversal remedies.

Community foundations are uniquely positioned to address the most pressing needs in our region and support the community members who are most at risk. The opioid crisis in Alameda County is a silent, devastating and pervasive challenge, impacting far more than those directly in addiction. Every overdose in our region is more than just a statistic; it represents a family broken apart, children left without parents, loved ones bereaved, and a community left with a profound void.

“Our local communities are uniquely positioned to lead the County’s efforts to end the opioid crisis. They bear witness daily to the fallout and hold intimate knowledge of the most effective pathways to recovery and resilience. This work is not possible without communities in the lead.”

— **Dr. George Ayala**
Deputy Director, Public Health Department,
Alameda County Health

As your anchor community foundation, we are here to serve as a true catalyst for transformational change. Our region’s nonprofits are responding to the most critical local needs, including addressing the opioid and mental health crisis, and 3VCF is working to infuse local resources back into our community. We are honored to have the opportunity and responsibility to lead and manage this crucial work for Alameda County.

About Alameda County Opioid Settlement Funding

Opioid Settlement refers to the legal resolution of suits filed by the State, County of Alameda and cities against opioid manufacturers, distributors, and prescribers for their role in fueling the opioid epidemic. The Settlement resulted in pharmaceuticals and other entities providing settlement funds to State jurisdictions to address the opioid crisis. It is estimated that Behavioral Health Department, Alameda County Health will receive approximately \$40M to address opioid and substance use disorders in the County over a period of six to eighteen years.

What We Do

Established in 2020, Three Valleys Community Foundation (3VCF) seeks to strengthen our vibrant region through inclusive leadership, thoughtful funding, informed giving, and collaborative action. We partner with donors who care about our community and connect them with impactful local organizations to make a real difference in the communities we serve, throughout Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

How can you help make an impact?

Join Three Valleys Community Foundation as we identify and raise awareness of the most critical needs in our region and award grants to community-based organizations seeking to address them through innovative ways. Our goal? A community where every single person has the opportunity to lead a full and rewarding life. Let's give, grant, and grow - together.



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Guiding Principles

We work collaboratively with community leaders, philanthropists and front line organizations to make a positive and lasting impact where most needed. We adhere to the following vision, mission and values. These are at the core of our promise to our community and guide our decision making and long term planning.

Vision

We envision a community where everyone has the opportunity to live a full and rewarding life.

Mission

Our mission is to strengthen our region through inclusive leadership, thoughtful funding, informed giving, and collaborative action.

Values

Integrity and Transparency

We operate with high ethical standards, honor our commitments, and communicate openly and effectively.

Equity and Inclusiveness

We celebrate the diversity in our region and are committed to representing, communicating with, and advocating for all community members who share our vision to improve the quality of life in the area.

Collaboration and Innovation

We actively engage with communities to develop creative solutions that address complex issues in our region.

Three Valleys Community Foundation
5960 Inglewood Drive, Suite 201, Pleasanton, CA 94588-8611

3VCF.org | info@3vcf.org
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