

## Heroin Trends Across Washington State

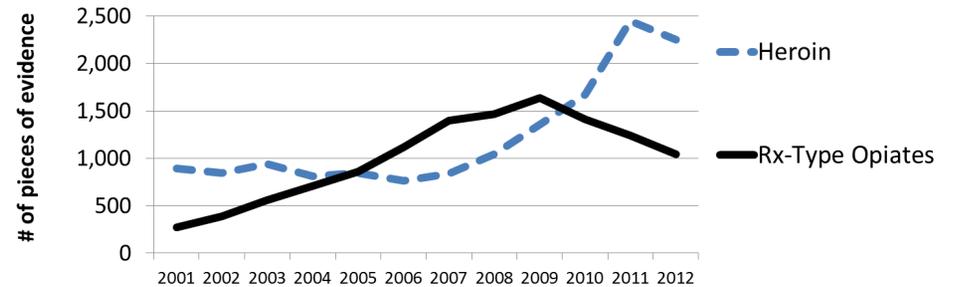
June 2013

Washington, like much of the United States, has seen increases in the use and harms associated with heroin. Because direct measurement of heroin use is difficult, various indicator data are used instead. Police evidence provide a close to real time picture of what is available on the street. Treatment data tend to lag behind heroin availability and onset of use by several years. Deaths are a lagging indicator as well, though King County data show an increase in deaths involving heroin among those under 30 in 2012, indicating that the lag may not be as long as expected. The rate of all opiate deaths (heroin and/or Rx-type) has nearly doubled in the past decade.

For some, abuse of prescription-type opiates (e.g. morphine, oxycodone, methadone) leads to heroin use\* so preventing inappropriate use of prescription (Rx) opiates is important. All opiate overdoses can be prevented and most can be reversed before they become fatal. This report summarizes the most recent data available for heroin and includes information about resources to help people prevent and treat opiate addiction and prevent fatal overdoses.

### Police evidence tested by the State Crime Lab

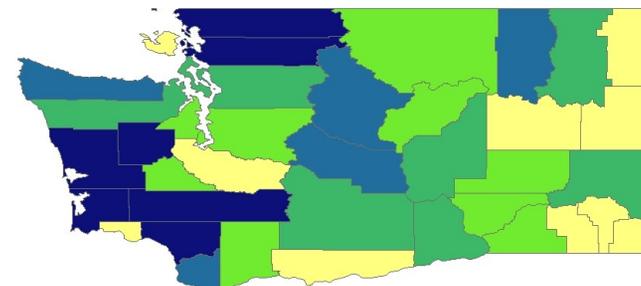
The past decade has seen an overall decline in the amount of evidence sent to the state crime lab for testing. Heroin and Rx-type opiates are the exception. Rx-type opiates peaked in 2009 while heroin increased. These data parallel the impressions of police across much of the state that heroin has increased in local communities in recent years.



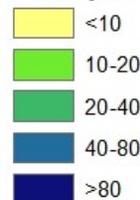
Heroin in police evidence  
annual average 2001-2002



Heroin in police evidence  
annual average 2011-2012



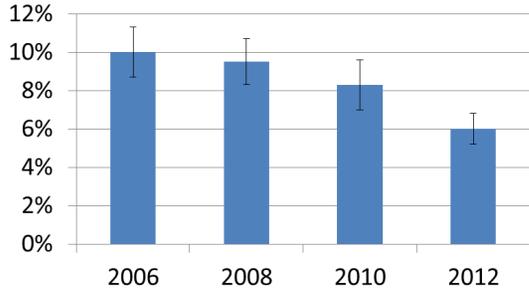
Rate per 100,000



## Trends in the use of Rx-type opiates to "get high" among 10th graders and the association with heroin use

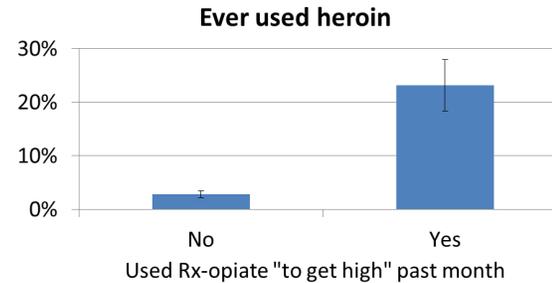
The proportion of 10th graders reporting use of Rx-type opiates to get high in the past month declined in 2012.

Past month use of Rx-type opiate to "get high"



Among those who had used Rx-type opiates to "get high" in the past month 23% had ever used heroin, compared to 3% among those who had not used Rx-type opiates to "get high" in the past month.

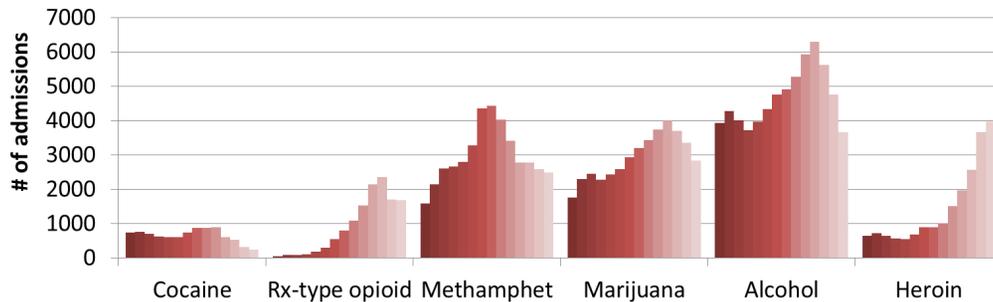
Past month use of Rx-type opiate to "get high" in 2012 & ever used heroin



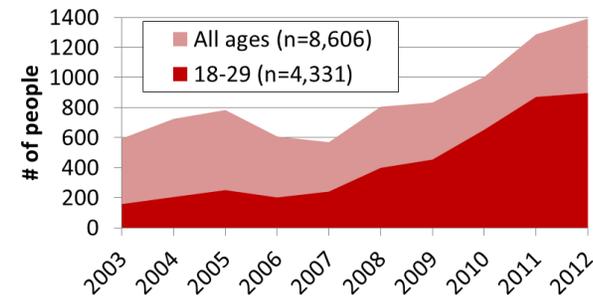
## Treatment admissions

Total treatment admissions show that heroin is the most common drug in 2012 among 18-29 year olds. First time admissions to treatment indicate that the growth in heroin admissions is driven by young adults and is primarily outside of the Seattle metro area.

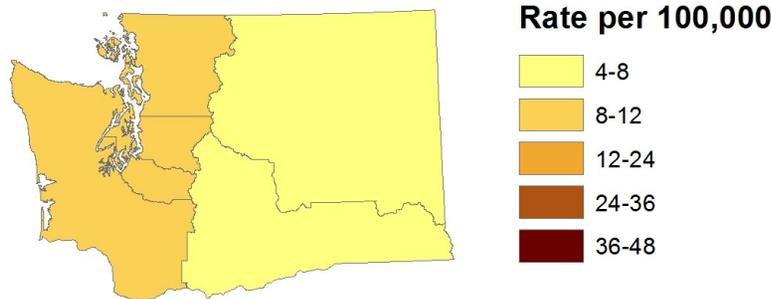
Total treatment admission trends ages 18-29 (1999-2012)



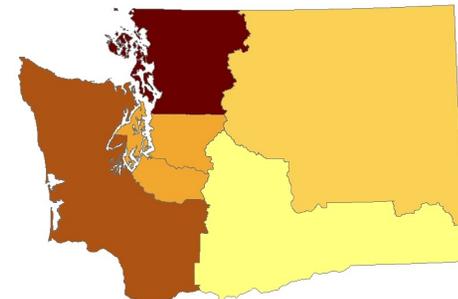
First time in treatment, heroin primary drug



First time in treatment, heroin primary drug 2003

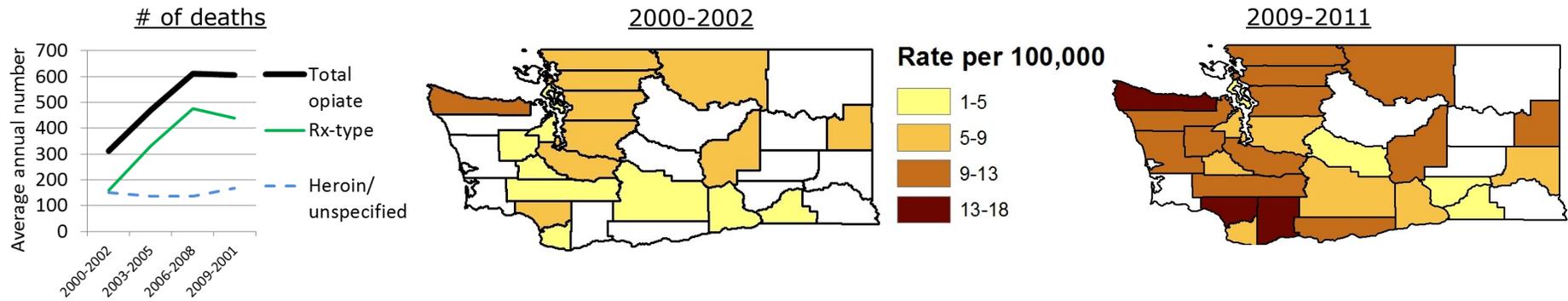


First time in treatment, heroin primary drug 2012



## Fatal overdoses involving heroin and/or Rx-type opiates (unintentional)

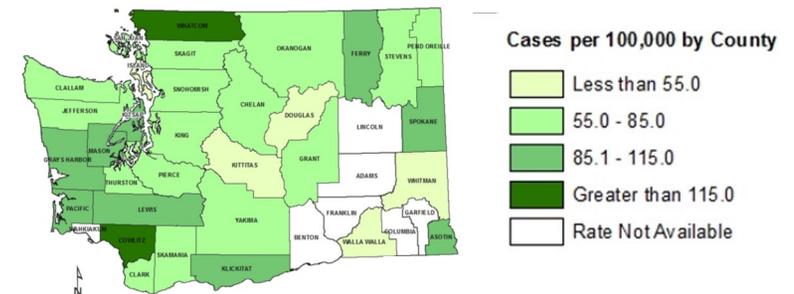
The average annual number of deaths from 2000-2002 was 310, from 2009-2011 it was 607. The majority of deaths involved Rx-type opiates from 2000-2011. Heroin and unspecified opiates increased in the period from 2009-2011. King County data for 2012 indicate 84 heroin involved deaths, up from 49 in 2009, with all of the increase among those under 30 (data not shown).



## Infectious diseases can be spread via injection drug use

Washington state has a low prevalence and incidence of HIV among injection drug users (IDU) which is related to our longtime and widespread syringe exchange programs dating back to 1988. Hepatitis B and C can be spread more easily than HIV via injection drug use. In King County 75% of IDU's have Hepatitis C. Hepatitis C diagnoses from 2009-2011 indicate that some of the highest rates are also in counties where heroin indicators are the highest; however, current data on risk factors related to hepatitis infection are unavailable.

## Chronic hepatitis C infection diagnosis rate 2009-2011



### Resources

How to prevent and reverse overdoses:  
<http://stopoverdose.org>

Safe opiate medication usage:  
<http://takeasdirected.doh.wa.gov/>

Syringe exchange programs in WA:  
<http://nasen.org/programs/us/wa/>

Drug treatment information:  
[www.dshs.wa.gov/DBHR/](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/DBHR/)

Additional drug trends data:  
<http://adai.washington.edu>

### Data sources

*Police evidence tested by State lab* Data source: WA State Patrol, Forensic Lab Services Bureau,

*10th graders Rx-type opiate and heroin use* Health Youth Survey; *Fatal opioid overdoses; Hepatitis C diagnosis rates-* WA State Dept of Health

*Treatment admissions (publicly funded)* WA State DSHS, Div. of Behavioral Health & Recovery

*Fatal overdoses involving heroin* King County Medical Examiner, Public Health– Seattle & King County

*Hepatitis C prevalence in King County* Public Health– Seattle & King County. HIV/AIDS Epidemiology Report, First Half 2012: Volume 80.

\*Peavy et al. (2012)"Hooked on" prescription-type opiates prior to using heroin: results from a survey of syringe exchange clients. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23061326>

## Data tables

Rates, presented in maps, represent counts per 100,000 population. Tables below are sorted from highest to lowest rate for the most current year of data available. The absolute ranking should not be over-interpreted, particularly when the absolute numbers are relatively small, e.g. less than 5.

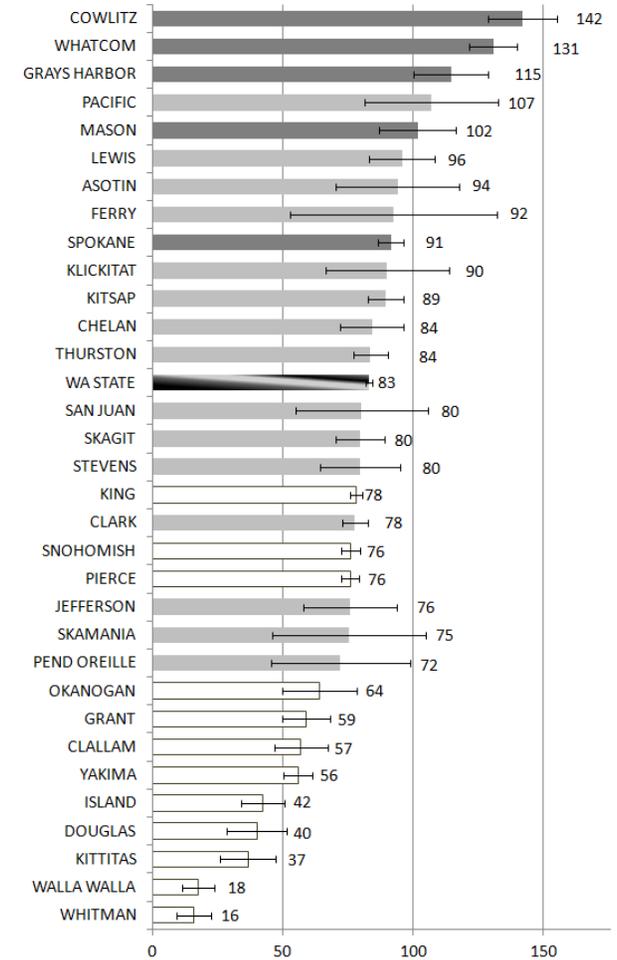
### Police evidence testing positive for heroin

	Heroin 2001-2002	Heroin 2011-2012	Heroin 2011-2012
	Avg annual rate	Avg annual rate	Avg annual #
Cowlitz	74.0	218.7	224
Grays Harbor	42.5	190.3	137
Whatcom	31.5	153.4	314
Lewis	17.4	124.9	95
Mason	13.9	108.4	66
Skagit	25.6	107.6	127
Pacific	43.7	82.0	17
Clark	10.5	78.8	344
Ferry	0.0	71.5	6
Chelan	9.0	70.1	52
Clallam	26.0	68.9	50
Kittitas	14.6	51.6	22
Jefferson	1.9	38.5	12
Benton	6.8	36.4	66
Grant	11.1	34.0	31
Snohomish	21.3	33.2	242
Stevens	0.0	27.6	12
Whitman	2.5	25.1	12
Island	1.3	20.9	17
Yakima	29.8	20.5	51
Skamania	5.1	17.9	2
Douglas	0.0	17.9	7
King	13.0	15.7	312
Walla Walla	9.0	12.6	8
Kitsap	2.8	11.6	30
Franklin	49.2	11.2	10
Okanogan	3.8	10.9	5
Adams	15.4	10.6	2
Thurston	8.6	10.1	26
Lincoln	5.0	9.6	1
San Juan	3.5	9.5	2
Klickitat	0.0	7.2	2
Spokane	3.9	5.8	28
Pierce	9.7	3.5	29
Asotin	0.0	0.0	0
STATE TOTAL	13.1	34.6	2362

### Opioid related deaths by residence county

County	2000-2002		2009-2011	
	Count	Rate	Count	Rate
Cowlitz	20	7.3	50	17.6
Pend Oreille	1		6	16.4
Clallam	17	9.9	30	15.3
Skamania	4		6	14.0
Snohomish	105	5.3	290	12.7
Klickitat	1		7	11.5
Grays Harbor	4		24	11.4
Spokane	91	7.3	155	11.1
Skagit	16	5.2	37	11.0
Chelan	7	3.6	24	10.9
Lewis	8	4.0	26	10.7
Asotin	4		6	10.2
Stevens	8	6.9	10	10.2
Okanogan	10	8.9	14	10.0
Mason	5	2.9	17	9.7
Whatcom	37	7.6	56	9.5
Jefferson	1		10	9.4
Pierce	127	5.9	232	9.3
Douglas	8	8.5	10	9.2
Grant	12	6.0	22	9.2
Thurston	12	1.8	58	7.7
King	309	5.3	467	7.4
Whitman	0		6	7.0
Clark	50	4.5	89	6.9
Benton	8	1.8	32	6.5
Kitsap	18	2.5	50	6.4
Yakima	24	3.9	43	6.3
Island	6	2.9	12	4.6
Kittitas	2		5	3.4
Walla Walla	5	3.3	5	2.7
Franklin	1		6	2.6
Pacific	2		4	
San Juan	3		4	
Adams	1		2	
Lincoln	2		2	
Wahkiakum	1		2	
Columbia	1		1	
Ferry	0		1	
Garfield	0		0	
State Total	931	5.1	1821	8.7

### Chronic hepatitis C virus diagnosis rate per 100,000 2009-2011



**Citation:** Heroin Trends Across WA State. (ADAI Info Brief). Prepared by Caleb Banta-Green, PhD, MPH, MSW, for the UW Alcohol & Drug Abuse Institute, June 2013. URL: <http://adai.uw.edu/pubs/InfoBriefs/ADAI-IB-2013-02.pdf>. **Supplemental data:** Police evidence positive for Rx type opiates by county of law enforcement jurisdiction. [http://adai.uw.edu/pubs/InfoBriefs/ADAI-IB-2013-02\\_suppl.xlsx](http://adai.uw.edu/pubs/InfoBriefs/ADAI-IB-2013-02_suppl.xlsx)