

What is an opioid?

An opioid is a drug that eases pain and may also cause feelings of extreme pleasure. Opioids act on the brain and nerves and include both prescription medications and illegal drugs like heroin. Opioids can be addictive with regular use or misuse.

What is fentanyl?

Fentanyl is a very powerful opioid that can be prescribed by a healthcare professional or produced illegally. Illegal fentanyl, also known as illicitly manufactured fentanyl, is now driving the opioid overdose epidemic.

What is an opioid overdose?

An overdose is when excess opioids act on the brain to decrease or stop a person's breathing.

What is addiction?

Addiction is a long-term, relapsing disease of the brain characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use despite harmful consequences. Opioid addiction affects individuals, families and communities.

What is happening in Calhoun County?

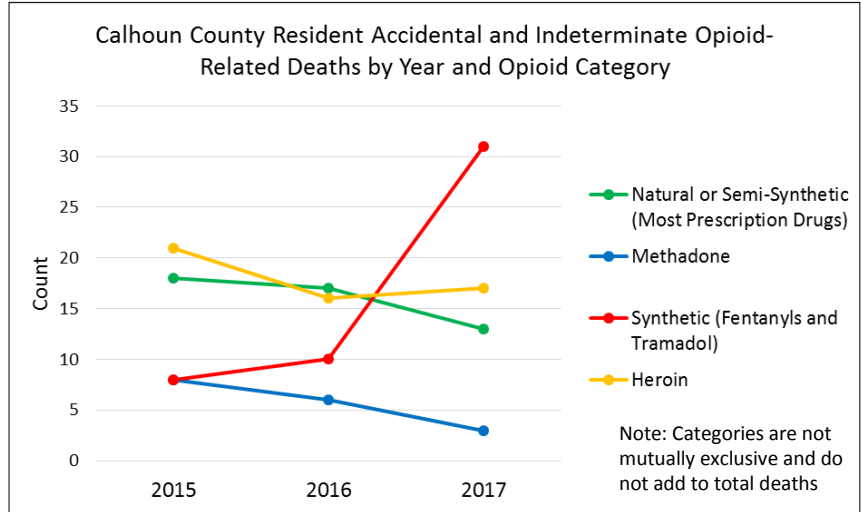
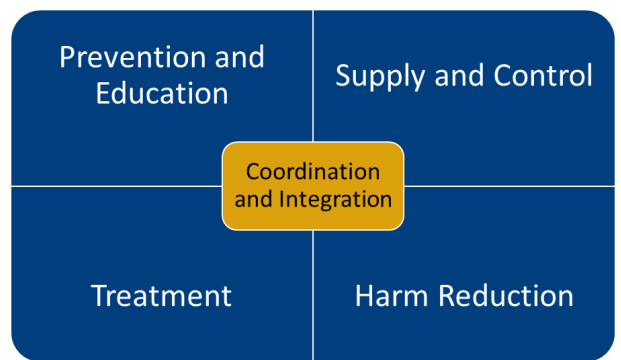
From 2010 to 2015, the amount and strength of opioids prescribed increased significantly while the national average decreased. In 2015, the amount and strength of opioids prescribed was nearly double the national average and six times higher than the 1999 national average. In 2016, 120 opioid prescriptions per 100 persons were dispensed, nearly twice the national average.

Although opioid overdose makes up a very small percentage of all Calhoun County emergency department visits, opioid overdose visits nearly doubled from 147 to 289 visits between 2015-2017. The 2016 total opioid-related death rate of approximately 30 deaths per 100,000 Calhoun County residents was 1.72 times higher than the Michigan 2016 death rate of 17.5 deaths per 100,000 residents. More than 40 opioid-related deaths have occurred each year in Calhoun County between 2015-2017. More people die of drug-related overdose in Calhoun County than of motor vehicle accidents.

Fentanyl-related deaths increased from 6 in 2015 to 31 (27 Calhoun County residents) in 2017. Illegally produced fentanyl poses a serious public health threat to Calhoun County.

How can we address the opioid epidemic?

A multi-sector, collaborative approach across communities is required. The diagram outlines key strategic priorities necessary to coordinate and integrate action: prevention and education, supply and control of opioids, treatment access across a continuum of care and the reduction of fatal overdoses and the spread of infectious disease through harm reduction efforts. The Calhoun County Opioid Coalition aims to address the opioid epidemic through the coordination and integration of these four strategic priorities.



Sources: National Institute on Drug Abuse, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Bronson Healthcare, Oaklawn Hospital, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, and the Calhoun County Medical Examiner

