

GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY SUBSTANCE USE RESPONSE PLAN



GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY
PUBLIC HEALTH
4/5/2024
JERRY RAJCICH

History of Grays Harbor's Opioid Response

In 2018, Grays Harbor County Public Health allied with numerous community partners to form an Opioid Action Team to create the Opioid Needs Assessment and Response Plan. The scope of the problem and activities to be utilized were informed by the Washington State Opioid Plan's Strategic Priorities Format. The four priorities were as follows: (1) prevent inappropriate opioid prescribing and prevent opioid misuse and abuse; (2) link individuals with opioid use disorder to treatment support services; (3) intervene in opioid overdoses to prevent death and (4) use data and information to detect opioid misuse/abuse.

Working within the parameters of the above strategic plan, the Opioid Action Team outlined a strategy to address these issues for Grays Harbor County. With the outline, the County and community partners have been able to address outcomes in the four priority areas highlighted below.

Opioid Needs Assessment and Response Plan

February 2018

Grays Harbor County

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Priorities and Progress 2018-2024

Priority (1) – Prevent inappropriate opioid prescribing and prevent opioid misuse and abuse

- Decreased opioid prescribing (from 88.6/1000 in 2018 to 67.4/1000 in 2021 and down to 61.0 in 2022)
- Increased availability for drug takeback opportunities through partnerships with pharmacies and law enforcement agencies (Coalition work)
- Addressed stigma through education and engagement with local coalitions and events (Coalition work, RROE, Grays Harbor Consortium, Grays Harbor's Opioid Awareness Day Event)
- Support best practice prevention curriculum (Coalition work)

Priority (2) - Link individuals with opioid use disorder to treatment support services

- Worked to Increase access to SUD and MOUD services

Jail System of Care Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GH County Jail • Aberdeen Jail • Hoquiam Jail 	Inpatient OUD Treatment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HarborCrest • Columbia Wellness 	Detox Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HarborCrest
Outpatient MAT/MOUD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPMC Low-barrier Clinic • Community Integrated Health Services • HarborCrest • QIN Wellness Center • Limited primary care • GH Comprehensive Treatment Center • Medtriq • Columbia Wellness 	Therapeutic Court <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aberdeen Community Court • Grays Harbor County Therapeutic Court <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Drug Court ○ Family Recovery Court ○ Mental Health Court 	Harm Reduction Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willapa Behavioral Health - Syringe Services Program • Destination Hope and Recovery

- Continued to expand therapeutic court programs (GH Superior Court, Aberdeen Community Court)
- Implemented Jail SUD services along with re-entry coordination (Public Health, County jail, and Aberdeen/Hoquiam City jails)

Priority (3) - Intervene in opioid overdoses to prevent death

- Syringe service program with naloxone education and distribution (Willapa Behavioral Health and Destination Hope and Recovery)
- Improved partnerships with first responders for naloxone education and administration
- Developed partnerships with community agencies around overdose education and naloxone use (Public Health, Grays Harbor Consortium, CHOICE)

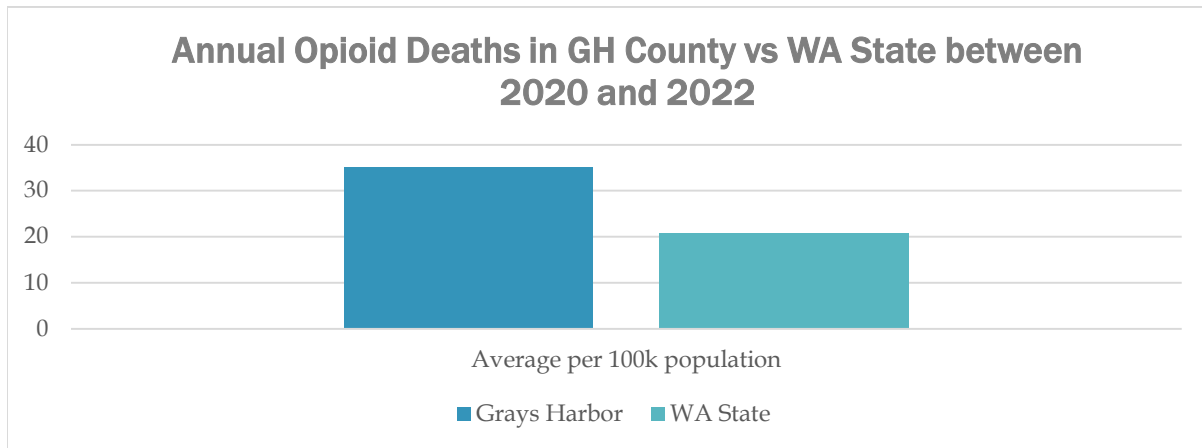
Priority (4) - Use data and information to detect opioid misuse/abuse

- Washington EMS Information System (WEMSIS) reporting for recording overdose-related interactions (71.4% of EMS responses reported to WEMSIS in GH County, below average for counties of similar size)
- Participating in stakeholder meetings locally and statewide to share information and discuss actionable strategies
- Using RHINO (emergency department) data to inform public health policy

While Grays Harbor has made strides in some areas: decreased opioid use in youth (Healthy Youth Survey); decreased opioid prescriptions (WA DOH, Prescription Monitoring Program); and increased access to SUD and MOUD services, there are still some pain points and room for improvement.

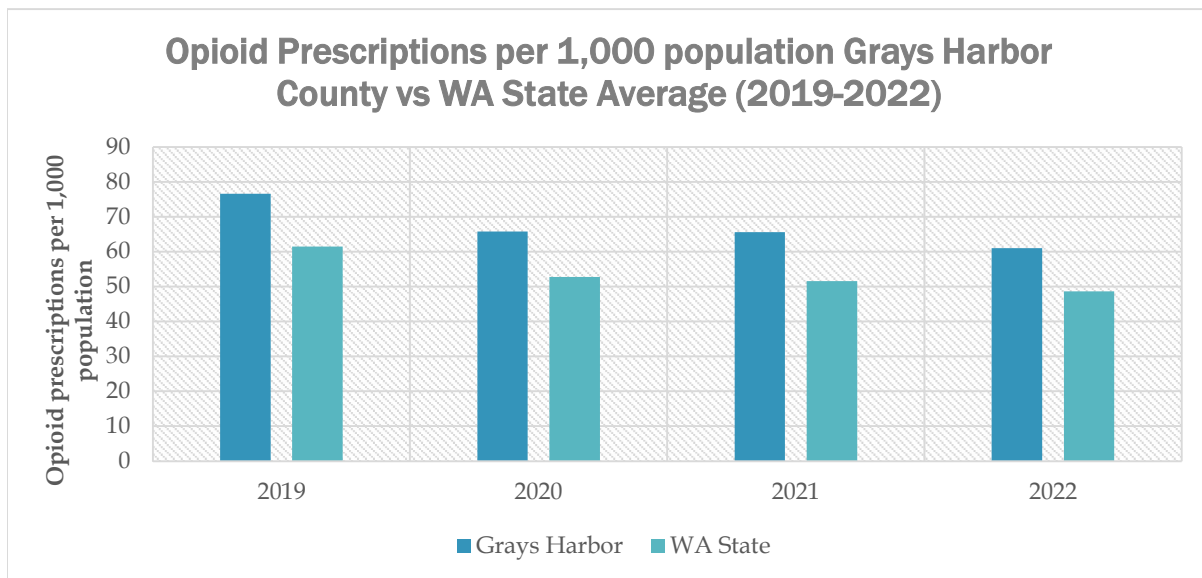
Annual Opioid Deaths

In 2022, Grays Harbor County had one of the highest overdose fatality rates in Washington State (University of WA ADAI).



Opioid Prescriptions per 1,000 population

Additionally, Grays Harbor County still has a higher rate of opioid prescriptions per 100,000 residents at 61 compared to 48.6 at the State level for 2022 (WA DOH Opioid Prescribing Dashboard), but both Grays Harbor and WA State are on a downward trend and the rates are decreasing at a comparable rate.

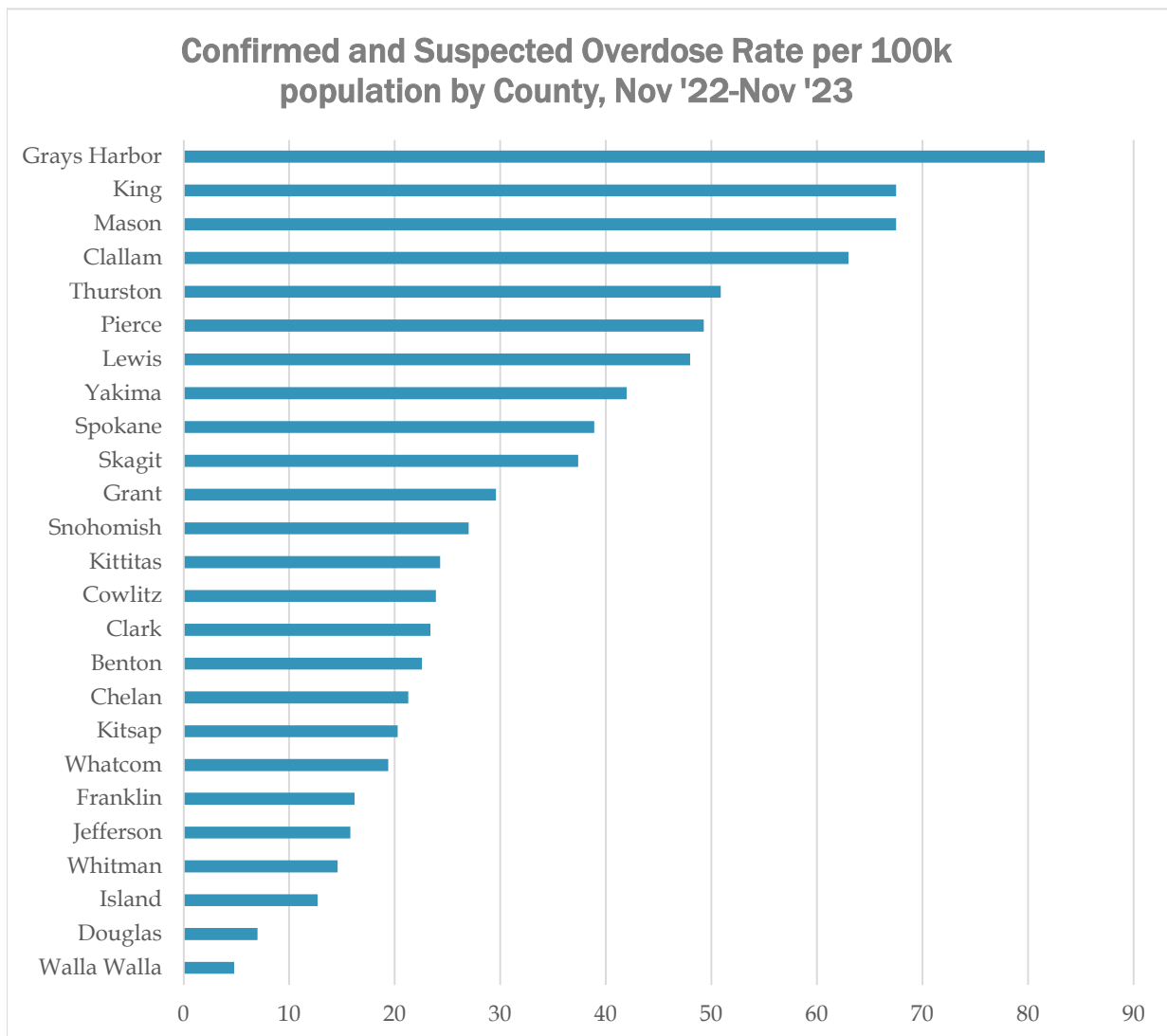


Suspected/Confirmed Overdose Death Rate per 100,000 population*

Grays Harbor County is still one of the highest counties in the State of Washington when looking at the rates of suspected and confirmed overdoses fatalities per 100,000 residents. According to the Washington State Fatal Overdose Surveillance Network Bulletin, between November 2022 and November 2023, Grays Harbor ranked the highest in the state at a rate of 81.8 suspected/confirmed overdoses per 100,000 population*. This number is up significantly from a rate of 38.4 suspected/confirmed overdoses per 100,000 population taken between November 2021 and November 2022.

*Note that these numbers are surveillance numbers and are not verified.

*Note that this is the rate of all suspected/confirmed overdose deaths, not just limited to opioids.



Next Steps

Washington State DOH along with the Washington State Health Care Authority have updated the [WA State Opioid and Overdose Response Plan](#) to include the following goals:

- Goal 1 – Prevent opioid and other drug misuse
- Goal 2 – Identify and treat opioid misuse and stimulant use disorder
- Goal 3 – Ensure and improve the health and wellness of people who use opioids and other drugs
- Goal 4 – Use data and information to detect opioid misuse, monitor drug user health effects, analyze population health, and evaluate interventions
- Goal 5 – Support individuals in recovery

These goals and related strategies largely overlap with our current 2018 plan and work currently underway. With changes to the landscape of opioid and drug use trends with increasing use rates of synthetic opioids (i.e. fentanyl) and stimulant overdoses (Washington State Fatal Overdose Surveillance Network Bulletin), this is an area that we as a community can address. Additionally, to address these goals, data obtained from the [Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan](#) (CHA/CHIP), the [Behavioral Health System Gaps Analysis](#), [Crisis Triage Model](#), and [Third Space Report](#) will help inform policy and strategy moving forward. Finally, Grays Harbor County Public Health published our [Strategic Plan](#) which outlines some of Public Health's plans for the 2023-2025 biennium.

Grays Harbor community partners must continue to invest in successful strategies noted in this document, and more is needed to meet the existing and expanding/changing needs related to substance use.

The strategies below were identified as being strong considerations for Grays Harbor in addressing and responding to the local opioid and substance use crisis:

Goal 1 – Prevent opioid and other drug misuse

- Expansion of youth prevention work with an emphasis on community belonging, reducing risk factors and increasing resilience factors of youth and families – including adopting recommendations from Third Space Report
- Invest in preventing/mitigating Adverse Childhood Experiences while promoting resilience and trauma-informed care training, programming, and supports

Goal 2 – Identify and treat opioid misuse and stimulant use disorder

- Continued investment/engagement in the recovery navigator program
- Continue/expand Peer co-responder model for law enforcement/EMS
- Continuation/Expansion of peers in the emergency department
- Continuation/Expansion of the jail system of care model
- Peer driven behavioral health transportation program
- EMS buprenorphine induction
- Investment in support/expansion of behavioral health workforce to meet continuing/expanding service delivery needs

- Implementation of Crisis Triage facility(ies)

Goal 3 – Ensure and improve the health and wellness of people who use opioids and other drugs

- Anti-stigma campaigns
 - Increase the number of Community Conversations held around SUD
 - Increase the number of community events that are inclusive of all community members
 - Continuation of the Overdose Awareness Day event
- Continuation/expansion of the behavioral health resource guide with improved distribution
- Increase harm reduction services
 - Naloxone leave behind programs via EMS/LE
- Increase low barrier/service-supported emergency shelter and housing capacity
- Improved coordination between community partners involved in the behavioral health/social services spaces

Goal 4 – Use data and information to detect opioid misuse, monitor drug user health effects, analyze population health, and evaluate interventions

- Continue/expand Public Health and partner capacity to engage in surveillance and strategic planning
- Strengthen partnerships between community partners who engage in drug checking/testing to keep the community up-to-date on current drug use trends

Goal 5 – Support individuals in recovery

- Continued investment into expansion of recovery support services based on identified needs

The above list is not exhaustive but provides a starting point based on findings from the local assessments and strategic plans, while also aligning with Washington State's response plan.

Please submit any questions and/or feedback to the contact below.

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