



What is Overdose Fatality Review (OFR)?

Formed in December 2023, Oakland County's OFR is a collaborative, multi-agency process that brings together public health and public safety partners to better understand and prevent overdose deaths. The OFR team is guided by the understanding that overdose deaths are preventable, and that progress happens when communities act together. They meet regularly to:

- Review overdose cases and identify systemic gaps
- Translate findings into coordinated, local action
- Generate recommendations for intervention and prevention

Who is Involved?

Representatives from the following sectors are committed to improving systems, sharing knowledge, and driving change to save lives.

- Substance use and mental health treatment providers
- Justice system professionals
- Community advocates and recovery groups
- Emergency responders
- Harm reduction partners

Why OFR Matters

- Every overdose death is a loss that deeply affects loved ones throughout our community.
- OFR helps shine a light on the root causes and missed opportunities behind each case that is reviewed to guide future interventions and strategies.
- Through collaboration, we can develop effective and compassionate approaches that reach members of our community before it's too late.

Key Data Trends

- In 2024, Oakland County saw encouraging declines in fatal and non-fatal overdoses, a hopeful sign that local efforts are making a difference.
- However, not all communities and populations within Oakland County are benefiting equally from these declines. Disparities persist by race, age, and geography throughout our community.
- The nature of overdose risk has been shifting in recent years. For instance, deaths are more likely to involve multiple substances and are increasingly affecting individuals in their 40s and older.
- Community-level data shows a need to remain adaptable and responsive, monitor emerging drug trends, and tailor interventions to the evolving landscape of the overdose crisis in our community.

What we Learned

OFR reviews of community-level and case-specific data have revealed consistent themes, some of which include:

- The overdose crisis remains complex and evolving with no one-size-fits-all solution.
- Mental health and substance use challenges are often intertwined.
- Gaps in housing, care coordination, and post-incarceration support appear to continue to contribute to fatal overdose risk in the community.
- Progress is underway but additional efforts are needed to ensure equity across all populations & areas of the community.
- Oakland County is a well-resourced community, but there is a need to reduce silos, enhance resource coordination, and support improved continuity of care among systems.
- Fatal overdose is often linked to challenges with mental health, trauma, and housing instability.
- Further opportunities remain to address the gaps in care coordination across systems touchpoints, especially during transitions, such as post-incarceration or post-overdose.

How We're Taking Action

Public Health and Public Safety Subcommittees were formed and meet regularly to move recommendations from OFR into action. Key efforts include:

- Facilitating effective inter-organization collaboration among stakeholders to address substance use and mental health.
- Improving resource dissemination and data sharing.
- Developing strategies to better support loved ones of those lost to substance use and overdose.
- Strengthening support for people involved in the justice system.
- Expanding training and support related to other areas of health and wellbeing that are known to be interconnected with substance use and overdose, such as human trafficking and co-occurring mental health conditions.
- Broadening OFR participation to include more partners and enhance perspectives.
- Supporting providers and first responders with targeted training to improve response capacity.
- Identifying strategies for expanding outreach to locations identified as potentially high risk for substance use and overdose, such as hotels and motels.

Next Steps

- Review fatal overdose cases among members of communities that remain underserved including rural areas, older adults, and people experiencing housing instability.
- Expand community education and efforts to reduce stigma.
- Promote equity-centered planning in all response strategies.
- Address areas of disconnect among systems and services in the community and make overdose prevention efforts more connected and efficient.
- Continue to honor those we've lost by transforming insights into meaningful, measurable change.

Need Help?

24/7 Crisis Line: Call or text 988

Oakland Community
Health Network Access Line:
248-464-6363

Nurse on Call: 800-848-5533