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# PUBLIC AWARENESS REPORT: **THE DRUG & OVERDOSE EPIDEMIC** LORAIN COUNTY

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Dear County Resident,

Preservation of the health, safety and welfare of our county residents is a responsibility we take seriously. **Fatal drug overdoses keep rising in Ohio** with the Ohio Department of Health recently reporting a 20% increase. The impact is being felt in our community at an alarming rate.

Here in Lorain County (population 306,000), new research estimates **35,000 residents are misusing or abusing opioids\***. Last year, **132 overdose deaths** occurred. Some of the dead included grandparents. **An alarming number of infants are being born displaying withdrawal symptoms due to drug exposure. 75% of our children being placed in foster care in the county is due to parental substance abuse.**

Fentanyl is now being mixed with all kinds of street drugs triggering overdoses and death. It is alarming to report that the federal government has assigned two designations to our county because it has become **one of the leading drug trafficking counties in the nation**. This drug activity is harmful to our families, our children and our local economy (\$200-million/year negative economic burden\*).

This Public Awareness Report will provide you with the latest information on the severity of the toll the drug epidemic is having on our county. We continue to work with law enforcement and those on the front line providing treatment. This is **a community crisis that we, as a community, must address** for the sake of our families and the future of our county.

The Board of Lorain County Commissioners

**For help with substance use disorders in Lorain County, please visit:**  
Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services Board of Lorain County (440) 282-9920 or [www.lorainadas.org](http://www.lorainadas.org)  
or the 24-hour Helpline at The LCADA Way: (440) 989-4900

# In 2017, 132 overdose deaths occurred in Lorain County

(Lorain County Coroner's Office)

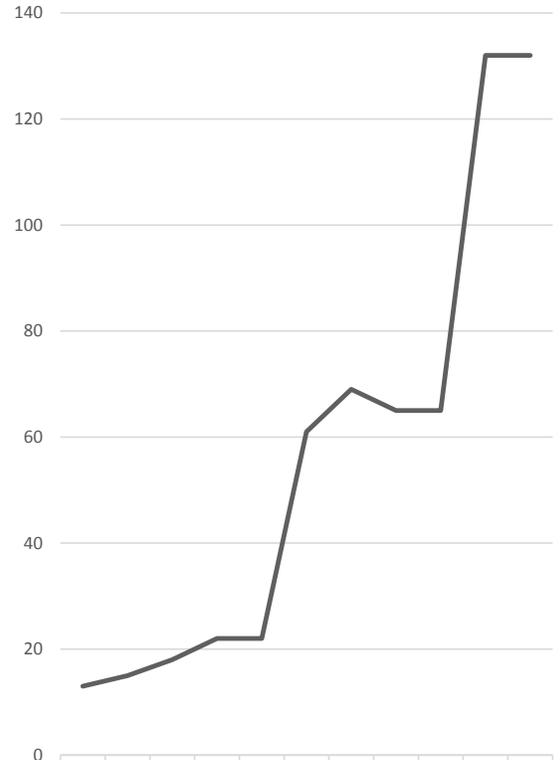
Sadly, Lorain County is designated by the Federal Government as being a county that is part of the Operation Synthetic Opioid Surge (S.O.S.) area and a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA).

As part of Operation S.O.S., each participating United States Attorney's Office (USAO) will prosecute every readily provable case involving the distribution of fentanyl, fentanyl analogues and other synthetic opioids, regardless of drug quantity.

The mission of the Ohio HIDTA is to reduce drug availability by creating intelligence-driven task forces aimed at eliminating or reducing drug trafficking.

In Lorain County, overdose deaths totaled 65 in 2015 and increased to 132 in 2016 and 2017.

**In 2017, the Lorain County Coroner's Office stated that 84% of the overdose deaths in Lorain County were opioid related; 13% higher than the state average!**



| Year                             | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|----------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Overdose Deaths in Lorain County | 13   | 15   | 18   | 22   | 22   | 61   | 69   | 65   | 65   | 132  | 132  |

# In 2017, 4,854 overdose deaths occurred in the State of Ohio

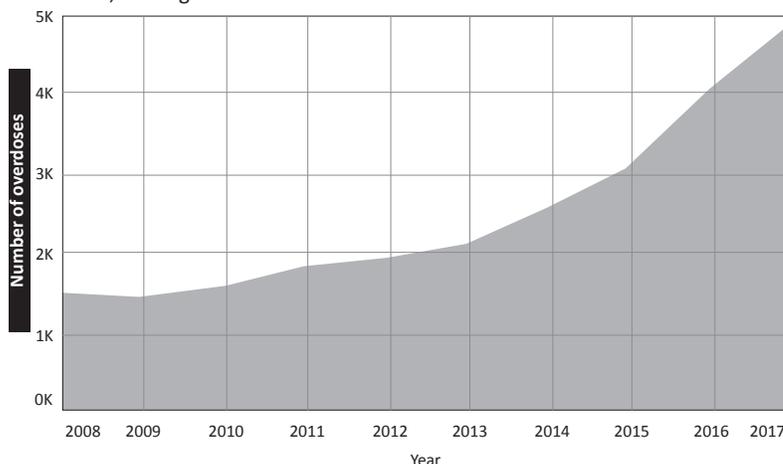
(Ohio Department of Health (ODH)) Press Release 9/27/18.

According to ODH, fentanyl is being mixed with heroin, cocaine and other street drugs causing deadly combinations. In 2017, illegally produced fentanyl and other opioid related drugs were involved in 71% of all overdose deaths.

See "Soaring drug deaths" chart below.

## Soaring drug deaths

Drug overdose deaths have **more than tripled** during the past 10 years in Ohio, new figures show.



**Nationally** Nearly 48,000 people died from opioid overdoses in 2017 (The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). Surgeon General Dr. Jerome Adams has stated his desire to raise awareness of opioid addiction as a brain disease.

# 2017- Comparative drug trends: State of Ohio and Lorain County

Data from the Lorain County Crime/Drug Laboratory confirms these deadly statistics:

When law enforcement organizations in the county seize drugs during an arrest, the material is tested by the county drug lab. In Lorain County, test results clearly show positive tests for heroin are a little higher than the state average, cocaine is double the state average and fentanyl is almost triple the state average.

| DRUGS    | Percentage Tested Positive |               |
|----------|----------------------------|---------------|
|          | State of Ohio              | Lorain County |
| Cocaine  | 15%                        | 30%           |
| Heroin   | 12.9%                      | 15%           |
| Fentanyl | 8.7%                       | 24.2%         |

## 2016 economic burden of Lorain County opioid crisis

*\*Community Assessment of The OPIOID Crisis in Lorain County, Ohio*

### Quantitative Analysis Finding

The annual economic burden of the opioid epidemic in Lorain County reached nearly \$200 million in 2016. The most significant economic impacts are lost wages, productivity and tax revenues; increased healthcare costs resulting from overdoses and indirect health complications; and additional criminal justice (police, judicial and corrections) expenditures.

| Category                    | Estimate             |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Lost Earnings/Productivity  | \$139,800,000        |
| Healthcare                  | \$42,900,000         |
| Criminal Justice            | \$7,200,000          |
| Child and Family Assistance | \$4,500,000          |
| Treatment and Prevention    | \$5,400,000          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                | <b>\$199,800,000</b> |

*\*Community Assessment of The OPIOID Crisis in Lorain County, Ohio*

## Community-level problems exacerbated by the opioid crisis

*\*Community Assessment of The OPIOID Crisis in Lorain County, Ohio*

In addition to an increase in overdose deaths, stakeholders described a wide array of community problems related to the opioid crisis in Lorain County including an increase in crime, economic impacts, stressors on the family unit and a decline in general community dynamics.

**Crime** - Many stakeholders mentioned an increase in crime, particularly property break-ins and theft. One stakeholder noted that as individuals become desperate for cash, frequently because they have been cut off financially by their employers, friends, and families, they begin to commit crimes that are bolder and more creative.

### Increased Criminal Justice Cost

|                             | Annual Cost        |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Police Protection           | \$2,700,000        |
| Judicial and Legal          | \$1,300,000        |
| Corrections & Incarceration | \$2,900,000        |
| Property Losses             | \$300,000          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                | <b>\$7,200,000</b> |

*\*Community Assessment of The OPIOID Crisis in Lorain County, Ohio*

## Who is bearing the cost of this epidemic?

The costs of the opioid crisis are borne by individuals in the form of lost wages; the private sector in lost productivity and health care costs; and federal, state and local governments in lost tax revenue and additional spending on health care, social services, education and criminal justice.

Overdose deaths in Lorain County is a huge problem. While deaths are decreasing in 2018, use of cocaine, heroin and opioids is increasing. The disease of addiction has no demographic boundaries. It strikes all ages, populations, ethnicities and economic demographics. Finding help and support is overwhelming and often costly.

# Important County Government Contact Numbers

Lorain County **Drug Task Force** ..... 440-284-0615

Lorain County **Sheriff's Office** ..... 440-329-3709 *main*

Lorain County **Prosecutor's Office** ..... 440-329-5389

Lorain County **Coroner's Office** ..... 440-774-7300

Lorain County **Crime Lab** ..... 440-329-5636

Lorain County **Board of Commissioners** ..... 440-329-5111

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**Please visit [www.LorainCounty.us](http://www.LorainCounty.us) for an electronic copy of this government report.**

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