

OPIOID OVERDOSE DEATHS AND HOSPITALIZATIONS

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY • RESEARCH AND POLICY UNIT



November 2021

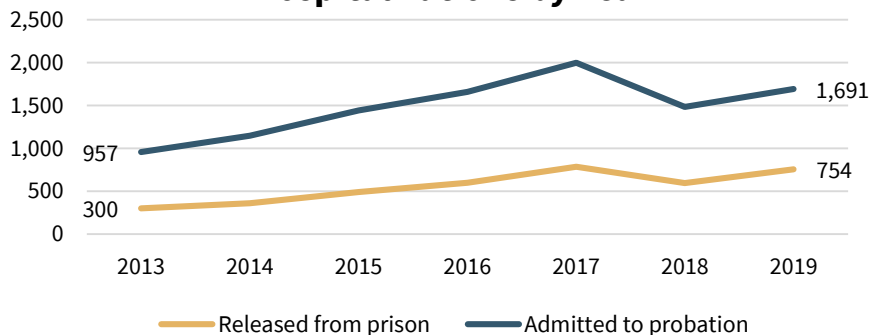
In order to address the current opioid public health crisis, the WI Department of Corrections (WI DOC) examined opioid-related deaths and hospitalizations within corrections populations. Vital Records and Wisconsin Hospital Association data were matched to two separate DOC populations: individuals who had spent time in a WI DOC prison (including those who were admitted for holds and alternatives to revocations) and had been released between 1998 and 2020, and individuals who had begun probation with WI DOC between 1998 and 2020. Only deaths occurring between FY14 and FY20 and hospitalizations occurring between 2013 and 2019 are reported here. Data for those who died or who were hospitalized from an opioid overdose was compared to the population of individuals who were released from prison or admitted to probation during the same timeframe and did not have an opioid overdose death or hospitalization. Additionally, hospitalizations and deaths that occurred after discharge from supervision were included in this report, in an attempt to examine overall public health outcomes, and not just outcomes while individuals were in the care of the WI DOC.

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WI DOC OPIOID OVERDOSE HOSPITALIZATIONS

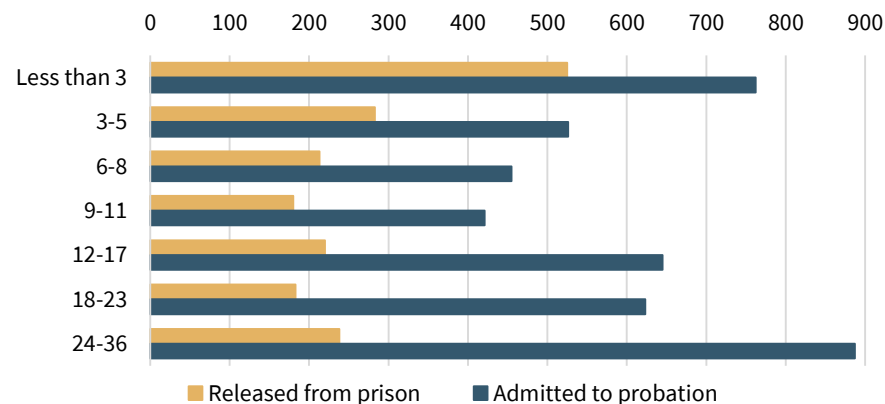
2013 – 2019

Hospitalizations by Year



Opioid overdose hospitalizations have increased **151%** among those released from prison, and **77%** among those admitted to probation, from 2013-2019. Overdose hospitalizations in Wisconsin overall have increased **89%** from 2013-2019 ([source](#)).

Months Until First Opioid Overdose Hospitalization*

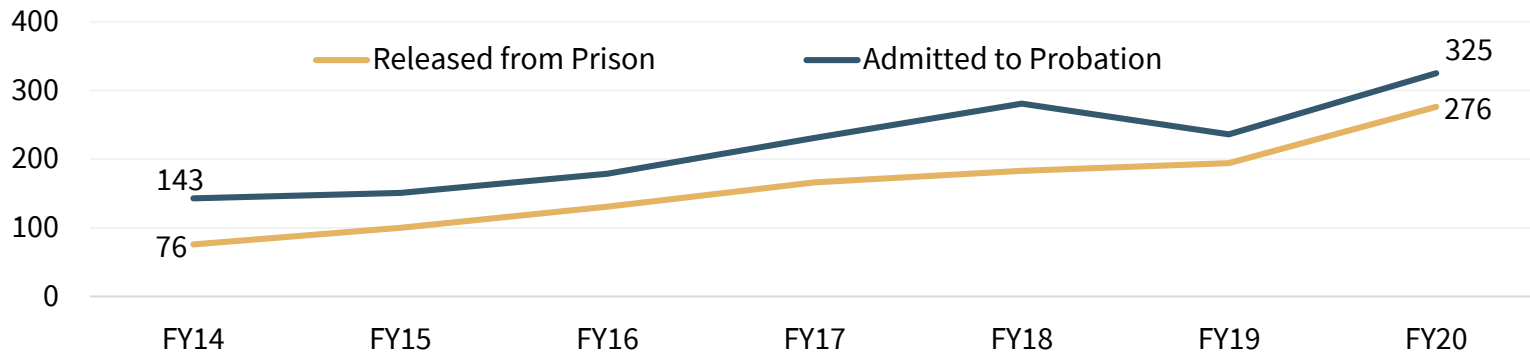


*For overdoses occurring within 3 years of release from prison or admission to probation.

Note: For reference, the 2019 numbers reported here are based on 12,966 releases from prison (including releases from holds in DOC facilities) and 15,341 admissions to probation. Admissions to probation only include those clients who were on probation on June 30th or December 31st in 2019.

WI DOC OPIOID OVERDOSE DEATHS

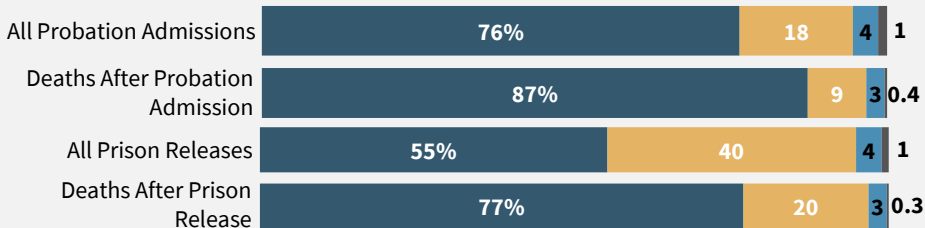
FY2014 – FY2020: Overdose Deaths by Fiscal Year



Overdose deaths have increased **263%** among those released from prison, and **127%** among those admitted to probation, from FY14-FY20. Overdose deaths in Wisconsin overall have increased **46%** from 2014-2019 ([source](#)). Of the deaths among those admitted to probation, **33.1%** occurred while under WI DOC supervision, with the remainder occurring post-discharge.

Race

■ White ■ Black ■ American Indian/Alaskan Native ■ Asian or Pacific Islander



Percent of Population

Of the people admitted to probation, 76% were white and 18% were black, while 87% of people who died after admission to probation were white, and 9% were black. By comparison, 55% of people who were released from prison were white and 40% were black, while 77% of people who died after release from prison were white, and 20% were black.

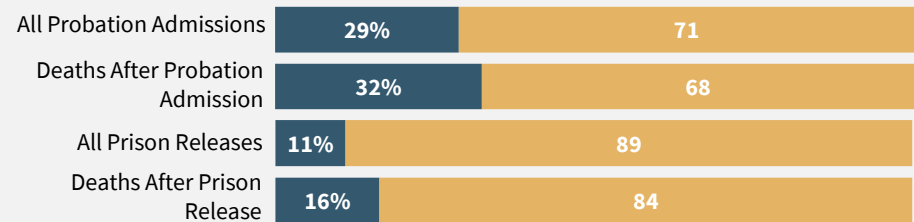
Age



More than **50%** of people who died were between the ages of 25 and 40. Ages ranged from 17 to 70 years.

Gender

■ Female ■ Male



Percent of Population

Of the people admitted to probation, 29% were female and 71% were male, while 32% of people who died after admission to probation were female, and 68% were male. By comparison, 11% of people who were released from prison were female and 89% were male, while 16% of people who died after release from prison were female, and 84% were male.

Mental Health Status

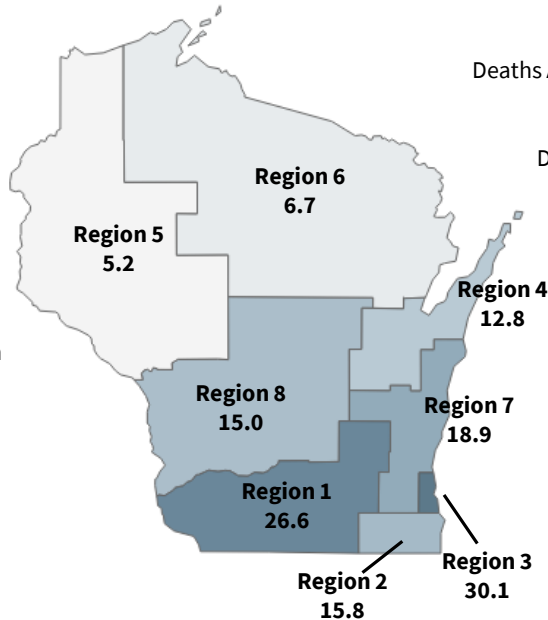
Serious mental health disorders were **1.9x** higher in those who died from an opioid overdose after release from prison, compared to others released from prison.



WI DOC OPIOID OVERDOSE DEATHS, CONTINUED

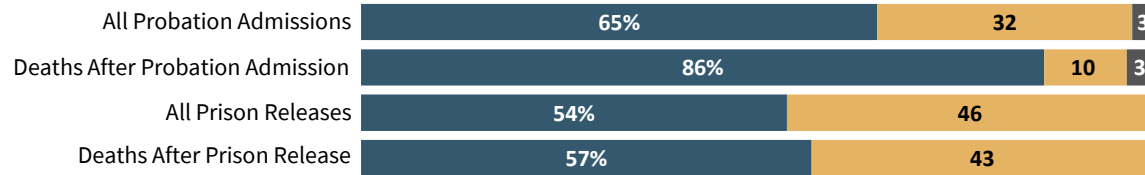
Overdose Deaths by Region Rate per 1,000

This map shows overdose deaths by region for people released from prison and admitted to probation. Region 3 had the highest overdose death rate, with 30.1 overdose deaths per 1,000 releases and admissions to probation, while Region 5 had the lowest rate, with 5.2 overdose deaths per 1,000 releases and admissions to probation.



Substance Use Treatment Need

■ Yes ■ No ■ Unknown



Substance use treatment needs were identified using a validated needs assessment for those admitted to probation, and were identified through the intake process for those released from prison. Only admissions to probation and releases from prison in 2012 and later are included in the above graph due to availability of data. Of those who died after admission to probation, 86% had a substance use treatment need compared to 65% of all admissions to probation. Of those who died after release from prison, 57% had a substance use treatment need compared to 54% of all releases to prison.

Opioid and Heroin Offenses

People who died were more likely to have had an opioid- or heroin-related conviction.

- Opioid offenses were **2.1 times higher** in people who died after release from prison than others released from prison, and **3.3 times higher** in people who died after admission probation, compared to others admitted to probation.
- Heroin offenses were **1.4 times higher** in people who died after release from prison than others released from prison, and **2 times higher** in people who died after admission to probation, compared to others admitted to probation.

WHAT IS DOC DOING TO HELP?

- Distributed Narcan to agents across the state to utilize if they encounter an overdose victim.
- Created a process to begin distributing Narcan to identified clients at risk on community supervision. This will be piloted in Regions 7 in 2021.
- Created training videos to educate staff about all three medication-assisted treatment (MAT) options: Buprenorphine, methadone, and naltrexone.
- Expanded funding for MAT to the entire state, and to all forms of MAT for clients on supervision.
- Created an Opiate Advisory Team to consult with agents on complicated cases.
- Created a DOC Overdose Death Review Team that completes monthly overdose death reviews.
- Created a protocol that flags those at risk of overdose in prison and on community supervision, creating a process to follow to reduce risk.
- Purchased the Hazelden Core-12 app for clients to download on their phones. This app was created to provide mobile support for those suffering from opiate addiction.
- Created Overdose Response Teams in Regions 1 and 4 to offer services to clients that overdose within a short timeframe from the overdose incident.
- Provided training and access to the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program to Division of Community Corrections staff.
- All county overdose fatality review teams now have a DOC representative that participates in reviews.
- DOC is currently preparing Harm Reduction job aids for staff to further support this best practice.
- DOC's Division of Adult Institutions is in the process of developing Substance Use Disorder programming opportunities at two maximum custody prisons, WSPF and CCI.