

# OPIOID SURVEILLANCE SUMMARY

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## DECEMBER 2020

This summary<sup>1</sup> provides local and provincial surveillance information. For some indicators, there is a lag time to receive data, so data are shown for the most recent complete month available. For more detailed provincial and local data visit [Public Health Ontario's Interactive Opioid Tool](#) and the [Ontario Prescription Opioid Tool](#)

### EMERGING ISSUES

- On December 16<sup>th</sup> Health Canada [confirmed](#) reports from June 2020, of counterfeit pills made to look like prescription oxycodone or Percocet that contain fentanyl.
- Between Dec 5<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> [Toronto's Drug Checking Service](#) found benzodiazepines in 77% of fentanyl substances checked and carfentanil in 15% of samples checked. On Dec 10<sup>th</sup> an [alert](#) was posted regarding xylazine, a tranquilizer used in veterinary practice, being found in 22% of the expected fentanyl samples checked.
- On December 4<sup>th</sup> Hamilton Public Health Services [alerted](#) that a new deadly substance is likely causing a rise in suspected opioid-related overdoses.

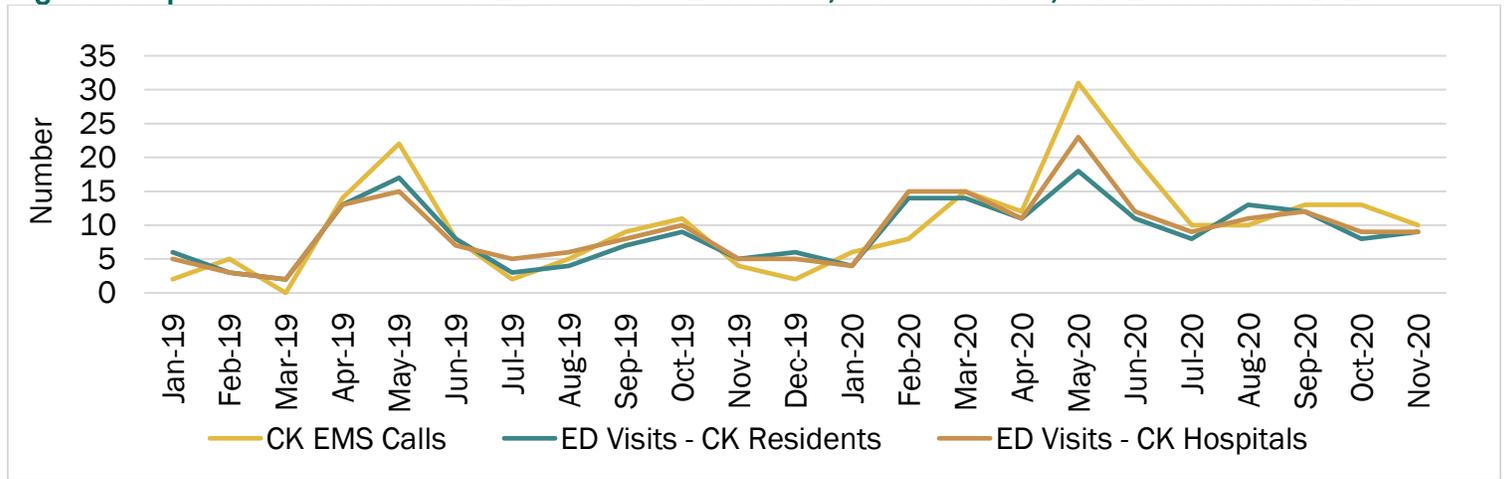
### CHATHAM-KENT ACTIVITY

EMS Calls <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10 suspected opioid overdose-related calls in November (148 to date in 2020) (Figure 1)</li><li>• 10 suspected non-opioid drug overdose-related calls in November (82 to date in 2020)</li></ul>
Emergency Department Visits <sup>3</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 9 opioid overdose-related ED visits by CK residents in November (122 to date in 2020 or 114.8 per 100,000) (Figure 1)</li></ul>
Deaths <sup>4</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10 confirmed deaths between January and August 2020 (9.4 per 100,000; 6 deaths in 2019).</li></ul>
Naloxone Distribution <sup>5</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 21 naloxone kits distributed by CK Public Health in November (409 to date in 2020)</li><li>• 189 naloxone kits distributed through CK pharmacies in August (August 2020 YTD: 1,157; 2019 Total: 1,413)</li></ul>
OVERALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The number of opioid-overdose related EMS calls and ED visits in November were similar to the previous months. The year to date rate of ED visits was higher in Chatham-Kent compared to Ontario (114.8 versus 70.7 per 100,000). The rate of deaths for the first 8 months of 2020 is already nearly twice as high as the 2019 rate of death.</li></ul>

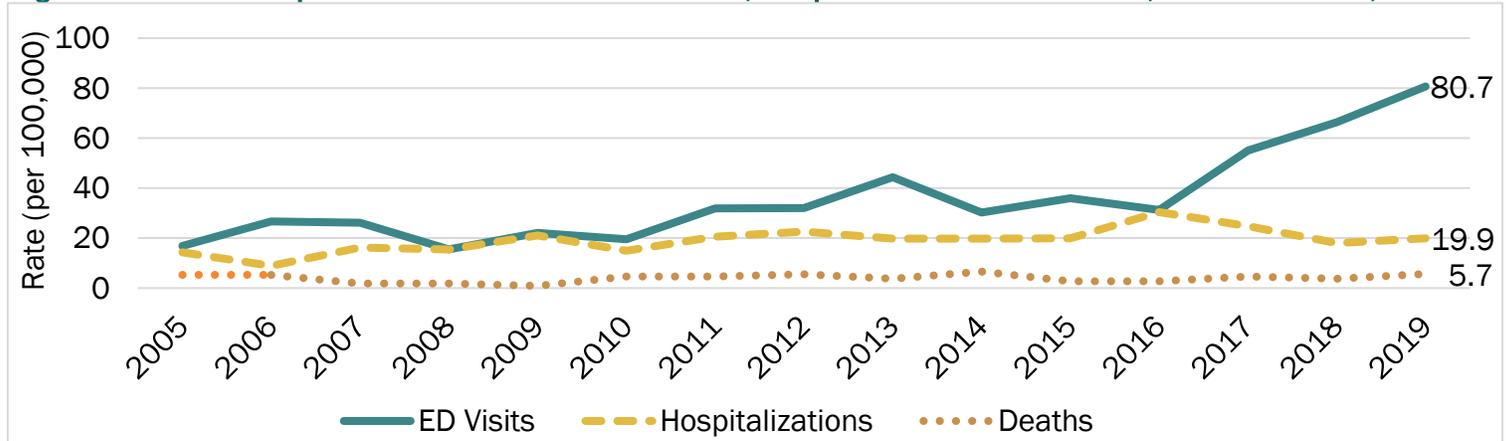
### PROVINCIAL ACTIVITY

Emergency Department Visits <sup>3</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 945 ED visits in November (10,510 to date in 2020 or 70.7 per 100,000)</li></ul>
Deaths <sup>4</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1,391 deaths between January and August 2020 (9.4 per 100,000; 1,512 deaths in 2019)</li></ul>
OVERALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The number of ED visits in November was comparable to previous months. Death rate has increased provincially since the pandemic started.</li></ul>

**Figure 1. Opioid overdose-related ED visits and EMS calls, Chatham-Kent, Jan 2019 to Nov 2020**



**Figure 2. Rates<sup>4</sup> of opioid overdose-related ED visits, hospitalizations and deaths, Chatham-Kent, 2005-19**



**NOTES**

<sup>1</sup>Content and format of this information summary has been adapted from Lambton Public Health  
<sup>2</sup>EMS calls were provided by Chatham-Kent EMS (December 18, 2020)  
<sup>3</sup>Emergency department visits were provided by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (Weekly emergency department visits for opioid overdose Week 37: Dec 7 - 13, 2020). All Ontario hospitals are required to report cases of opioid overdose presenting in their EDs to the Canadian Institute for Health Information. Results are considered preliminary and subject to change as emergency departments continue to submit data. Rates are based on 2020 population projections.  
<sup>4</sup>2020 death data are based on the Coroner's Opioid Investigative Aid, January 2020 to August 2020, Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario, Nov 30, 2020. Data include confirmed deaths only, are considered preliminary and are subject to change. 2005 to 2019 ED visits, hospitalizations and deaths were obtained from Public Health Ontario's [Interactive Opioid Tool](#). 2019 death data are also considered preliminary and are subject to change as remaining cases are closed by the Office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario - the data includes confirmed deaths only.  
<sup>5</sup>Naloxone kits distributed by CK Public Health are tracked through NEO as part of the Ontario Harm Reduction Database initiative. The number of kits distributed in 2020 by Chatham-Kent pharmacies was available up to August 2020 through the [Ontario Drug Policy Research Network Prescription Opioid Tool](#).

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