

# OPIOID SURVEILLANCE SUMMARY

CK Public Health • 435 Grand Avenue West, Chatham, ON N7M 5L8  
Tel: 519.352.7270 • Fax: 519.352.2166 • Email: ckpublichealth@chatham-kent.ca



## FEBRUARY 2024

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 Opioid Indicator Tool](#).

### EMERGING ISSUES & NEW RESOURCES

- Over the last month, several health unit areas across Ontario have issued alerts related to increased opioid poisonings and deaths (including Lambton County, Guelph-Wellington, Grey-Bruce, Ottawa and Kingston)
- Local opioid-related EMS calls for service have been elevated over the first weeks of February and communication to partners occurred earlier this month.
- Potent tranquilizers Medetomidine/dexmedetomidine and Xylazine have been found recently in the drug supply in Ontario.
- **The unregulated drug supply is unpredictable and always changing.** Share this information with those at risk.

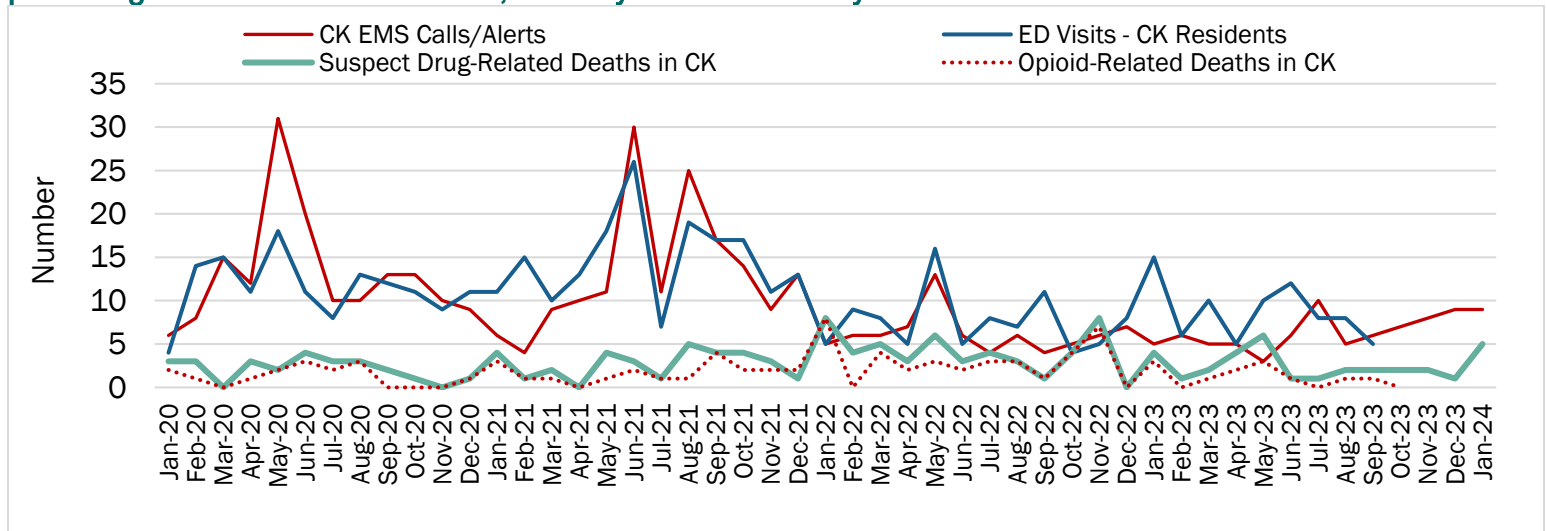
### CHATHAM-KENT ACTIVITY

EMS Calls <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 9 suspect opioid poisoning-related calls to CK EMS in January (9 to date in 2024; 75 in 2023) (Figure 1)</li><li>• 9 non-opioid drug related calls to CK EMS in January (9 to date in 2024; 119 in 2023)</li></ul>
Emergency Department Visits <sup>3</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Due to the recent regional hospital cyber-attack, opioid poisoning-related ED visits for the month of January are not readily available. Reporting of ED visits will resume next month.</li></ul>
Deaths <sup>4</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 8 suspect drug-related deaths in CK in last 3 months (5 to date in 2024; 28 deaths in 2023 or 25.8 per 100,000) (Figure 1)</li><li>• 12 confirmed opioid poisoning deaths in CK between January and October 2023 (37 deaths in 2022 or 34.2 per 100,000) (Figure 1)</li></ul>
OVERALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The number of opioid-related EMS calls remained similar to previous month and suspect drug deaths were higher. 2022 data shows CK experienced higher rates of opioid poisoning ED visits, hospitalizations and deaths, compared to Ontario. For the first 6 months of 2023, local opioid deaths have largely impacted males, age 45 to 64, and 90% of deaths are attributed to fentanyl.</li></ul>

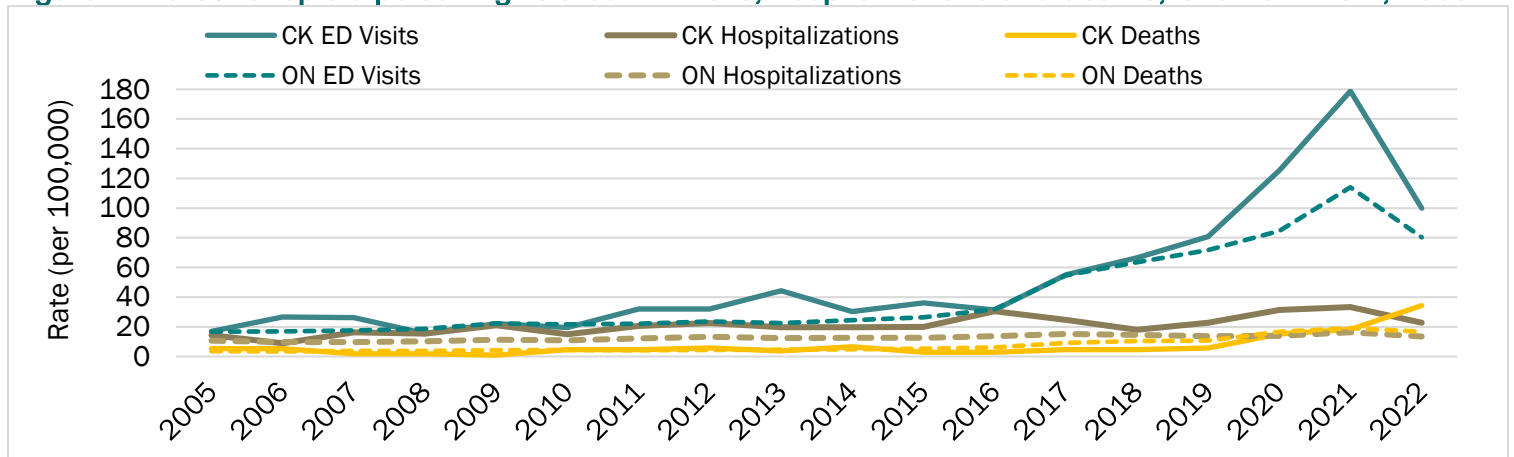
### PROVINCIAL ACTIVITY

Emergency Department Visits <sup>3</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 739 opioid poisoning-related ED visits in January (739 to date in 2024; 13236 in 2023 or 86.1 per 100,000)</li></ul>
Deaths <sup>4</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 272 suspect drug-related deaths in January (3664 in 2023 or 23.8 per 100,000; 3691 deaths in 2022)</li><li>• 1780 confirmed opioid poisoning deaths between January and October 2023 (2498 deaths in 2022 or 16.5 per 100,000)</li></ul>
OVERALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suspect drug deaths in the past 3 months are increased slightly from the 3 months prior and remain higher compared to the same time period pre-pandemic (2019).</li></ul>

**Figure 1. Opioid poisoning-related ED visits and EMS calls and suspect drug-related and confirmed opioid poisoning deaths in Chatham-Kent, January 2020 to January 2024**



**Figure 2. Rates<sup>4</sup> of opioid poisoning-related ED visits, hospitalizations and deaths, Chatham-Kent, 2005-22**



**NOTES**

- <sup>1</sup>Content and format of this information summary has been adapted from Lambton Public Health
- <sup>2</sup>EMS calls up to and including January 2023 are based on calls for service by month provided by Chatham-Kent EMS for suspected opioid-related calls.
- <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 46: Feb 12-Feb 18, 2023). Ontario hospitals are required to report cases of opioid overdose presenting in their EDs to the Canadian Institute for Health Information. CK hospital visit data is unavailable since October 2023 and is expected to be unavailable for the short-term due to the regional hospital cyber attack. Results are considered preliminary and subject to change as emergency departments continue to submit data. Rates are based on 2022-2023 population projections, and 2019-2021 population estimates.
- <sup>4</sup>2019 to 2024 suspect drug-related deaths and confirmed opioid deaths are based on the Monthly Summary table provided by the Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario, February 15, 2024. 2005 to 2022 ED visits, hospitalizations and deaths were obtained from Public Health Ontario's [Interactive Opioid Tool](#). Opioid-related deaths include confirmed deaths only, are considered preliminary and are subject to change as remaining cases are closed by the Office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario.

**CONTACT:**

Laura Zettler, Epidemiologist, CK Public Health  
 Phone: 226.312.2023 ext. 2407; Email: [lauraz@chatham-kent.ca](mailto:lauraz@chatham-kent.ca)