

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



MARCH 2024

This summary¹ 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

- In February, several areas across Ontario issued alerts related to increased opioid poisonings and locally, drug poisoning harms have been elevated.
- [Toronto's Drug Checking Service](#) has observed an increase in the presence of nitazene opioids in samples that are not expected to contain high-potency opioids; sign up for updates and alerts from the Toronto Drug Checking Service here: <https://drugchecking.community/reports/>
- See March 28th issue of the [Chatham Voice](#) (p13) for a local article about the Drug Poisoning tragedy in CK
- The CK Community Drug Strategy and [recommendations](#) were passed by Municipal Council on March 18th
- **The unregulated drug supply is unpredictable and always changing.** Share this information with those at risk.

CHATHAM-KENT ACTIVITY

EMS Calls ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 18 suspect opioid poisoning-related calls to CK EMS in February (27 to date in 2024; 75 in 2023) (Figure 1)• 6 non-opioid drug related calls to CK EMS in February (15 to date in 2024; 119 in 2023)
Emergency Department Visits ³	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reporting of local ED visits (following regional hospital cyber-attack in fall 2023) resumed in mid-February (7 opioid poisoning-related ED visits in February).
Deaths ⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7 suspect drug-related deaths in CK in February (12 to date in 2024; 28 deaths in 2023 or 25.8 per 100,000) (Figure 1)• 14 confirmed opioid poisoning deaths in CK between January and November 2023 (37 deaths in 2022 or 34.2 per 100,000) (Figure 1)
OVERALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number of opioid-related EMS calls, ED visits and suspect drug deaths were higher in February compared to previous months.

PROVINCIAL ACTIVITY

Emergency Department Visits ³	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 827 opioid poisoning-related ED visits in February (1701 to date in 2024; 13392 in 2023 or 87.1 per 100,000)
Deaths ⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 267 suspect drug-related deaths in February (546 to date in 2024; 3716 in 2023 or 24.2 per 100,000)• 1977 confirmed opioid poisoning deaths between January and November 2023 (2500 deaths in 2022 or 16.6 per 100,000)
OVERALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suspect drug deaths in the past 3 months are decreased slightly from the 3 months prior and remain higher compared to the same time period pre-pandemic (2019-2020).

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 February 2024

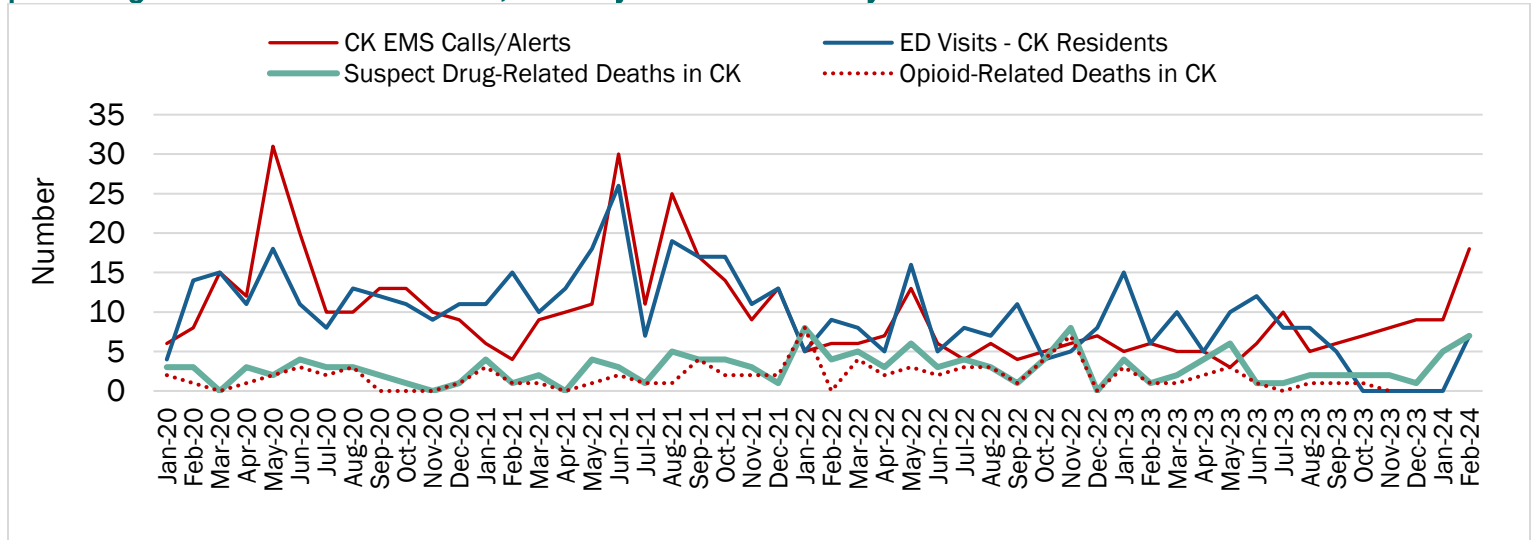
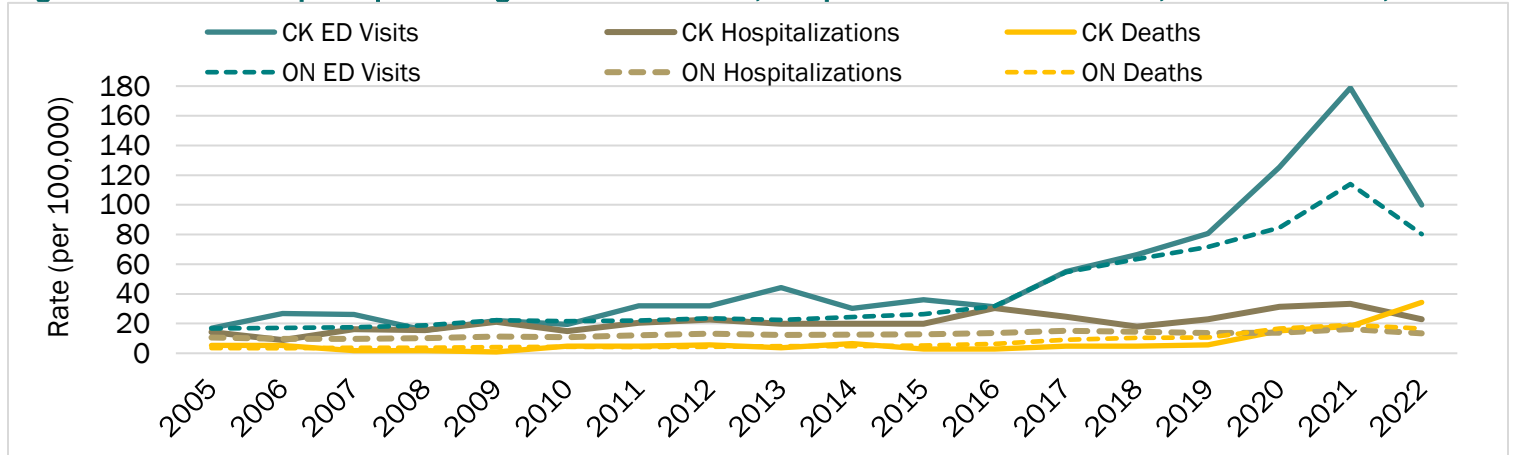


Figure 2. Rates⁴ of opioid poisoning-related ED visits, hospitalizations and deaths, Chatham-Kent, 2005-22



NOTES

- ¹Content and format of this information summary has been adapted from Lambton Public Health
- ²EMS calls up to and including February 2024 are based on calls for service by month provided by Chatham-Kent EMS for suspected opioid-related calls.
- ³Emergency department visits were provided by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (Weekly emergency department visits for opioid overdose Week 50: Mar 11-17, 2024). 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 for October 2023 through January 2024 are not available due to the regional hospital cyber-attack in October 2023. 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.
- ⁴2019 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, March 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