

Drug Related Deaths in Denver (as of July 17, 2020)

Denver Department of Public Health & Environment
Office of the Medical Examiner & Division of Community and Behavioral Health

Note, the number of drug related deaths in any given time period may increase over time as forensic pathologists determine the cause and manner of death on cases pending investigation.

Data Last Updated:

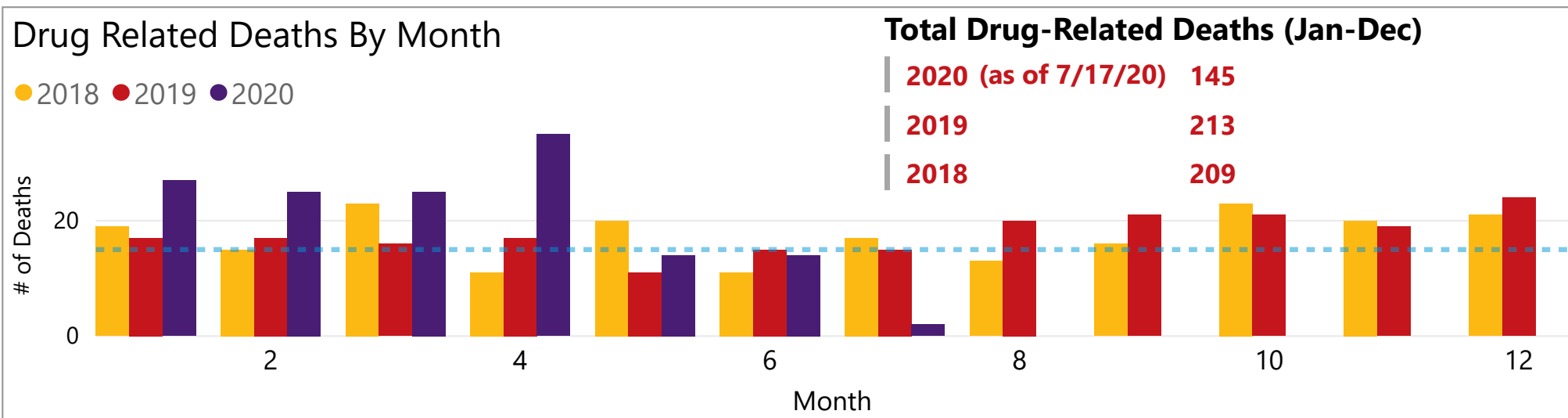
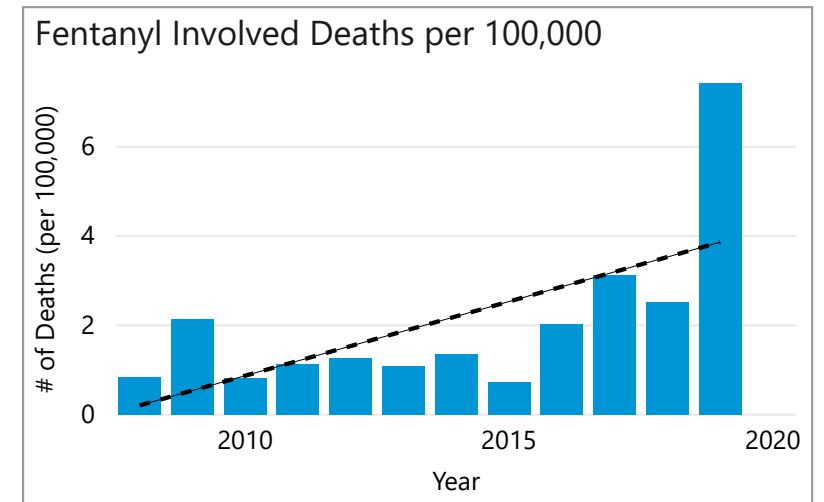
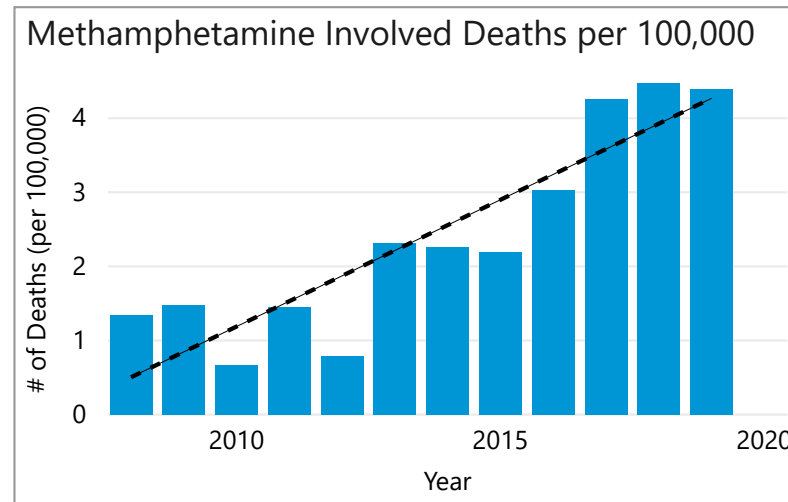
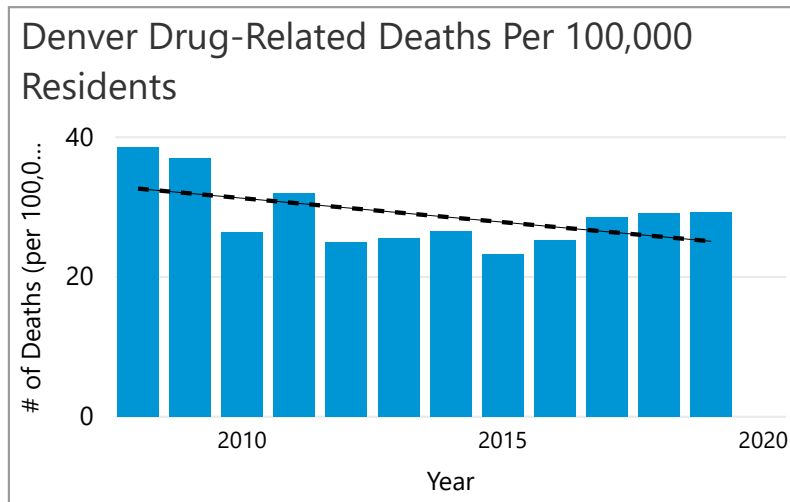
7/17/2020 10:19 AM

Drug-Related Deaths in the City & County of Denver

Data Source: Denver Department of Public Health & Environment, Office of the Medical Examiner
2020 Summary as of July 17, 2020

HISTORICAL TRENDS (2008-2019) - Overdose deaths have decreased in Denver on average over the last decade. Small recent increases fall within the normal variation of the data series. Deaths with Methamphetamine on board and with Fentanyl on board are increasing.

YEAR TO DATE - The total number of drug related deaths in Denver in 2019 was 213. In 2020 so far, there have been 145 drug related deaths.



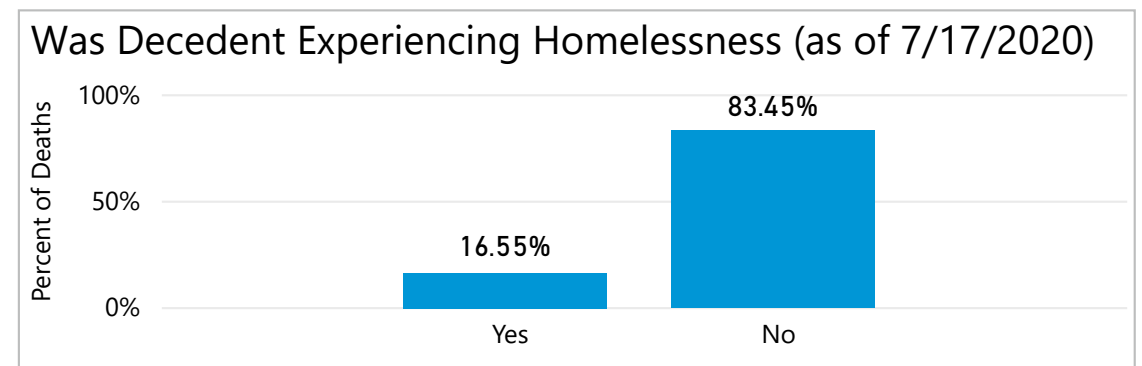
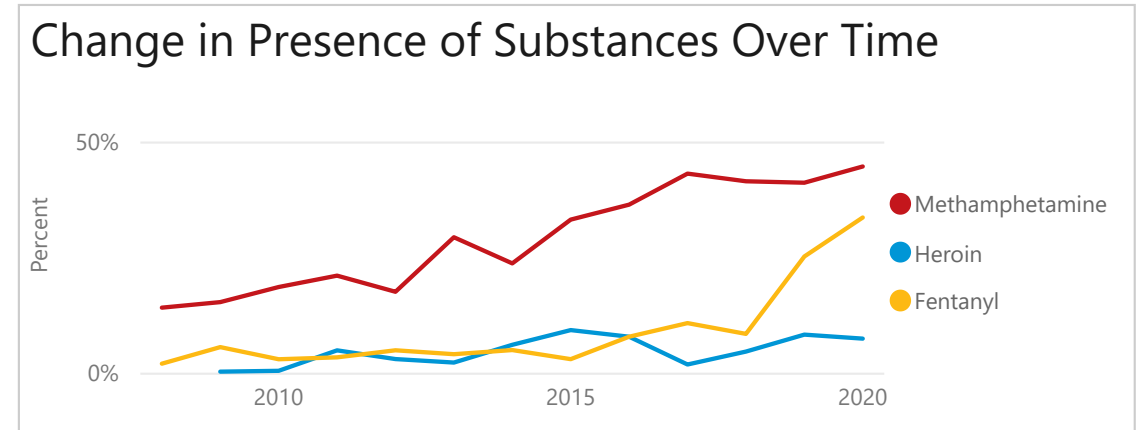
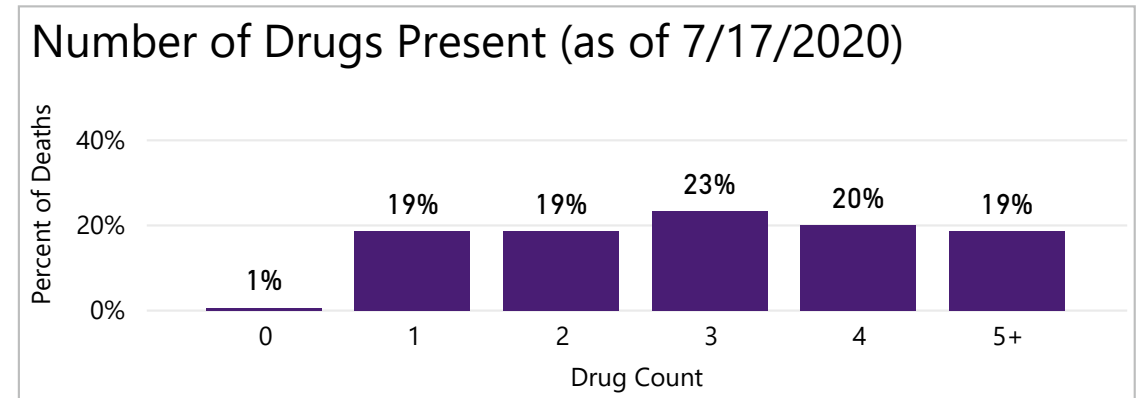
POLYSUBSTANCE USE - The majority of drug overdose deaths in Denver involve multiple substances found in the deceased's system, i.e. toxicology. In 2020 so far:

- 62% of deaths involved 3 or more drugs in the deceased's system.
- 19% of deaths involved 5 or more drugs in the deceased's system.

DRUGS PRESENT (see footnote 2) - In 2020 so far, some type of Opioid was present in the deceased's system (including heroin) in 64% of drug-related deaths in Denver. In 2020 so far:

- 52% had prescription type opioids (not including heroin), compared to 41% in 2019.
- 8% had heroin present but not prescription opioids, compared to 8% in 2019.
- Methamphetamine has been present in 45% of deaths, compared to 41% in 2019.
- Denver has seen a rise in Fentanyl-related deaths between 2018 and 2020. In 2019, 25% of deaths had Fentanyl on board, compared to 9% in 2018. In 2020 so far, 34% of deaths have had Fentanyl on board.

HOUSING STATUS - The Denver Office of the Medical Examiner investigators determine that the majority of people (83%) who died from a probable drug-overdose were not experiencing homelessness (see footnote 3).

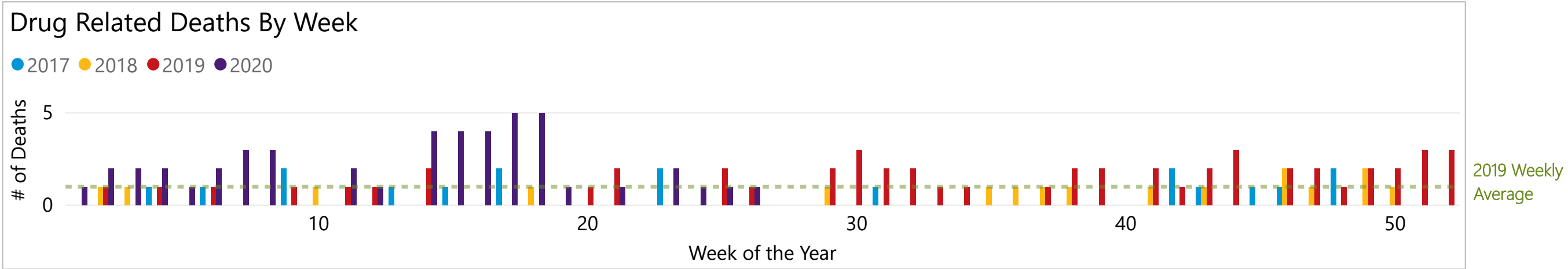


2. These data represent deaths in which the specified drugs were present in specimens examined. Each death may have had other contributing factors.

3. Determining homeless status is not an exact science. This determination is based on OME investigators' classification after extensive research into an individual's life.

Fentanyl Related Deaths in Denver County by Year and Week (2017 - 2020)

*Note these totals exclude deaths deemed as suicides by the Denver Office of the Medical Examiner

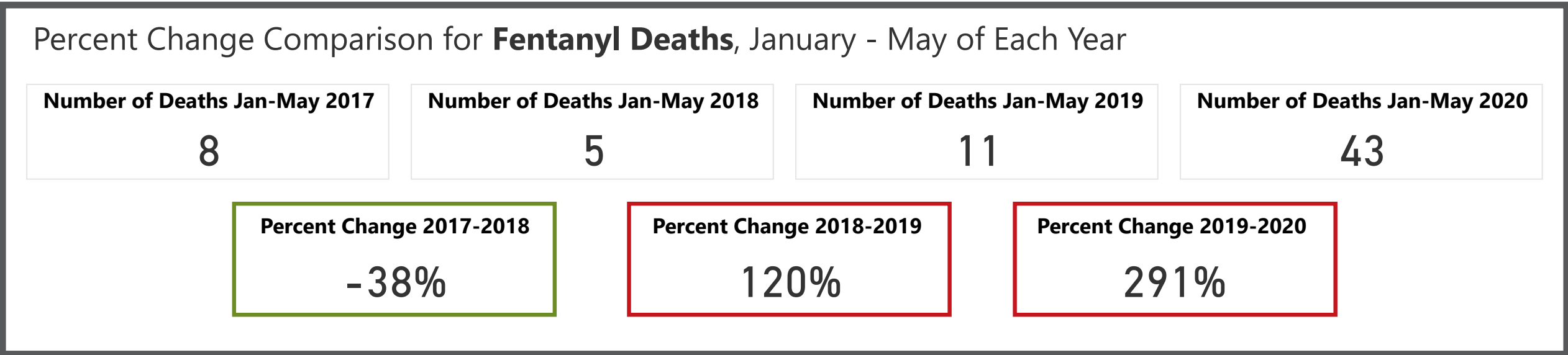
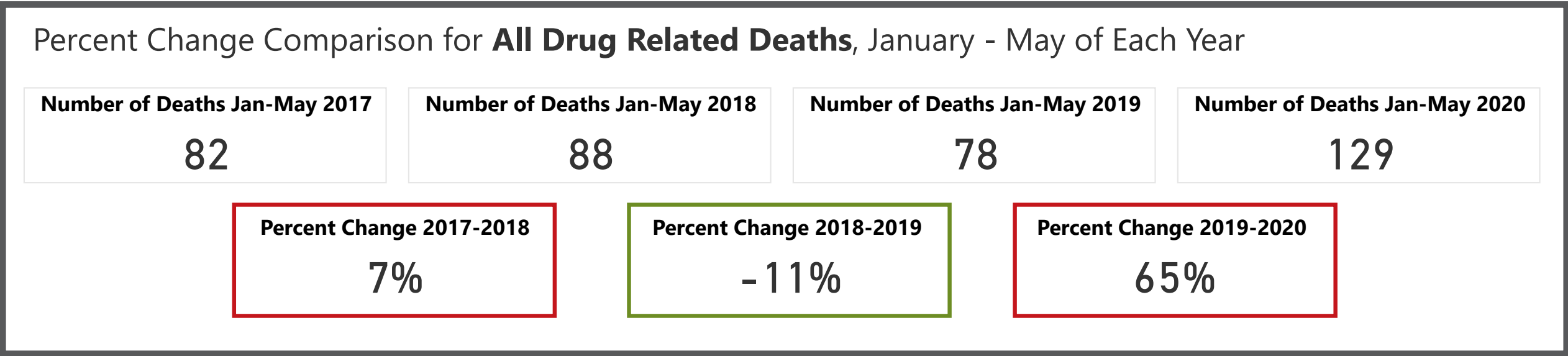


Explanation

In 2019, DDPHE began partnering with Denver Public Health to monitor the presence of Fentanyl in Denver. Fentanyl has become a more wide spread drug across the country and is much more potent than other drug types. In an attempt to prevent Fentanyl related deaths, the Denver public health agencies have created a dashboard of several indicators that could indicate increased Fentanyl presence. Some of the leading indicators in the dashboard include drug seizures from the Denver Police Department and Urine Analyses from Precision Labs. One of the lagging indicators in the dashboard is Fentanyl Related Deaths from the Denver Office of the Medical Examiner. The number of Fentanyl Related Deaths in 2019 was much higher than in 2018, indicating a rise in the presence of Fentanyl in Denver. The public health agencies as well as other city agencies and community partners are currently working together to understand what this change in presence and use pattern might mean for Denver populations in order to develop an appropriate response to prevent future Fentanyl Related Deaths.

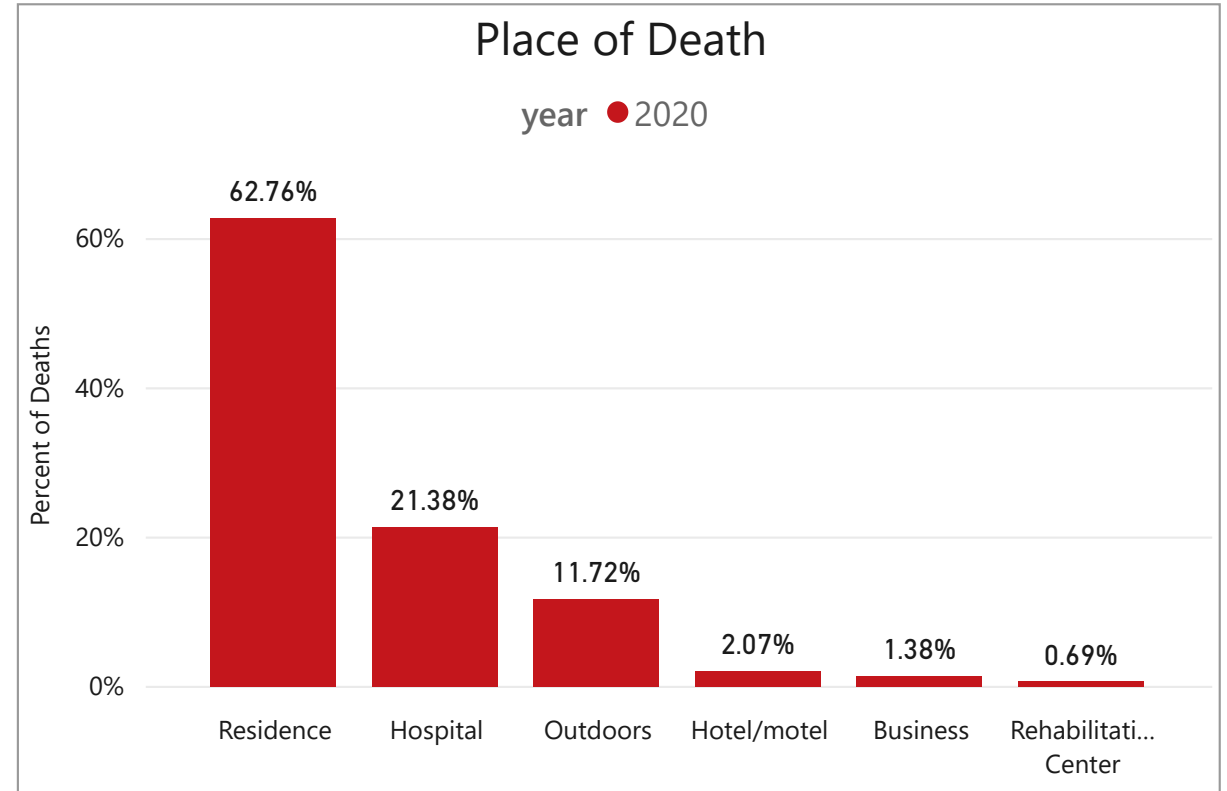
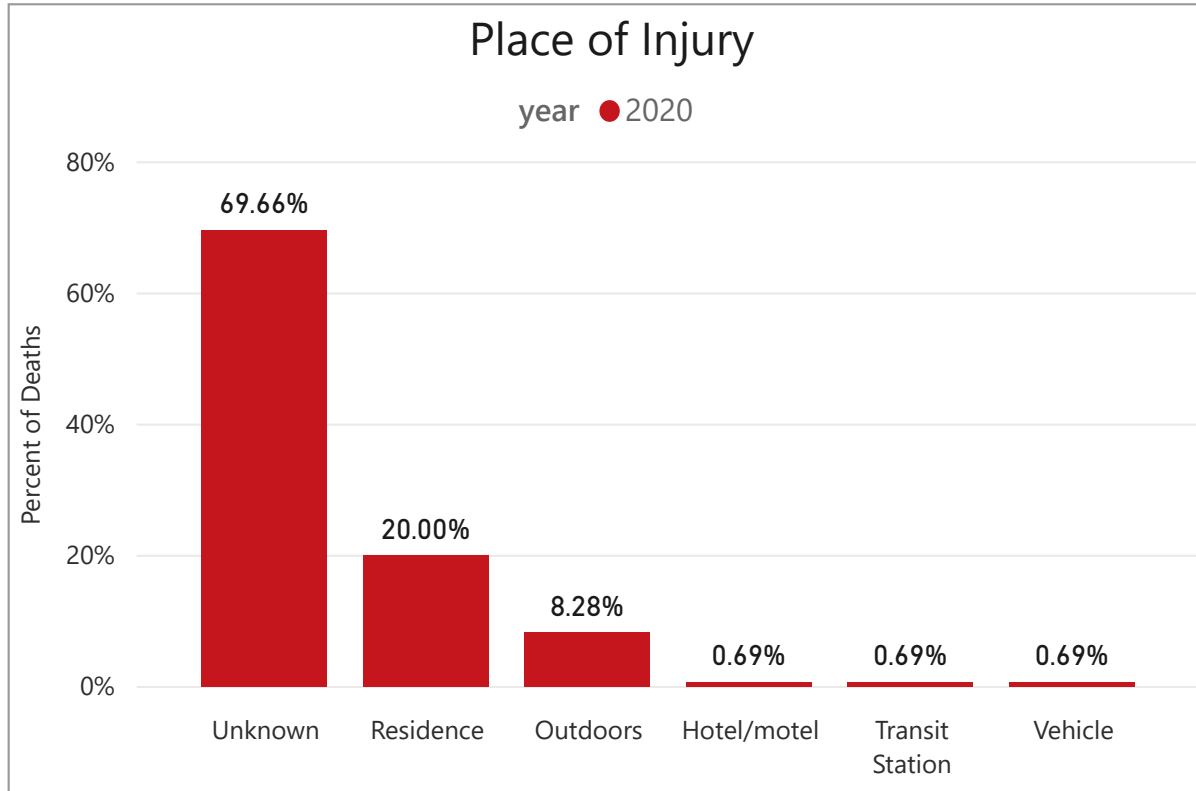
Year to Year Comparisons For All Drug and Fentanyl Deaths

All data as of 7/17/2020



LOCATIONS (see footnote 3) - Most drug related deaths occur in private residences or hospitals. In 2020 so far:

- 63% of deaths occurred in private residences; roughly 21% occurred in a hospital.
- Only 12% of deaths occurred outdoors.



Additional Data Notes and Limitations

1. Cause of death may have intricate complexities and interpretations.
2. The numbers presented in this summary reflect deaths reported to the Denver Office of the Medical Examiner (OME) as required by CRS 30-10-606 (not every death in the City and County of Denver is reported to OME, just those required by statute).
3. Numbers may vary from other statewide data due to differences in reporting and coding.
4. Drug-related deaths can include a manner of natural, accident, suicide, homicide, and undetermined. The manner of death is the determination of how the injury or disease lead to the death, whereas cause of death is the specific injury or disease that lead to the death.

Footnotes

3. The place of death is where the decedent actually expired (e.g. died on the street). The place of injury is where the injury occurred prior to death (e.g. car accident location). The category "Unknown" in the Location of Injury chart represents cases where OME is not able to determine the location of injury (e.g. where substances were consumed).