

SUBSTANCE USE IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

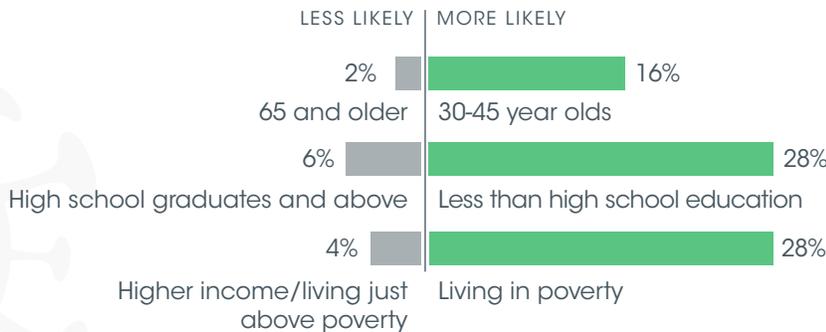
Before the COVID-19 pandemic, drug overdose death rates in [Greater Cincinnati](#) declined by 26% from 2017 to 2019.¹ However, disruptions during the pandemic—such as temporary closures of syringe services programs and in-person treatment sessions—may have slowed progress to reduce overdose deaths.

Preliminary overdose death rates for 2020 varied across the region. Some counties saw an increase while others saw a decline.² Nationally, more than 93,000 people died from drug overdoses in 2020, according to provisional data. That's a 29.4% increase from 2019 and the highest number of annual overdose deaths ever recorded.³ The **Greater Cincinnati COVID-19 Health Issues Survey** asked Greater Cincinnati adults how the pandemic has affected their friends and family members' substance use.

8%

reported that they had a friend or family member who **experienced a drug overdose** since the start of the pandemic.

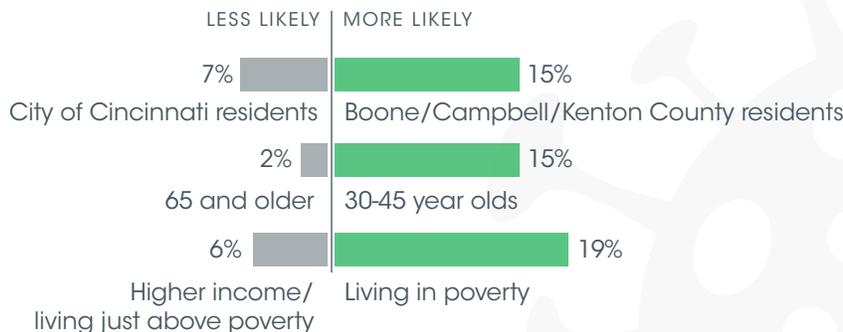
SOME ADULTS WERE MORE LIKELY TO REPORT KNOWING SOMEONE WHO OVERDOSED DURING THE PANDEMIC



8%

reported that they had a friend or family member who **experienced problems as a result of relapsing and using drugs again**.

SOME ADULTS WERE MORE LIKELY TO REPORT KNOWING SOMEONE WHO RELAPSED



Interact for Health asked these questions to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on overdose and substance use in our region. This is the first time Interact for Health has asked questions about overdose and relapse in our region.

Naloxone available

Naloxone, also known by the brand name Narcan, is a safe, effective medication used to temporarily reverse an opioid overdose. Policies have made it widely available in our region: by mail order in Ohio from [Harm Reduction Ohio](#), in Indiana from [ShipHappens](#), and in Kentucky from the [Bracken County, Northern Kentucky](#) and [Three Rivers](#) health departments.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2010). "CDC WONDER." <https://bit.ly/3hQZpyx>. Accessed July 2020.

² As reported in preliminary reports from county coroners. Final 2020 data from the CDC and state health departments have not been released.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021). "Provisional Drug Overdose Death Counts" <https://bit.ly/3ekHaAN>. Accessed 14 July 2021.

⁴ In 2019, household income for a family of four living in poverty: \$25,750 or less; for a family of four living just above the poverty level: \$25,751-\$51,500; for a family of four with higher income: greater than \$51,500.