



December 29, 2025

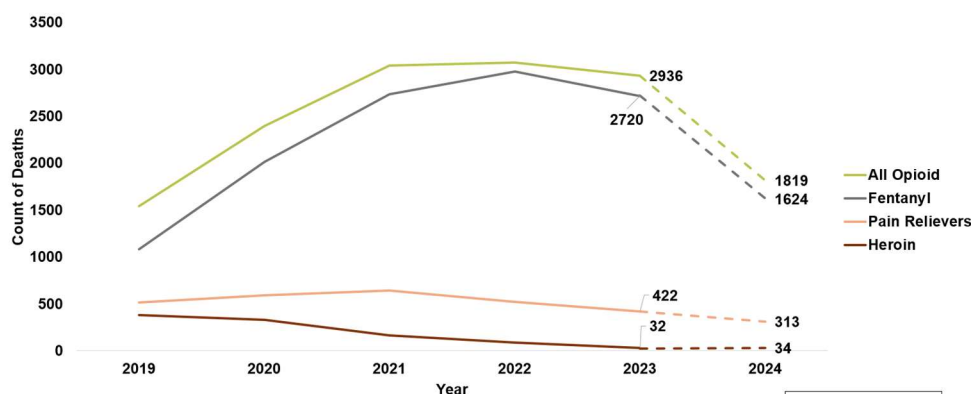
RE: Final Narrative Award Number: D06RH49185 (Rural Community Opioid Response Program)

Rural Health Association of Tennessee's (RHA) Tennessee Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (TN-RCORP) consortium was designed to build a self-sustaining, statewide network of individuals, healthcare providers, and other community-based organizations who could work collaboratively to reduce the prevalence of Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) by **5% in rural Tennessee by September 2025**.

While Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) data is still provisional, we believe that RHA's efforts, coupled with other partners such as TDH, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Middle Tennessee State University, and many others have contributed to a dramatic decrease in OUD and SUD, as evidenced by declining Opioid Overdose Deaths among Tennessee Residents.

At the time of application in January 2022, Tennessee faced a rapidly escalating substance use disorder crisis, with an estimated **438,900 adults living with SUD** and overdose deaths increasing sharply in the years preceding the grant period. The below graphs from TDH show the peak of Opioid Overdose deaths among Tennessee residents in 2021, the modest reduction in 2022, and projected declines through 2025.

Opioid Overdose Deaths among TN Residents, 2019-2024

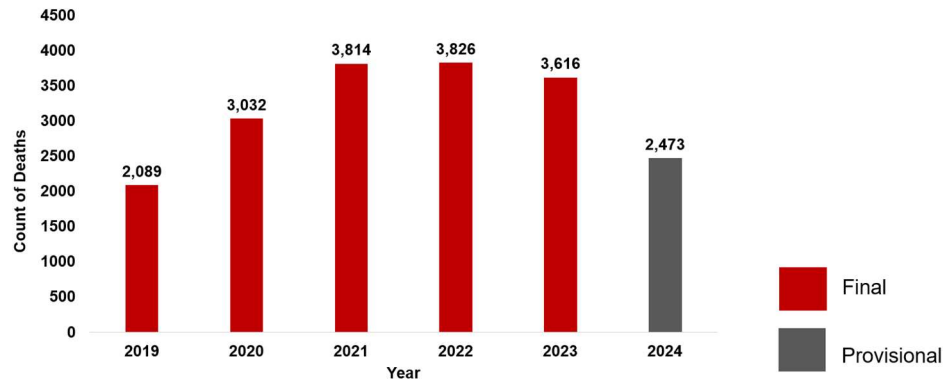


Analysis by the Office of Informatics and Analytics, TDH (last updated September 22, 2025. 2024 data is provisional. Final numbers are subject to change. Limited to TN residents. Drug categories are not mutually exclusive. Data Source: TN Death Statistical File.



Drug Overdose Deaths among TN Residents, 2019-2024

- Provisional Data from Vital Statistics shows a **31.6% decrease** from 2023 to 2024.

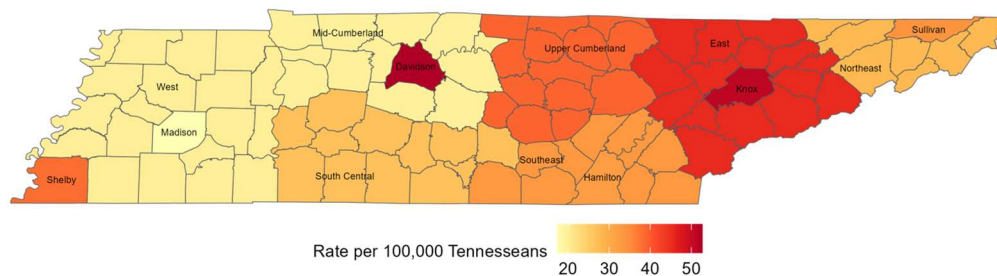


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Age-Adjusted Rates of Drug Overdose Deaths by Region, 2024

- All regions experienced a decrease in deaths in 2024. Nashville Davidson Region & Knox Metro Region have the highest rates of overdose deaths in 2024.



TN-RCORP Statewide Reach

Rural Health Association of Tennessee's (RHA) strength rests in its statewide network of more than 800 members, an email list of 4,000+ subscribers, and many partners who also have large networks.

Through this funding opportunity, RHA built a consortium of **37 Active Members** with 93 sites, an additional **51 Partners** who helped distribute materials, a TN-RCORP Consortium Email list of **560+ Subscribers**, that reached **100% of the Service Area** to deliver the following resources and education.

Resource Distribution

- 1,393 Naloxone Kits, with 8,675 Fentanyl Test Strips
- 6,448 Drug Disposal Kits (boxes with 100+ individually wrapped disposal kits)
- 12 Drug Take Back Boxes (large, mailbox sized boxes)
- 1184 barrels for communities that already had takeback boxes, but needed replacement bins.
- 47,343.30 Pounds were picked up from location sites.

Training and Education Goals

- Regional Events – 300+ persons educated on Stigma, Overdose Reversal, etc.
- Annual Conference – 900+ persons received SUD/OD related education
- Naloxone Training – 600+ persons received online Overdose Reversal Training
- Online Education – 300+ persons received TN-RCORP related training
- Billing and Coding – 29 people representing 6 Healthcare organizations trained
- Emergency Medical Response Training – 17 EMS providers trained (Hawkins County)

Workforce Development

- **Peer Workforce Development:** Supported **18 Certified Peer Recovery Specialists (CPRS)-Apprentices** graduated. RHA is working on a follow-up success story document to feature these individuals and their new employers.

Sustainability and Long-Term Impact

Rural Health Association of Tennessee plans to continue the following activities through their membership activities and/or other grants.

- Quarterly Consortium Meetings
- TN-RCORP Newsletter
- Drug Take Back Toolkit – This toolkit was developed in partnership with University of Tennessee Health Science Center College of Pharmacy and will continue to be updated and distributes.
- Naloxone Training – RHA has developed online training to educate on the impacts of OUD, how to administer Overdose Reversal, and has embedded this training into other trainings such as Workforce Ready (a High school and Community College add-on training), Community Health Worker, and Doula Trainings.

Through another funding source, RHA is establishing a “Rural Resource Center” in West Tennessee that will employ several Community Health Workers. Among their job responsibilities will be providing OUD/SUD prevention education, encouraging clinics to do use screening tools, and distributing Naloxone kits.

Lessons Learned

This funding opportunity propelled RHA forward in their institutional knowledge of OUD/SUD, strengthened relationships, and ability to support members and other find mental health training, prevention, treatment, and recovery resources, and much more. Throughout this grant period there were several federal policy changes that will hopefully encourage more rural providers to offer mental and behavioral health services, and RHA will advocate for necessary statewide changes.

Overall, we learned the power of bringing likeminded organizations who have a singular goal is effective. We have identified so many more needs and are confident of the TN-RCORP consortium’s ability to work together to keep reducing the prevalence of SUD and OUD.

Thank You



**Watertown
Police
Department**

TN-RCORP
A PROGRAM OF
RURAL HEALTH
ASSOCIATION



Tennessee Rural Community Opioid Response (TN-RCORP) Consortium Members!



VSTAR
Behavioral
Health

TN-RCORP
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RURAL HEALTH
ASSOCIATION



*Together, We
Distributed...*



**Bradley-Polk
Walk-in
Clinic**

TN-RCORP
A PROGRAM OF
**RURAL HEALTH
ASSOCIATION**





200+

TN-RCORP Bags...

TN-RCORP
A PROGRAM OF
RURAL HEALTH
ASSOCIATION

Meigs EMS

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RURAL HEALTH
ASSOCIATION

Containing 850 Naloxone Kits...



**Access Medical Care
of Monroe County**



*Drug disposal packets, and
education materials...*



**Live Free Bethany
Church**

TN-RCORP
A PROGRAM OF
RURAL HEALTH
ASSOCIATION





To 60+ Rural Communities



*Together,
we make a
Difference*

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