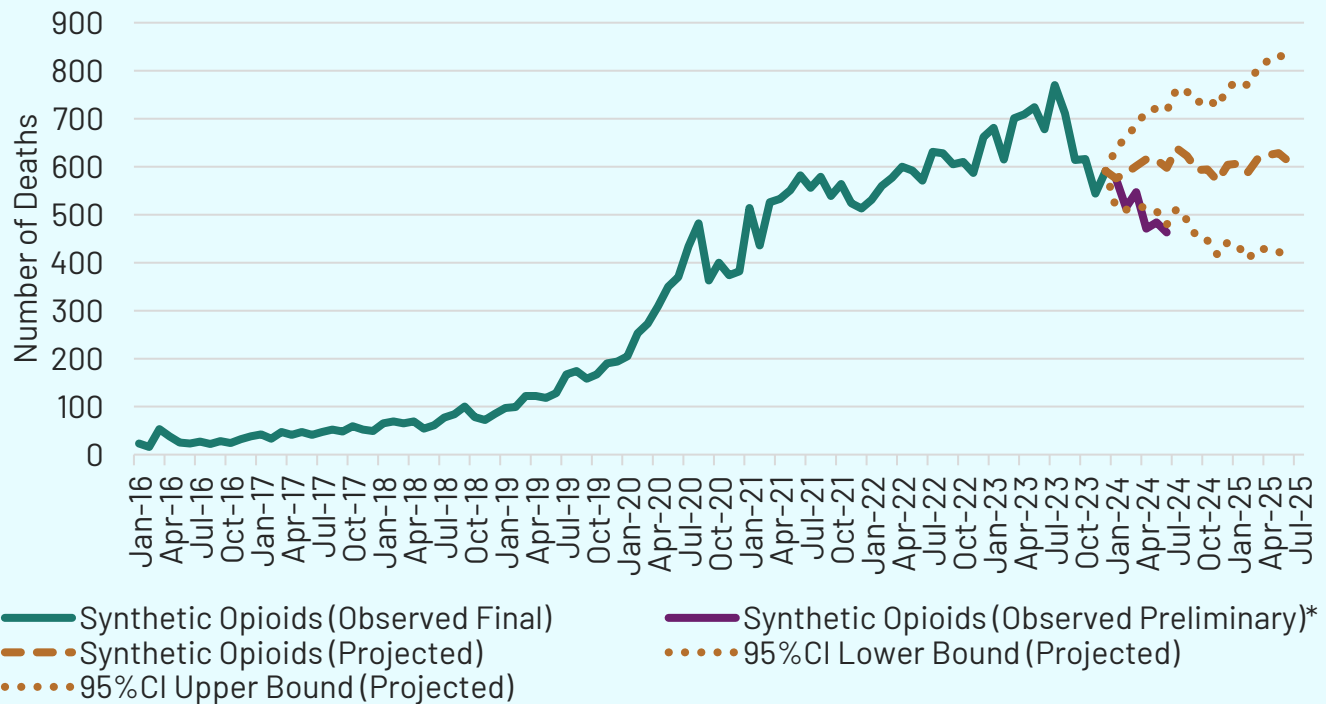


Preliminary Data Through June 2024 Show a Decreasing Trend in Synthetic Opioid-Related Overdose Deaths



Note: CI=Confidence Interval

*While the majority of Quarter 1 and 2 (January to June) 2024 cases are expected to already be captured in this data, 2024 data is still preliminary, and numbers will likely increase as causes of death are finalized.

Key Points:

- Synthetic opioids include drugs such as fentanyl and tramadol. In California, synthetic opioid-related overdose deaths had been rising every year since 2018 and continued to increase through July 2023. Data from the second half of 2023 reflect a decline from the peak.
- Projections based on final 2016 to 2023 data indicated a stable trend through June 2025. However, preliminary data for the first half of 2024 shows a decline in the number of synthetic opioid-related overdose deaths. These data indicate a shift in overdose deaths related to synthetic opioids, which are the primary driver of the overdose epidemic.
- Drug-related overdose deaths not involving synthetic opioids have remained steady since 2016 in California and are projected to remain stable through June 2025. Preliminary data for the first half of 2024 confirms the trend is stable for drug-related overdose deaths not involving synthetic opioids (data shown in the appendix).
- Naloxone (e.g., Narcan) is a life-saving medication used to reverse opioid overdoses. Distribution of naloxone along with other efforts to address the overdose crisis are still urgently needed.

Substance and Addiction Prevention Branch – Overdose Prevention Initiative

Appendix:

Table 1: Observed Monthly Counts for Synthetic Opioids and All-Drugs Minus Synthetic Opioids-related Drug Overdose Deaths in California in 2023 and 2024.

	Synthetic Opioids	All-Drugs Minus Synthetic Opioids
January 2023	681	428
February 2023	615	361
March 2023	701	423
April 2023	709	348
May 2023	724	395
June 2023	678	328
July 2023	770	431
August 2023	711	382
September 2023	614	329
October 2023	616	323
November 2023	544	321
December 2023	591	346
January 2024 (Preliminary)	576	367
February 2024 (Preliminary)	515	347
March 2024 (Preliminary)	547	346
April 2024 (Preliminary)	471	325
May 2024 (Preliminary)	484	327
June 2024 (Preliminary)	463	347

Table 2: Estimated Monthly Counts and 95% Confidence Intervals (CI) for Synthetic Opioids and All-Drugs Minus Synthetic Opioids-related Drug Overdose Deaths in California from January 2024 to June 2025. Projections are based on final data through December 2023.

	Synthetic Opioids			All-Drugs Minus Synthetic Opioids		
	Estimate	Lower CI	Upper CI	Estimate	Lower CI	Upper CI
January 2024	576	514	637	388	323	454
February 2024	586	510	662	358	291	425
March 2024	601	516	686	367	300	435
April 2024	616	515	716	354	285	423
May 2024	614	508	721	368	298	437
June 2024	598	479	716	357	288	427
July 2024	638	513	763	397	327	467
August 2024	622	488	756	389	319	460
September 2024	593	452	734	387	316	458
October 2024	594	446	742	350	278	421
November 2024	570	416	725	345	274	416
December 2024	604	443	765	361	290	433
January 2025	606	434	778	391	317	466
February 2025	589	408	769	364	289	439
March 2025	618	430	807	385	310	460
April 2025	624	427	821	360	285	436
May 2025	628	424	833	378	302	454
June 2025	610	398	823	356	281	432

Technical Notes and Data Source:

Estimated numbers for 2024 and 2025 were calculated using an Autoregressive Integrated Moving Average (ARIMA) model and have a degree of uncertainty. The data sources used for this modeling were the California Comprehensive Master Death Files (CCMDF) 2016–2023. The preliminary data for 2024 were from the California Comprehensive Death File (Dynamic) 2024. Acute drug poisonings regardless of intent (e.g., unintentional, intentional, assault, or undetermined) cases were included. Synthetic opioids exclude methadone and include fentanyl and fentanyl analogs. This analysis includes overdose deaths that occurred in California. This analysis includes non-California residents who died in California and excludes California residents who died outside of California. *The data reported here will not match California Overdose Surveillance Dashboard data as the dashboard includes deaths only among California residents regardless of whether they died in or out of state.*

About the Overdose Prevention Initiative:

[CDPH's Overdose Prevention Initiative \(OPI\)](#) works on the complex and changing nature of the drug overdose epidemic through prevention and research activities. OPI works to advance and amplify CDPH's unified response to reduce the harms from substance misuse and end the evolving drug overdose crisis in California through increased information sharing, policy development, and implementation of its seven core strategies:

- Improve CDPH and state agency coordination.
- Improve state and local surveillance.
- Promote protective factors and reduce risk factors to support individual and community resiliency.
- Increase public awareness and education.
- Expand naloxone access, saturation, and education.
- Promote treatment and reduce stigma.
- Promote harm reduction and drug checking services.

Prevention Resources:

- [Facts Fight Fentanyl](#)
- [Resources for People Who Use Drugs](#)
- [Information About Naloxone](#)
- [Information About Fentanyl](#)
- [Information About Opioids](#)
- [Drug Overdose Response](#)
- [Resources for Persons Experiencing Chronic Pain](#)

Suggested Citation:

Safi SB, Kranz AN. Preliminary Data Through June 2024 Show a Decreasing Trend in Synthetic Opioid-Related Overdose Deaths. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Public Health, February 2025.

Acknowledgement:

This data product was supported by the Opioid Settlements Fund.

Contact: opi@cdph.ca.gov