



# Opioid-Involved Overdose Deaths in Cook County, IL 2022

June 2025

Beginning in 2016, Cook County and Chicago Public Health Departments began working with the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office and Cook County Health to produce an annual joint report of the overall opioid overdose deaths throughout Cook County. This report describes opioid deaths from 2021 and 2022 that have gone through a fatality review process.

## OVERALL

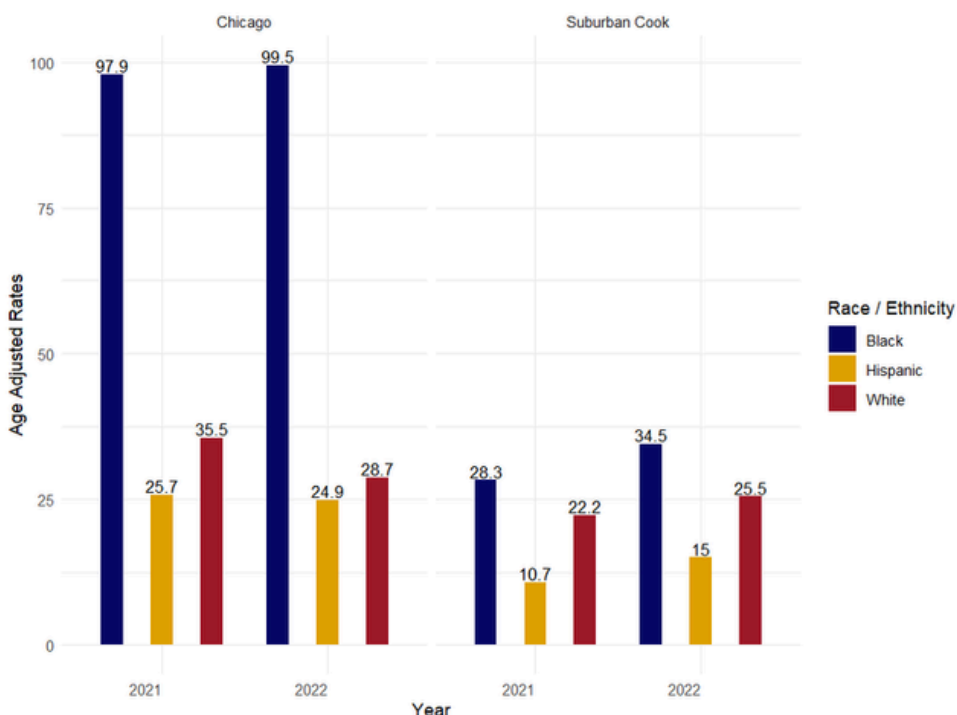
In 2022, Cook County recorded 1,961 opioid-involved overdose deaths, including 1,397 in Chicago and 537 in suburban Cook County (SCC). The opioid-involved death rate was 47.4 per 100,000 residents in Chicago and 21.6 in SCC. By comparison, the overall rate for Illinois was 26.0 and the national rate was 25.0 per 100,000. Chicago's mortality rate was approximately 1.8 times the state rate.

Between 2021 and 2022, Chicago experienced a slight decline in its death rate from 49.3 to 47.4 per 100,000, a 3.9% decrease. In contrast, SCC saw a significant increase, with the rate rising from 18.0 to 21.6 per 100,000 with an increase of 20%.

## RACE & ETHNICITY\*

The burden of opioid mortality remains disproportionately high among Non-Hispanic Black residents. In 2022, the age-adjusted mortality rate for Non-Hispanic Black individuals was 99.5 per 100,000 in Chicago and 34.5 per 100,000 in SCC. These rates were 3.5 and 1.4 times more than Non-Hispanic White individuals, when compared to the rates 28.7 per 100,000 in Chicago and 25.5 per 100,000 in SCC. Rates among Black residents were nearly four times higher than Hispanic residents in Chicago (24.9 per 100,000) and about 2.3 times higher in SCC (15 per 100,000).

Figure 1: Rates of Opioid Deaths in Suburban Cook by Race/Ethnicity (2021 - 2022)



## SEX & AGE GROUP

Males continued to experience disproportionately higher opioid-involved mortality compared to females in 2022, with rates of 76.5 for males and 20.0 for females in Chicago, and 33.5 for males and 10.2 for females in SCC. Age group analyses revealed elevated mortality among middle-aged adults. In Chicago, individuals aged 45–54 and 55–64 had rates exceeded 95 per 100,000, while in SCC, the highest rates were observed among those aged 25–44 and 45–64, ranging from 36.5 to 39.3 per 100,000. In Chicago, the greatest reduction was among young adults aged 15–24, whose death rate fell by 24.3% from 2021 to 2022. In SCC, increasing rates were found among those aged 65–74 (up 125.6%), 45–54 (up 27.6%), and 55–64 (up 24.6%).

## TYPE OF OPIOID INVOLVED

Fentanyl continued to dominate opioid-involved mortality in 2022, with 94.3% of deaths in Chicago and 92% in SCC involving the substance. In contrast, deaths involving heroin showed a slight decline, while deaths involving opioid pain relievers and methadone remained relatively low.

**Table 1: Percentage of all Opioid-involved Overdose Deaths by Opioid Type - Cook County, IL (2022)**

Opioid-Involved Types <sup>I</sup>	City of Chicago Population = 2,745,830 (n = 1,397)	Suburban Cook Population = 2,529,711 (n = 537)
Fentanyl-involved	1,317 (94.3%)	494 (92%)
Heroin-involved	370 (26.5%)	117 (21.8%)
Opioid pain reliever-involved <sup>II</sup>	93 (6.7%)	62 (11.5%)
Methadone-involved <sup>III</sup>	91 (6.5%)	22 (4.1%)

Data Source: Cook County Medical Examiner's Office, 2020 U.S. Census Bureau

Note: Geographic designations are based on address of incident, regardless of decedent's residence address. Missing addresses were NOT accounted for in the calculations of frequencies and rates.

<sup>I</sup> Categories are not mutually exclusive as some deaths involved more than one type of opioid. Percentages will not add up to 100%.

<sup>II</sup> Opioid pain reliever: Buprenorphine, codeine, hydrocodone, hydromorphone, meperidine, morphine, oxycodone, oxymorphone, or tramadol.

Buprenorphine is included in this category, but it is not possible to determine if it was prescribed for pain or opioid use disorder treatment or used illicitly.

<sup>III</sup> Methadone: It is not possible to determine if methadone was prescribed for opioid use disorder treatment or used illicitly.

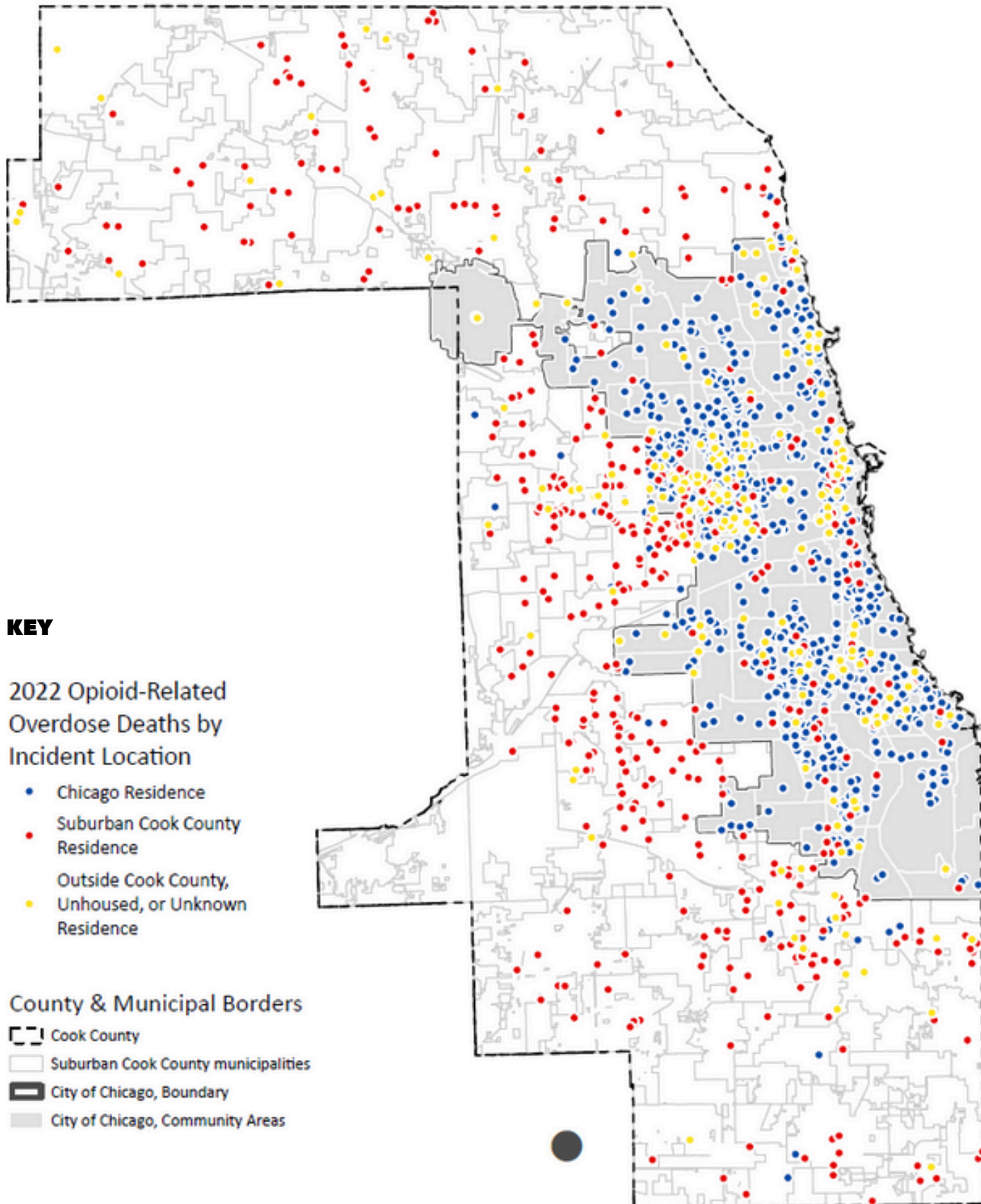
**Table 2: Opioid-Related Overdose Deaths by Residence - Cook County, IL (2022)**

Home Residence Locations	City of Chicago Population = 2,745,830 (n = 1,397)	Suburban Cook Population = 2,529,711 (n = 537)
Residence in Chicago	1,114 (79.7%)	38 (7.1%)
Homeless	4 (0.3%)	4 (0.7%)
Residence outside of Cook County	110 (7.9%)	48 (8.9%)
Residence in SCC	107 (7.7%)	424 (79%)
Residence Unknown	62 (4.4%)	16 (3%)

Beginning in 2016, the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office provided decedent's address of residence and of overdose incident. The address of residence is obtained from a variety of sources, including hospital records, police records, family, and government ID. Missing addresses were not accounted for in the calculations of frequencies and rates.



Figure 2: Opioid-Related Overdose Deaths by Incident Location



Data Source: Cook County Medical Examiner, US Census Bureau.  
Note: Dots do not represent exact incident addresses.



Table 3: Opioid Involved Overdose Deaths, Chicago and SCC, IL (2021 & 2022)

Opioid-involved overdose deaths by demographics								
INDICATOR	CHICAGO				SUBURBAN COOK COUNTY			
	2021		2022		2021		2022	
	#	RATE <sup>II</sup>	#	RATE <sup>II</sup>	#	RATE <sup>II</sup>	#	RATE <sup>II</sup>
<b>DRUG TYPE<sup>I</sup></b>								
All Opioids	1,441	49.3	1,397	47.4	442	18.0	537	21.6
Fentanyl-involved	1,316	45.1	1,317	44.6	389	16.0	494	19.9
Heroin-involved	477	16.3	370	12.4	124	4.9	117	4.8
Opioid-pain- reliever-involved <sup>III</sup>	143	5.0	93	3.0	66	2.7	62	2.4
Methadone- involved <sup>IV</sup>	89	3.0	91	3.1	26	1.0	22	0.9
<b>SEX<sup>V</sup></b>								
Male	1,100	77.2	1,091	76.5	332	27.7	408	33.5
Female	341	22.9	306	20.0	110	8.7	129	10.2
<b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b>								
Black	881	97.9	908	99.5	122	28.3	154	34.5
White	333	35.5	269	28.7	250	22.2	289	25.5
Hispanic	213	25.7	203	24.9	61	10.7	86	15
Asian or Pacific Islander	<5	++	12†	5.2	<5	++	<5	++
<b>AGE</b>								
0-14	<5	++	<5	++	<5	++	-	-
15-24	74	20.2	56	15.3	41	12.8	48	15
25-34	203	36.9	207	37.6	106	34.7	120	39.3
35-44	244	61.5	251	63.2	105	32.0	123	37.5
45-54	365	111.8	314	96.2	94	28.6	120	36.5
55-64	426	140.4	414	136.4	81	23.2	101	28.9
65-74	120	56.9	142	67.3	11†	4.3	25	9.7
75+	7†	5.0	11†	7.9	<5	++	-	-

Note: Geographic designations are based on address of incident, regardless of decedent's residence address. Due to differing methods used by CCDPH and CDPH to adjudicate fatality in their jurisdiction, the joint report's counts may differ from those reported by the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office. Missing addresses were NOT accounted for in the calculations of frequencies and rates.

I Categories are not mutually exclusive as some deaths involved more than one type of opioid.

II Rates express the number of overdose deaths per 100,000 people of corresponding population. Denominators are based on the 2020 census population. Rates are age-adjusted to the 2000 US standard population.

III Opioid pain reliever: buprenorphine, codeine, hydrocodone, hydromorphone, meperidine, morphine, oxycodone, oxymorphone, or tramadol. Buprenorphine is included in this category, but it is not possible to determine if it was prescribed for pain or opioid use disorder treatment or used illicitly.

IV Methadone: it is not possible to determine if methadone was prescribed for opioid use disorder treatment or used illicitly.

V Gender categories are not accounted for.

† Rates for counts less than 20 (although reported) should be interpreted with caution. Counts less than 5 are suppressed.