
SUBSTANCE USE IN IOWA

Susie Sher, Bureau Chief

Iowa Department of Public Safety

Office of Drug Control Policy





- Susie Sher, Bureau Chief
- OCDP is the SAA for Iowa
- Drug policy and federal grants
- Charged with coordinating substance use prevention, treatment, and enforcement efforts in Iowa

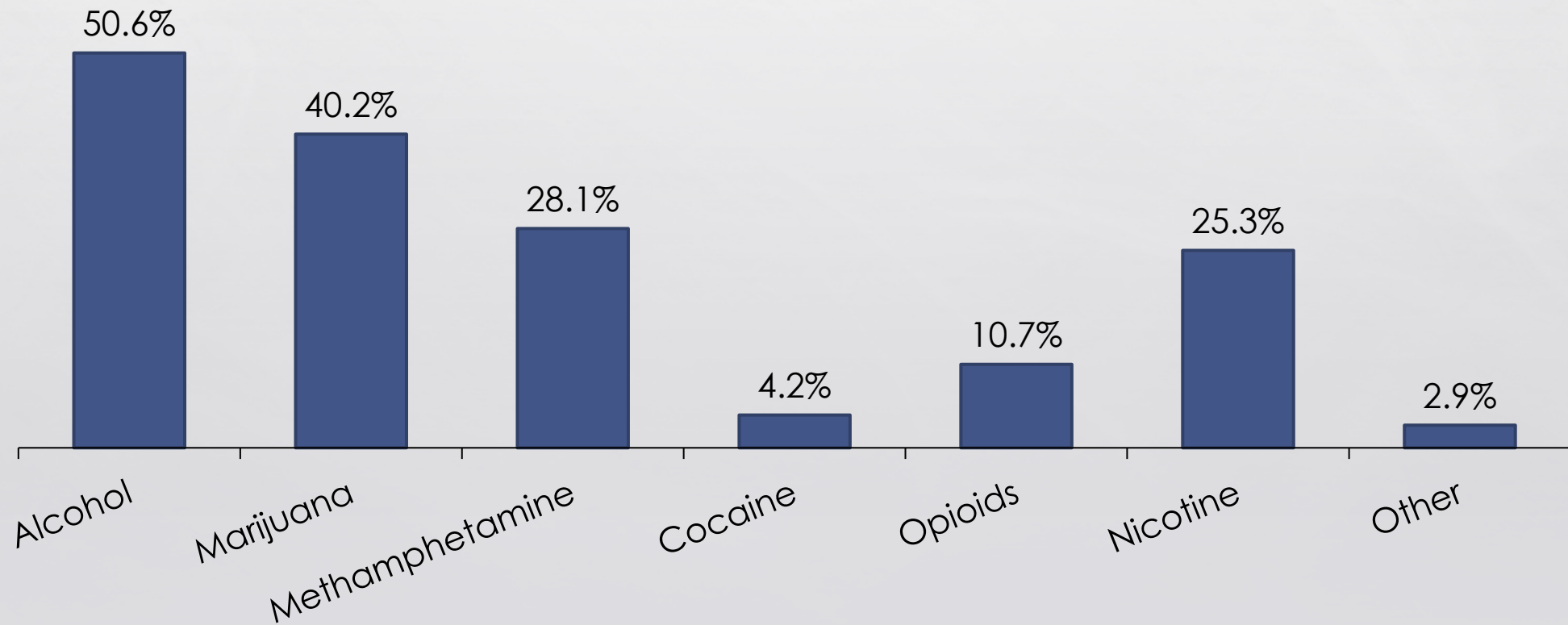
What are we
seeing in
Iowa?

- Marijuana
- Cocaine
- Meth is king
- Pills, both Rx and counterfeit

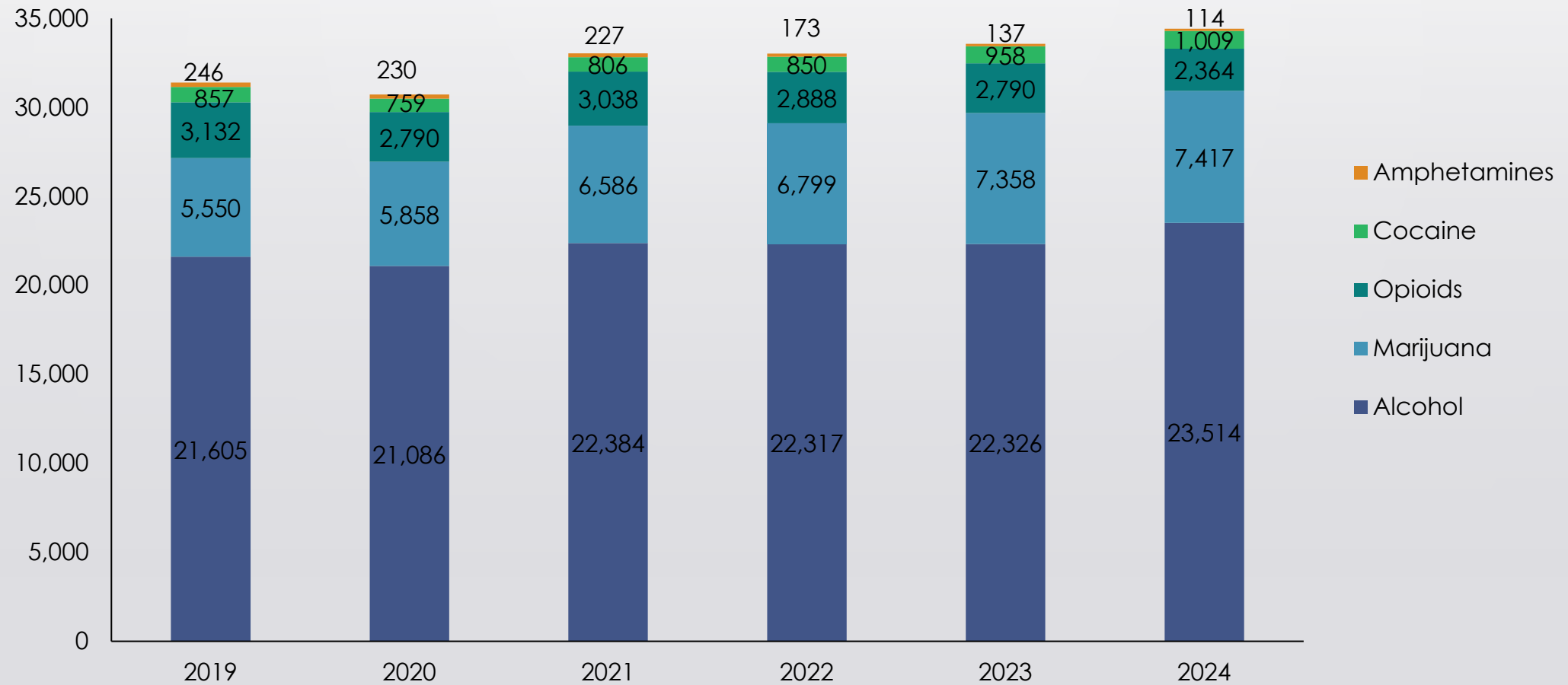
Normalization of Drug & Alcohol Use



Past 30-Day Substance Use by Iowa Adult & Juvenile Clients Admitted to SUD Treatment



Iowa Drug and Alcohol-Related ED Visits



Intentional Exposure Calls to Poison Control

Intentional Exposure

- Substance Abuse
- Substance Misuse
- Suspected suicide
- Unknown

Type of Substance

- **172** Non-Pharmaceutical (alcohol, cleaning products, hygiene products)
- **779** Pharmaceutical (OTC medicines, prescription drugs)

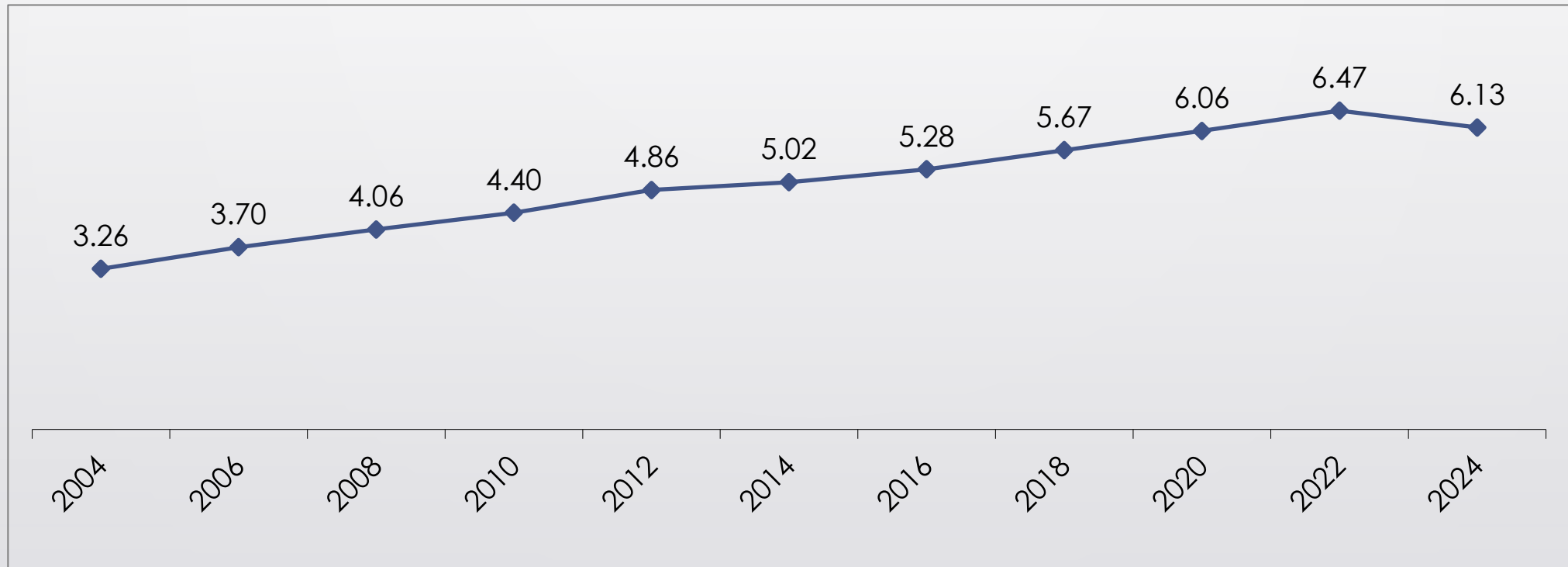
Age Range

- **312** age 6 to 19
- **636** age 20 or older

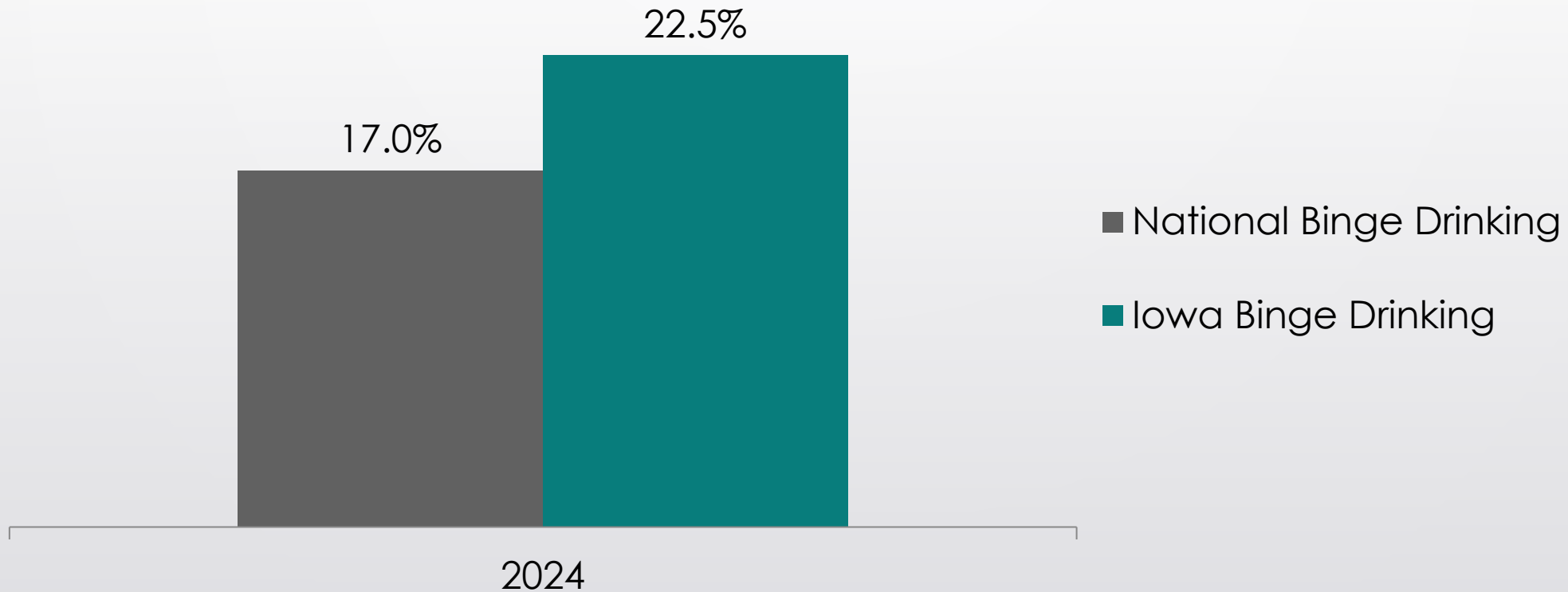
Iowa Alcohol-Related Deaths

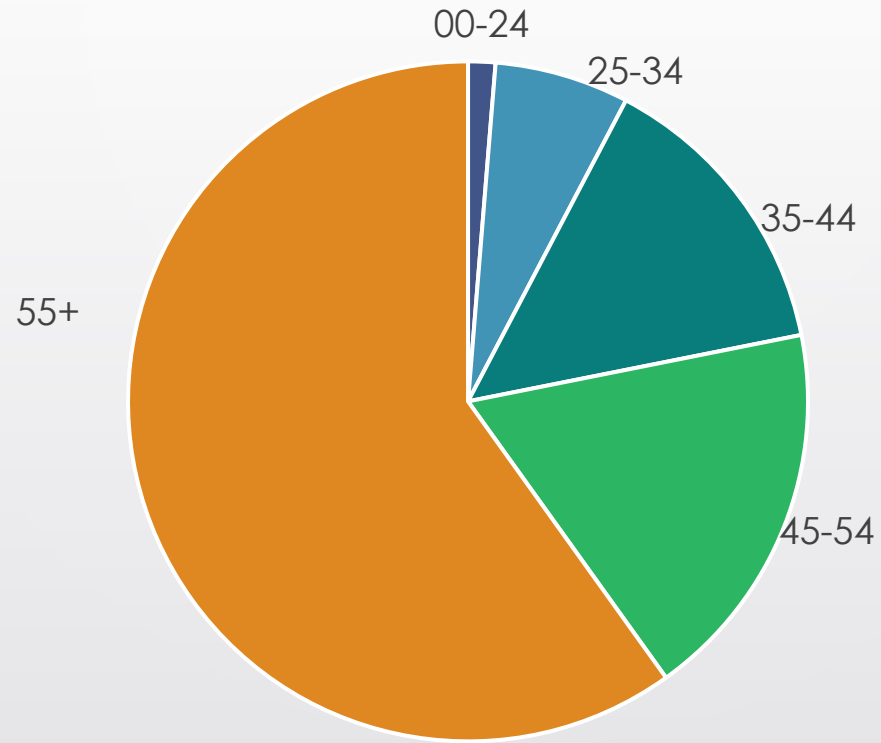


Iowa Distilled Spirits Sales (gallons in millions)



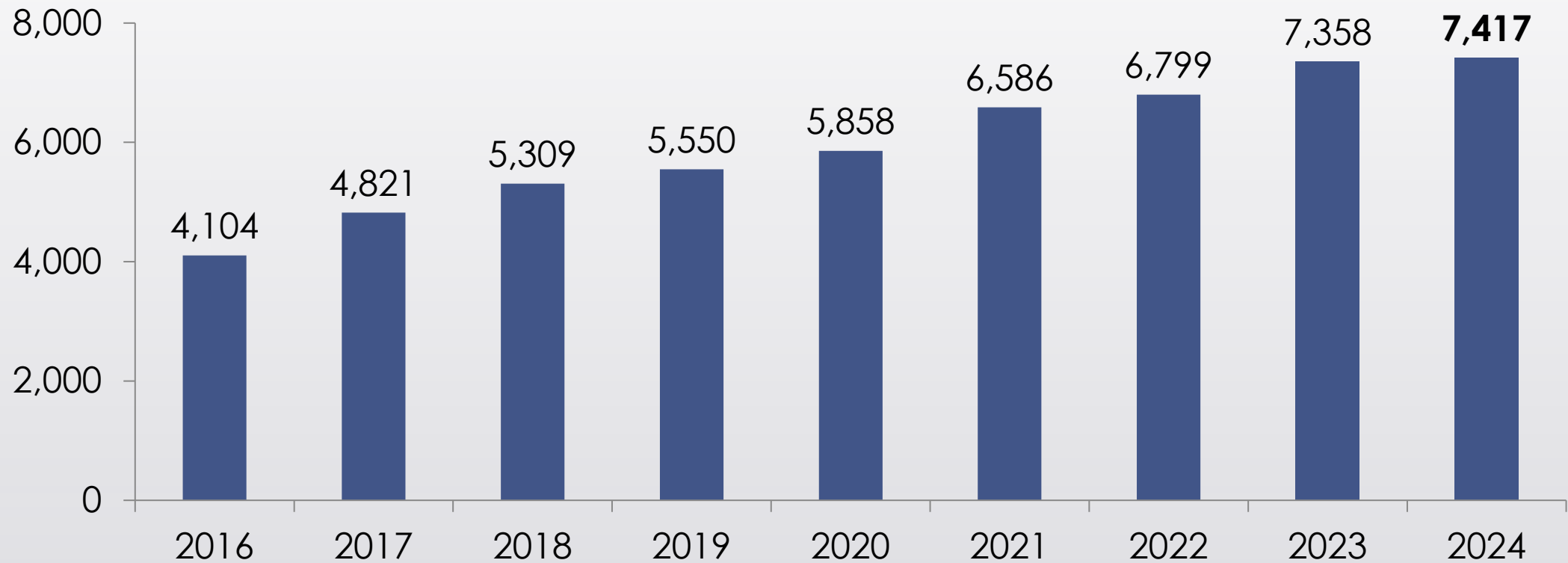
Binge Drinking Rates



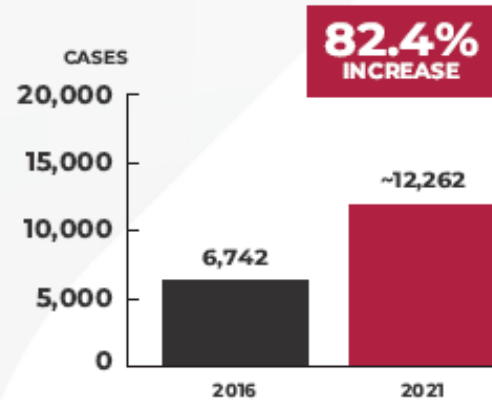


Alcohol-Related Deaths by Age Group

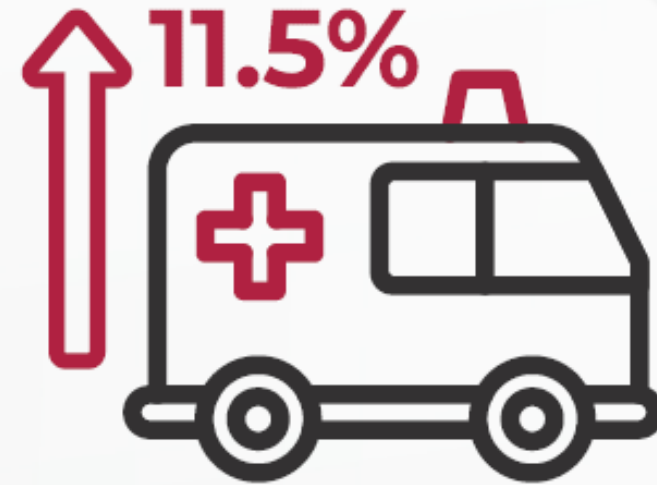
Iowa Marijuana-Related ED Visits



Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM)



Marijuana-related pediatric emergency visits increased by 82.4% (2016–2021).

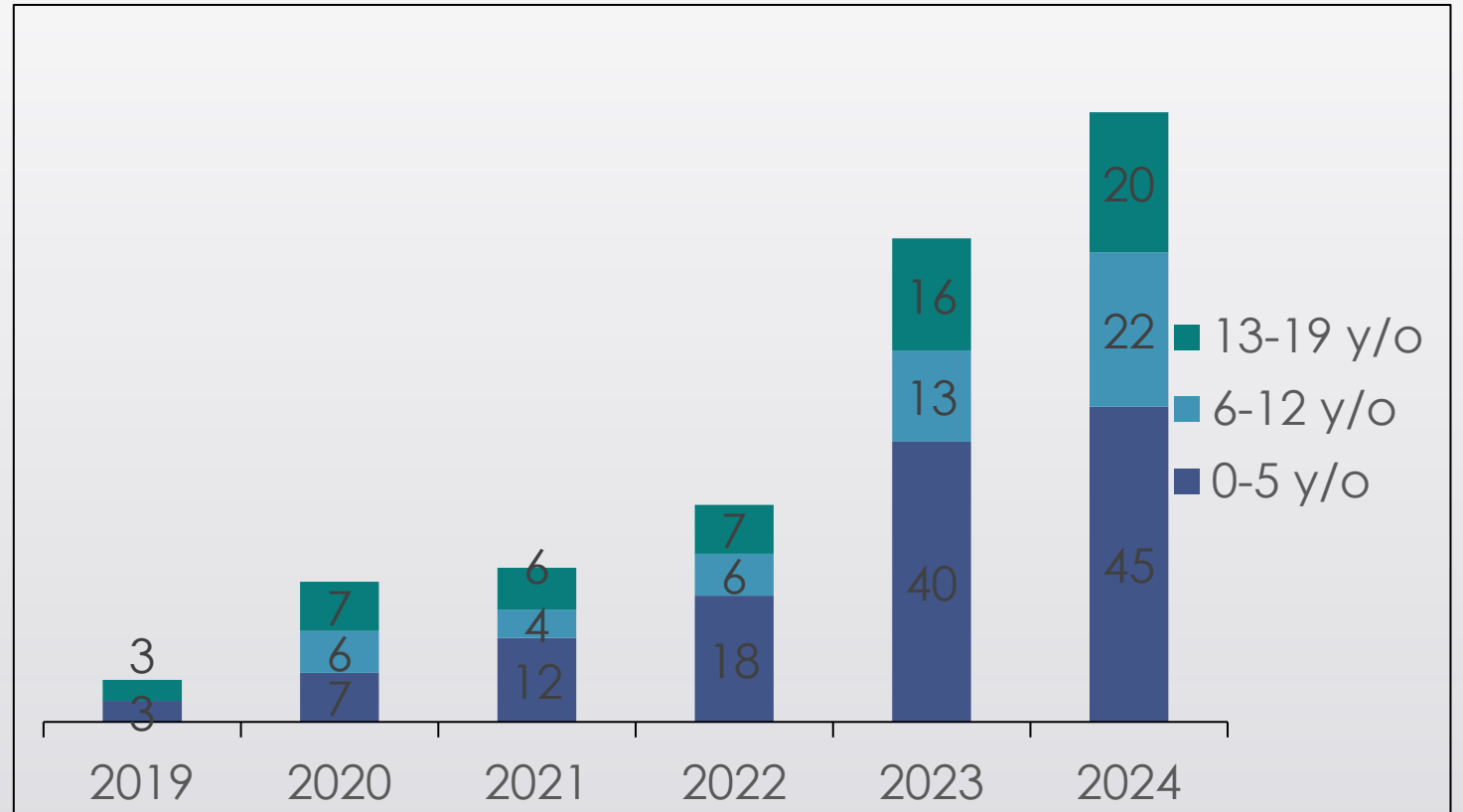
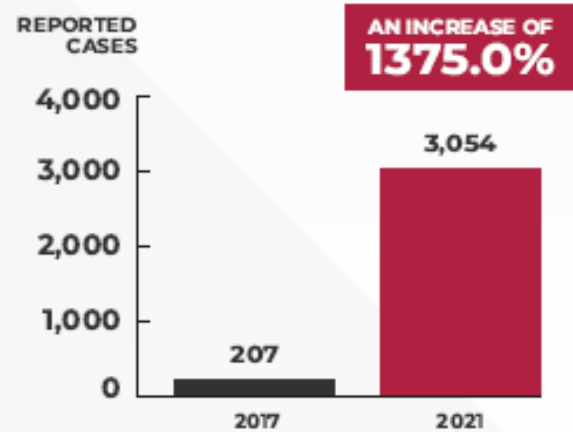


Marijuana-related emergency department visits increased 11.5% from 2021 to 2023.

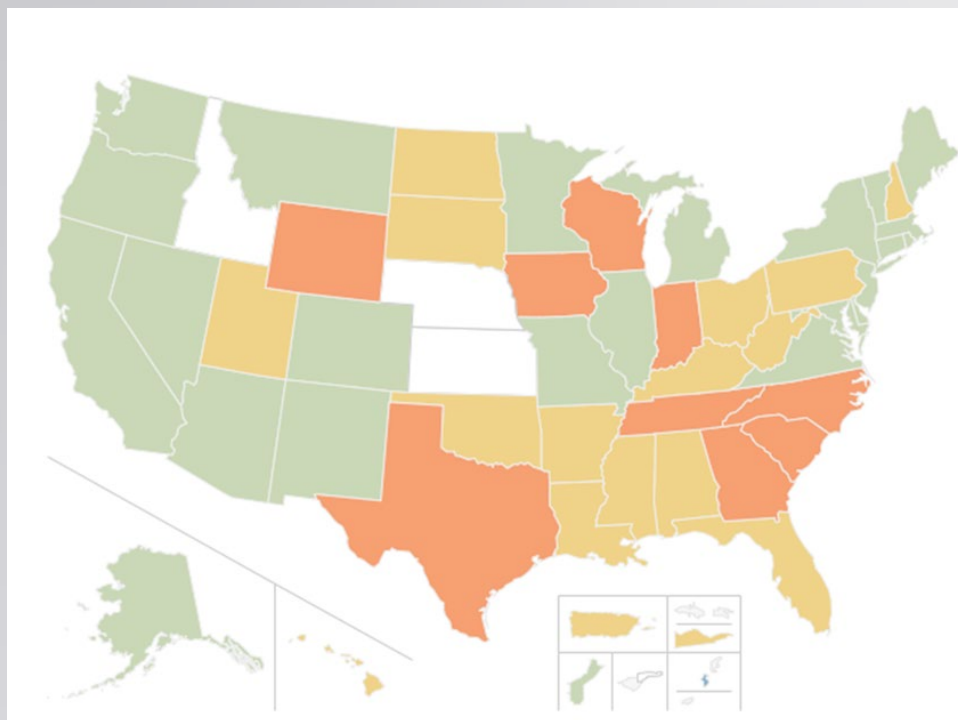
Cases of pediatric THC Exposures

THC Edible Cases Reported to the Iowa Poison Control Center

Pediatric (kids under the age of 6) accidental edible marijuana exposure increased by 1,375% (2017–2021).



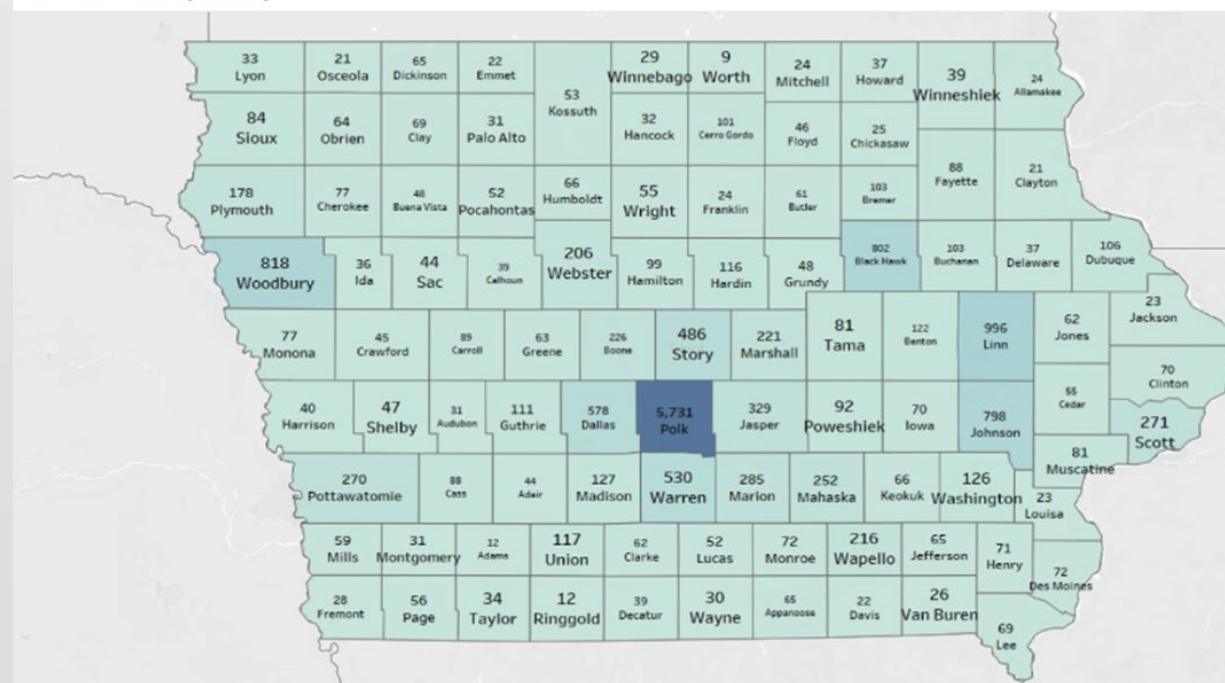
Medical Marijuana



**14 of 15 states with highest
12+ past month usage
legalized marijuana.**

NSDUH/NCSL, 2020/2022

Active Patients by County



**Youth 12-20 were more likely to
become cannabis users in legal
marijuana states vs. others.**

University of California-San Diego, 2022

Medical Marijuana

Iowa patients or caregivers may possess these THC-containing cannabis (marijuana) products:

Vaporizable

Oral forms - tablets, capsules, liquids,
tinctures, and sublingual forms

Topical forms - gels, ointments, creams,
lotions, and transdermal patches

There is a "4.5g THC per 90-day" purchase limit for Iowa's program, but this is enforced at the point of sale at dispensaries. Medical waivers may also be in place. (=50mg per day)

THC will show up on a drug test up to 90 days after consumption

“Consumable Hemp”

- Consumable hemp is still THC (Legalized edibles)
- There are >1,000 active registrants in Iowa, including many bars and restaurants
- Maximum total THC limits for consumable hemp products is now 4 mg/serving and 10 mg/container
- July 1, 2024, law now prohibits the sale of consumable hemp to individuals under 21

Amount of THC in Consumable Hemp Products

HIGH THC PRODUCTS ARE CURRENTLY PERMISSIBLE
Edibles with large doses of DELTA-9 THC can still comply with Federal limit of 0.3% THC by weight.

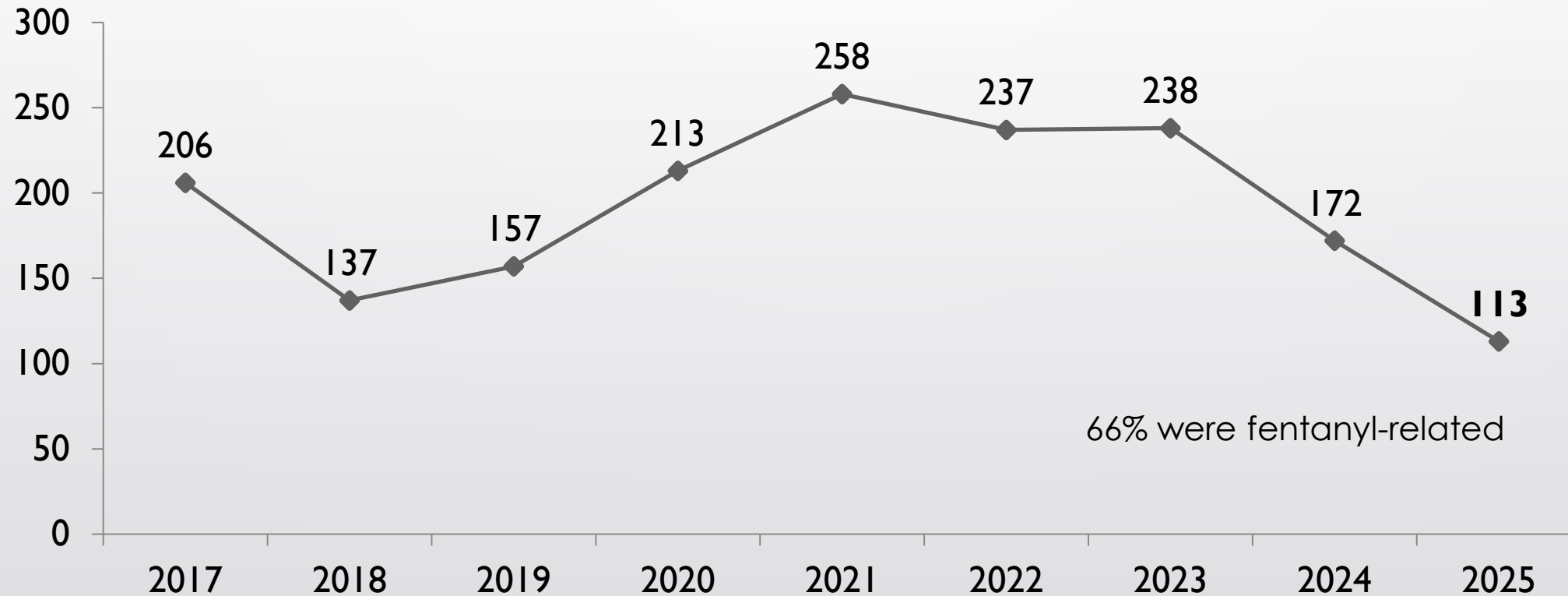
Standard adult dose of THC = 10mg



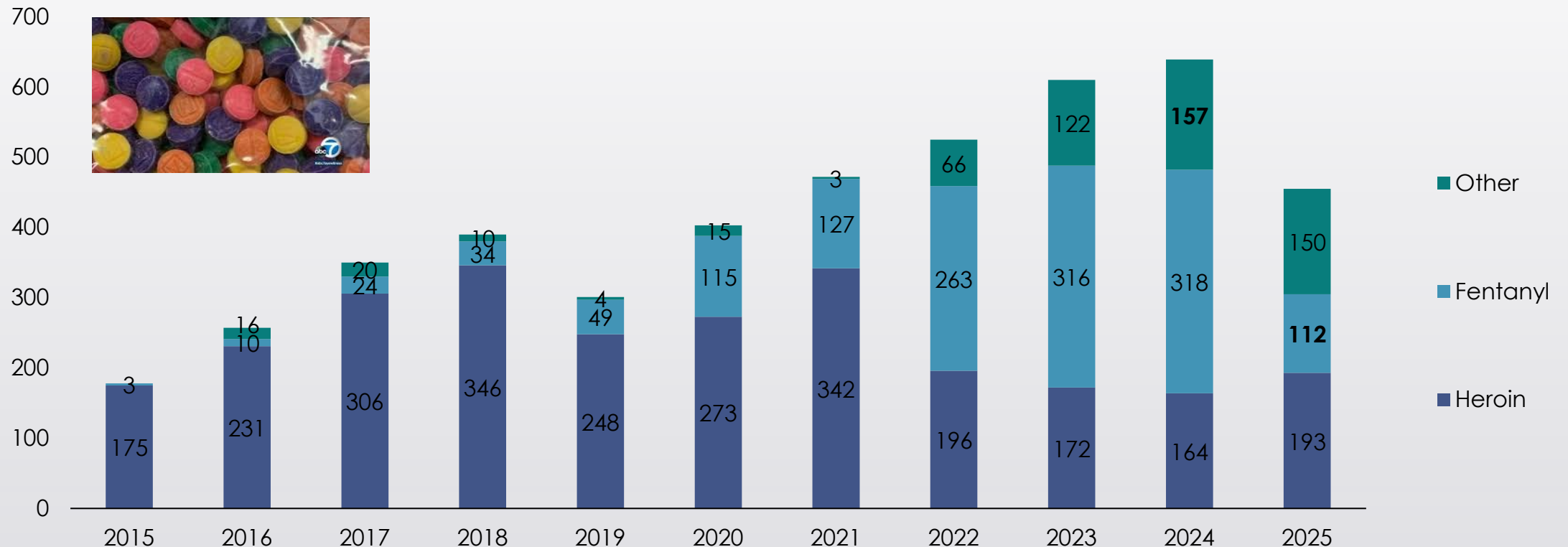
10mg Beverage **50mg multi-colored candy**
10mg gummies **100mg Gummy** **150mg Chocolate Bar**

Source: Iowa HHS, Cannabis Regulation

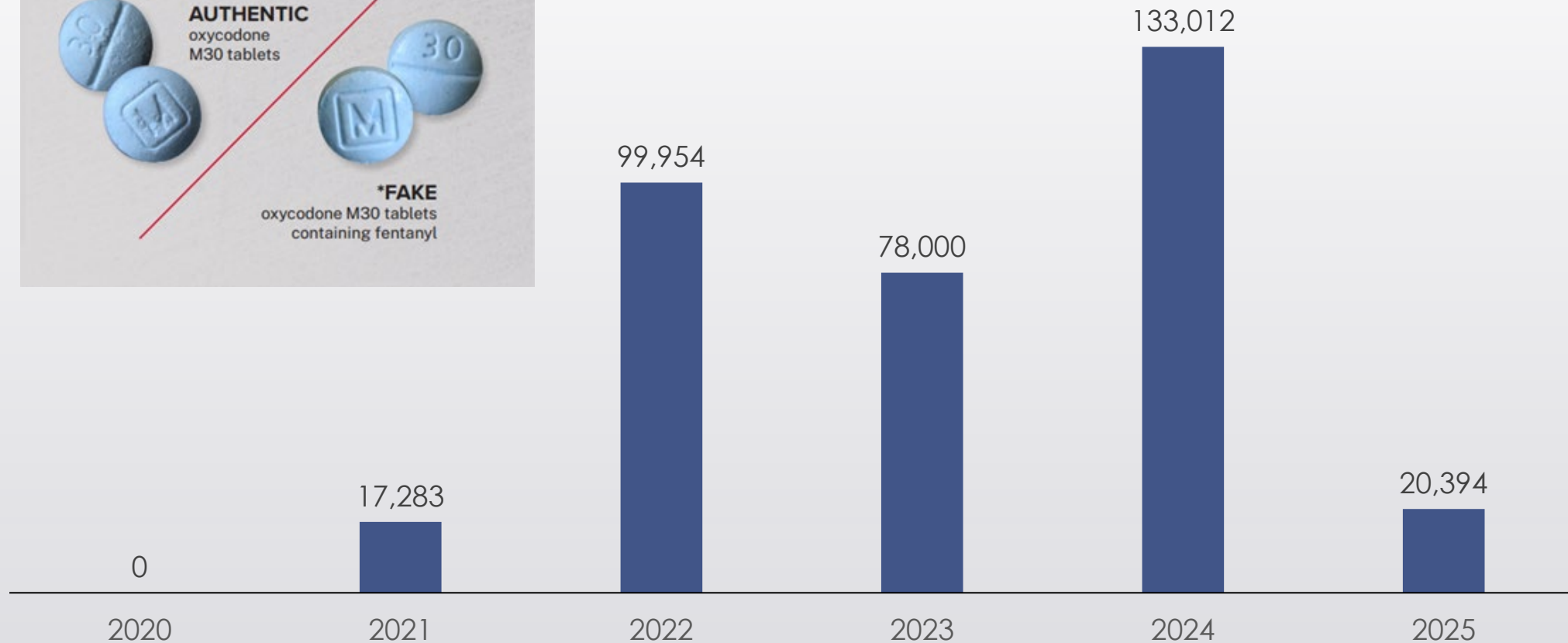
Opioid-Related Overdose Deaths



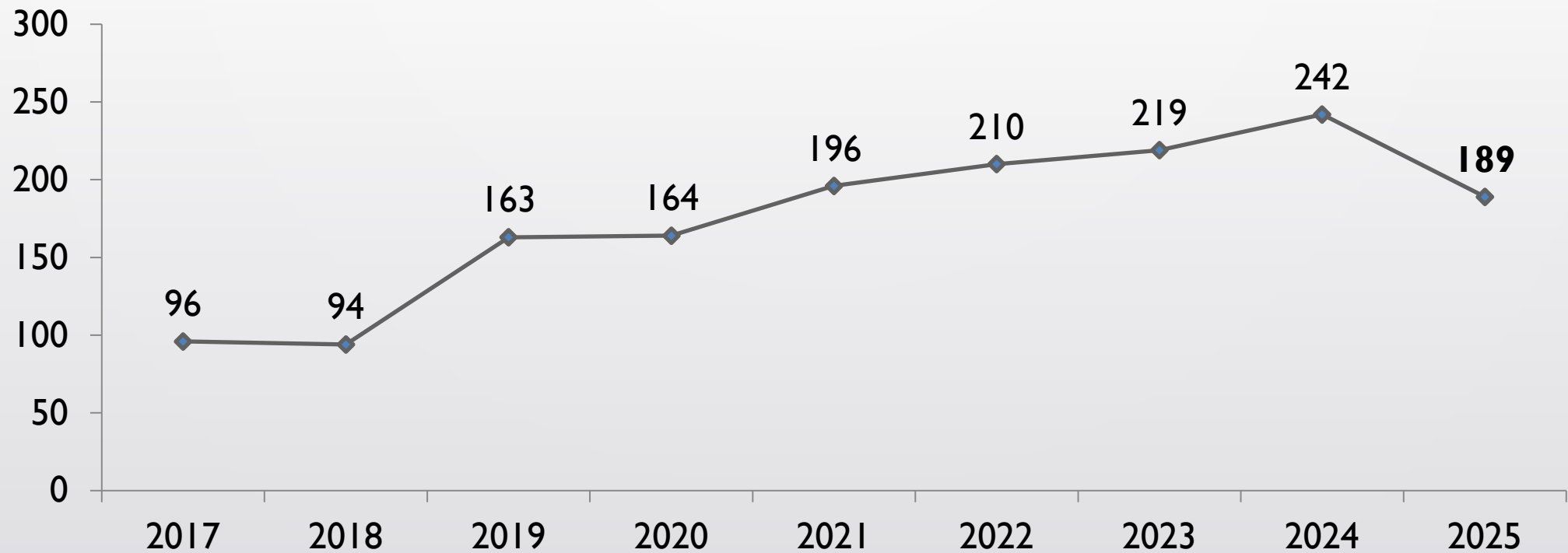
Law Enforcement Opioid Seizures



Iowa Crime Lab Counterfeit Pill Submissions



Iowa Psychostimulant-Related Deaths



Iowa Average Methamphetamine Price per Gram and Purity

	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020	2023
Price	\$130	\$135	\$125	\$105	\$105	\$89	\$43
Purity	79%	87%	95%	97%	97%	97%	98%

Cocaine

2016 to 2021 – 6,000 to 12,000 grams

2022 – 43,727 grams

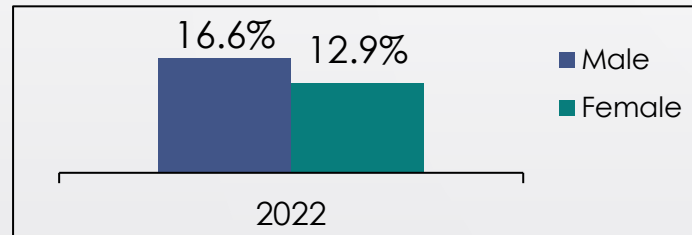
2023 – 76,863 grams

2024 – 19,115 grams

2025 – 23,392 grams

Nicotine & Energy Drinks

Current Iowa Smokers

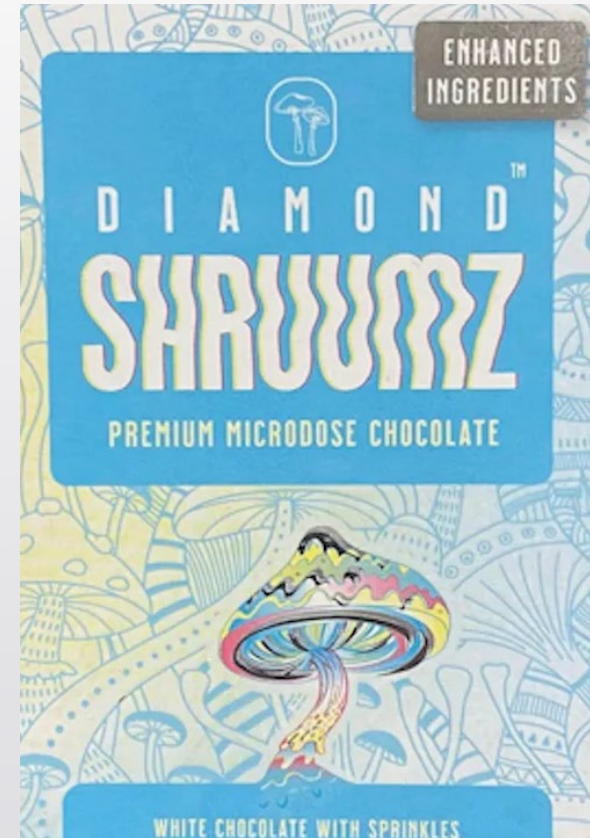
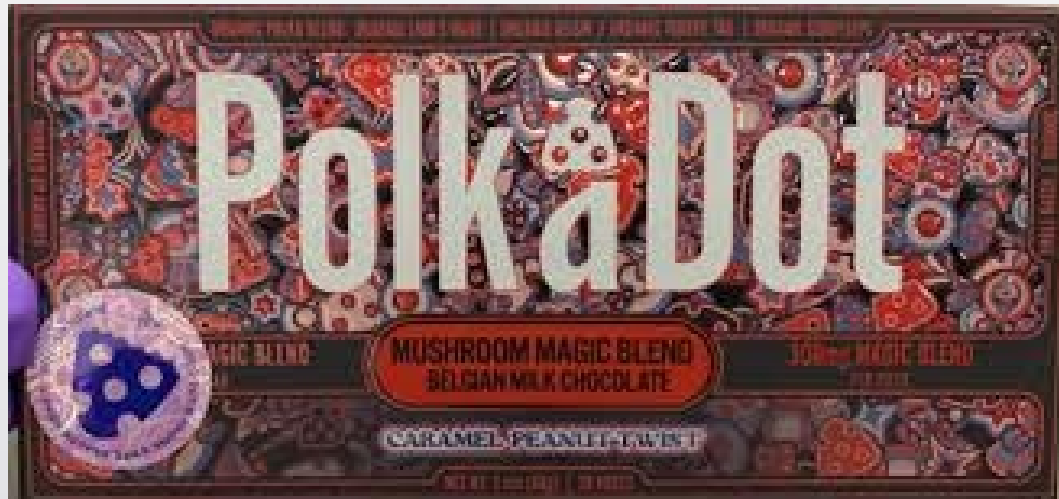


- Anxiety, irritation, dehydration, cardiac arrest, headaches, then sleepiness, fatigue, lower motivation to work, impaired mental performance, muscle stiffness, blood pressure issues, mood swings, aggression, anemia, heart palpitations
- Recommended max 400mg for adults, 100mg for kids

Vaping is NOT Harmless



Psilocybin & Muscimol



Kratom-Derived Products (7-OH, MGM-15, MGM-16)





Emerging Drugs

- Xylazine
- Nitazines
- Medetomidine
- Tianeptine

DRUG-FREE Workplace

Drug Use in the Workplace

77%

of drug users are employed (Bureau of Labor Statistics)

5x

more likely to file a workers' compensation claim (Employee Assistance Society of North America)

3x

more likely than non-users to be late for work; users are absent 30-35 days per year (U.S. Chamber of Commerce)

Substances users are also:

- 33-50% less productive (National Institute on Drug Abuse)
- Absent 30-35 days per year and 3x more likely than non-users to be late for work (U.S. Chamber of Commerce)
- 3 to 4x more likely to have an accident on the job (Employee Assistance Society of North America)

Additionally, a person's alcohol use affects other employees. Twenty-one percent of workers report being put in danger or injured, having to redo work or cover for another employee, or needing to work harder due to others' drinking (JSI Research and Training Institute).

Alcohol Resources

- [DRINK LESS FOR YOUR BREASTS](#)
- [RETHINKING DRINKING](#)
- [REPORT: CANCER IN IOWA](#)
- [YOURLIFEIOWA](#)
- [HHS SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS WEBSITE](#)

- [SAM Impact Report](#)
- [988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE](#)
- [YOURLIFEIOWA](#)
- [TAKE BACKS/DRUG DISPOSAL](#)
- [GOOD SAMARITAN LAW – CALL 911](#)
- [MAT](#)
- [NALOXONEIOWA.ORG](#)

Other
Resources



The 2025 Iowa Drug Control Strategy is a comprehensive and flexible blueprint designed to achieve maximum effectiveness on multiple health and public safety fronts, including: preventing drug use, treating addictive behavior, helping Iowans get into recovery, interrupting illicit drug trafficking, and reducing overdose deaths. This report highlights drug trends, tactical responses, evidence-based practices and promising approaches, a thorough action plan for addressing current and emerging needs, and a summary of associated funding that flows through state agencies.

2025 Iowa Drug Control Strategy



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