



Three-Year Strategic Plan

2025-2027

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Knox County
Substance Misuse Response

Section 1

Leadership Overview



Vision

Decrease the impact of substance misuse within Knox County, Tennessee.

Mission

Create community-level change and a coordinated response to better address the substance misuse epidemic.



Letter from Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs

The urgency of addressing substance misuse and addiction remains as critical as ever. For many of us, this is not a distant issue - it's personal. I think of one of my best friends who has been in recovery for over a decade. Among the many people I've known battling substance misuse, he is one of the very few .

Yet even he lives each day with the weight of uncertainty. One misstep, and the hard-won progress could unravel. That's the harsh reality of this disease. And he is far from alone. Millions of Americans continue to struggle with substance dependency. Public health experts rightly call it an epidemic and here in East Tennessee, the impact has been especially severe.

But there is hope, and there is power in community.

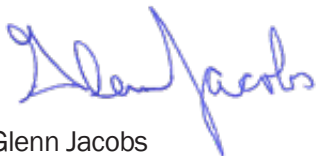
We know that no single organization, agency, or initiative can solve this on its own. It requires all of us working together, removing stigma, sharing resources, and having honest conversations. We must continue to reject the shame and misinformation that prevent people from seeking help and prevent communities from responding effectively.

I am deeply grateful for the leadership of organizations like Metro Drug Coalition and the Knox County Health Department. Their tireless efforts remind us that while this fight is long and complex, it is not unwinnable.

As we look ahead, let's renew our commitment to collaboration, compassion, and community action. Every person we help, every family we support, every life we save matters.

Thank you for continuing to be part of this essential work. Our strength lies in our Unity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Glenn Jacobs". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Glenn" and the last name "Jacobs" clearly distinguishable.

Glenn Jacobs
Knox County Mayor



Letter from City of Knoxville Mayor Indya Kincannon

Dear All4Knox Partners,

Over the past few years, we have witnessed the continued toll that substance misuse takes on our families, neighborhoods, and growing community. Thankfully, we have also witnessed something powerful – what's possible when we work together.

From expanding access to naloxone and peer support to raising awareness about the dangers of fentanyl to reducing stigma around addiction and recovery, All4Knox has become a model of collaboration. You have shown that public health leaders, harm reduction agencies, law enforcement, schools, service providers, and community members can come together with a shared purpose – to save lives and build a healthier, safer future for all.

The progress we've made is tangible. Fatal overdoses in Knox County are declining for the first time in years. Harm reduction efforts are reaching more people than ever before. Prevention programs are helping young people make safer choices for their health. However, we know the work is far from over.

The challenges we face – emerging drug trends, gaps in mental health care, and the devastating impact of addiction on so many families – require a renewed commitment and shared responsibility. The 2025-2027 All4Knox Strategic Plan reflects that spirit. It is a road map shaped by data, community input, and the belief that no single organization, and no individual sector, can solve this alone.

As Mayor, I remain committed to supporting our shared efforts. Together, we are creating pathways to prevention, treatment, and recovery that are grounded in evidence, adaptability, and compassion for all.

Thank you for your leadership, your dedication, and your unwavering resolve. I am proud to stand with you in this work.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Indya Kincannon.

Indya Kincannon
City of Knoxville Mayor

Executive Summary

The **All4Knox Strategic Plan (2025-2027)** represents a coordinated, community-led effort to reduce substance misuse in Knox County through strengthened prevention, treatment, recovery, housing, and wrap-around support system initiatives. As we begin our next three-year cycle, recent local data trends point to both measurable progress and pressing areas for continued focus.

In 2024, Knox County reported 334 drug-related deaths, marking a 36% decrease from the previous year – this is a significant and encouraging shift. However, the same data point also communicates to us that 334 lives were lost to substance misuse, urging us to maintain our drive. Overdose deaths among adults aged 65-74 rose by more than 50%, signaling the need for age-specific prevention strategies among our older demographics. Moreover, fentanyl and its analogues remain a primary contributor behind fatal overdoses, underscoring the continued urgency for overdose prevention education, naloxone distribution, fentanyl testing strip distribution, and other risk mitigation services.

Over the past three years, our six cross-sector implementation teams – Access to Treatment, Housing, Judicial Diversion, Prevention & Education, Recovery Support, and Standardization of Practice – have driven our collective work, representing approximately 75 partner organizations. Summarized in this three-year strategic plan are the goals and objectives identified by each team as salient, impactful ways to address local needs. Some may be achieved more quickly than others, but all represent the shared commitment our community has to creating a safer future for every person.

The progress made reflects the power of unified, community-driven action. Let us meet the path ahead with determination, innovation, and patience.

Knox County
Substance Misuse Response

Section 2

Review and Trends



All4Knox in Review

Since 2023, All4Knox has deepened its commitment to coordinated, community-led responses to substance misuse by launching several projects and expanding public engagement efforts across Knoxville and Knox County. These initiatives reflect the strategic priorities of the six implementation teams and continue to drive prevention, recovery, and systems-level collaboration forward.

Substance Misuse Prevention & Education Speaker Series

Launched as a free, public-facing event series, this quarterly program brings together experts, community voices, and lived-experience perspectives to inform and engage the community of current issues in substance misuse. Topics range from stigma reduction and prevention to local policy and substance regulation updates.

Annual Recovery Housing and Resource Fair

Navigating recovery housing programs to find the best fit for yourself or a loved one can be challenging. This event convenes service providers, peer organizations, and local recovery housing programs and resources in one location to connect individuals and families with supportive recovery services and living environments.

Re-entry Roadmap

Developed in collaboration with law enforcement, justice, and community partners, this tool offers guidance and resources for individuals transitioning from incarceration back into the community to support successful reintegration and reduce recidivism. The Roadmap highlights long-standing wrap-around services, insurance coverage, treatment providers, food pantries, and more to make the re-entry process less difficult to navigate.

National Impaired Driving Prevention Month Campaign

In conjunction with the national awareness efforts, All4Knox led a countywide awareness campaign during National Impaired Driving Prevention Month, highlighting the dangers of driving under the influence and promoting prevention messaging across media channels and community networks.

Recovery Housing Guide

This publicly available guide collating more than 30 programs helps individuals, families, and professionals navigate recovery housing options in and near Knox County, promoting informed choices and expanding access to supportive environments.

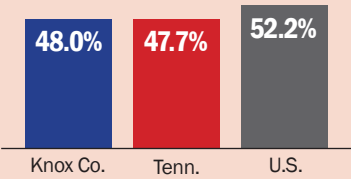
2023 Anti-Stigma Media Campaign

This campaign challenged misconceptions about substance use and recovery through powerful storytelling and local messaging aimed at reducing stigma. The testimonies shared by current Knox County residents helps bring identities to the recovery journey, reminding everyone that hope – recovery – is possible.

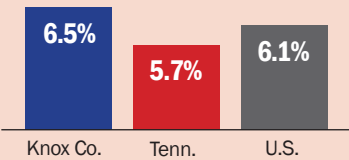
Scope of Substance Misuse in Knox County

Percentage of people who report using

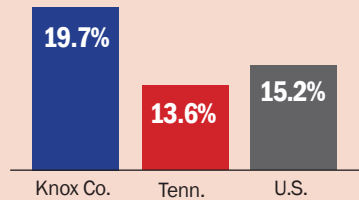
ALCOHOL



Prevalence estimates of adults reporting alcohol use on one or more days during the past 30 days (current use), Knox County, Tennessee, United States, 2023

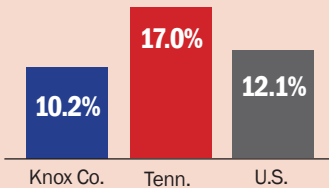


Prevalence estimates of heavy alcohol use among adults, Knoxville, Tennessee, United States, 2023

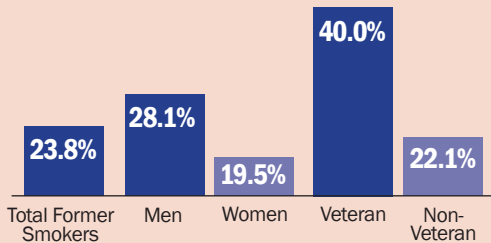


Prevalence estimates of adults reporting binge drinking one or more times during the past 30 days (current use), Knox County, Tennessee, United States, 2023

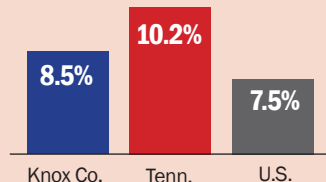
TOBACCO



Prevalence estimates of adults (18+ years) who said they had smoked one or more cigarettes during the past 30 days (current smokers), Knox County, Tennessee and the United States, 2023



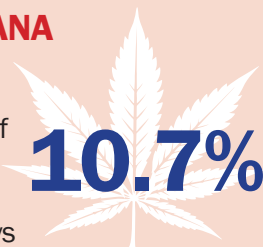
Prevalence of former smokers among Knox County adults by gender and veteran status, 2023



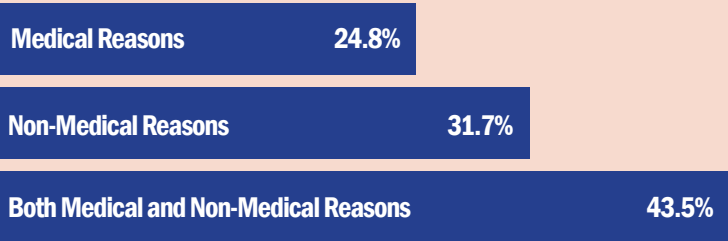
Prevalence estimates of adults (18+ years) using e-cigarettes or electronic vapor product on some days or every day, Knox County, Tennessee, United States, 2023

MARIJUANA

Prevalence estimates of marijuana use on one or more days during the past 30 days among Knox County adults (18+ years) 2023

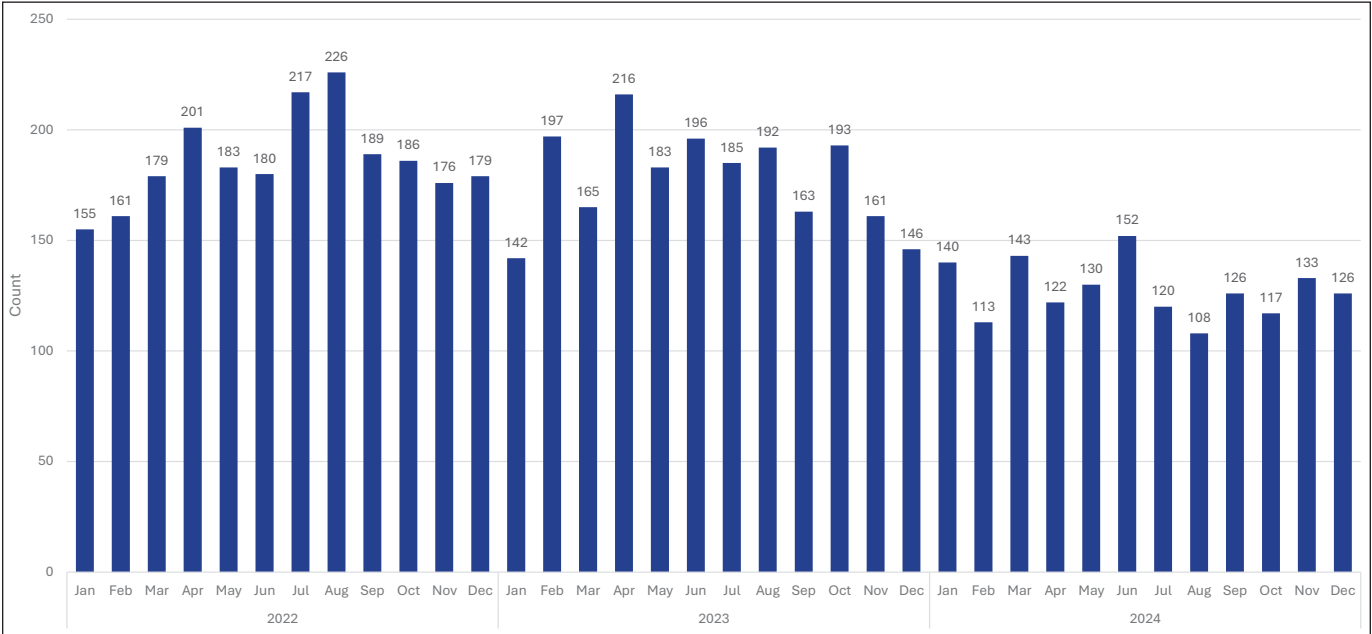


Primary reason given for marijuana use among Knox County adults (18+ years) in 2023: Prevalence estimates

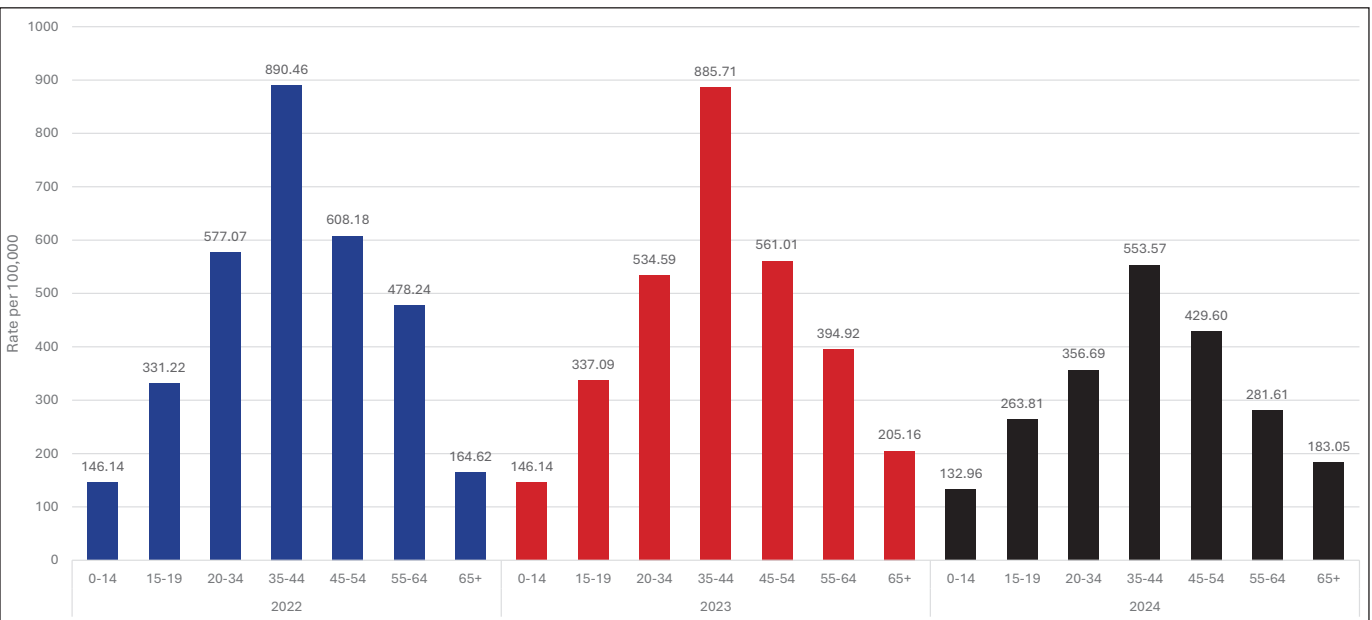


Emergency Department Overdose Visits

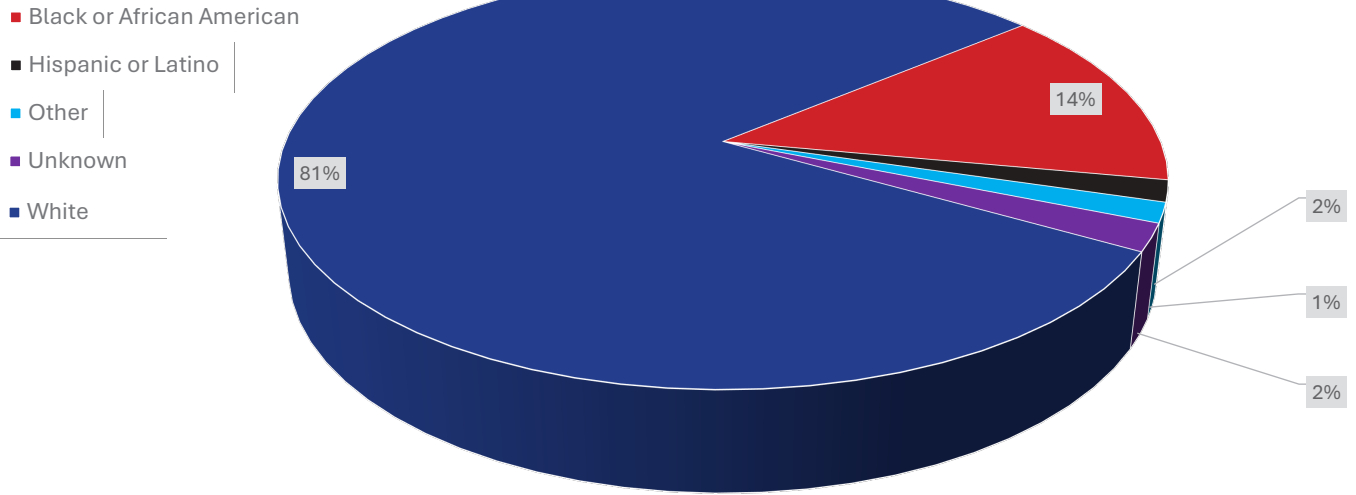
Number of overdose visits by year (2022-2024)



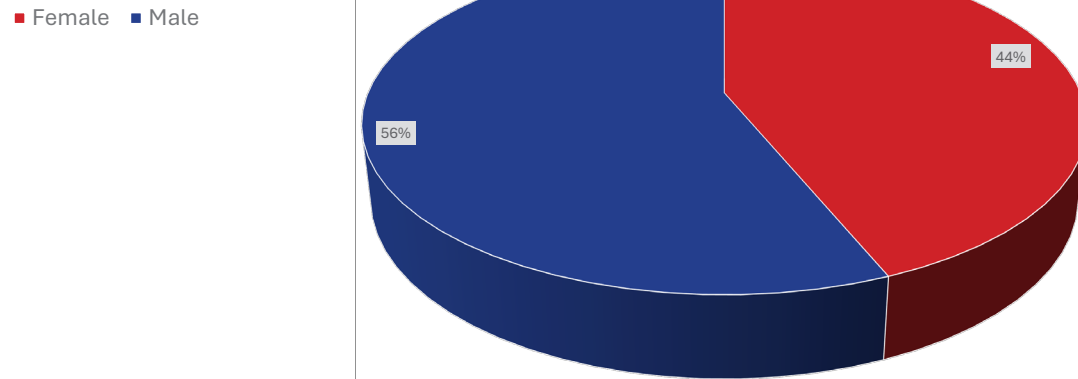
Number of overdose visits by age group (rate per 100,000)



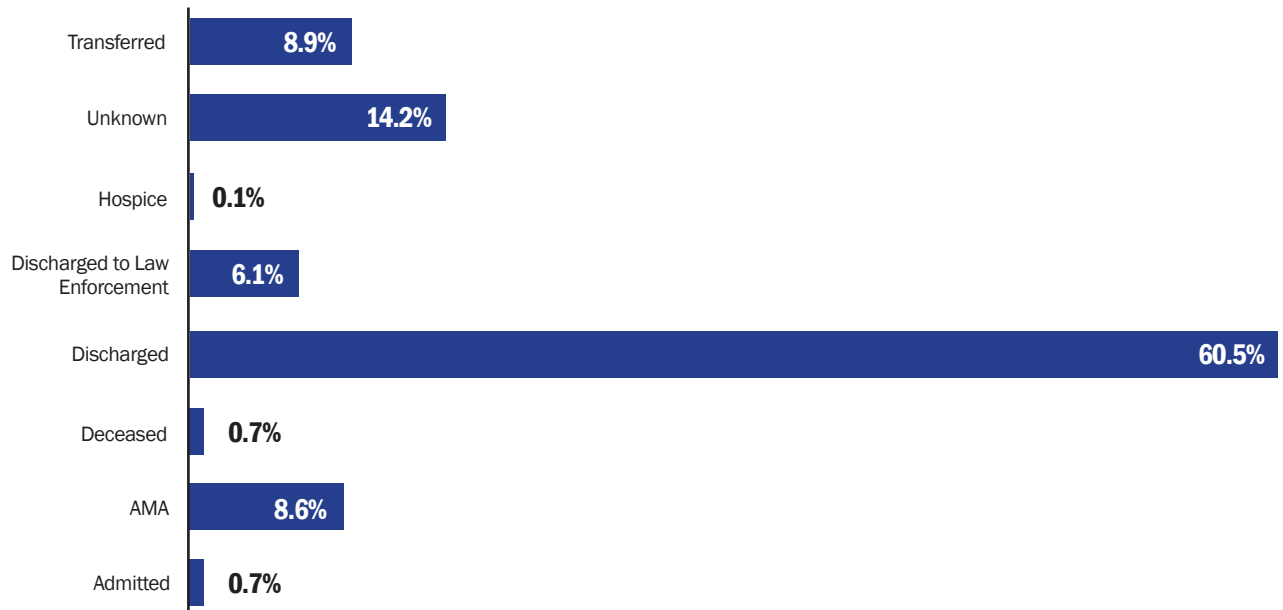
Number of overdose visits by race



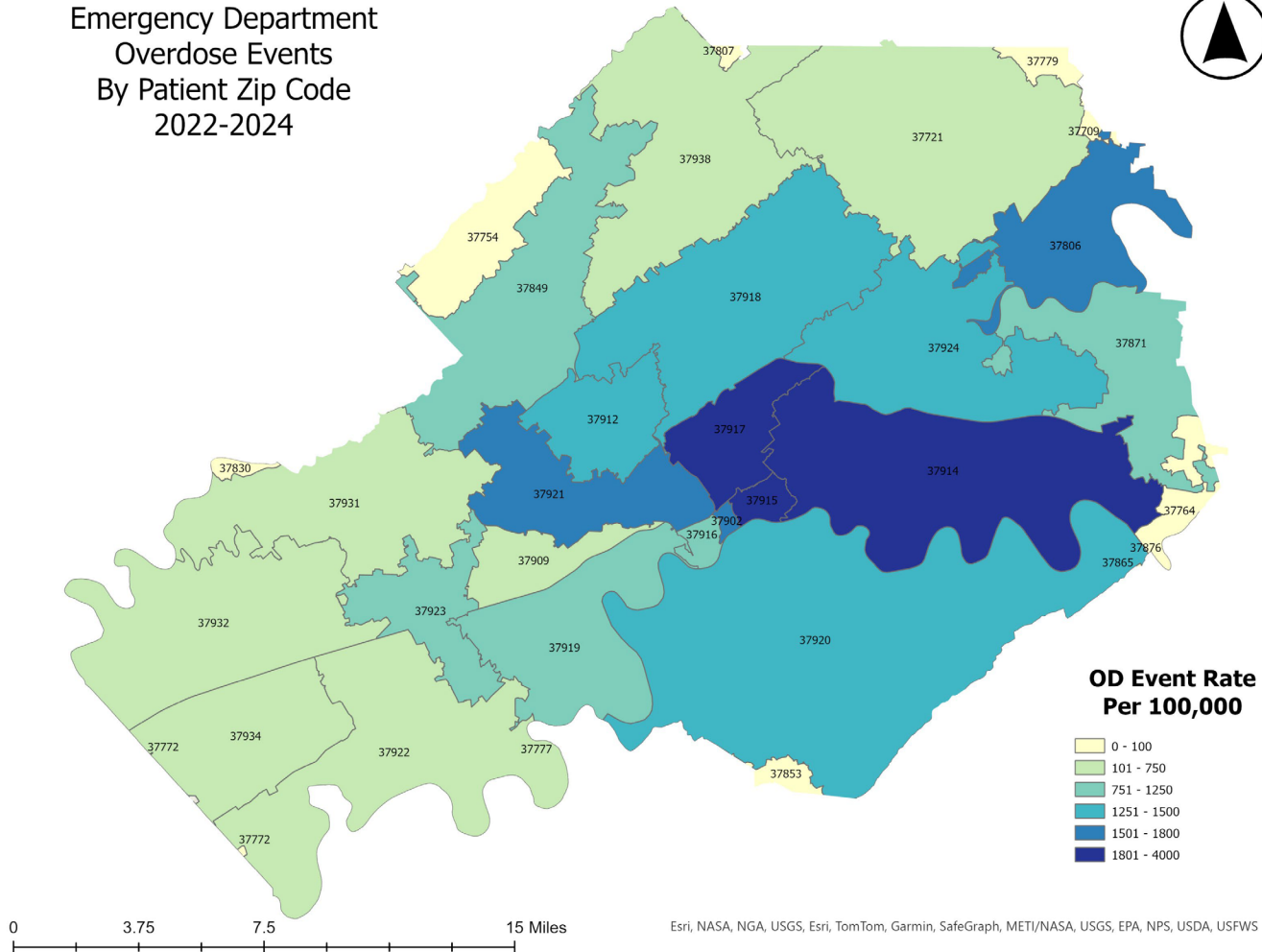
Number of overdose visits by sex



Number of overdose visits by outcome

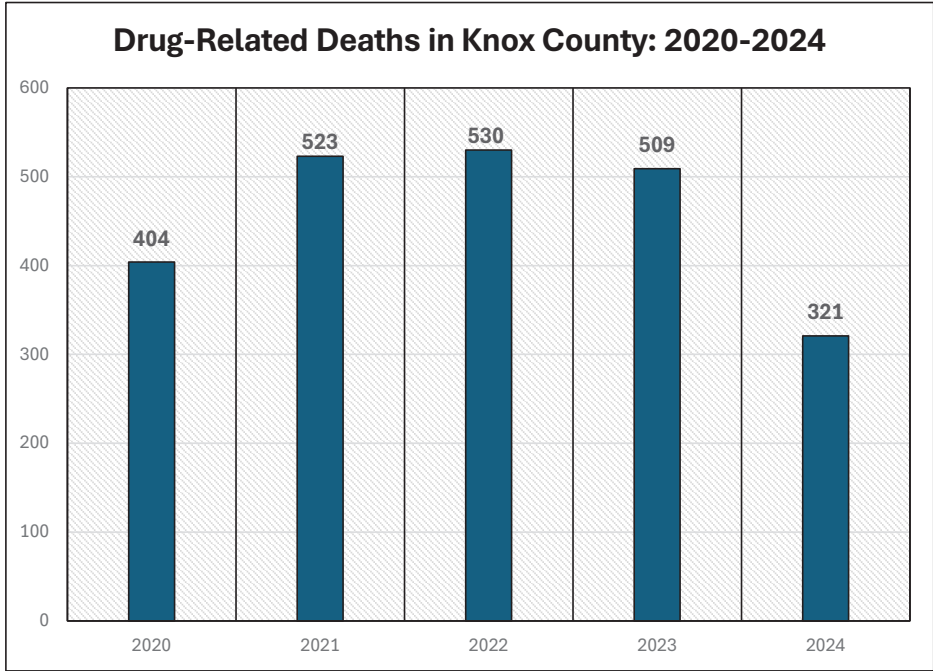


Emergency Department
Overdose Events
By Patient Zip Code
2022-2024



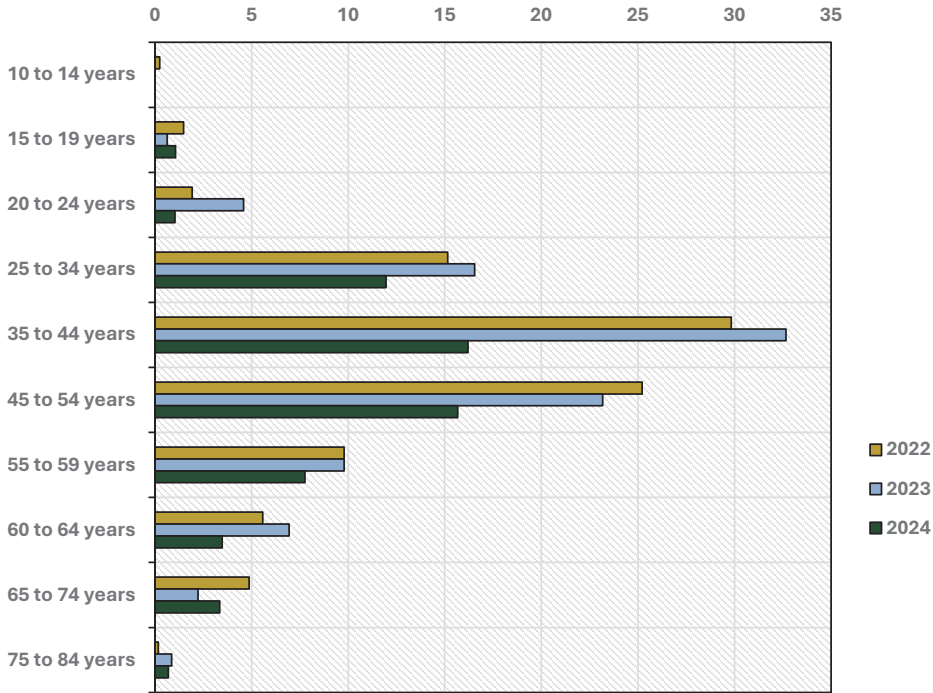


Drug Related Deaths



<https://www.knoxcounty.org/rfc/reports.php>
Knox County Regional Forensic Center Drug Related Death Report 2024

Age Adjusted Rates (per 100,000) of Drug-Related Deaths in Knox County, 2022-2024



Knox County Regional Forensic Center - MDIlog
United States Census Bureau - American Community Survey
U. S. 2000 Standard Population

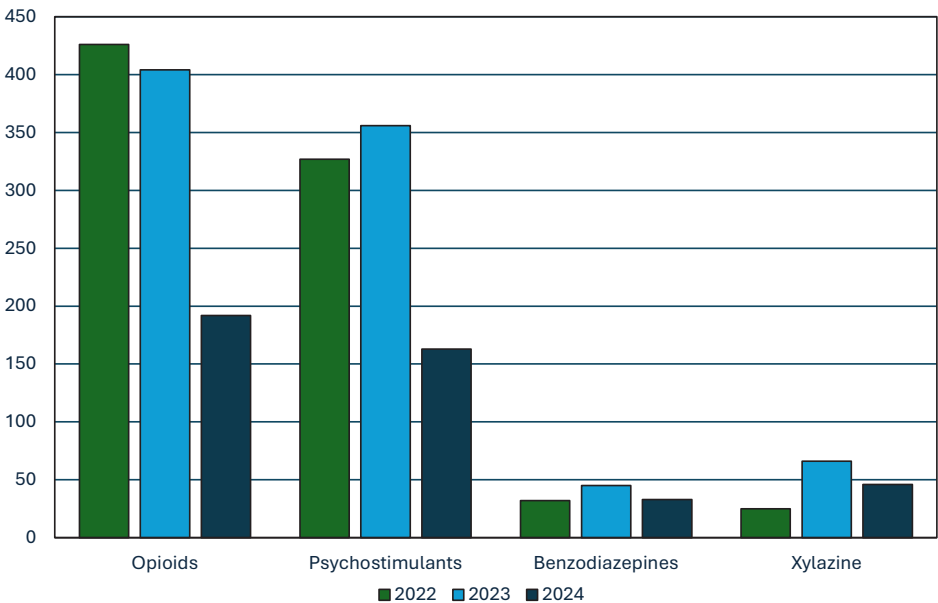
Knox and Anderson Counties Top 10 Drugs Found in Drug-Related Deaths 2024

1. Fentanyl & Analogues*	6. Alcohol/Ethanol
2. Methamphetamine	7. Gabapentin
3. Cocaine	8. Alprazolam
4. Xylazine	9. Morphine
5. Diphenhydramine	10. Bromazolam

*Includes Fentanyl, Acetyl Fentanyl, norfentanyl, para-Fluorofentanyl, Despropionyl parafluorosobutyry fentanyl, Carfentanil, and perfluorobutyl fentanyl.

Knox County Regional Forensic Center Drug Related Death Report 2024

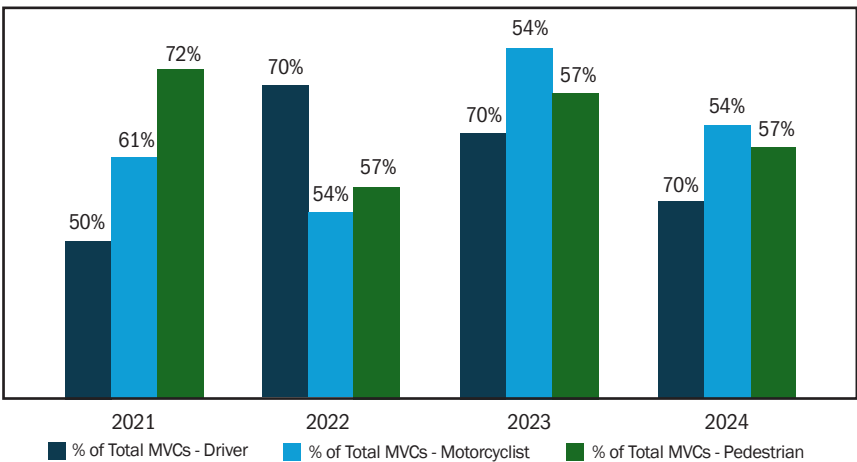
Substance Included in Immediate Cause of Death 2022-2024



*Includes Fentanyl, Acetyl Fentanyl, norfentanyl, para-Fluorofentanyl, Despropionyl parafluorosobutyry fentanyl, Carfentanil, and perfluorobutyl fentanyl.

Knox County Regional Forensic Center - MDILog

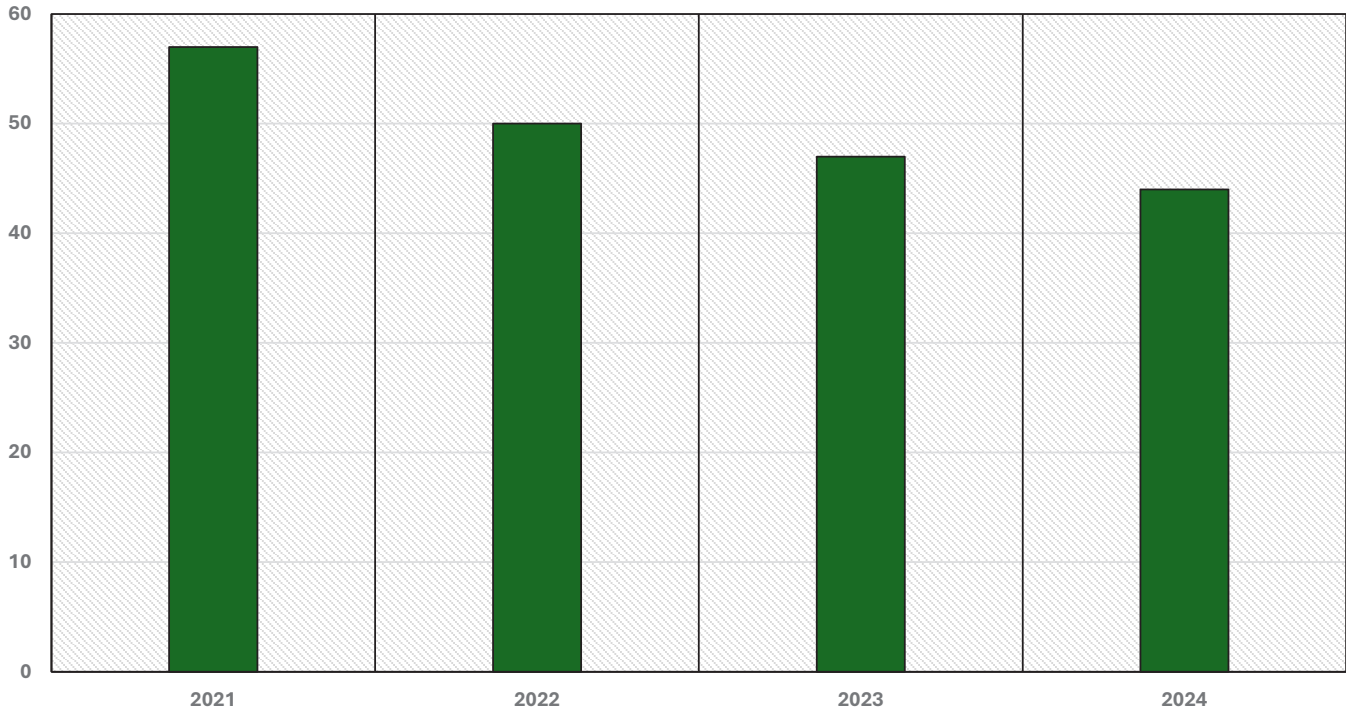
Percentage of Total Motor Vehicle Collision (MVC) Involving Illicit Substances of Alcohol



Knox County Regional Forensic Center - MDILog

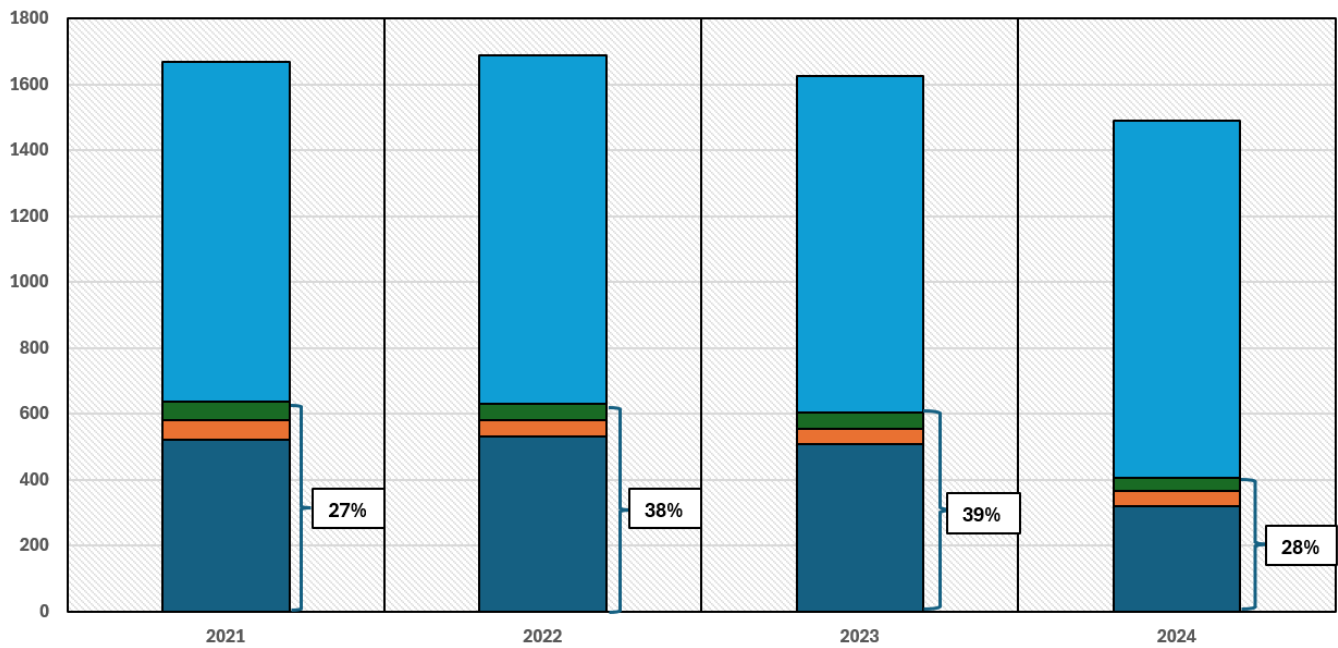


Total Deaths Attributable to Chronic Alcoholism: 2021-2024



Knox County Regional Forensic Center - MDILog

Percentage of Deaths Attributable to Drug Related Deaths, Chronic Alcoholism, or MVC's Involving Illicit Substances



■ Drug Related Death
 ■ Chronic Alcoholism
 ■ MVC's Involving Illicit Substances
 ■ All Other Natural/Accidental/Undetermined Causes

Knox County Regional Forensic Center - MDILog

Knox County
Substance Misuse Response

Section 3

Strategies and Tactics

Access to Recovery

The **Access to Recovery Team** was established through the consolidation of the former Access to Treatment Team and Recovery Support Team. This merger was undertaken to streamline efforts, reduce duplication in team membership and sector representation, and improve alignment of shared resources and goals.

The strategic goals and action steps that follow were initially developed by the two separate teams, each reflecting a distinct but complementary focus on treatment access and recovery support. As a unified team, the Access to Recovery Team will work collaboratively to implement both sets of goals, fostering a more integrated and coordinated approach to expanding access across the full continuum of care—from treatment entry to sustained recovery.

RECOVERY SUPPORT (former)

Strategy 1.1

Reduce Cost and Coverage Barriers to Treatment Access

Objective

Increase access to treatment services by addressing financial and insurance-related barriers experienced by individuals seeking care.

Action Steps:

1. Community Program and Recovery Housing Promotion

- Collaborate with local behavioral health services providers to establish an insurance navigation assistance program or workshop to help individuals understand, apply for, and maintain insurance coverage, including TennCare/Medicaid.
- Develop a Sliding-Scale Provider Resource Guide featuring low-cost and sliding-scale providers, with potential integration into a broader provider directory.

Strategy 1.2

Address Transportation Barriers to Care

Objective

Expand transportation options to help individuals attend treatment appointments and recovery support services.

Action Steps:

1. Transportation Programs and Resources

- Develop a transportation voucher or ride-share program in partnership with local agencies, churches, and other transportation services.
- Create a transportation resource map that highlights outpatient and detox services closest to all local KAT bus stops.

Strategy 1.3

Expand Treatment and Availability Awareness

Objective

Improve timely access to detox and inpatient treatment by increasing bed availability and interim support.

Action Steps:**1. Program Expansion and Availability Awareness**

- Seek grant opportunities to expand treatment capacity, including detox and residential programs, in collaboration with recovery fund initiatives.

Strategy 1.4**Improve Access to Integrated and Co-Occurring Treatment Services****Objective**

Enhance the ability of providers to serve individuals with both mental health and substance use disorders.

Action Steps:**1. Provider Workshops and Collaboration**

- Offer cross-training workshops for providers on topics such as co-occurring disorder treatment, best practices, and local resources to refer to.

Strategy 1.5**Support Access for Special Populations Facing Additional Barriers****Objective**

Ensure services are responsive to the unique needs of populations such as youth, homeless individuals, justice-involved persons, and rural residents.

Action Steps:**1. Specialized Navigation and Reentry Support**

- Promote youth and family navigation services to assist youth and their families with accessing treatment and recovery resources.
- Collaborate with the Judicial Diversion Team to encourage access to recovery-focused supports like rent stipends, vital document assistance, and transportation.

Strategy 1.6**Reduce Stigma and Improve Community and Employer Engagement****Objective**

Promote supportive environments that reduce stigma and encourage treatment engagement.

Action Steps:**1. Employer and Community Education**

- Launch and maintain employer education initiative to inform local businesses about recovery-friendly workplace practices, legal protections, and accommodations.
- Implement county-wide anti-stigma campaign highlighting local recovery stories through social media and local events to normalize seeking treatment and support for substance use.

ACCESS TO TREATMENT (former)

Strategy 1.7

Increase Awareness of and Access to Post-Treatment and Transition-Focused Recovery Support Services

Objective

To ensure individuals who are transitioning out of treatment or justice involvement have accessible, safe, and sustainable recovery support options to foster long-term stability.

Action Steps:

1. Community Program and Recovery Housing Promotion

- Promote and encourage engagement with post-treatment support programs, including The Gateway, the Day Reporting Center, 12-Step Clubhouses, and other structured transitional programs.
- Support and promote the Housing Team's annual Recovery Housing and Resource Fair to increase community awareness of local affordable recovery housing options that meet standards for safety and accessibility.
- Collaborate with the Housing Team to establish and sustain a county-wide recovery residence operator network committed to evidence-based operation standards, utilizing online platforms (e.g. social media) and quarterly in-person meetings for ongoing support and information-sharing.

Strategy 1.8

Increase Awareness and Utilization of Peer Recovery Support Services.

Objective

To strengthen and expand peer-led recovery supports to serve the broader Knox County community with an emphasis on underrepresented and high-risk populations.

Action Steps:

1. Needs Assessment and Program Development

- Conduct a needs assessment to identify peer recovery support gaps for underrepresented and under-served populations.
- Collaborate with community partners to launch demographically appropriate peer recovery meetings, including but not limited to groups for Spanish-speaking residents and older adults.

2. General Community and Collegiate Engagement

- Raise awareness of general population meetings, including 12-Step groups and community-based recovery support resources.
- Promote participation in existing collegiate recovery support groups among college students in the Knox area.

3. Workforce Development and Peer Integration

- Expand opportunities for Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS) supervision and mentorship to strengthen the peer workforce pipeline.
- Increase visibility and access to peer-led services by promoting Metro Drug Coalition (MCD) programs, such

as Project Lifeline and Recovery Coach Academy.

- Collaborate with the All4Knox Standardization of Practice Team to support the training of more MAT/MOUD providers and encourage the placement of CPRS and resource navigators in behavioral health, medical, and justice-related provider agencies that do not currently utilize peer professionals.
- Promote peer support call centers as low-barrier entry points for recovery engagement.

Strategy 1.9

Expand the Reach and Capacity of Recovery Support Providers and Recovery-Oriented Community Services

Objective

To enhance the infrastructure, sustainability, and coordination of recovery support organizations and community-based recovery spaces to better serve individuals in or seeking recovery.

Action Steps:

1. Infrastructure Review and Development

- Assess the availability, distribution, and alignment of funding and treatment resources across Knox County to identify gaps, strengthen support for recovery services, and explore opportunities for increased investment.
- Strengthen and promote community connections and partnerships related to The Gateway community recovery center to maintain access to peer services, social supports, skill-building activities, and recovery-aligned programming.
- Maintain and promote an “all-recovery” group meeting for individuals using various pathways to recovery – including abstinence-based and Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) and Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) – to ensure mutual support.
- Collaborate with the Housing Team and support their Recovery Residence Network strategy to facilitate service integration and cross-referral agreements between The Gateway and other local nonprofits to ensure streamlined support for individuals navigating recovery.

Strategy 1.10

Increase Community Acceptance of Individuals Utilizing Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) and Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) in Their Recovery.

Objective

To reduce stigma and promote evidence-based understanding of MAT/MOUD to increase access and support for individuals using MAT/MOUD as part of their recovery process.

Action Steps:

1. MAT Education and Integration in Workforce Development

- Collaborate with the All4Knox Housing Team to develop and deliver training for recovery housing operators and staff on MAT/MOUD as evidence-based treatment for substance use disorders (SUD).
- Promote the development of protocols for safe storage and administration of MAT/MOUD, and strategies to reduce stigma toward MAT recipients.

- Collaborate with public and private funders to encourage the inclusion of MAT-/MOUD-accessible criteria in recovery housing contracts and funding agreements.
- Promote education on the role of MAT/MOUD in maintaining workforce participation and long-term recovery outcomes, accommodations for people in recovery, and effective protocols to employers and vocational service providers who employ individuals in recovery.
- Leverage community awareness events (e.g. Fentanyl Awareness Day, Overdose Awareness Day, National Recovery Month, etc.) to promote awareness about the role of MAT/MOUD in recovery.

Housing Team

Strategy 2.1

Enhance and Standardize the Quality of Operations among Knox County Recovery Residences.

Objective

To improve the quality, consistency, and safety of recovery housing in Knox County by promoting adherence to recognized standards, expanding training and certification, and fostering collaboration among housing providers.

Action Steps:

1. Establish and Strengthen Infrastructure for Standardized Recovery Housing Program Operations in Knox County.

- Promote awareness of TNARR and its certification process among recovery residence operators and advocating for ongoing funding to support certification and compliance.
- Facilitate peer support and mentorship among operators by creating a program where more experienced operators can guide new or struggling recovery residence managers to enhance operations and service delivery.
- Establish, maintain, and facilitate ongoing communication between house operators, Knox County, and the City of Knoxville to identify challenges, opportunities, and areas for collaboration.

2. Promote Adherence to Best Practices for Recovery Residences Among House Operators.

- Deliver Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution (OEND) training to both house operators and residents to mitigate overdose risks.
- Collaborate with the All4Knox Recovery Support Team to increase the number of recovery residences that incorporate Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) into their program models.
- Promote completion of the Metro Drug Coalition's Recovery House Academy among recovery residence operators to improve operational standards.

Strategy 2.2

Enhance Community Awareness and Access to Recovery Residences.

Objective

To ensure community members, service providers, and system navigators are well-informed about available recovery housing options, improving access and connection to supportive living environments for individuals in recovery.

Action Steps:

1. Establish and Strengthen Infrastructure for Standardized Recovery Housing Program Operations in Knox County.

- Continue to expand the All4Knox Recovery Housing Guide and distribute it to community members, service providers, navigators, and other relevant stakeholders.
- Host annual Recovery Residence and Resource Fair to showcase recovery residences, treatment providers, harm reduction programs, businesses that strive to employ individuals in recovery, and other support services.

Strategy 2.3

Increase Support and Interconnectivity Among Recovery Residence Operators.

Objective

To build a collaborative network of recovery residence operators that fosters peer learning, resource sharing, and collective advancement of housing quality across the Knox area.

Action Steps:

1. Establish and Sustain a County-Wide Recovery Residence Operator Network.

- Develop and maintain a network of housing operators committed to high standards, utilizing online platforms (e.g. social media) and quarterly in-person meetings for ongoing support and information-sharing.
- Implement a structured feedback and evaluation process with recovery residence operators to inform the continuous quality improvement of the county-wide recovery housing network.
- Collaborate with the All4Knox Judicial Diversion Team to increase and coordinate referrals of diversion clients in recovery to network partners.

Judicial Diversion

Strategy 3.1

Enhance the Capacity and Delivery of Treatment, Recovery Support, and Reentry Services.

Objective

To improve the overall health, stability, and wellbeing of individuals with behavioral health disorders who are currently involved in, or have been involved in, the justice system within the past three years by increasing access to and coordination of care.

Action Steps:

1. Workforce Development and Program Support

- Provide specialized training and continuing education in behavioral health topics for staff within Knox County Probation Services and local law enforcement agencies to enhance their capacity to effectively address the complex needs of justice-involved individuals.
- Maintain and expand the utilization of validated risk assessment tools currently employed by Knox County Probation Services to systematically identify and address factors contributing to substance misuse and recidivism.
- Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of existing drug disposal protocols used by law enforcement during field responses, with an emphasis on aligning practices with current public health and safety standards.

2. Stakeholder Understanding and System Navigation

- Facilitate judicial diversion information sessions for community workgroups and wraparound service partners to improve public understanding of referral systems, protocols, and procedures, and to strengthen interagency collaboration and service continuity.
- Establish a comprehensive reentry support system that leverages warm hand-offs to efficiently facilitate client access to, and navigation of, critical services essential to successful recovery and reintegration, including but not limited to the acquisition of vital documents, recovery housing assistance, transportation, and prescribed medications.

Strategy 3.2

Expand Access to Recovery Housing for Justice-Involved Individuals.

Objective

To support sustained recovery, reduce recidivism, and promote successful community reintegration by increasing access to appropriate and supportive recovery housing for individuals with current or recent justice system involvement.

Action Steps:

1. Infrastructure and Program Development

- Establish and sustain the Knox County Health Department/All4Knox Recovery Housing Support Fund, including the development of eligibility criteria, application procedures, and accountability measures for fund use.

- Educate key community partners on low-barrier, trauma-informed models that accommodate co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders.
- Collaborate with the All4Knox Housing Team to establish a formal network of recovery housing providers committed to evidence-based practices and coordinated referrals.

Strategy 3.3

Enhance Internal and Cross-System Communication Among Judicial Diversion Stakeholders.

Objective

To improve coordination and efficiency of behavioral health and recovery referrals within the diversion system by strengthening internal communication and standardizing cross-system collaboration.

Action Steps:

1. Workflow Development and Partner Education

- Conduct a stakeholder communication assessment to identify existing communication methods, tools, and barriers among judicial diversion partners.
- Evaluate stakeholder communication assessment results to create and implement standardized workflows for diversion referrals to behavioral health and recovery services, ensuring compliance with relevant confidentiality laws.
- Organize regular training sessions to educate partners on each other's roles, services, and procedures, including guidance on navigating behavioral health and recovery referrals within the diversion framework as needed.

Strategy 3.4

Increase Collaboration with the East Tennessee Human Trafficking Coalition.

Objective

To improve identification of and response to justice-involved individuals affected by human trafficking through enhanced coordination, training, and trauma-informed service provision.

Action Steps:

1. Referral Pathways and Professional Development

- Collaborate with the Coalition and judicial diversion partners to develop screening tools and referral workflows that identify trafficking survivors early in the justice process.
- Collaborate with the Coalition to provide ongoing professional development on best practices for serving justice-involved trafficking survivors, including training on trauma-informed approaches, victim identification, and version referral protocols.

Prevention and Education Team

Strategy 4.1

Increase Opportunities for Community Education and Awareness on Substance Misuse Prevention and Related Topics.

Objective

To enhance public knowledge and understanding of substance use disorders (SUD), prevention methods, and the broader impacts of substance misuse to reduce the overall need for treatment across all age groups.

Action Steps:

1. Increase Community Engagement and Substance Misuse Awareness

- Strengthen partnerships between local agencies, after-school program providers, the Knox County School System, and other organizations through the coordination and promotion of substance misuse prevention and education campaigns.
- Use social media campaigns, public service announcements (PSAs), presentations, and events tied to key awareness days to educate the community about the intersection of substance misuse and other co-occurring issues (e.g. domestic violence, sexual violence, child abuse, driving under the influence of alcohol and other drugs).

2. Expand Access to Substance Misuse Education Resources

- Expand and maintain the quarterly All4Knox Prevention & Education Substance Misuse Speaker Series to provide educational sessions, workshops, and resources on substance misuse for community members – including professionals, parents, caregivers, young adults, and students.
- Compile and distribute a comprehensive, accessible resource guide detailing available prevention, treatment, and recovery services in the Knox area.

Strategy 4.2

Strengthen Protective Factors Against Substance Misuse Among the Aging Population, Families, Young Adults, and Youth.

Objective

To support and empower Knox County residents with the knowledge and skills to prevent and reduce substance misuse risks and related injuries by providing education and resources.

Action Steps:

1. Provide Family-Focused Substance Misuse Education Resources

- Develop resources that help caregivers who are older adults initiate conversations about substance misuse with the younger family members in their care.
- Facilitate educational opportunities and events to help adults more effectively and regularly talk to the seniors and adolescents in their families about substance misuse.

2. Decrease Substance Use Among Youth

- Produce multimedia materials (e.g. children's books, social media content, social media campaigns) to educate youth on community resources, the impacts of substance misuse, resilience, healthy coping mechanisms, and similar topics.

3. Decrease Substance Use Among Young Adults

- Launch comprehensive awareness campaigns and provide workshops that educate young adults on the risks of alcohol, tobacco, electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), and stimulants, focusing on health impacts, addiction potential, and safer alternatives to cope with common triggers, such as stress and anxiety.
- Leverage social media platforms and relationships with community centers, universities, and other organizations working with young adults to amplify messaging.

Strategy 4.3

Increase Understanding and Awareness of Best Practices for Prescription and Over the Counter (OTC) Medication Storage and Disposal.

Objective

To increase community awareness of the importance of safely storing and disposing of prescription and over the counter (OTC) medications to reduce the risk of misuse.

Action Steps:

1. Promote Proper Prescription Medication Storage and Disposal Practices

- Provide workshops and informational materials for older adults on how to discuss prescription medication needs with healthcare providers and safe storage practices to prevent misuse of prescription and OTC medications.
- Partner with healthcare providers to incorporate substance misuse prevention into routine care for seniors and older adults.
- Distribute educational materials on proper storage and disposal of prescription medications through healthcare providers, pharmacies, and community organizations.
- Promote the availability of safe disposal options year-round, including drop-off locations within the Knox area.
- Collaborate with the Metro Drug Coalition and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to increase the number of partners involved in local Drug Take-Back events.

Standardization of Practice Team

Strategy 5.1

Increase Standardization of Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment Practices Among Providers in Knox County

Objective

To improve consistency, effectiveness, and coordination of care for individuals with substance use disorders by promoting the adoption of best practices across healthcare providers and systems in Knox County.

Action Steps:

1. Standardize Integration of Peer Support Services

- Increase the utilization of peer supports in healthcare settings by expanding placements of certified peer recovery specialist navigators and recovery coaches to assist individuals with substance use disorders in accessing care and sustaining recovery.
- Collaborate with the All4Knox Recovery Support Team to promote completion of the Metro Drug Coalition's Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS) Ethics Training Series and similar opportunities as they arise.

2. Develop Best Practice Toolkits for Providers

- Develop, disseminate, and maintain comprehensive toolkits to orient new providers and educate existing providers on evidence-based practices related to:
 - Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
 - Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT)
 - Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)

3. Cross-Provider Education and Collaboration

- Organize and facilitate quarterly educational sessions among healthcare practices and small hospital groups to promote standardization of care, foster inter-clinic collaboration, and support peer learning on effective treatment strategies.

Knox County Substance Misuse Response

Section 4

Glossary and Acknowledgements

Glossary

Abstinence - Not using drugs or alcohol.

Addiction - A chronic, relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use despite adverse consequences. It is considered a brain disorder, because it involves functional changes to brain circuits involved in reward, stress, and self-control, and those changes may last a long time after a person has stopped taking drugs (National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2018).

Buprenorphine - An opioid partial agonist medication prescribed for the treatment of opioid addiction that relieves drug cravings without producing the high or dangerous side effects of other opioids.

Comorbidity - When two disorders or illnesses occur in the same person. Drug addiction and other mental illnesses or viral infections (HIV, hepatitis) are often comorbid. Also referred to as co-occurring disorders.

Continuum of Care – A comprehensive and coordinated range of treatment and support services for individuals with substance use disorders or mental health conditions. The continuum spans from early intervention and prevention to treatment (including detoxification, residential, and outpatient services) and long-term recovery support. The goal is to provide the right level of care at the right time to meet each individual's needs as they change over time.

Dependence - A condition that can occur with the regular use of illicit or some prescription drugs, even if taken as prescribed. Dependence is characterized by withdrawal symptoms when drug use is stopped. A person can be dependent on a substance without being addicted, but dependence sometimes leads to addiction.

Detoxification - A process in which the body rids itself of a drug, or its metabolites. Medically assisted detoxification may be needed to help manage a person's withdrawal symptoms. Detoxification alone is not a treatment for substance use disorders, but this is often the first step in a drug treatment program.

Drug abuse (drug use, misuse, and addiction) - An older diagnostic term that defined use that is unsafe, use that leads a person to fail to fulfill responsibilities or gets them in legal trouble, or use that continues despite causing persistent interpersonal problems. This term is increasingly avoided by professionals because it can perpetuate stigma. Current appropriate terms include: drug use (in the case of illicit substances), drug misuse (in the case of problematic use of legal drugs or prescription medications) and addiction (in the case of a substance use disorder).

Medicated-assisted treatment (MAT) - Is the use of FDA-approved medications, in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies, to provide a “whole-patient” approach to the treatment of substance use disorders (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2019).

Methadone - A long-acting opioid agonist medication used to treat opioid addiction and manage pain. When used as part of MAT, methadone reduces opioid cravings and withdrawal symptoms without producing the high associated with opioid misuse. It is dispensed through specialized treatment programs and taken daily under supervision.

Mental disorder (mental health diagnosis) - A mental condition marked primarily by disorganization of personality, mind, and emotions that seriously impairs the psychological or behavioral functioning of the individual. This is sometimes referred to as a mental health condition. Substance use disorder is a mental disorder.

Motor Vehicle Collisions (MVC) – Crashes or accidents involving one or more vehicles, which may result in injury, death, or property damage. People under the influence of drugs or alcohol are at increased risk of being involved in MVCs due to impaired judgment, slower reaction times, and reduced coordination. MVCs are a leading cause of injury and death related to substance use.

Naloxone - An opioid antagonist medication approved by the FDA to reverse an opioid overdose. It displaces opioid drugs (such as morphine or heroin) from their receptor and prevents further opioid receptor activation.

Naltrexone – A non-addictive opioid antagonist medication used to treat both opioid and alcohol use disorders. Naltrexone works by blocking the euphoric and sedative effects of opioids and alcohol, helping to prevent relapse. Unlike methadone or buprenorphine, it does not reduce cravings or withdrawal symptoms but can be effective after detoxification.

Substance Use Disorder (SUD) - A medical condition characterized by the uncontrollable use of substances despite harmful consequences. It can involve legal or illegal drugs, alcohol, or prescription medications. The disorder ranges from mild to severe, with addiction being the most extreme form (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, n.d.).

Vivitrol – A brand name for the extended-release injectable form of naltrexone. Vivitrol is administered once a month by a healthcare provider and is used to help prevent relapse in people with opioid or alcohol dependence after detoxification. It blocks the effects of opioids and alcohol and does not lead to physical dependence.

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CenterPointe	Knoxville's Community Development Corporation
CDC Foundation	Metro Drug Coalition
City of Knoxville	Mental Health Association of East Tennessee
Community Coalition Against Human Trafficking	Non-profit Consulting
Covenant Health	Pellissippi State Community College
Creating Homes Initiative	Peninsula Behavioral Health
E.M. Jellinek Center	ReNew Clinic
eTHIN	Ridgeview Behavioral Health Services
Focus Integrative Centers Knoxville	River Valley Health
Hellbender Harm Reduction	Steps House
Irongate	Summit Medical Group
Knox County	Team Health
Knox County District Attorney's Office	Tennessee Community Resource Network
Knox County Grants and Community Development	Tennessee Department of Correction
Knox County Health Department	Tennessee Department of Correction Day Reporting and Community Resource Centers
Knox County Mental Health Court	The McNabb Center
Knox County Probation Office	University of Tennessee Knoxville's Center for Health Education and Wellness
Knox County Schools	University of Tennessee SMART Initiative
Knox County Sheriff's Office	University of Tennessee Medical Center
Knoxville Academy of Medicine Foundation	Volunteers for Recovery
Knoxville Area Rescue Ministries	
Knoxville Police Department	
Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee	