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Report: Yearly Deaths Due to Alcohol, Drugs or Suicide Top 150,000

Recent data also point to Black youth suicide crisis, NYU McSilver's Executive Director says in the report by Trust for America's Health and Well Being Trust

(Washington, DC, Oakland, CA and New York, NY – May 21, 2020) – Newly released data show that 151,964 Americans died due to alcohol, drugs or suicide in 2018. This national death rate for alcohol, drug and suicide deaths was only very slightly lower than what it had been in 2017 despite progress in reducing some types of opioid overdose, according to a new study by [Trust for America's Health](#) (TFAH) and [Well Being Trust](#) (WBT).

For the year, alcohol deaths were up 4 percent and suicide deaths were up 2 percent. Death rates for all opioids were down 2 percent, but the death rate for synthetic opioids was up 10 percent.

While still disturbingly high, the 2018 data is the first time since 1999, when the current data collection began, that there has not been a sizable increase in the alcohol, drugs and suicide deaths per 100,000 rate. However, this stabilization in the deaths rate was not uniform. Some places and population groups are experiencing stable or decreasing deaths rates while rates among other groups or in other places continue to rise.

In an interview published in the report, **Dr. Michael A. Lindsey**, Executive Director of the [NYU McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research](#), shared additional data about suicide in Black youth that was originally published in the Congressional Black Caucus Emergency Taskforce on Black Youth Suicide and Mental Health report, [Ring the Alarm: The Crisis of Black Youth Suicide in America](#).

“The data are clearly telling us that Black youth are at high risk,” said Dr. Lindsey. “Black youth suicide and suicide behaviors are rising. Black boys (ages 5 to 12 years old) are twice as likely to die by suicide as compared with their White peers. We led a study at the McSilver Institute that found that the self-reported suicide attempt rate for Black youth increased by 73 percent between 1991 and 2017; meanwhile, self-reported suicide attempt rates fell for White and Latino kids and for Asian and American Indian/Alaska Native kids during the same period.”

Among the solutions needed for addressing this crisis are more mental health professionals in every school and more National Institutes of Health funding of research and evidence-based interventions relating to Black youth mental health, Dr. Lindsey added.

“These data are a clarion call to action,” said John Auerbach, President and CEO of Trust for America’s Health. “We know what works to address deaths of despair but progress has been uneven and death rates continue to climb, with communities of color experiencing higher rates of increases in drug-induced and alcohol deaths. And there’s another immediate concern: the COVID-19 crisis has increased the health burdens and economic pressures on many communities of color.”

ABOUT THE MCSILVER INSTITUTE

The McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research at New York University is committed to creating new knowledge about the root causes of poverty, developing evidence-based interventions to address its consequences, and rapidly translating research findings into action through policy and best practices. Each year it holds the McSilver Awards, recognizing five extraordinary leaders transforming systems to tackle structural poverty and oppression. Learn more at mcsilver.nyu.edu and [sign up](#) for updates.

***Trust for America’s Health** is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that promotes optimal health for every person and community and makes the prevention of illness and injury a national priority. tfah.org*

***Well Being Trust** is a national foundation dedicated to advancing the mental, social, and spiritual health of the nation. Created to include participation from organizations across sectors and perspectives, Well Being Trust is committed to innovating and addressing the most critical mental health challenges facing America, and to transforming individual and community well-being. wellbeingtrust.org. Twitter: [@WellBeingTrust](https://twitter.com/WellBeingTrust)*

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