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QUEENS DISTRICT ATTORNEY MELINDA KATZ:
BORO-WIDE OVERDOSE DEATHS SURGED DURING PANDEMIC

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz today said drug overdose deaths in Queens County surged during the Covid pandemic, echoing recently-released national data.

DA Katz said, "In 2020, there were 391 overdose deaths, a 45.5 percent increase over 2019, when there were 268 overdose deaths. There is no question that the pandemic, which fueled a national drug abuse crisis, also hit us hard here in our borough."

According to data compiled from the New York Police Department and the Office of the City Medical Examiner, 71 percent of all suspected drug overdose deaths in Queens are related to fentanyl and/or fentanyl derivatives.

DA Katz noted, "While there were 82 homicides in Queens last year, there were nearly five times as many deaths due to drug overdoses, and the overwhelming majority were attributed to fentanyl. Fentanyl is a dangerous, lethal drug – and often people don't even know they are taking it because it is mixed with other drugs or sold as pills. Addressing this epidemic remains one of the greatest public health challenges facing current and future generations of Queens residents."

As highlighted in recently released federal data, COVID-19 pandemic related factors such as stress, job loss, and lockdown restrictions have exacerbated the use of opioids and drastically increased reports of overdoses both across the nation and within Queens County.

Here is a demographic breakdown of 2020 suspected overdose deaths in Queens:

Men: 313 (80%)
Women: 78 (20%)

Men by Age Group:

10-20: 11
21-30: 57
31-40: 97
41-50: 62
51-60: 52
61-70: 29

71-80: 4

81-90: 1

Men by Ethnicity:

White: 140

Black/African American: 66

Hispanic: 73

Hispanic Black: 1

Hispanic White: 5

Asian: 10

Indian: 3

Asian Pacific: 12

Women by Age Group:

10-20: 1

21-30: 11

31-40: 17

41-50: 17

51-60: 23

61-70: 9

Women by Ethnicity:

White: 40

Black/African American: 20

Hispanic: 10

Hispanic White: 1

Asian: 2

Asian Pacific: 5

Across the country, 93,000 people died from drug overdoses in 2020, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

DA Katz said, "My office remains committed to equitable drug policies and provides avenues of support through the Queens Treatment Court and specialized treatment courts. Evidence-based public health and safety interventions are our most effective tools in helping residents reclaim their lives."

Queens Connect, for example, is a new program in the Queens Misdemeanor Treatment Court that provides participants with a variety of services, including an introduction to substance use and alcohol addiction treatment. The District Attorney's Office refers eligible participants for clinical assessment, where they will receive recommendations for different treatment options. Pursuant to this no-plea diversion program, a participant's completion will result in a dismissal of the participant's case. The program includes educational, vocational, and home health services related to mental health or psychiatric conditions.

Queens County Opioid Treatment Resources

To find a treatment provider, visit [FindAddictionTreatment.ny.gov](https://findaddictiontreatment.ny.gov). Call the 24/7 NYS Hopeline: 877-846-7369 or text 467369 for free and confidential help. Those in need may also find help at this link:

<https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/locator>

Addiction Treatment Centers

Samaritan Daytop Village

144-10 Jamaica Ave
Jamaica, NY 11435-3624
(718) 206-2000

Cornerstone Treatment Facilities Network

159-05 Union Turnpike
Fresh Meadows, NY 11366
(800) 233-9999

Elmcor Youth & Adult Activities, Inc

107-20 Northern Blvd
Corona, NY 11368
(718) 651-0096

Emotional and Mental Health Supportive Services

NYS Office of Mental Health Emotional Support Helpline

1-844-863-9314 (7 days a week from 8am – 10pm)

Expanded Programming

Many NYS Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services providers offer expanded services that build on traditional prevention, treatment, and recovery programs. Locally based services address the needs of specific counties and regions and offer additional support to individuals, families, and communities, affected by addiction include: Prevention Resource Centers, 24/7 Open Access Centers, Centers of Treatment Innovation and more. To find a recovery center or open access center visit oasas.ny.gov/support-services.

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