

On September 11, NCHS released its monthly provisional estimates on drug overdose deaths in the country. The latest release covers the one year period ending in February 2019, and shows that there was an estimated 2.9% decline in the total number of overdose deaths in the U.S. from a year ago. An estimated 69,029 people died of a drug overdose during this period.

Nearly 7 out of 10 of these overdose deaths were due to opioids. Nearly half of all overdose deaths, or 47%, were due to fentanyl or other synthetic opioids besides methadone. More than 1 in 5 of all overdose deaths, or 22%, were due to heroin. More than 1 in 5 of all overdose deaths, or 23%, were due to cocaine. An estimated 1 in 5 of all overdose deaths were due to methamphetamine or other psychostimulants with abuse potential.

Over 770,000 Americans have died from drug overdoses since 1999, and the total number of deaths jumped from 16,849 in 1999 to a high mark of 70,237 in 2017.

Though data for 2018 are not final yet, NCHS estimates that 2018 marked the first decline in drug overdose deaths in several decades. For the past several years, West Virginia has had the highest death rate from drug overdoses of any state, with a rate of nearly 58 overdose deaths per 100,000 population in 2017.