Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Criminal Justice Services
Jackson Miller, Director

Criminal Justice Research Center

Drug Seizures & Overdose Fatalities– Quarterly Update

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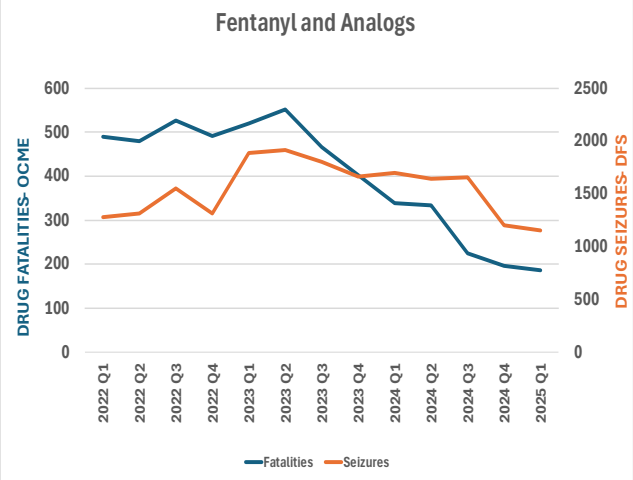
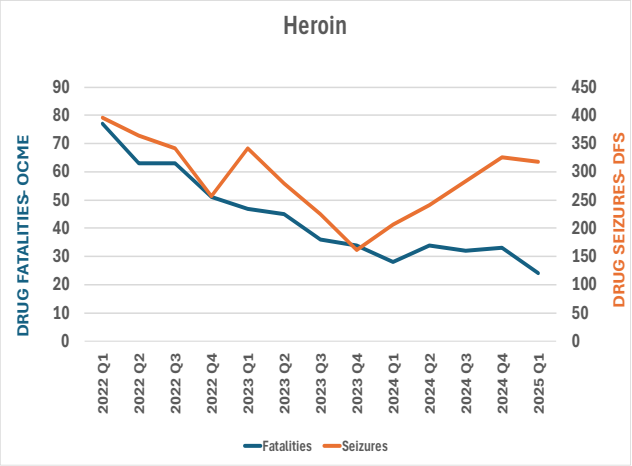
The Virginia Department of Forensic Science (DFS) tests samples of drugs seized by law enforcement agencies across Virginia. Virginia's Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) receives reports on deaths due to drug overdose (whether by accident, suicide, homicide, or undetermined).

This report compares quarterly trends in select drugs (fentanyl, heroin, prescription opioids, benzodiazepines, cocaine, and methamphetamine) submitted to DFS with overdose fatalities for those same drugs. It examines one-quarter, one-year, and three-year changes in the data through 2025-Q1. Specific counts may change slightly between reports.



- 1 quarter comparison:
  - Seizures went down by 4%
  - Fatalities went down by 5%
- 1 year comparison:
  - Seizures went down by 32%
  - Fatalities went down by 45%
- 3 year comparisons:
  - Seizures went down by 10%
  - Fatalities went down by 62%
- According to preliminary data, seizures decreased by about 4% from Q1 to Q3 in 2025.
- There were about 6.1 drug seizures per fatality in Virginia in Q1 2025.

Note: Although fentanyl can be prescribed, in this report, all fentanyl and analogs data are counted in this chart, and excluded from the prescription opioid data (most cases are illicit).



- 1 quarter comparison:
  - Seizures went down by 2%
  - Fatalities went down by 27%
- 1 year comparison:
  - Seizures went up by 54%
  - Fatalities went down by 14%
- 3 year comparisons:
  - Seizures went down by 20%
  - Fatalities went down by 69%
- According to preliminary data, seizures decreased by about 26% from Q1 to Q3 in 2025.
- There were about 13.3 drug seizures per fatality in Virginia in Q1 2025.
- 97% of cases of fatalities in 2024 also included fentanyl.

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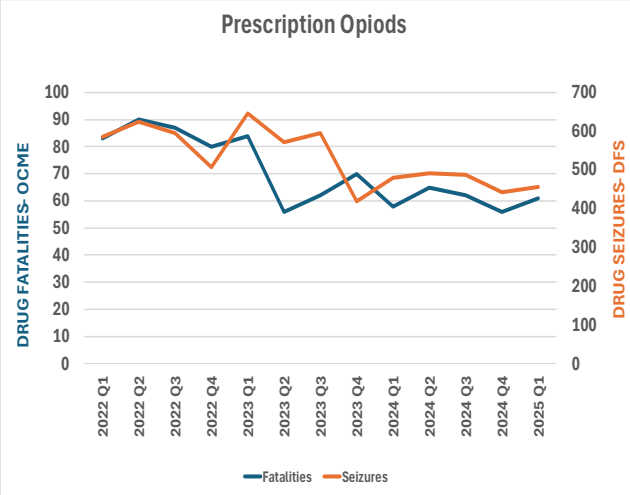

- 1 quarter comparison:
  - Seizures went up by 3%
  - Fatalities went up by 9%
- 1 year comparison:
  - Seizures went down by 5%
  - Fatalities went up by 5%
- 3 year comparisons:
  - Seizures went down by 22%
  - Fatalities went down by 27%
- According to preliminary data, seizures increased by about 8% from Q1 to Q3 in 2025.
- There were about 7.5 drug seizures per fatality in Virginia in Q1 2025.

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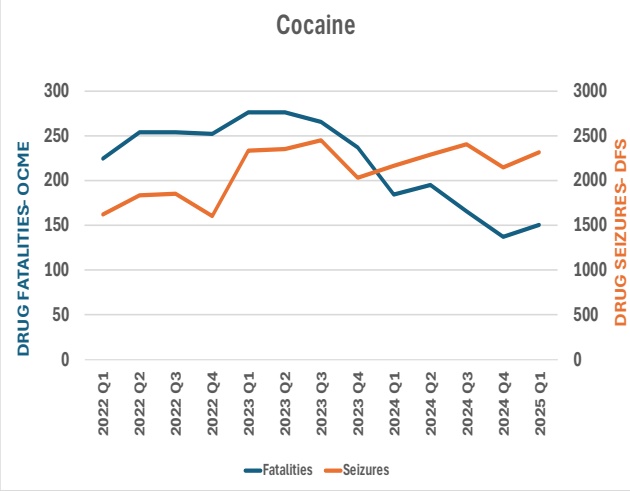
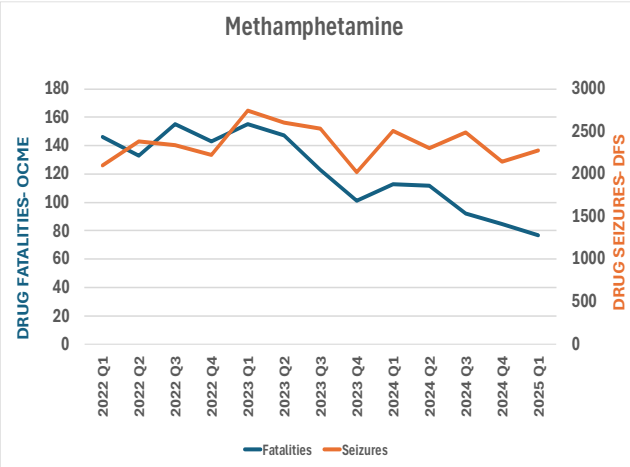


- 1 quarter comparison:
  - Seizures went up by 8%
  - Fatalities went up by 9%
- 1 year comparison:
  - Seizures went up by 7%
  - Fatalities went down by 18%
- 3 year comparisons:
  - Seizures went up by 43%
  - Fatalities went down by 33%
- According to preliminary data, seizures increased by about 14% from Q1 to Q3 in 2025.
- There were about 15.4 drug seizures per fatality in Virginia in Q1 2025.
- 72% of cases of fatalities in 2024 also included fentanyl.



- 1 quarter comparison:
  - Seizures went up by 6%
  - Fatalities went down by 9%
- 1 year comparison:
  - Seizures went down by 9%
  - Fatalities went down by 32%
- 3 year comparisons:
  - Seizures went up by 8%
  - Fatalities went down by 47%
- According to preliminary data, seizures decreased by about 3% from Q1 to Q3 in 2025.
- There were about 29.6 drug seizures per fatality in Virginia in Q1 2025.
- 60% of cases of fatalities in 2024 also included fentanyl.

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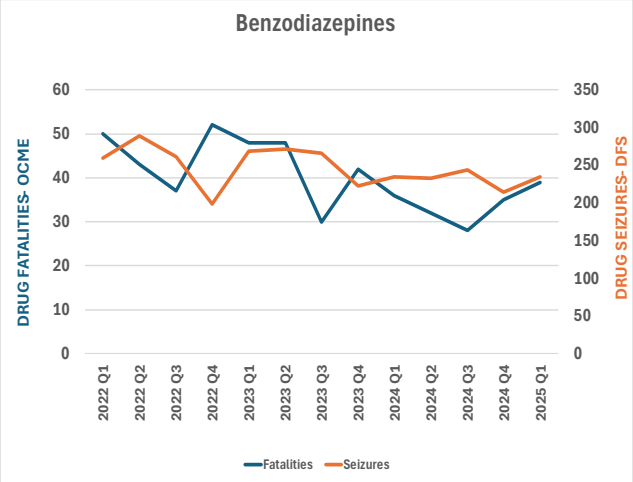

- 1 quarter comparison:
  - Seizures went up by 9%
  - Fatalities went up by 11%
- 1 year comparison:
  - Seizures did not change.
  - Fatalities went up by 8%
- 3 year comparisons:
  - Seizures went down by 9%
  - Fatalities went down by 22%
- According to preliminary data, seizures decreased by about 14% from Q1 to Q3 in 2025.
- There were about 6.0 drug seizures per fatality in Virginia in Q1 2025.
- 90% of cases of fatalities in 2024 also included fentanyl.

Data Sources:

Drug submissions: DFS monthly submission to the National Forensic Laboratory Information System. (See the DFS Seized Drug Dashboard at https://dfs.virginia.gov/seized-drug-dashboard/ for more information).

Drug overdose fatalities: OCME quarterly report of drug overdose fatalities, *Fatal Drug Overdose Quarterly Report, 1st Quarter 2025, Edition 2025.* Most recent report can be found at https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/medical-examiner/forensic-epidemiology/.

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