Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Criminal Justice Services
Ashaki McNeil, Director

Criminal Justice Research Center

Drug Seizures & Overdose Fatalities– Quarterly Update

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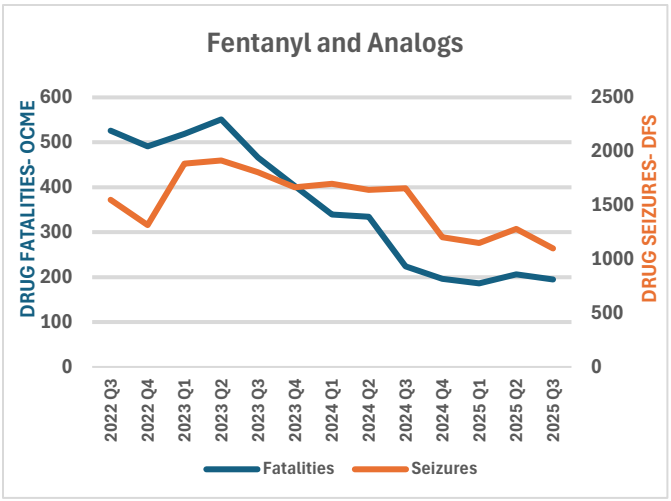
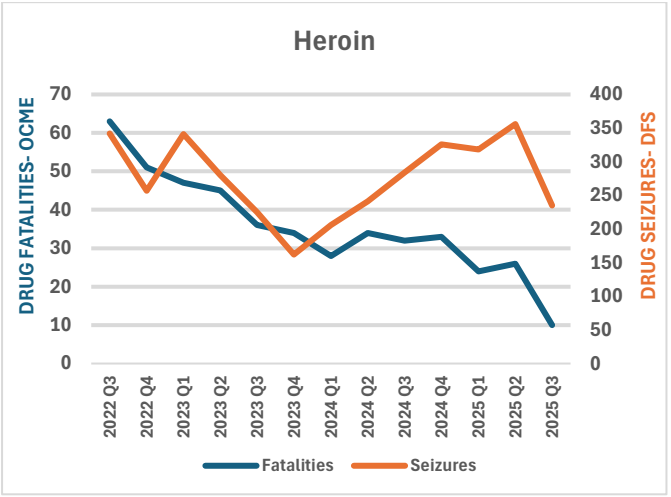
The Virginia Department of Forensic Science (DFS) tests samples of drugs seized by law enforcement agencies across Virginia, the data for which can be accessed here. Virginia's Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) reports on deaths due to drug overdose (whether by accident, suicide, homicide, or undetermined) in a report accessed here.

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-Q3. Historical counts may change slightly between reports.



- 1 quarter comparison:
  - Seizures decreased by 14%
  - Fatalities decreased by 5%
- 1 year comparison:
  - Seizures decreased by 34%
  - Fatalities decreased by 13%
- 3 year comparisons:
  - Seizures decreased by 29%
  - Fatalities decreased by 63%
- There were about 5.6 fentanyl seizures per fatality in Virginia in Q3 2025.

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



- 1 quarter comparison:
  - Seizures decreased by 34%
  - Fatalities decreased by 62%
- 1 year comparison:
  - Seizures decreased by 17%
  - Fatalities decreased by 69%
- 3 year comparisons:
  - Seizures decreased by 31%
  - Fatalities decreased by 84%
- There were about 23.5 heroin seizures per fatality in Virginia in Q3 2025.
- 97% of heroin fatalities in 2024 also included fentanyl.

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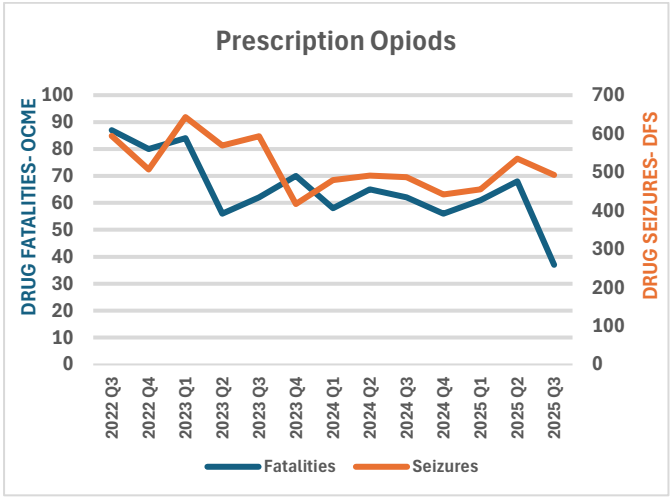
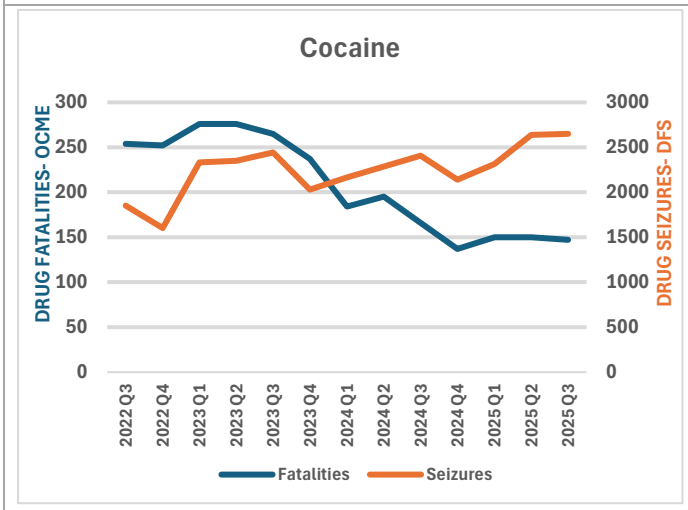
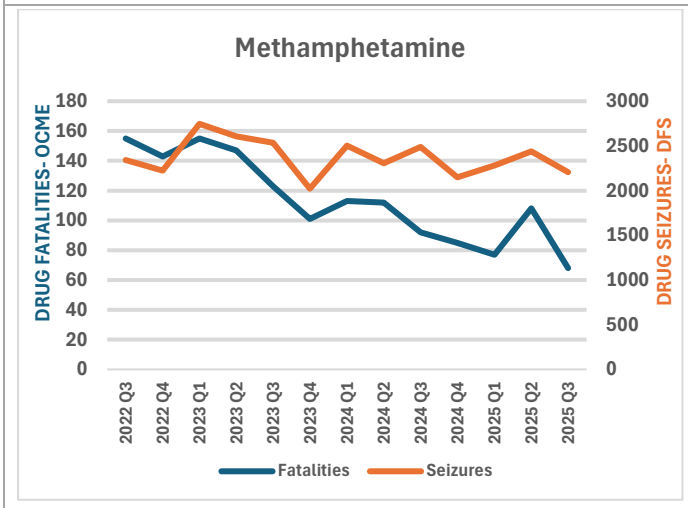


- 1 quarter comparison:
  - Seizures decreased by 8%
  - Fatalities decreased by 46%
- 1 year comparison:
  - Seizures increased by 1%
  - Fatalities decreased by 40%
- 3 year comparisons:
  - Seizures decreased by 17%
  - Fatalities decreased by 57%
- There were about 13.3 prescription opioid seizures per fatality in Virginia in Q3 2025.

Note: This excludes prescription fentanyl



- 1 quarter comparison:
  - Seizures increased by 0.5%
  - Fatalities decreased by 2%
- 1 year comparison:
  - Seizures increased by 10%
  - Fatalities decreased by 11%
- 3 year comparisons:
  - Seizures increased by 43%
  - Fatalities decreased by 42%
- There were about 18.0 cocaine seizures per fatality in Virginia in Q3 2025.
- 72% of cocaine fatalities in 2024 also included fentanyl.



- 1 quarter comparison:
  - Seizures decreased by 10%
  - Fatalities decreased by 37%
- 1 year comparison:
  - Seizures decreased by 11%
  - Fatalities decreased by 26%
- 3 year comparisons:
  - Seizures decreased by 6%
  - Fatalities decreased by 56%
- There were about 32.4 methamphetamine seizures per fatality in Virginia in Q3 2025.
- 60% of methamphetamine fatalities in 2024 also included fentanyl.

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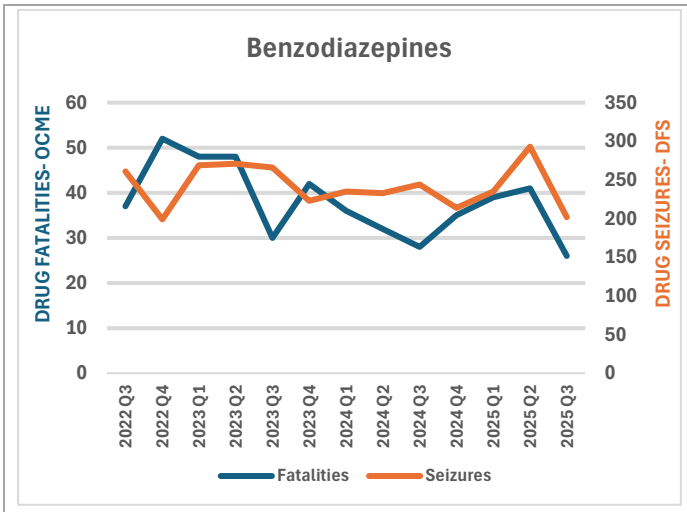

- 1 quarter comparison:
  - Seizures decreased by 31%
  - Fatalities decreased by 37%
- 1 year comparison:
  - Seizures decreased by 17%
  - Fatalities decreased by 7%
- 3 year comparisons:
  - Seizures decreased by 23%
  - Fatalities decreased by 30%
- There were about 7.8 benzodiazepine seizures per fatality in Virginia in Q3 2025.
- 90% of benzodiazepine 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, 3rd Quarter 2025, Edition 2025.* Most recent report can be found at https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/medical-examiner/forensic-epidemiology/.

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