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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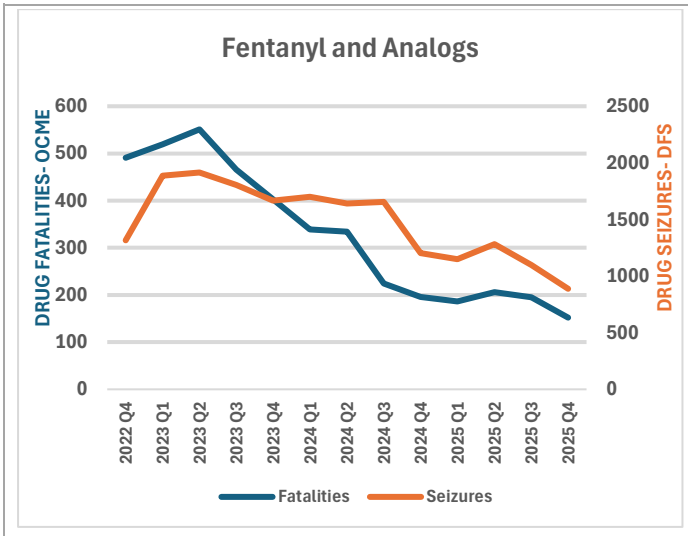
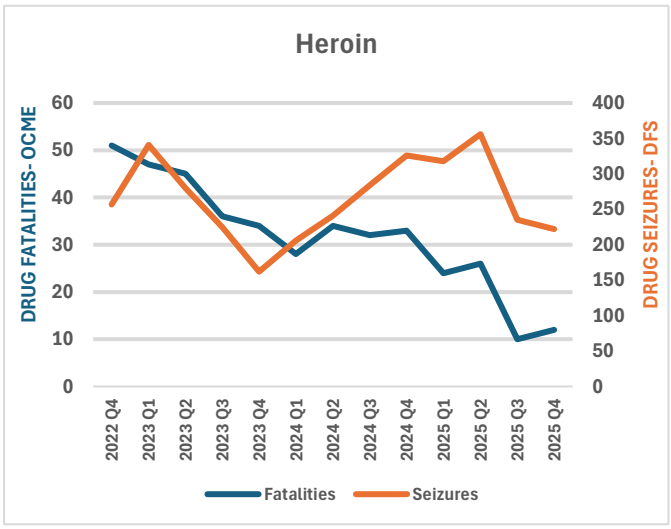
The Virginia Department of Forensic Science (DFS) tests samples of drugs seized by law enforcement agencies across Virginia, the data for which can be accessed here. Virginia's Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) reports on deaths due to drug overdose (whether by accident, suicide, homicide, 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-Q4. Historical counts may change slightly between reports.



- 1 quarter comparison:
  - Seizures decreased by 19%
  - Fatalities decreased by 22%
- 1 year comparison:
  - Seizures decreased by 26%
  - Fatalities decreased by 22%
- 3 year comparisons:
  - Seizures decreased by 32%
  - Fatalities decreased by 69%
- There were about 5.8 fentanyl seizures per fatality in Virginia in Q4 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 6%
  - Fatalities increased by 20%
- 1 year comparison:
  - Seizures decreased by 32%
  - Fatalities decreased by 64%
- 3 year comparisons:
  - Seizures decreased by 14%
  - Fatalities decreased by 76%
- There were about 18.5 heroin seizures per fatality in Virginia in Q4 2025.
- 99% of heroin fatalities in 2025 also included fentanyl.

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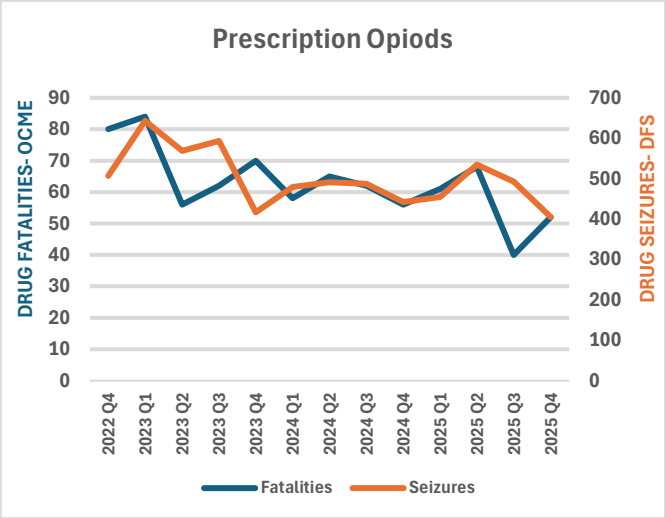
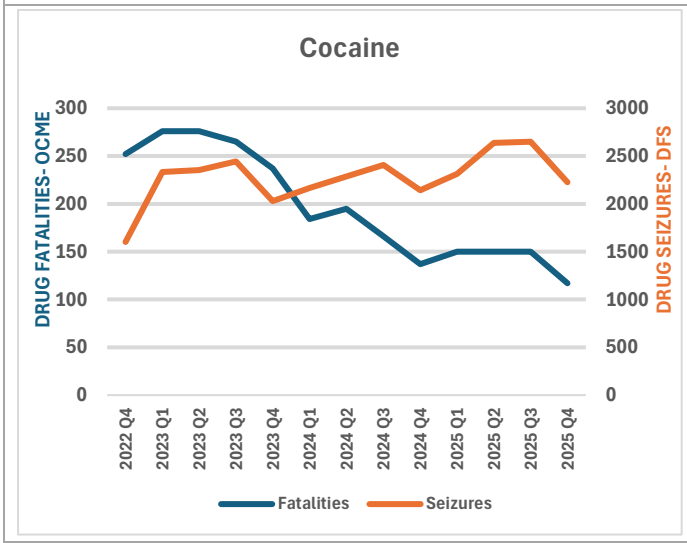
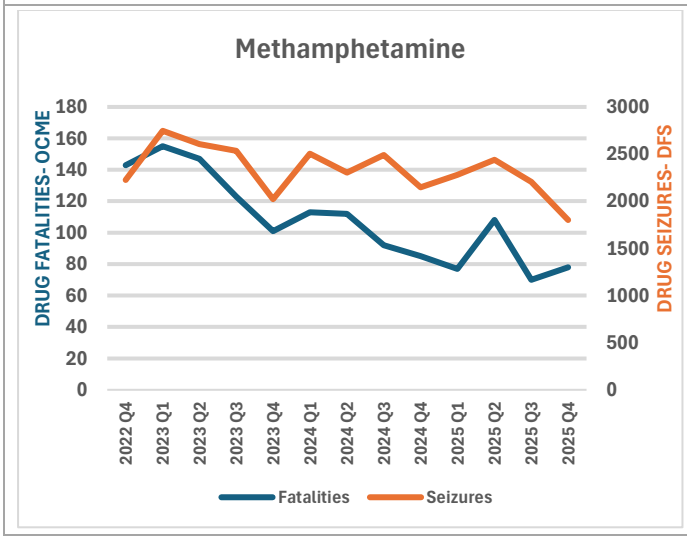


- 1 quarter comparison:
  - Seizures decreased by 18%
  - Fatalities increased by 30%
- 1 year comparison:
  - Seizures decreased by 8%
  - Fatalities decreased by 7%
- 3 year comparisons:
  - Seizures decreased by 20%
  - Fatalities decreased by 35%
- There were about 7.8 prescription opioid seizures per fatality in Virginia in Q4 2025.

Note: This excludes prescription fentanyl



- 1 quarter comparison:
  - Seizures decreased by 16%
  - Fatalities decreased by 22%
- 1 year comparison:
  - Seizures increased by 4%
  - Fatalities decreased by 15%
- 3 year comparisons:
  - Seizures increased by 39%
  - Fatalities decreased by 54%
- There were about 19.0 cocaine seizures per fatality in Virginia in Q4 2025.
- Roughly 60% of cocaine fatalities in 2025 also included fentanyl.



- 1 quarter comparison:
  - Seizures decreased by 18%
  - Fatalities increased by 11%
- 1 year comparison:
  - Seizures decreased by 16%
  - Fatalities decreased by 8%
- 3 year comparisons:
  - Seizures decreased by 19%
  - Fatalities decreased by 45%
- There were about 23.1 methamphetamine seizures per fatality in Virginia in Q4 2025.
- 46% of methamphetamine fatalities in 2025 also included fentanyl.

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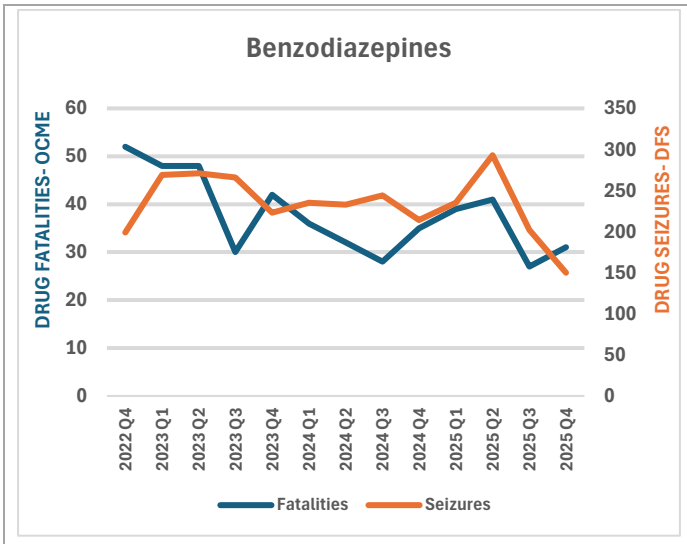

- 1 quarter comparison:
  - Seizures decreased by 26%
  - Fatalities increased by 15%
- 1 year comparison:
  - Seizures decreased by 30%
  - Fatalities decreased by 11%
- 3 year comparisons:
  - Seizures decreased by 25%
  - Fatalities decreased by 40%
- There were about 4.8 benzodiazepine seizures per fatality in Virginia in Q4 2025.
- Roughly 60% of benzodiazepine fatalities in 2025 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, 4th Quarter 2025, Edition 2025.* Most recent report can be found at https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/medical-examiner/forensic-epidemiology/.

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