

Pain in the Nation: The Epidemics of Alcohol, Drug, and Suicide Deaths: Snapshot for California

Major National Findings

Combined deaths from alcohol, drugs, and suicide were down significantly in the United States in 2024 for the first time since 1999. A new report highlights how progress is at risk amid federal workforce and funding cuts.

Combined Death Rate

 The combined rate of alcohol, drug, and suicide deaths was down nationally in 2024. The drug overdose death rate saw the largest decline, with a decrease of 26%.

 Still, nearly 174,000 Americans died due to alcohol, drugs, and suicide in 2024.

Suicide Deaths

 48,824 Americans died from suicide in 2024, down 3% from 2023. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for ages 10-35.

Drug Overdose Deaths

 The overall age-adjusted drug overdose mortality rate decreased 26% from 2023—with synthetic opioid deaths also falling sharply by 36%, serving as a major driver of the overall decrease.

Alcohol-Induced Deaths

 For 2024, the alcohol-induced mortality rate decreased 4% from 2023, marking a third consecutive annual decline after rising steadily since 2002.

Source: Trust for America's Health analysis of National Center for Health Statistics data.

Substance Use and Mental Health Data, 2023-2024

US

California

17%

Illicit drug use among 12+ population (past month)

17%

21%

Binge drinking among 12+ population (past month)

21%

17%

Substance Use Disorder among 12+ population (past year)

17%

6%

Serious mental illness among 18+ population (past year)

5%

5%

Serious thoughts about suicide among 18+ population (past year)

5%

29%

Poor mental health among high schoolers (past 30 days)

NA

20%

Seriously considered suicide among high schoolers (past 30 days)

NA

14%

ACEs among children 0-17

11%

For the full report, go to:

<https://www.tfah.org/report-details/pain-in-the-nation-2026-report/>

Sources: National Survey on Drug Use and Health, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, National Survey of Children's Health.

Key Recommendations for Congress



Protect investments in injury and violence prevention by providing robust funding for CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (Injury Center) and maintaining the vital workforce necessary to fulfill the center's activities, including the Comprehensive Suicide Prevention program.



Continue to improve programs, like CDC's Overdose Data to Action, to track emerging trends by geographic, demographic, and drug type metrics to guide local, state, and national responses and to prevent overdoses in real time.



Address upstream drivers of substance use and mental health challenges among children and youth by passing the RISE from Trauma Act and investing in CDC's Adverse Childhood Experiences and Division of Adolescent and School Health programs, and SAMHSA's National Child Traumatic Stress Network.



Maintain SAMHSA's funding and critical workforce and bolster the continuum of crisis intervention services, such as the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.



Restore Medicaid funding and eligibility to prevent losses in mental health and substance use healthcare.

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