Heard in the Health and Human Services Interim Committee on 08/20/2025

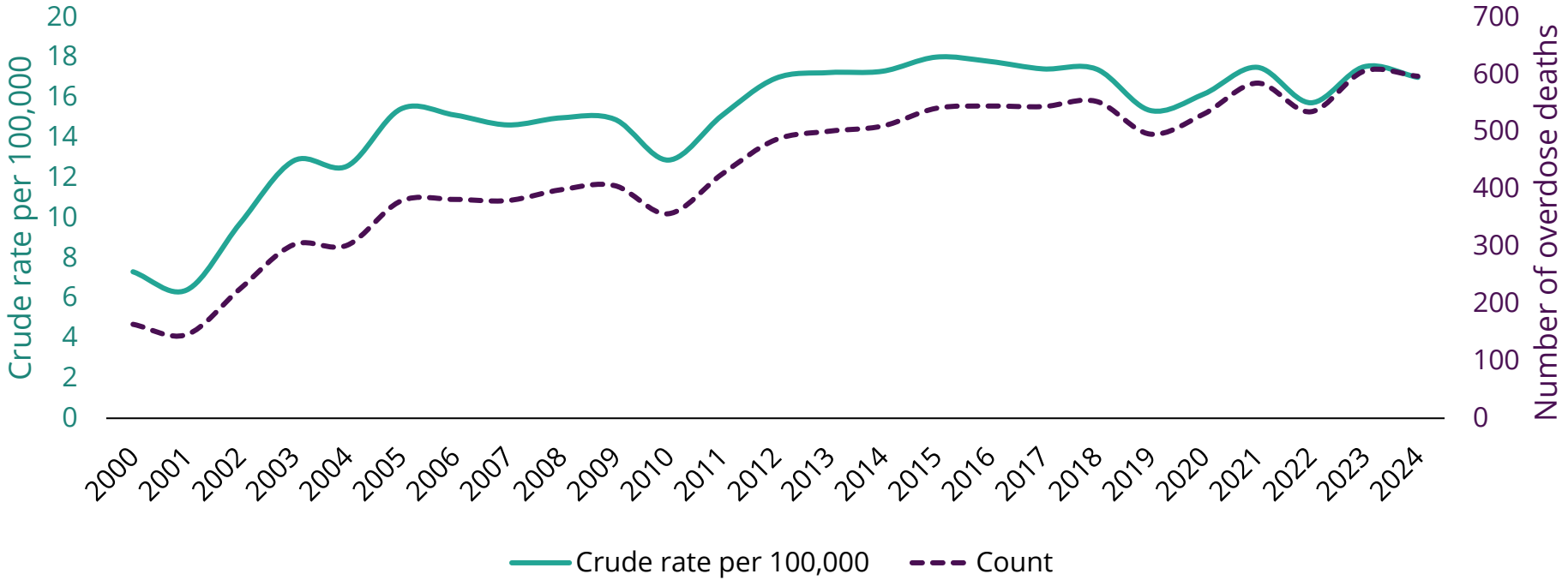
# Data and beyond: learning from overdose fatalities to save lives

Megan Broekemeier, MPH
Overdose Fatality Examiner
Utah Office of the Medical Examiner

Utah Department of Health & Human Services

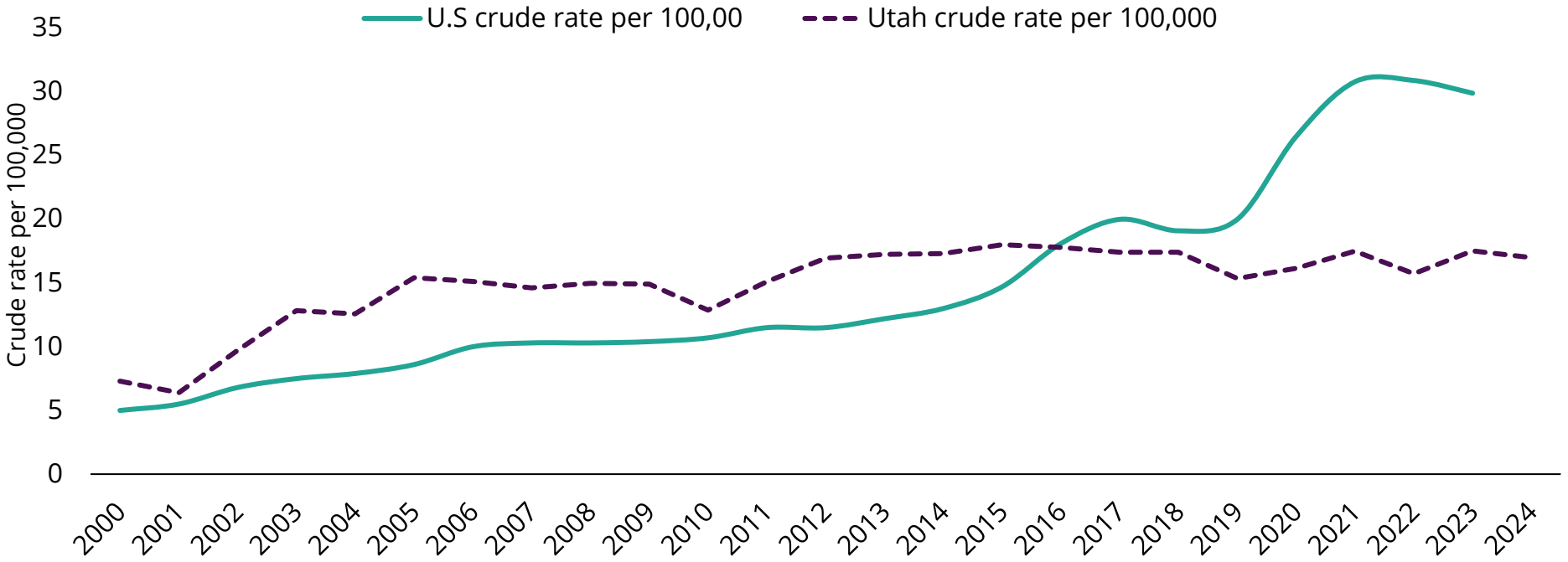
# Fatal overdose surveillance update

# The drug overdose death rate increased signi cantly from 2000 to 2015 and has remained at peak levels since.



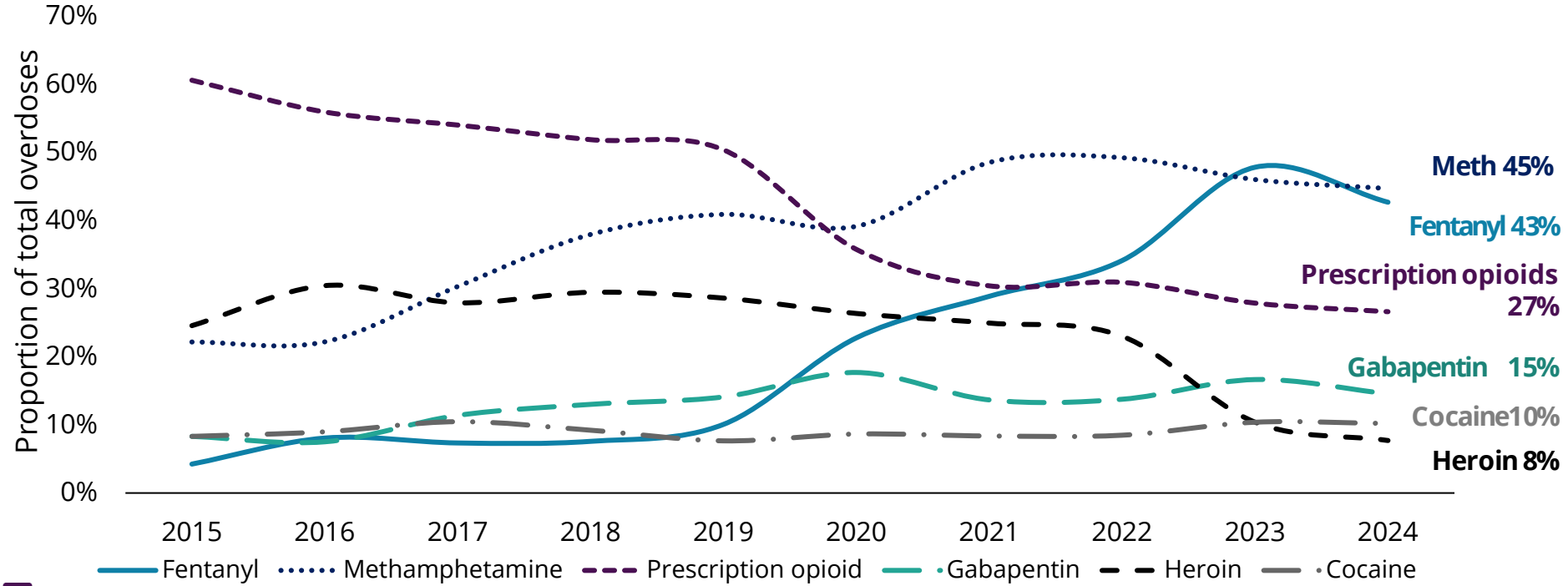

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# While the nation saw a steep climb in overdose deaths during the pandemic, Utah's trend held steady.




Utah Department of Health & Human Services
Medical Examiner

# Methamphetamine is the most common drug involved in overdose deaths in Utah.

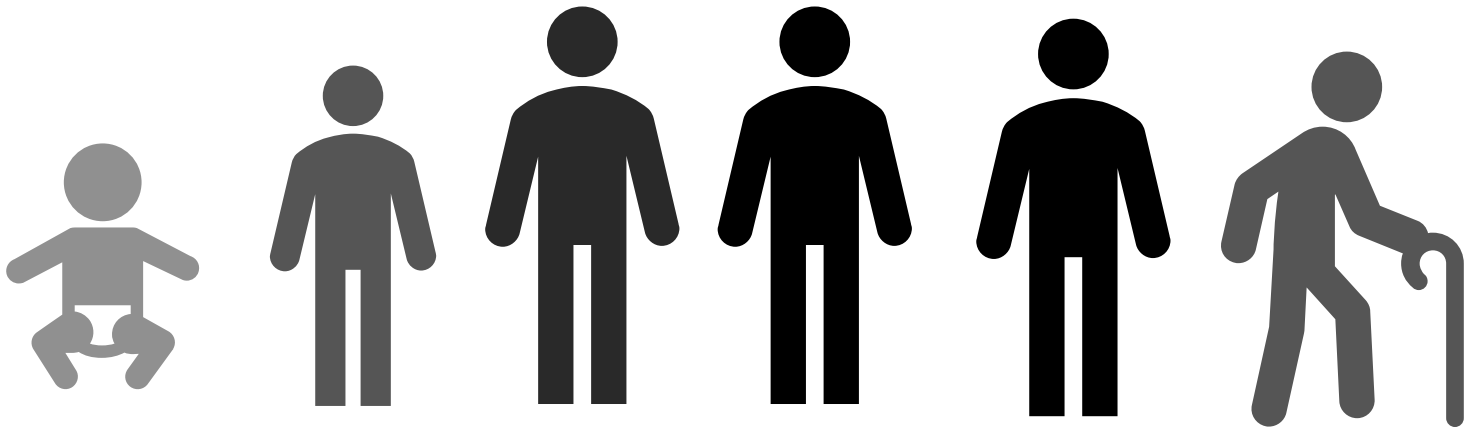



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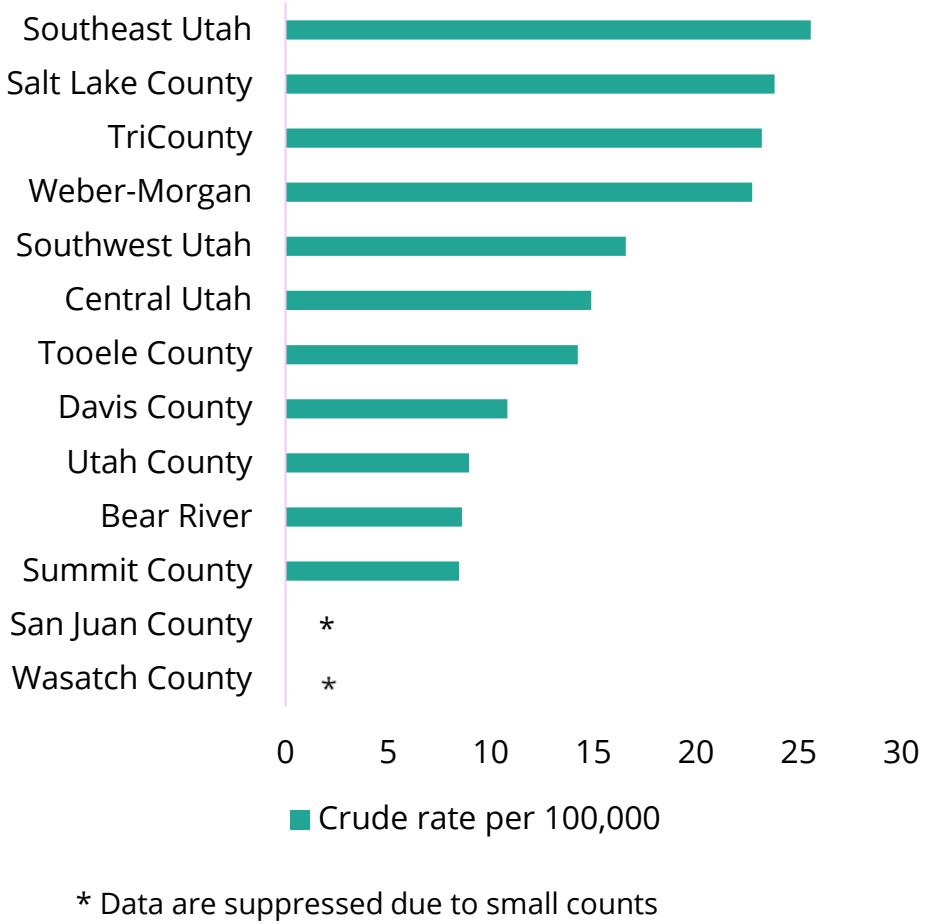
Three out of five overdose deaths are among males.



Adults aged 35 to 54 have the highest rate of overdose death.



Between 2022 and 2024, the drug overdose death rate was the highest in the Southeast Health District (25.6), which includes Carbon, Emery, and Grand counties, followed by Salt Lake County (23.8).




* Data are suppressed due to small counts

# Overdose fatality review

# Fatality review overview

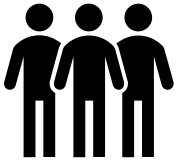
- Structured, confidential process
- Multidisciplinary team
- Examine full context of a person’s life
- Identify missed opportunities for prevention and system level improvement



# Overdose fatality review guiding principles

- Overdose deaths are preventable
- Substance use disorder is a chronic, treatable condition
- Responsible use of data to inform prevention strategies
- Continually improve OFR process

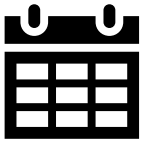
# Recommendations



Who will act?



What will they do?

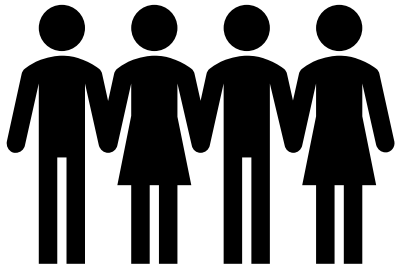


When?

# Recommendations: healthcare systems

**Individuals who use drugs should be able to access behavioral health care, including peer support, as part of their primary care.**

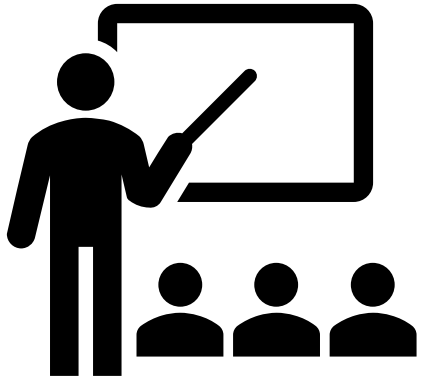
- Integrated behavioral health is a proven model for improving health outcomes
- Peer support has been shown to improve treatment engagement and retention



# Recommendations: community education and awareness

**The Department of Health and Human Services should develop a state plan to address the harms of methamphetamine use within the next 12 months.**

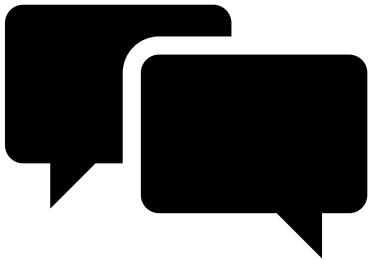
- Education around unique risks
- Promote risk mitigation strategies



# Recommendations: access to services

**School districts should increase access to mental health services aimed at reducing the impact of childhood trauma.**

- Strong link between childhood trauma and substance use
- Address underlying mental health conditions



# Goals and next steps





