
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

November 30, 2016

Ald. Michael J. Murphy
(414) 286-3763

Milwaukee County on pace for a record-setting year of opioid overdose deaths

Analysis from city's new partnership with Medical College of Wisconsin also shows growing prevalence of fentanyl in overdose cases

Building on a report from the office of **Alderman Michael J. Murphy**, an analysis of opioid overdose deaths conducted by the **Medical College of Wisconsin** shows Milwaukee County is on pace to significantly eclipse last year's figure of 231 heroin and opiate overdose deaths.

Through September 24 of this year, the updated report (attached) shows 191 people fell victim to opioid overdoses, compared to 176 by the same time in 2015. If overdose deaths continue at this rate in Milwaukee County, the total figure for the year 2016 could exceed 250.

"It's alarming because the issue is getting more attention than ever before, and yet still the rate of overdoses is climbing," Alderman Murphy said. "What's more, the breakdown of data by race, by age and by geographic location shows the problem is as ubiquitous as ever. Absolutely anyone in any part of the county can fall victim."

Also notable is the precipitous increase in the number of overdose cases in which the drug fentanyl played a role. Through September 24, fentanyl was identified as a contributing factor in 56 overdose deaths—compared to 30 deaths in all of 2015, 16 in 2014, 11 in 2013 and five in 2012. If these deaths continue at the current rate, the number of fentanyl overdose victims in 2016 will eclipse those in the last four years combined.

-More-

Overdose analysis/ADD ONE

“Fentanyl is a powerful and dangerous drug that we see more and more frequently in overdose cases,” said **Dr. Brooke Lerner**, who is leading the Medical College of Wisconsin’s analysis of data from the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner’s office. “In some cases, users may know that fentanyl is present, but in many cases it may be mixed into their drugs without their knowledge. Fentanyl is always dangerous when used without medical supervision.”

The analysis is taking place as part of a two-year community-based, data-driven partnership between the City of Milwaukee, the Zilber Family Foundation and the MCW’s Department of Emergency Medicine to examine key metrics of the heroin and opiate abuse epidemic. The **Milwaukee COPE** (Community Opioid Prevention Effort) got underway earlier this year under legislation sponsored by Alderman Murphy, and regular updates are expected as the initiative proceeds.

To best utilize the data, Alderman Murphy will introduce Common Council legislation creating a **City-County Heroin and Opioid Task Force** charged with studying the problem further and presenting policy recommendations to address the issue. The task force would be composed of representatives from the Common Council, Milwaukee Health Department, Police Department, Fire Department, Milwaukee County Circuit Court, Intergovernmental Relations, County Executive’s office, the community and the medical profession.

The council’s Public Safety Committee will take up that legislation at its regular meeting on **Thursday, December 1 at 9:00 a.m.** in Room 301-B of City Hall.

“As we continue to better understand the breadth of the heroin and opiate abuse epidemic, the next step is to translate facts into action,” Alderman Murphy said. “By bringing together experts from both the public and private sectors and multiple government jurisdictions, I hope to be able to craft an effective set of policy recommendations that can help reverse this startling, deadly trend.”

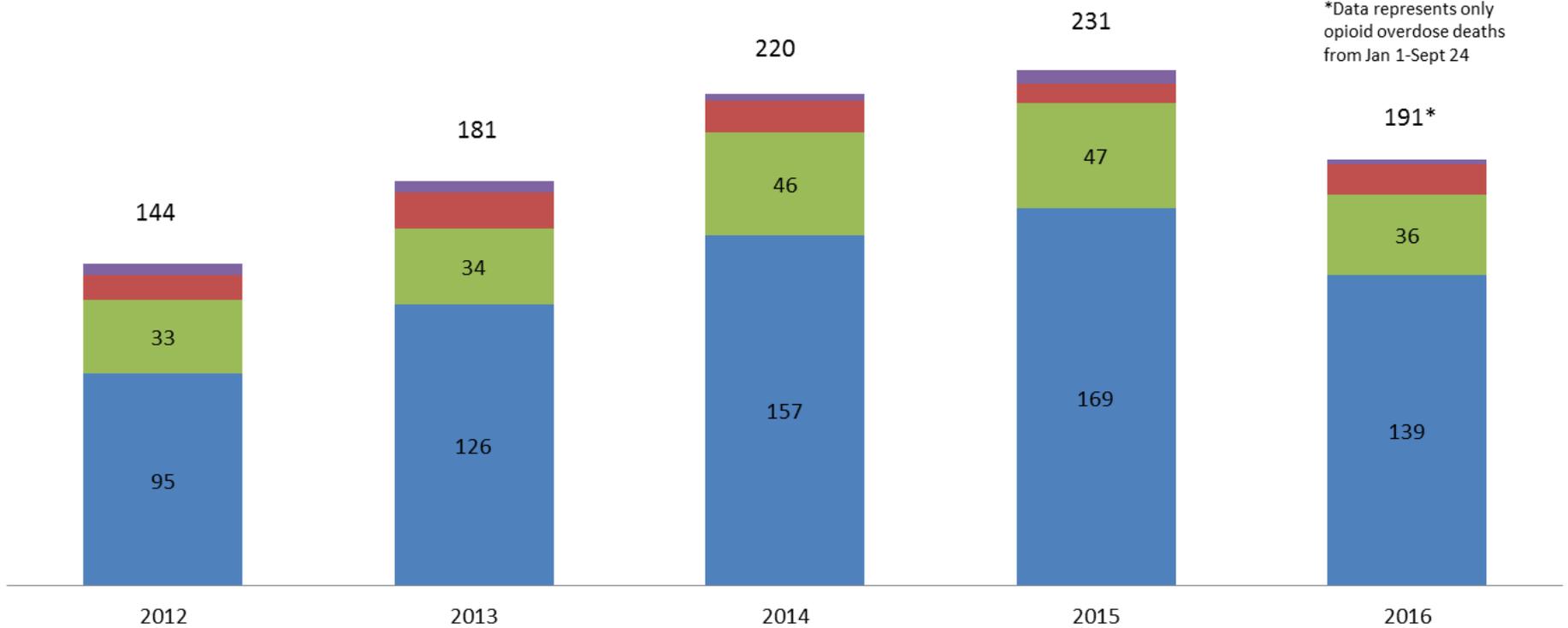
Alderman Murphy said the community effort is augmented by tomorrow’s launch of the local **Drug Mail Back Program** championed by **Alderman Jim Bohl**. The program creates a safe, convenient method to dispose of unused or unwanted medication, reducing the opportunities for surplus medication to contribute to addiction issues.

Opioid-Related Overdose Deaths in Milwaukee County January 1, 2012 – September 24, 2016

Opioid Overdose Deaths by Year and Race/Ethnicity

January, 2012 – September, 2016

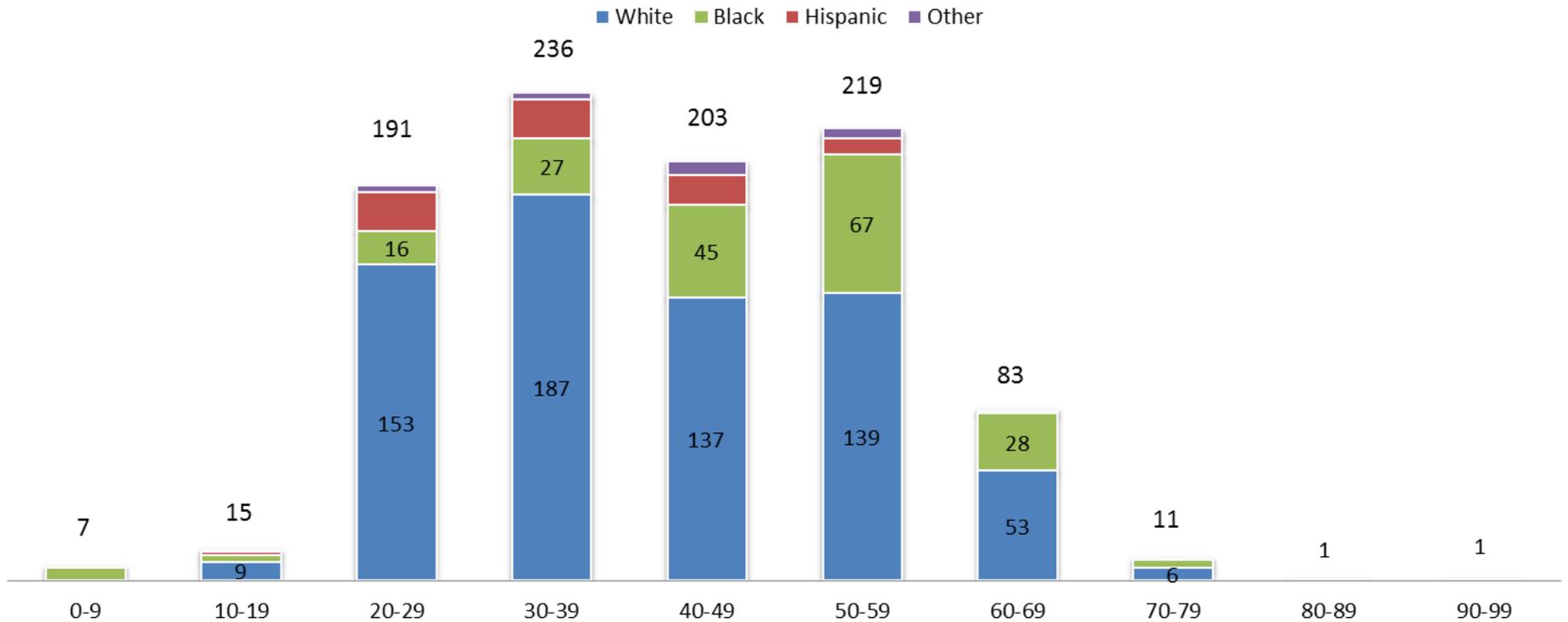
■ White ■ Black ■ Hispanic ■ Other



*Data represents only opioid overdose deaths from Jan 1-Sept 24

Opioid Overdose Deaths by Age Range and Race/Ethnicity

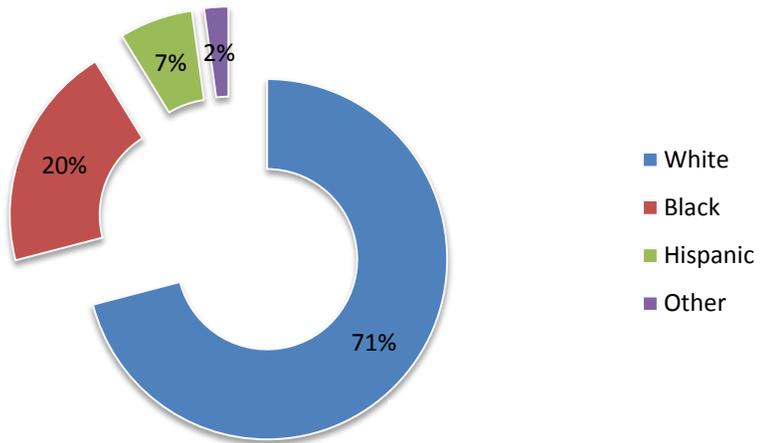
January, 2012 – September, 2016



Almost 50% of all opioid-related overdose deaths occurred among white victims between the ages of 20-49. While the distribution of white overdose deaths mirrors the overall distribution, black overdose deaths skew older with 45% occurring between the ages of 40-59.

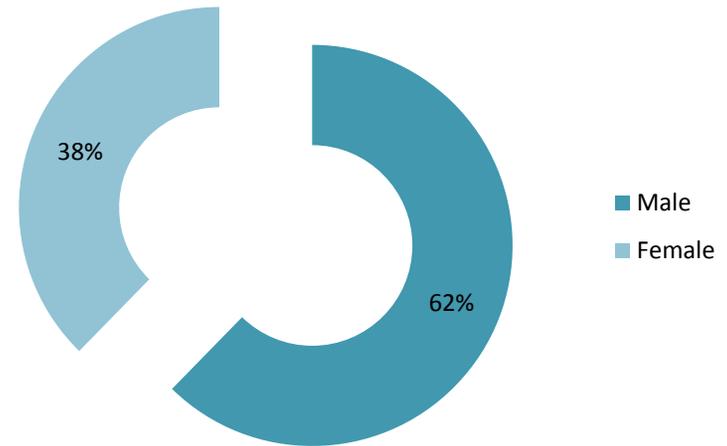
Opioid Overdose Deaths by Race/Ethnicity

January, 2012 – September, 2016



Opioid Overdose Deaths by Sex

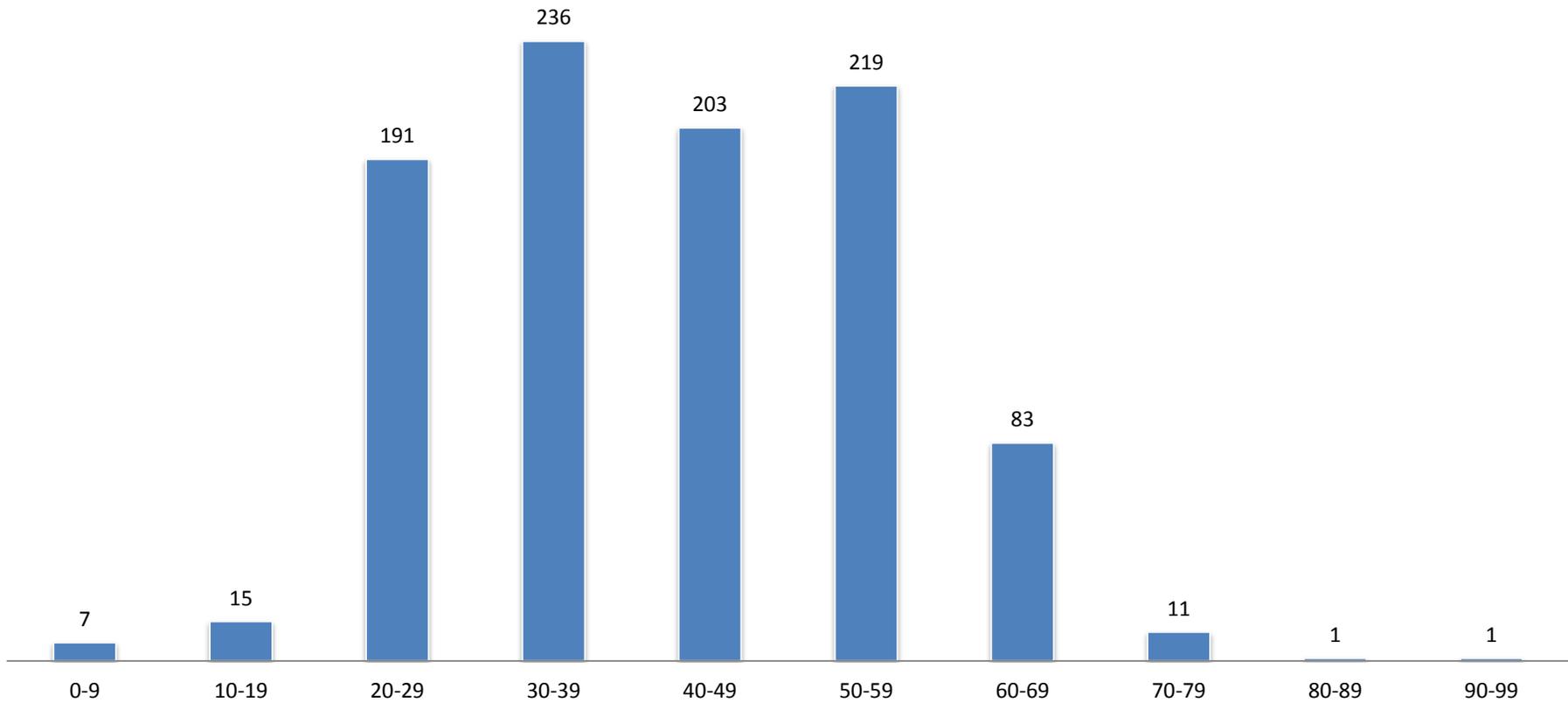
January, 2012 – September, 2016



Of the 967 opioid-related overdose deaths between January 1, 2012 and September 24, 2016, 71% were white and 62% were male.

Opioid Overdose Deaths by Age Range

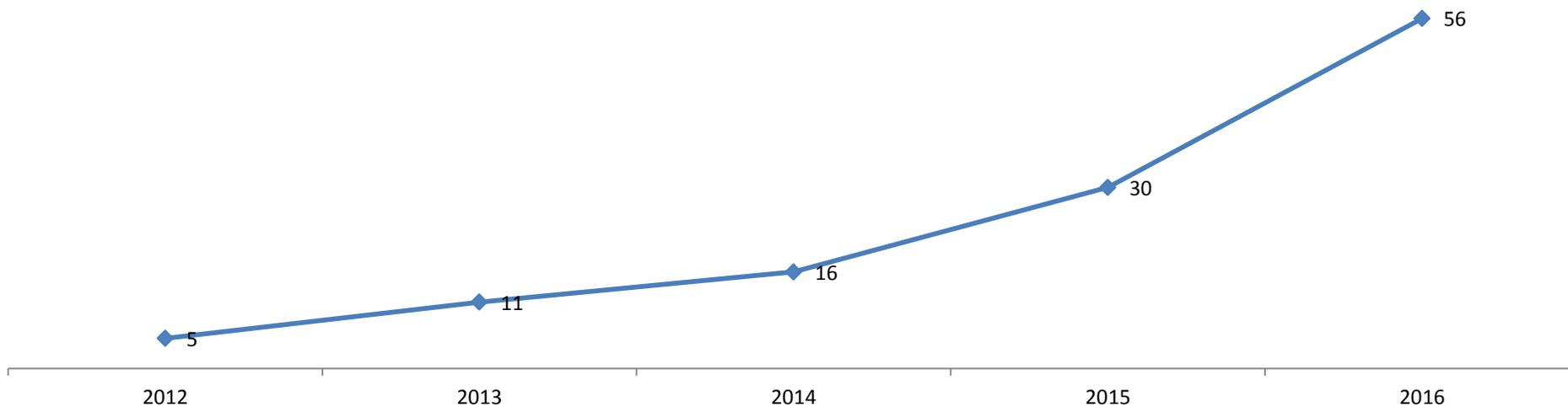
January, 2012- September, 2016



Nearly half, 45%, of opioid-related overdose deaths occur between 30-49 years of age.

Fentanyl-Related Overdose Deaths

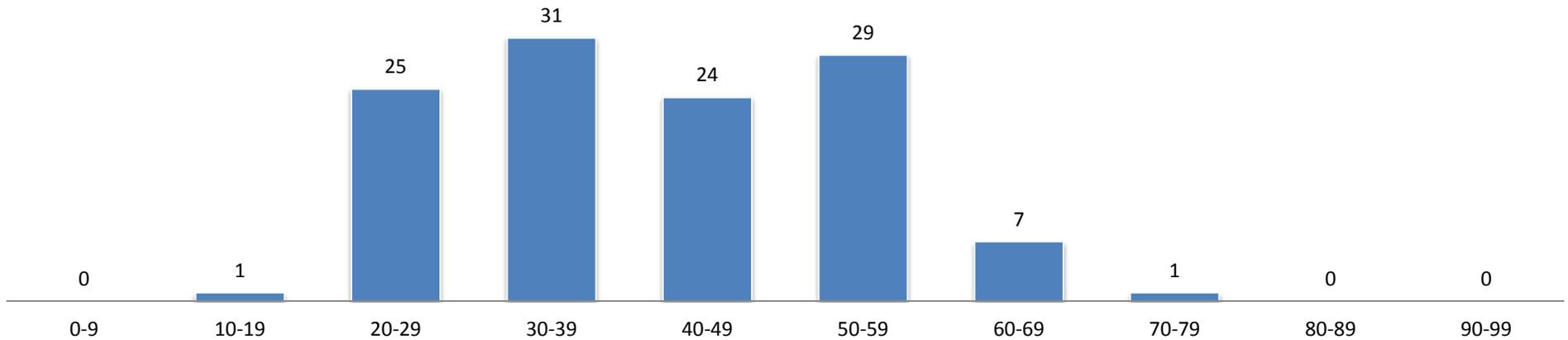
January, 2012-September, 2016



Of the 191 opioid-related overdose deaths between January 1, 2016 and September 24, 2016, 29% involved the drug fentanyl. In 2015, only 13% of opioid-related overdose deaths involved fentanyl; the rate of overdose deaths involving fentanyl for the first nine months of 2016 alone already surpasses the rate for all of 2015.

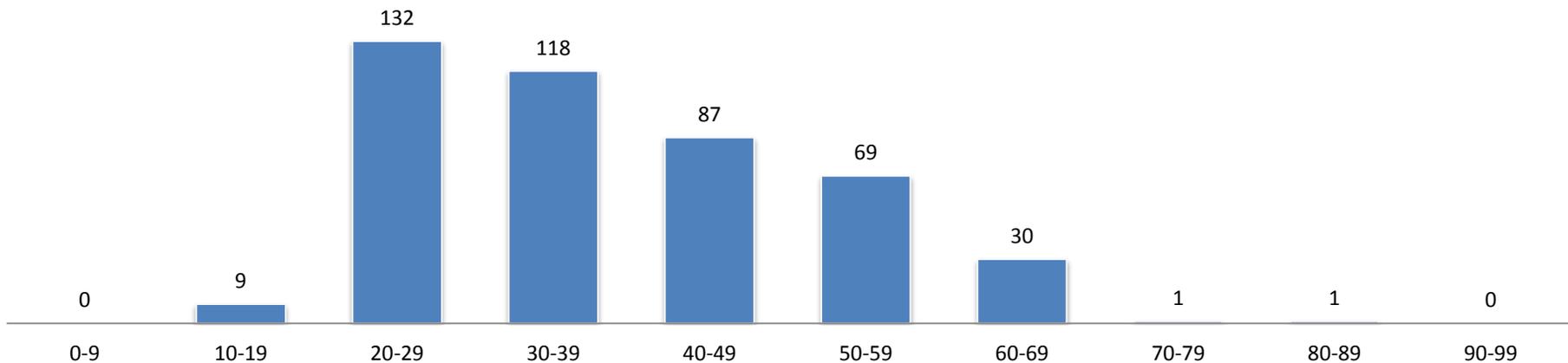
Fentanyl-Related Overdose Death by Age Group

January, 2012-September, 2016



Heroin-Related Overdose Deaths by Age Group

January 2012-September 2016



Fentanyl-related deaths stay relatively steady from ages 20-59, while heroin-related deaths affect younger groups, with 20-29 year olds having the highest incidence.

Opioid-Related Overdose Deaths in Milwaukee County

	All Opioid Overdoses 2012-2016		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
Total	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Sex												
Male	602	62%	87	60%	102	56%	133	60%	149	65%	131	69%
Female	364	38%	57	40%	79	44%	87	40%	81	35%	60	31%
Age Range												
under 9	7	1%	0	0%	2	1%	0	0%	1	0%	4	2%
10-19	15	2%	2	1%	5	3%	1	0%	4	2%	3	2%
20-29	191	20%	23	16%	35	19%	50	23%	45	19%	38	20%
30-39	236	24%	36	25%	32	18%	48	22%	64	28%	56	29%
40-49	203	21%	30	21%	53	29%	44	20%	46	20%	30	16%
50-59	219	23%	42	29%	42	23%	49	22%	42	18%	44	23%
60-69	83	9%	9	6%	9	5%	24	11%	26	11%	15	8%
70-79	11	1%	2	1%	3	2%	3	1%	3	1%	0	0%
80-89	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%
90-99	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
Race/Ethnicity												
White	686	71%	95	66%	126	70%	157	71%	169	73%	139	73%
Black	196	20%	33	23%	34	19%	46	21%	47	20%	36	19%
Hispanic	64	7%	11	8%	16	9%	14	6%	9	4%	14	7%
Other	18	2%	5	3%	5	3%	3	1%	5	2%	2	1%
Drug Type*												
Heroin	447	46%	53	37%	69	38%	116	53%	110	48%	99	52%
Oxycodone	305	32%	60	42%	64	35%	82	37%	59	26%	40	21%
Methadone	132	14%	26	18%	26	14%	23	10%	39	17%	18	10%
Morphine	159	16%	24	16%	37	20%	31	14%	48	21%	19	10%
Fentanyl	118	12%	5	3%	11	6%	16	7%	30	13%	56	29%

Not mutually exclusive

**Heroin metabolizes to 6-monoacetylmorphine and is detectable in the blood for up to two hours in a living person. 6-monoacetylmorphine is then metabolized to morphine. When 6-monoacetylmorphine is found on a toxicology screen, the Medical Examiner can identify heroin as the cause of the overdose. However, if 6-monoacetylmorphine is not detected, morphine is identified as the cause of death.

Opioid-Related Overdose Deaths in Milwaukee County

Death at Victim's Residence

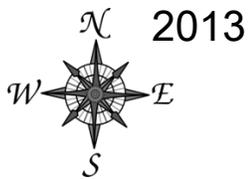
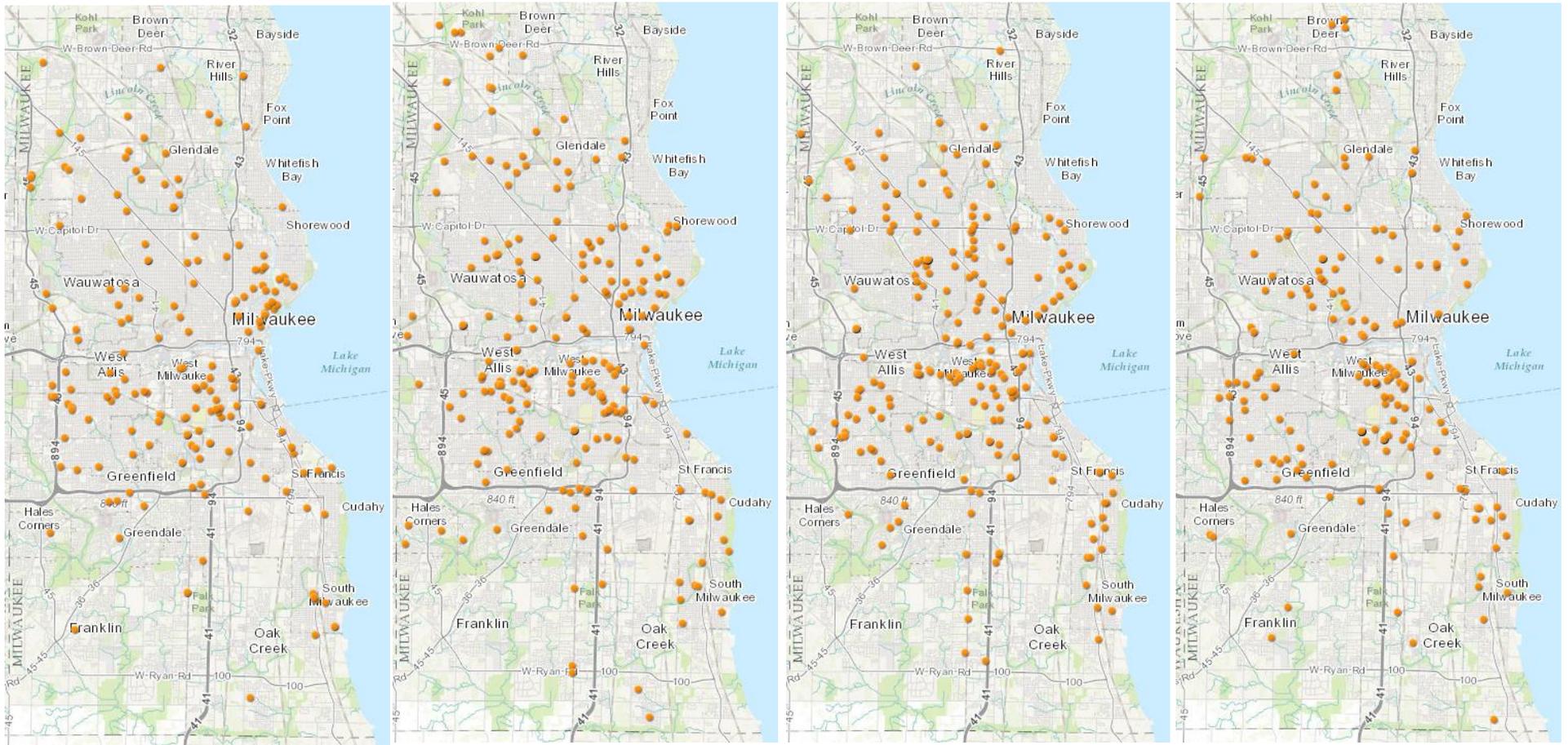
January, 2012-September, 2016

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016*
Death at Residence	106	131	150	162	123
Total opioid deaths	144	181	220	231	191
Percent	74%	72%	68%	70%	64%

From January, 2012 through September, 2016, 69% of people who experienced a fatal opioid-related overdose died in their place of residence.

Location of Opioid-Related Overdose Death in Milwaukee County by Year

January 2013-September 2016



2013

2014

2015

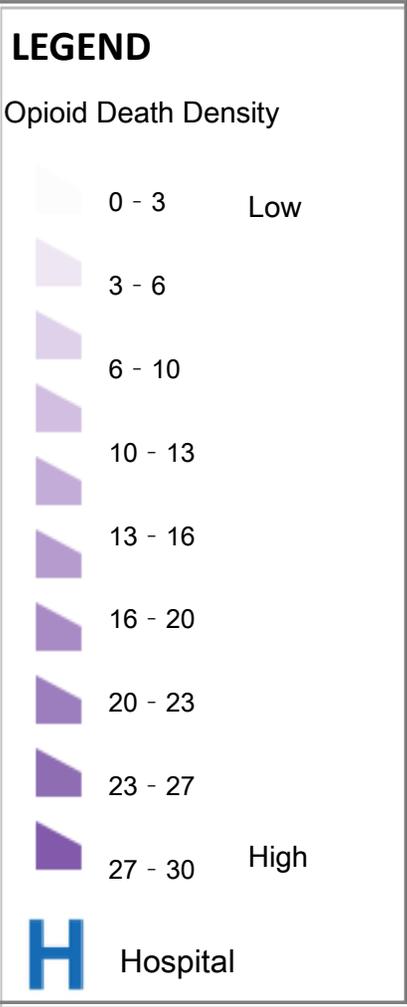
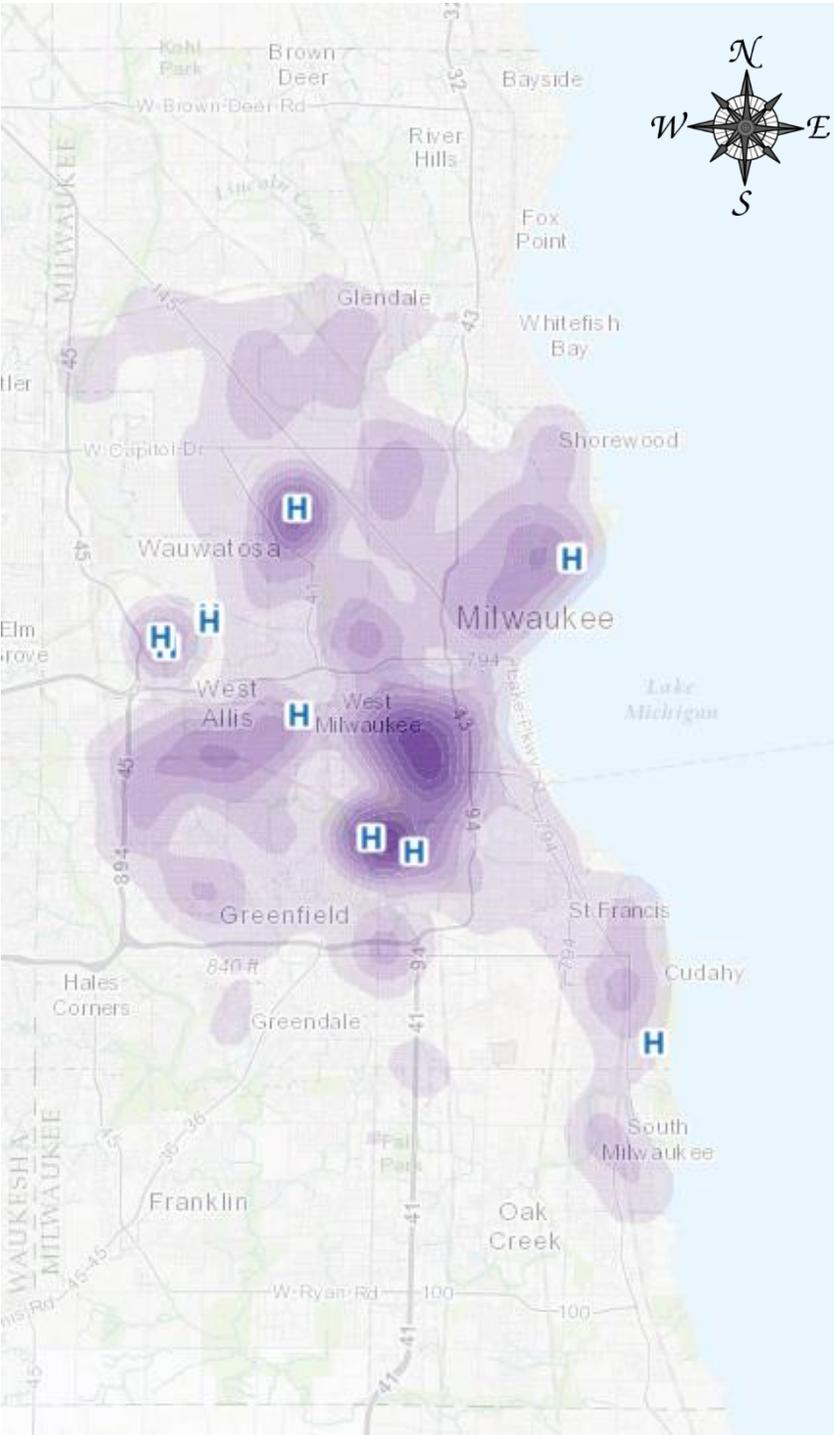
LEGEND

 Death

Data source: Milwaukee County Medical Examiner – Opioid-related overdose deaths January 1, 2012 - September 24, 2016.

Density of Opioid-Related Deaths in Milwaukee County

January 2012-September 2016



This map represents the location of overdose deaths including those who died at a hospital.

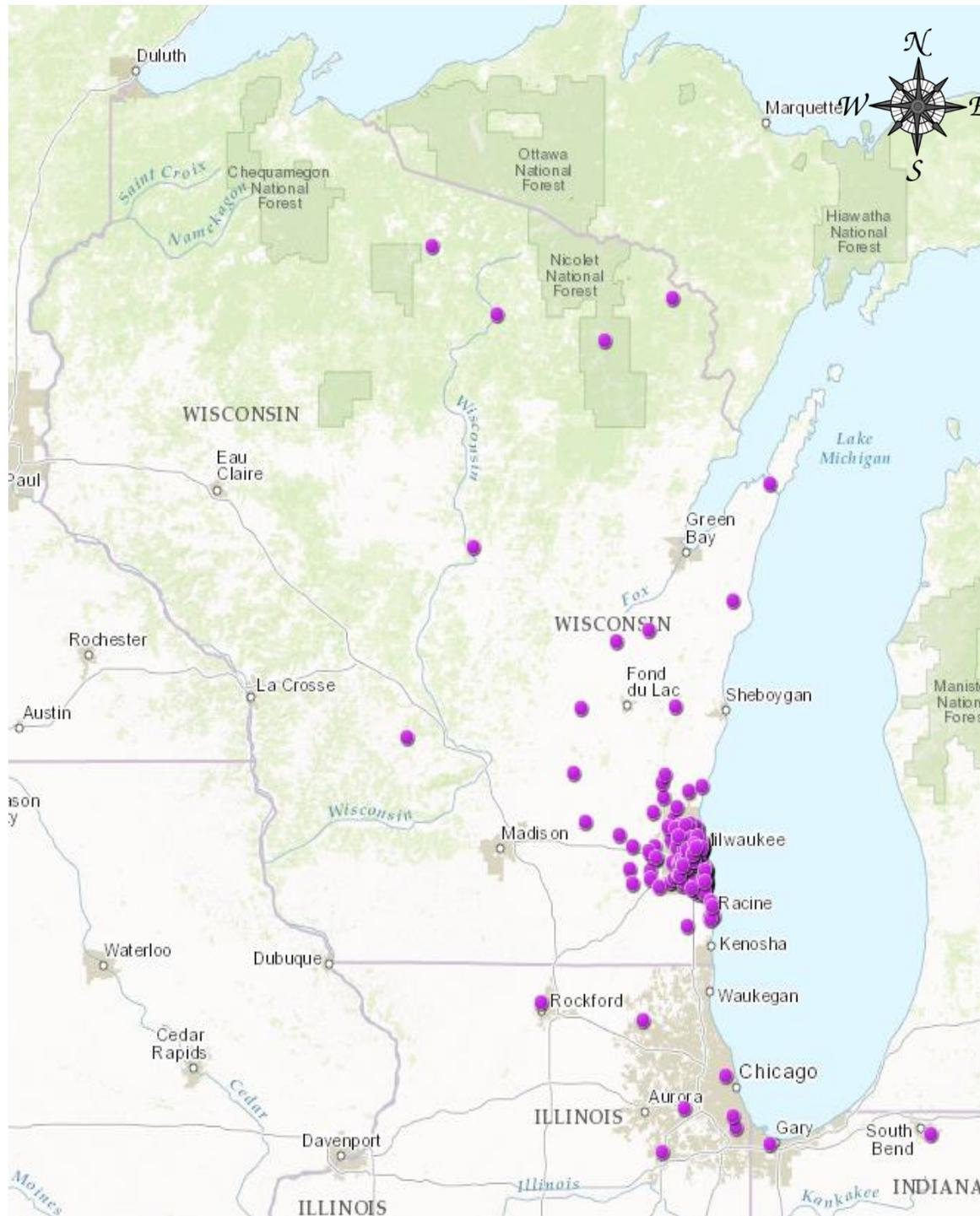
Data source: Milwaukee County Medical Examiner – Opioid-related overdose deaths January 1, 2012 - September 24, 2016.

Residence of Opioid-Related Overdose Victims Who Died in Milwaukee County

January 2012– September 2016

Approximately 60 opioid-related deaths in Milwaukee County had a residence outside of the county.

Additionally, four residences are not in this map's range.



Data source: Milwaukee County Medical Examiner – Opioid-related overdose deaths January 1, 2012 - September 24, 2016.