

**Working Title**  
**An Analysis of Ohio Stimulant Fatalities**  
**2010 through 2017**

Prepared by:



**Ohio Alliance**  
**for Innovation in**  
**Population Health**

## **Increase in Psychostimulant and Cocaine Related Unintentional Overdose Deaths**

The Ohio Alliance for Innovation in Population Health (OAIPH) has completed a review of unintentional overdose fatalities in Ohio from 2010 through 2017. The intent was to examine the increase in unintentional overdose deaths with cocaine or psychostimulant ICD death codes present. Data were abstracted from the Ohio Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Ohio Death Certificate File. Ohioans who overdosed and died in states other than Ohio were not available for analysis. Key patterns of mortality for demographics such as age, sex, and race were monitored. Geographic patterns were also assessed. Finally, OAIPH also reviewed stimulants prescribed through the Ohio health care system and reported to the Ohio Pharmacy Board OARRS system for the same period.

### **Key Findings:**

1. Psychostimulant mentions (including amphetamines and methamphetamines) in the Ohio unintentional overdose dataset increased from 9 in 2010 to 509 in 2017. This constitutes an increase of 500 death mentions or a 5,556% increase in psychostimulant related mortalities for the period.
2. In 2017, seventy-one percent (71%) of all psychostimulant mortalities co-occurred with fentanyl and seventy-nine percent (79%) co-occurred with some form of opioid.
3. In 2017, twelve percent (12%) of all unintentional overdose deaths included a psychostimulant. White decedents were significantly more likely to have a psychostimulant mention (12%) than African American decedents (2%).
4. Decedents between the ages of 20 – 29 were more likely to have a stimulant mention (14%) than all other age cohorts.
5. In 2017, rural and suburban counties were more likely to have higher percentages of psychostimulant mentions than urban counties.

6. Cocaine mentions increased from 212 in 2010 to 1,520 in 2017. This is an increase of 1,308 cocaine related mentions or a 617% increase.
7. In 2017, seventy percent (70%) of all cocaine mentions co-occurred with fentanyl and eighty-one percent (81%) co-occurred with some form of opioid.
8. In 2017, thirty-two percent of all unintentional overdose deaths included a cocaine mention. African American decedents were significantly more likely to have a cocaine mention (54%) than White decedents (28.8%).

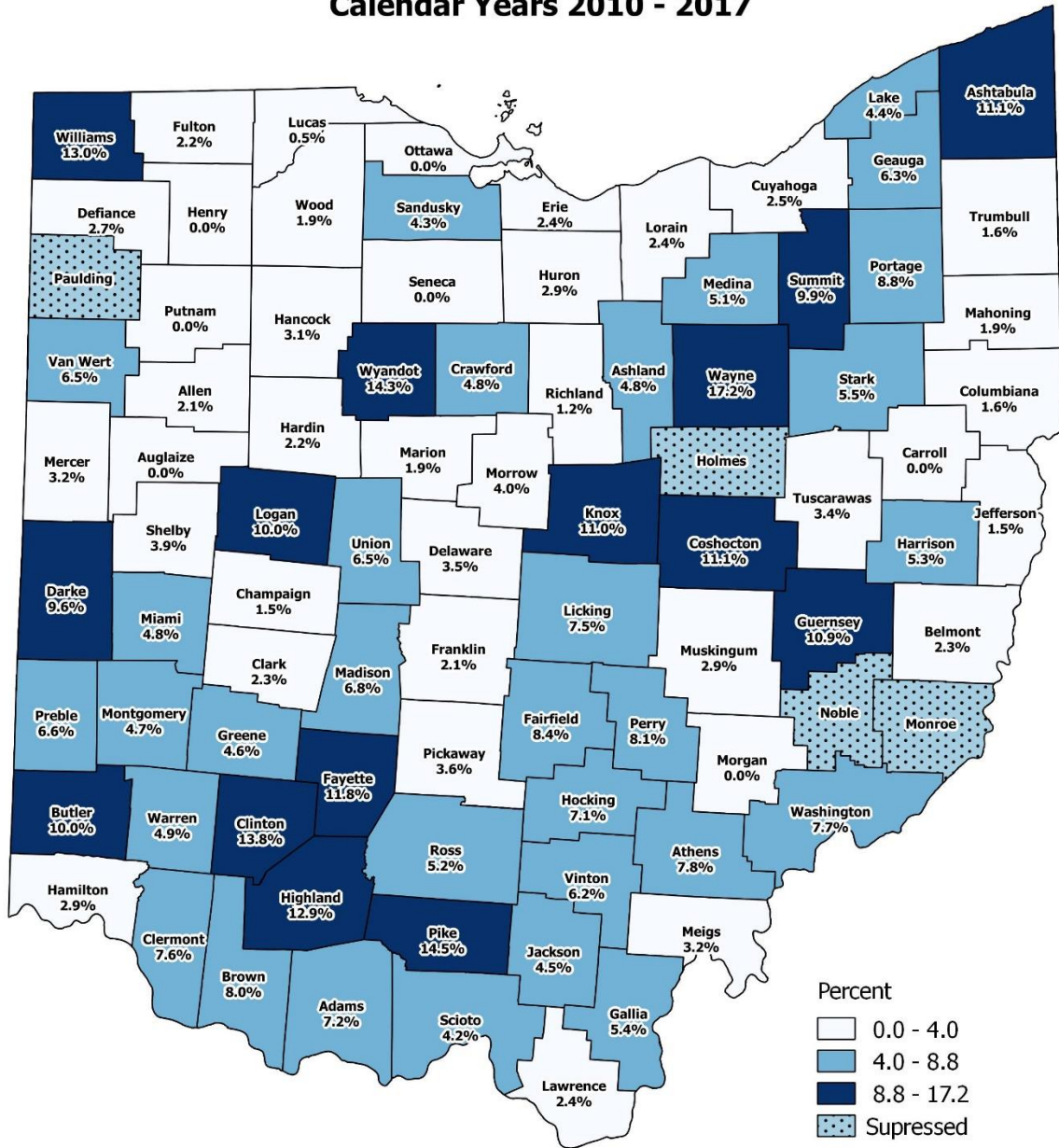
## **Discussion**

Cocaine (including crack) and psychostimulants like amphetamines (including methamphetamines) have similar affects. Users experience increased alertness as well as intense feelings of exhilaration and euphoria. While addiction to stimulants is common and expected, the recent surge of stimulant related fatalities in Ohio is concerning.

For the past several years, law enforcement officials have reported increased levels of stimulant trafficking. It is also worth noting that a review of Pharmacy Board data shows a thirty-eight percent (38%) increase in psychostimulant prescribing in Ohio between 2010 and 2017. We now know that prolonged exposure to prescription opioids was an important contributing factor to the opioid epidemic and it is possible that the recent increased use of psychostimulants in Ohio's healthcare system is having a similar effect.

Additional analysis is required to determine what factors account for elevated levels of stimulant trafficking and related fatalities. Appropriate policy action should be taken before additional loss of life and social costs are incurred.

## Percentage of Unintentional Overdose Deaths That Include a Psychostimulant ICD Code Calendar Years 2010 - 2017

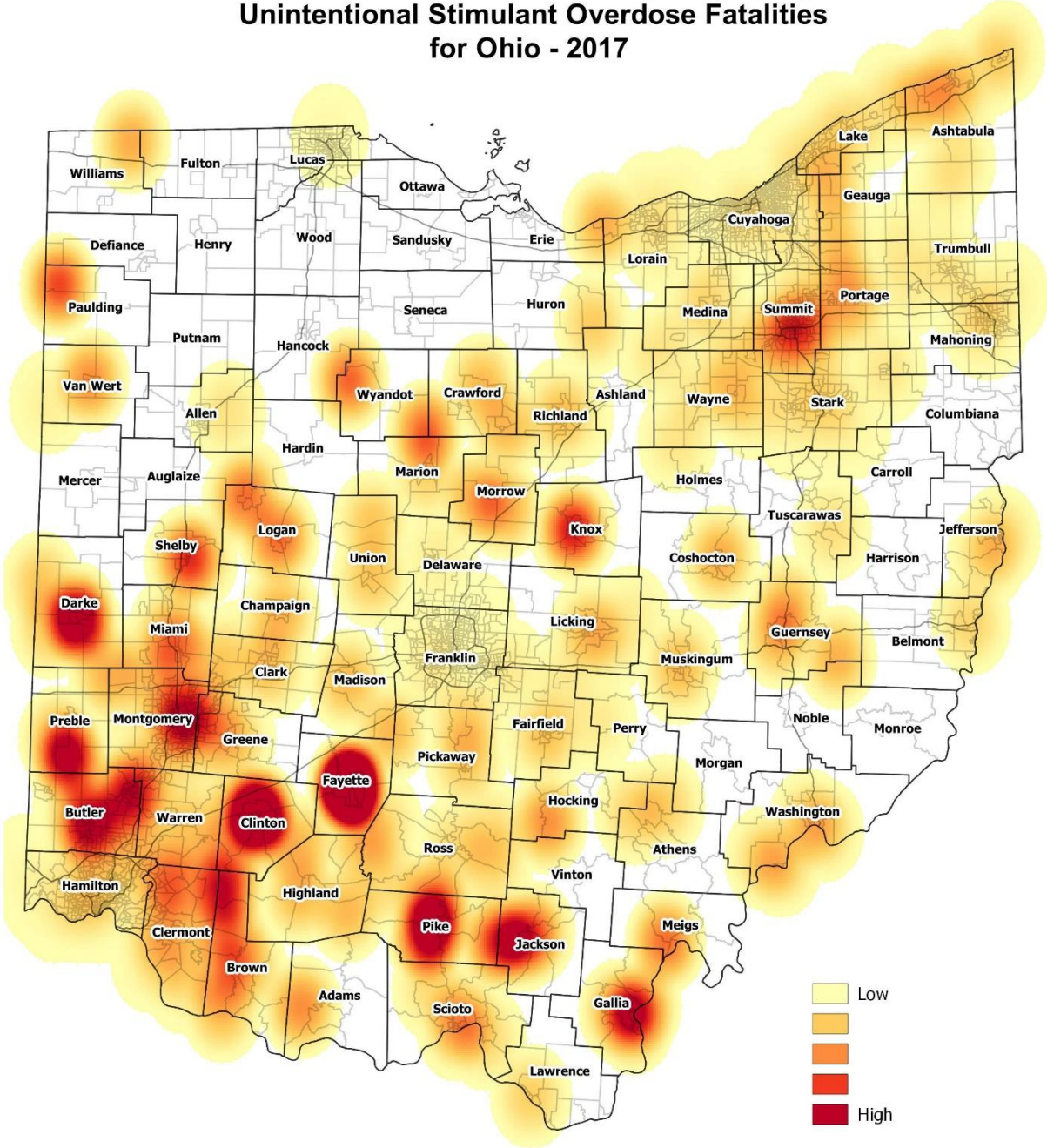


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Source: Ohio Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Ohio Death Certificate File. These data were provided by the Ohio Department of Health. The Department specifically disclaims responsibility for any analyses, interpretations or conclusions. Data suppressed for counties with fewer than 10 reported deaths.

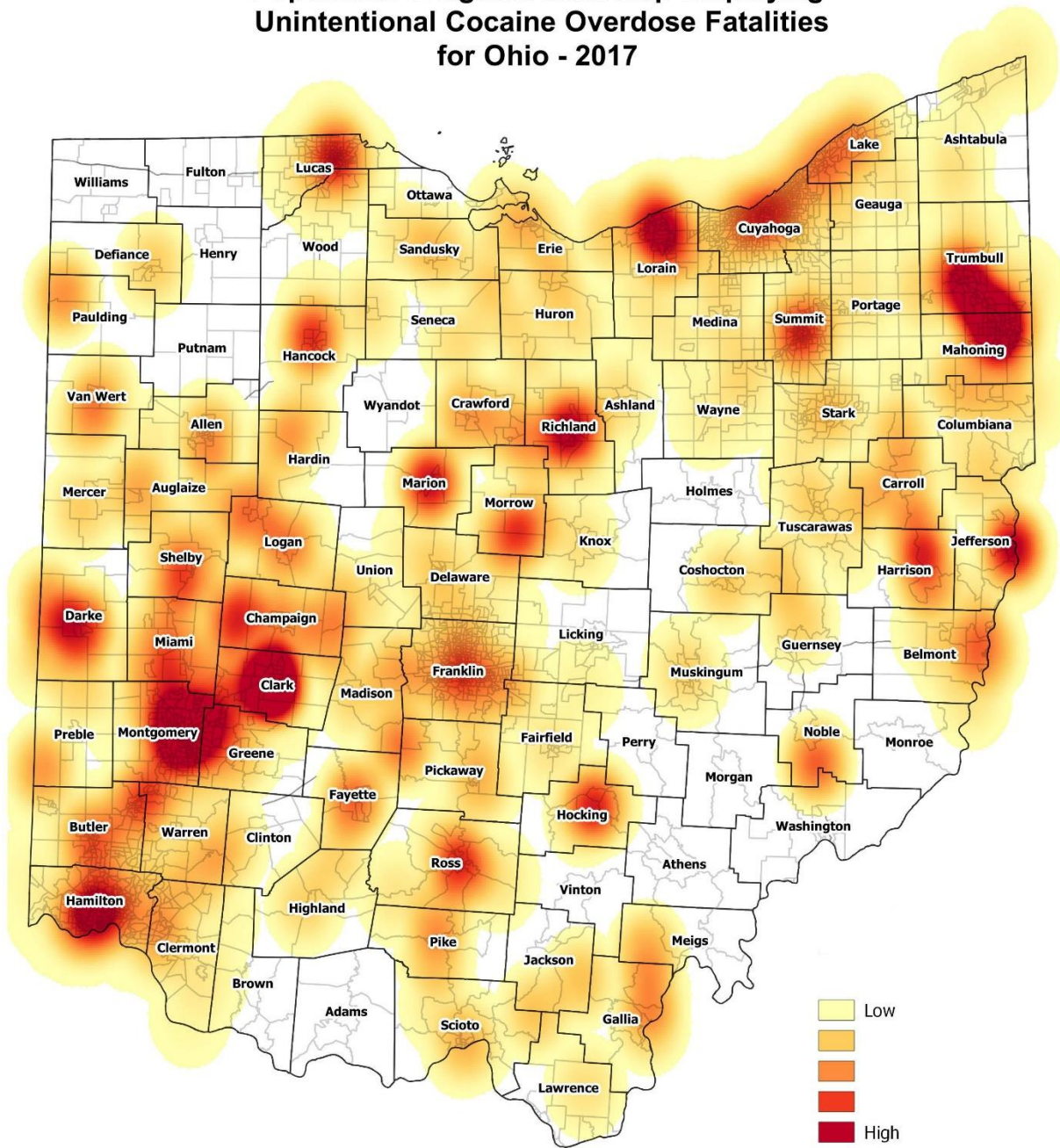


# Population Weighted Heat Map Displaying Unintentional Stimulant Overdose Fatalities for Ohio - 2017



Source: Ohio Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Ohio Death Certificate File. These data were provided by the Ohio Department of Health. The Department specifically disclaims responsibility for any analyses, interpretations or conclusions.

## Population Weighted Heat Map Displaying Unintentional Cocaine Overdose Fatalities for Ohio - 2017



Source: Ohio Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Ohio Death Certificate File. These data were provided by the Ohio Department of Health. The Department specifically disclaims responsibility for any analyses, interpretations or conclusions.





