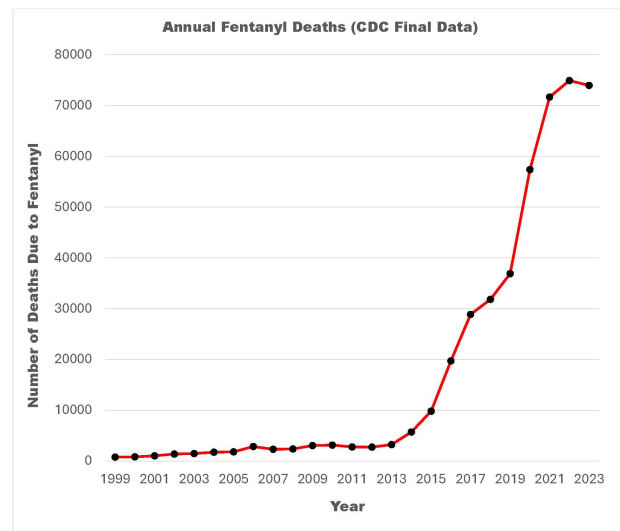


Black Males and Native American Males Have Highest Death Rates due to Fentanyl, as Revealed by Disaggregated CDC Data

Oklahoma Secretary of State Ryan Walters and Dr. Donna J. Nelson Discuss Research on Illicit Fentanyl at InspireOK 25

NORMAN, OK, UNITED STATES, June 30, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Analyses of the most recent CDC "final" data from 2023 for illicit fentanyl were shared with Oklahoma Secretary of State Ryan Walters at the InspireOK 25 Conference on June 27. Dr. Donna J. Nelson reported that "final" CDC illicit fentanyl death rates, disaggregated by race, by gender, and by year for 2015 - 2023, released for the first time, reveal that the demographic groups impacted most severely are Black males and Native American males.



Annual CDC "final" fentanyl deaths plotted 1999 - 2023 reveals that deaths have plateaued.

Recent reports of fentanyl death rates cited a leveling and slight decline in overall death rates for 2023, as compared to 2022. Currently, 2023 is the [most recent year for which the CDC has reported "final" data](#), which are most reliable, according to the CDC. CDC "provisional" data predict that illicit fentanyl death rates [declined recently and should decline further in subsequent years](#).

Results of the research on illicit fentanyl deaths, disaggregated by race, by gender, and by year, are presented in a bar graph, in which bars are grouped according to race, from left to right: Blacks, Native Americans, Whites, and Asians. For each racial group, annual death rates in deaths per 100,000 people for the pertinent group are calculated using CDC "final" data. These annual death rates for each year are given above the bars and increase from left to right across each racial group.

Each bar is a stacked bar, with data for males in a solid hollow bar on bottom and data for females in a bar filled with hashtags on top. The numbers associated with each bar represent annual deaths per 100,000 people for the respective group. In each stacked bar, the annual death rate for males is greater than that for women, which occurs in each case, for all years and for all races.

The annual death rates for Blacks have always been higher than for any other racial group. Their death rates increased even more than usual in 2020 and 2021. In subsequent years, both 2022 and 2023, the annual death rates continued to increase, but to a smaller degree. For all other racial groups, the annual death rates declined or remained constant in 2023. The decline in death rates for the other racial groups is responsible for the leveling and slight decline in overall death rates for 2023, as compared to 2022.

In earlier years, 2015 – 2021, annual death rates for Native Americans were lower than those for Whites.

They increased greatly in 2020 and 2021, and annual death rates for Native Americans now exceed those for Whites. However, more recently, annual death rates for Native Americans have increased less rapidly, and in 2023, their annual death rates declined slightly, as they did for Whites.

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It is good that these communities impacted most severely, the Black Males and Native American Males, are given these data, so they will understand what is happening in their communities.”

Dr. Donna J. Nelson

[Blacks and Native Americans are interested in these data,](#) because these data give quantitative information about the status of and impacts upon their communities from the fentanyl crisis, which they would not have otherwise. Such information helps Blacks and Native Americans plan how to address this illicit fentanyl crisis. While the recent decline in overall death rates for illicit fentanyl is very welcome, these data reveal that the decline is not uniform across all communities. Death rates for Black males are still increasing, as of 2023.



Secretary Walters and Dr. Donna Nelson at InspireOK 2025

DR. DONNA J. NELSON

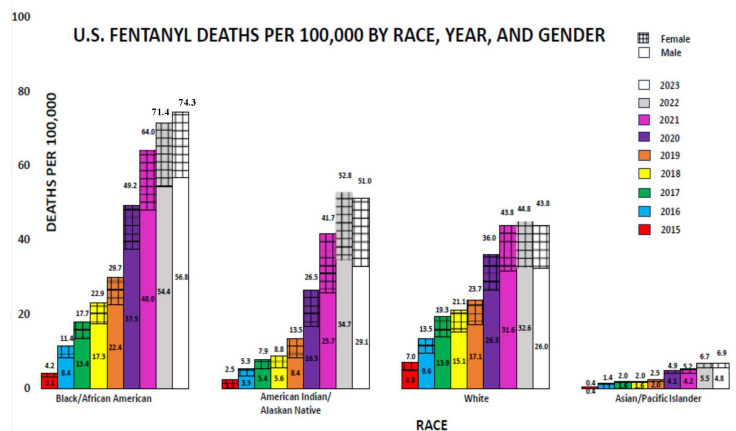
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Fentanyl Death Rates by Race, Gender, and Year

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