

2024 ANNUAL OPIOID REPORT



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BACKGROUND

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported a reduction in the number of overdose fatalities in the United States in 2023 from an estimated 111,029 in 2022 to an estimated 107,543. Louisiana-specific fatality review data show a similar trend, with the state's Opioid Data and Surveillance System reporting 2,456 drug-involved deaths in 2023 and 2,628 in 2022. For the first time since 2018, New Orleans saw a reduction in accidental overdose deaths from the previous year. According to the New Orleans Coroner, there were 293 accidental overdose deaths recorded in 2024³. The New Orleans Coroner reported 523 deaths in 2023, the highest on record since the Coroner's Office began tracking overdose deaths⁴. Despite the 44% local reduction in overdose deaths in 2024, the number of deaths remain alarmingly high, outpacing murders in 2024 by more than 200%⁵. One key finding in the Coroner's report was that fentanyl was detected in fewer deaths in 2024 (71%) compared to the previous year (86%), but rates of overdoses involving stimulant drugs (cocaine, methamphetamine) continued to steadily increase⁶. Figure 1 illustrates the number of accidental overdose deaths per year as reported by the Orleans Parish Coroner.



¹ https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/nchs_press_releases/2024/20240515.htm#:~:text=Provisional%20data%20from%20CDC%C3%A2%E2%80%A2%C5%BDs%20National,drug%20overdose%20deaths%20since%202018

² <https://lodss.ldh.la.gov/>

³ Data provided by the New Orleans Coroner's Office

⁴ <http://neworleanscoroner.com/2023-coroners-report-on-accidental-drug-related-deaths-in-new-orleans/>

⁵ https://www.nola.com/news/2024-was-one-of-new-orleans-least-violent-years-in-decades/article_ff2b6070-d1f0-11ef-bdc7-479a3394f69b.html

⁶ Data provided by the New Orleans Coroner's Office

BACKGROUND

Accidental Overdose Deaths in Orleans Parish by Year

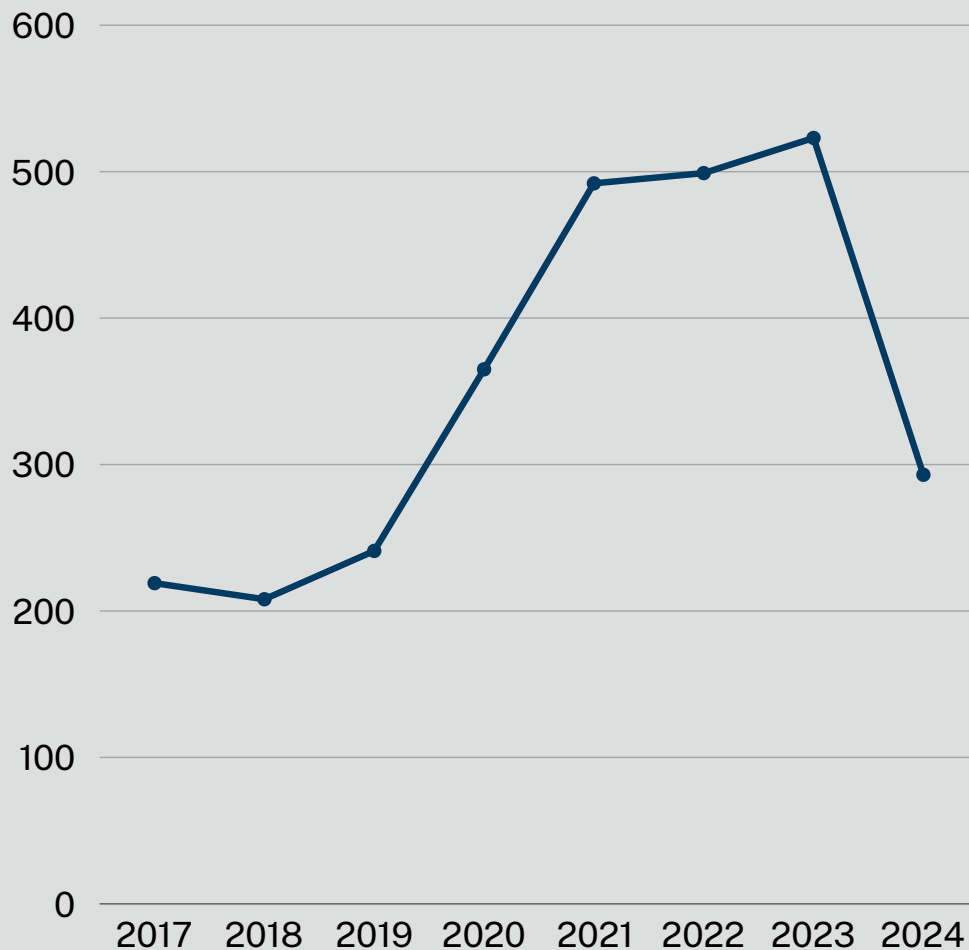


Figure 1: Accidental Overdose Deaths Reported by the Orleans Parish Coroner⁵

The New Orleans Health Department's (NOHD) role in preventing and responding to the overdose crisis continued to expand in 2024 with the City receiving funds from national opioid settlements. A contract was awarded to Tulane University to conduct a community-based needs assessment and provide spending recommendations for this funding source. Additionally, the New Orleans Health Department began the planning process for an Overdose Fatality Review panel in partnership with the Orleans Parish District Attorney's office.

⁵ <http://neworleanscoroner.com/press-releases/>
2024 Overdose Data was provided to NOHD by the New Orleans Coroner's Office

NEW ORLEANS LANDSCAPE

In 2024, the Behavioral Health Team experienced some staffing changes, including the hiring of an Opioids Special Projects Coordinator. Additionally, thanks to Opioid Settlement Funds, the New Orleans Health Department (NOHD) filled the Opioid Outreach and Education Coordinator position, which had been funded by a federal grant that ended in March 2024. While NOHD's already-established prevention activities--including Narcan distribution--continued, these changes in staffing and funding sources resulted in some stalling of program activities, as is evident by fewer Narcan trainings and distribution during outreach events in 2024 (Table 1). The Outreach and Education Coordinator hit the ground running in the fall of 2024 and the Behavioral Health team is confident 2025 will see our Narcan distribution efforts in line with previous years.

This year's report will provide detail and relative data with regards to overdoses in New Orleans, the City's response, and new programs and initiatives that are under way. The report will also provide more detailed information about plans for the use of Opioid Settlement Funds and what's ahead for 2025.



NEW ORLEANS LANDSCAPE

According to the most recent data available from the New Orleans Coroner, New Orleans saw 293 people die due to drug overdose in 2024. Figures 2 and 3 highlight the demographic data of those deaths. It is also worth noting that while fentanyl was detected in 71% of deaths, 65% of those individuals tested positive for cocaine and 28% tested positive for methamphetamines.⁶ These numbers underscore the fact that individuals are often dying from using drugs other than opioids — such as amphetamines — that have been contaminated with fentanyl.

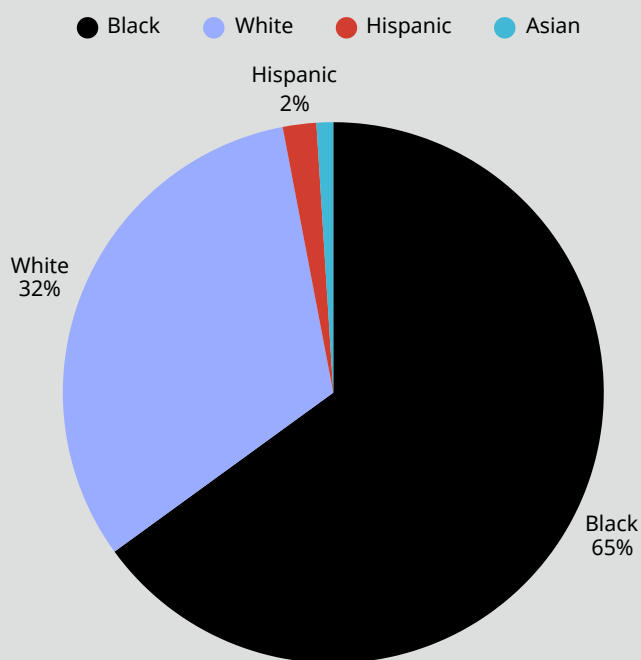


Figure 2: Overdose Deaths by Race, 2024⁷

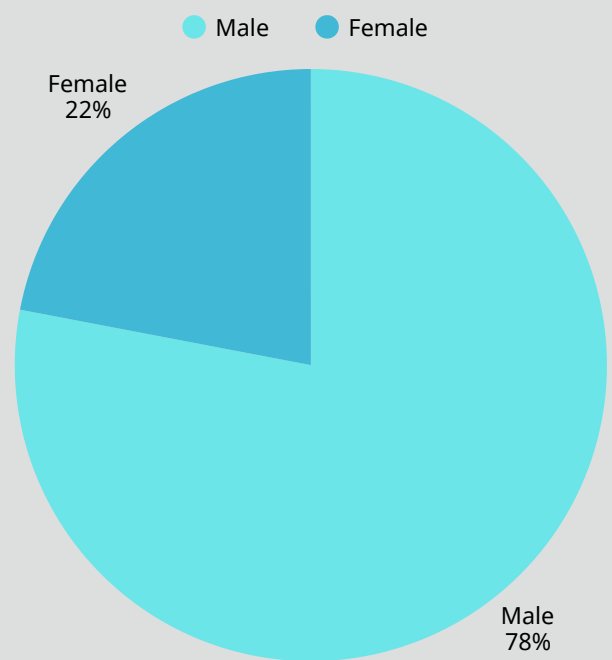


Figure 3: Overdose Deaths by Gender, 2024⁸

⁶Data provided by the New Orleans Coroner's Office

⁷Data provided by the New Orleans Coroner's Office

⁸Data provided by the New Orleans Coroner's Office

NARCAN DISTRIBUTION EFFORTS

While the name-brand overdose reversal medication, Narcan, became available over-the-counter last year, its high cost (typically around \$45 for a pack of two sprays) remains a barrier for many — particularly those most in need of the life-saving medication. Subsequently, the New Orleans Health Department continued its work to ensure that Narcan remains available to anyone who wants it via overdose response trainings, community outreach, and providing Narcan to partner agencies.

NOHD OVERDOSE RESPONSE TRAININGS

NOHD’s overdose response training helps individuals recognize when someone may be experiencing a drug overdose and how to administer the life-saving medication, naloxone. As noted above, staffing changes at NOHD likely contributed to the reduction in trainings conducted in 2024 compared to previous years. Table 1 shows the number of trainings conducted by year, the number of individuals trained, and the amount of Naloxone/Narcan provided to trainees.



Summer Lander, NOHD Opioid Outreach and Education Coordinator

NARCAN DISTRIBUTION EFFORTS

	Year	Number of Trainings Conducted	Number of Individuals Trained	Number of Narcan Doses Distributed
	2021	25	225	277
	2022	63	731	1,083
	2023	75	1,392	2,868
	2024	47	723	1,512
Total		210	3,071	5,740

Table 1: NOHD Overdose Response Trainings by Year, 2021-2024

In the fall of 2024, the New Orleans Health Department partnered with the City’s Office of Nighttime Economy and New Orleans EMS to provide a series of Stop the Bleed and Overdose Response trainings for hospitality workers. The six-training series saw 53 participants at a variety of hospitality venues across the city, and these trainings will continue into 2025.

NARCAN DISTRIBUTION EFFORTS

OVERDOSE RESPONSE TRAINING FROM COMMUNITY PARTNERS

In 2022, local agencies participating in NOHD's Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) identified a need to expand harm reduction and overdose response trainings. In an effort to do so, CHIP members established a train-the-trainer program in the summer of 2023 for any individuals interested in facilitating overdose response trainings of their own. These trainings are typically provided to agencies who plan on distributing Narcan to their client base, with the goal of providing foundational knowledge developed by experts in harm reduction. Furthermore, the use of this curriculum ensures consistent information is being communicated to agencies who are expanding the work of providing overdose response education. These train-the-trainer sessions continued in 2024, resulting in 19 additional certified overdose response trainers for agencies that would be distributing Narcan to clients or program participants.

NARCAN OUTREACH

In addition to overdose response trainings, NOHD distributes Narcan throughout the community via regular outreach, using overdose data provided by New Orleans Emergency Medical Services (NOEMS) and the Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program (ODMAP) to help inform outreach locations.

These outreach events provide community members with a quick, on-the-street introduction to overdose response including how to identify an overdose and administer NOHD-provided naloxone. NOHD kits include two doses of nasal-spray Narcan, instructions on how to use it, a community resource guide outlining where people with substance use disorder can access treatment, and a phone number for individuals to call should they want or need more Narcan. In 2024, NOHD provided 457 kits (914 doses) of Narcan. Staffing changes to NOHD's Behavioral Health Team and the prioritization of other efforts like the New Orleans Overdose Fatality Review and Opioid Settlement Funds Strategic Plan, discussed later in this report, likely contributed to a 22% decrease in the number of Narcan doses distribution during these efforts as well as six fewer outreach events conducted in 2024 than in 2023. Figure 4 illustrates where NOEMS responded to calls that required Narcan administration.

NARCAN DISTRIBUTION EFFORTS

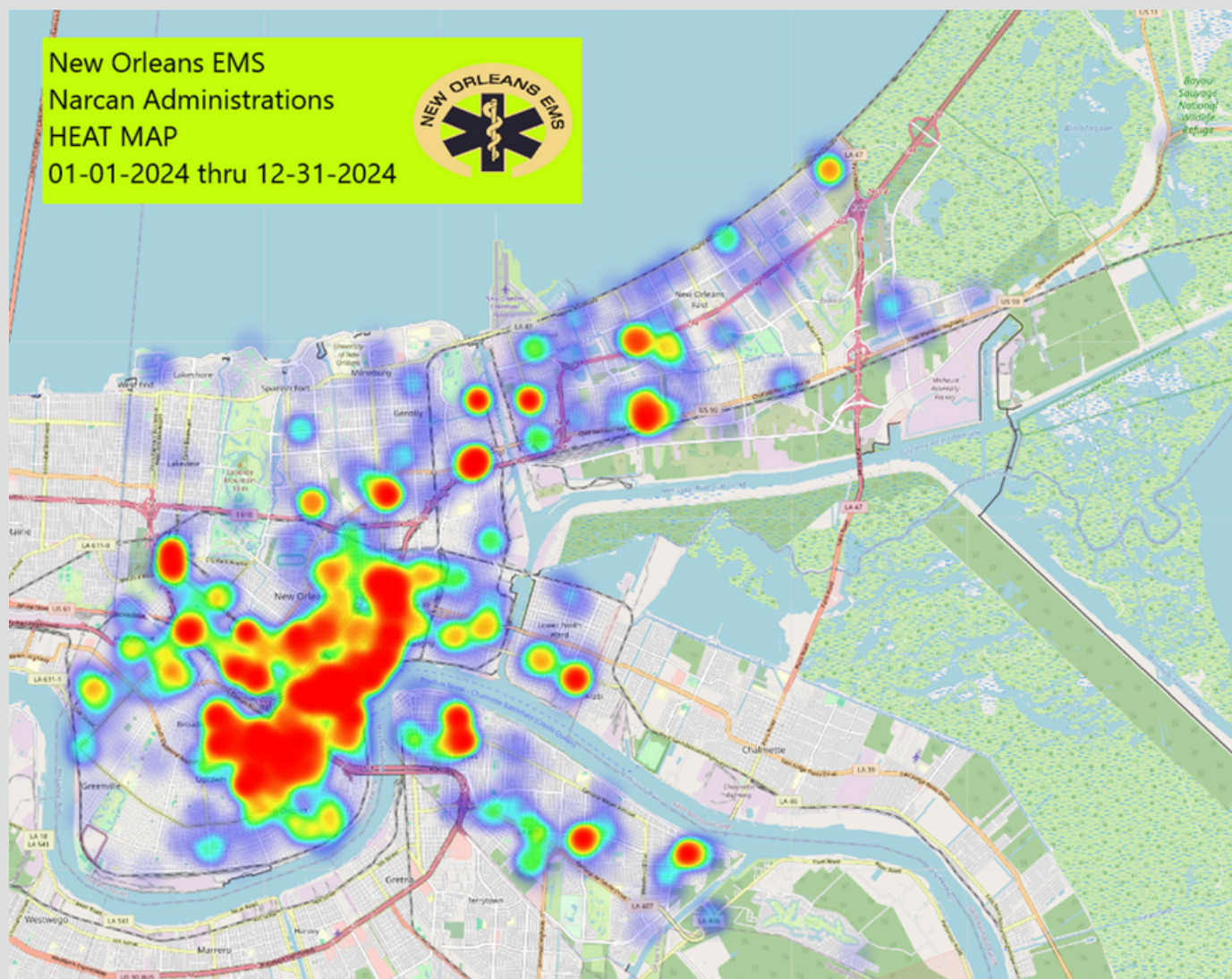


Figure 4: New Orleans EMS Narcan Administration Heatmap, 2024

NARCAN DISTRIBUTION EFFORTS

PROVIDING NARCAN TO COMMUNITY PARTNERS

To further increase community access to Narcan, NOHD also provides Narcan to agencies and organizations throughout New Orleans who then pass it on to individuals who need it. In 2024, NOHD provided 1,058 doses of Narcan to organizations serving various groups, an increase of 39% from 2023. Some of these groups include:

- 

HCH, formerly known as Healthcare for the Homeless
- 

Low Barrier Shelter
- 

New Orleans Mobile Crisis Intervention Unit (MCIU)
- 

New Orleans Police and Justice Foundation
- 

NOHD Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Program
- 

New Orleans Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness
- 

Southern Solidarity
- 

Travelers Aid Society of Greater New Orleans

These organizations act as trusted messengers to distribute Narcan to harder-to-reach populations and expand the reach of NOHD’s Narcan distribution efforts.

NARCAN DISTRIBUTION EFFORTS

In addition to these distribution points, the New Orleans Fire Department (NOFD) continues to provide free Narcan to community members at the four stations listed below. In 2024, NOFD issued 324 kits.



Station #1:
2920 Magazine St



Station #29:
317 Decatur St



Station #36:
5403 Read Blvd



Station #40:
2500 General De
Gaulle Dr

Narcan Distribution Outcomes

Since initiating Narcan distribution activities, New Orleans has seen a significant increase in Bystander Administration of Narcan. Table 2 shows New Orleans EMS data between 2019 and 2024 by administration type. In 2024, bystander-administered Narcan accounted for 14% of naloxone administrations tracked by NO-EMS, up from 11% in 2023.

It is worth noting the significant decrease in total naloxone administrations between 2023 and 2024. This decrease in Narcan administration mirrored the decrease in overdose mortality between 2023 and 2024.

NARCAN DISTRIBUTION EFFORTS

	Total Naloxone Administrations	NOEMS & Acadian	NOPD	NOFD	Bystander
2019	1,133	787	47	277	22
2020	1,545	1,108	52	321	64
2021	2,032	1,461	44	524	93
2022	1,788	1,135	72	459	122
2023	2,104	1,393	56	420	235
2024	1,474	955	37	271	211
Percent Increase 2019-2024	30.10%	21.30%	-21.27%	-2.17%	859.09%

Table 2: Naloxone Administration by Type, 2019-2024

TULANE UNIVERSITY OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2024, the City of New Orleans awarded a contract to Tulane University to develop recommendations for the use of opioid settlement funds using a community stakeholder approach. The team from Tulane's School of Public Health conducted a literature review; distributed a community-based survey; and facilitated stakeholder meetings with public health and safety officials, treatment providers, representatives from syringe service programs, and people with lived experience. The findings from this process pointed to a need for better engagement with individuals who use drugs and who are not engaged with traditional systems of care. The report emphasized the importance of not only a focus on harm reduction and navigating systems of care, but also the prioritization of agencies working together on the project. Subsequently, Tulane recommended the City award funding to a local agency (or agencies) for a mobile harm reduction and care navigation unit. The funding announcement was posted in January of 2025, and Tulane's full report can be found on the Health Department's website⁹. After a competitive process in March 2025, funding was awarded to a multi-agency team led by Crescent Care to operationalize a harm reduction mobile unit.



⁹ <https://nola.gov/getattachment/NEXT/Behavioral-Health/Topics/Opioid-Outreach/Opioid-Abatement-Funds-Funding-Recommendations.pdf?lang=en-US>

NEW ORLEANS OVERDOSE FATALITY REVIEW (NOOFR)

In 2022, the Orleans Parish District Attorney's Office was awarded a grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance to establish an Overdose Fatality Review team in Orleans Parish. During overdose fatality review meetings, a multidisciplinary team meets to examine the life of a person who died of a drug overdose. The team reviews the person's history drug use, comorbidity factors, major health events, social-emotional trauma, encounters with law enforcement and the criminal justice system, treatment history, and other components to facilitate a deeper understanding of the missed opportunities for prevention and intervention that may have prevented an overdose death.

By conducting a series of reviews, the team begins to identify patterns of need and opportunity, not only within specific agencies but across systems. With stakeholder input, the team then develops program and policy recommendations to improve coordination and collaboration between agencies to prevent future overdose deaths.

NOHD is co-leading the NOOFR team, in partnership with the Orleans Parish District Attorney's office. In 2024, a steering committee was formed to develop policies, procedures, and documents that will be used to facilitate the case review process. This committee consisted of representatives from key agencies that will be involved in the data collection and information sharing during the review process. Additionally, in the summer of 2024, the Louisiana state legislature authorized the establishment and operation of local Overdose Fatality Review teams: Louisiana Act No. 498, 2024 Regular Session. This bill provides safeguards for the confidential exchange of information, allowing agencies to share records after signing a Data Sharing Agreement with the New Orleans Health Department. Finally, in January of 2025, Mayor Cantrell signed an Executive Order establishing the creation of an Overdose Fatality Review team in Orleans Parish in accordance with the state legislation.

¹⁰ <https://legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=1382202>

¹¹ https://nola.gov/nola/media/Mayor-s-Office/Executive%20Orders/Executive-Order-LC-25-01_-_Overdose-Fatality-Review-Panel1.pdf

NEW ORLEANS EMS & PARTNERS

EMS BUPRENORPHINE PROGRAM

In August of 2024, New Orleans EMS expanded their community paramedicine program by equipping paramedics with suboxone to administer to individuals who have overdosed and refuse transport to the hospital. This strategy has been implemented in EMS agencies across the country as it helps alleviate withdrawal symptoms and reduces the risk of future overdose. In New Orleans, the addition of suboxone also allows first responders to connect those in need with longer term treatment pathways via Odyssey House Louisiana's Rapid Response Team. Last year, New Orleans EMS administered suboxone to 21 individuals between August and December of 2024.

ODYSSEY HOUSE LOUISIANA RAPID RESPONSE TEAM

New Orleans EMS is partnering with Odyssey House Louisiana to dispatch a quick response team to the scene of an overdose in addition to EMS staff. This team of caring professionals, comprised of people with lived experience, will follow-up with the individual that required Narcan to see how they may reduce the risk of future overdose for that person. This may include linkage to substance use treatment, help obtaining basic needs such as food and stable housing, or this could include conversations about using more safely.



THINGS TO COME

WHAT'S NEXT: 2025

The New Orleans Health Department is looking forward to continuing overdose abatement activities in 2025. NOHD will continue to provide Bystander Response Trainings, including additional trainings for service industry staff in partnership with the Office of Nighttime Economy and NOEMS. The department plans to begin facilitating overdose fatality reviews in the summer of 2025 with the goal of releasing a report of initial findings and recommendations towards the end of the year.

Finally, with the recipient(s) of the award for the mobile harm reduction unit being announced in March, planning activities will be ongoing through 2025 with a goal of rolling out the unit later in the year.

CONCLUSION

While New Orleans has seen a welcome decrease in drug overdoses and deaths over the past year, the fight against the opioid epidemic continues to be an uphill battle locally. 2025 will be a year of putting critical prevention pieces into place:

- The Overdose Fatality Review will facilitate cross-sector collaboration in an effort to identify system gaps that contribute to drug overdose deaths
- The harm reduction mobile unit will launch to provide broader access and services to individuals that typically fall outside of traditional systems of care and in harder to reach locations
- NOHD will continue Narcan distribution efforts to reduce overdose deaths throughout the community
- NOHD will continue to support community partners who provide needed services to people using drugs, from our harm reduction service providers to our buprenorphine and methadone providers.

Our hope is that, with new programs being put into place along with our existing infrastructure, the City will begin to see fewer deaths due to overdose, more community members will be able to access the services they need, and the toll of the opioid epidemic on our City will continue its sharp decline.