Kentucky’s Age Adjusted Drug Overdose Fatality Rate is 6th in the U.S.

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December 21, 2017
Kentucky’s age-adjusted drug overdose fatality ranking in the U.S. decreased by 3 positions from year 2015 to 2016 according to the National Center for Health Statistics website statistics released this morning. Kentucky had the 6th highest age-adjusted drug overdose fatality rate in the nation in year 2016, behind West Virginia, Ohio, New Hampshire, District of Columbia, and Pennsylvania; Kentucky was ranked #3 in year 2015. While Kentucky’s overall drop in the U.S. rankings is good news, the age-adjusted drug overdose mortality rate increased 12% from year 2015 to year 2016, at 29.9 drug overdose fatalities/100,000 population in year 2015 to 33.5/100,000 in year 2016, according the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center, bona fide agent for the Kentucky Department for Public Health at the University of Kentucky College of Public Health. The highest drug overdose fatality rate was for Kentucky residents aged 35-44 and the lowest drug overdose fatality rate was for residents aged 65-74.

Drug overdose mortality numbers increased 11%; the total number of Kentucky resident drug overdose deaths was 1,419 in year 2016, compared to 1,273 drug overdose deaths in year 2015. The highest number of Kentucky resident drug overdose deaths was in the 35-44 age group (429).

Heroin was involved in 99 drug overdose deaths in individuals aged 35-44. Natural and semi-synthetic opioids were most frequently involved in deaths of individuals aged 35-44. The age-adjusted natural and semi-synthetic opioid overdose fatality rate increased from 8.9 deaths/100,000 population in year 2015 to 9.3 deaths/100,000 population in year 2016. There was a concomitant increase in the age-adjusted heroin overdose rate from 7.4 heroin deaths/100,000 in year 2015 to 7.6 deaths/100,000 population in year 2016.

Figure 1: Age-adjusted fatal drug overdose rate, Continental United States, 2016