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# TOBACCO, ALCOHOL, AND SUBSTANCE USE

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death and disability. Substance misuse—involving drugs, alcohol, or both—is associated with a range of destructive social conditions, including family disruptions, financial problems, lost productivity, failure in school, domestic violence, child abuse and crime. Early initiation of substance use is associated with increased risk for addiction.<sup>19</sup>



# Tobacco

Rates of current cigarette smoking decreased steadily among adults in Minnesota, while rates of vaping and smokeless tobacco use remained low but relatively unchanged.<sup>95</sup> Despite reductions in the number of smokers, commercial tobacco use kills over 6,300 Minnesotans annually and is associated with \$3.2 billion in medical costs each year.<sup>106</sup>

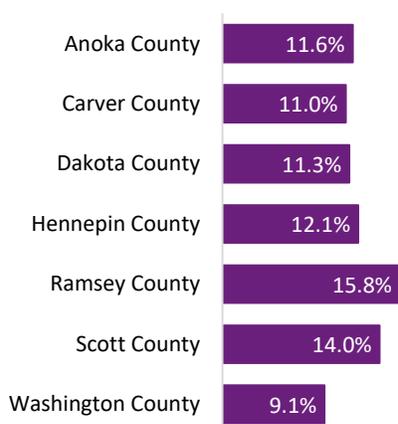
More information and reports related to work on this issue can be found [here](#).

## Risk Factors

Tobacco use is more common among people with mental health concerns, lower incomes, lower educational attainment, and people who identify as LGBTQIA+ and American Indian.<sup>95</sup>

- The rate of adult cigarette smokers in Ramsey County is higher than the surrounding metro area counties.

### 1. Current cigarette smoking among adults age 18 and older by metro-area county, 2022



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.<sup>32</sup>  
Notes: Rates are age-adjusted.

# Alcohol

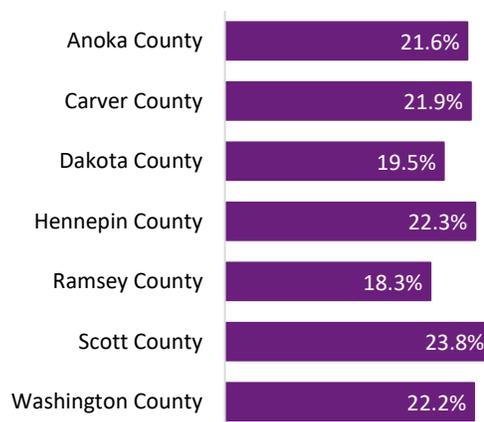
Six out of 10 adult Minnesotans say they drink alcohol. Minnesota has one of the highest binge drinking rates in the country, and deaths directly caused by alcohol use (e.g., alcohol poisoning, alcoholic liver disease) have increased significantly over the past 20 years in the state.<sup>103</sup>

## Risk Factors

While males have had higher rates of alcohol consumption and alcohol use disorder, the gap has narrowed over time. Stress and mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder are associated with higher rates of alcohol use disorder. Genetics also play a role in vulnerability to alcohol use disorder.<sup>140</sup>

- According to 2019 estimates, excessive drinking cost Ramsey County \$1,245 per resident (e.g., related to health care, lost productivity, and other societal costs).<sup>100</sup>
- In 2022, 40% of treatment admissions among Ramsey County residents involved alcohol as their primary substance of misuse.<sup>58</sup>
- Rates of past 30-day binge drinking among adults were lower in Ramsey County compared to other metro-area counties.

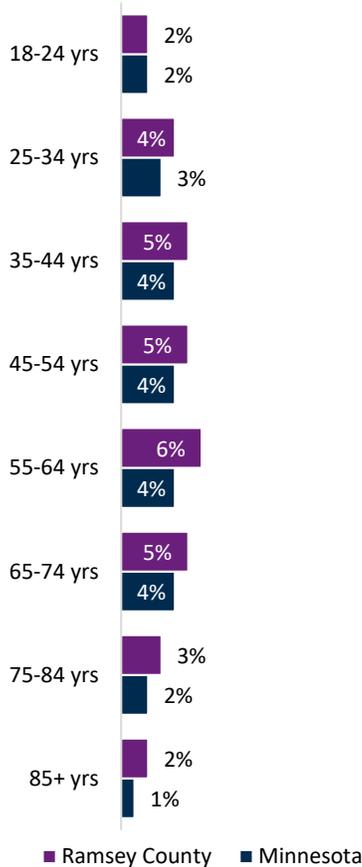
### 2. Past 30-day binge drinking among adults age 18 and older by metro-area county, 2022



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.<sup>32</sup>  
Notes: Rates are age-adjusted.

- Diagnoses related to alcohol use, overdose, intoxication, and other related conditions were higher in Ramsey County than the statewide average and peak around ages 55 to 64. Less than one percent of youth under age 18 were seen for an alcohol-related diagnosis.

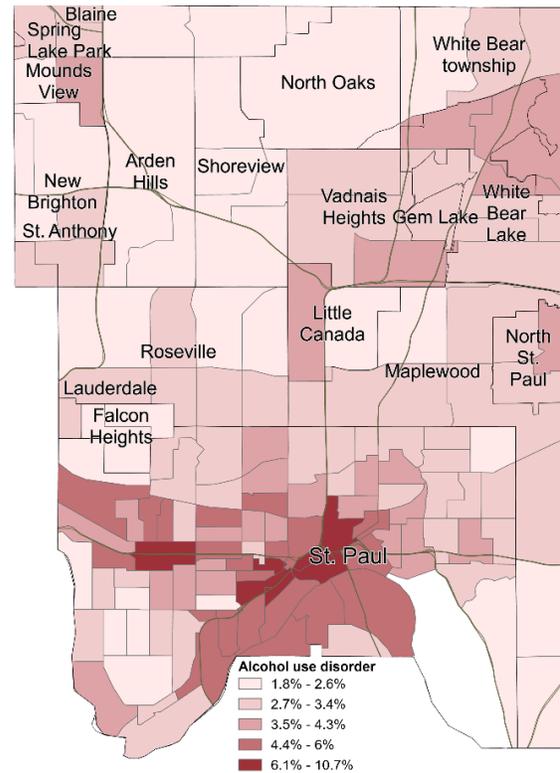
### 3. Alcohol-related diagnoses by age, 2020-2023



Source: Minnesota Electronic Health Records Consortium.<sup>132</sup>  
 Note: Visit the Health Trends Across Communities in Minnesota dashboard for how alcohol-related diagnoses are defined.

- Within Ramsey County, rates of diagnoses related to alcohol use, overdose, intoxication, and other related conditions were highest in St. Paul.

### 4. Alcohol-related diagnoses, Ramsey County, 2020-2023



Source: Minnesota Electronic Health Records Consortium.<sup>132</sup>

## Drugs

### Risk Factors

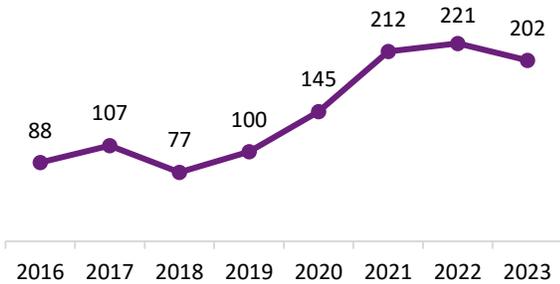
Risk factors for drug use include a family history of substance misuse, mental health issues, and adverse childhood experiences.<sup>19</sup> Within Ramsey County, rates of drug-related health care visits were higher among American Indian residents compared to other racial groups.<sup>132</sup>

- Drug overdose deaths among Ramsey County residents primarily involved opioids (75%), alone or in combination with other substances. Of these, 95% involved synthetic opioids such as fentanyl. Psychostimulants were involved in one-third of Ramsey County drug overdose deaths.<sup>55</sup>
- Health care visits related to drug use, overdose, intoxication, and other related conditions were low in Ramsey County from 2020 to 2023 with 2% of visits involving cannabis, 1% involving

opioids, and less than 1% involving cocaine, hallucinogens, inhalants, psychostimulants, and sedatives.<sup>132</sup>

- In 2022, 24% of treatment admissions among Ramsey County residents involved methamphetamines as the primary substance of abuse. This was followed by opiates (12%), heroin (10%), marijuana (7%), and cocaine or crack (4%).<sup>58</sup>
- The number of drug overdose deaths in Ramsey County and among Ramsey County residents increased steadily from 2018 to 2022.

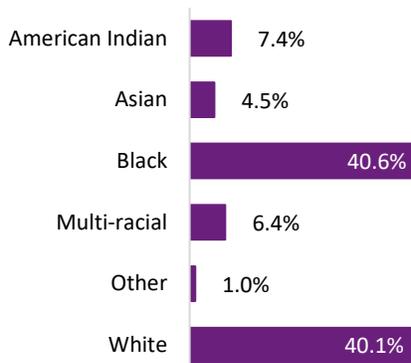
### 5. Number of drug overdose deaths among Ramsey County residents



Source: Minnesota Department of Health.<sup>75</sup>  
Note. Data from 2023 are preliminary.

- The majority of Ramsey County residents who died from a drug overdose in 2023 were Black or white. American Indian, Black, and multi-racial residents were disproportionately represented in the overdose data.

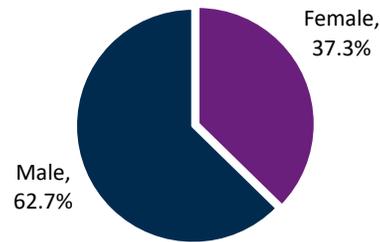
### 6. Drug overdose deaths, Ramsey County residents, 2023



Source: Minnesota Department of Health.<sup>75</sup>

- Two-thirds of Ramsey County residents who died from a drug overdose in 2023 were males.

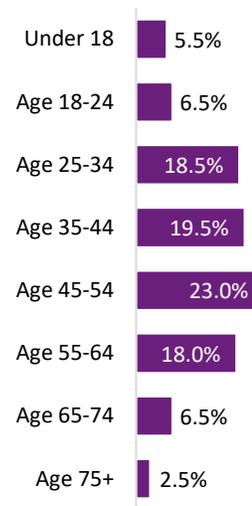
### 7. Drug overdose deaths, Ramsey County residents, 2023



Source: Minnesota Department of Health.<sup>75</sup>

- Ramsey County drug overdose deaths in 2023 primarily involved residents ages 25 to 64.

### 8. Drug overdose deaths, Ramsey County residents, 2023

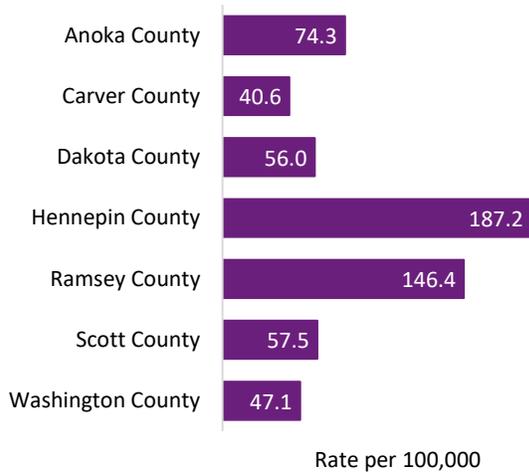


Source: Minnesota Department of Health.<sup>75</sup>

# Opioids

- Ramsey County had the second highest rate of nonfatal emergency department and hospital visits involving opioids in 2023 compared to metro-area counties.
- Within Ramsey County, rates of diagnoses related to opioid use disorder were highest in St. Paul.
- Less than one percent of young people under age 18 received an opioid-related diagnosis.

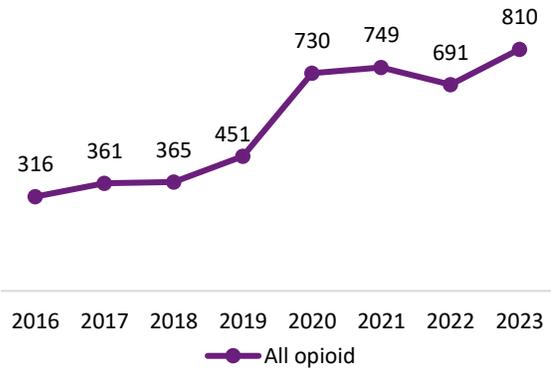
## 9. Nonfatal emergency department and hospital visits for opioids by metro-area county, 2023



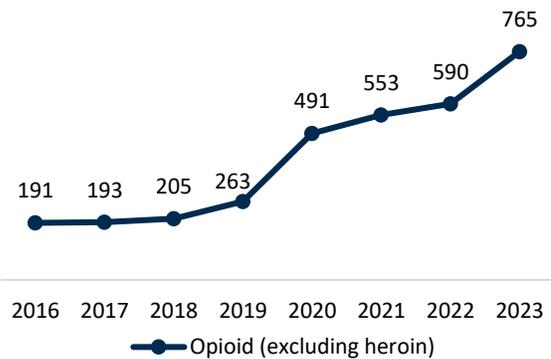
Source: Minnesota Department of Health.<sup>75</sup>

- While the number of emergency department and hospital visits for heroin began declining after 2020, visits for other opioids continued to climb.

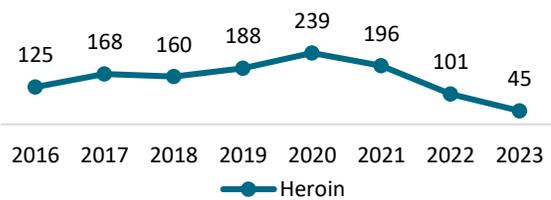
## 10. Number of nonfatal emergency department and hospital visits for overdoses, Ramsey County residents



Source: Minnesota Department of Health.<sup>75</sup>



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Source: Minnesota Department of Health.<sup>75</sup>