



MEDIA RELEASE

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KNOX COUNTY FORENSIC CENTER RELEASES 2018 DRUG-RELATED DEATH REPORT

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (December 5, 2019) – The Knox County Regional Forensic Center has released its 2018 Drug-Related Death Report for Knox and Anderson Counties. The report includes data on drug-related death cases the Center investigated from 2010 through 2018.

“Unfortunately, the drug misuse epidemic continues to be one of our community’s biggest challenges” said Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs. “We’ve taken strides in the last year to engage the community in a tremendous effort of putting a stop to this disturbing trend. The info presented in this report will be a tool in the larger community action plan to stop the growing drug misuse problem.”

The number of drug-related deaths in Knox County increased by just over 3 percent in 2018 which is far less than the 41 percent rise from 2016 to 2017.

“The 2018 data shows a continuing, but slowing, upward trend in drug deaths in Knox and Anderson Counties,” said Darinka Mileusnic-Polchan, Chief Medical Examiner of the Knox County Regional Forensic Center. “Concurrently, some demographic shifts reported last year and the introduction of more illicit drugs such as Fentanyl and its analogues continue to trend upward.”

The full report is available online at: <http://www.knoxcounty.org/rfc/reports.php>.

As outlined in the full text of the report, the data is drawn only from drug-related deaths in Knox and Anderson Counties between 2010 and 2018 that were investigated by the medical examiner. Some highlights from the report include:

- Knox County has seen a 3.2% *increase* in drug-related deaths from 2017 to 2018.
- Fentanyl and fentanyl analogues (synthetic opioids) were the most frequently identified drugs in drug-related deaths in 2018.
- The five most common drugs identified in drug-related deaths in 2018 are: synthetic opioids, methamphetamine, heroin, cocaine and alcohol.
- Prescription opioid related deaths continue to decrease in our jurisdictions.
- In 2018, the 45-54 year age group had the most drug deaths in Knox County.
- The sharpest decrease was in the 15-24 year age group and the sharpest increase was for individuals between the ages of 25-34 in 2018.

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