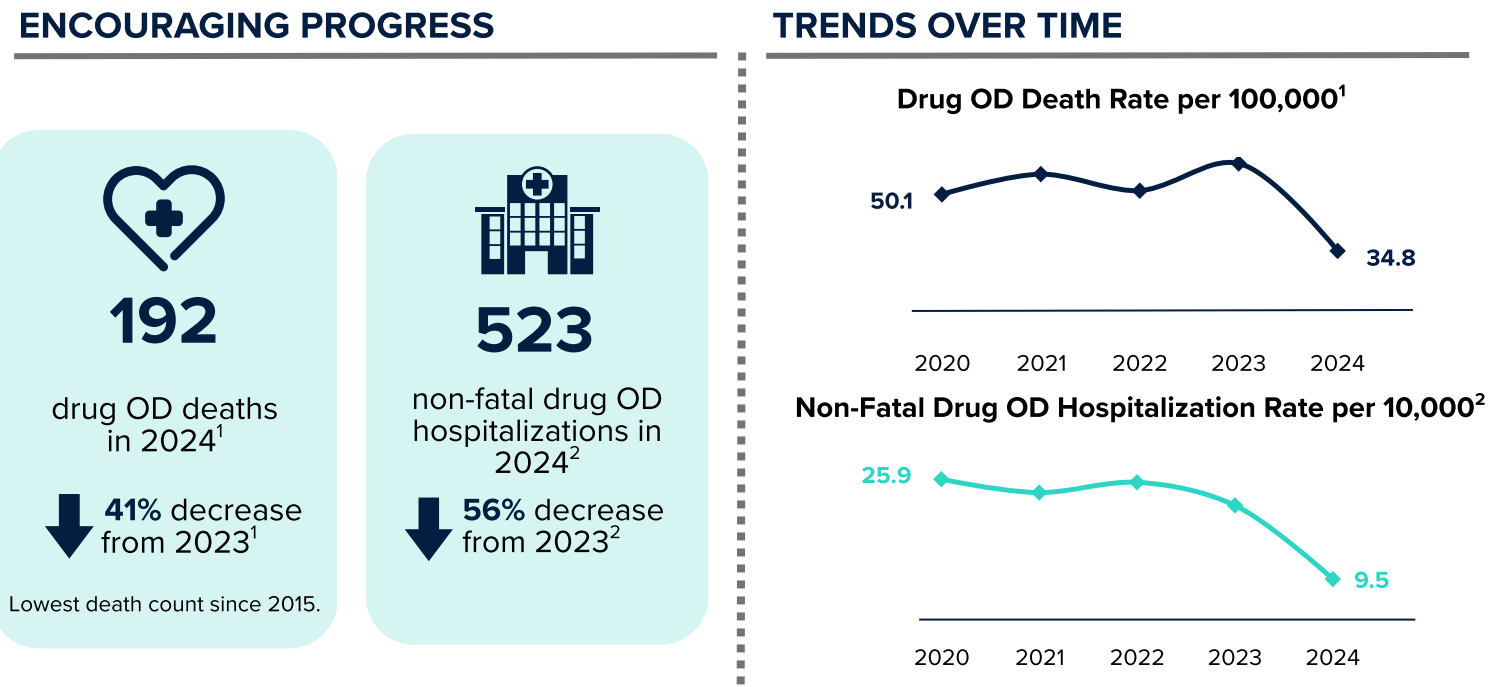


Boston overdose deaths and hospitalizations are declining - but its still a major public health issue.



Although drug overdose (OD) deaths and non-fatal hospitalizations are down, OD remains a leading cause of accidental death and continues to disproportionately impact Boston communities.



Substance Use, Impact, and Treatment in Massachusetts and Boston



Substance use continues to affect many individuals and families in Massachusetts and Boston. Despite strong treatment coverage and infrastructure, many people are not receiving the treatment they need.

PREVALENCE AND USE

Massachusetts and Boston residents experience slightly higher rates of **substance use disorder (SUD)** compared to the national average.



On average, about **1 in 5** people in Massachusetts and Boston had SUD within the past year.¹

(National average - 17%)¹

Past Month Substance Use, 2021-2023



Binge drinking is **similar** in Massachusetts (22.9%) but **higher** in Boston (24.3%) compared to the national average (21.7%).¹



Illicit drug use is **higher** in Massachusetts (21.2%) and Boston (23.0%) compared to the national average (15.9%).¹



Marijuana use is **higher** in Massachusetts (19.2%) and Boston (20.6%) compared to the national average (14.5%).¹



Opioid misuse is **similar** in Massachusetts (2.9%) and Boston (3.6%) to the national average (3.2%).¹

THE HUMAN IMPACT

Among Massachusetts residents



60% report knowing someone with SUD.²



25% report knowing someone who died of an opioid overdose.³



76% say opioid use is a major problem in the state.⁴

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT



Opioid use disorder is estimated to have cost Massachusetts

\$145 Billion

in 2024 - one of the highest costs in the nation.⁵

Massachusetts is leading the way in expanding treatment access.



Massachusetts is **expanding** substance use treatment through primary care, making medication treatment more widely available in healthcare settings.⁶



Most Massachusetts residents have insurance coverage for behavioral health and substance use services.⁷



Massachusetts has **more** substance treatment providers per person (25 per 100,000 residents) than most states, and higher than the national average.⁸

Despite expansion and strong coverage about **6 in 10** people with SUD still do not receive the care they need.⁸

¹Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Behavioral Health Barometer, Massachusetts, Volume 8, 2021-2023

²Shatterproof & Irsay Institute, Indiana University. (2024). Shatterproof Addiction Stigma Index (SASI) [Raw dataset]. Shatterproof.

³Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. (2018). Massachusetts residents believe the opioid epidemic is the most serious problem facing the state.

⁴Beacon Research (2023). Massachusetts statewide survey on public perceptions of opioid use and overdose prevention.

⁵Avalere Health. (2025). The cost of opioid use disorder in the United States (state-level estimates). Reported in Axios.

⁶Pew Charitable Trusts. (2025, December 3). How Massachusetts addresses substance use disorders in primary care settings.

⁷Massachusetts Division of Insurance. (2025). Mental Health Awareness Month: Understanding Your Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Insurance Benefits.

⁸Mental Health America. State of Mental Health in America: Massachusetts (SUD treatment access indicators).