

Ky. overdose deaths on the decline for third consecutive year

BY MARK WHITE
The News Journal

Overdose deaths in Kentucky have decreased for three consecutive years with a 30.2 percent decrease in 2024 compared with the previous years, according to statistics in the Kentucky 2024 Drug Overdose Fatality Report, which was released May 1.

A News Journal review of the 2024 Drug Overdose Fatality Report also showed significant drops in overdose deaths in both Whitley and Laurel counties compared to the prior year.

A total of 1,410 Kentuckians lost their lives in 2024 to a drug overdose compared to 1,984 people in 2023, 2,135 people in 2022 and 2,250 people in 2021, according to reviews of the drug overdose fatality reports for those years.

Fentanyl was present in 62.3 percent of overdose deaths, and methamphetamine was present in 50.8 percent of overdose deaths in 2024. The two continue to be the most prevalent drugs contributing to overdose deaths in the state. The report also indicates that most Kentucky age groups saw a decrease in overdose deaths, with the only increase being among those ages 75-84, according to a release from the governor's office.

"I am thankful that more Kentuckians are alive and in recovery today compared with last year," said Gov. Andy Beshear. "But we still mourn and grieve our 1,410 Kentuckians who lost their life last year to addiction and the many more who we lost before that. Every life lost is a child of God, and someone's mom, dad, son, daughter and loved one. We won't stop until every Kentuckian is saved from addiction."

In 2023, Kentucky reported a 9.8 percent decrease compared with 2022. In 2022, there was a decrease of 2.5 percent from 2021, marking the first year Kentucky saw a decrease in overdose deaths since 2018, according to the release.

Many local counties have also seen a drop in overdose death rates. (The drug overdose fatality reports don't release the actual number of overdose deaths in a county if there were few than five deaths.)

Whitley County reported 13 overdose deaths in 2024 compared to 19 deaths in 2023, 32 deaths in 2022 and 16 deaths in 2021.

Laurel County reported 15 overdose deaths in 2024 compared to 33 deaths in 2023, 23 deaths in 2022 and 16 deaths in 2021.

Knox County reported 5 overdose deaths in 2024 compared to less than 5 deaths in 2023, 7 deaths in

2022 and 17 deaths in 2021.

Bell County reported 11 overdose deaths in 2024 compared to 12 deaths in 2023, 10 deaths in 2022 and 15 deaths in 2021.

McCreary County reported less than 5 overdose deaths in 2024 and 2023 compared to 7 deaths in 2022 and 6 deaths in 2021.

"If you are a family member of one of the Kentuckians who lost their lives to an overdose last year, we are praying for you and will continue this work in your loved one's honor," said Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy Executive Director Van Ingram.

The 2024 Kentucky Overdose Fatality Report is compiled by the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center using data from the Office of Vital Statistics, the Office of the State Medical Examiner and Kentucky's coroners. These numbers are subject to change.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report includes both the deaths

of Kentucky residents and nonresidents in their reporting. Kentucky's overdose report includes only the deaths of Kentucky residents, which has been the standard since the Kentucky General Assembly first required this annual report. The Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy includes resident deaths only to better target harm reduction and prevention activities for Kentuckians.

If you or a loved one are struggling with addiction, the KY HELP Call Center can connect you to treatment by calling 833-8KY-HELP (833-859-4357).

Information about treatment programs all across the commonwealth is available at FindHelpNowKy.org. Information on how to obtain the life-saving drug naloxone, which is used to reverse an opioid overdose, can be found at that website as well as at FindNaloxoneNowKy.org and FindMentalHealthNowKy.org.



KNOX COUNTY CHURCH DIRECTORY

Please send changes, additions or deletions to: editor@mountainadvocate.com

ANGLICAN

St. Paul's Anglican Church
Pastor Andy Dunn
Hwy. 233, Gray, Ky.

EPISCOPAL

St. John's Episcopal Church
701 Engineer St
Corbin, Ky. 40701
606-528-1659

CHRISTIAN CHURCH

First Advent Christian Church
Pastor Leonard A. Lester
245 Sycamore Dr.
Barbourville, Ky.

Artemus Christian Church
Pastor Matthew Martin
2775 KY Hwy 225, Artemus, Ky.

CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

First Christian Church
Pastor Gregory McClellan
209 High Street
Barbourville, Ky.

CHURCH OF GOD

Cornerstone Church of God
Pastor Les Broughton
5321 Ky. Hwy 1304
Hinkle, Ky.

Trosper Church of God
Pastor David J. Rivas Sr.
14 Big Bush Creek Road
Trosper, Ky.

Barbourville Church of God
Pastor Sylvester Dunn
Hwy. 225, Barbourville, Ky.

NON-DENOMINATIONAL

Henderson Chapel Church
Pastor Rema Helton
Mayhew Cemetery Road

New Beginnings Worship Center
Pastor Don Napier
130 Church Hill Road,
Barbourville (Heidrick), Ky.

BAPTIST

Apple Grove Baptist Church
Pastor Brian Davidson
114 Campbell Street
Barbourville, Ky.

Beacon Baptist Church
Pastor Pat Chesnut
190 Stephen Trace Rd.
Barbourville, Ky.

Bethesda Baptist Church
Pastor Gary King
3463 KY 3439
Bimble, Ky. 40915

Callihan Baptist Church
Pastor James McDonald
Hwy. 229, Jarvis, Ky.

Calvary Baptist Church
Pastor Kevin Roach
Ky. 830, Gray, Ky.

Candle Ridge Baptist Church
Pastor Rick Broughton
705 Candle Ridge Church Road,
Gray, Ky.

Coalport Baptist Church
Pastor Larry Sizemore
40 Frog Pond Rd
Artemus, Ky.

Concord Baptist Church
Pastor Terry Broughton
Flat Lick, Ky.

Dewitt Baptist Church
Pastor Bobby Henson
Hwy. 223, Dewitt, Ky.

Dripping Springs Baptist Church
Pastor Dewayne Smith
Calles Creek Rd., Hinkle, Ky

East Barbourville Baptist
Pastor Dr. Joshua K. Smith
279 Old 25E Hwy
Barbourville, Ky.

First Baptist Church of Artemus
Pastor Ralph Halcomb
Artemus, Ky.

First Baptist of Barbourville
Pastor Tyler Shields
201 N. Main St.
Barbourville, Ky.

Friendship Baptist Church
Pastor Jeremy Abner

Free Spirit Baptist Church
Pastor Roger Liford
355 Phillips Branch Road
Hinkle, Ky.

Gray Baptist Church
Pastor Herschel Walker
45 School St., Gray, Ky.

Greenroad Baptist Church
Pastor Mickie Smith
8184 N Hwy 11, Greenroad, Ky.

Highland Park Baptist Church
Pastor Rev. Jared Styles
N. Ky. 11, Barbourville, Ky.

Himyar Baptist Church
Pastor Don Smith
Himyar, Ky.

Historic First Baptist Church
Pastor Craig Clark
308 Church St., Barbourville, Ky.

Horn Branch Baptist Church
Pastor Johnny Shell
Hammons Fork Road, Woollum, Ky.

Indian Creek Baptist Church
Pastor Mike Fuson
6130 S Ky 233, Gray, Ky. 40734

Indian Gap Missionary Baptist Church
Pastor Daniel Alsip
Route 6, Gray, Ky.

Keck Baptist Church
Pastor Darrell Warren
334 Keck Church Rd, Gray, KY

Liberty Missionary Baptist Church
Pastors Daniel Alsip & Josh Carnes
590 Little Brush Creek Road
Artemus, Ky.

Little Poplar Creek Missionary Baptist Church
Hwy. 1809, Barbourville, Ky.
Pastor Ronnie Rose

Lynn Camp Baptist Church
Pastor Justin Ray Morris
215 Lynn Camp Church Rd.
Corbin, Ky.

Locust Grove Baptist Church
Pastor David Barnard
Girdler, Ky.

Lovell Baptist Church
Pastor Orangie Wheat

Mountain Mission Baptist Church
240 Mayhew Cemetery Rd.
Barbourville, Ky.

Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church
112 Emmanuel Loop Rd.
Gray, Ky.

New Bethel Baptist Church
Pastor Randy Johnson
2005 Ky 1803
Barbourville, Ky.

New Hope Baptist Church
Pastor Lonnie Messer
920 KY 3442
Barbourville, Ky.

Northside Baptist Church
Pastor Russell Jones
2nd Street, Barbourville, Ky.

Old Time Missionary Baptist Church
Pastor Don Farmer
Owens Hollow Rd.
Barbourville, Ky.

Paint Hill Baptist Church
Pastor Homer Johnson
52 Helton Branch Rd.
Gray, Ky. 40734

Parkway Baptist Church
Pastor Jerry Vaughn
U.S. 25E South, Barbourville, Ky.

Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church
Pastor James Bargo
3589 N US 25 E, Barbourville, Ky.

Poplar Grove Baptist Church
Pastor Reed Murphy
1099 Possom Hollow Rd.
Flat Lick, Ky.

River Baptist Church
Pastor J.W. Loudin
606-261-7093
217 Swan Lake Road
Barbourville Ky.

Roadside Baptist Church
Pastor Jimmy Rarriek
50 Burlwood Drive
Barbourville, Ky.
606-546-4823

Salem Baptist Church
Pastor Bud Sizemore

Salt Gum Baptist Church
Pastor Kennon Roark
Scalf, Ky.

Sinking Valley Baptist Church
Pastor John Fisher
97 Dancy Branch Rd.
Cannon, Ky. 40923

Sojourn Baptist Church
Pastor Sam Moore
712 Moore Hill Avenue
Corbin, Ky.

Southeastern Baptist Church
Pastor Eddie Inman
Emanuel Loop, Gray, Ky.

Springfield Baptist Church
Pastor Michael Helton
Ky. 1304 & Ky. 3439
Bimble, Ky.

St. Paul Baptist Church
469 Old 25 E, Barbourville, Ky.
Pastor Rev. Charles Tinsley

Swan Pond Baptist Church
Pastor Roy Lucas
Swan Pond, Ky.

Turkey Creek Baptist Church
Pastor Lonnie Collett
211 E Fortney Branch Road
Flat Lick, Ky.

Union Mission Baptist Church
Pastor Derrick Mills
Dewitt, Ky.

Walker Baptist Church
Pastor Ken Merida
Walker, Ky.

Young Grove Baptist Church
Pastor Mike Collins
Dewitt, Ky.

METHODIST

First United Methodist Church
Pastor Thomas Brown
North Main St., Barbourville, Ky.

Trace Branch Methodist Church
Pastor Delila Miller
N. Ky. Hwy. 11
Cannon, Ky.

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL

Wayman Chapel AME Church
Services 1st & 3rd Sunday
Old Pineville Rd.
(141 KY, HWY 3439)
Barbourville, Ky.

PENTECOSTAL

Boone Height Pentecostal Church
Charles & Carolyn Henson
92 Boone Height Church Lane,
Barbourville, Ky.

Coalport Holiness Church
Pastor Glen Collins

Gray Pentecostal Church
Pastor Rodney Edwards
155 Farris Hill Gray, Ky.
graypentecostalchurch.com

Faith Tabernacle Pentecostal Church
Pastor Sam Lawson
Barbourville KY

Faith House of Prayer
Holiness Church
Pastors Bill Collins & Chris (Bear) Brown
16 Cheyenne Rd., Scalf, Ky.
Sundays 2 p.m.

Free Pentecostal House of Prayer
Pastors Andrew and Taylor Hamblin
141 Logan Hollow Road
Gray, Ky.

Heidrick Holiness Church
Pastor Duke Hammons
Heidrick, Ky.

Hillside House of Prayer
Pastor Jimmy Henson
White Cedar Drive
Barbourville, Ky.

House of Refuge
Pastor Nathan Ledford
775 C. Mills Rd., Hinkle, Ky.

Knox Fork Pentecostal Church
Pastor Dylan Johnson
Hwy 229, Barbourville Ky
Services - Wed. 7 p.m.
Sunday Morning 11 a.m.

New Vision Pentecostal Church
100 Ascot Dr., Gray, Ky.
Pastor Kenny Johnson

Old Ark House of Prayer
Pastor Roy Eversole
Sublimity Hollow Rd., Girdler, Ky.

Rosland Pentecostal Church
Ky. 233, Gray, Ky.

Scalf Chapel
Pastor Keith 'Buster' Liford
3090 Ky. 3439, Bimble, Ky.

Straightway Pentecostal Church
Pastor Ron Shelton & Michael Hill
Artemus, Ky.

Living Waters Pentecostal
Pastor Charley Humfleet
Gray, Ky.

CATHOLIC

Saint Gregory Catholic Church
Father George Mani
Sycamore Drive, Barbourville, Ky.

Sacred Heart Catholic Church
Master Street, Corbin, Ky.

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