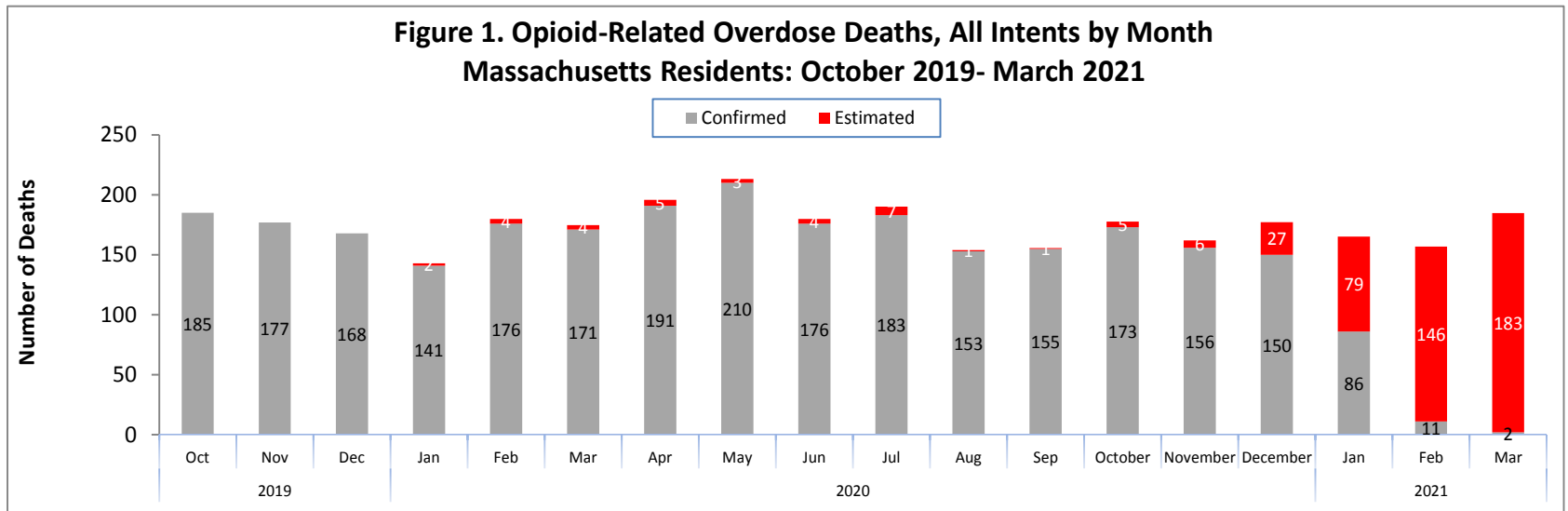




Preliminary data show **507 confirmed and estimated opioid-related overdose deaths** in the first three months of 2021, an estimated **2% increase** compared with the same period in 2020.

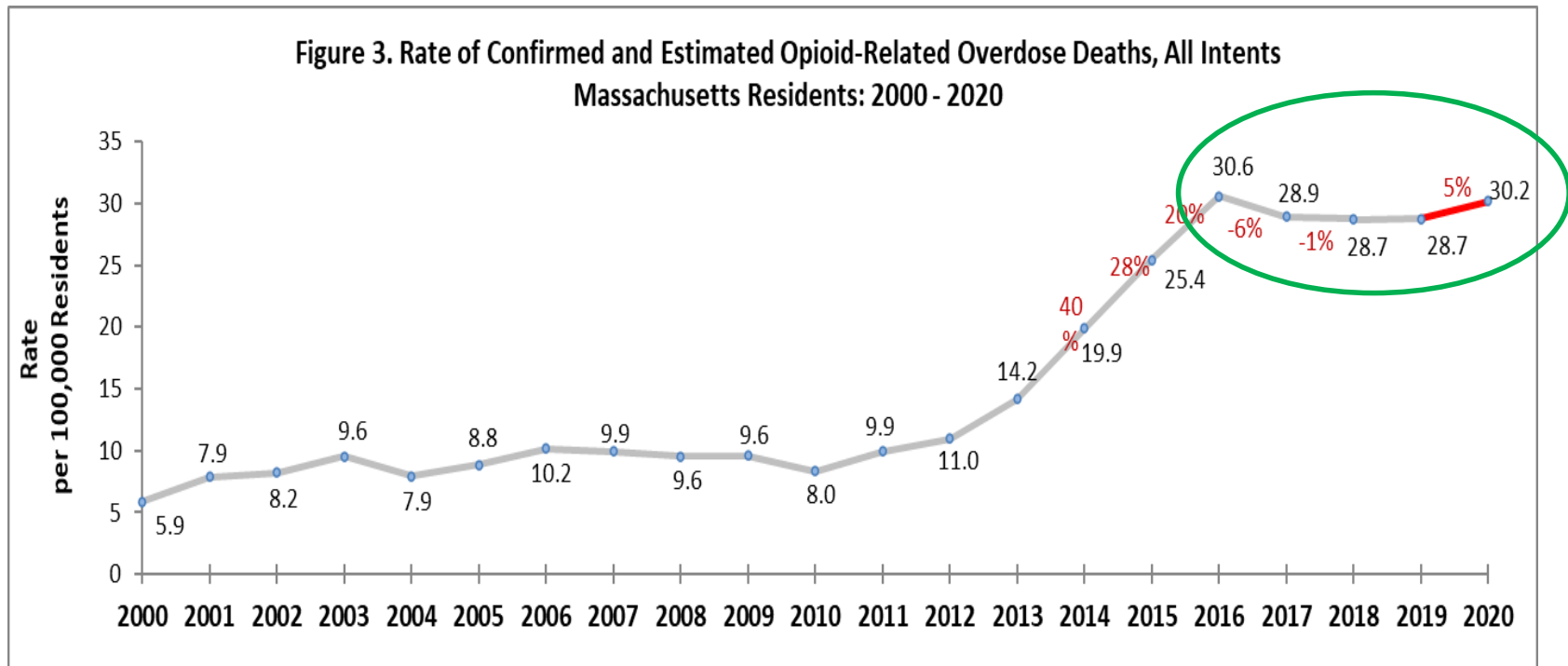


Estimated 498 deaths

Estimated 507 deaths



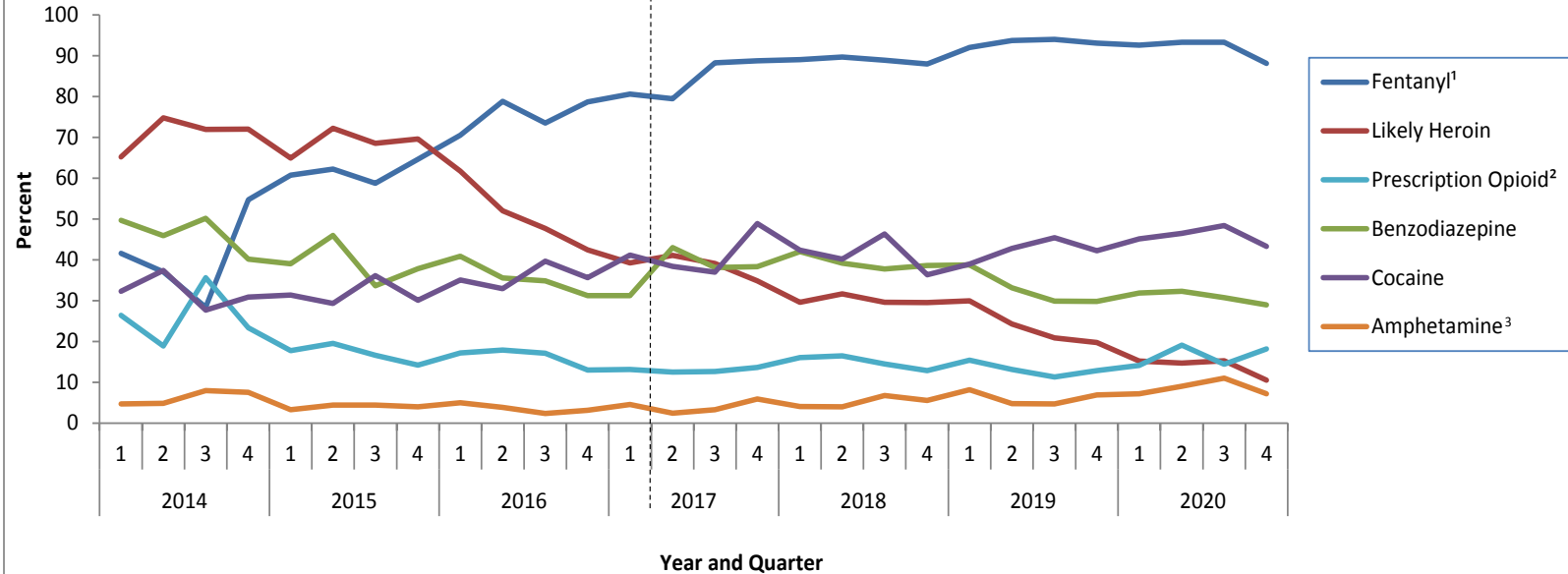
The rate of opioid-related overdose deaths has increased 5% in 2020 compared with 2019 and is 1% lower than the 2016 peak.





Fentanyl remains a key factor in opioid-related overdose deaths (92% present in toxicology screen in 2020).

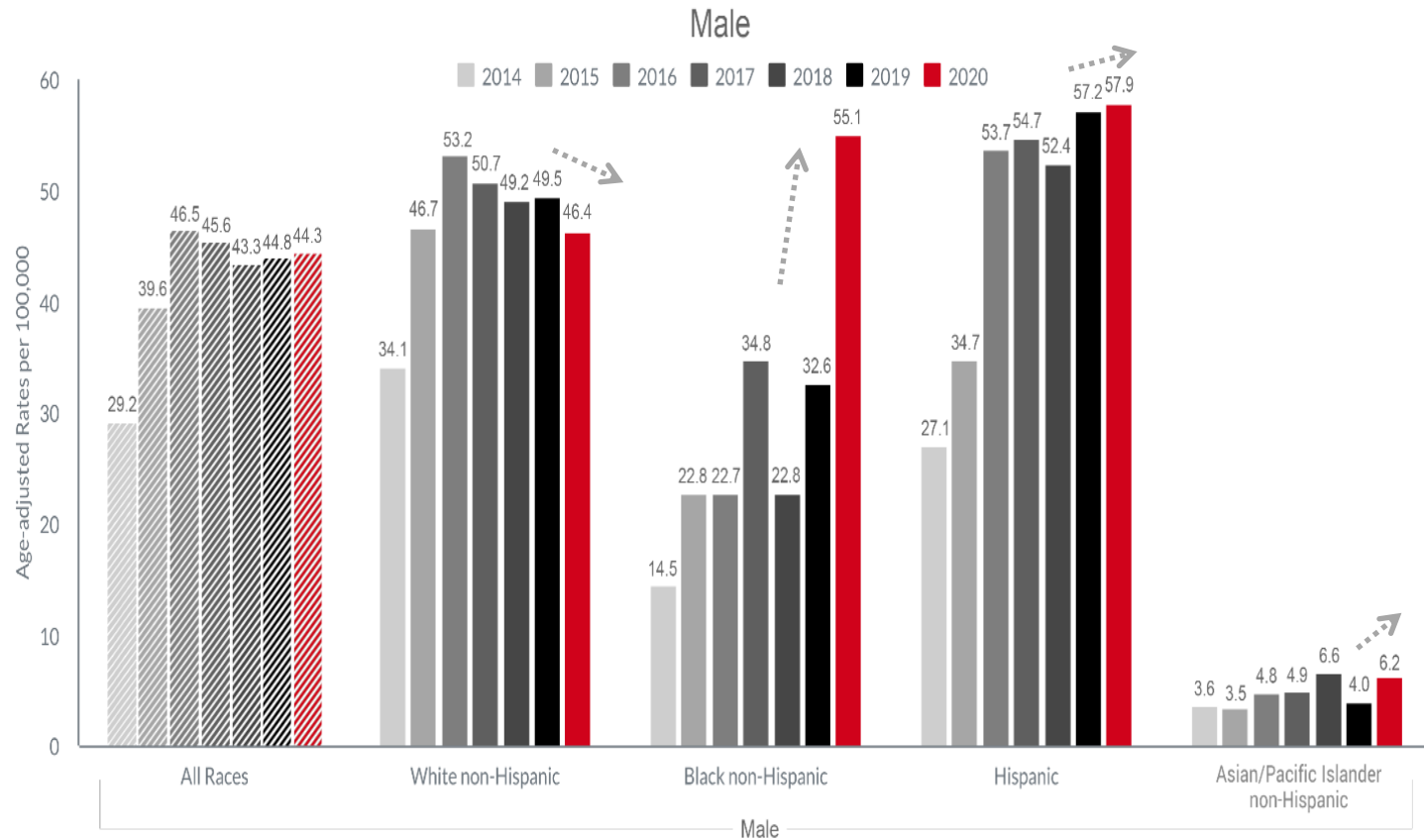
Figure 4. Percent of Opioid-Related Overdose Deaths with Specific Drugs Present
Massachusetts Residents: 2014 - 2020





Between 2019 & 2020, the confirmed opioid-related overdose death rates for Black non-Hispanic men increased significantly at 69%.

Confirmed Opioid-Related Overdose Death Rates, All Intents, by Race and Hispanic Ethnicity





DPH/BSAS is implementing new investments to enhance treatment and recovery support, particularly in communities of color

- BSAS is dedicating a significant portion of supplemental funding from SAMHSA's Substance Abuse Prevention & Treatment Block Grant towards addressing racial equity, including:
 - Increasing **behavioral healthcare workforce diversity, recruitment, and retention** through workforce development initiatives
 - **Funding community-led programming in communities of color** through grant making and support for increasing community-based organizations' ability to contract with the Commonwealth
 - **Increasing the number of culturally-specific programs** across the continuum of prevention, outreach/engagement, treatment, and recovery support services
 - **Increasing investments in pre-arrest diversion/co-response models**, in order to divert people with SUD from the criminal justice system, in partnership with the Department of Mental Health
 - **Increasing funding for low-threshold housing/housing first models in Suffolk County**, with program expansions expected in Merrimack Valley, Springfield, and Worcester to address communities in need



DPH/BSAS addresses health and racial equity by continuing and enhancing existing programs

- Current BSAS programs dedicated to addressing overdoses in the Black/Latinx community include:
 - **Recovery-Based Re-Entry Services for Black and Latino Men**, a pilot program for Black and Latino men leaving incarceration that will be provided by the following agencies:
 - ☐ Fathers' Uplift
 - ☐ Casa Esperanza
 - ☐ Legendary Legacies
 - ☐ New North Citizens' Council
 - ☐ Greater Lawrence Family Health Center/Lynn Community Health Center
 - Increased investments in the **Black Addiction Counselor Education (BACE)** and **Latinx Addiction Counselor Education (LACE)** programs to support Black and Latinx people seeking to enter the SUD workforce
- BSAS is also partnering with other existing **culturally-specific agencies/programs in the Commonwealth** to expand their services and provide increased access for communities of color



DPH/BSAS has aggressively maximized access to SUD treatment during the COVID-19 pandemic, and is continuing the fight against the opiate crisis

- Increasing access to naloxone – from March 2020 to April 2021 **over 110 thousand naloxone kits** have been distributed to Opioid Treatment Providers (OTP), Syringe Service Programs, community health centers, hospital emergency departments, and county Houses of Correction.
- Implementing a **new standing order for naloxone** allowing providers/organizations such as **first responders, co-response/jail diversion teams, criminal justice personnel, and health and human services workers** (such as those in homeless shelters, drop-in centers, and soup kitchens) to give naloxone to individuals at risk and their friends/family.
- Obtaining a **blanket exception** from SAMHSA on behalf of Massachusetts Opioid Treatment Programs (OTP) for take home doses of MOUD. As of December 2020, **48.5% of OTP patients are receiving take home doses**, compared to the pre-COVID average of 15.6% in December 2019.
- Implementing the broad adoption of a DEA waiver allowing prescriptions for **buprenorphine and naltrexone to patients for whom providers have conducted telehealth sessions**, as well as induct patients on buprenorphine and naltrexone.
- Reimbursing contracted Office Based Opioid Treatment (OBOT) providers for **cell phones and data plans** to maintain patients' ability to keep in contact with their providers for telehealth.
- Establishing **COVID+ ATS and CSS units** to facilitate positive patient transfers and maintain capacity within the rest of the treatment system.
- Leveraging the second round of **State Opioid Response (SOR) funding** from SAMHSA to increase access in Massachusetts to all FDA-approved forms of MOUD, reduce unmet treatment needs, and reduce opioid/stimulant misuse and overdose.
- Working with programs to **prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19**, including distributing guidance on surveillance testing, screening and isolation of patients/staff, and increased flexibility in bed allocation between different service settings to accommodate changing patient needs at individual programs.