

# OPIOID POISONING IN GREY BRUCE



## 2018 ANNUAL SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

*Over the past decade there has been a significant increase in opioid-related harms in Ontario and across Canada, and the number of emergency department visits due to opioid poisoning in Grey Bruce has increased sharply in recent years. This brief report summarizes local data on the number of emergency department (ED) visits due to opioid poisoning in Grey Bruce in 2018. Keep in mind that healthcare utilization information provides an approximation of opioid-related harms, but does not present a complete picture. In this report, emergency department visits due to opioid poisoning in Grey Bruce are based on a patient's postal code (e.g. an opioid poisoning patient with a Markdale postal code visits any Ontario emergency department).*

### 2018 OVERVIEW

In 2018, there were 89 emergency department visits due to opioid poisoning by Grey Bruce residents, up from 82 ED visits in 2017. The average number of ED visits per month was 7 and the highest number of visits in one month was 13 visits in December. This was just below the highest number recorded in a single month in Grey Bruce to date- 14 visits in both August and September of 2017.

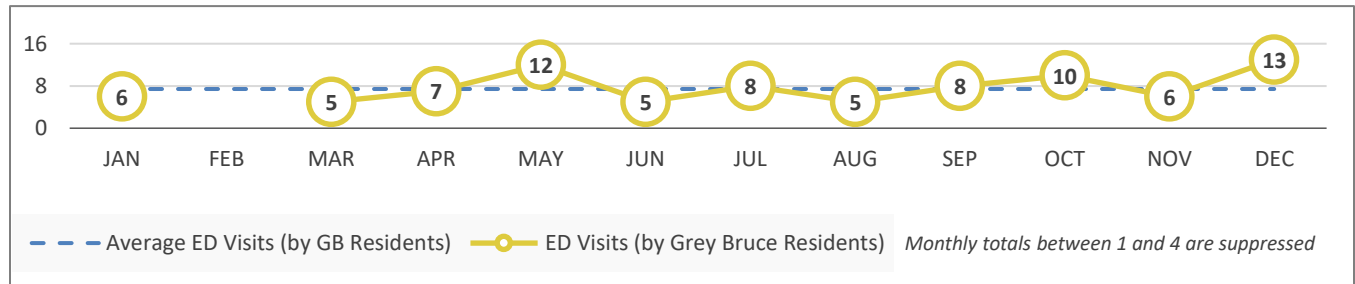


Data Source: National Ambulatory Care Reporting System (NACRS), via [Public Health Ontario](#). Updated July 12, 2019

## THE NUMBER OF OPIOID POISONINGS PEAKED IN MAY AND DECEMBER

In 2018 there was an **average of around 7 ED visits per month due to opioid poisoning** by Grey Bruce residents, which was unchanged from 2017. The number of opioid poisonings peaked in May and December, at 12 and 13 visits respectively (Figure 1). By contrast, in 2017 the number of monthly ED visits by Grey Bruce residents peaked in August and September at 14 ED visits.

Figure 1. Monthly ED Visits due to Opioid Poisoning by Grey Bruce Residents, 2018

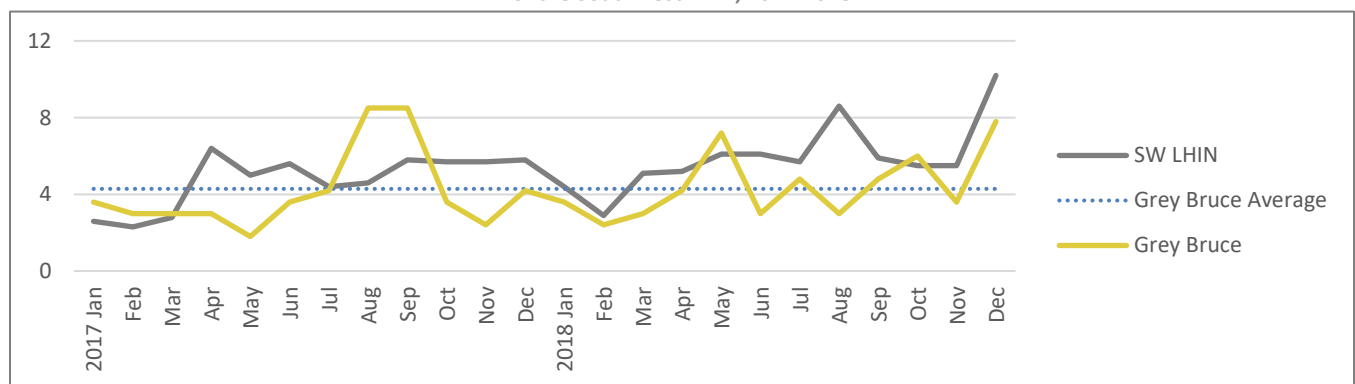


Data Source: National Ambulatory Care Reporting System (NACRS), via [Public Health Ontario](#). Updated July 12, 2019

## LOCAL RATES OF ED VISITS PER MONTH ARE SIMILAR TO RATES ACROSS THE SOUTHWEST LHIN

During an average month in 2017, 4 of every 100,000 Grey Bruce residents visited the ED due to opioid poisoning. Excluding a peak in local rates in August and September of 2017, monthly rates (per 100,000 population) of ED visits due to opioid poisoning for residents of Grey Bruce tends to be similar to or lower than the rates for residents of the Southwest Local Health Integration Network as a whole (LHIN) (Figure 2). Both Grey Bruce and the Southwest LHIN saw a sharp increase in rates in December of 2018. The Southwest LHIN encompasses all of Bruce and part of Grey County, along with Elgin, Huron, Middlesex, Oxford and Perth counties, and part of Norfolk County.

Figure 2. Monthly Rates of ED Visits due to Opioid Poisoning (per 100,000 population), by Residents of Grey Bruce and Residents of the Southwest LHIN, 2017-2018

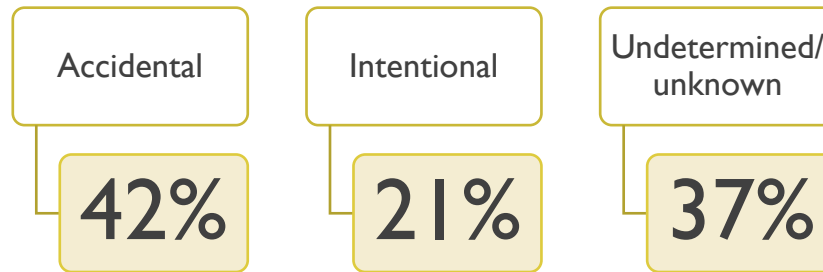


Data Source: National Ambulatory Care Reporting System (NACRS), via [Public Health Ontario](#). Updated July 12, 2019

## INTENT IS OFTEN UNKNOWN OR UNDETERMINED

In 2018, 42% of ED visits due to opioid poisoning among Grey Bruce residents were accidental overdoses, 21% were intentional overdoses, and 37% were overdoses of an unknown or undetermined cause (no intent was recorded or more than one intent was recorded) (Figure 3). Note that intentional overdoses are likely to be underestimated.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 3. Total ED Visits due to Opioid Poisoning by Grey Bruce Residents, by Cause (%), Grey Bruce 2018

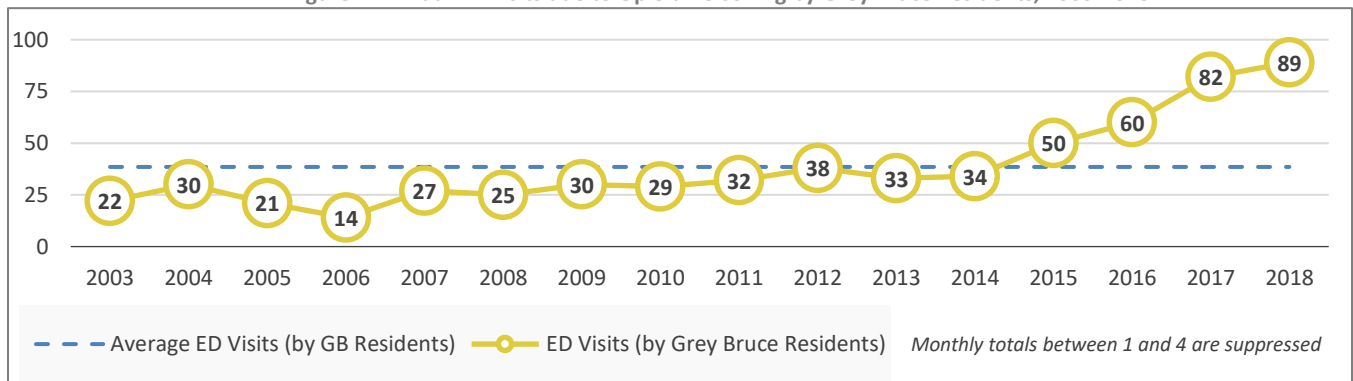


Data Source: National Ambulatory Care Reporting System (NACRS), Canadian Institute for Health (CIHI), via Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Updated July 12, 2019

## THE ANNUAL NUMBER OF ED VISITS DUE TO OPIOID POISONING DOUBLED IN RECENT YEARS

In 2018 there were 89 emergency department visits due to opioid poisoning by Grey Bruce residents (Figure 4). Between 2003 and 2014, the annual number of visits fluctuated between 14 and 38. Over the past several years, however, the number of ED visits per year due to opioid poisoning by Grey Bruce residents has more than doubled from 34 in 2014 to 89 in 2018. This increasing trend is also occurring at the provincial level (not pictured).

Figure 4. Annual ED Visits due to Opioid Poisoning by Grey Bruce Residents, 2003-2018



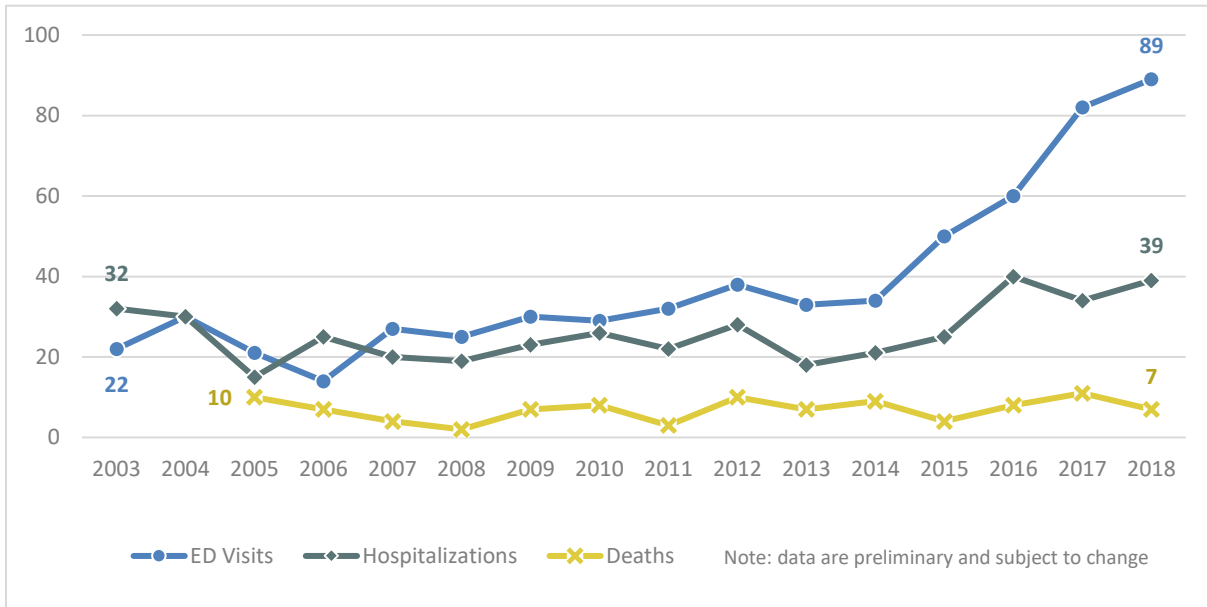
Data Source: National Ambulatory Care Reporting System (NACRS), via Public Health Ontario. Updated July 12, 2019

<sup>1</sup> Skinner, R., McFaul, S., Rhodes, A.E., Bowes, M., & Rockett, I.R.H. (2016). Suicide in Canada: Is Poisoning Misclassification an Issue? *Can J Psychiatry*, doi: 10.1177/0706743716639918.

**HOSPITALIZATIONS AND DEATHS HAVE REMAINED STABLE LOCALLY**

While the number of ED visits due to opioid poisoning has increased in Grey Bruce since 2003, no major increase has been observed in the number of hospitalizations or deaths due to opioid poisoning (Figure 5). Provincially, the number of ED visits increased from 1,858 in 2003 to 9,150 in 2018, while hospitalizations increased from 1,188 to 2,083, and deaths increased from 366 to 1,469 over that time period (not pictured).

**Figure 5. Annual ED Visits, Hospitalizations, and Deaths due to Opioid Poisoning by Grey Bruce Residents, 2003-2018**



Data Source: National Ambulatory Care Reporting System (NACRS), via [Public Health Ontario](#). Updated July 12, 2019