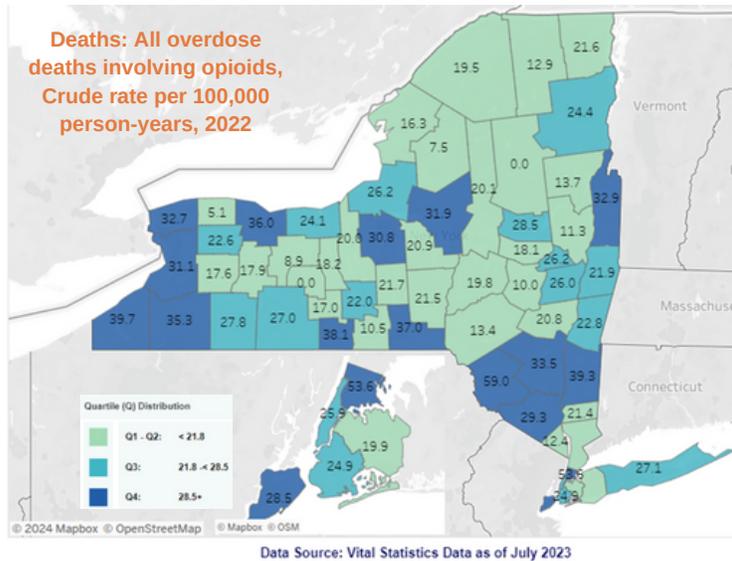




Nearly every family in Ulster County knows someone who has been affected by the opioid crisis. The Ulster County Comptroller's Office presents this snapshot to share data with policymakers and the community on the public health impacts of the opioid crisis considering the additional funding coming to Ulster County from opioid settlement agreements. While the opioid settlement funds are not the only sources of financial support to address the opioid crisis, these are a new and recurring source of funding that should be put to best use to save and improve as many lives as possible.

Opioid Overdoses

According to the most recently available data aggregated by New York State, Ulster County finds itself with an opioid overdose death rate of 33.5 overdoses per 100,000 residents, among the highest of quartile of counties throughout New York State.



New York State Quarterly Opioid Report October 2023 Edition, available at: https://apps.health.ny.gov/public/tabvis/PHIG_Public/opioid-quarterly/reports/#state

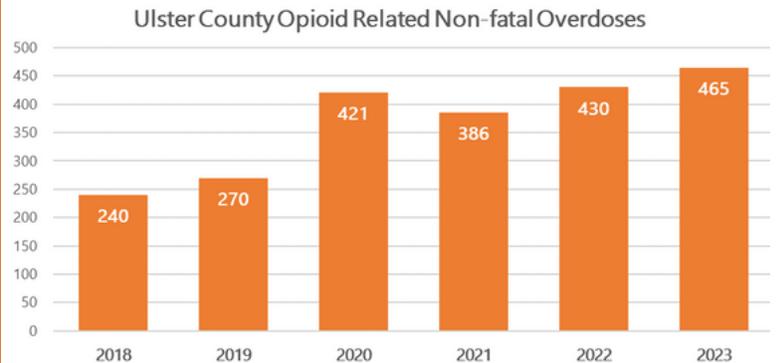
Fatal Overdoses

While getting an accurate picture of Ulster County opioid overdose deaths is hampered by a lag in toxicology verification, we can see in the chart to the right that in 2022 and 2023, fatal overdoses have leveled off when compared to 2021 where 71 fatal opioid related overdoses were reported.

A second confounding issue is that the use of non-opioid synthetics such as xylazine may be the ultimate cause of death, but these deaths are currently recorded as opioid deaths. In 2022, Ulster County had 11 deaths that were directly attributable to xylazine use. In 2023, the number of xylazine deaths reported in Ulster County declined to 4. In 2022, the Drug Enforcement Administration reported that approximately 23% of fentanyl powder and 7% of fentanyl pills seized by the DEA contained xylazine.¹

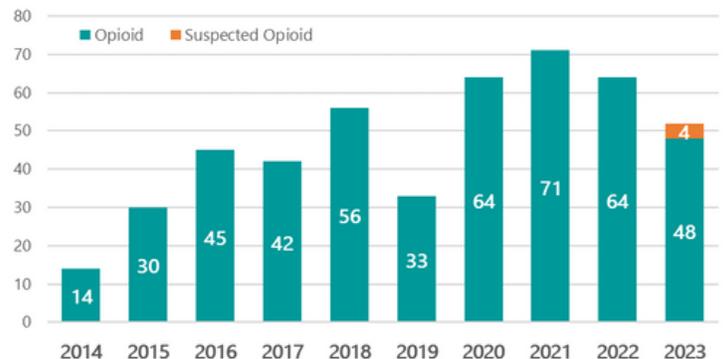
Non-fatal Overdoses

Ulster County experienced over 460 non-fatal opioid overdoses in 2023. There is a lack of data consistency across agencies due to certain differences in reporting methods. For 2023, the Ulster County Department of Mental Health identified 465 non-fatal overdoses while the Ulster County Sheriff's Office tracked 403 opioid overdoses (92 of which were considered intentional). These numbers differ for several reasons including multiple overdoses by one individual being counted as one, and the removal of prescribed medication overdoses or adverse reactions. It is important to note, non-fatal overdoses may be under-reported. Due to the increased availability of nalaxone, it's doubtful that all private administrations are tracked.



Ulster County Department of Mental Health ODMAP/ME Weekly Surveillance Report available at: <http://tinyurl.com/Mental-Health-ODMA-ME>

Ulster County Opioid-Related Deaths



Aggregated from Autopsy data from Ulster County Medical Examiner available at: <https://ulstercountyny.gov/health/medical-examiner-division>

[1] United States Drug Enforcement Administration, Public Safety Alert: DEA Reports Widespread Threat of Fentanyl Mixed with Xylazine, available at: <https://www.dea.gov/alert/dea-reports-widespread-threat-fentanyl-mixed-xylazine>

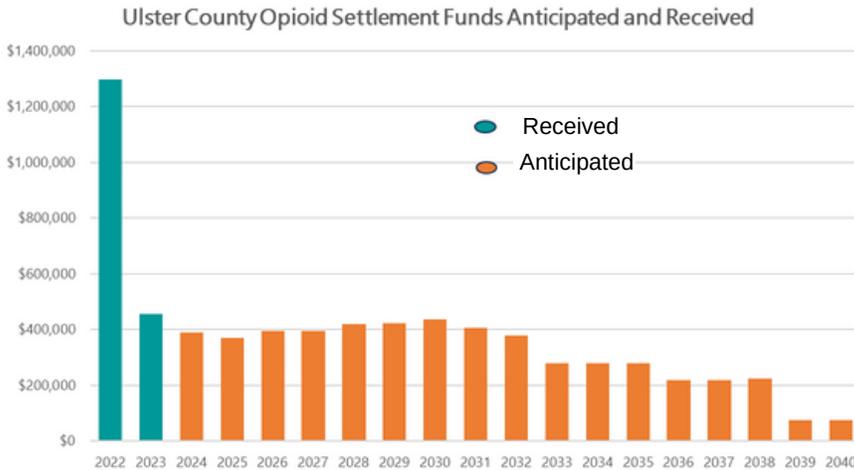
Opioid Settlement Funds

Ulster County was awarded opioid settlement funds as a result of litigation brought by the States' Attorneys General. These settlements have specific payout schedules and must be spent in accordance with approved uses including projects related to the treatment and prevention of opioid use, and a variety of other related costs such as training, research, and first responder support. Below are tables of settlement funds that Ulster County received in 2022 and 2023.

Ulster County Opioid Settlement Funds

Date Received	Settlement Source	Funds Received
4/22/2022	Distributors Settlement	\$ 229,241.79
6/15/2022	Janssen Pharmaceutical	\$ 455,921.16
9/7/2022	Allergan Pharmaceutical	\$ 492,676.01
11/30/2022	Distributors Settlement	\$ 119,440.23
2022 Total		\$ 1,297,279.19

Date Received	Settlement Source	Funds Received
1/31/2023	Mallinckrodt	\$ 21,938.07
3/21/2023	Endo Pharmaceutical	\$ 171,846.99
8/2/2023	Distributors Settlement	\$ 119,440.23
10/04/2023	Distributors Settlement	\$ 115,592.15
11/9/2023	Mallinckrodt	\$ 25,809.49
2023 Total		\$ 454,626.93



The bulk of the settlement proceeds that Ulster County anticipates being awarded were received in 2023, with smaller annual payments going forward that will range from \$76,475 to \$435,553 through 2040. Additional settlements may be reached which would increase the anticipated annual revenue going forward. These revenues do not include opioid settlement funds through the New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports (\$1,242,914 in 2023) which may be subject to change in the future.

While these settlement funds are recurring in nature through 2040, annual settlement revenue was front loaded and most was received in 2022, while the remaining funding decreases over time. The Comptroller's Office recommends caution in funding ongoing operating expenditures with one-time revenues, or decelerating revenues.

Opioid Programs

Ulster County continues to pursue a variety of strategies to address this looming public health problem. Although Ulster County has not reported any expenditures of settlement funds to date, the County currently has several programs operating and planned to address the opioid crisis that are supported by a mixture of federal, state, and local funds.

The Ulster County Sheriff's Office Opioid Response as County Law Enforcement program (ORACLE), funded by a three-year federal Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program (COSSAP) grant established the ORACLE'S overdose response team. The work of ORACLE has been very robust and merits separate reporting on its own, but a summary of the achievements is worthy of review.

- Developed an alert system and tracking mechanism for overdose incidents.
- Convened a High Risk Mitigation Team made up of 10 agency members to monitor opioid overdoses and coordinate opioid response efforts.
- Conducted 122 educational outreach sessions with hidden in plain sight trainings using the ORACLE vehicle.
- Facilitated 4,057 naloxone trainings (2,592 to individuals and 1,465 through various organizations).
- Coordinated Hot Spot Community Outreach sessions at the Broadway Bubble Laundromat and Linear Park engaging 163 individuals.
- Expanded its work to incarcerated individuals and instituted medication assisted treatment for 36 incarcerated individuals. ORACLE has served 115 referrals from the Ulster County Jail in 2023.
- Operated the ORACLE hotline and Emergency Call Outs coordinating treatment options and immediately transporting individuals to treatment.
- In collaboration with the Department of Mental Health, placed and serviced 125 naloxone stations in supermarkets, schools, churches, municipal facilities, recreation facilities, restaurants, and nonprofits.

ORACLE Services

The following information reflects services provided by ORACLE to those in crisis in Year 2023:

Unintentional Overdose referred to ORACLE from PD	369
Intentional Overdose referred to ORACLE from PD	92
Overdose referred to ORACLE from Oracle Hotline	55
Overdose referred to ORACLE from other community members	74
Clients admitted into Inpatient Detox facilities	54
Clients admitted into Inpatient Rehab facilities	82
Clients admitted into Outpatient Rehab services	9
Clients referred for Transportation	32
Clients referred to other Community Recovery Support	537
Clients placed in emergency Housing services	38
Clients placed on MOUD Induction	22
Clients placed on MOUD Maintenance	14
Clients referred for MOUD Referral	26

Source: Ulster County Sheriff's Office Oracle Team 2023 End of Year Report

Meanwhile, the Department of Health distributed opioid prescription drug awareness communications via radio, social media, and the internet. The Department of Mental Health launched an [opioid dashboard](#) in 2023 to provide relevant and useful data.

In 2024, ORACLE and the Department of Mental Health have planned the placement of 25 naloboxes in outdoor spaces. The County has allocated \$3 million of American Rescue Plan Act funding to specifically address the opioid epidemic by purchasing and renovating 368 Broadway in Kingston which now houses the Mental Health Department with plans for a 24 hour crisis stabilization center to better address emergency needs at this location by the end of 2024.

The County has also had several contracts with outside agencies to address opioid issues. In 2023, the County entered into a contract with Samadhi Center, Inc. for \$797,000 to operate an outpatient and substance use disorder withdrawal and stabilization services program. As of the close of 2023 only \$213,529 has been invoiced and the contract has yet to be amended to allow continuation into 2024. In 2024, the County entered into a contract for \$74,985 with Ellenville Regional Hospital to develop a response to opioid overdose spikes of three or more overdoses within 24 hours.

Conclusion

While the reduction in opioid deaths is significant and representative of successful efforts to administer naloxone, opioid deaths do not necessarily tell the full story. Although deaths have leveled, the number of non-fatal overdoses continues to rise and with the use of naloxone, it is possible that not all overdoses are being reported. We have yet to see whether the harm reduction and the overdose spike response approaches will have a significant impact on overdoses and overdose deaths. What can be inferred from our review thus far is that without the significant efforts of the Sheriff's Office and the Departments of Health and Mental Health, the loss of life and even survivable overdoses could be much, much worse. Ulster County must continue to track the allocation of these finite resources to best determine how to save and improve lives of our community members going forward.