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## Opioids in the Las Vegas Metro

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## OPIOIDS IN THE LAS VEGAS METRO

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### PURPOSE:

In 2014, Nevada was one of 7 states selected to participate in a national policy coalition to reduce prescription drug abuse. As a result, the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Southern Nevada Health District (SNHD) created a data dashboard to track opioid prescriptions and opioid-involved overdose incidents. This Fact Sheet synthesizes state-level data from the Nevada Opioid Overdose Surveillance Dashboard<sup>1</sup> and focuses on the Las Vegas Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)<sup>2</sup>. The data track opioid prescription rates as they correlate to opioid-involved overdose deaths, emergency room visits, and hospitalizations.

### DATA COLLECTION:

The data includes information from Clark County, Nevada during an eight-year period from 2011 to 2018.

For the purposes of this Fact Sheet, “opioids” refer to both prescription pain medications and illicitly manufactured drugs like heroin and synthetic opioids such as fentanyl.

Data on deaths, emergency room visits (ER Visits), and hospitalizations are presented as annual *crude rates*, that is the total number of opioid-related incidences per 100,000 people per year. Prescription drug indicators are also presented as crude rates and are based on counts of prescriptions dispensed per 1,000 residents each year.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS:

1. Opioid prescriptions rates are on a downward trend.
2. Opioid-involved deaths in Clark County are on a downward trend and have stayed under the Nevada state average.
3. Emergency room visits are higher in Clark County than the rest of Nevada but continue to trend downward.

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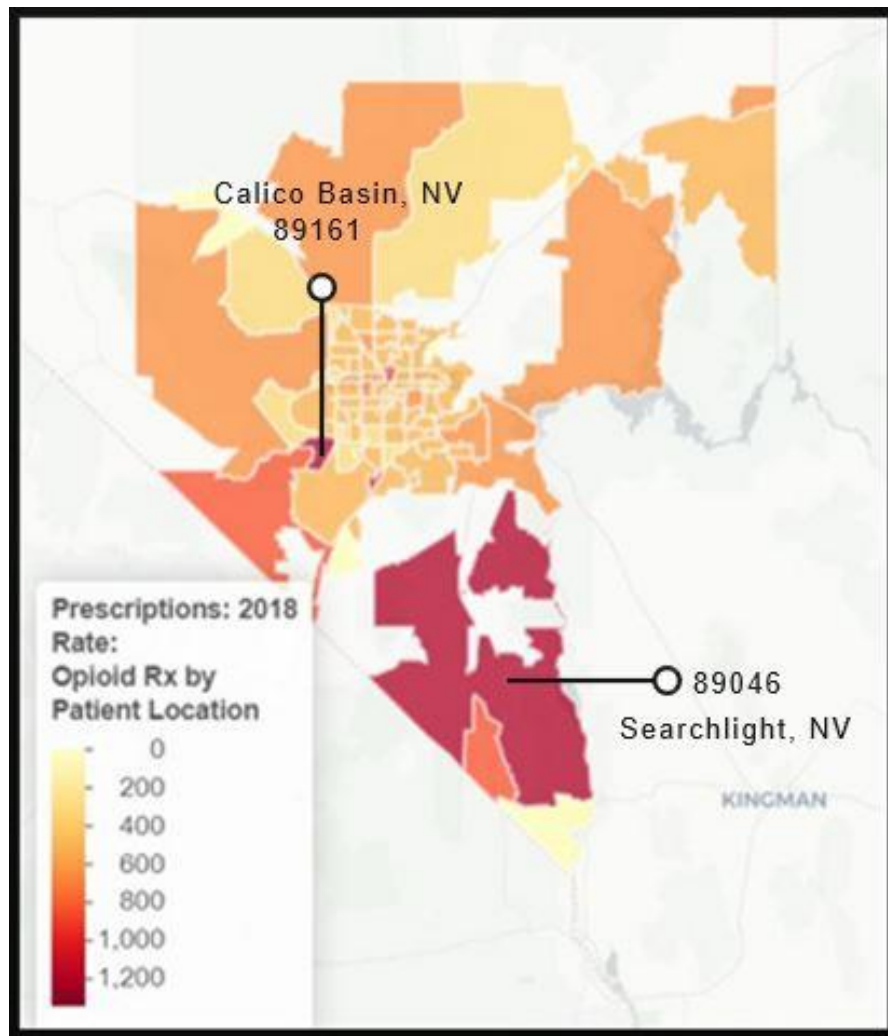
<sup>1</sup> <https://opioid.snhd.org/>. The Nevada Opioid Surveillance Dashboard was created using data from the Electronic Death Registry System, the Center for Health Information Analysis, the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP), and the Division of Public and Behavioral Health.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this Fact Sheet, the Las Vegas MSA encompasses all of Clark County, Nevada.

Figure 1 is a heat map of the Las Vegas metro, which has recently emerged as a new area of high opioid-related hospital admissions<sup>3</sup>. By synthesizing state-level data and focusing on the Las Vegas MSA, the data track opioid prescription rates as they correlate to opioid-involved overdose incidents—that is *opioid-involved deaths, emergency room visits, and hospitalizations*.

Clark County has the largest share of Nevada’s population and the largest presence of medical providers, yet ranks below the state average for opioid prescriptions from 2011 to 2018. Nevertheless, the areas highlighted in red (zip codes 89161 and 89046) show a high concentration of opioids prescribed to patients in an area much less populated than the rest of the metro. The area which corresponds to the largest zip code, 89046, is known as Searchlight, Nevada.

**FIGURE 1: OPIOID PRESCRIPTIONS PER 100K RESIDENTS BY PATIENT LOCATION IN CLARK COUNTY, NV, 2018**



Source: Nevada Opioid Surveillance Dashboard

<sup>3</sup> Lawrence Fulton and others, Geospatial-temporal and demand models for opioid admissions, implications for policy (*Journal of Clinical Medicine*, 2019).

Figure 2 shows a bar chart of opioid prescriptions dispensed per 1,000 residents in Clark County and the State of Nevada from 2011 to 2018. For all years, prescription rates in Nevada’s largest county are below the state average and gradually decrease after 2016.

**FIGURE 2: OPIOID PRESCRIPTIONS PER 1K RESIDENTS, CLARK COUNTY AND NEVADA (2011-2018)<sup>4</sup>**

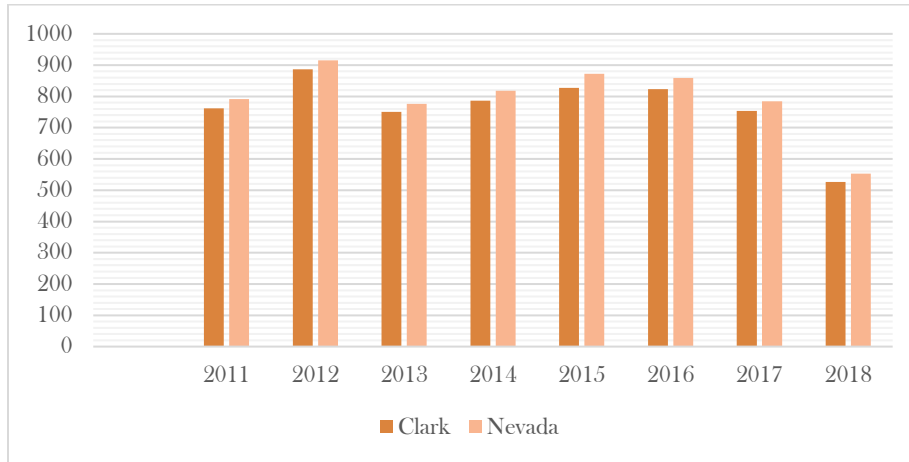
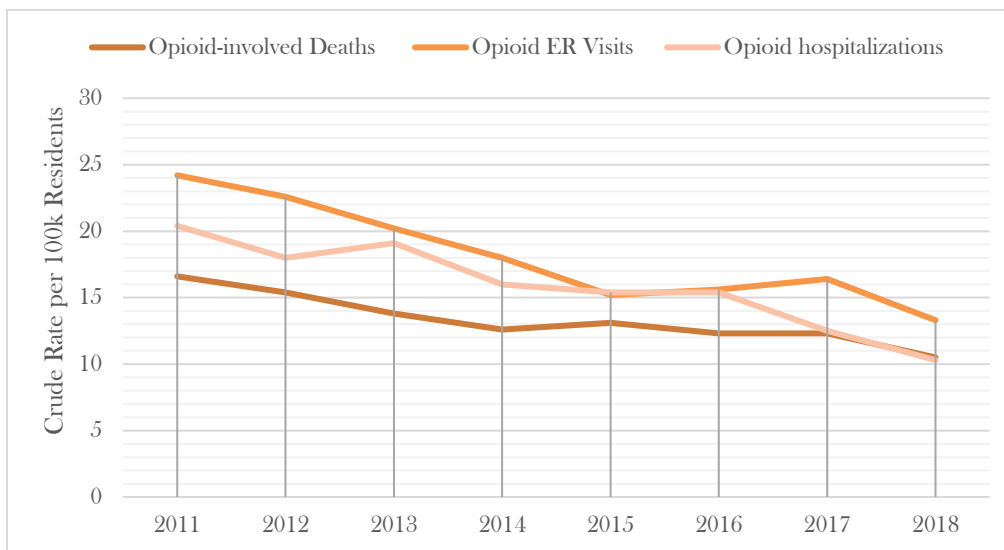


Figure 3 is a line graph measuring trends over time for rates of opioid-involved deaths, ER visits, and hospitalizations in Clark County, Nevada from 2011 to 2018. For each year except 2015, rates of opioid-involved ER visits were higher than rates of overdose deaths and rates of in-patient hospital admissions. Since 2011, all three indicators are on a downward trend.

**FIGURE 3: OPIOID-INVOLVED DEATHS AND HOSPITAL VISITS IN CLARK COUNTY, NV (2011-2018)<sup>5</sup>**



<sup>4</sup> Source: Nevada Opioid Overdose Surveillance Dashboard

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*