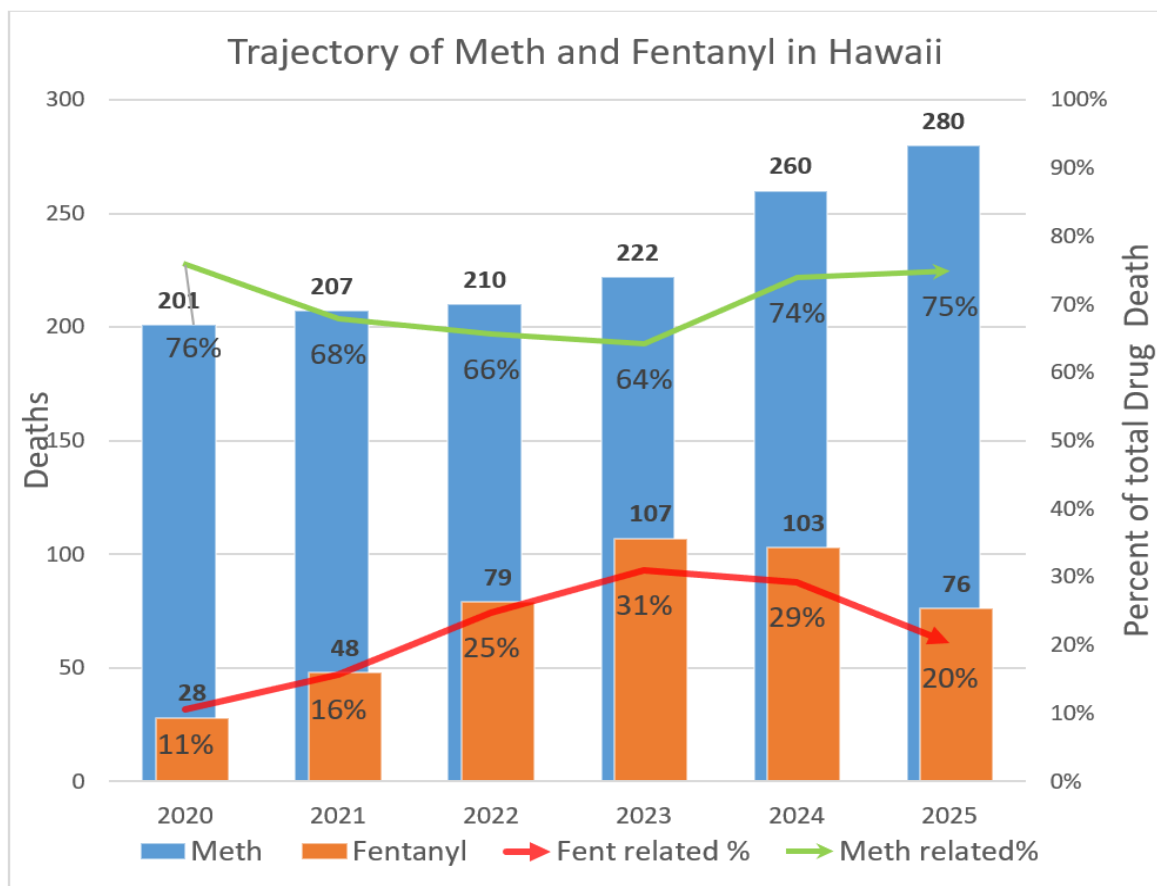


Drug Threats in Hawaii Summary

From the 2027 Hawaii High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Threat Assessment ¹

Hawaii's greatest drug threat is methamphetamine (meth) and its abuse appears to be increasing. In 2025, 75% of the 374 general drug-related deaths in Hawaii involved meth, while fentanyl deaths declined after experiencing an upward trend since 2019. A significant factor in the declining fentanyl deaths was the reduction of fentanyl deaths in Honolulu (from 52 deaths in 2024 to 32 deaths in 2025). Meth deaths rose from 260 deaths in 2024 to 280 in 2025, while fentanyl deaths decreased from 103 to 76. Hawaii law enforcement believes methamphetamine is Hawaii's greatest drug threat, followed by fentanyl; whereas the Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center believes fentanyl is equivalent to meth as Hawaii's greatest drug threat. In Hawaii, the pendulum appears to be swinging towards an increasing threat of meth, and a declining threat of fentanyl.



- Arrows depict percentage flow

¹ Hawaii's regional drug threats are studied each year by the Hawaii High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area and reported in an annual drug threat assessment. The 2027 Drug Threat Assessment identifies Hawaii's drug trafficking activity and analyzes specific data sources to identify drug abuse trends and threats in Hawaii.

Hawaii Meth & Fentanyl Drug Related Death Rate per 100,000

ISLAND	Meth Deaths 2024	Meth Deaths 2025	Change	Rate per 100,000
Kauai	24	16	33% decrease	22
Hawaii	19	33	73.7% increase	16
Maui	38	37	2.6% decrease	23
Oahu	179	194	8.4% increase	19
Overall	260	280	7.7% increase	19

ISLAND	Fentanyl Deaths 2024	Fentanyl Deaths 2025	Change	Rate per 100,000
Kauai	5	3	40% decrease	4
Hawaii	7	9	28.6% increase	4
Maui	21	21	0% increase	13
Oahu	70	42	40% decrease	4
Overall	103	75	27.2% decrease	5

Per capita, Kauai County is identified as having the highest rates (per 100,000) of general drug related deaths, while Maui County is identified as having the highest rate of methamphetamine and fentanyl related deaths

Drug Deaths by Category	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Fentanyl	19	28	48	79	107	103	76
Heroin	19	21	19	12	14	5	3
Opioid	34	26	38	38	32	31	19
Meth	182	201	207	210	222	260	280
THC	14	0	2	26	24	15	26
Xylazine					4	3	1
Cocaine	16	16	16	30	29	31	35

Xylazine is not a synthetic opioid, but its growing prevalence in fentanyl mixtures complicates the reversal of opioid overdoses with naloxone and is responsible for widespread reports of injection site infections and necrosis (soft tissue death) resulting in amputations. [Note: Xylazine is a sedative, not an opioid. It is used as an anesthetic in veterinary medicine, primarily on large animals, and is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) only for veterinary use.] Xylazine is being added to fentanyl by drug traffickers, a mixture known as “tranq”, in illicit drug markets, increasing the risk of death from fentanyl poisoning. Law enforcement mainly encounters xylazine in mixtures with fentanyl or other opioids, like heroin, but it has also been seen alone and in mixtures with cocaine and other illicit drugs. DEA forensic laboratories report that the number of heroin and fentanyl exhibits adulterated with xylazine is increasing and spreading outside traditional white powder heroin and fentanyl markets in the eastern United States, where xylazine has been present for several years. There was one xylazine additive related death in 2025 (Hawaii Island).

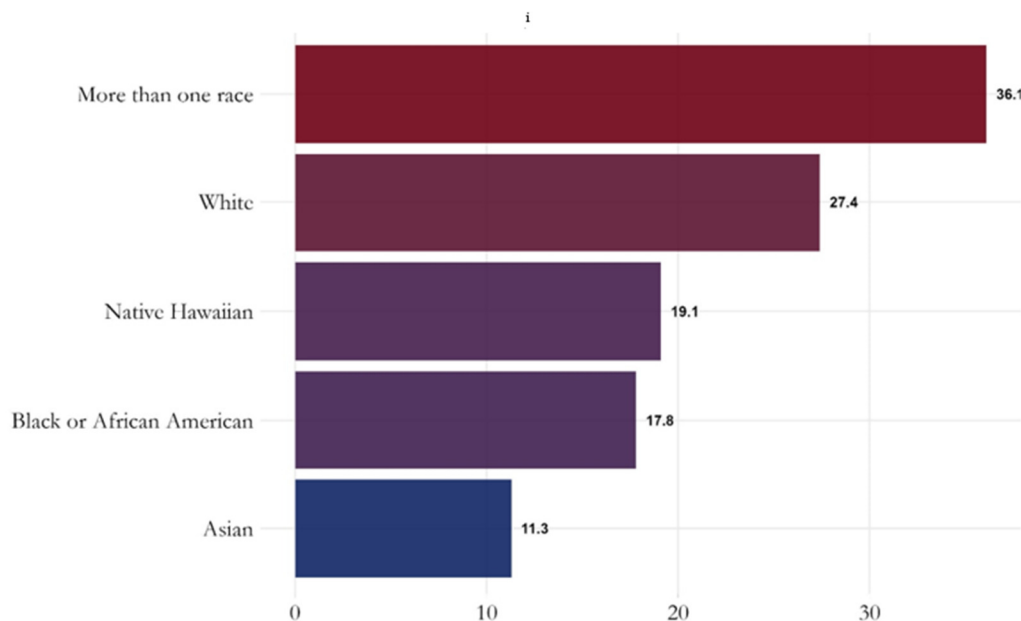
Hawaii Drug-Related Deaths	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Kauai County	18	14	22	23	30	27	26
Hawaii County	21	24	32	34	32	32	40
Maui County	35	39	39	43	64	49	49
Honolulu County	191	196	212	220	220	244	259
Total HI State	265	265	305	320	346	352	374

Who Dies from Drugs in Hawaii?

The race types of those that died from drug abuse are reflective of the multi-cultural composition of Hawaii, and similar to the multi-ethnic composition of those who traffic drugs in the region (see Drug Trafficking Organizations beginning on page 39).

The *Hawaii overdose death rate per 100,000 chart*² (Office of National Drug Control Policy, Drug Threat Analysis Group) depicts the racial diversity of drug related deaths in Hawaii:

**Provisional Overdose Death Rate per 100,000
by Race for Hawaii, 2021 - 2025**



*2025 Hawaii Ethnicity Index reports Asian populations comprise the largest group (37.27%), followed by those identifying as two or more races (26.05%), and White populations (22.51%). Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander populations make up 10.31% of the state's total.

²Center for Disease Control (CDC), Provisional Drug Count

Who makes Meth and Fentanyl and how does it get to Hawaii?

Precursor chemicals for methamphetamine and fentanyl are manufactured in China and shipped to Mexico for final production by violent Mexican cartels. The heightened violence is associated to the competition of manufacturing and distributing these synthetic drugs destined for the United States. Cartel manufactured drugs are smuggled across the Southwest Border and then transported by parcel delivery systems, air passenger carrier, and marine cargo to Hawaii—primarily from West Coast drug trafficking enterprises.

Threat Summary and 2027 Outlook

More than any drug, methamphetamine threatens the overall socioeconomic landscape and quality of life in Hawaii. Methamphetamine is the drug most associated with drug deaths; property and violent crimes; anti-social behavior; mental and physical illnesses; homelessness; and poverty.

The Hawaii HIDTA Mission is to disrupt and dismantle drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) in the region by allocating resources and analytical support to the Hawaii HIDTA Task Forces. These Task Forces are synergized by their multi-agency design, consisting of federal, state, and local narcotics agents and investigators—known as HIDTA Task Force Officers. All the while, the Hawaii HIDTA Prevention Team develops and implements demand reduction strategies and focuses on direct intervention with the communities and schools throughout the Hawaiian Islands. HIDTA's partnership with the Department of the Attorney General and Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawaii synergizes our drug prevention efforts in our mission to reduce the number of drug related deaths, to be measured in future Hawaii HIDTA Drug Threat Assessments.

