

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

Forum on Global Violence Prevention Workshop

Policy Responses To Syndemics

May 17, 2019

A Local Health Department's Response to the Opioid Epidemic

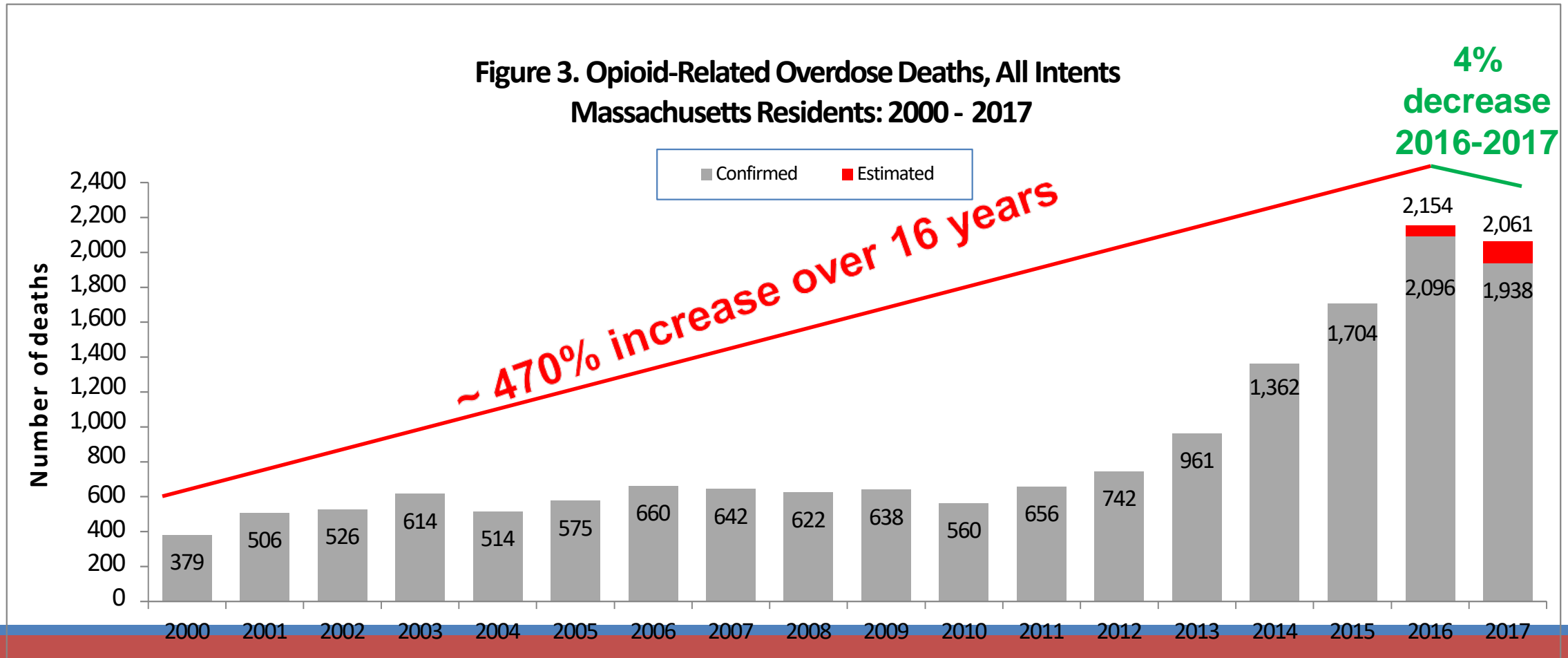
Rita L. Nieves, RN, MPH, LICSW
Director, Organizational Development
Recovery Services Bureau
Boston Public Health Commission



Data From Massachusetts

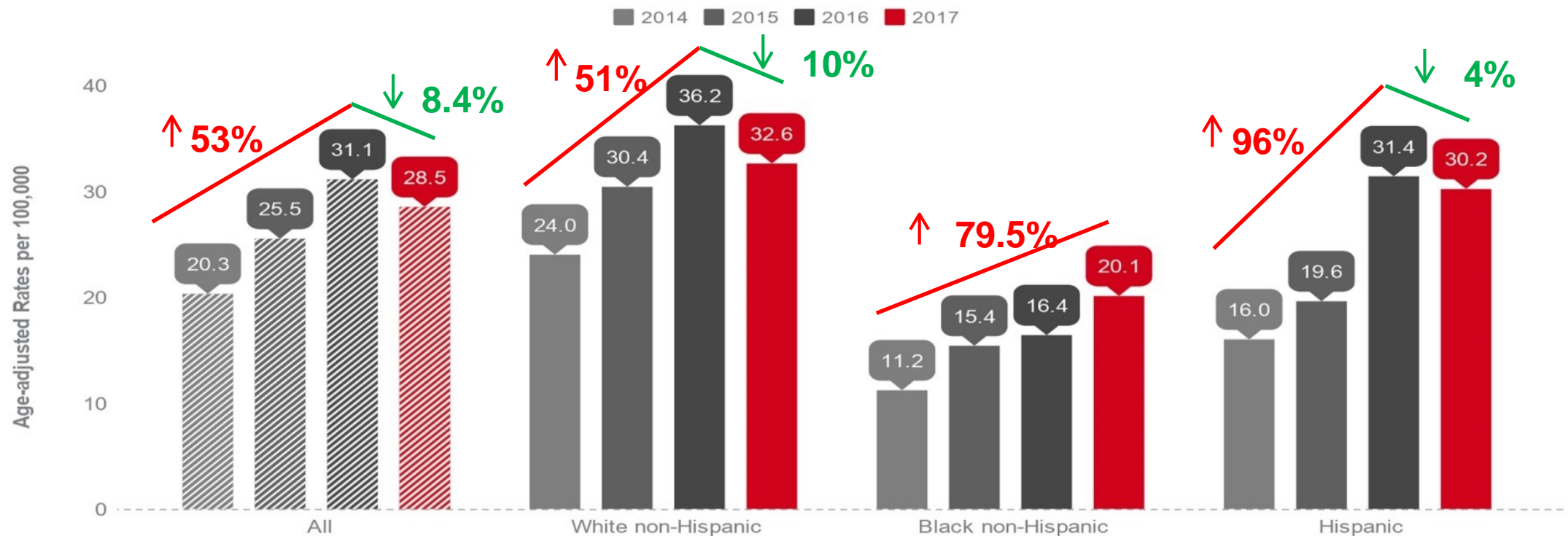
Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Opioid-related overdose deaths declined in 2017 for the first time in 7 years



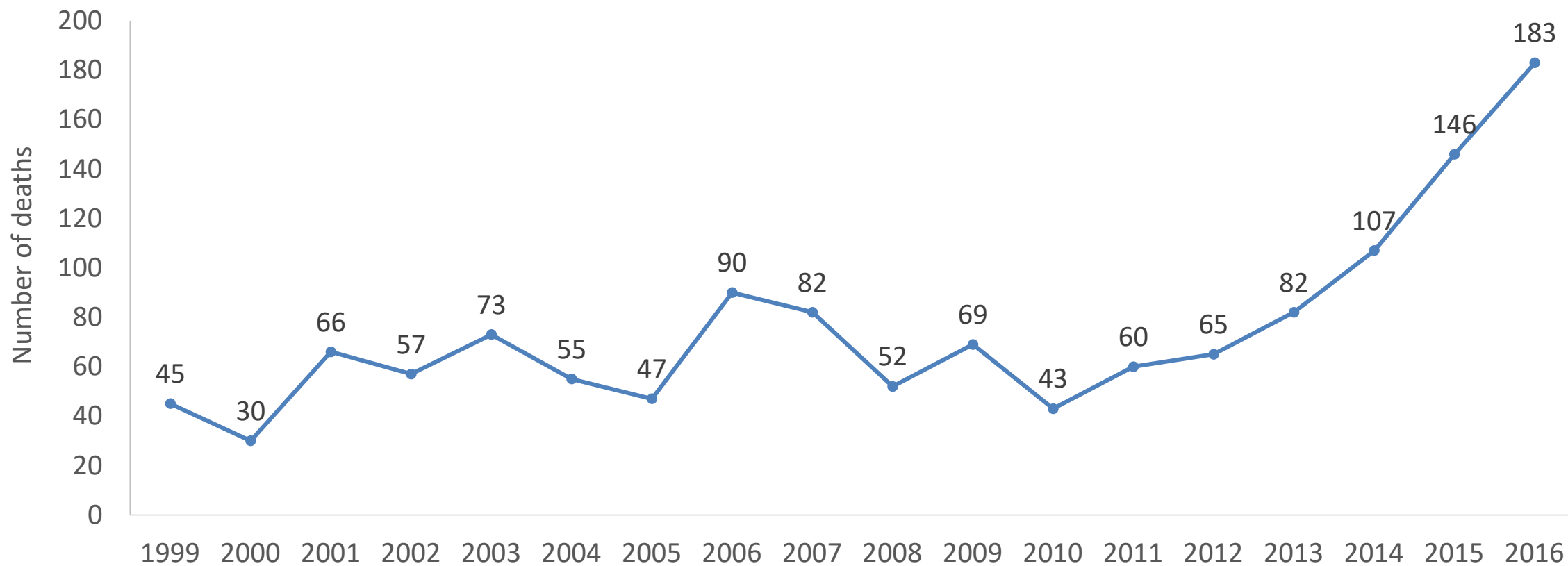
Between 2016 and 2017, confirmed opioid-related overdose death rate increased for Black non-Hispanics, decreased for White non-Hispanics and Hispanics

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



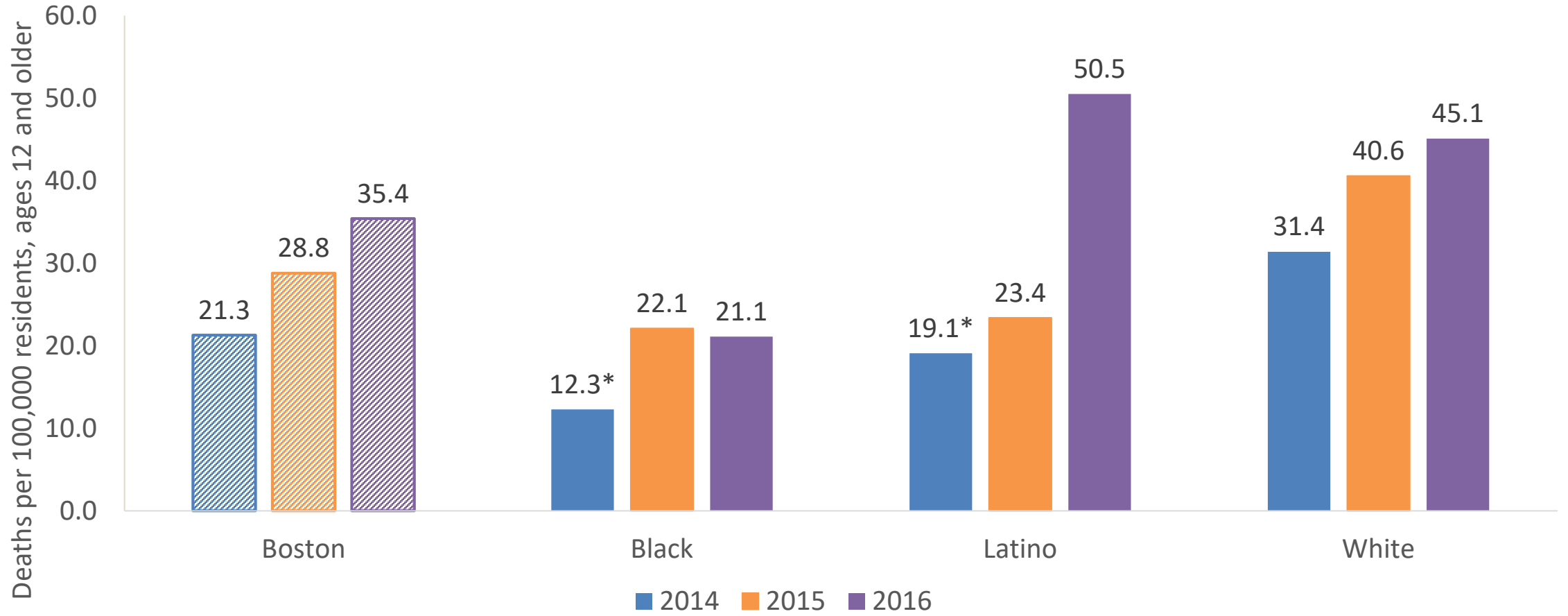
Data From Boston

Number of Unintentional Opioid Overdose Deaths among Boston Residents, 1999-2017



DATA SOURCE: Boston resident deaths, Massachusetts Department of Public Health
DATA ANALYSIS: Boston Public Health Commission, Research and Evaluation Office

Unintentional Opioid Overdose Mortality, Age Adjusted Rates, by Race/Ethnicity, Boston, 2014-2016



Boston's Response to Opioid Epidemic & Other Clusters of Conditions

Framing the Problem Locally

Epicenter of Opioid Epidemic

The Mass Ave/Melnea Cass area of Boston



- **Boston has been hit particularly hard** by the opioid epidemic – in the last five years over 723 people have died from opioids overdose.
- **Boston is a service hub for New England**, with a wide array of recovery services and over 80 licensed treatment programs
- The Mass Ave/Melnea Cass area is challenged by large on-street populations of people struggling with substance use, homelessness, mental health issues, at increased risk for HIV, HEP C, exposure to interpersonal violence, poverty and economic stressors.
- In 2018 22.18% of all Narcotic Related Incidents in Boston occurred within 1/2 mile of Mass Ave/Melnea Cass area.
- Over 90% of individuals served by BPHC treatment programs report MH diagnosis and 65% are homeless.





Engagement Center

