MENTAL HEALTH BY THE NUMBERS: SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN FLORIDA
According to DSM-5, a substance use disorder ranges from mild to severe and patients must have two or more symptoms over a 12 month period for:

- Cravings to use the substance
- Increased tolerance
- Inability to fulfill daily responsibilities
- Extra time to obtain, use and recover from the substance
- Using despite knowing its harmful effects
- Using in high-risk settings (like driving)
- Failed attempts at quitting
- Withdrawal symptoms

Symptoms can include:

- Opioids
- Alcohol
- Cannabis
- Amphetamines
- Cocaine
- Sedatives
- Hallucinogens
- PCP
- Inhalants
- Other Stimulants

Source: LA County Public Health; Azmi R. Jahan; Doug M. Burgess, National Library of Medicine
From 2016 to 2020, the highest fatal drug overdose rates were recorded in Palm Beach County while the lowest occurred in Miami-Dade. Rates in all areas increased from 2016 to 2017 and fell in 2018, only to rise in 2019 and continue on a dramatic increase in 2020.

Fatal Drug Overdose Rate per 100,000 Population: 2016-2020

Opioids account for the vast majority of overdose deaths in all counties (at least 70%). In fact, in Palm Beach the county with the highest rate and second highest total overdose deaths, they account for 92.6% of all overdose deaths.
Opioid Use

Opioid prescriptions decreased in South Florida from 2016 to 2017 but then increased sharply in 2018. Since then prescriptions have steadily declined.

Opioids still account for 6 in 10 non-fatal overdose emergency room visits in South Florida and Florida.

Source: Florida Department of Health, Florida Health Charts Substance Use Dashboard
At least 15% of adults in Florida and South Florida engage in Binge Or Heavy drinking with counties displaying similar levels of heavy drinking.

Deaths from alcohol liver disease fluctuated from 2010 to 2020. The highest rates occurred in 2020 for Miami-Dade and Florida while the highest rates in Broward and Palm Beach occurred in 2016 and 2015 respectively.

Sources: Florida Department of Health, Florida Health Charts Substance Use Dashboard