

May 11, 2021

Death investigations may require weeks or months to complete; while investigations are being conducted, deaths may be assigned a pending status on the death certificate. Pending causes of death may be for the results of toxicology or further investigation.

Regarding toxicology, the substances tested for, the circumstances under which the tests are performed, and how information is reported on death certificates may also vary. Drug overdose deaths that lack information about the specific drugs may have involved opioids. Even after a death is ruled as caused by a drug overdose, information on the specific drug might not be subsequently added to the certificate. Therefore, fatal drug overdoses involving opioids may be underestimated from lack of drug specificity.

Please note: Overdose deaths may include overdose deaths due to pharmaceutically and illicitly produced, naturally-occurring, semi-synthetic, and synthetic drugs.

### **Tompkins County Medical Examiner Drug Related Death Data**

2007 – 2  
2008 – 8  
2009 – 4  
2010 – 6  
2011 – 15  
2012 – 14  
2013 – 10  
2014 – 15  
2015 – 14  
2016 – 21  
2017 – 22  
2018 – 18  
2019 – 17  
2020 – 19

In response to the growing opioid public health crisis and recommendations to improve the timeliness of reporting opioid-related data, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) Opioid Prevention Program provides opioid-related data on the following website: <https://health.ny.gov/statistics/opioid/>