

Rank FALLS from second highest to 17th

SANTA FE — New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez and the New Mexico Department of Health report that for the third consecutive year, the state’s drug-overdose death rank among states has improved.

Based on a recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, New Mexico’s national ranking has improved from the second highest death drug overdose death rate in the United States in 2014 to 17th highest in 2017, the most current available data nationwide.

This is the first time New Mexico has ranked outside the top 15 rankings since the CDC started reporting drug overdose death data in 1999. This comes as drug overdose death rates saw a sharp 9.6-percent increase nationwide in 2017.

“It is clear that policy changes we’ve made over the last eight years in New Mexico have made significant impacts,” Martinez said. “We’ve been on the cutting edge of this fight and it’s my hope that New Mexico will continue to play a key role in addressing this national epidemic in the years to come.”

Martinez has made drug overdose prevention a priority of her administration and has implemented comprehensive solutions to fight drug abuse in New Mexico.

Under Martinez, New Mexico became the first state to require all local and state law enforcement agencies to provide officers with naloxone, a medication that reverses opioid overdoses.

New Mexico also strengthened Prescription Monitoring Program laws to require health care providers to check the database when prescribing opioids, leading to fewer opportunities for someone addicted to opioids to go from doctor to doctor for drugs.

Over the past year alone, patients receiving high dose opioid prescriptions decreased by 17 percent over the past year.

NMDOH previously reported a 4 percent decline in death rates in 2017 due to overdose of commonly prescribed opioids such as oxycodone compared to 2016.

In addition, deaths due to heroin decreased by 9 percent and deaths due to synthetic opioids such as fentanyl decreased by 6 percent over the same time period.

Martinez also signed legislation that allows both pharmacists and law enforcement to dispense naloxone without a prescription.

Both efforts expanded access to the life-saving drug. Earlier this year, the National Safety Council reported that New Mexico is one of only two states that has implemented all six key actions recommended to reduce prescription painkiller deaths.

There is still more work to be done as drug overdose deaths remain the leading cause of injury death in New Mexico. Nearly half of all overdose deaths in New Mexico resulted from prescription opioids, which are medicine used for pain such as morphine, hydrocodone, and oxycodone.

Everyone in New Mexico can play a role in reducing drug overdose deaths, the New Mexico Department of Health recommends:

Anyone using opioids and their friends and family should be prepared with naloxone. Again, naloxone reverses an opioid overdose and is available at most pharmacies across the state without a prescription.

All prescribers should check the Prescription Monitoring Program before writing a prescription for a controlled substance such as an opioid or a benzodiazepine. The PMP can help health care providers ensure that their patients are not receiving dangerous amounts or combinations of these drugs.

Prescribers should become trained to prescribe medication assisted treatment(including using drugs such as buprenorphine and methadone) and incorporate MAT into their practice.

Additionally, NMDOH provides information on prescription opioid safety , New Mexico substance abuse data and statistics , and information about our Harm Reduction Program .

The nationwide CDC overdose death data can be found at www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db329.htm .

Staff Reports