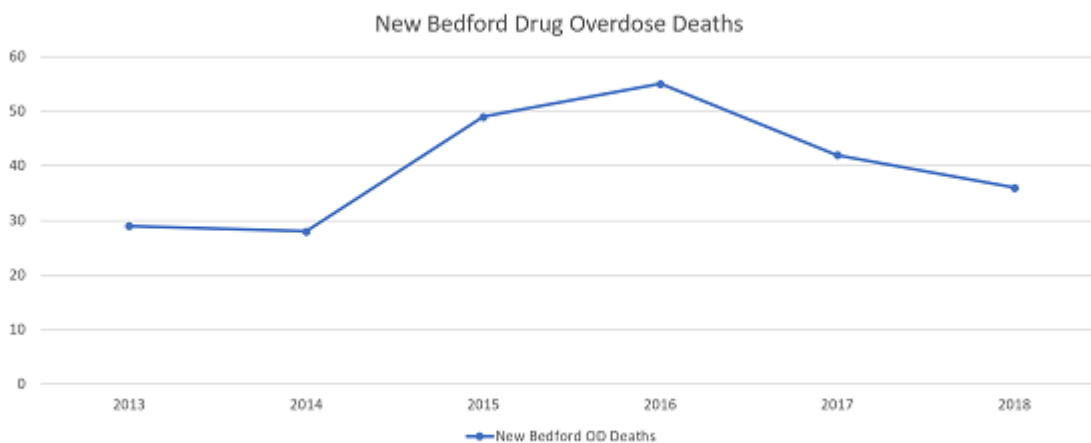


New Bedford sees 15% decrease in overdose deaths in 2018

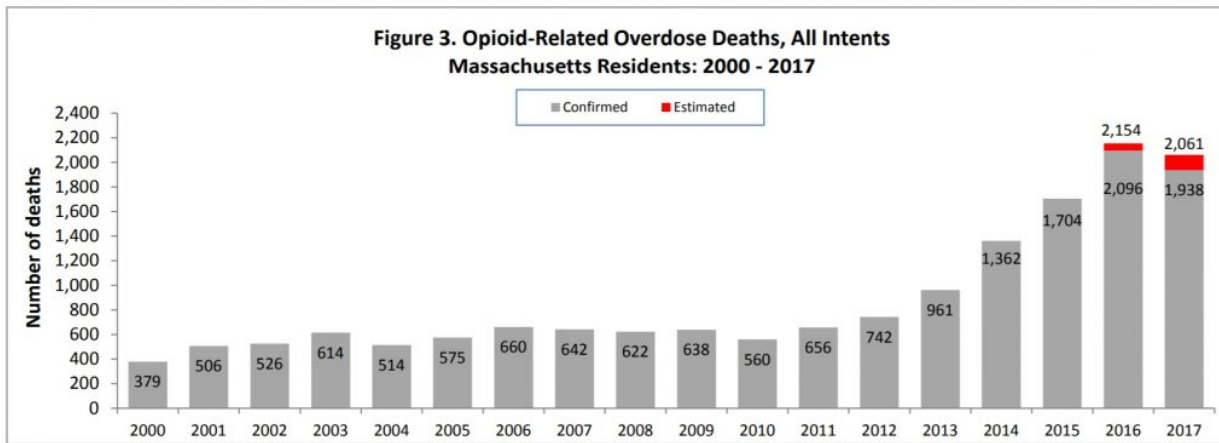
Of the 563 drug overdoses that New Bedford police responded to in 2018, 36 were fatal compared to 42 in 2017 – a 15% decrease. The decrease in the total number of fatal overdoses can likely be attributed to the widespread use of Narcan – the life-saving drug that has a high rate of success in saving overdosing persons.

Overdose deaths in New Bedford have now declined for two straight years from the high of 55 in 2016.



According to New Bedford police data, they responded to 563 total drug overdoses in 2018, up from 553 in 2017 – a 1.8% increase year over year. **New Bedford Fire Department records** show that firefighters responded to 602 overdoses in New Bedford in 2018, up from 548 in 2017 – a 10% increase year over year. Firefighters responded to **698 overdoses in 2016**.

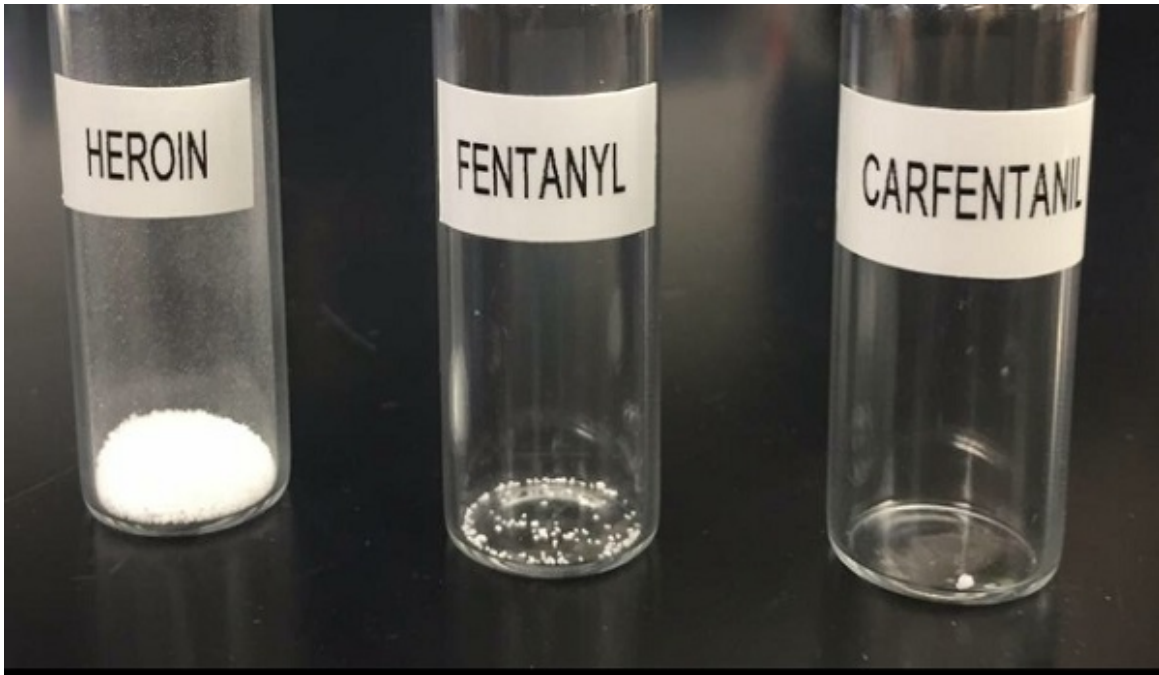
Here's the data for drug overdoses in Massachusetts per the **Massachusetts Department of Health's records on fatal overdoses (2012-2016)** and the New Bedford Police Department records (2017 and 2018). **Massachusetts has seen an overall decrease for 2016 and 2017:**



“The efforts of our Greater New Bedford Opioid Task Force to reach out to those in need, along with the Police Department’s work in apprehending dealers, are paying off. But the work is far from over, and with the proliferation of fentanyl, it is in some ways becoming more difficult,” said Mayor Jon Mitchell. “No matter what, we are committed to the work of saving the lives of those affected by addiction.”

The rise of Fentanyl mixed into heroin and now cocaine caused the increase in overdoses in New Bedford and Massachusetts. Fentanyl was found in 75 percent of the 1,374 opioid deaths in Massachusetts in 2016 and **carfentanil, a drug 10,000 times more potent than morphine and used on elephants, found its way into Massachusetts** a few years ago. Carfentanil is approximately 100 times more potent than Fentanyl, which can be lethal in the 2-milligram range. These two drugs are likely to be the main cause of most drug overdoses going forward and even causing overdoses in first-responders.

Here’s a look at a fatal amount of each drug:



This image shows the lethal (deadly) amount of each drug shown

Have overdoses peaked in New Bedford and Massachusetts? Let's hope so.