



# Drug Trends in Iowa

## Evolving Health, Safety & Response Issues

Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy

June 2021

*Vision: Safe & healthy Iowans.*

*Mission: To coordinate substance use related criminal justice resourcing & policy development.*

# Changes & Emerging Challenges: Overview

## PRODUCTS (DEA labs identified 1 new substance about every 3 weeks in 2020)

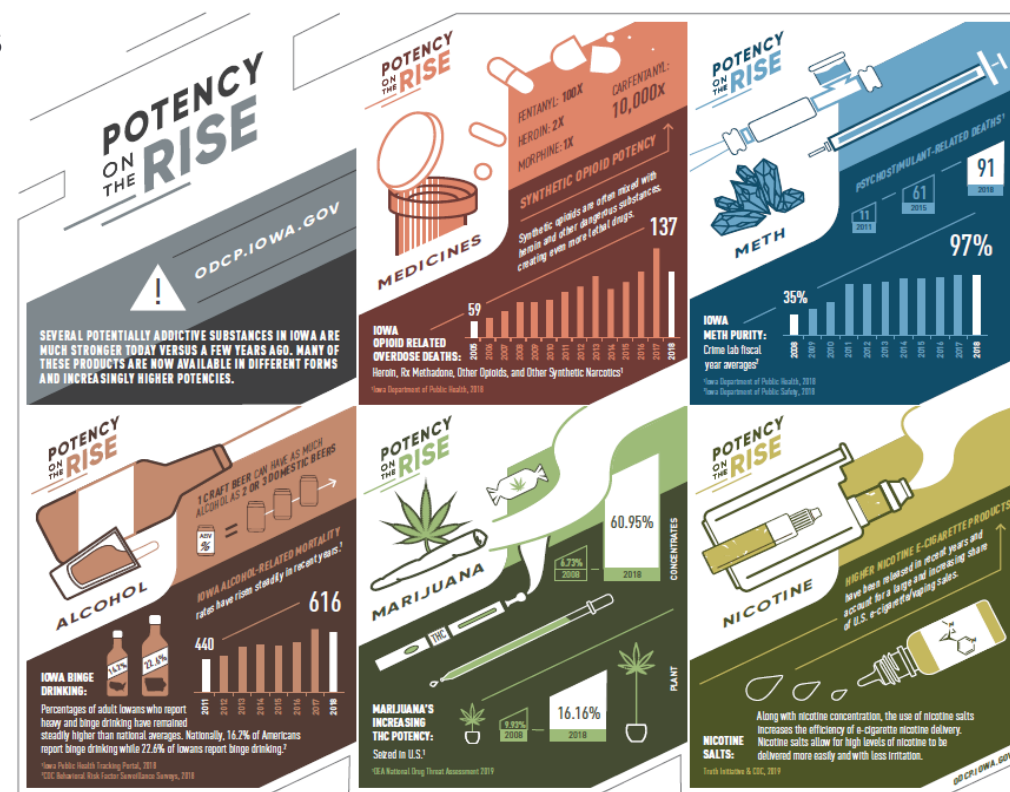
- Delivery/Consumption Systems: Vaping (Nicotine, THC, Heroin, etc.), smoking, oral ingestion, IV
- Forms: THC & CBD oils, waxes, edibles (+ delta-8/10 THC, CBG, etc.); Smokable hemp; & Synthetics
- Mixtures: Heroin + Fentanyl, Meth, Marijuana; Cocktails
- Distribution: Mail & Shipping Services

## POTENCY

- Alcohol: Concentrations (craft beers)
- Nicotine: Levels (vaping pods)
- THC: Flower + Concentrations (oils, waxes, edibles)
- Meth: Purities (nearly 100% “ice”)
- Fentanyl (illicit), et al.: Extremely lethal

## POLICY

- Laws (vary by state): Medical & legal marijuana (THC &/or CBD); Hemp; delta-8 THC, et al.; Psychedelic Mushrooms (psilocybin) & Ecstasy (MDMA); Opioids; Kratom; Smoking & Vaping...



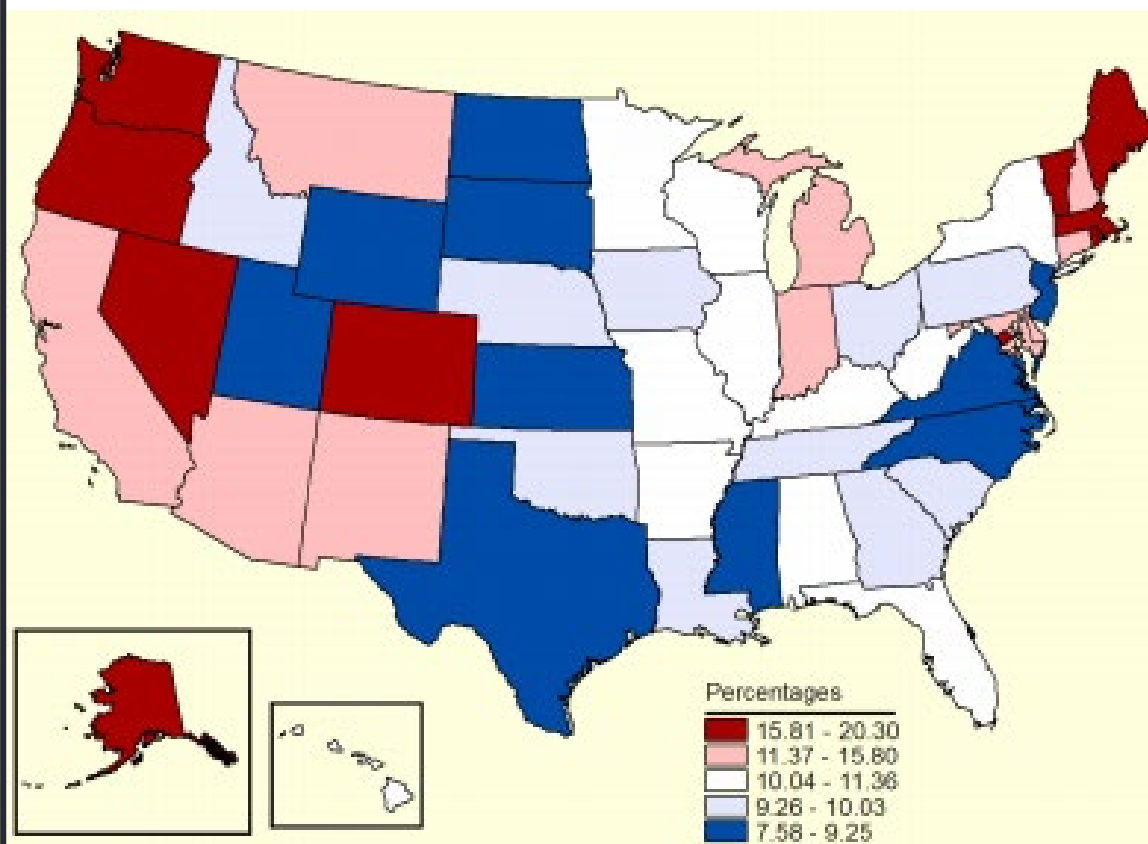
# Snapshot of U.S. Drug Use, by States

## Map: Rates of 12+ Current (Past Month) Illicit Drug Use

### Iowa ranks:

- 45<sup>th</sup> in current illicit drug use**  
(9.17% vs. 12.34% US)
- 48<sup>th</sup> in current marijuana use**  
(6.70% vs. 10.80% US)
- 44<sup>th</sup> in current cocaine use**  
(1.45% vs. 2.00% US)
- 39<sup>th</sup> in heroin use (yearly)**  
(0.25% vs. 0.28% US)
- 48<sup>th</sup> in the *rate* of drug OD deaths**  
(9.6 vs. 20.7 US per 100,000)
- 5<sup>th</sup> in pain reliever misuse (yearly)**  
(4.14% vs. 3.58% US)
- 15<sup>th</sup> in current tobacco use**  
(25.16% vs. 21.28% US)
- 8<sup>th</sup> in current binge drinking**  
(27.92% vs. 24.21% US)
- 13<sup>th</sup> in meth use (yearly)**  
(1.11% vs. 0.70% US)

National Survey Drug Use & Health, 2018-2019; CDC, 2018

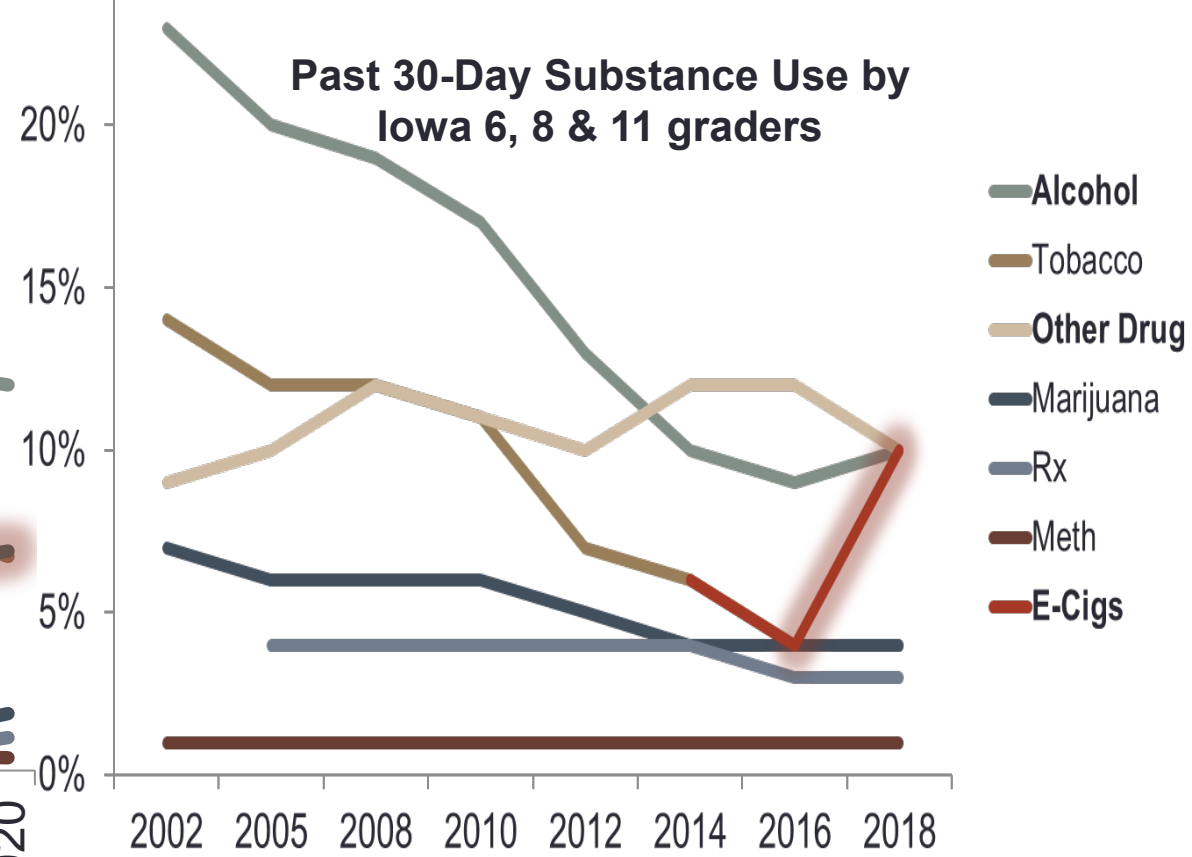
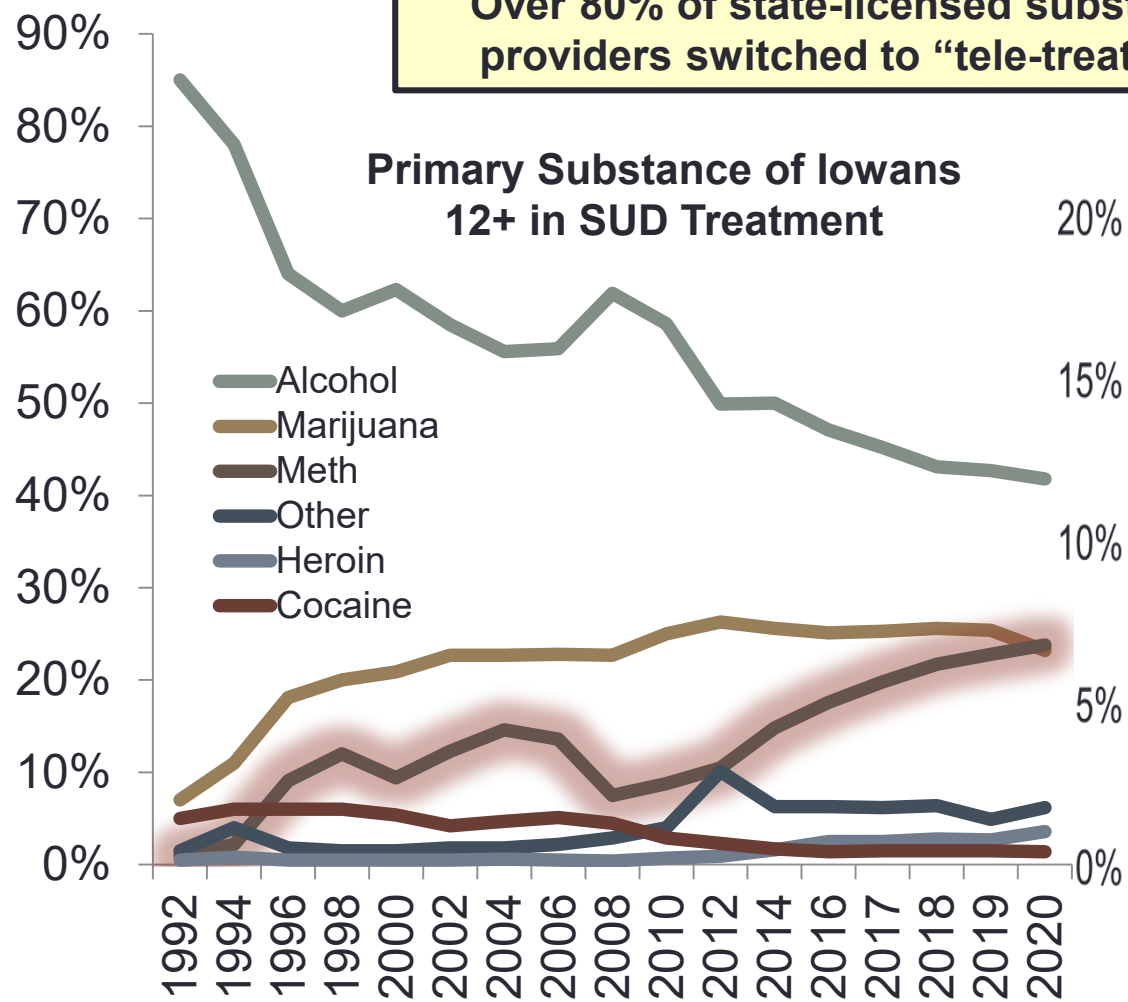


National Survey on Drug Use & Health, 2017/2018

# Trends in Iowans' Substance Use

## Substance Use Disorder Treatment Admissions & Iowa Youth Survey

Over 80% of state-licensed substance use disorder treatment providers switched to "tele-treatment" during the pandemic.

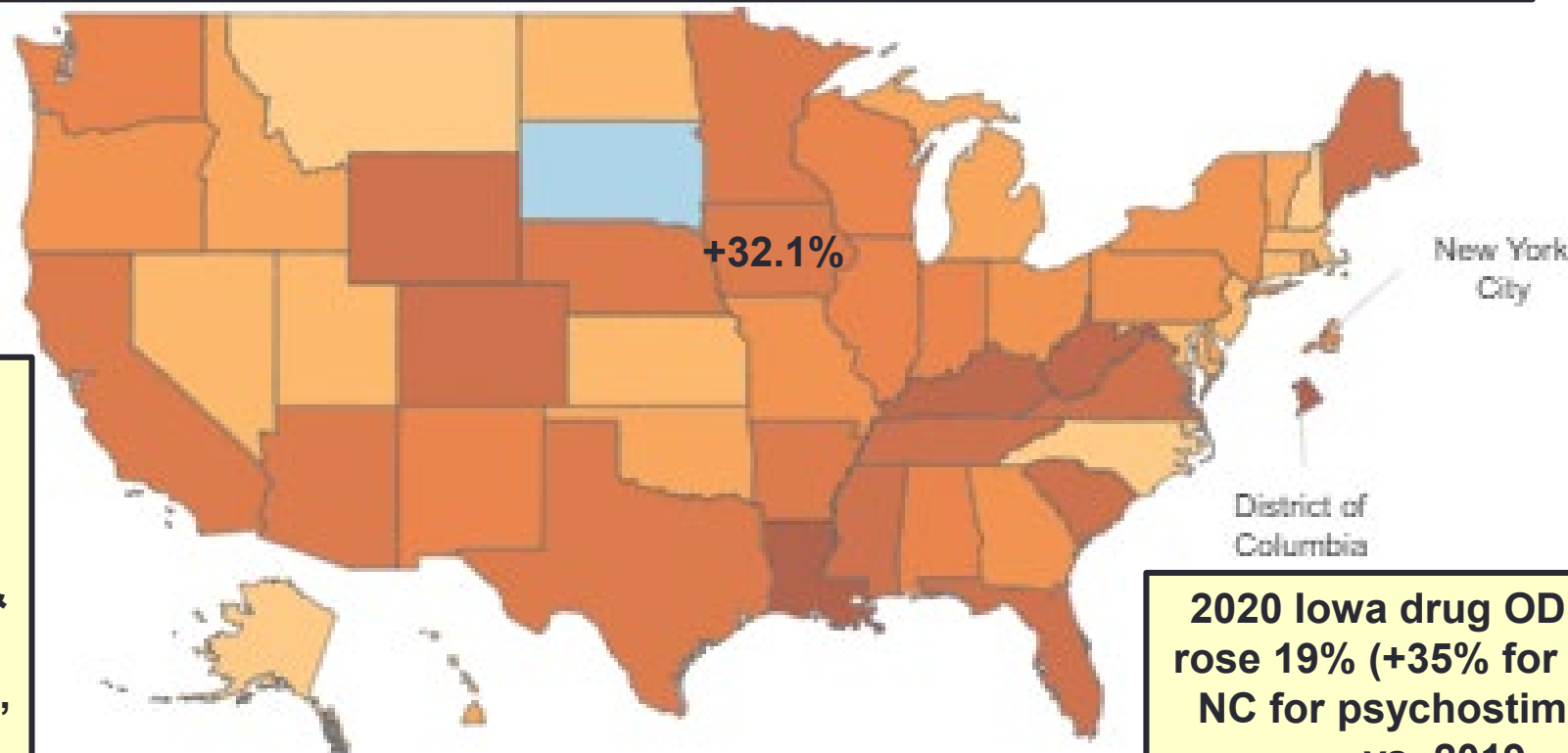


45% of referrals via justice system vs. 52% years ago.

# Change in Drug OD Deaths, by States

Percent Change September 2019 to September 2020 (U.S. +26.8%)

Iowa has one of the lowest *overall rates* of drug OD deaths (48th in 2018) in the U.S., but one of the highest *rates of increase* of drug OD deaths (4th in 2019-2020).



In 2019, U.S. drug OD deaths reversed a 2018 decline & increased 4.6% to 70,980, or over 194 lives per day.

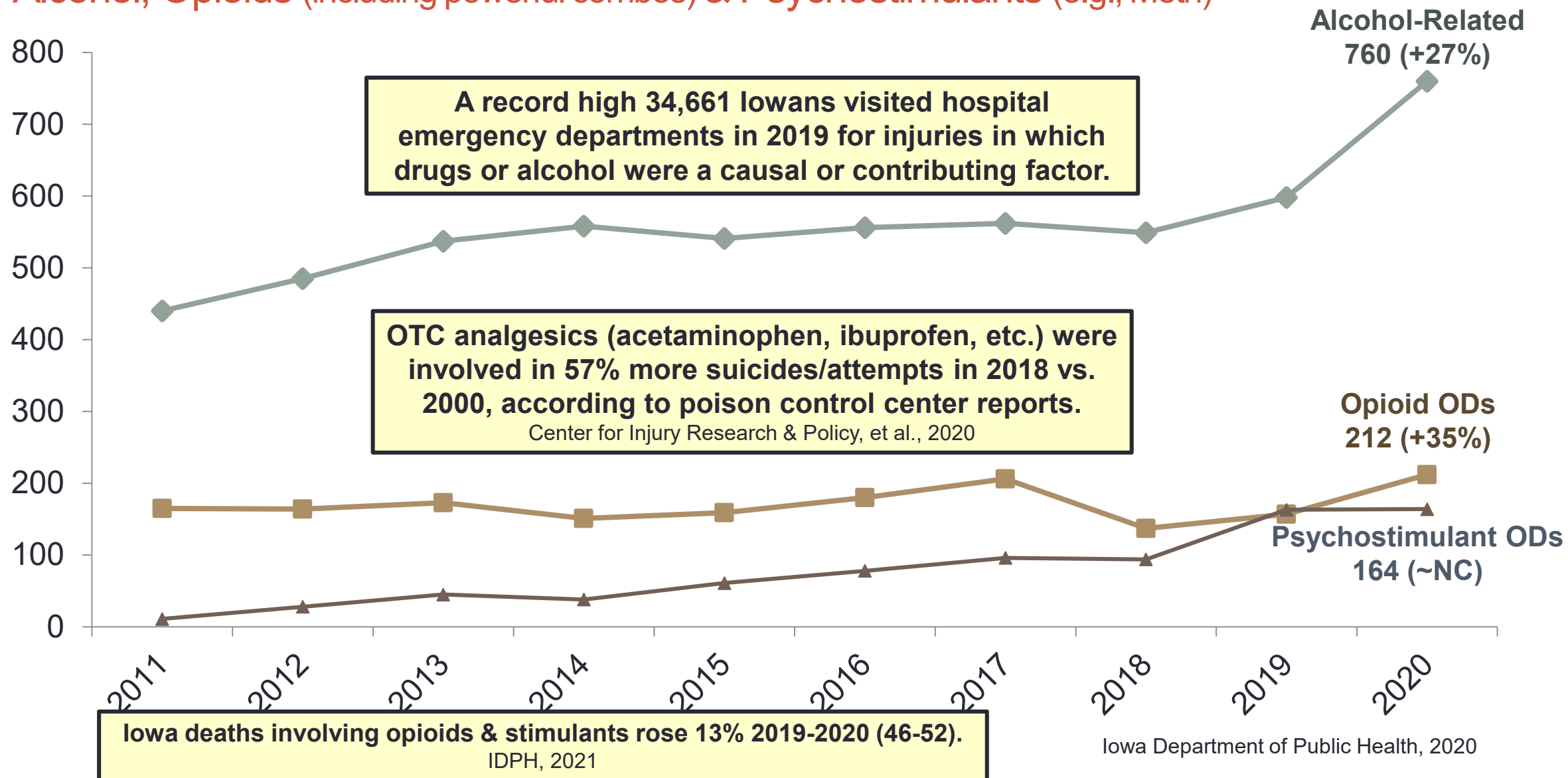
2020 Iowa drug OD deaths rose 19% (+35% for opioids, NC for psychostimulants) vs. 2019. IDPH, 2021

Legend for Percent Change in Drug Overdose Deaths Between 12-Month Ending Periods



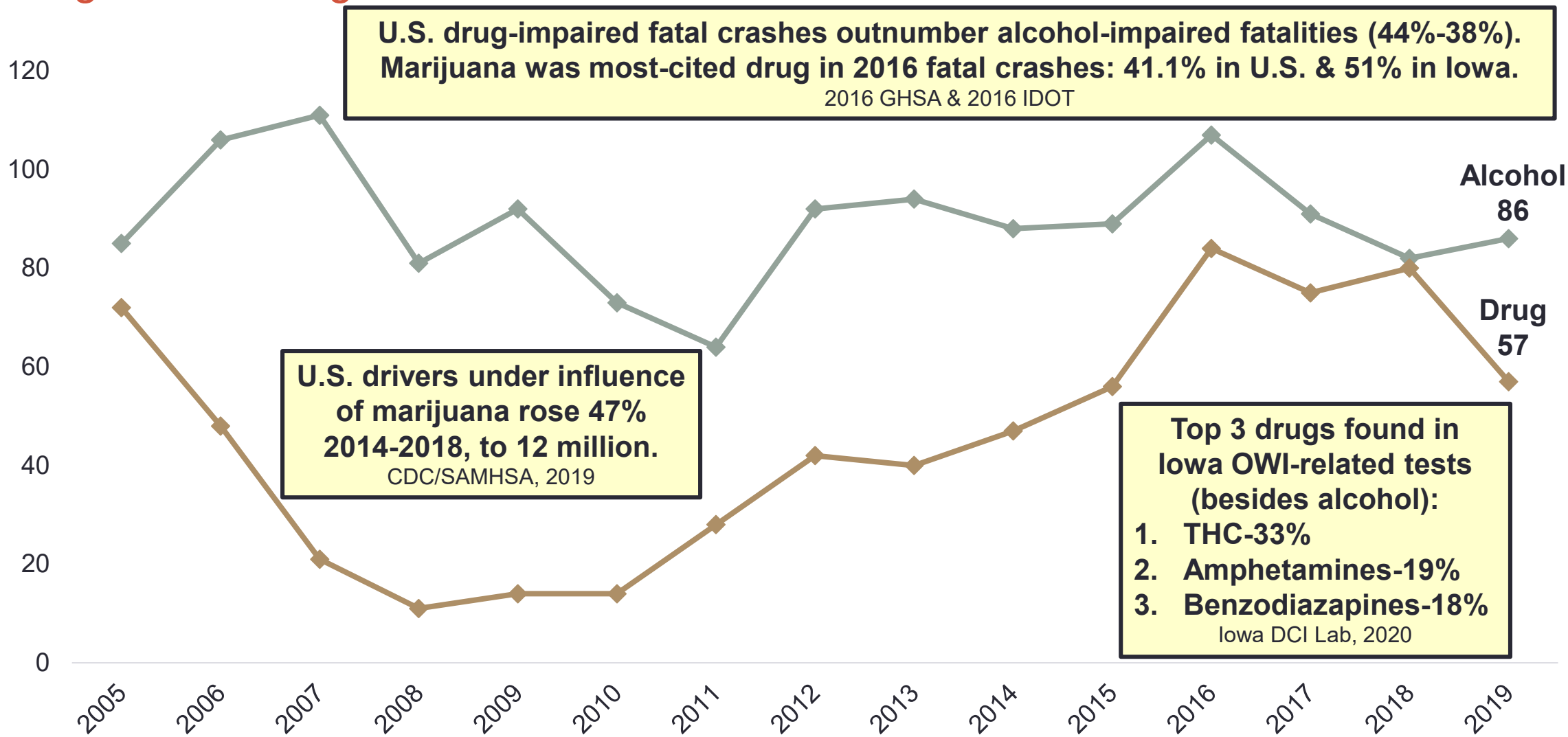
# Substance-Involved Deaths in Iowa

Alcohol, Opioids (including powerful combos) & Psychostimulants (e.g., Meth)



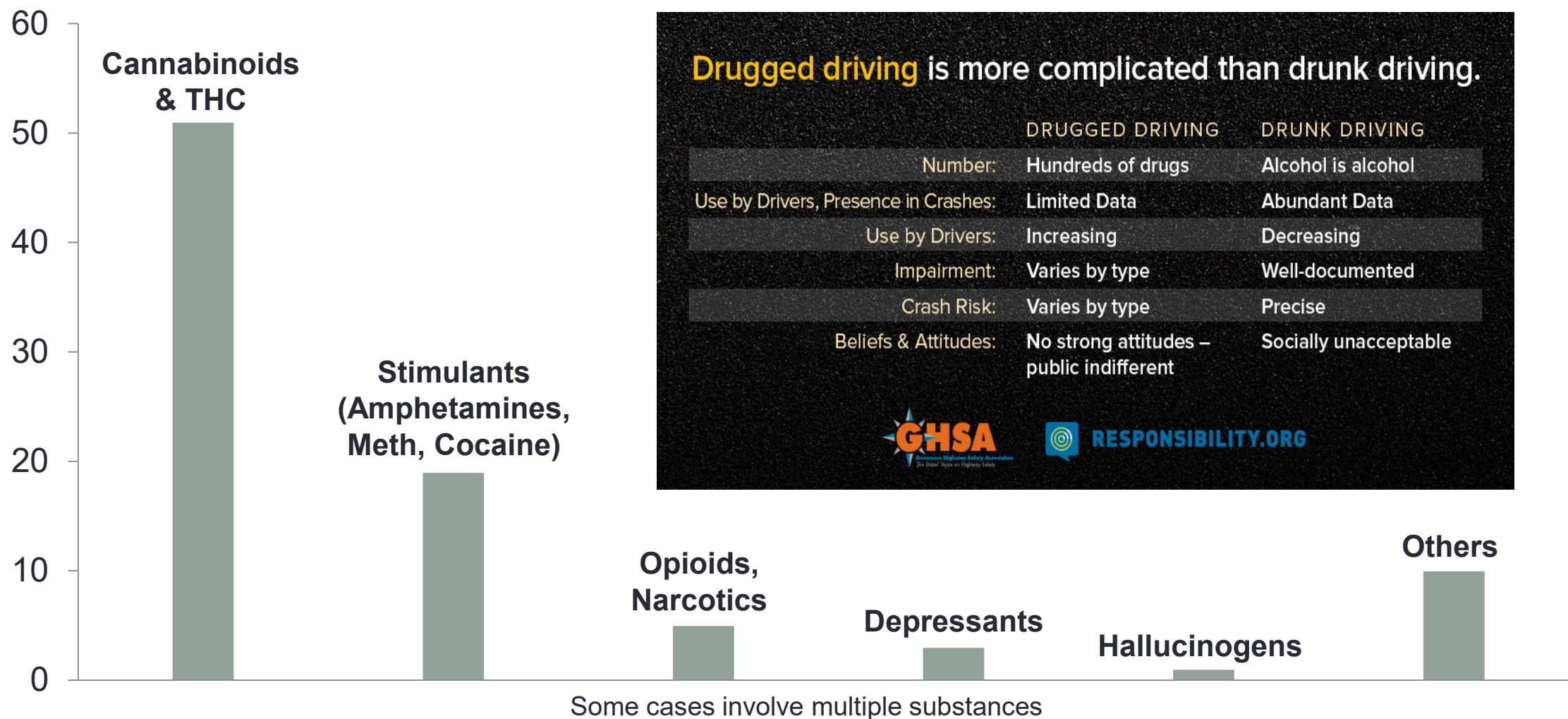
# Iowa \*Drug-Related Traffic Fatalities

## Drug & Mixed Drug/Alcohol-Related Traffic Deaths



# Iowa Drug-Related Traffic Fatalities

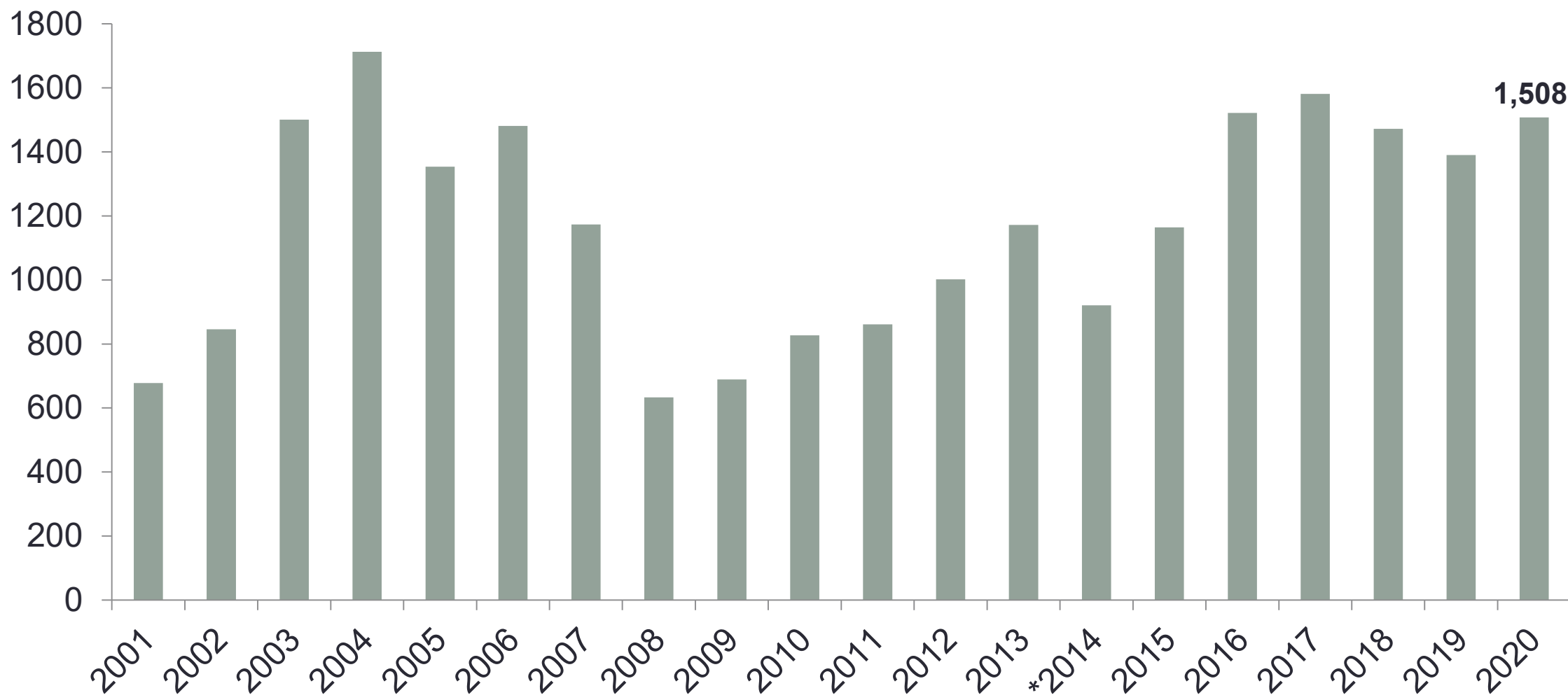
2018 by Drug Type (not including alcohol-only)





# Iowa Drug-Related Child Abuse

Confirmed/Founded Cases: Presence of Illegal Drugs in Child's System

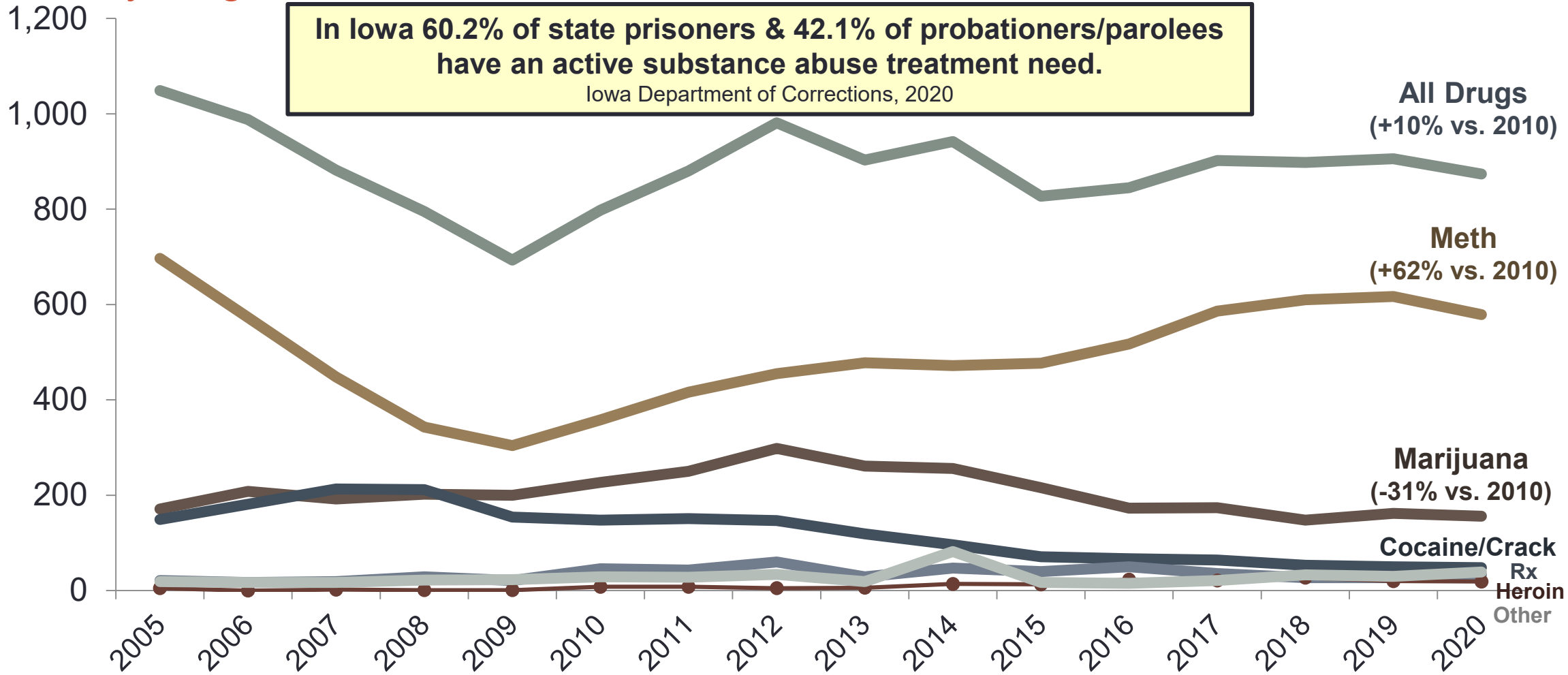


(Caution advised interpreting trends due to protocol changes in 2014 & 2017)

Iowa Department of Human Services, 2021

# Iowa “Drug-Related” Prison Admissions

## Primary Drug Involved



**58% of state prisoners & 63% of jail inmates used drugs vs. 5% of general population.**

USDOJ, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2017

Iowa Justice Data Warehouse, 2020

# Iowa's Workplace

Sample of Positive Drug Tests Reported 2018 vs. 2001 (% of Total)

The U.S. workforce drug positivity rate hit a 16 year high in 2019, with increases in the Midwest in cocaine, meth & marijuana.

**Meth:**  
Iowa 1.6% vs. US 1.1%

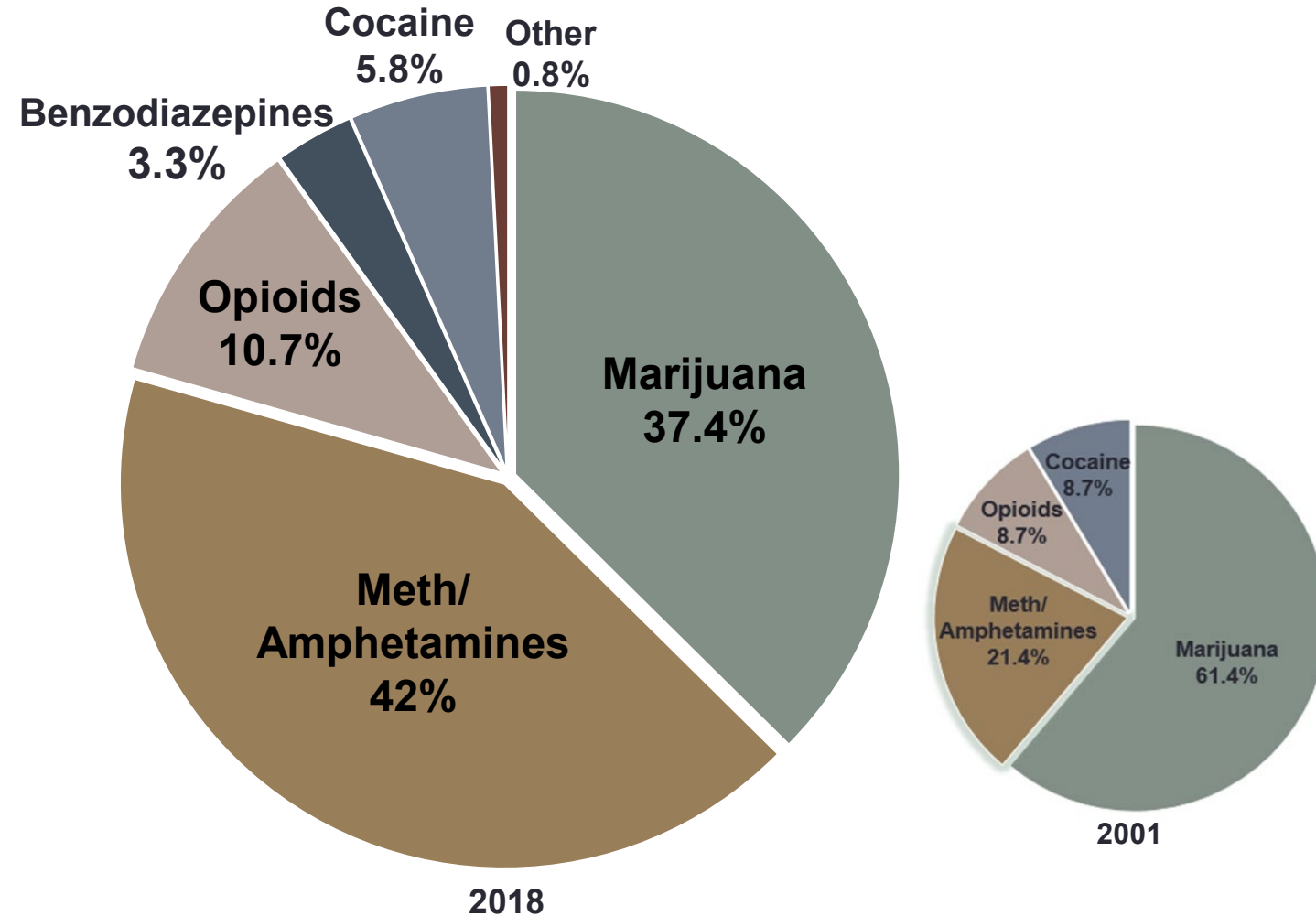
**Cocaine:**  
Iowa 0.16% vs. US 0.26%

**Marijuana:**  
Iowa 1.6% vs. US 2.5%

**Opiates:**  
Iowa 0.2% vs. US 0.22%

**Overall:**  
Iowa: 3.9% vs. US 4.5%

2020 Quest Diagnostics

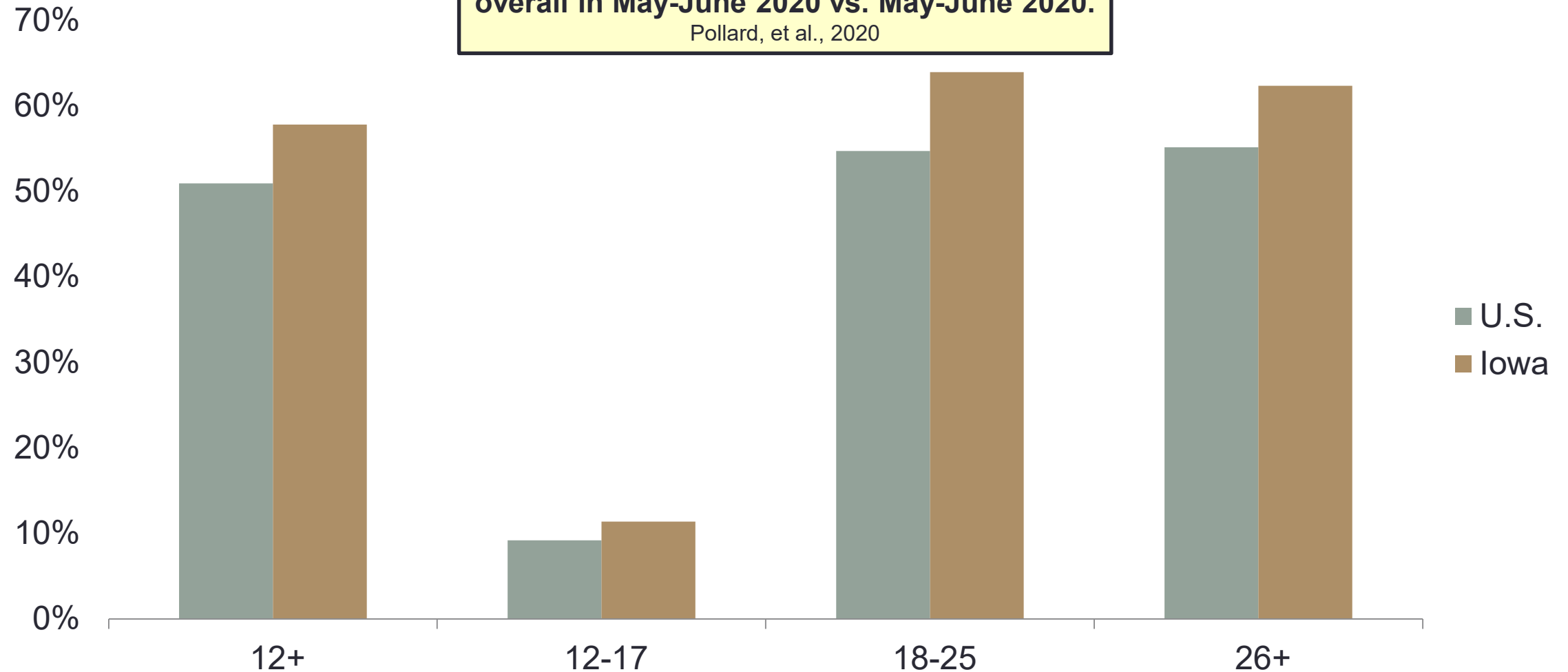


# Alcohol & Tobacco/Nicotine



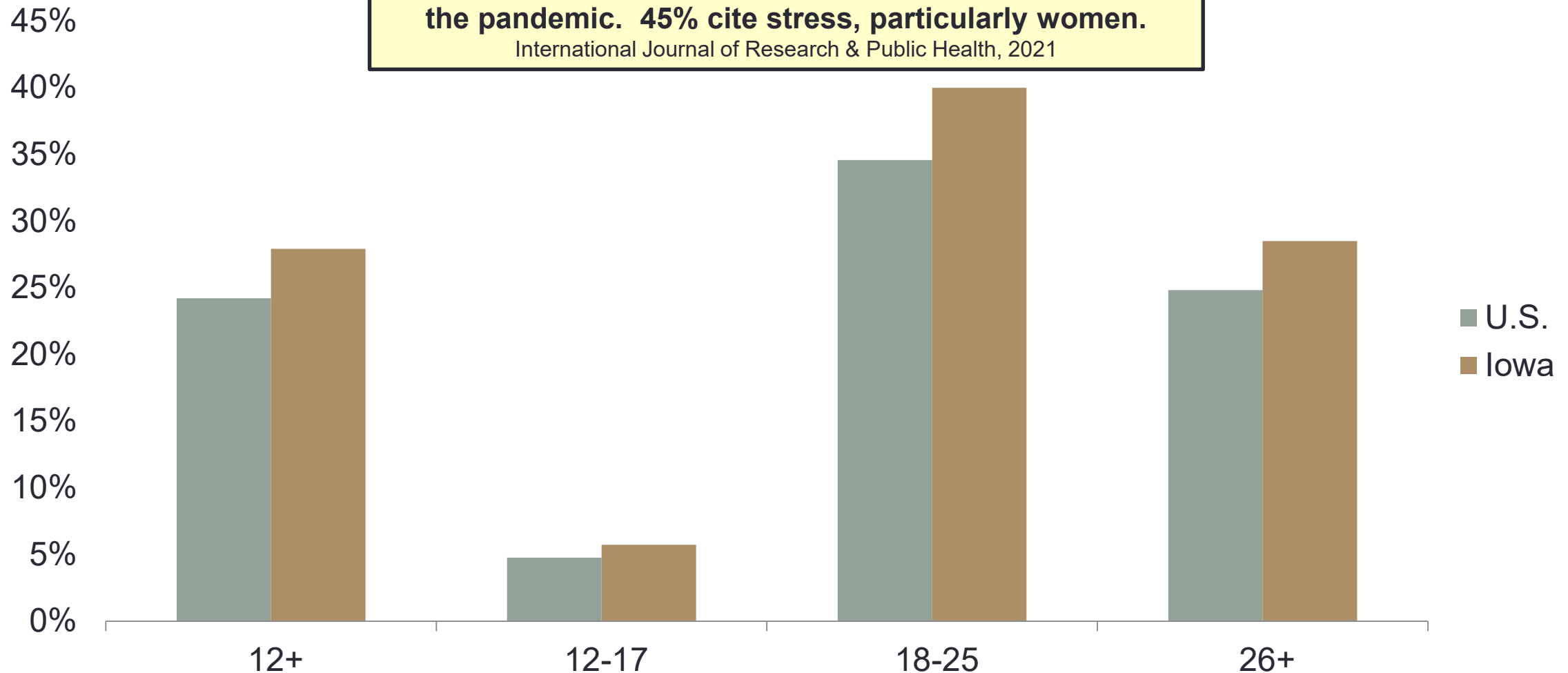
# Current Alcohol Use

Last 30-Days



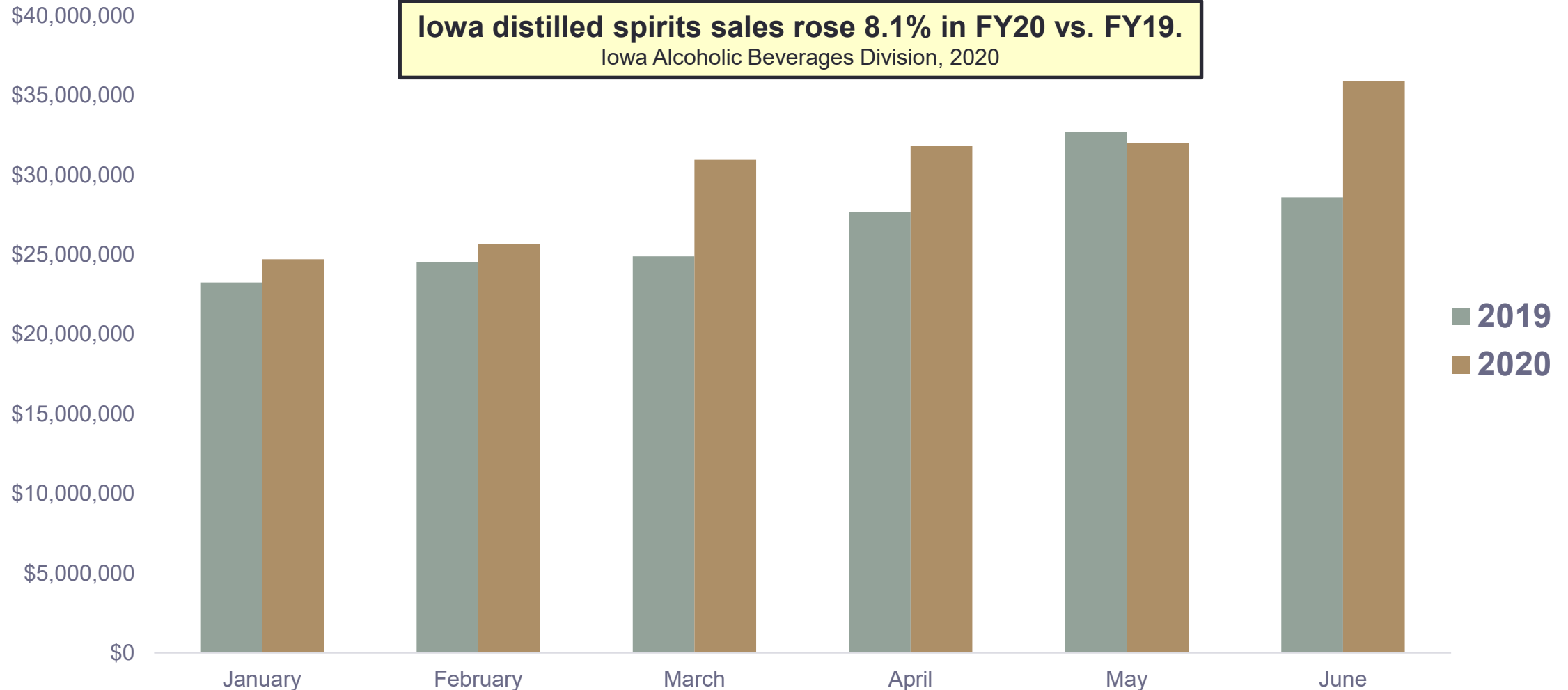
# Current Binge Drinking

Last 30-Days



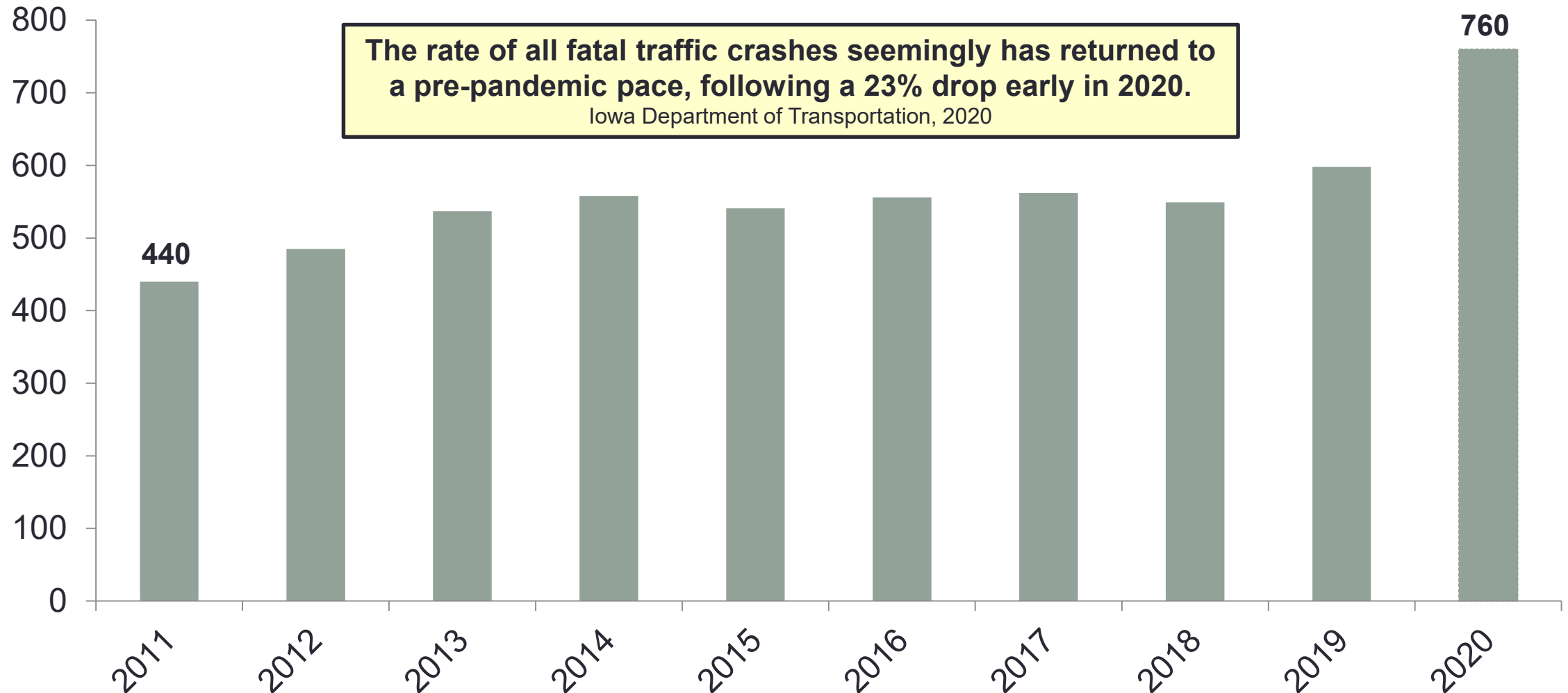
# Iowa Distilled Spirits Alcohol Sales

Up 8.1% FY 2020 vs. FY 2019



# Iowa Alcohol-Related Deaths

## As a Contributing Factor



**The rate of all fatal traffic crashes seemingly has returned to a pre-pandemic pace, following a 23% drop early in 2020.**

Iowa Department of Transportation, 2020

**Among those in U.S. who died violently, 41% had BAC & 28% had BAC of .08 or >.**

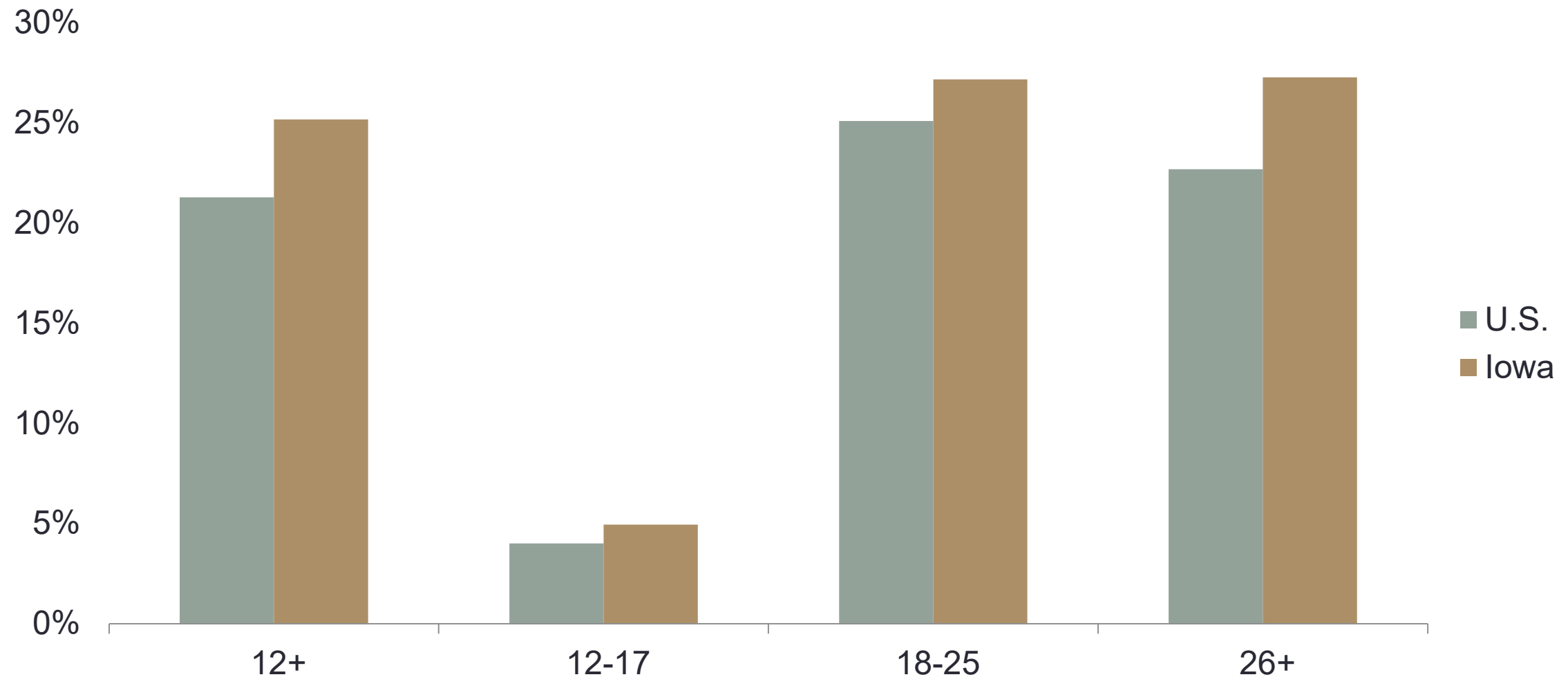
CSTE/CDC, 2021

Iowa Department of Public Health, 2021



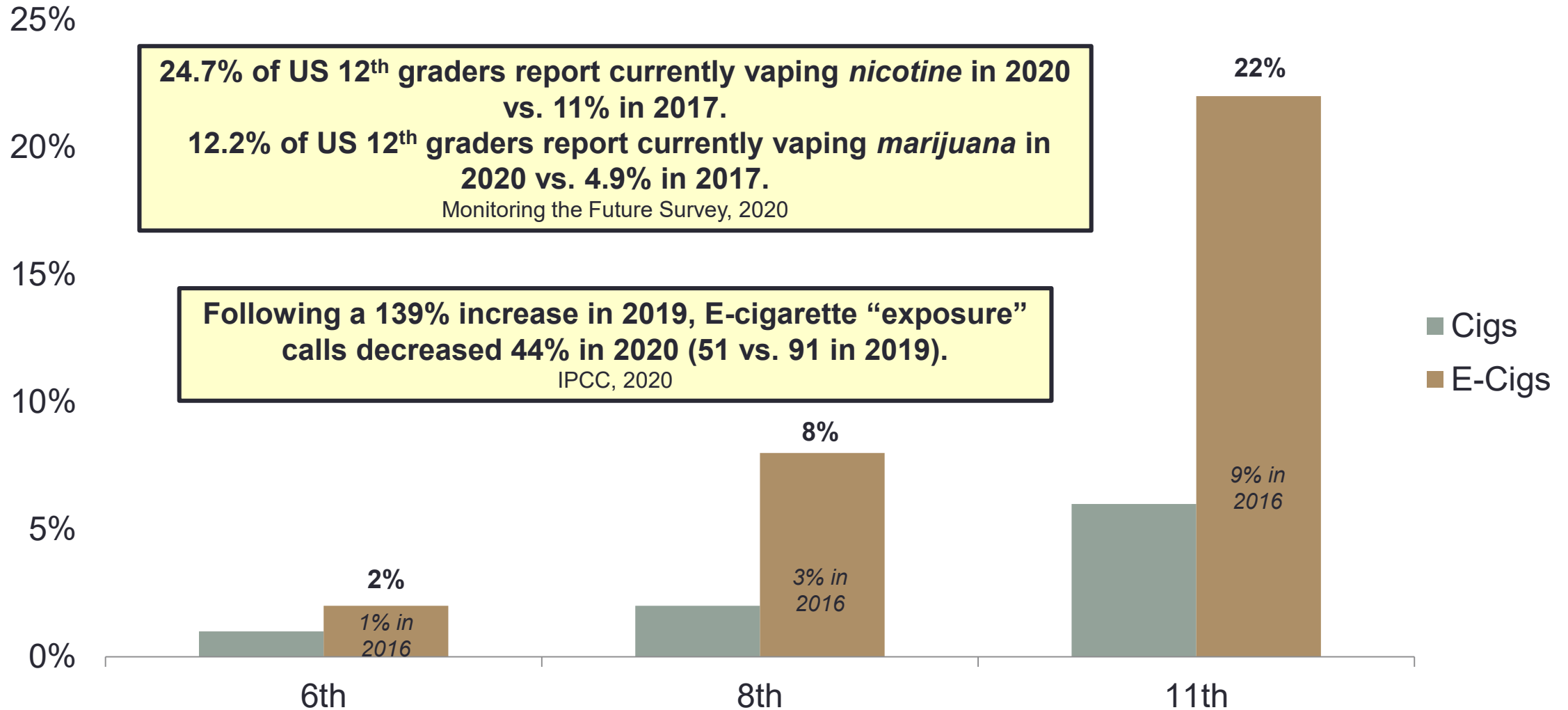
# Current Tobacco Product Use

Last 30-Days



# Iowa Youth Cigarette vs. E-Cigarette Use

## Last 30-Days





# Marijuana in Iowa

## Health & Public Safety Perspectives

*“Medical”*

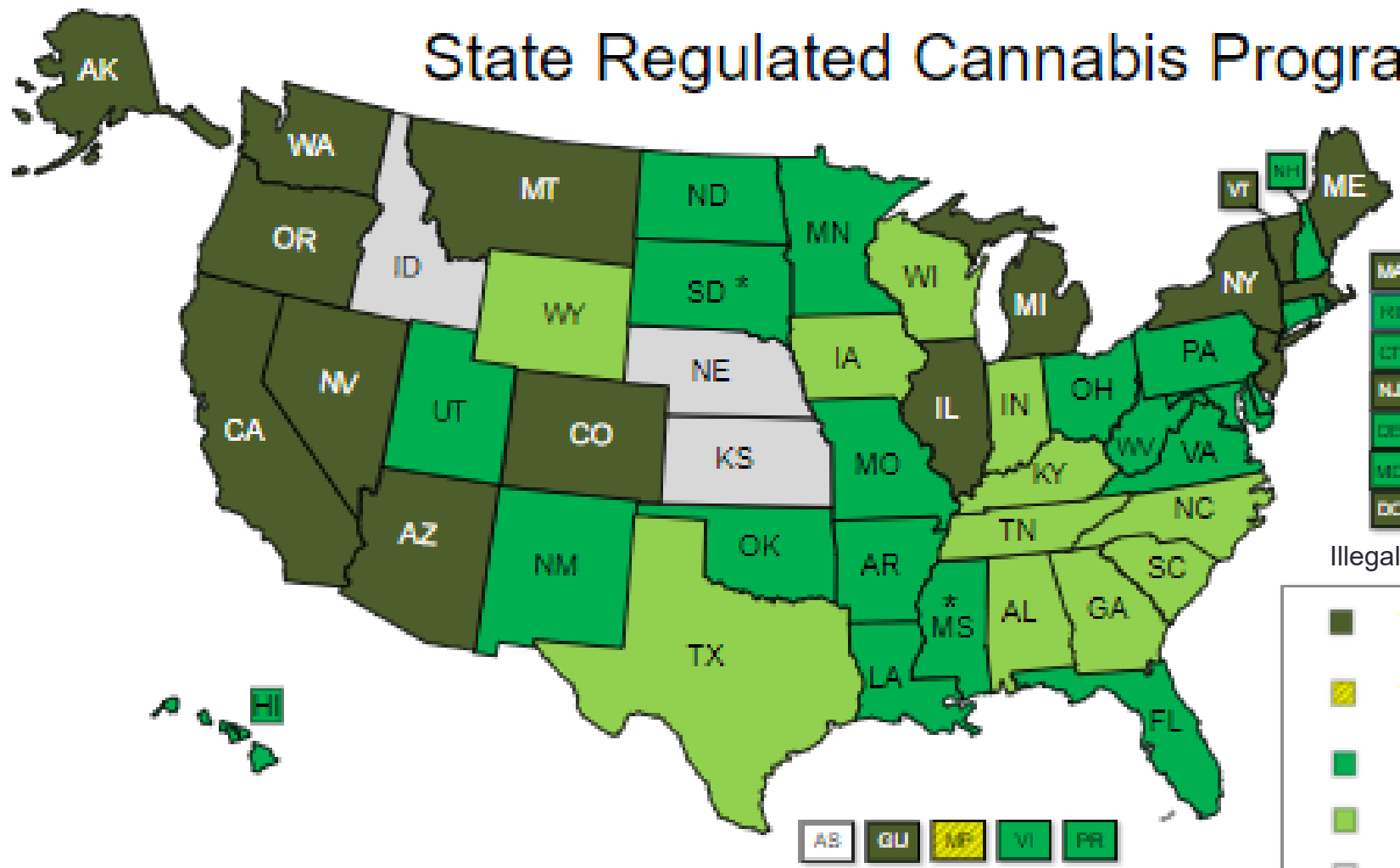
*“Extracts” “CBD & THC” “Concentrates”*

*“Cannabis” “Hemp”*

*“Recreational”*

# Marijuana Laws Across the U.S.

## State Regulated Cannabis Programs



**9 of 10 states with highest past month usage legalized or decriminalized marijuana.**  
 NCSL/NSDUH, 2019

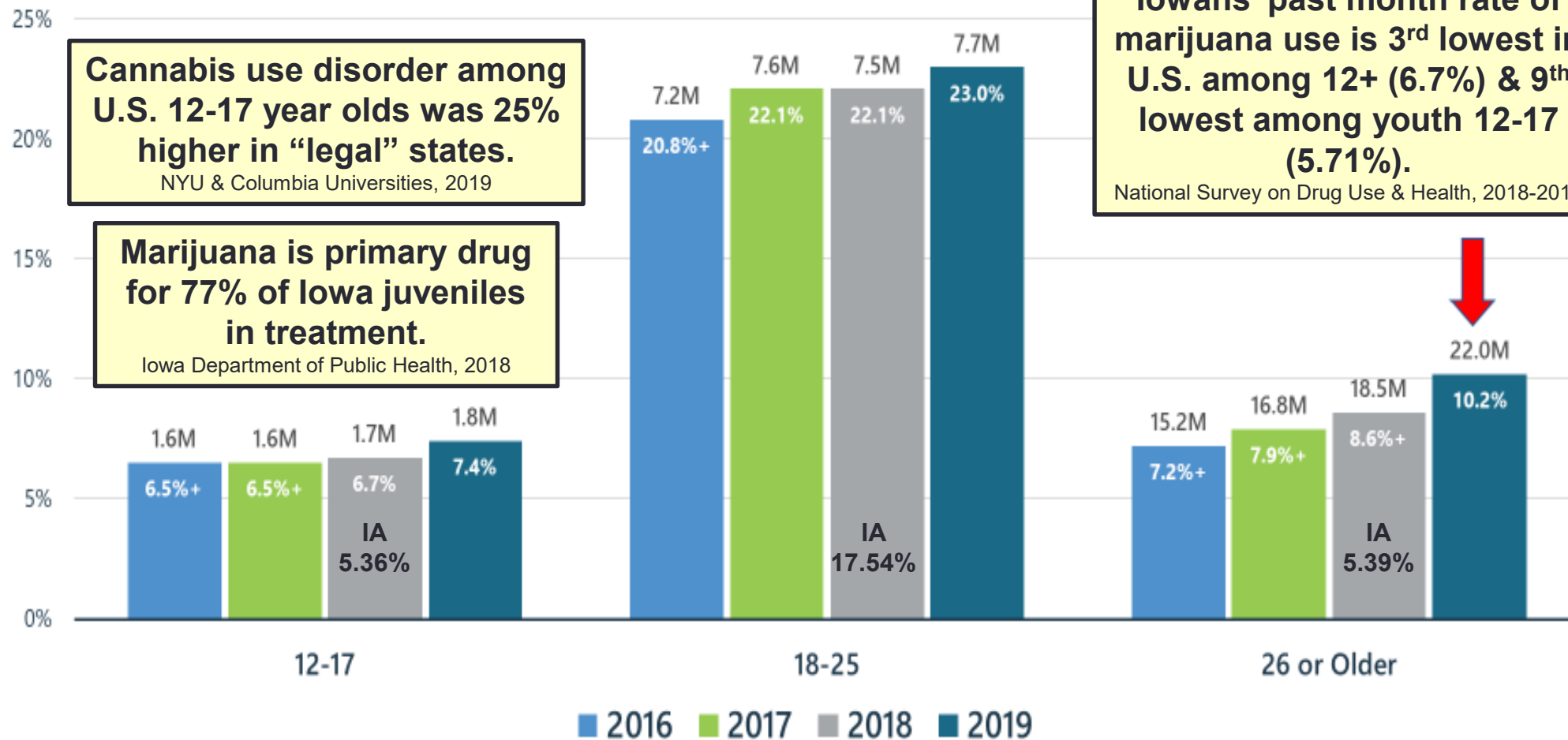
- Illegal per federal law (except hemp)
- Adult & medical use regulated program 15 (+SD & VA)?
  - Adult use only no medical regulated program 0
  - Comprehensive medical cannabis program 21 (MS)?
  - CBD/Low THC program 11 (IA)
  - No public cannabis access program 3

Limited adult possession and growing allowed, no regulated production or sales: DC

March 2021

# U.S. Marijuana Use

## Current Use (Past Month) by Age Group



**Cannabis use disorder among U.S. 12-17 year olds was 25% higher in “legal” states.**  
 NYU & Columbia Universities, 2019

**Marijuana is primary drug for 77% of Iowa juveniles in treatment.**  
 Iowa Department of Public Health, 2018

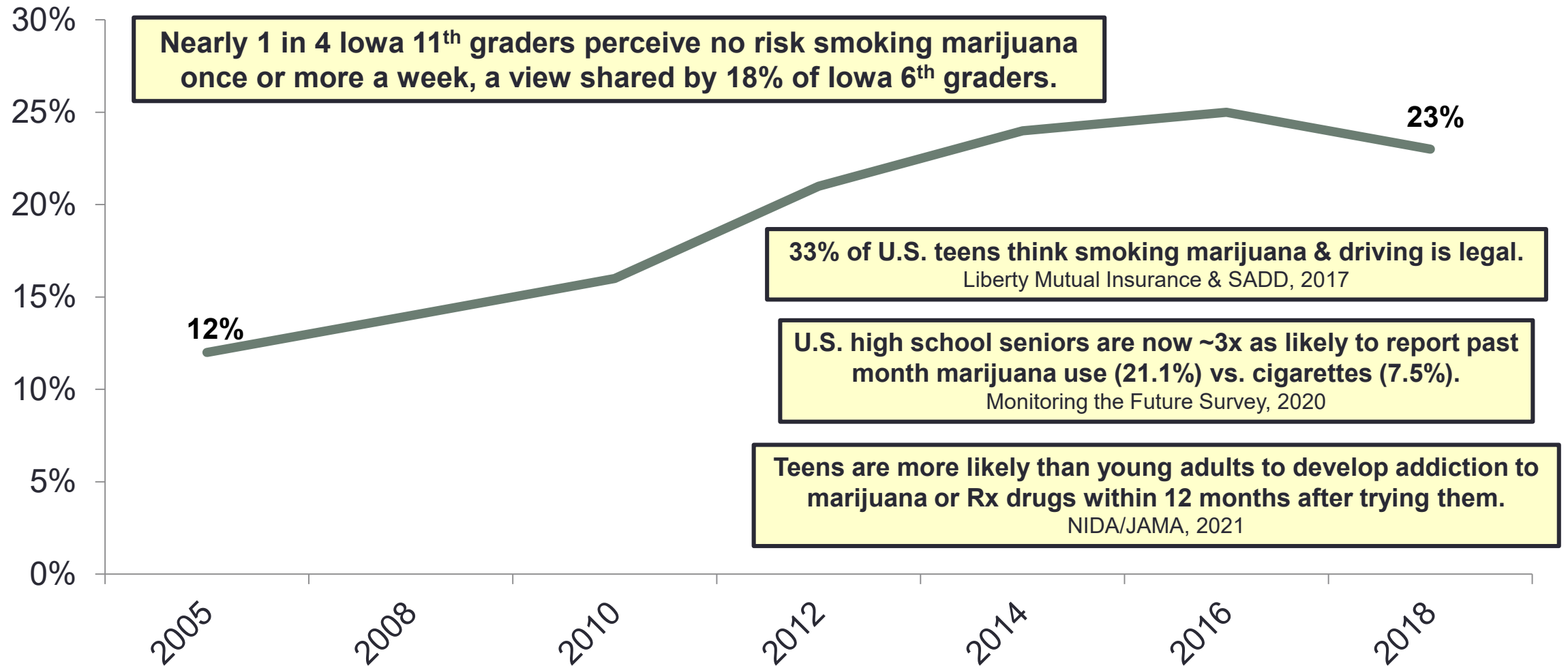
**Iowa's past month rate of marijuana use is 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest in U.S. among 12+ (6.7%) & 9<sup>th</sup> lowest among youth 12-17 (5.71%).**  
 National Survey on Drug Use & Health, 2018-2019

**Past month U.S. marijuana use in last 4 years grew 31%, with largest increase among adults, & 12-17 year old marijuana use disorders rose 20%.**  
 National Survey on Drug Use & Health, 2019

National Survey on Drug Use & Health, 2019

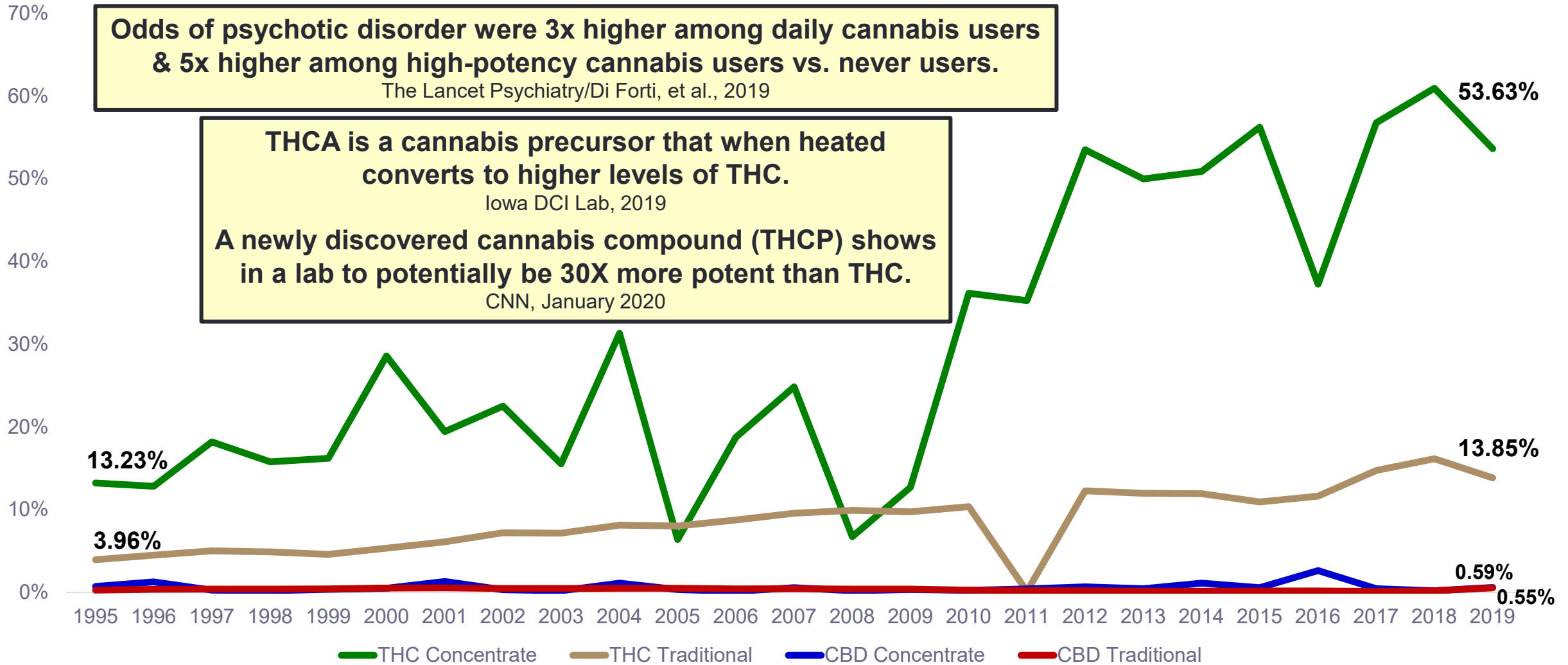
# Iowa Youth Attitudes about Marijuana

Lower Perceived Risk Coincides with Higher U.S. Rates of Use



# Marijuana's Increasing Potency

## Average THC & CBD Levels in U.S. Marijuana Samples



# Concentrates

Less is More...THC



"Green Crack" wax



"Ear Wax"



Butane Hash Oil (BHO)



Hash Oil Capsules

NOW AVAILABLE AT

**Peak**  
DISPENSARY

3RD & BROADWAY, DENVER  
720-390-7804 • PEAKMJ.COM

HUNDREDS OF EXTRACTS  
AND EDIBLES  
50+ STRAINS OF FLOWER

**THE CLEAR**  
95%  
THC

THE CLEAR™  
*The Clear & Clean - Extract Purity*




"Budder"

"Diamonds"



"Shatter"



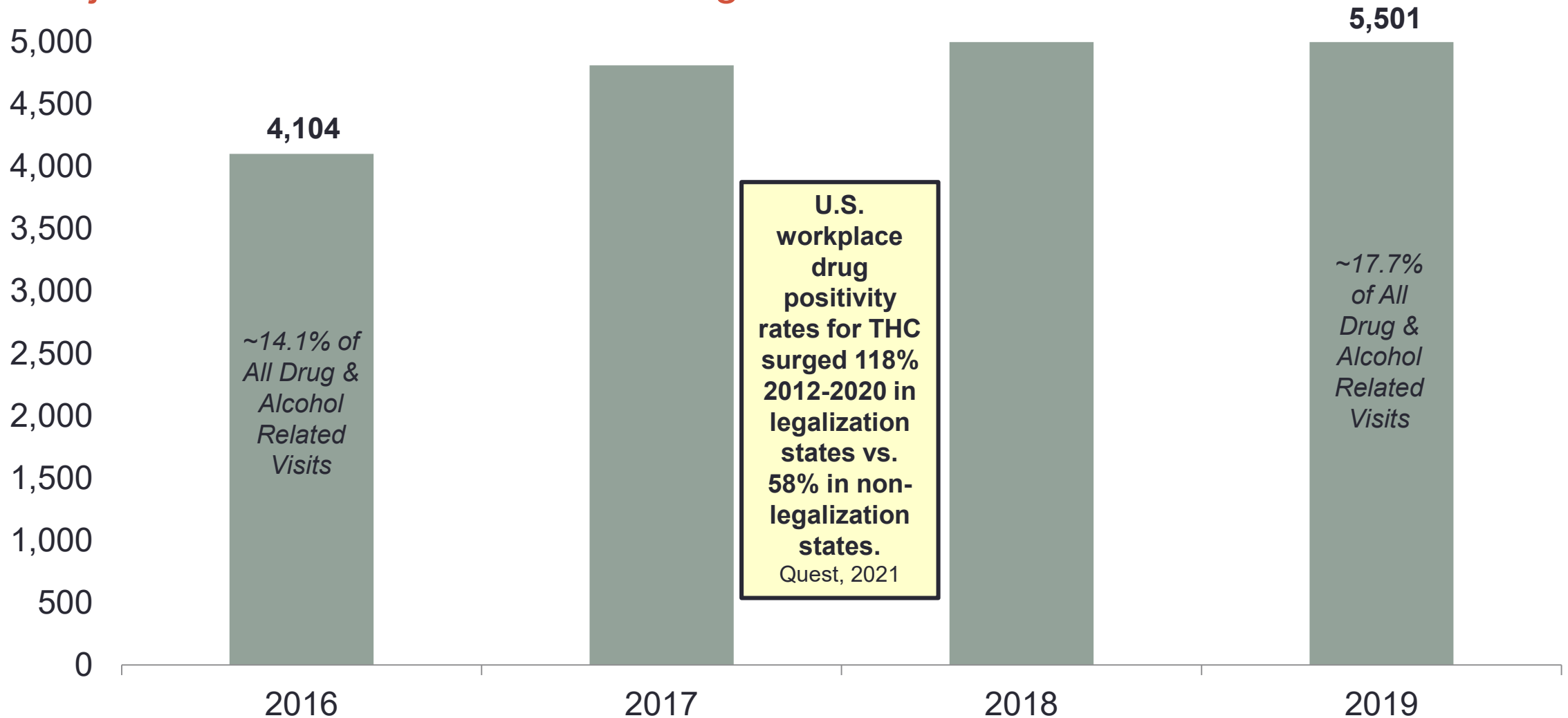
[Register](#) [HOME](#) [NEWS](#) [SPORTS](#) [USA TODAY](#) [JOBS](#) [ARCHIVES](#) [MORE](#) [Q](#)

**Des Moines area man arrested in Nebraska with hundreds of vape cartridges filled with THC oil**



# Marijuana-Related Hospital ED Visits

## Marijuana Use as Causal or Contributing Factor



(\*Reporting methods changed in 2015, resulting in a new baseline in 2016.)

Iowa Department of Public Health, 2020

# Medical *Derivatives & Extracts* of Cannabis

## **Marinol, Syndros (Dronabinol) & Cesamet (Nabilone):**

FDA-approved synthetic cannabinoids—containing THC & CBD—legally available as prescription pills to treat cancer chemotherapy nausea & appetite loss.



## **Sativex (mouth spray):**

A product with 2 cannabinoids extracted from the cannabis plant failed FDA-authorized tests for cancer pain, but continues undergoing clinical study for spasticity & other treatments.



## **Epidiolex (oral liquid)**

Contains the non-psychoactive cannabis extract Cannabidiol (CBD). Recently approved by the FDA & reclassified as a Schedule V controlled substance by the DEA after clinical trials, this Rx product is now available in pharmacies.



## **Iowa “Medical Cannabidiol” (mCBD):**

State law authorizes products regulated by the Iowa Department of Public Health to be used by qualified patients for eligible conditions.



# Other Cannabis Products (ABCs of THC, CBD, et al.)



March 2020

- “The FDA has approved only one CBD product, a prescription drug product to treat two rare, severe forms of epilepsy.
- It is currently illegal to market CBD by adding it to a food or labeling it as a dietary supplement.
- The FDA has seen only limited data about CBD safety and these data point to real risks that need to be considered before taking CBD for any reason.
- Some CBD products are marketed with unproven medical claims and are of unknown quality.”

## Recent Iowa Legislation

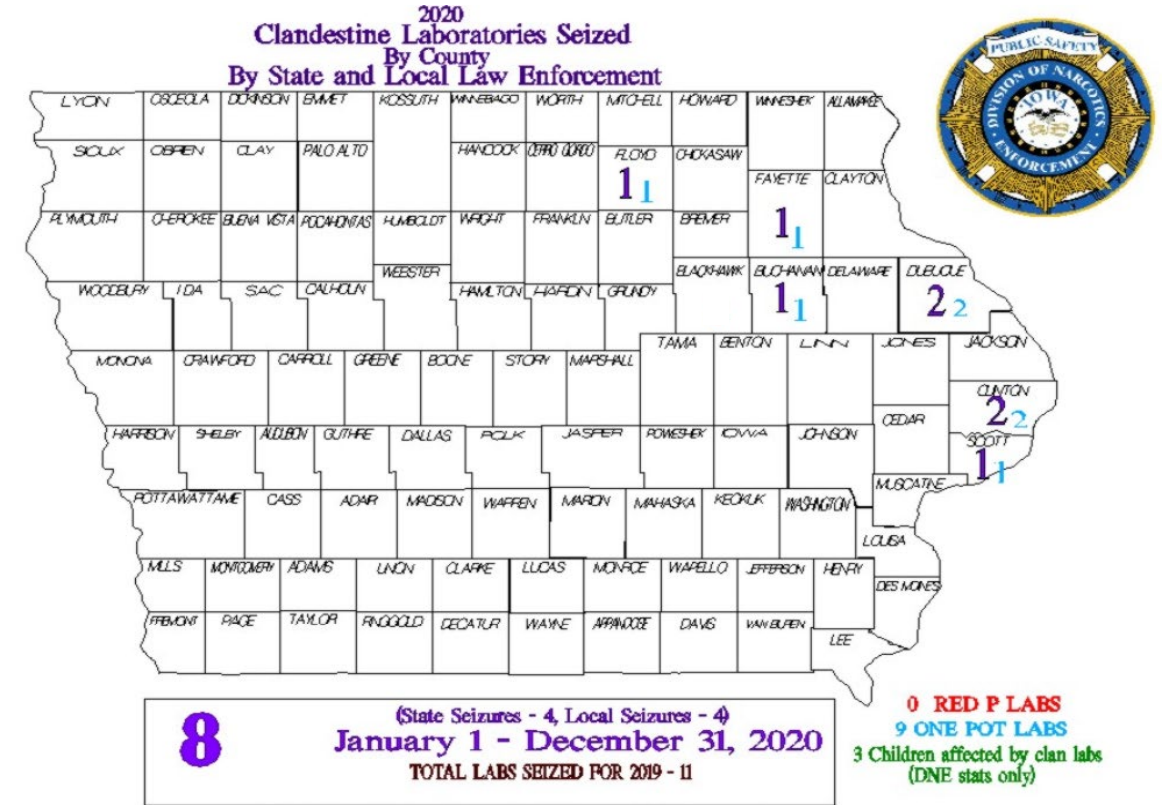
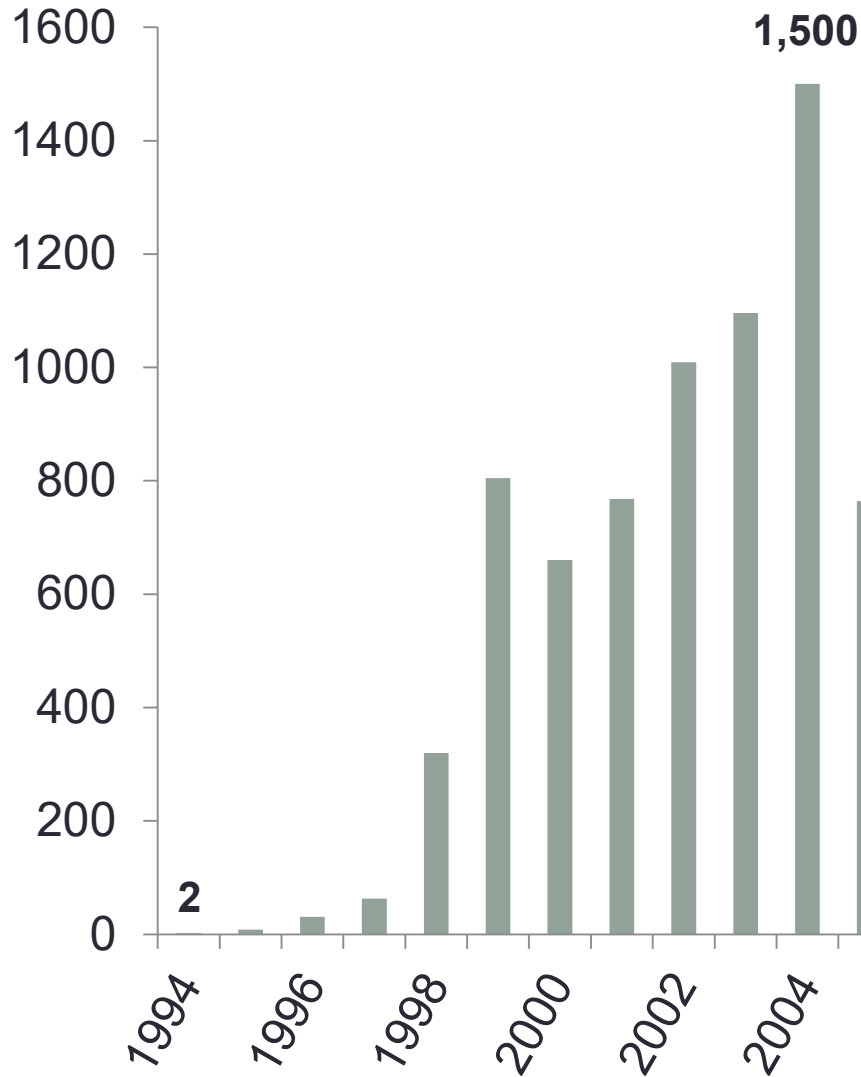
- 2019: Iowa Hemp Act legalizes products with less than 0.3% THC content.
- 2020: Iowa Hemp Act amended to legalize “consumable hemp” products (e.g., CBD) as long as such products are not inhaled (administrative rules pending).

**\*\*\*Other/Newer Cannabinoids: THC-A, delta-8 & delta-10 THC, CBG, CBG-A...**

# Meth



# Iowa Meth Labs

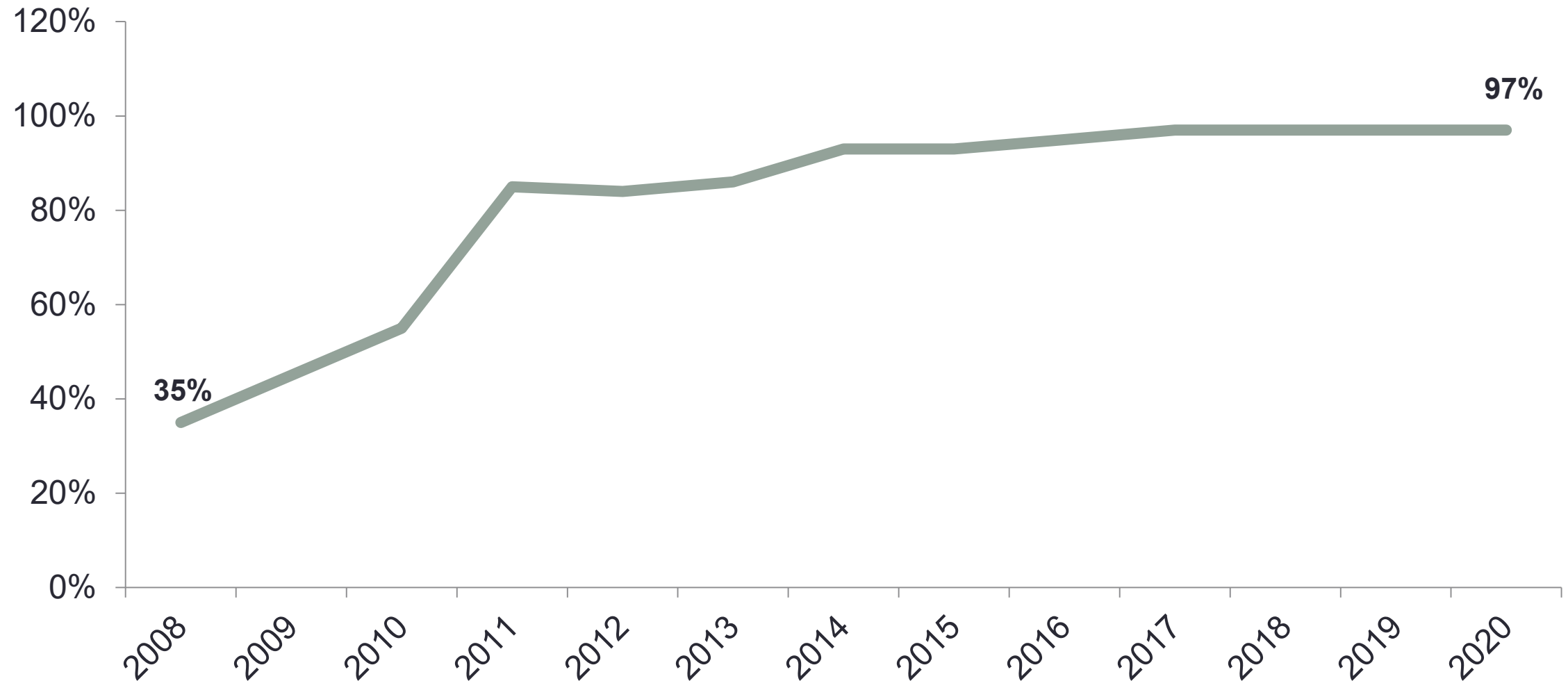


This map compiled by the Iowa Division of Narcotics Enforcement. Based on numbers reported as of 1/6/2021

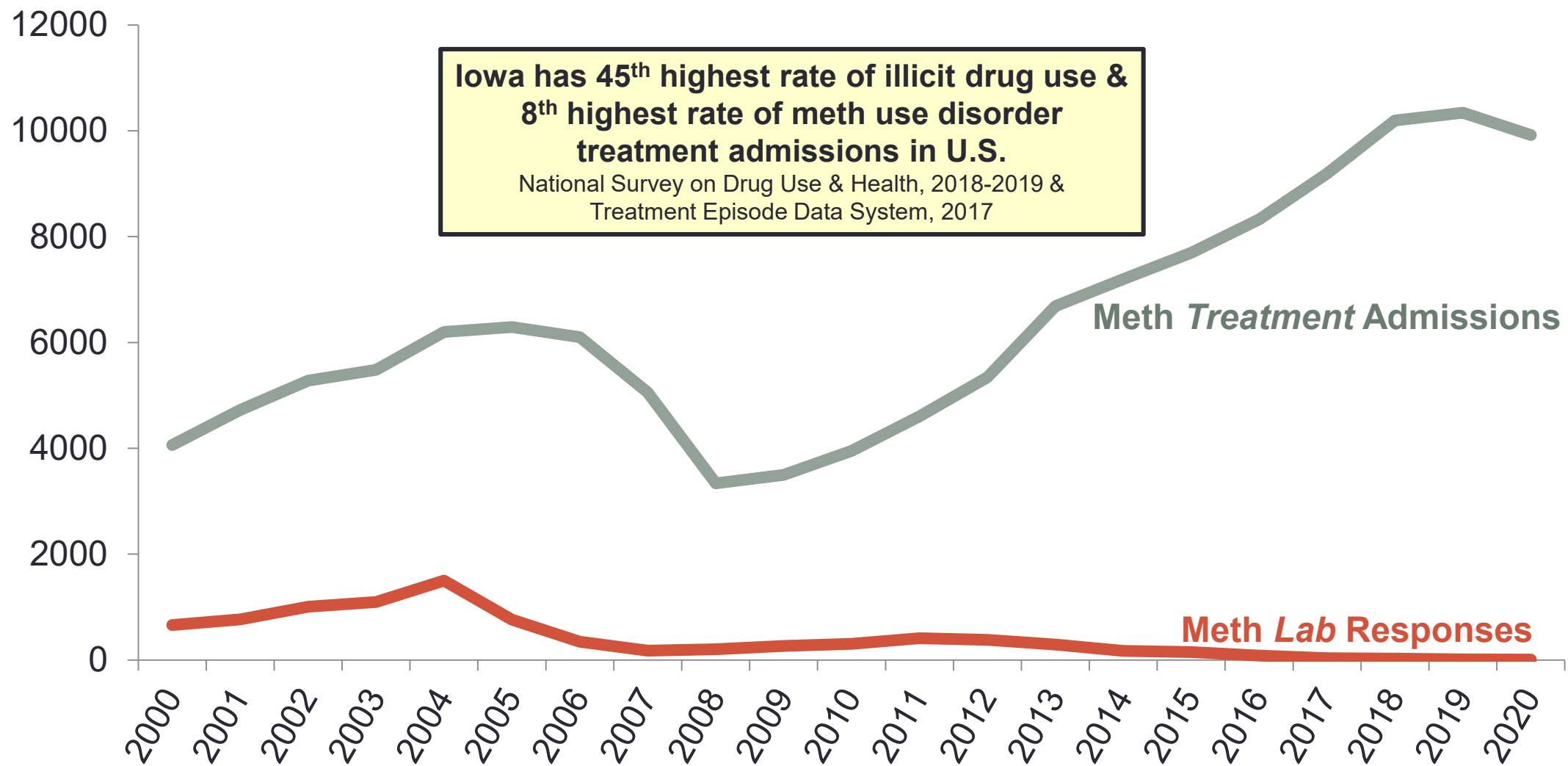
(Gold = "One Pot" Labs)

# Iowa Meth Purity

## Crime Lab Fiscal Year Averages



# Iowa Meth Trends: Use vs. Production



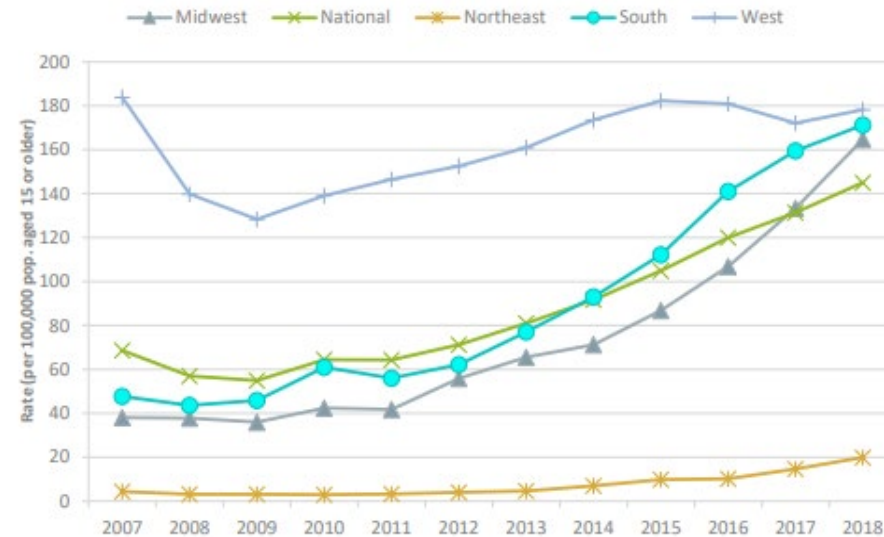
# Rising Tide of Meth in U.S.



Oct. 14, 2020: Largest domestic meth seizure in DEA history—2,224 lbs.—announced in LA.

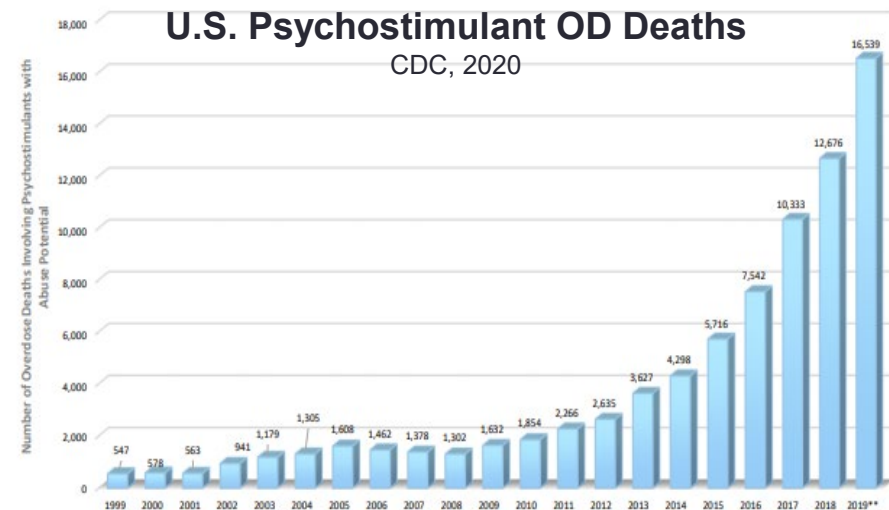
## U.S. Law Enforcement Meth Seizures

NFLIS, 2020



## U.S. Psychostimulant OD Deaths

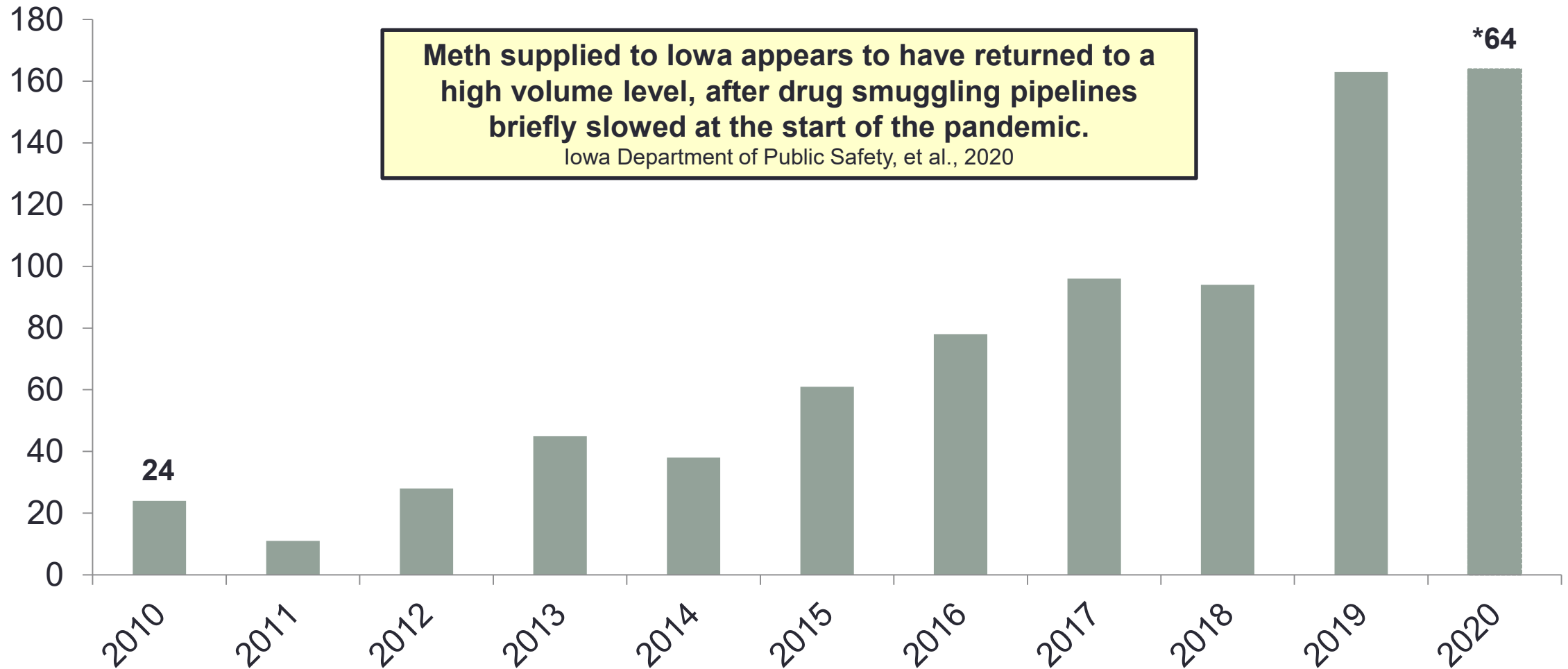
CDC, 2020





# Iowa Psychostimulant-Related (OD) Deaths

## As a Contributing Factor



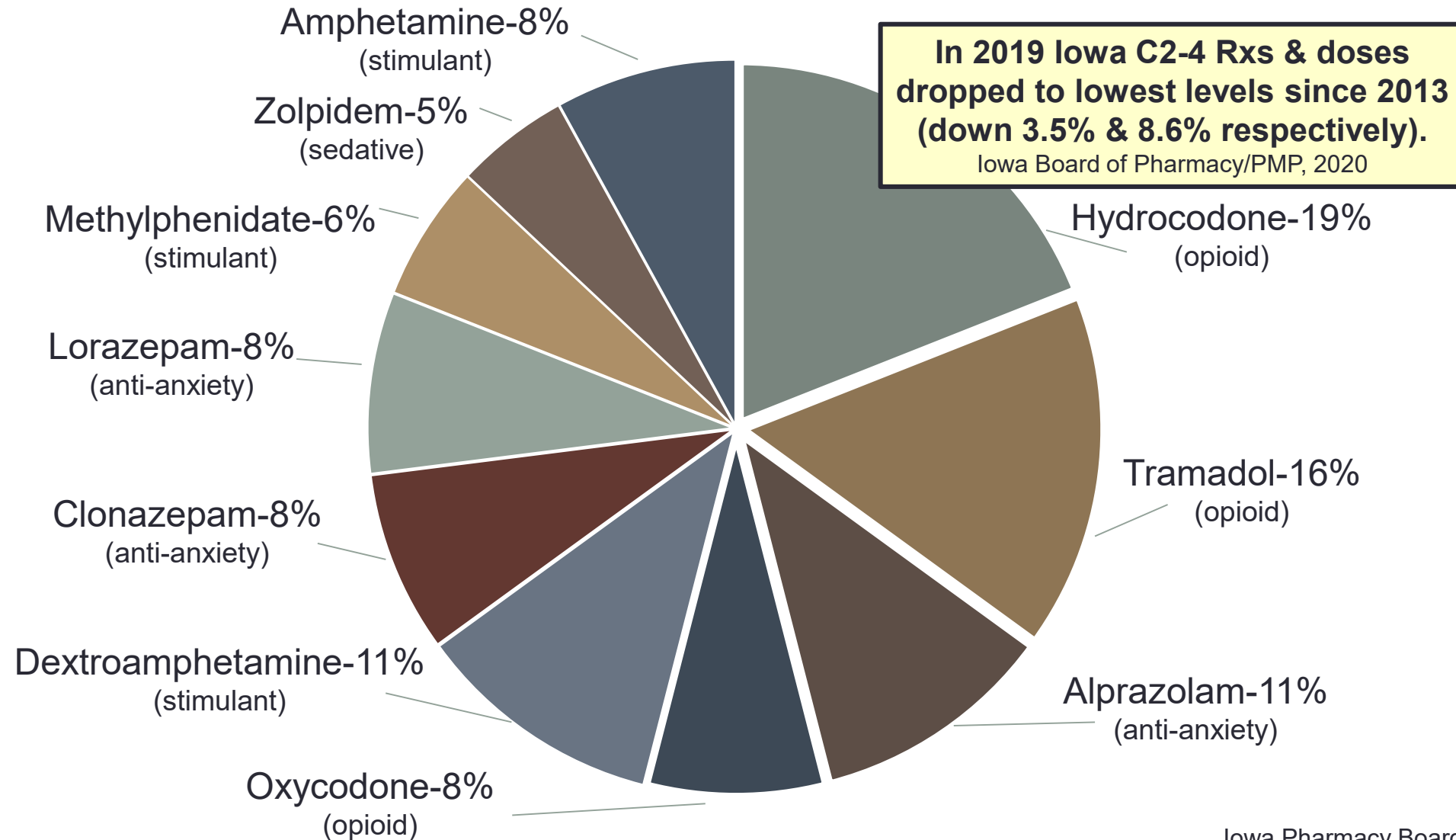
# Opioids

- Rx
- Heroin
- **Illicit Synthetics**  
(fentanyl analogs, etc.)



# Top 10 Iowa Rx Controlled Substances

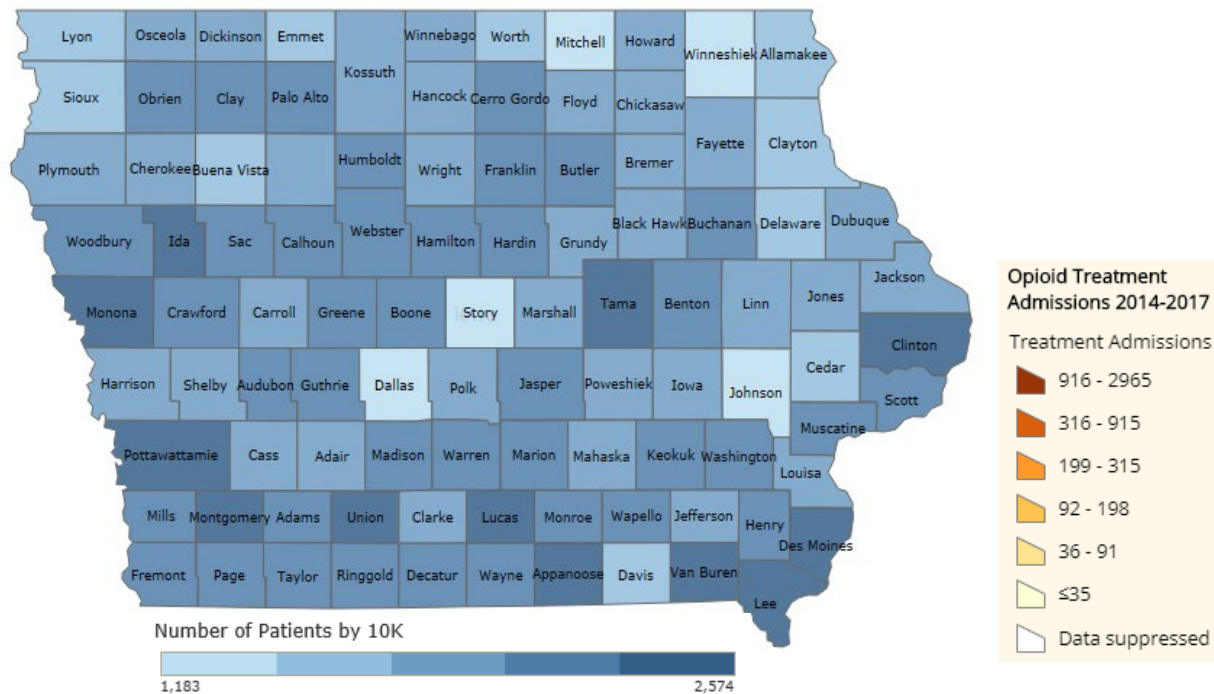
ClIs-CIVs per Iowa's Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) in 2019



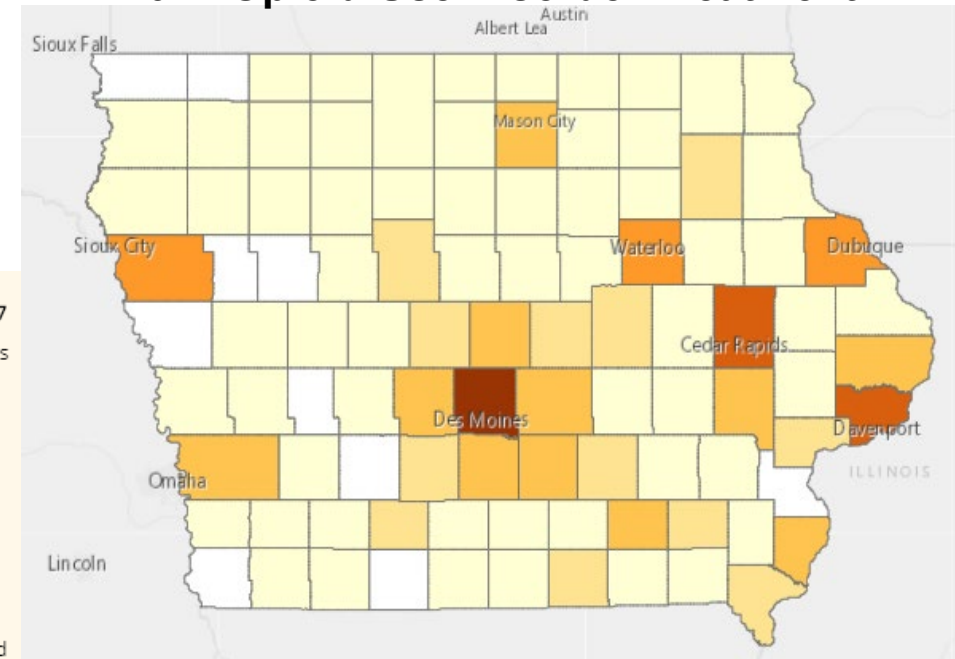
# Iowa Rates of Opioid Rx & Treatment

## By County in 2018 & 2017, Respectively

### 2018 Opioid Prescribing



### 2017 Opioid Use Disorder Treatment



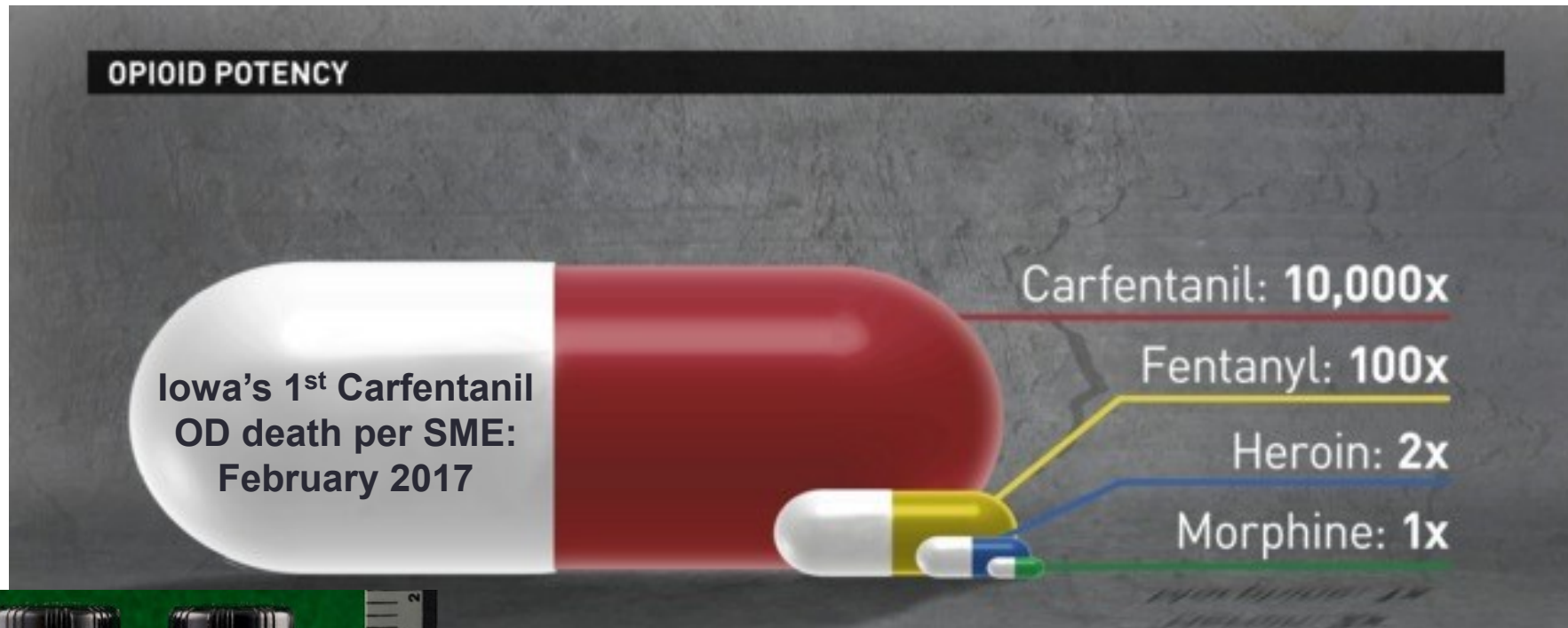
**Top 3 categories of “exposure” calls: (1) Analgesics; (2) Anti-Depressants; (3) Sedatives/Hypnotics/Anti-Psychotics.**

Iowa Poison Control Center, 2020

**Iowa Hepatitis C cases have risen 220% since 2000, due in part to IV drug use.**

Iowa Department of Public Health, 2018

# Illicit Synthetic Opioids: Less is More

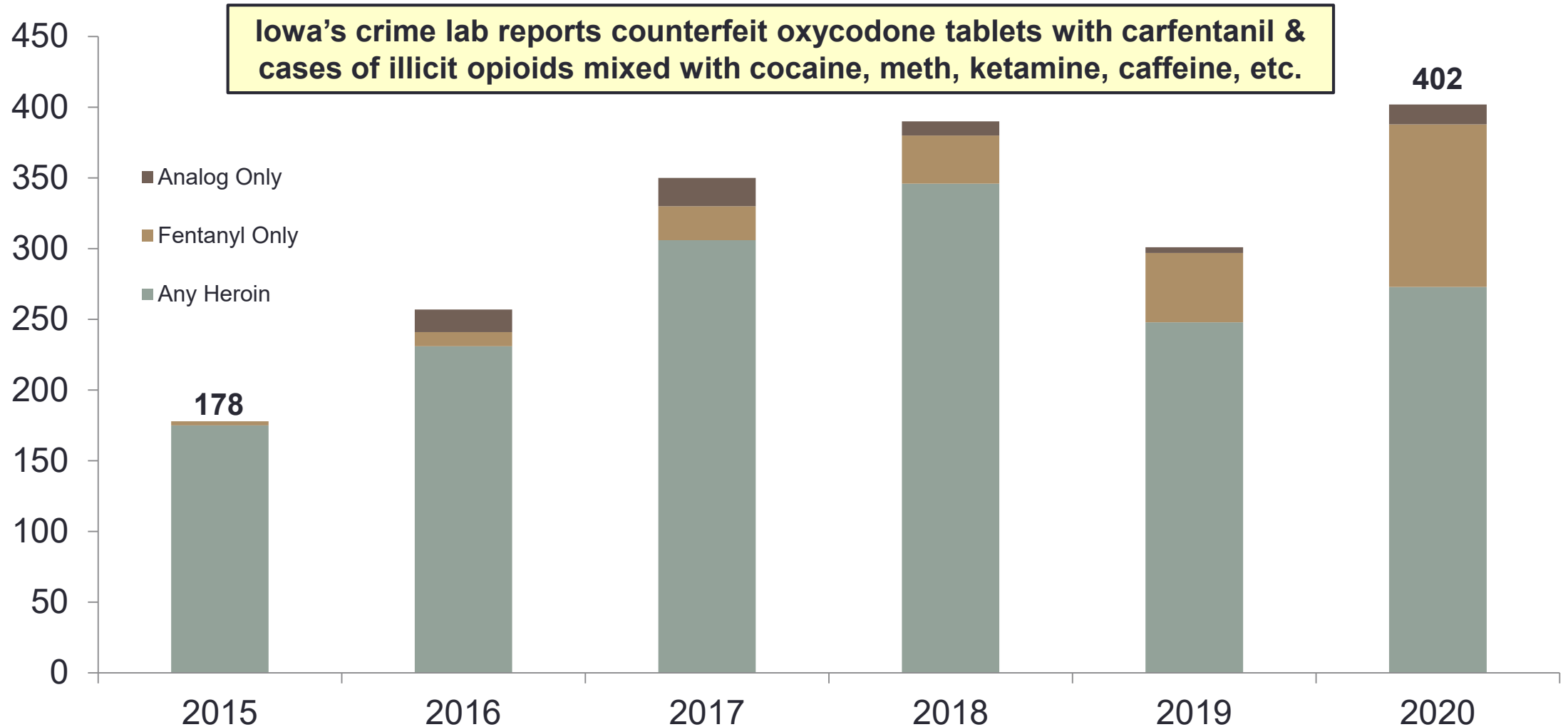


Often mixed with heroin, illicit *synthetic opioids* (e.g., fentanyl analogs)—in tiny amounts—can be much more lethal vs. heroin.



# Heroin, Fentanyl & Illicit Synthetic Opioids

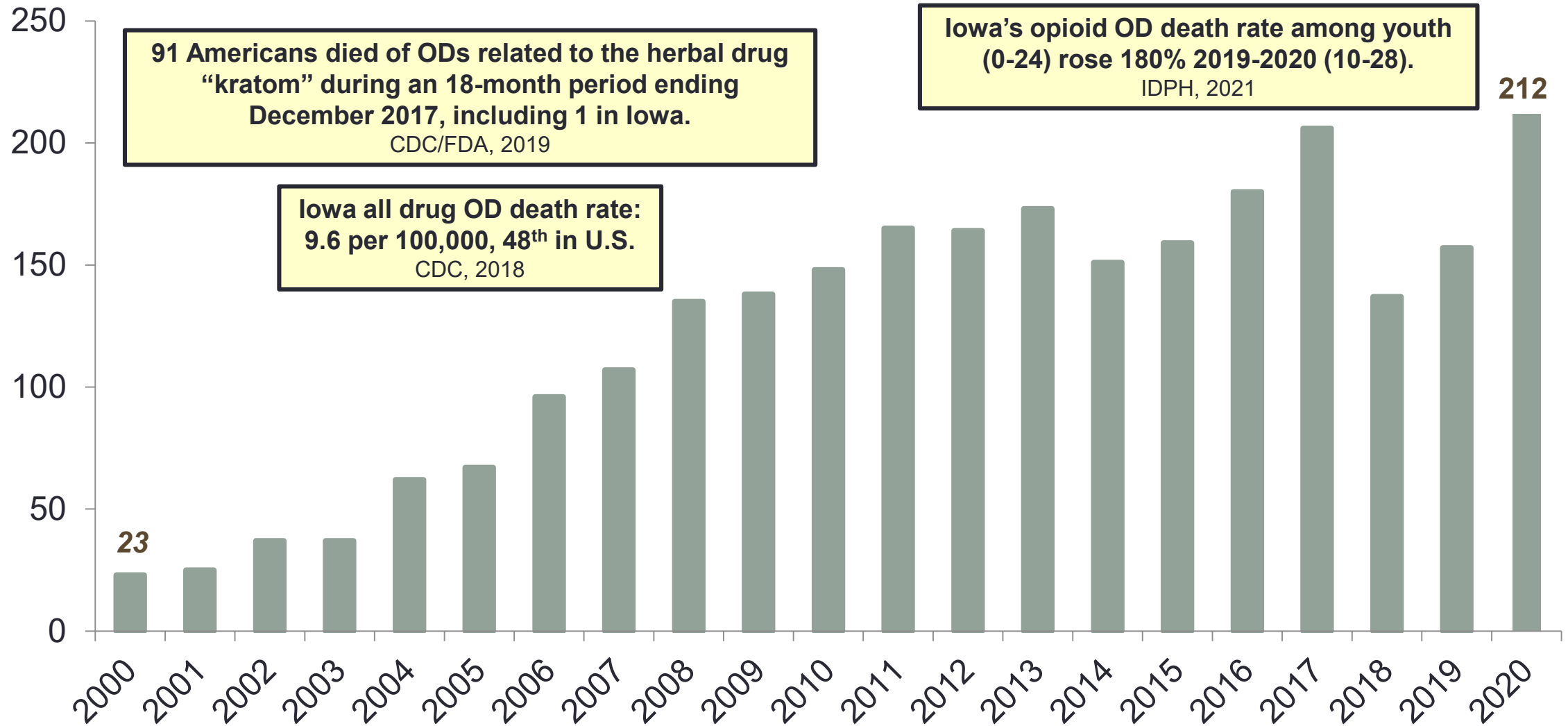
## Law Enforcement Seizure Cases per Iowa's Crime Lab



Iowa synthetic narcotic deaths rose 59% 2019-2020 (101-161).  
IDPH, 2021

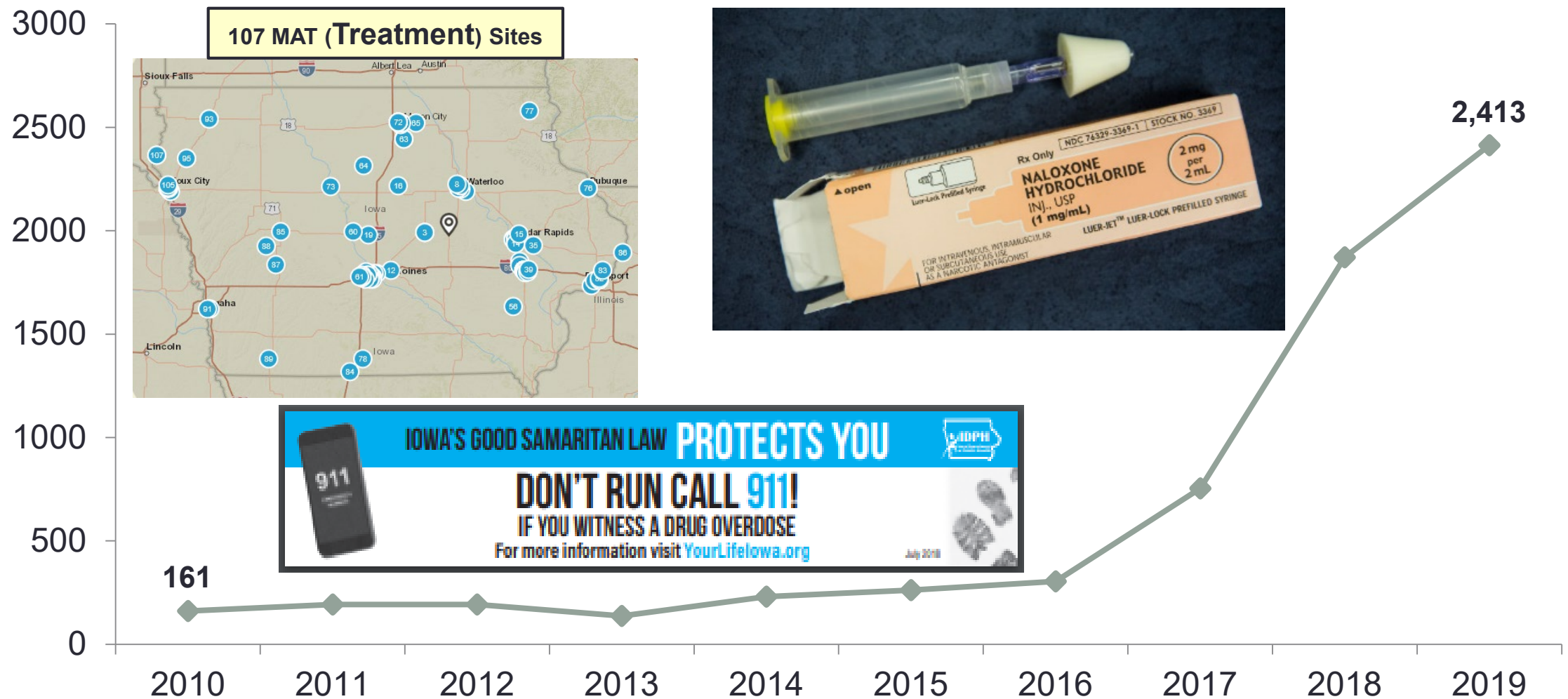
# Iowa Opioid OD Deaths

## Primary Cause of Deaths vs. Contributing Factor (Related) Deaths

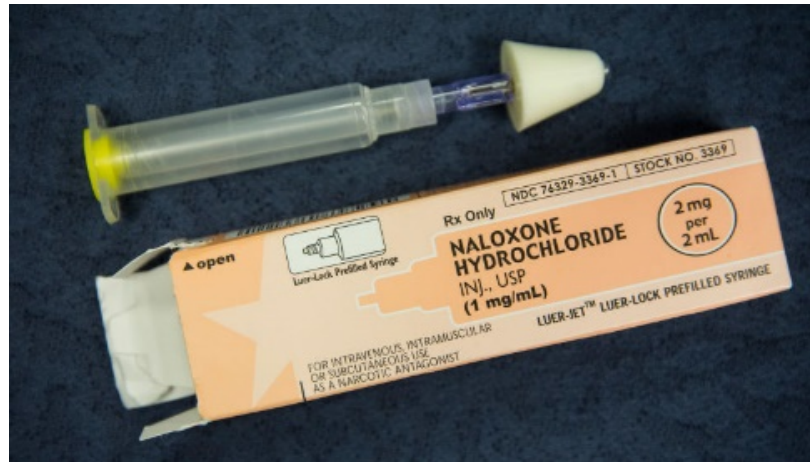
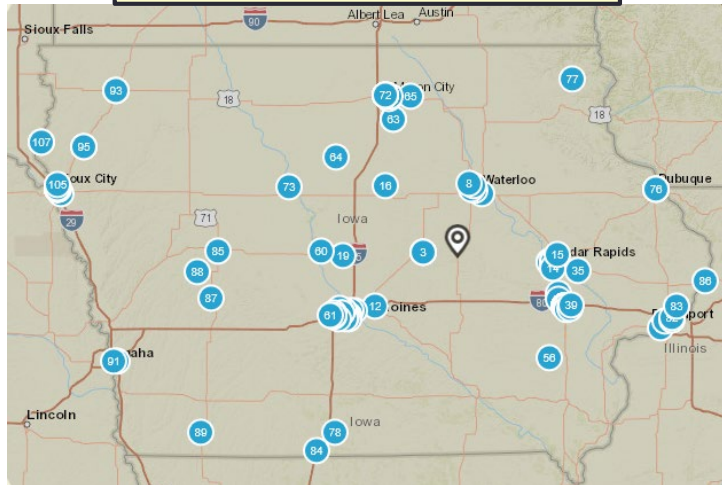


# Iowa Opioid OD & Addiction Tools

## Naloxone Doses by EMS, Good Samaritan Law & MAT



107 MAT (Treatment) Sites



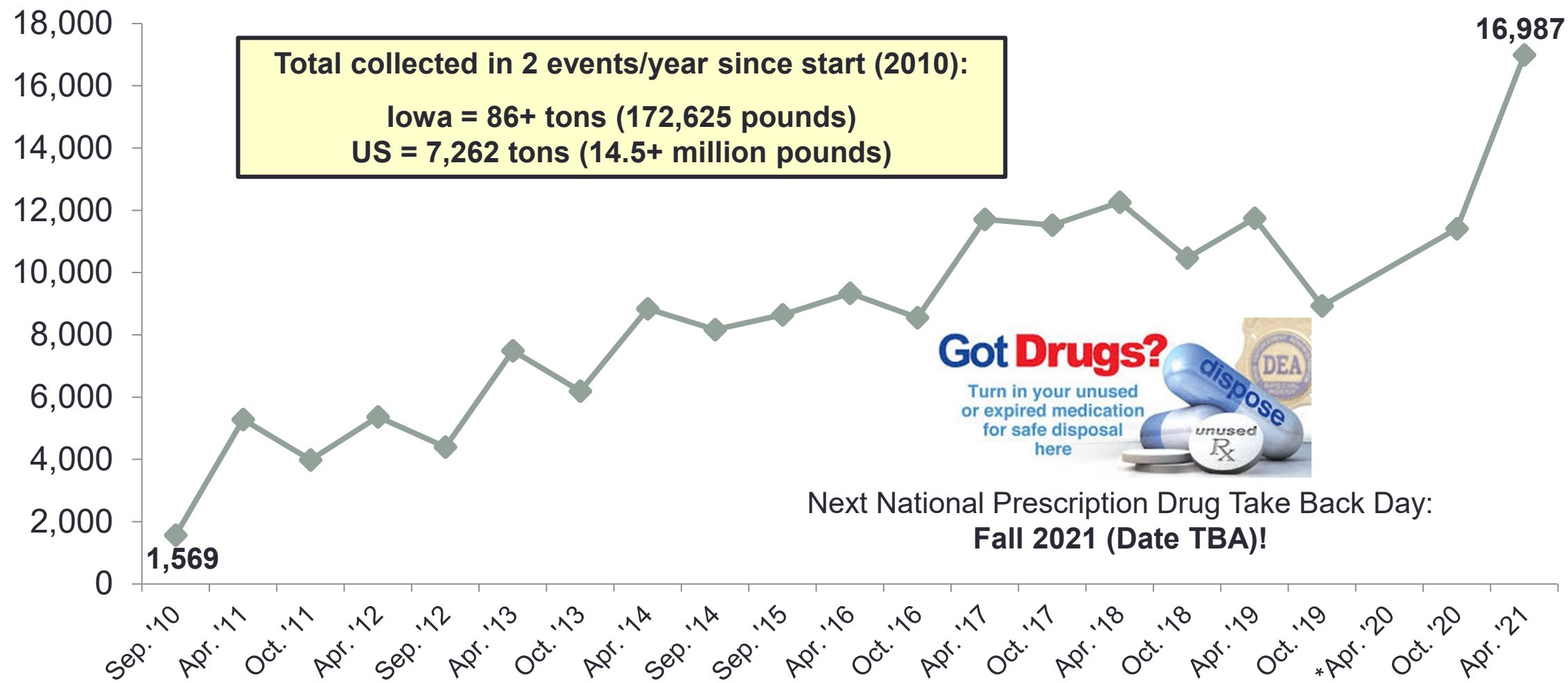
(Reporting process changed in 2015.)

Iowa Department of Public Health, Emergency & Trauma Services, 2020



# Iowa "Take-Back" Initiative

Amount (in Pounds) of Rx Drugs Collected

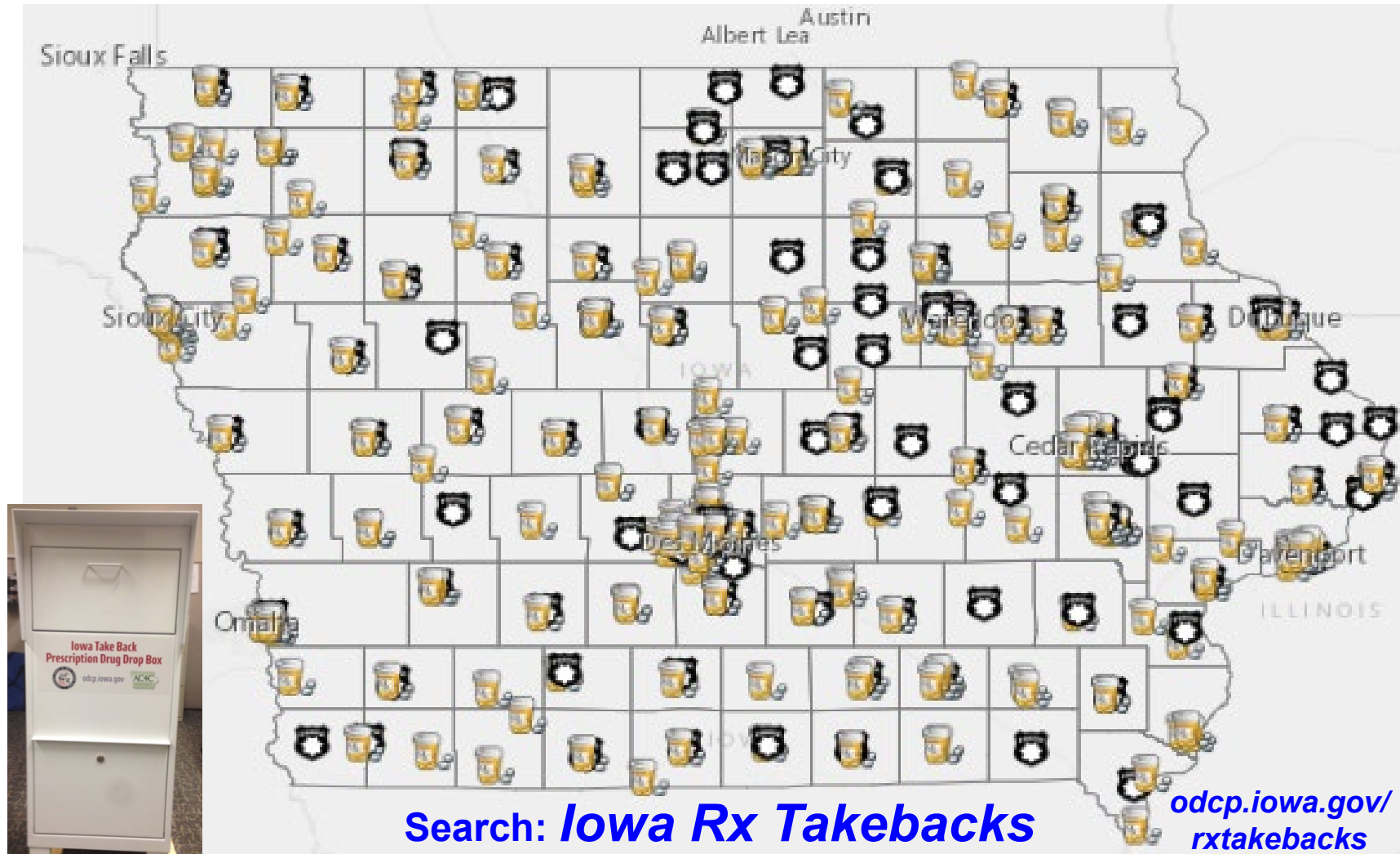


(\*April 2020 Event Canceled Due to Pandemic)

DEA, 2021

# Iowa Permanent Rx “Take Back” Sites

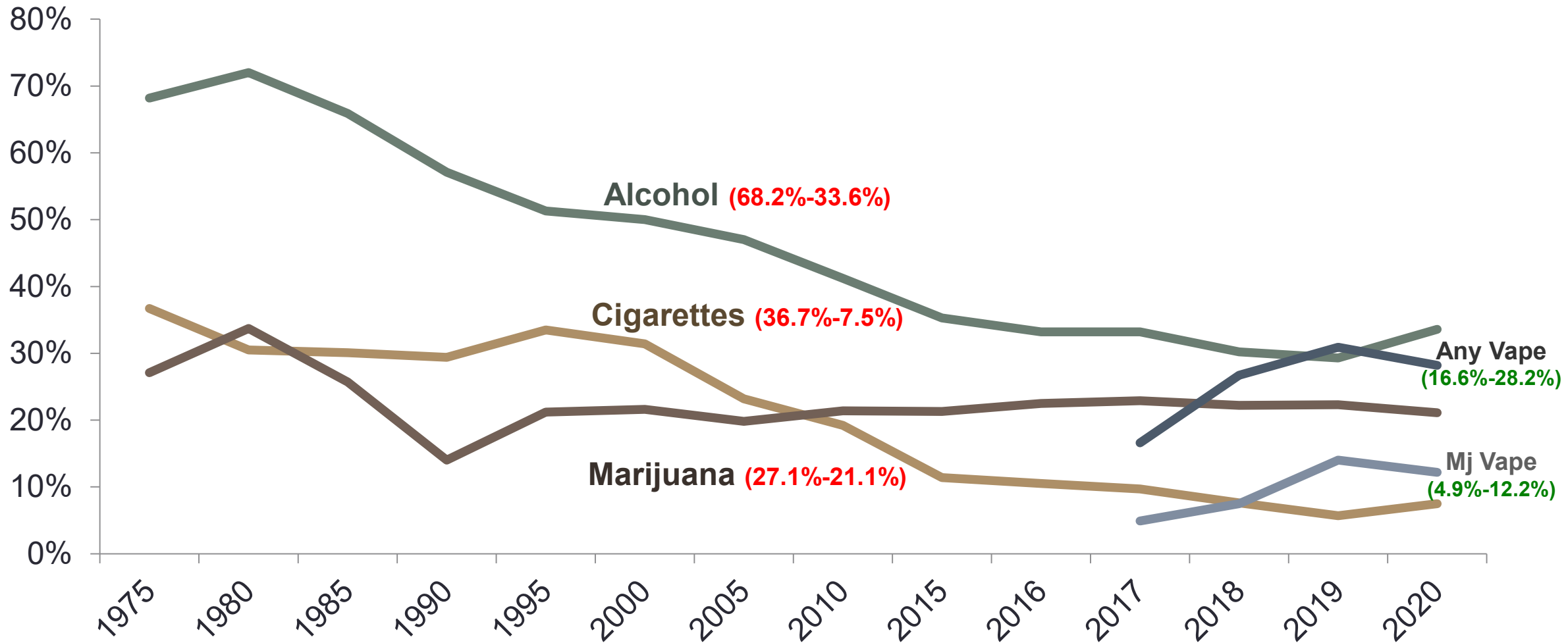
## Controlled Prescription Drug Disposal Locations



398 Sites Statewide (273 Pharmacies & 125 Law Enforcement Centers) vs. 47 in January 2016

# Youth Substance Use 40+ Year Trends

Current Use (past 30 days) Among U.S. 12<sup>th</sup> Graders



# STAY SAFE!

---



Iowa Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy

Visit Our Website: <https://odcp.iowa.gov>

**Get Help 24/7: Call 855-581-8111, Text 855-895-8398 or go to [YourLifelowa.org](https://YourLifelowa.org)**