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Opioid overdoses far outpace car-crash deaths in Mass.

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By **Matt Rocheleau**

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In announcing new efforts to curb drug abuse, the White House on Wednesday [pointed](#) to the fact that more Americans now die every year from drug overdoses than they do in car crashes.

That alarming stat holds true not only nationally, but in Massachusetts, too.

In fact, opioid-related overdoses, including heroin deaths, alone killed more than four and a half times as many people statewide as motor vehicle accidents during the first half of 2015, according to data from the [state public health department](#) and the [National Safety Council](#).

There were an estimated 684 opioid related deaths in Massachusetts through the first six months of this year compared with 149 car crash deaths, the data shows.

Nationally, during 2013, the most recent year for which national data is available, fewer people died from opioid-related overdoses than car crashes. But overdose deaths overall — including those from other drugs, whether illegal or prescription — outnumbered crash deaths.

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Opioid deaths climbing in Mass.

During the first half of 2015, the number of deaths from overdoses increased about 6 percent from the same period last year.

A total of 43,982 people died from drug overdoses — including 16,235 from opioid painkillers and 8,257 from heroin — while 32,719 people died in car crashes, according to the 2013 statistics from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#).

Drug overdose was the leading cause of injury death in 2013, the CDC said. Since 2000, the rate of drug overdose deaths has more than doubled, from 6.2 per 100,000 in 2000 to 13.8 per 100,000 in 2013.

Drug overdose versus car crash deaths

The number of each death type between 2000 and 2013.

— DRUG OVERDOSE — CAR CRASH

Created with Highcharts

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DATA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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