



MEDIA RELEASE

OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR GLENN JACOBS

400 Main Street, Suite 615, Knoxville, TN 37902

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Contact: Rob Link Jennifer Linginfelter September 12, 2018
215-4750 office 215-4579 office
320-2108 cell 803-5509 cell

KNOX COUNTY FORENSIC CENTER RELEASES 2017 DRUG-RELATED DEATH REPORT

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (Sept. 12, 2018) – Today, the Knox County Regional Forensic Center released its 2017 Drug-Related Death Report for Knox and Anderson Counties. The report includes data on drug-related death cases the Center investigated from 2010 through 2017.

“Unfortunately, the drug epidemic in our community continues to spiral out-of-control” said Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs. “While our law enforcement and other agencies are tireless in their efforts to address this issue, it’s apparent that a community-wide approach is necessary if we are to stop this disturbing trend. Hopefully the info presented in this report can help initiate a larger conversation that leads to a definitive plan of action to stop the growing drug problem.”

The number of drug-related deaths in Knox and Anderson Counties increased by more than 41 percent from 2016 to 2017.

“The 2017 data shows an alarming, continuing upward trend in drug deaths in Knox and Anderson Counties,” said John Lott, Senior Director of the Knox County Regional Forensic Center. “In addition, we have seen some demographic shifts and the introduction of more illicit drugs such as Fentanyl and its analogues.”

In 2017, the number of African Americans who died of drug-related causes surged 113 percent in the two counties as compared to 2016. Additionally, all age groups saw significant increases in drug-related deaths but occurred most frequently in the 45-54 category.

The full report is available online at: <http://www.knoxcounty.org/rfc/reports.php>.

As outlined in the full text of the report, the data is drawn only from drug-related deaths in Knox and Anderson Counties between 2010 and 2017 that were investigated by the medical examiner. Some highlights from the report include:

- The number of drug-related deaths increased by 41 percent from 2016 to 2017.
- The 45-54 year age group again had the highest number of drug-related deaths, however the number of drug-related deaths in all age categories had significant increases from 2016 to 2017.
- Polypharma (or multiple drugs) were involved in 60 percent of drug-related death cases in 2017.
- Fentanyl and its analogues were again the most frequently found drug among 2017 drug-related death cases with an increase of 179 percent from 2016.
- Trends already noted for 2018:
 - Fentanyl and its analogues continue to be the most frequently found drugs in a drug-related death.
 - The 45-54 age group has the highest number of drug-related deaths in 2018.

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