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NEWS // PUBLIC HEALTH

As World Cup crowds pack overdose-prone parts of Dallas, first responders, stores prep with Narcan

The large crowds expected during World Cup events could mean higher risk for overdoses in Dallas County.

By [Alyda Muela](#), Staff Writer
June 11, 2026

 Gift Article











The exterior of Dallas Stadium is pictured during a media tour of Dallas Stadium in Arlington, June 10, 2026. FIFA is ready for the World Cup and will host 9 matches including the semifinal in July.

Tom Fox/The Dallas Morning News



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As World Cup crowds pack overdose-prone parts of Dallas, first respor

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The crowds and highly anticipated events expected to swell Dallas County's population over the next five weeks may carry a hidden risk.

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Last year, on average, [two people died of a drug overdose every three days](#) in the county, mostly from fentanyl or other opioids. The surge of 3 million expected revelers celebrating soccer's biggest stage across the city and region could mean an accompanying spike in overdoses.



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Whether an overdose occurs at a special event during the World Cup, or comes in via the 911 call system, Jason Evans, a spokesperson for Dallas Fire-Rescue said they're prepared to respond to all situations.

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“All of our rescues are equipped with an adequate supply of Narcan to accommodate the calls received, and supplies are restocked as needed at the station or through EMS supply, if necessary,” Evans said.

Since 2021, Dallas Fire-Rescue has administered Narcan to 12, 582 patients. Narcan, also known as naloxone, can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose and save lives if used early enough. It doesn’t have any harmful side effects even if it is used on someone who is not experiencing an overdose.

To combat the ongoing opioid crisis, Dallas County Health and Human Services distributed Narcan to nearly 900 businesses across the county over the past eight months.

DCHHS Naloxone outreach locations

Dallas County Health and Human Services have distributed nearly 900 doses of the overdose reversal drug Narcan in the Dallas area since October 2025. Here are more than 700 of those locations:



SOURCE: Dallas County Health and Human Services
GRAPHIC: Laurie Joseph

The Dallas Morning News

It's a mission they've been carrying out for the past two years, starting with the launch of the [Overdose Prevention Hotline in October 2024](#). Dr. Philip Huang, director of Dallas County Health and Human Services, says they're working to increase access to life-saving resources.

"We're really getting out in the community, being data-driven and responsive to what the data shows, and working with our community partners," Huang said. "It's a model effort to try to address this important problem."

Data from the Dallas County health department's website shows that many of the more than 6,000 overdose deaths over the last 10 years have been concentrated south and east of the city center.

These areas are clustered around the Fair Park area, which is expected to amass thousands of guests Thursday for the kickoff of FIFA Fan Fest.

Staying safe



Narcan delivers the drug as a nasal spray and can cost between \$50 and \$90 a dose.

Matthew Rakola/ADAPT Pharma

When Kilah Anderson hears a Code Purple call come in on her walkie-talkie, she knows someone is suffering from an overdose. Anderson has worked at Metrocare's Oak Cliff clinic for three years and said she administers Narcan at least once a month.

However, with ongoing advancements in synthetic opioids, she noted that a single dose of Narcan may not be enough to reverse an overdose.

"In the past, one would work, but now these drugs are getting so strong and so bad, sometimes you have to use two," Anderson said.

She once had to give a person five doses before they woke up, she said.

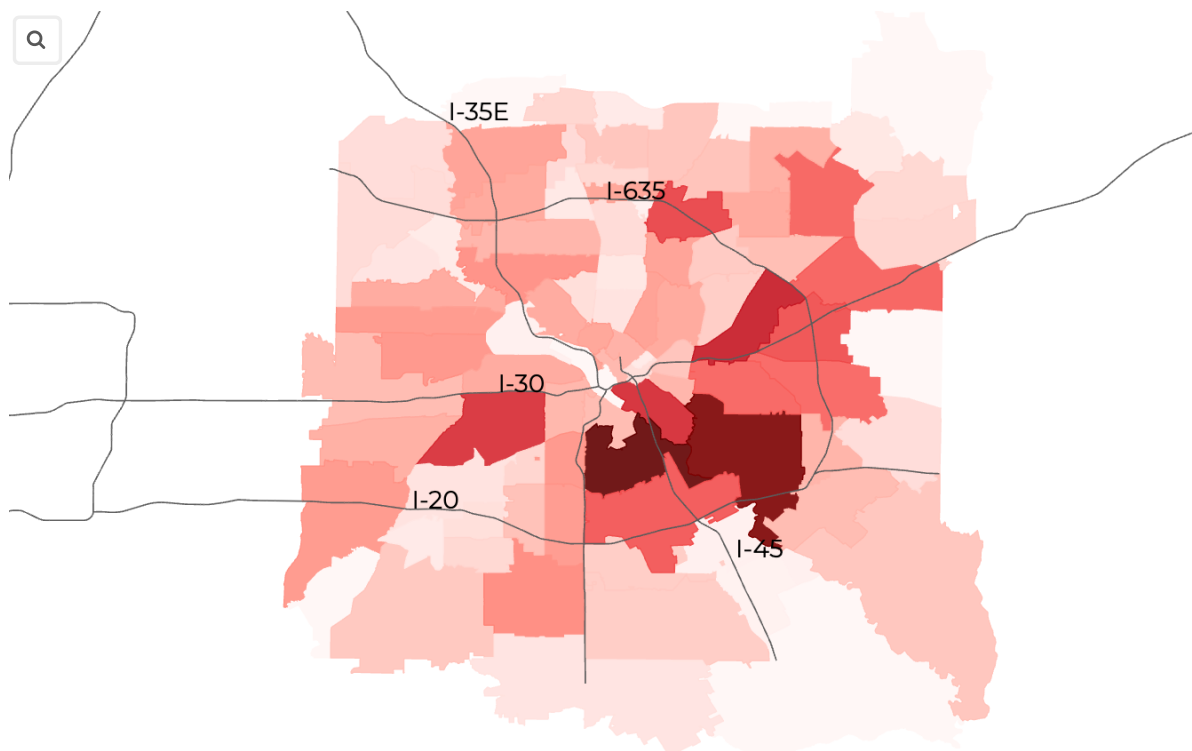
Anderson advises everyone participating in the World Cup excitement to stay safe.

"Don't take anything from anybody. You can't trust anything. It could be somebody you trust getting it from somebody they trust, but they don't know who manufactured it or what's put in it," she said.

Overdose deaths in Dallas County 2016-26

Data from the Dallas County health department's website shows that overdose deaths over the last 10 years have been concentrated south and east of the city center.

Overdose deaths per ZIP code 0 184



SOURCE: Dallas County Health and Human Services
GRAPHIC: Laurie Joseph

The Dallas Morning News

Metrocare is Dallas County's largest mental health service provider, serving approximately 50,000 people aged 13 and up each year.

Tiffany Stranathan, the Clinical Manager of Substance Abuse Disorders at Metrocare, said she's seeing more youth struggle with opioid addiction.

"The hard part about pinpointing where the opioid use is happening is oftentimes, they will not know that they're using an opioid," Stranathan said. "They think that they're just taking a pill, or they think 'I'm just smoking this vape.'"

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, overdose death rates among teens and young adults saw a sharp decline of 26.2% from 2023 to 2024. Still, illicit labs are manufacturing newer and stronger synthetic drugs at rapid speeds.

Stranathan stresses Metrocare's mission to increase accessibility and reduce barriers to care. In recent months, the nonprofit partnered with Dallas County Health and Human Services to launch a Public Health Vending Machine at its Lancaster-Kiest Adult Mental Health Clinic.

The installation is free and equipped with Narcan among other health kits and was part of a county-wide program aimed at reducing opioid overdoses.

Signs of an overdose include discolored or blue lips and fingertips, slowed breathing and heartbeat, choking or gurgling sounds, loss of consciousness and cold and/or clammy skin.

For instructions on how to use Narcan, visit [NARCAN® Nasal Spray](#). For educational resources on substance abuse prevention, visit [DCHHS | Alcohol and Substance Use Prevention](#).

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Alyda Muela

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INTERN



Originally from El Paso, Alyda recently graduated from the University of Texas at El Paso with a BA in multimedia journalism and a minor in general business. After working at her university's student publication, she interned for the local public radio station KTEP and Puente News Collaborative, a nonprofit news organization covering the U.S.-Mexico border.

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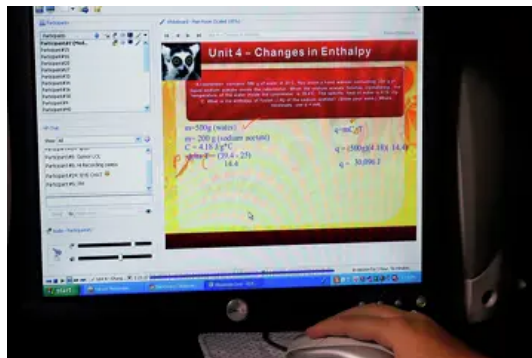
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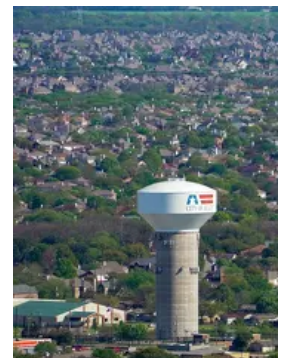
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