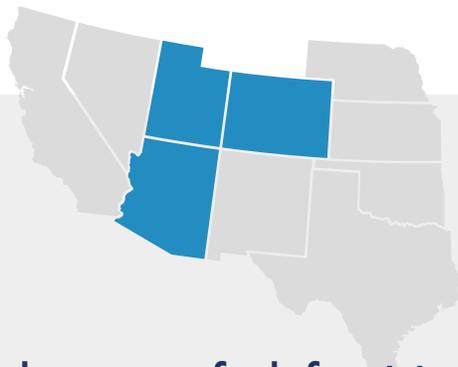


WHY ARE SYNTHETIC OPIOID OVERDOSE DEATHS RISING FASTER IN COLORADO?



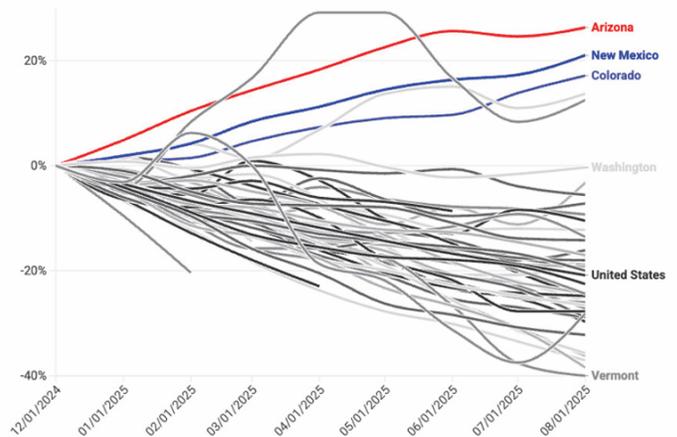
BY CSI PUBLIC SAFETY FELLOW PAUL PAZEN, THOMAS YOUNG, JIMENA SANCHEZ

Between December 2024 and August 2025, synthetic opioid overdose deaths (SOOD) in **Colorado grew by 17%**. The national rate **decreased by 21%** during this same period.



Colorado was one of only five states to see an increase in synthetic opioid overdose deaths since December 2024. The only two states with faster-growing overdose death rates are two neighboring states, Arizona (+26%) and New Mexico (+21%).

Synthetic Opioids Overdose Deaths, Dec. 2024 - Aug. 2025
Since the end of 2024, synthetic opioids overdose deaths in Colorado have grown third fastest among states, up +17%.



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



If Colorado had followed the national trend of declining synthetic opioid deaths, Colorado would have had

1,620
FEWER DEATHS



The value of life lost for the 1,620 excess deaths is approximately

\$18.3 BILLION



While this number does not encompass the entire value of human life, it does indicate that lives lost due to fentanyl and other opioids reduce the economic potential of the state.