

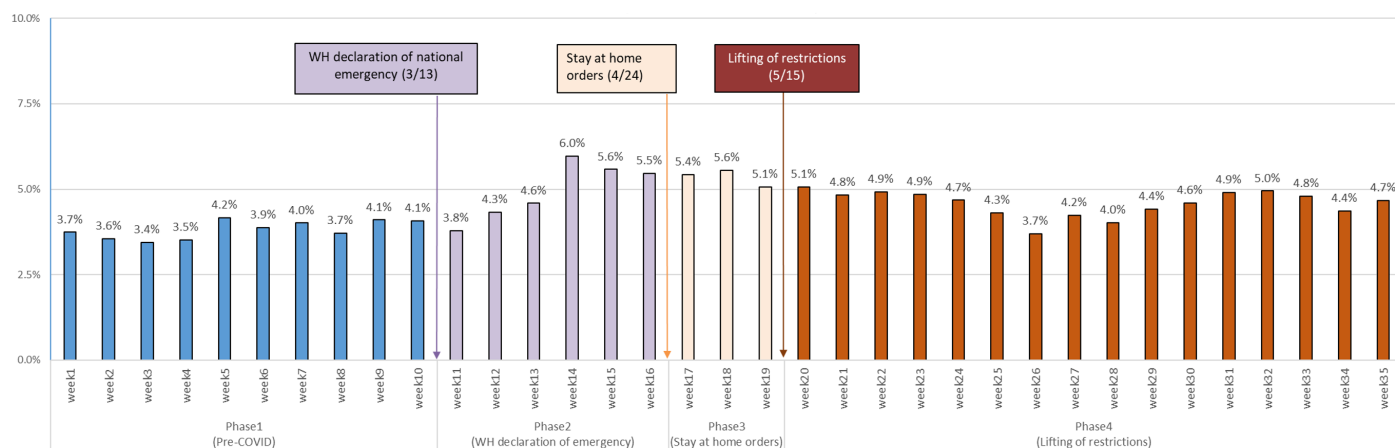
DAWN and COVID-19

The Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) is a nationwide public health surveillance system administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. As of October 15, 2020, data are being abstracted from 49 hospitals. Ultimately, the system will include at least 50 non-Federal general hospitals with 24-hour emergency departments (EDs), consisting of 10 sentinel hospitals and 40 probability-sampled hospitals. Data are abstracted directly from hospital electronic health records. DAWN captures data on ED visits related to recent substance use and misuse, such as alcohol use, illicit drug use, suicide attempts, and nonmedical use of pharmaceuticals.

DAWN data can be used to monitor substance misuse trends and serve as an early warning system to identify new psychoactive substances. Since the sample is partial and the data are *unweighted*, this profile provides only preliminary results that are not generalizable to the US; caution must therefore be exercised in interpreting the data presented here.

DAWN tracks trends in substance use-related ED visits before and during the response to COVID-19. The information provided below summarizes weekly unweighted data from a subset of 30 hospitals that fully participated in data abstraction from the first week of January through August 2020. The data presented show weekly substance use-related ED visits from January to August 2020, which covers the date that COVID-19 was declared a national emergency, the point at which a majority of states announced stay at home orders, to the time these states started lifting their restrictions.

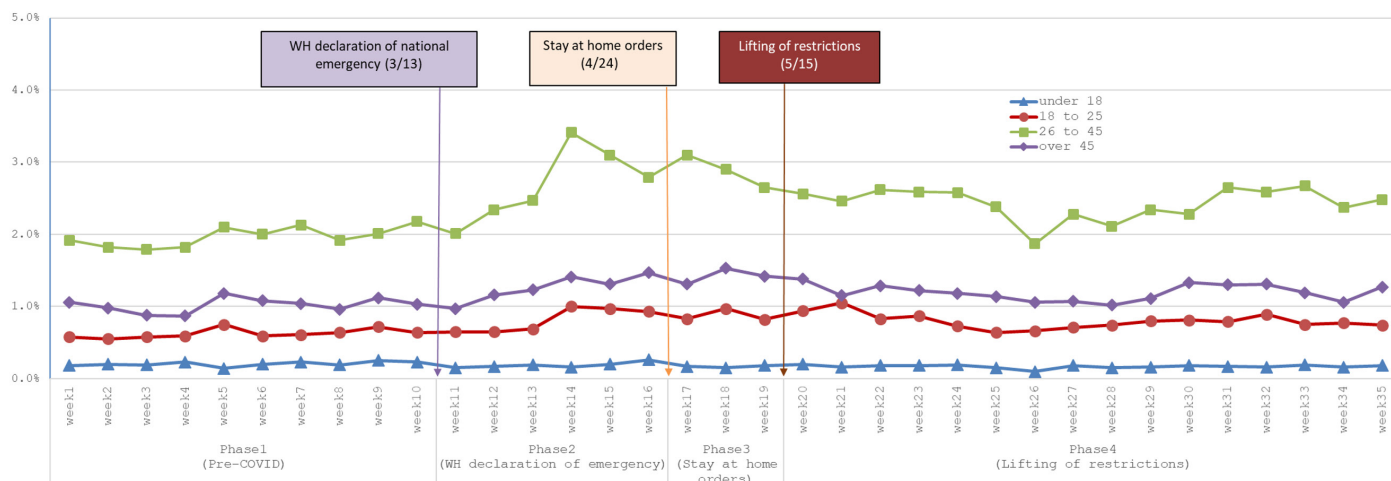
Percent of Weekly Substance Use-Related ED Visits to Total ED Visits



Overall, weekly substance-related ED visits ranged from 3.4% to 6% of total ED visits from January to August 2020. Substance-related ED visits were slightly higher after COVID-19 was declared a national emergency, peaking at 6%, as compared to the period before the declaration.

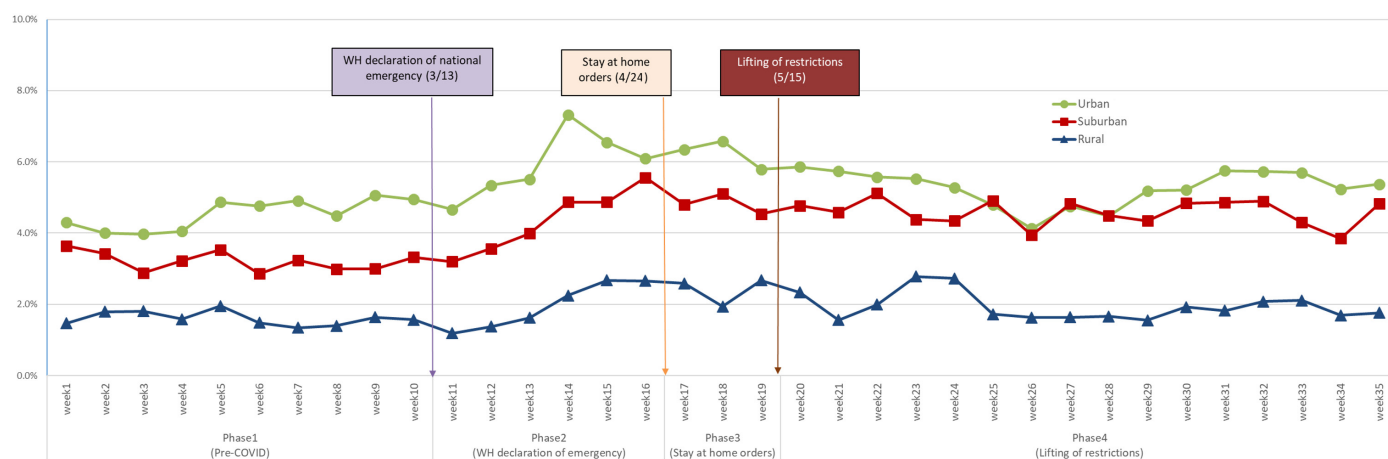
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Percent of Weekly Substance Use-Related ED Visits to Total ED Visits by Age



The highest percentage of substance-related ED visits between January and August 2020 were among 26 to 45 year old patients. This age group also showed more fluctuations as compared to other age groups, peaking at over 3% of total ED visits during the period from declaration of a national emergency and to the point at which the majority of states had stay at home orders in place.

Percent of Weekly Substance Use-Related ED Visits to Total ED Visits by Community Type



The graph above examines the percent of weekly substance use-related ED visits to total ED visits by community type. In this graph, the denominator is all ED visits within each community type. The percent of substance-related ED visits to total ED visits for all 3 community types increased after the declaration of a national emergency. While urban communities consistently had the highest percentage of weekly substance-related ED visits, the gap between urban and suburban communities seemed to narrow during the period from the time when a number of states lifted restrictions until August 2020.