UNREGULATED EPIDEMIC:
OPIOID AND HEROIN USE, ABUSE AND OVERDOSE IN KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

The Epidemic
- Opioid overdose is the leading cause of death due to drug poisoning in Kansas City, Missouri (KCMO).
- Since 2004, the number of emergency department visits due to opioid abuse has risen over 600% from 9 in 2004 to 64 in 2013.
- The age-adjusted drug overdose death rate from 2010-2014 was 14.4 per 100,000 population; a 50% increase from 2000-2014 (9.9 per 100,000 population).
- Those at most risk for drug poisoning-related deaths are white males ages 45-64. However, the largest increase in overdose deaths has been among blacks (of either sex) ages 55-64; in 2000-2004, the overdose death rate was 11.3 per 100,000 population and in 2010-2014, this rate increased to 37.8 per 100,000 population.

Growing Concerns
- Prescription drugs, including opioids, are frequently diverted for improper use
- Those addicted to prescription opioid painkillers are 40 times more likely to be addicted to heroin
- Heroin is typically injected; when people inject heroin, they are at risk of serious, chronic viral infections that include HIV and Hepatitis C

14.4 VS. 13.8
Per 100,000 Population
KCMO Drug Overdose Death Rate versus the National Average

Source: Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services and Kansas City, MO Health Department
From 2012 to 2015, overdose deaths due to heroin use have more than quadrupled on the Missouri side of the Kansas City metropolitan area. In some cases, opiates were deemed a contributing factor to the overdose.

Source: Jackson County Medical Examiner’s Office
