

# Health & Criminal Justice Data Committee

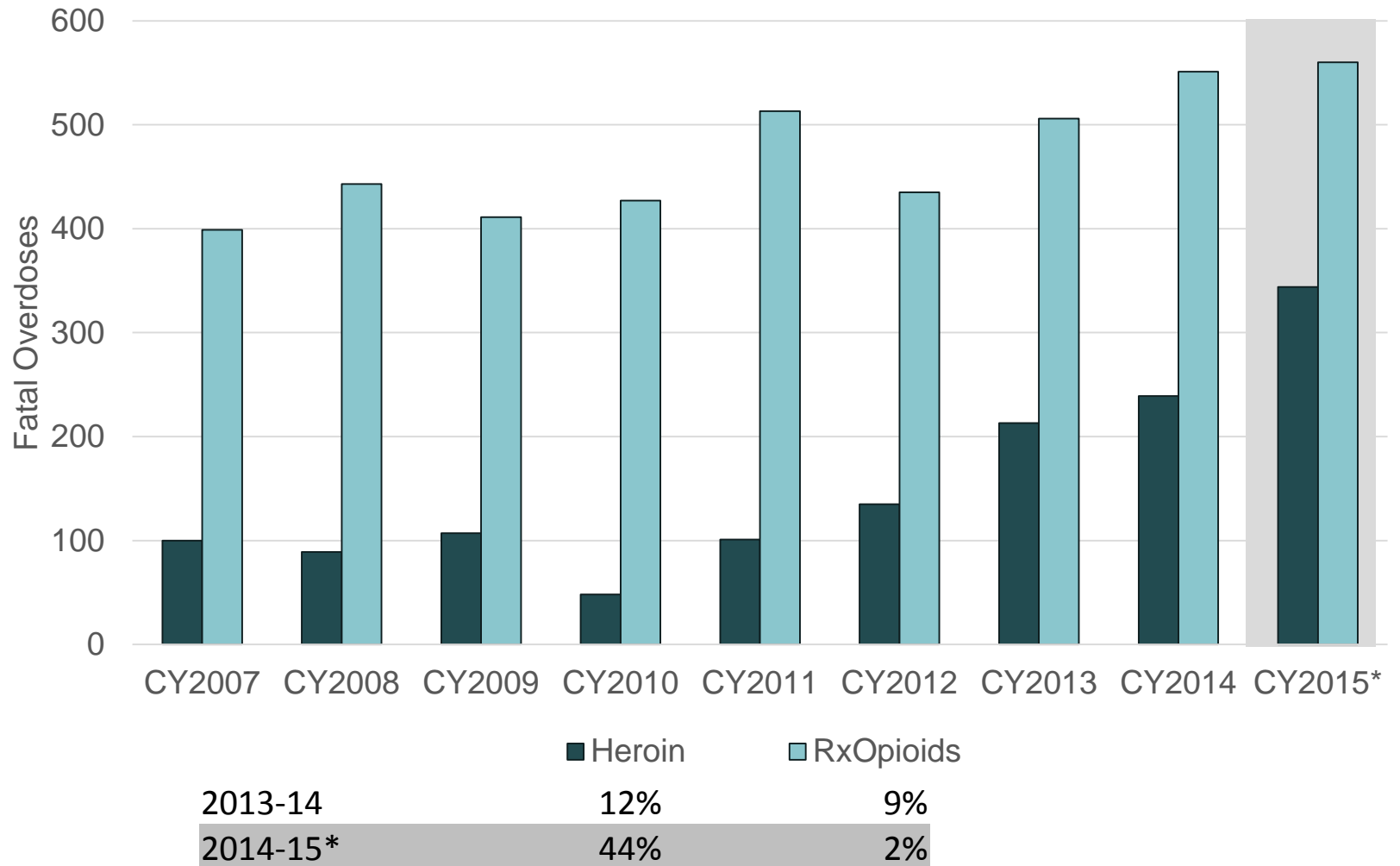
**Report to the Governor's Task Force on  
Prescription Drug and Heroin Abuse**  
Includes preliminary 2015 data

**May 4, 2016**

Presenting data from the Department of Forensic Science, and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and Office of Family Health Services at the Virginia Department of Health

# Fatal Overdose in Virginia: Prescription Opioids and Heroin

2015 data are incomplete. Presented here are predicted totals, subject to change.

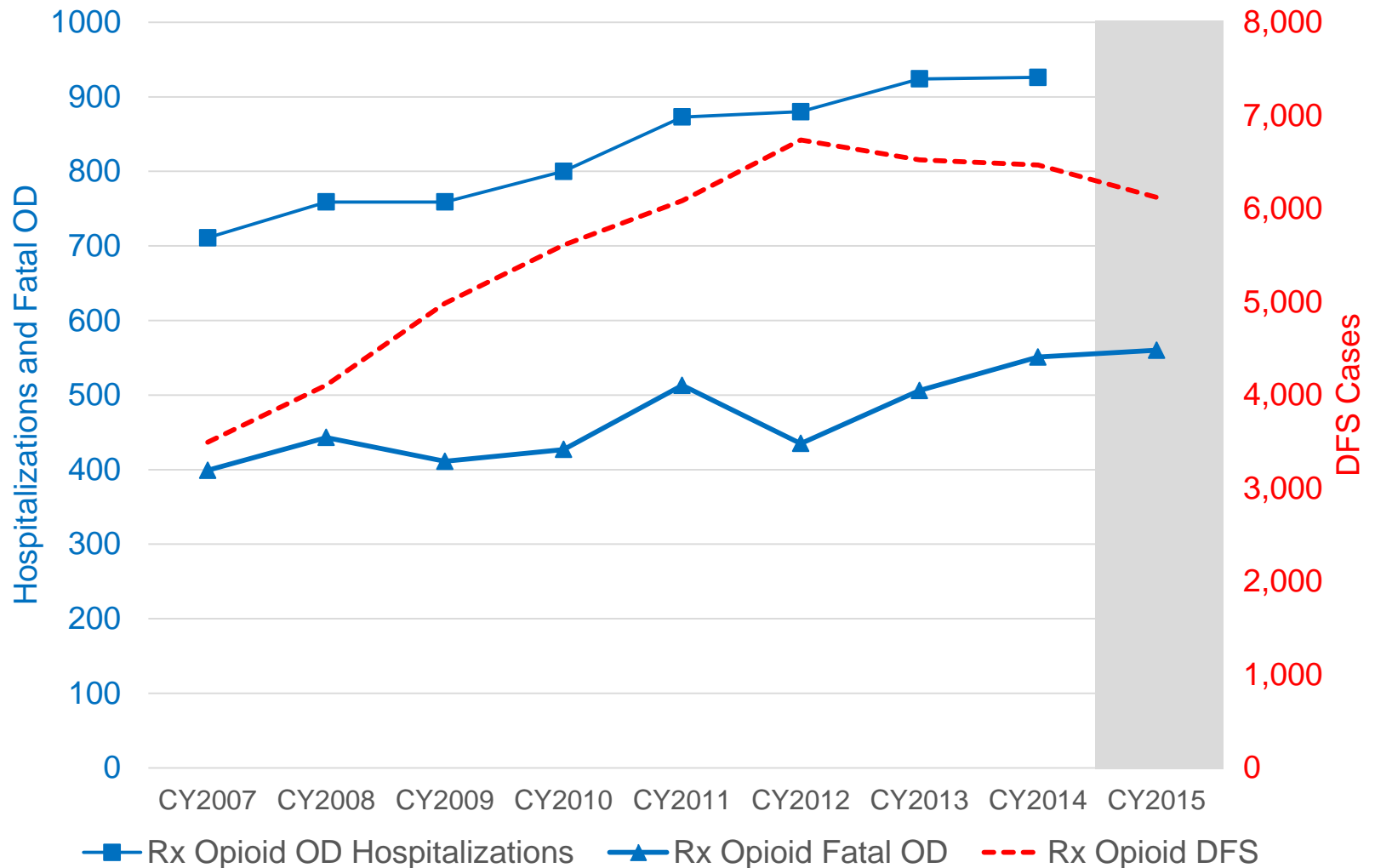


Data Source: OCME Fata Drug Overdose Quarterly Report <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/medExam/ForensicEpidemiology.htm>

\*2015 data are incomplete.

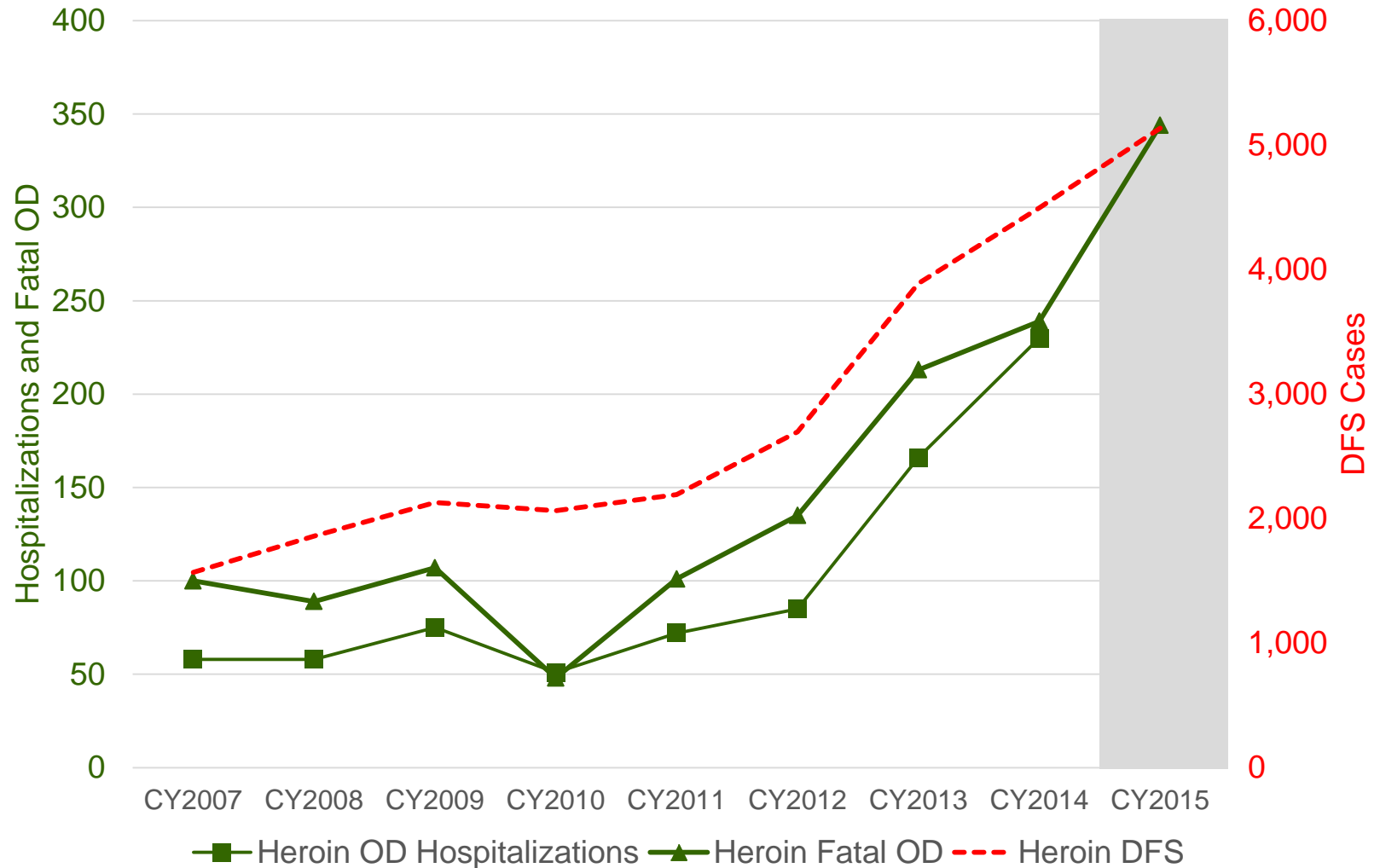
# Virginia Prescription Opioid Data

## Hospitalizations & Fatal Overdoses (Left Axis) and Cases Submitted to DFS (Right Axis)



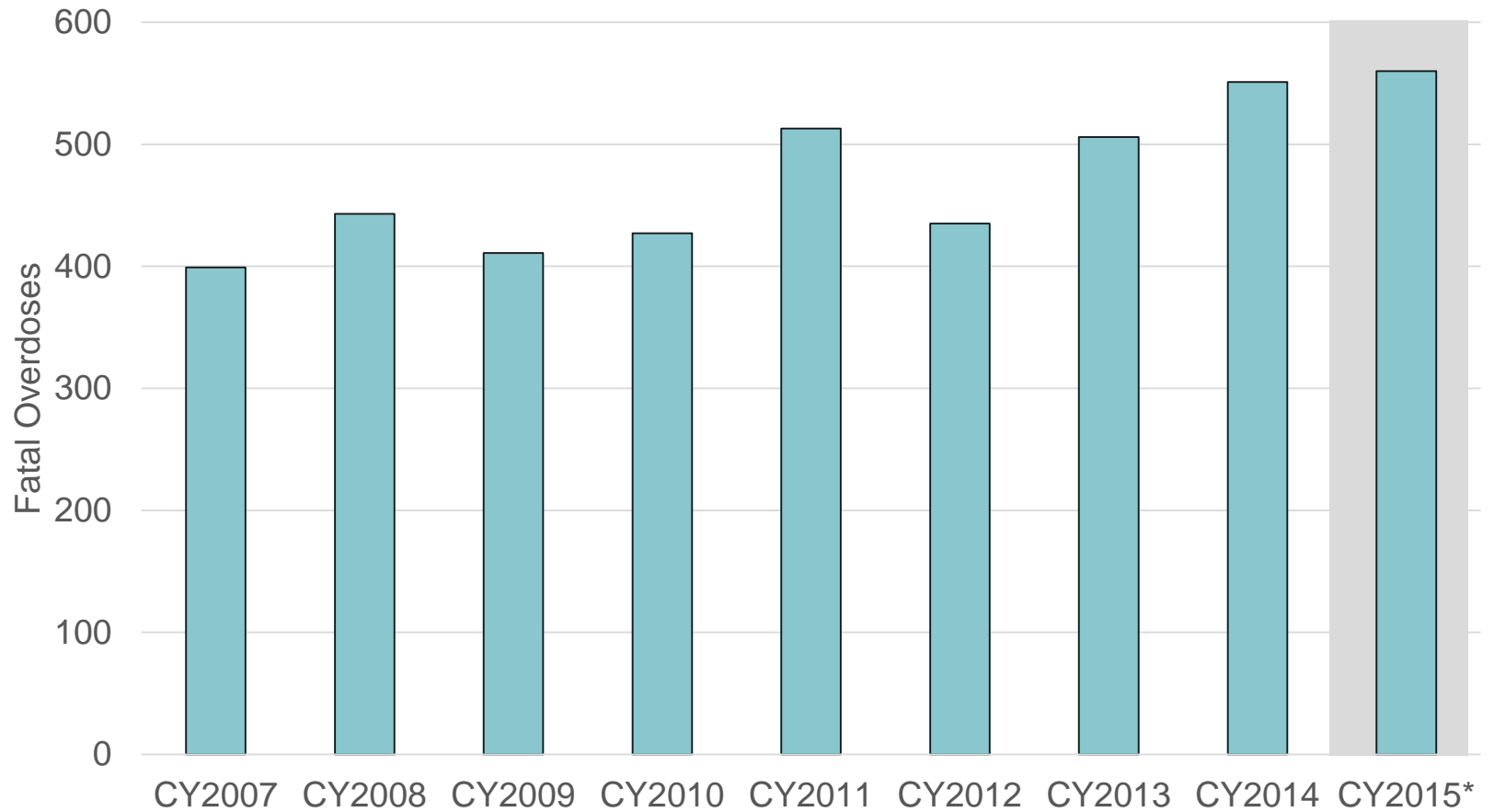
# Virginia Heroin Data

Hospital Discharges & Fatal Overdoses (Left Axis)  
and Cases Submitted to DFS (Right Axis)



# Fatal "Prescription Opioid" Overdoses

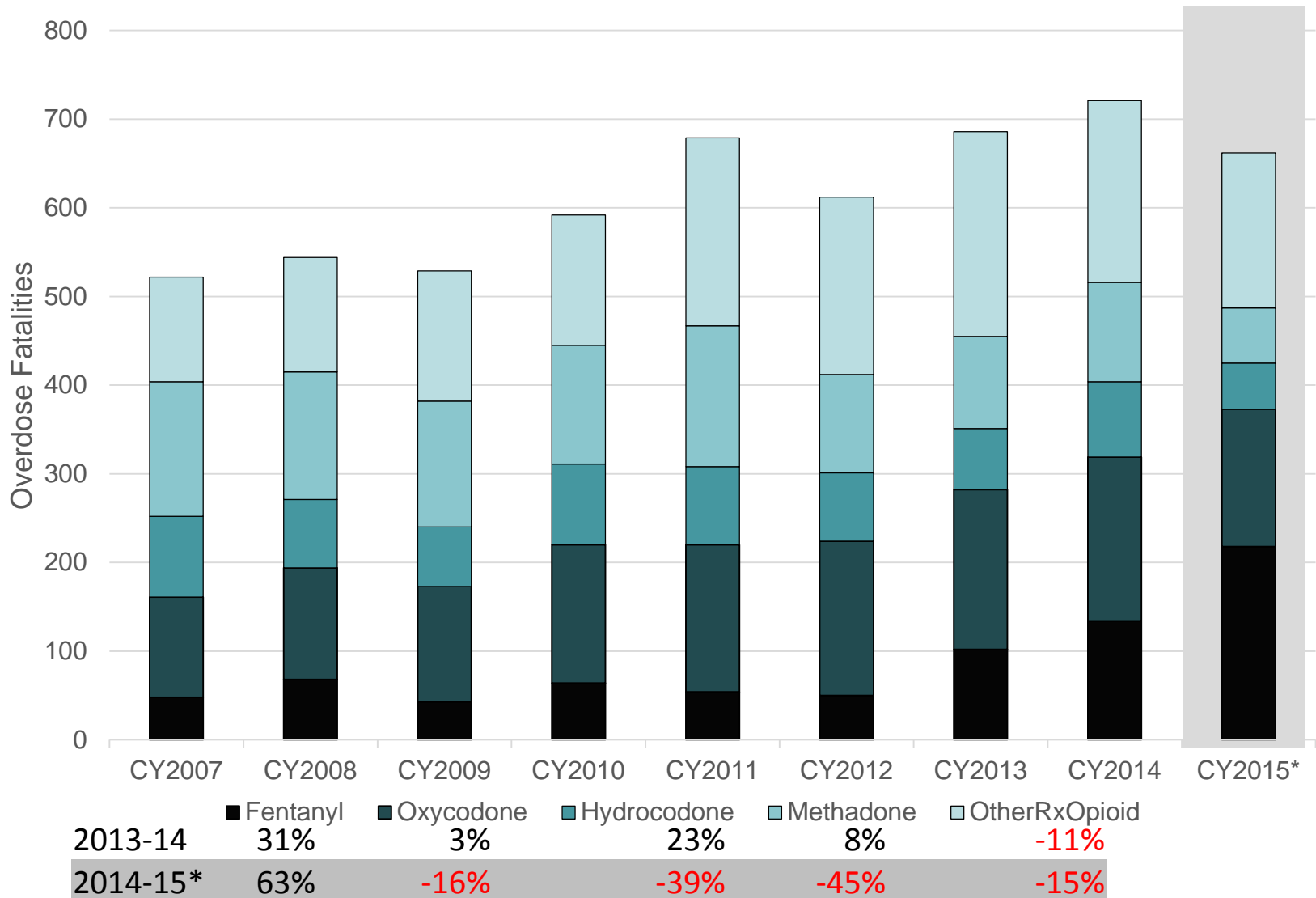
2015 data are incomplete. Presented here are predicted totals, subject to change.



2013-14	9%
2014-15*	2%

# “Prescription Opioid” Fatalities

2015 data are incomplete. Presented here are predicted totals, subject to change. Not directly comparable with total combined fatalities. Some fatalities involve more than one prescription opioid.



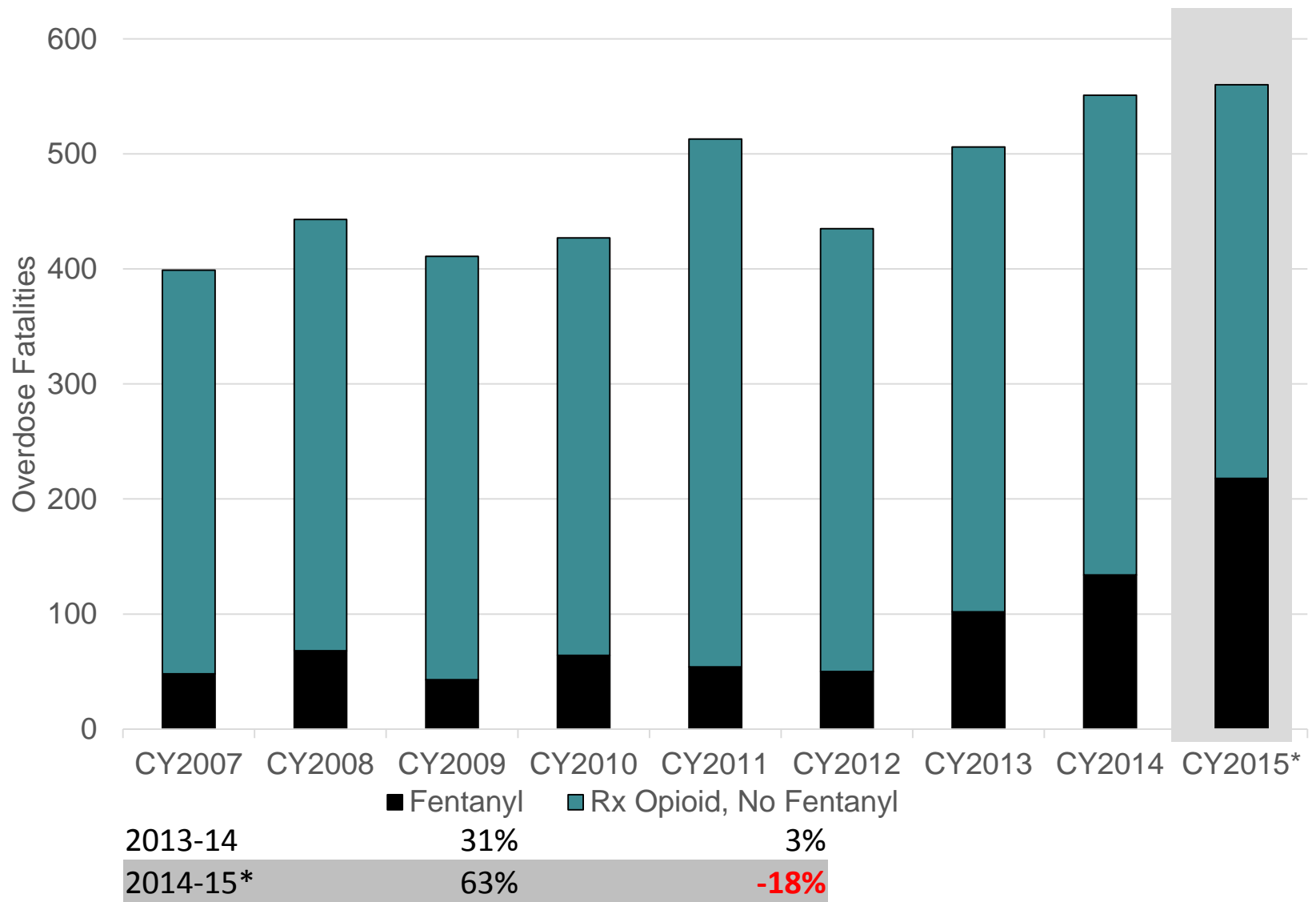
Data Source: OCME Fata Drug Overdose Quarterly Report <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/medExam/ForensicEpidemiology.htm>

\*2015 data are incomplete.

# Growth is in Fentanyl Overdose Fatalities

## Prescription Opioid Fatalities 2007-2015\*

2015 data are incomplete. Presented here are predicted totals, subject to change.



Data Source: OCME Fata Drug Overdose Quarterly Report <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/medExam/ForensicEpidemiology.htm>  
 \*2015 data are incomplete.

# How Should We Count Fentanyl?

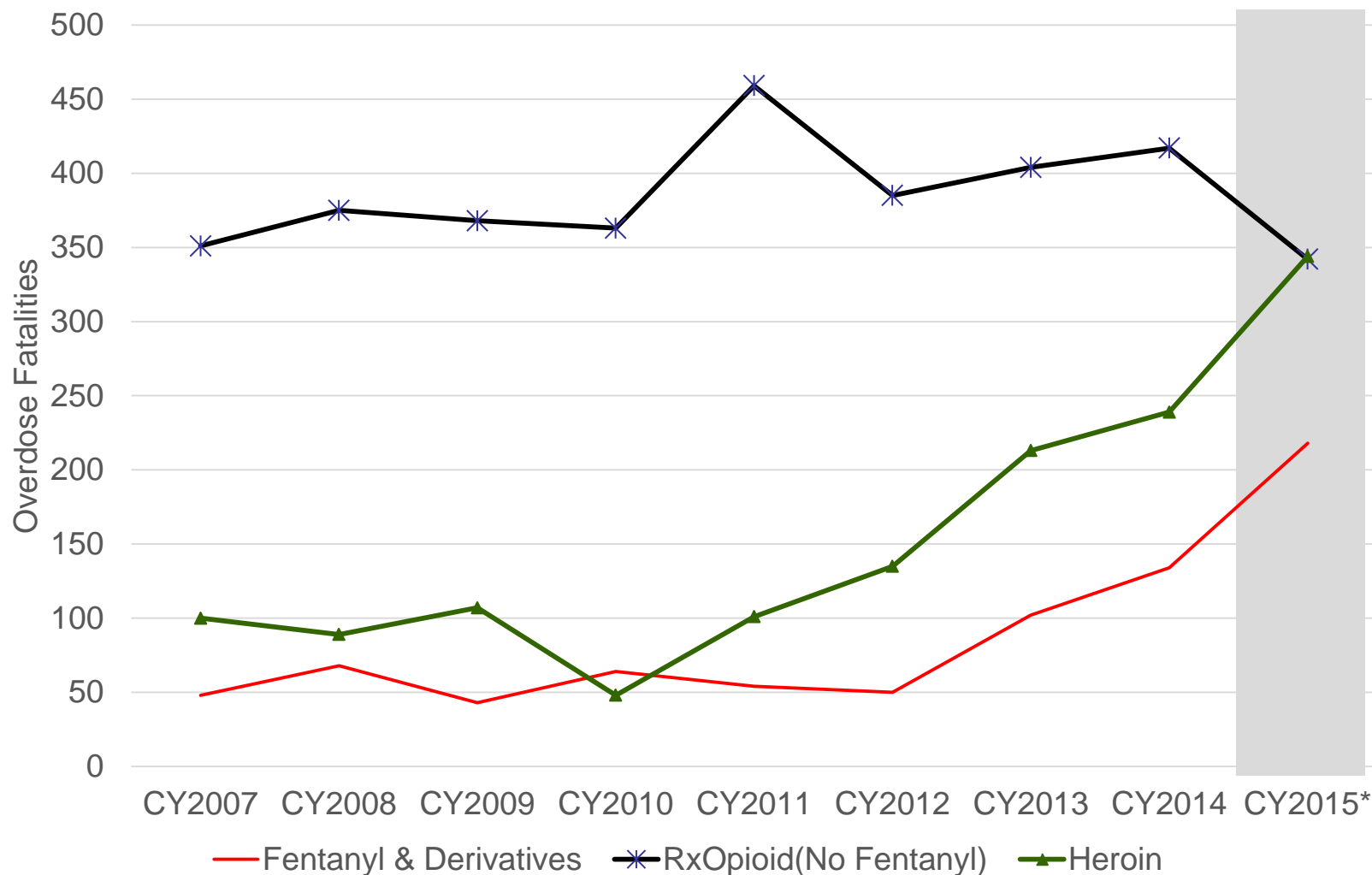
- Fentanyl is categorized as a prescription opioid because it is mass produced by pharmaceutical companies.
- Recent surge is due to illicitly-produced fentanyl, **not** the prescription drug.
- Illicit fentanyl appears to be produced in labs in Central and South America. Fentanyl derivatives (e.g., acetyl fentanyl) are produced in China.
- Both the illicit fentanyl and derivatives are smuggled into the U.S. by Mexican drug cartels, sometimes mixed with heroin.
- In prior analyses, fentanyl has been categorized with prescription drugs. Newer information indicates it would be more appropriate to look at it separately.



# Overdose Fatalities

## Heroin vs Prescription Opioids vs Fentanyl & Derivatives

2015 data are incomplete. Presented here are predicted totals, subject to change.

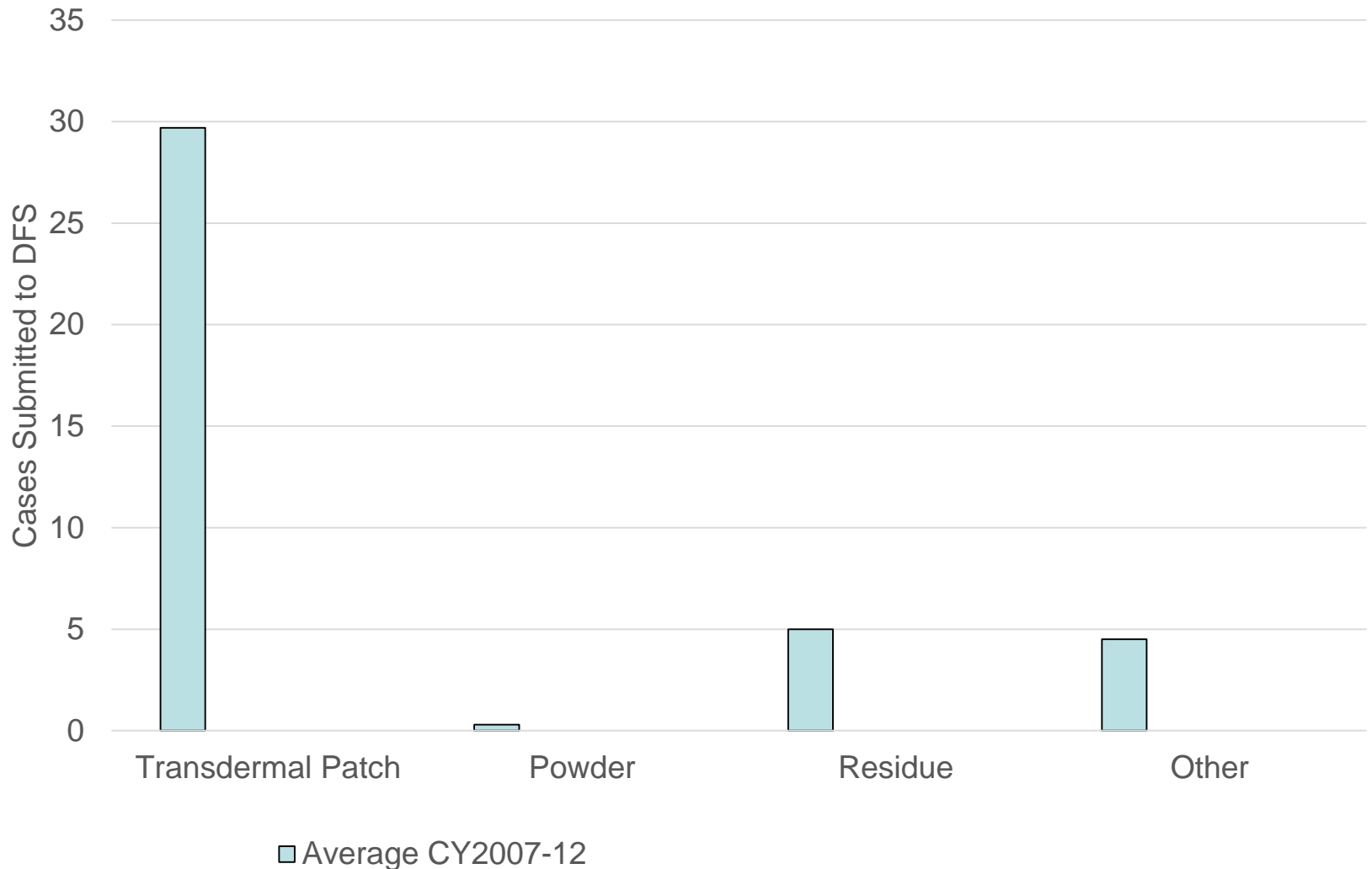


Data Source: OCME Fata Drug Overdose Quarterly Report <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/medExam/ForensicEpidemiology.htm>;

\*2015 data are incomplete.

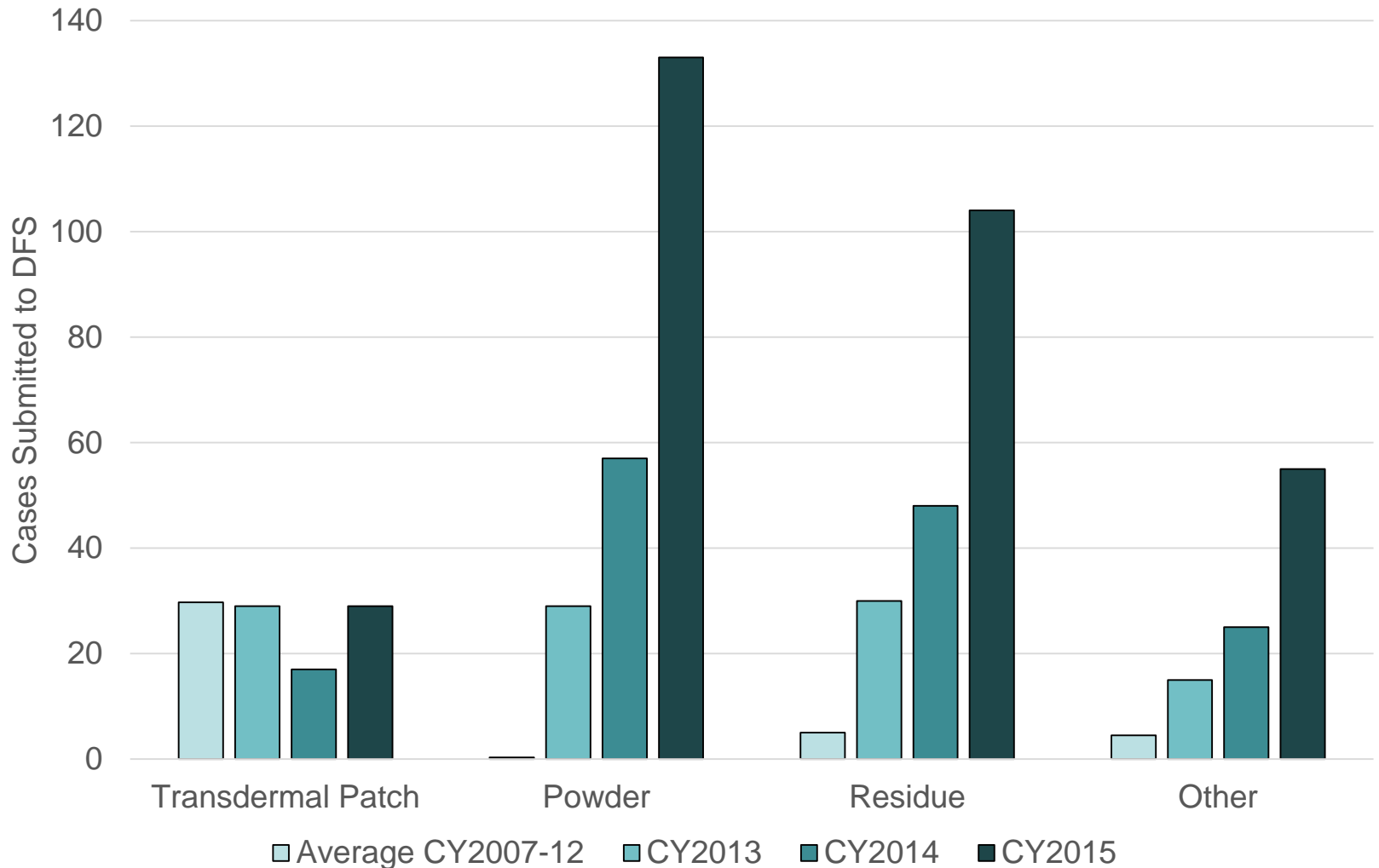
# Forms of Fentanyl – DFS Cases

Prior to 2013, most Fentanyl samples were in the form of a transdermal patch



# Forms of Fentanyl – DFS Cases

Beginning in late 2013, other forms of Fentanyl became much more common

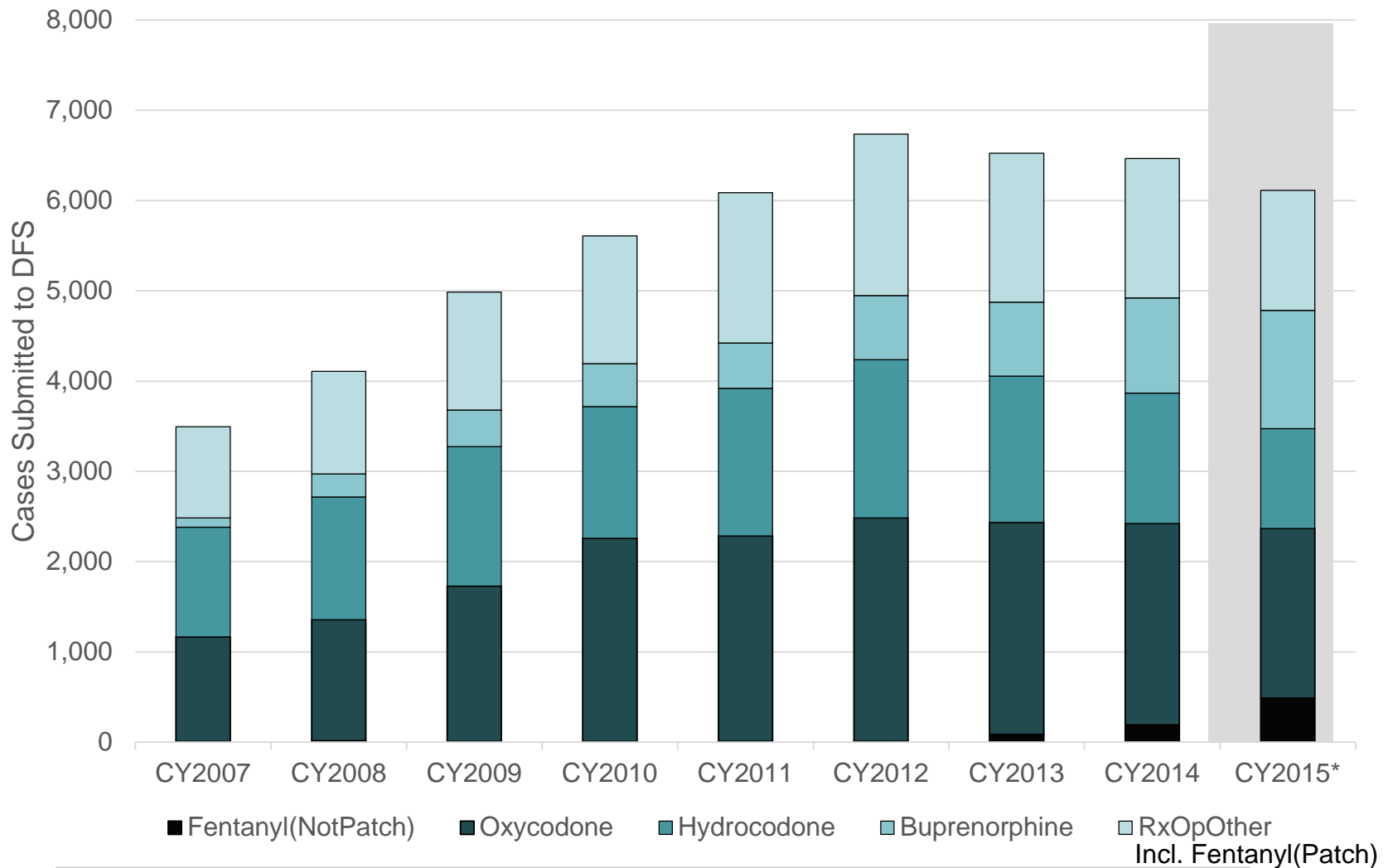


Data Source: DFS monthly submission to NFLIS.

\*2015 data are incomplete.

# Prescription Opioid DFS Cases

## 2015 Data Are Preliminary and Expected to Rise



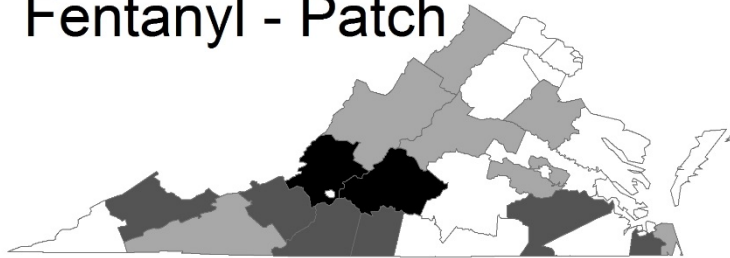
2013-14	125%	-5%	-11%	29%	-6%
2014-15*	155%	-16%	-23%	25%	-14%

Data Source: DFS monthly submission to NFLIS.  
 \*2015 data are incomplete.

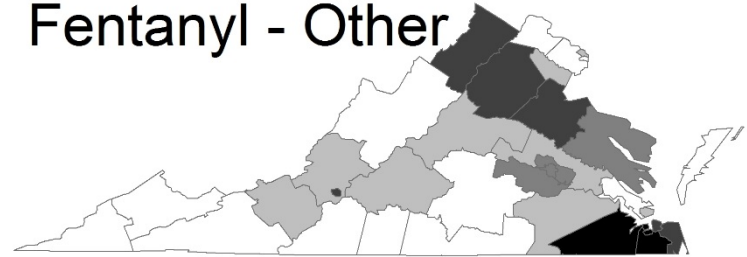
# DFS Case Distribution Across Virginia

Fentanyl(Patch) Compares with Rx Opioid; Fentanyl(Other) Compares with Heroin  
2015 Cases submitted to DFS, Rate per 100,000, By Health District

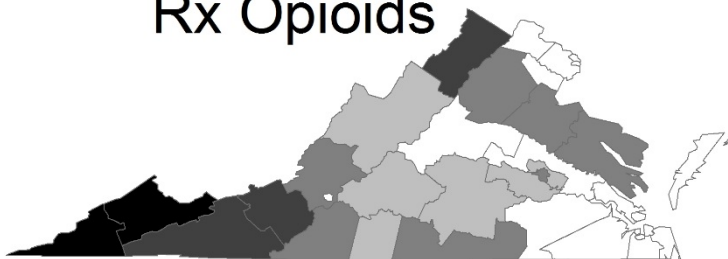
### Fentanyl - Patch



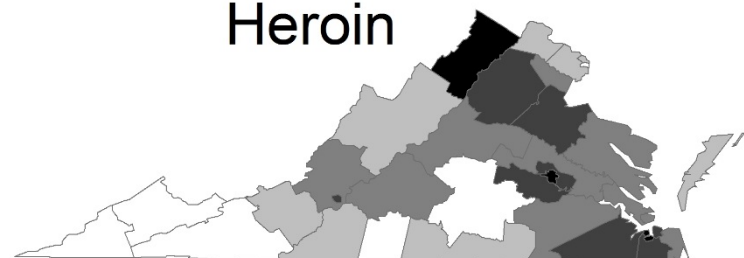
### Fentanyl - Other



### Rx Opioids



### Heroin

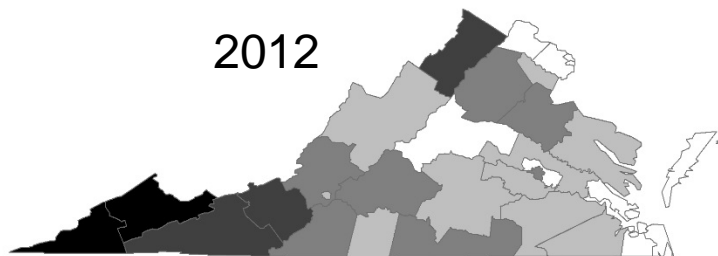


# DFS Prescription Opioid Cases, By Health District

Cases submitted to DFS, Rate per 100,000, By Health District

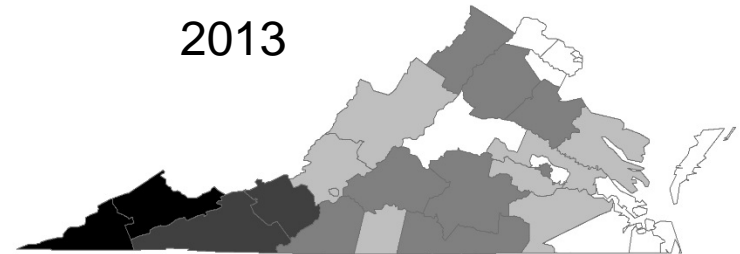
2015 Data Are Preliminary and Expected to Rise

Includes Fentanyl (Patch), excludes other forms of Fentanyl



2012

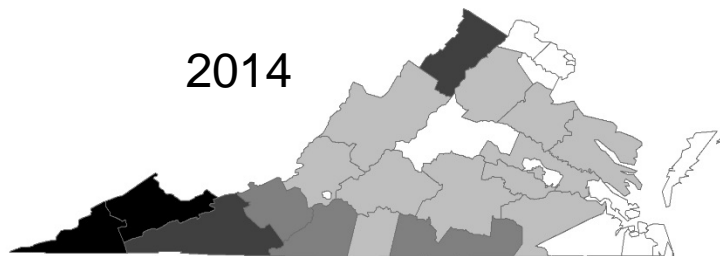
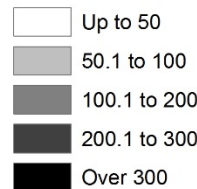
Statewide: 82.2



2013

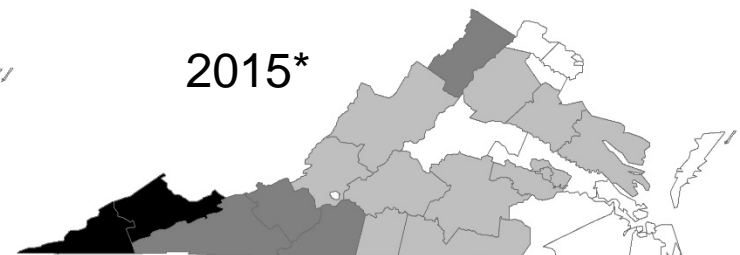
Statewide: 78.0

**Legend**



2014

Statewide: 75.4



2015\*

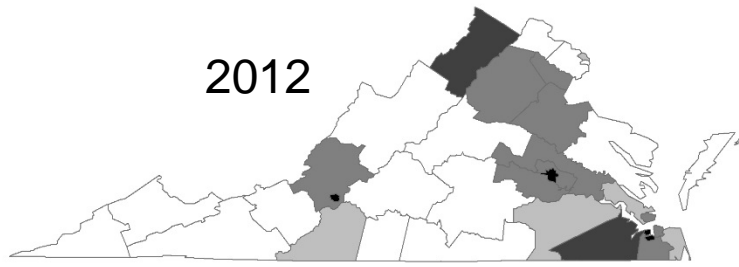
Statewide: 67.2

Data Source: DFS monthly submission to NFLIS.

\*2015 data are incomplete.

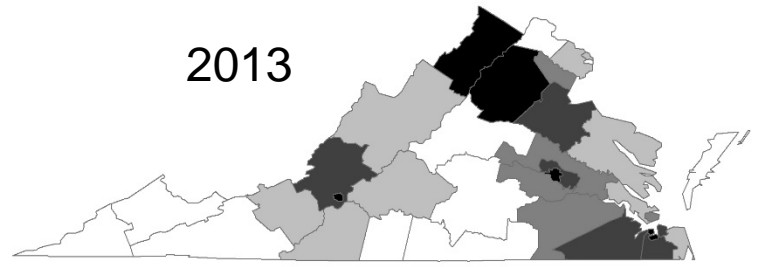
# DFS Heroin Cases, By Health District

Cases submitted to DFS, Rate per 100,000, By Health District  
 2015 Data Are Preliminary and Expected to Rise



2012

Statewide: 33.0

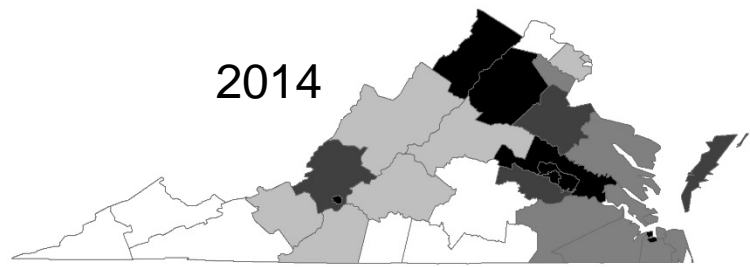


2013

Statewide: 47.1

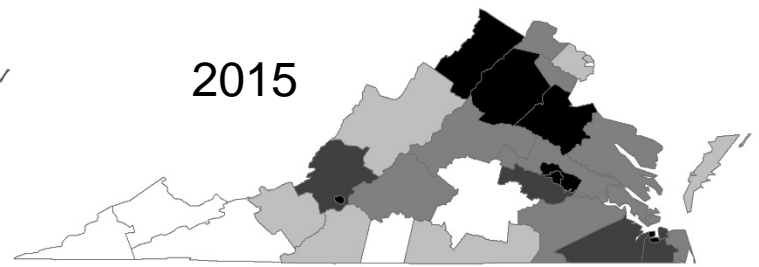
**Legend**

- Up to 15
- 15.1 to 30
- 30.1 to 60
- 60.1 to 90
- Over 90



2014

Statewide: 54.0



2015

Statewide: 61.3

Data Source: DFS monthly submission to NFLIS.  
 \*2015 data are incomplete.

# DFS Fentanyl & Derivatives Cases, By Health District

Cases submitted to DFS, Rate per 100,000, By Health District  
 2015 Data Are Preliminary and Expected to Rise

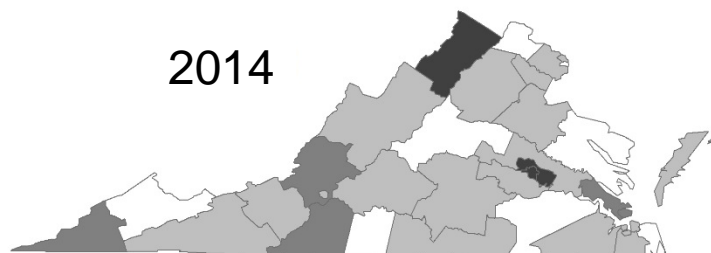
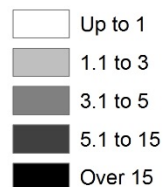


Statewide: 0.1

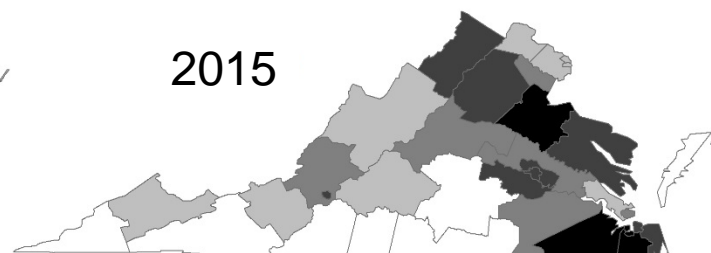


Statewide: 1.0

**Legend**



Statewide: 2.3



Statewide: 5.8

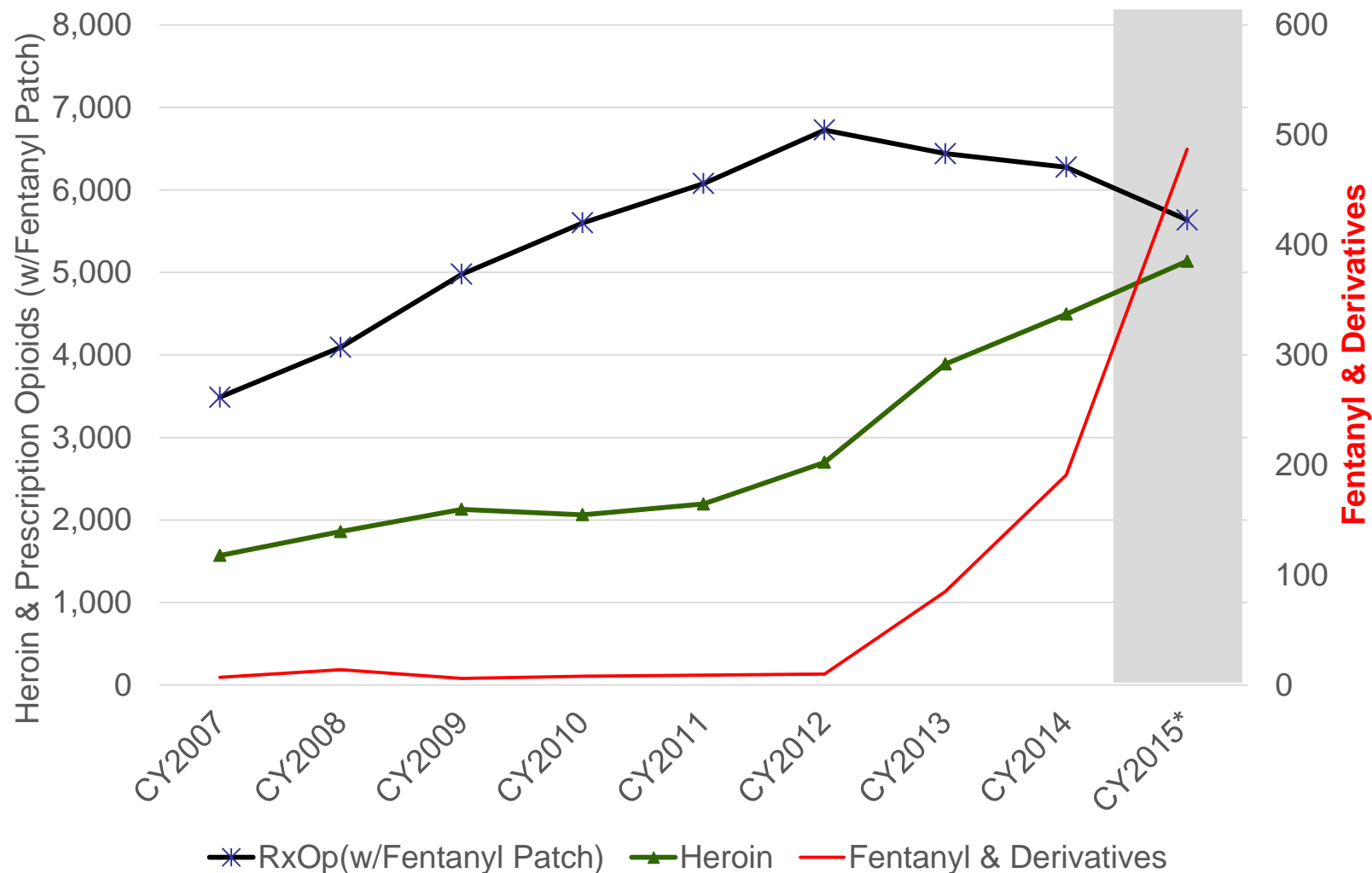
Data Source: DFS monthly submission to NFLIS.  
 \*2015 data are incomplete.



# Cases Submitted to DFS

Heroin vs Prescription Opioids (Left Axis) vs Fentanyl & Derivatives (Right Axis)

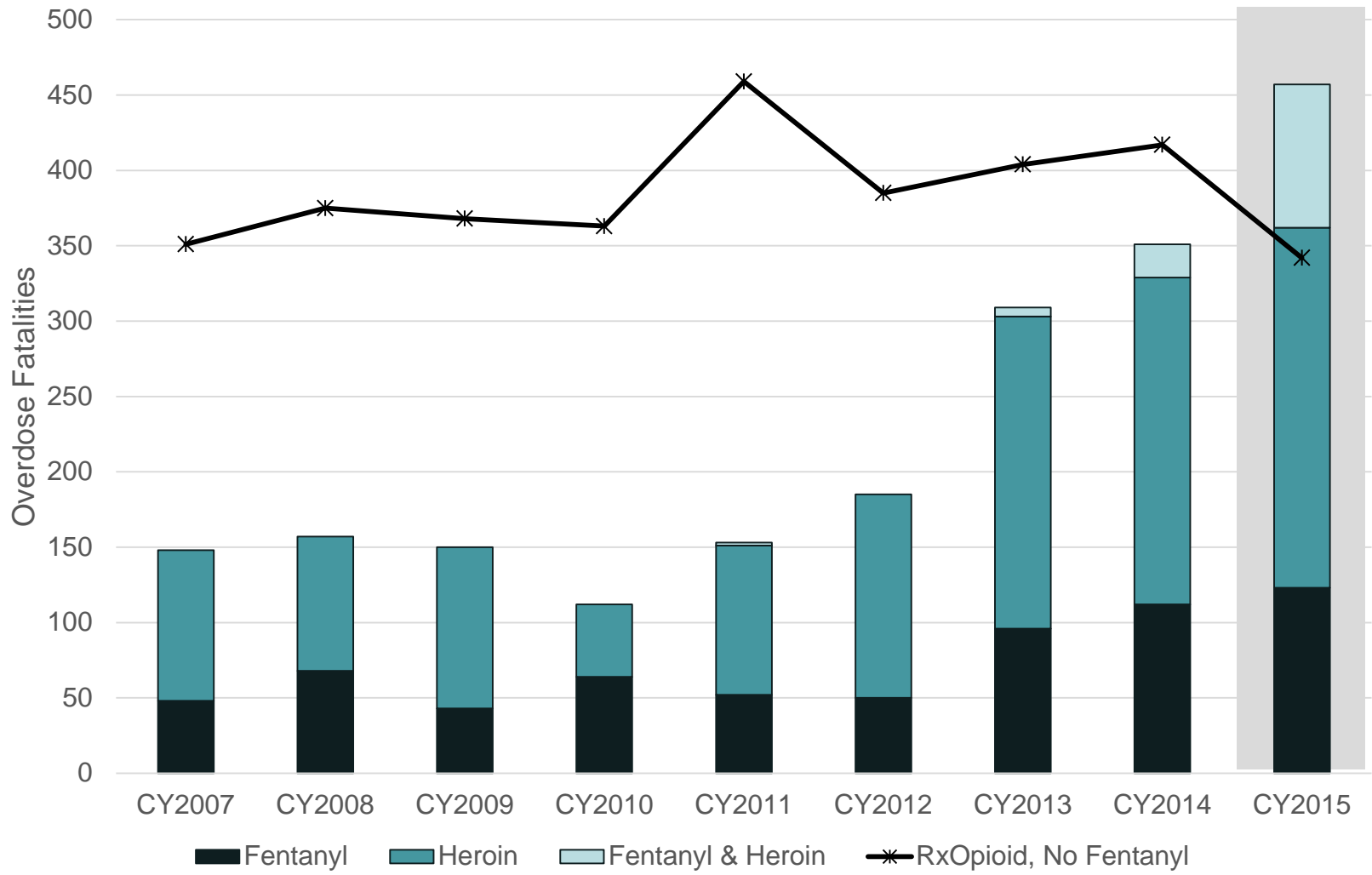
2015 data are incomplete.



Data Source: OCME Fata Drug Overdose Quarterly Report <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/medExam/ForensicEpidemiology.htm>; DFS monthly submission to NFLIS.  
\*2015 data are incomplete.

# Fatalities: Fentanyl and/or Heroin

2015 data are incomplete. Presented here are predicted totals, subject to change.



2013-14	17%	5%	267%	3%
2014-15*	10%	10%	332%	-18%

Data Source: OCME Fata Drug Overdose Quarterly Report <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/medExam/ForensicEpidemiology.htm>  
 \*2015 data are incomplete.

# Conclusions

- Unlike cases prior to 2013, the majority of fentanyl overdoses are the result of illicitly produced fentanyl, rather than prescription fentanyl.
- When fentanyl cases are excluded, preliminary 2015 data indicate a drop in fatal overdoses due to prescription opioids.
- Fatal overdoses due to heroin and fentanyl have risen sharply, exceeding fatalities due to prescription opioids.
- Although there are signs that actions taken to reduce prescription opioid overdoses are having an impact, there is no reason to believe that those actions would have a similar impact on illicitly produced fentanyl or heroin.

# Acknowledgments

## Special thanks to:

- Rosie Hobron, OCME
- John Przybylski, DFS
- Anne Zehner, OFHS