

NMSAC **FAST FACTS**

Opioid Test Results among New Mexico Probationers and Parolees

August 2018

The New Mexico Statistical Analysis Center (NMSAC) examined the urinalysis (UA) substance test results for probationers and parolees supervised by the New Mexico Corrections Department (NMCD). We highlight some findings regarding opioid use here.

Between 2004 and 2016, the NMCD administered **608,974** urinalyses tests for opioids; **5%** of the tests were positive for one or more opioids.

Most people were tested more than once.

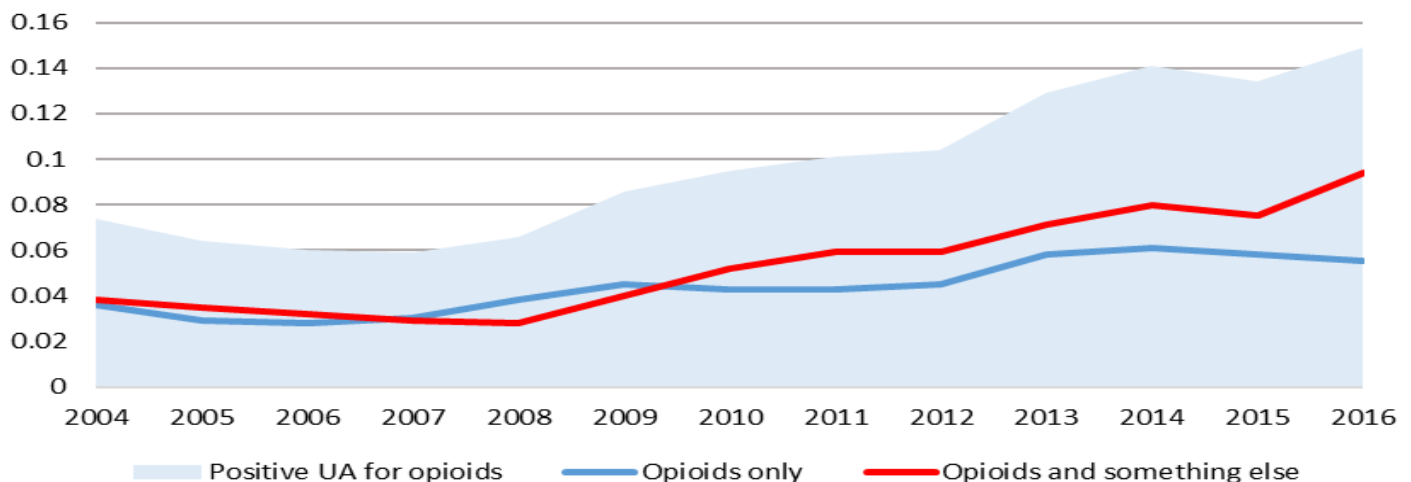
Of the **66,660** probationers and parolees tested for opioids, **16%** tested positive for opioids at least once between 2004 and 2016.

A greater proportion **20%** of females tested positive for opioids at least once compared to **15%** of males.

Individuals identified as Hispanic tested positive for opioids at the highest rates (**19%**), while Native Americans tested positive at the lowest (**7%**).

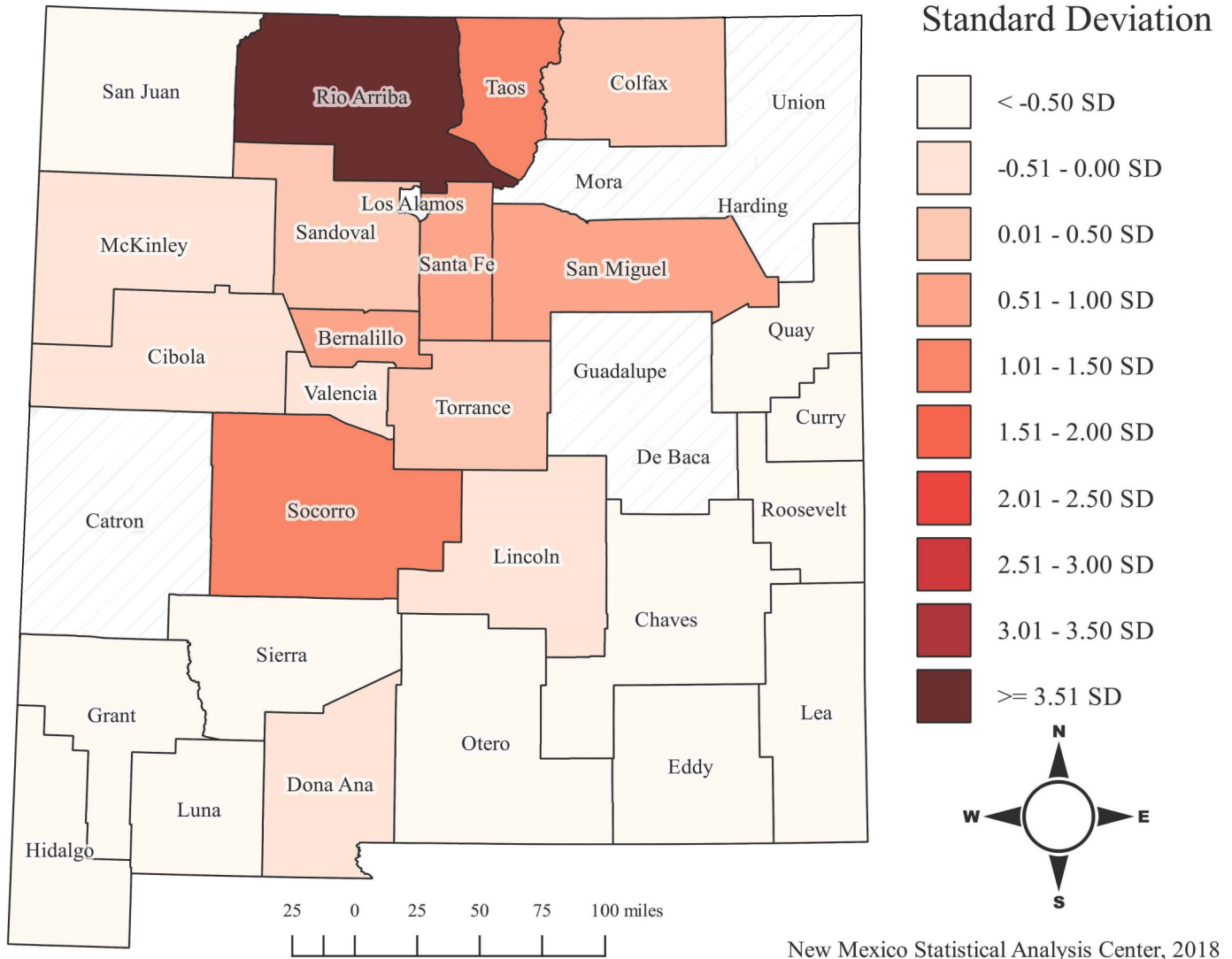
Opioid users were older on average (**35 years old**) than those who tested positive for other substances (**34 years old**).

Opioid use alone or with another substance, 2004-2016



Positive opioid results per person increased over time, as shown by the light blue background in the figure above. The proportion of individuals who tested positive for opioids and one or more other substances each year was similar to those who tested positive for opioids alone until 2009. After that, the proportion who tested positive for opioids and another substance exceeded those who tested positive for opioids alone. This trend has continued in recent years.

Positive tests for opioids by county, 2004-2016



Substance use tests are recorded by the county of the probation/parole office ordering the UA. Opioid detection rates for probationers and parolees varied throughout New Mexico. Between 2004 and 2016, Rio Arriba County had the highest average rates of opioid detection in the state. This is congruent with New Mexico overdose-related death rates, which are consistently highest in Rio Arriba (New Mexico Department of Health, 2017). These deaths are largely attributable to opioids (ibid). Socorro and Taos Counties have the next highest average rates of opioid detection. Taos is known to have long-standing problems with multi-generational heroin use (New Mexico Investigative Support Center, New Mexico HIDTA, 2018), and while not the highest, Taos has above average rates of drug-overdose deaths (New Mexico Department of Health, 2017). Bernalillo, Santa Fe, San Miguel, and Torrance counties report moderate rates of opioid-positive tests, while rates in Sandoval, McKinley, and Colfax counties cluster near the average. Opioid detection rates were below average in the remaining reporting counties. Overall, opioid use among probationer and parolees tends to be highest in the northern and central counties within New Mexico while the southwest and southeastern/eastern counties of the state are lowest.

More information is available in the full-length version of this report. The full report can be obtained by contacting:

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