

Opioid Deaths At Record Levels Locally

By **Pamela Vanmeer** - January 8, 2021

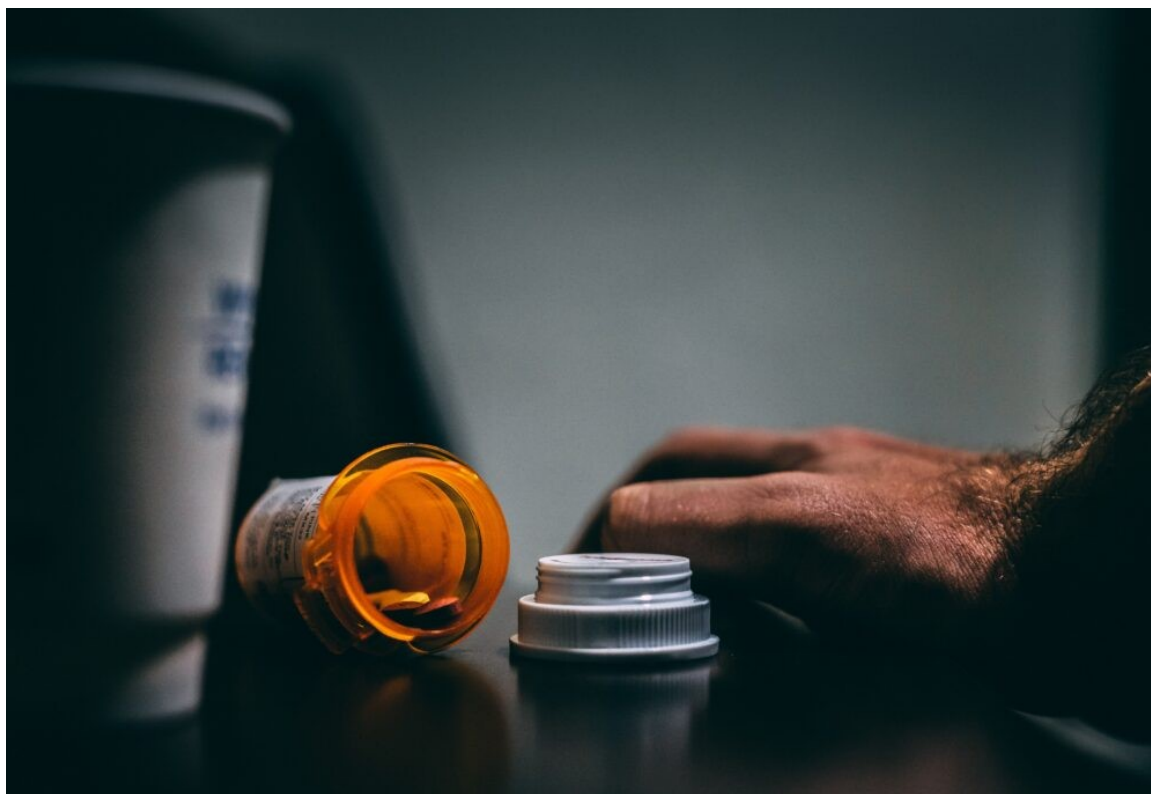


Photo by Kevin Bidwell from Pexels

KAWARTHA LAKES-According to data obtained from Public Health Ontario, 2020 could be the deadliest year yet for Opioid overdoses and deaths locally.

For the first eight months of 2020 there were 25 confirmed or probable deaths from Opioid overdoses in the Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge (HKPR) District Health Unit catchment area. That's 25% higher than the total for the entire year in 2019. There were 20 deaths in 2019.

In 2018 the numbers spiked to a record high of 30 deaths but in 2016 there was only 8 deaths and 10 in 2017.

The data for the final four months of 2020 is not yet available.

"Public Health Ontario (PHO) receives its data from the coroner's office, and the data in that too can lag as it can take 6 months or longer for opioid-related deaths to be confirmed by the coroner." PHO media relations told Kawartha 411 News.

Emergency department visits also jumped to the highest level since 2003 locally. In 2019 data from Public Health Ontario shows 10,478 ED visits in 2019, up from 9,154 in 2018. 1,995 of those were hospitalized in 2019. That's down slightly from 2018 when 2,110 people were hospitalized.