

Averhealth 2020 Annual Report

A Significant Rise in Substance Use During a Pandemic



2020 EXPERIENCED A MEANINGFUL INCREASE OF SUBSTANCE USE

Substance use saw a meaningful increase in 2020 – with a 33% increase in the alcohol positivity rates compared to the previous year. This data was released today by Averhealth, a substance use monitoring company that helps people navigate the intersection of health care and criminal justice. Averhealth has a national footprint serving more than 550,000 active clients nationwide and 2,700 programs.

In 2020, within Averhealth’s national footprint, there was a significant increase in positivity rates across specific drug classes such as, Methadone by 21%, Cannabinoids by 20%, and Amphetamines by 18%, while other drugs have seen a decline in positivity rates: Opiates by 12%, Benzodiazepines by 11%, and Cocaine by 5% (see Table 1). In addition to the positivity rates across specific drug classes, the programs Averhealth serves have also seen their positivity rates fluctuate this past year. Among the programs that experienced a significant increase were Treatment by 16%, Veterans Court by 15%, and DWI Court by 14%. Only two programs saw a decrease in positivity rates, Drug Courts by 13% and Workplace by 8% (see Table 2).

However, although Averhealth has not closed any of its patient care centers since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure their clients receive the care they need, many probation and social service agencies have limited their drug testing. This has potentially impacted positivity rates across different drug classes and programs.

Even with limited drug testing during this time, it is important to note the rise in positivity rates for specific substances such as alcohol, which has increased by 33% since 2019 (Table 1). Assumptions can be made that increased use of alcohol correlated with the COVID-19 pandemic. While most businesses were closed due to social distancing and restrictions, liquor stores were given an ‘essential business’ title and allowed to remain open. Other substances may also have increased during this time due to availability, and especially cannabinoids being recently legalized in many states.

Table 1. Average Positivity Rates by Drug Category Across Averhealth’s National Footprint.

Drug Class	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Alcohol	1.8%	2.5%	2.5%	2.8%	3.0%	3.3%	4.4%
Amphetamines	2.6%	3.0%	3.3%	3.3%	3.9%	4.9%	5.8%
Benzodiazepines	1.7%	2.5%	2.5%	2.4%	2.2%	1.9%	1.7%
Buprenorphine	1.3%	2.8%	7.7%	9.1%	13.3%	12.5%	12.2%
Cannabinoids Natural	4.8%	5.8%	7.2%	8.2%	9.4%	11.1%	13.3%
Cocaine	0.7%	0.9%	1.4%	1.5%	1.7%	1.9%	1.8%
Fentanyl	0.2%	1.3%	3.0%	2.2%	2.4%	2.4%	2.7%
Methadone	0.6%	0.4%	1.3%	1.8%	2.3%	2.9%	3.5%
Opiates	3.1%	4.1%	3.7%	2.9%	2.6%	2.5%	2.2%

Table 2. Average Annual Positivity Rates by Program Type Across Averhealth’s National Footprint. (~1.5 million tests in 2020)

Program Type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Drug Court	9%	11%	13%	13%	14%	15%	13%
DWI Court	6%	7%	7%	8%	8%	7%	8%
Family Court	18%	19%	19%	20%	26%	40%	42%
General	21%	24%	29%	24%	27%	22%	25%
Juvenile Court	26%	30%	30%	33%	35%	35%	36%
Mental Health	13%	16%	16%	13%	17%	16%	17%
Pretrial	15%	15%	19%	34%	35%	28%	30%
Probation	17%	21%	24%	24%	25%	26%	27%
Treatment	15%	26%	24%	24%	30%	32%	37%
Veterans Court	10%	12%	14%	15%	13%	13%	15%
Workplace	20%	20%	21%	25%	24%	25%	23%

Table 3. Percent of Tests Processed in Averhealth’s Regions by Year

Region	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Midwest	39.7%	41.2%	36.2%	27.7%	23.8%	20.4%	18.9%
Southeast	8.9%	8.1%	8.4%	10.1%	12.6%	13.3%	11.1%
West	29.3%	27.7%	23.7%	17.4%	15.4%	20.7%	30.3%
Great Lakes	13.9%	14.0%	14.4%	11.7%	12.2%	12.1%	11.1%
Northeast	8.1%	7.9%	12.1%	15.5%	16.5%	15.5%	13.7%
Southcentral	NA	1.1%	5.2%	17.6%	19.5%	18.0%	14.9%

The following report analysis showcases the positivity rates by program type and drug class for each region which comes from Averhealth’s testing and client information tracked in Aversys, the web-based application. The following charts showcase Averhealth data from the years 2014 to 2020.

U.S. Midwest Region

In the Midwest Region, program types that trended dangerously upward in positivity rates included, Pretrial by 64%, Family Court by 44%, while many programs remained neutral; DWI Courts, Mental Health Courts, and Treatments at the same rates as 2019 (see Table 4). Surprisingly, many drug class positivity rates decreased for this region. Most significantly, Cocaine usage was down by 38%, Benzodiazepines by 36% and Opiates by 32% (see Table 5).

Table 4. Annual Positivity Rates by Program Type for Averhealth’s Midwest Region (~292K tests in 2020)

Program Type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Drug Court	8%	12%	14%	14%	16%	17%	14%
DWI Court	5%	7%	8%	9%	9%	8%	8%
Family Court	12%	10%	14%	16%	17%	16%	23%
General	23%	26%	35%	33%	32%	31%	35%
Juvenile Court	24%	27%	27%	30%	33%	33%	32%
Mental Health	15%	19%	27%	20%	30%	30%	30%
Pretrial	17%	15%	24%	31%	25%	22%	36%
Probation	6%	26%	25%	25%	25%	25%	28%
Treatment	-	30%	29%	29%	27%	28%	28%
Veterans Court	8%	10%	15%	14%	11%	15%	16%
Workplace	29%	28%	29%	31%	32%	33%	30%

Table 5. Positivity Rates by Drug Category for Averhealth’s Midwest Region

Drug Class	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Alcohol	1.0%	2.4%	2.1%	2.1%	2.0%	1.9%	2.2%
Amphetamines	1.5%	3.0%	3.2%	3.5%	3.7%	4.1%	4.2%
Benzodiazepines	1.6%	3.0%	3.1%	2.9%	3.1%	2.5%	1.6%
Buprenorphine	3.9%	4.9%	7.0%	3.4%	8.6%	9.5%	10.6%
Cannabinoids Natural	3.6%	5.5%	6.2%	6.1%	6.6%	6.6%	5.6%
Cocaine	0.5%	0.8%	0.9%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.5%
Fentanyl	-	1.6%	4.3%	1.7%	3.2%	2.1%	1.6%
Methadone	1.5%	0.4%	1.2%	1.6%	1.2%	0.8%	0.8%
Opiates	2.7%	4.0%	3.9%	3.0%	2.3%	1.9%	1.3%

U.S. Southeast Region

In the Southeast region, some program types saw an increase in positivity rates, most notably Veterans Court by 25%, Juvenile Court by 21%, and DWI Court by 17% (see Table 6). Similarly, most drug classes saw their positivity rates increase, such as Fentanyl by 129%, Methadone by 27%, Cannabinoids and Amphetamines by 19%; Cocaine and Opiates positivity rate stayed the same from year 2019; and Buprenorphine use decreased by 27% (see Table 7).

Table 6. Annual Positivity Rates by Program Type for Averhealth’s Southeast Region (~171K tests in 2020)

Program Type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Drug Court	8%	8%	8%	8%	7%	8%	9%
DWI Court	29%	28%	7%	8%	7%	6%	7%
Family Court	-	-	-	-	52%	48%	48%
General	20%	21%	32%	33%	33%	21%	23%
Juvenile Court	-	-	-	-	49%	33%	40%
Mental Health	31%	27%	21%	16%	15%	15%	14%
Pretrial	-	-	36%	40%	37%	40%	39%
Probation	35%	35%	34%	35%	37%	41%	39%
Veterans Court	22%	22%	19%	18%	14%	16%	20%

Table 7. Positivity Rates by Drug Category for Averhealth’s Southeast Region

Drug Class	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Alcohol	8.3%	8.1%	5.2%	3.7%	4.1%	4.6%	5.1%
Amphetamines	1.3%	1.8%	1.7%	1.5%	3.4%	5.2%	6.2%
Benzodiazepines	3.4%	3.8%	1.3%	1.1%	1.4%	1.4%	1.5%
Buprenorphine	0.3%	0.4%	1.0%	4.4%	6.0%	15.2%	11.1%
Cannabinoids Natural	8.4%	7.2%	6.4%	6.2%	7.4%	7.9%	9.4%
Cocaine	1.7%	2.0%	2.0%	1.6%	2.2%	2.4%	2.4%
Fentanyl	-	-	-	0.5%	0.6%	0.7%	1.6%
Methadone	-	-	0.0%	0.1%	1.1%	1.5%	1.9%
Opiates	5.0%	6.1%	3.9%	2.7%	3.0%	3.2%	3.2%

U.S. West Region

In the West, program types saw some of the largest increases in positivity rates in 2020: Veterans Court by 120%, Mental Health by 100%, and Drug Court by 40% (see Table 8). Some of the drug classes also experienced increases in positivity rates, such as Alcohol by 59%, Cannabinoids by 51% and Methadone by 24%. However, Benzodiazepines, Buprenorphine and Opiates had decrease in usage by 12%, 11% and 7% accordingly; and Cocaine and Fentanyl had no change in their numbers (see Table 9).

Table 8. Annual Positivity Rates by Program Type for Averhealth’s West Region (~468K tests in 2020)

Program Type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Drug Court	11%	11%	13%	13%	10%	10%	14%
DWI Court	2%	12%	15%	15%	11%	6%	7%
Family Court	19%	22%	19%	19%	22%	24%	27%
General	11%	18%	12%	30%	43%	25%	31%
Juvenile Court	-	-	30%	33%	39%	27%	33%
Mental Health	5%	4%	6%	5%	11%	8%	16%
Pretrial	15%	15%	17%	19%	28%	15%	19%
Probation	15%	15%	15%	15%	17%	20%	22%
Treatment	15%	20%	18%	15%	19%	20%	22%
Veterans Court	-	-	23%	17%	16%	5%	11%
Workplace	7%	9%	9%	13%	12%	10%	11%

Table 9. Positivity Rates by Drug Category for Averhealth’s West Region

Drug Class	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Alcohol	1.9%	2.2%	2.4%	1.9%	2.4%	3.2%	5.1%
Amphetamines	5.0%	4.8%	5.1%	4.3%	4.4%	5.5%	6.6%
Benzodiazepines	2.2%	3.1%	2.5%	2.2%	1.7%	1.7%	1.5%
Buprenorphine	2.7%	3.9%	1.4%	2.8%	2.6%	11.1%	9.9%
Cannabinoids Natural	4.9%	5.2%	6.4%	6.9%	8.2%	8.6%	13.0%
Cocaine	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.4%	0.6%	0.6%
Fentanyl	0.4%	1.2%	1.8%	0.8%	2.1%	3.7%	3.7%
Methadone	0.2%	0.8%	2.5%	3.2%	1.4%	3.3%	4.1%
Opiates	3.2%	4.2%	3.5%	3.1%	2.7%	2.8%	2.6%

Southcentral Region

In the Southcentral Region, some of the program types had increase in annual positive rates in 2020, most notably, DWI Court by 27%, General Courts by 15% and Probation by 10%, and some program types had decrease in their numbers, such as Mental Health by 41%, Family Court by 39% and Drug Court by 8% (see Table 10). Similarly, some of the drug classes experienced increase in positivity rates, such as Fentanyl by 25%, Amphetamines by 15% and Cocaine by 13%, while others had a decrease in their numbers: Buprenorphine by 51%, Methadone by 33% and Opiates by 10% (see Table 11).

Table 10. Annual Positivity Rates by Program Type for Averhealth’s Southcentral Region (~230K tests in 2020)

Program Type	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Drug Court	13%	14%	16%	16%	12%	11%
DWI Court	-	-	15%	12%	11%	14%
Family Court	-	-	11%	19%	36%	22%
General	-	19%	16%	19%	20%	23%
Juvenile Court	-	-	50%	40%	41%	43%
Mental Health	-	-	-	71%	64%	38%
Pretrial	14%	20%	36%	36%	36%	39%
Probation	16%	23%	22%	22%	21%	23%
Veterans Court	-	21%	10%	14%	11%	11%

Table 11. Positivity Rates by Drug Category for Averhealth’s Southcentral Region

Drug Class	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Alcohol	2.3%	5.7%	6.3%	5.0%	5.1%	5.3%
Amphetamines	0.8%	3.1%	3.3%	3.6%	3.4%	3.9%
Benzodiazepines	1.6%	1.6%	2.1%	1.8%	1.4%	1.3%
Buprenorphine	-	-	-	-	36.6%	17.9%
Cannabinoids Natural	3.8%	9.4%	9.9%	10.1%	9.3%	10.0%
Cocaine	1.4%	1.7%	1.5%	1.4%	1.5%	1.7%
Fentanyl	-	-	-	-	0.4%	0.5%
Methadone	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%
Opiates	0.9%	2.5%	2.6%	2.5%	2.1%	1.9%

Great Lakes Region

In the Great Lakes Region, positive rates for most of the program types were increased in 2020, most notable examples are General Courts by 41%, followed by DWI Courts with increase of 33% and Juvenile Court by 28% (see Table 12). As for the drug classes, some of them experienced slight decrease in positive rate, such as Opiates, Fentanyl, Methadone and Buprenorphine numbers decreased by 7%, 3%, 3% and 2% accordingly, while Alcohol, Cannabinoids and Amphetamines had large increases in positive rates, 88%, 48% and 32% accordingly (see Table 13).

Table 12. Annual Positivity Rates by Program Type for Averhealth’s Great Lakes Region (~171K tests in 2020)

Program Type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Drug Court	14%	12%	16%	18%	22%	23%	27%
DWI Court	-	-	-	11%	12%	15%	20%
Family Court	-	-	-	-	33%	56%	59%
General	19%	19%	17%	27%	25%	17%	24%
Juvenile Court	33%	38%	39%	35%	34%	36%	46%
Mental Health	-	23%	19%	12%	21%	18%	18%
Pretrial	-	-	46%	40%	46%	-	-
Probation	16%	17%	21%	22%	23%	24%	30%
Treatment	-	-	-	77%	87%	86%	91%
Veterans Court	-	32%	18%	20%	20%	21%	22%

Table 13. Positivity Rates by Drug Category for Averhealth’s Great Lakes Region

Drug Class	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Alcohol	0.3%	0.5%	0.9%	0.9%	1.8%	1.7%	3.2%
Amphetamines	2.6%	2.0%	2.8%	3.7%	4.9%	7.9%	10.4%
Benzodiazepines	1.6%	1.1%	1.2%	1.2%	1.3%	1.6%	1.6%
Buprenorphine	-	4.4%	5.1%	9.3%	13.6%	11.8%	11.6%
Cannabinoids Natural	8.0%	8.5%	10.1%	9.3%	9.8%	17.6%	26.1%
Cocaine	2.1%	2.0%	3.1%	3.5%	3.4%	4.8%	5.5%
Fentanyl	-	-	0.2%	2.1%	2.4%	3.5%	3.4%
Methadone	-	-	8.0%	3.5%	9.1%	17.5%	17.0%
Opiates	4.4%	4.6%	4.6%	4.3%	3.7%	4.1%	3.8%

Northeast Region

In the Northeast region, some of the program types had increase in annual positive rates in 2020, most notably, Family Court by 23%, Veterans Courts by 17% and Treatment by 14%, and some program types had decrease in their numbers, such as Drug Court by 46%, General Court by 33% and DWI Court by 20%(see Table 14). Similarly, some of the drug classes experienced increase in positivity rates, such as Alcohol by 17%, Fentanyl by 17% and Cannabinoids by 11%, while others had a decrease in their numbers: Opiates by 14%, Cocaine by 11% and Benzodiazepines by 7% (see Table 15).

Table 14. Annual Positivity Rates by Program Type for Averhealth’s Northeast Region (~212K tests in 2020)

Program Type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Drug Court	4%	5%	4%	15%	23%	13%	7%
DWI Court	3%	2%	2%	3%	2%	5%	4%
Family Court	-	-	-	35%	33%	35%	43%
General	26%	-	-	12%	40%	27%	18%
Juvenile Court	28%	33%	24%	30%	36%	56%	48%
Mental Health	5%	8%	5%	5%	8%	8%	9%
Pretrial	-	-	-	24%	31%	26%	28%
Probation	11%	14%	28%	30%	31%	33%	36%
Treatment	-	-	-	-	41%	44%	50%
Veterans Court	7%	6%	2%	5%	4%	6%	7%

Table 15. Positivity Rates by Drug Category for Averhealth’s Northeast Region

Drug Class	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Alcohol	0.9%	1.3%	3.3%	4.0%	4.1%	4.1%	4.8%
Amphetamines	0.6%	1.2%	2.6%	3.1%	3.8%	4.5%	4.6%
Benzodiazepines	0.8%	1.4%	2.7%	3.5%	3.1%	2.7%	2.5%
Buprenorphine	0.9%	0.6%	16.2%	18.0%	24.2%	25.6%	25.7%
Cannabinoids Natural	1.8%	2.0%	7.5%	12.3%	15.8%	20.7%	22.9%
Cocaine	0.3%	0.4%	1.3%	2.1%	2.4%	1.9%	1.7%
Fentanyl	0.0%	-	3.2%	2.6%	3.0%	2.4%	2.8%
Methadone	0.4%	0.0%	0.3%	2.6%	7.0%	9.8%	10.5%
Opiates	1.0%	1.9%	2.7%	2.3%	1.8%	1.4%	1.2%