

---

## Stark County overdose deaths drop for second straight year

By Shane Hoover

CantonRep.com staff writer

Posted Nov 15, 2018 at 4:50 PM

Updated Nov 19, 2018 at 12:17 PM

Community looks ahead for new threats, strategies in addiction fight.

**PLAIN TWP.** Overdose deaths in Stark County are down for the second year in a row, but the community needs to keep looking for ways to address addiction and adapt to changes in drug-use trends.

That was the message at Stark County Mental Health and Addiction Recovery's annual Opiate Symposium at First Christian Church's Heritage Hall.

In keeping with the theme of "Next Steps for Proactive Progress," many speakers Wednesday focused on new trends in drug use and the next steps in addressing opioids and addiction in general.

### **Overdose deaths down**

After an increase in local overdose deaths in recent years, the toll has started to subside.

The Stark County Coroner has ruled 51 deaths as accidental overdoses through Oct. 2. The county had 69 overdose deaths by that time last year.

This year's downward trend follows a 27 percent decrease in overdose deaths in 2017, a year in which Stark County had the lowest fatal overdose rate among Ohio's most populous counties.

Stark MHAR Executive Director John Aller said the downward trend in overdose deaths didn't mean it was time for a victory lap.