



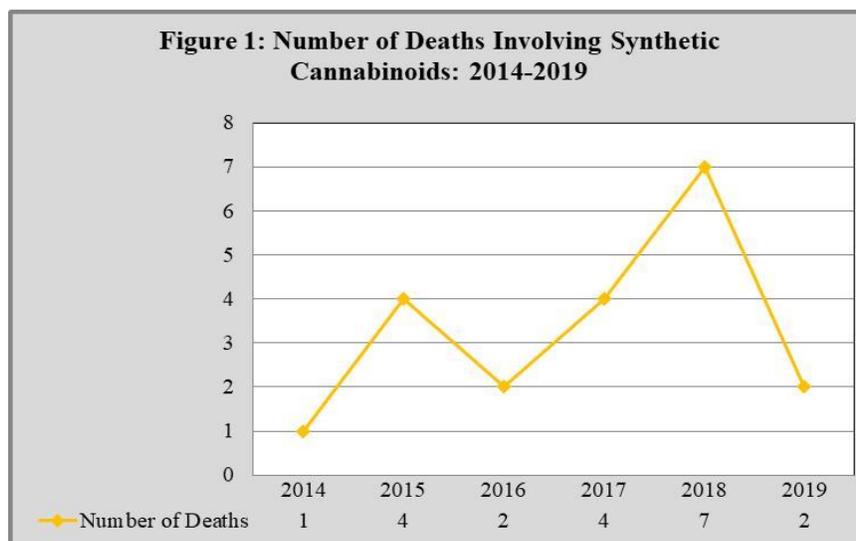
## Synthetic Cannabinoid-related Fatal Overdoses: January 1, 2014 to June 30, 2019<sup>1</sup>

Report Date: June 24, 2019

The DC Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) identified a total of **20** deaths in which the use of synthetic cannabinoids contributed to the cause of death from January 1, 2014 through June 30, 2019. Overall, there have been 10 different types of synthetic cannabinoids detected, with the most prevalent type being 5F-ADB (also known as 5F-MDMB-PINACA). The data presented within this report represents deaths occurring exclusively within the District of Columbia for which the OCME has jurisdiction. The data does not represent ALL deaths of DC residents. The decedent's place of residence or location of injury may be outside of the District.

### Trends in Deaths due to Synthetic Cannabinoid Use

There was a steady increase in the number of deaths involving synthetic cannabinoids between 2016 and 2018 (Fig.1). To date in 2019, there are two deaths in which synthetic cannabinoids contributed to the cause of death. However, most drug overdoses contain multiple drugs. The number of drugs contributing to the cause of death has ranged from 1 to 5, although there are variations across years. There has been an average of 2 drugs identified in the drug overdoses involving synthetic cannabinoids. In addition, only 1 of the 20 deaths due to the use of synthetic cannabinoids contained fentanyl. Important to note, there was only 1 overdose in the first half of 2018 in which synthetic cannabinoids contributed to the cause of death compared to 2 in 2019 during the same time period. Six (6) of the 7 synthetic cannabinoid related overdoses identified in 2018 were between July and December. Given the increase in the number of synthetic cannabinoid related deaths in the second half of 2018, we may not observe the total burden of fatal synthetic cannabinoid related overdoses in 2019 if we expect a similar trend to persist.

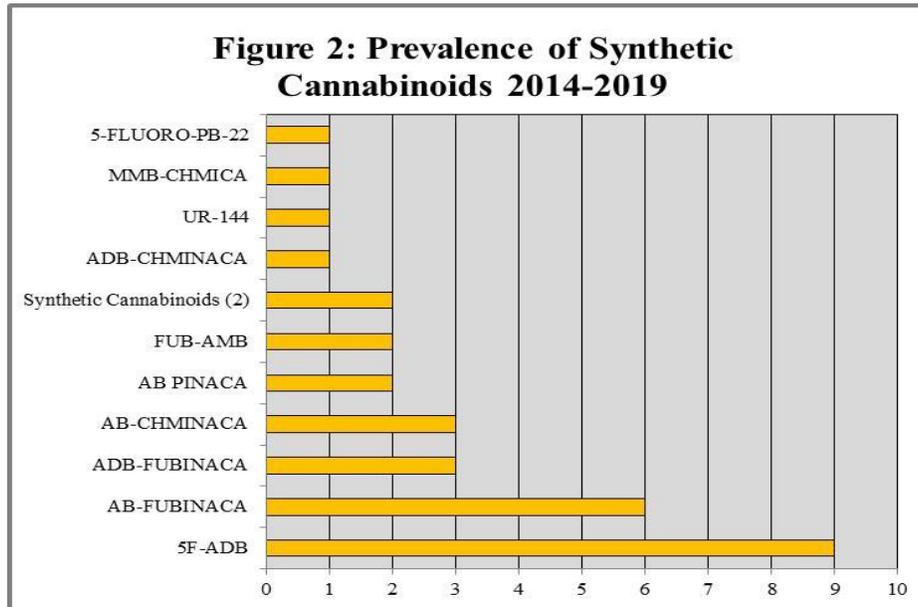


<sup>1</sup> Data for 2019 is inconclusive and subject to change due to cases where cause and manner of death is "Pending Further Investigation"



## Prevalence of Synthetic Cannabinoids<sup>2</sup>

The most prevalent synthetic cannabinoid identified over the past 5 years is 5F-ADB (also known as 5F-MDMB-PINACA).



## Synthetic Cannabinoid Deaths by Jurisdiction of Residence

Table 1 shows a breakdown of synthetic cannabinoid deaths by jurisdiction and ward of residence for DC residents only. Over the past 5 years, Wards 7 and 8 have the highest number of synthetic cannabinoid-related deaths.

**Table 1: Synthetic Cannabinoid Deaths by Jurisdiction of Residence**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Ward 1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ward 2	0	0	0	1	0	0
Ward 3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ward 4	1	0	0	0	0	0
Ward 5	0	0	0	1	1	0
Ward 6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ward 7	0	1	1	1	2	1
Ward 8	0	2	0	1	1	0
<b>DC</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>
MD	0	0	0	0	2	0
VA	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0
Undomiciled	0	1	1	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>2</sup> Toxicology testing was done at a hospital, not allowing for detection of specific type of synthetic cannabinoid.

