

## Suicide-related Public Health Surveillance Update September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### Data Sources

**Oregon Violent Death Reporting System (ORVDRS)** suicide deaths

**Emergency department (ED) and urgent care center (UCC)** suicide-related visits

**Oregon Poison Center (OPC)** suicide-related calls.

**Lines for Life** suicide hotline call data.

### Summary of Findings

#### Counts

- Suicide deaths in 2021 are similar to corresponding months in 2020. Mortality data is still being processed and numbers for recent months may change.
- 2021 Suicide-related visits to EDs and UCCs are similar to the corresponding months of 2019 and 2020.
- 2021 Suicide-related visits to EDs and UCCs for youths, ages 18 and under are similar to the corresponding months of 2019 and 2020.
- The number of suicide-related calls to Oregon Poison Center in 2021 are similar to corresponding months of 2020 and 2019.
- Oregon Lines for Life call volume is influenced by many factors such as willingness to seek assistance, visibility of the lifeline phone number, or high-profile suicides of celebrities or community members. Calls have increased annually since 2016. Calls in 2021 align with this trend. No increases beyond the variation expected have been identified

#### Percentages

- The percent of suicide-related visits to emergency departments and urgent care centers in 2021 is slightly lower than the corresponding months of 2019.

#### Items of Note

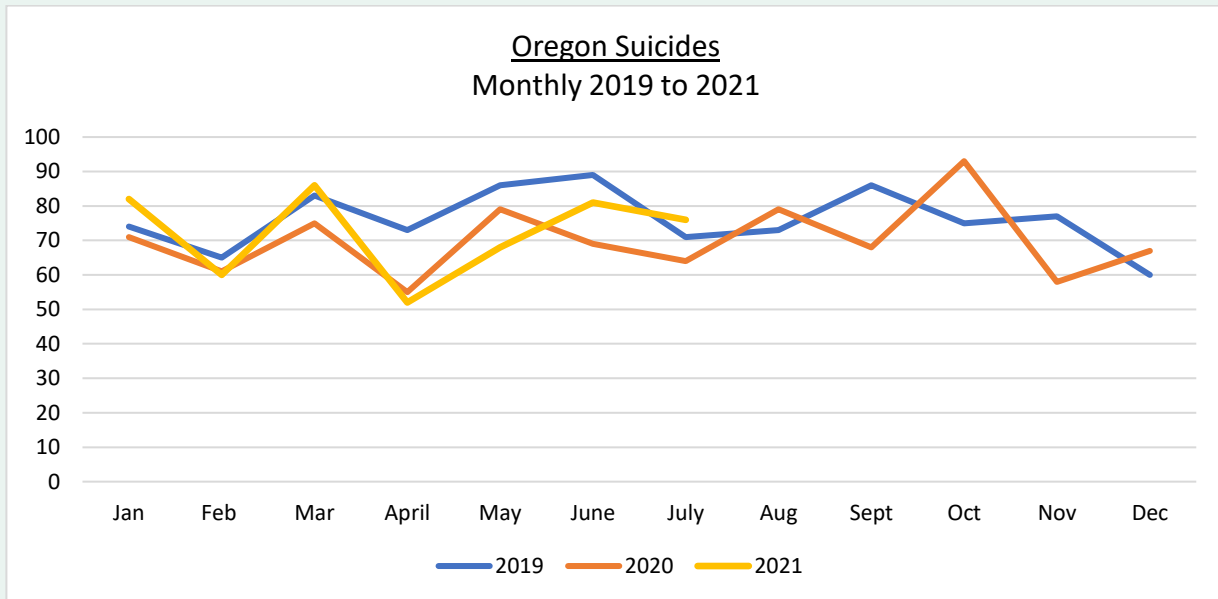
- **We invite you to share feedback on this report by taking a short [survey](#)**
- In October of 2020 syndromic surveillance data from 10 additional urgent care centers was added to the Oregon Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-Based Epidemics (ESSENCE).

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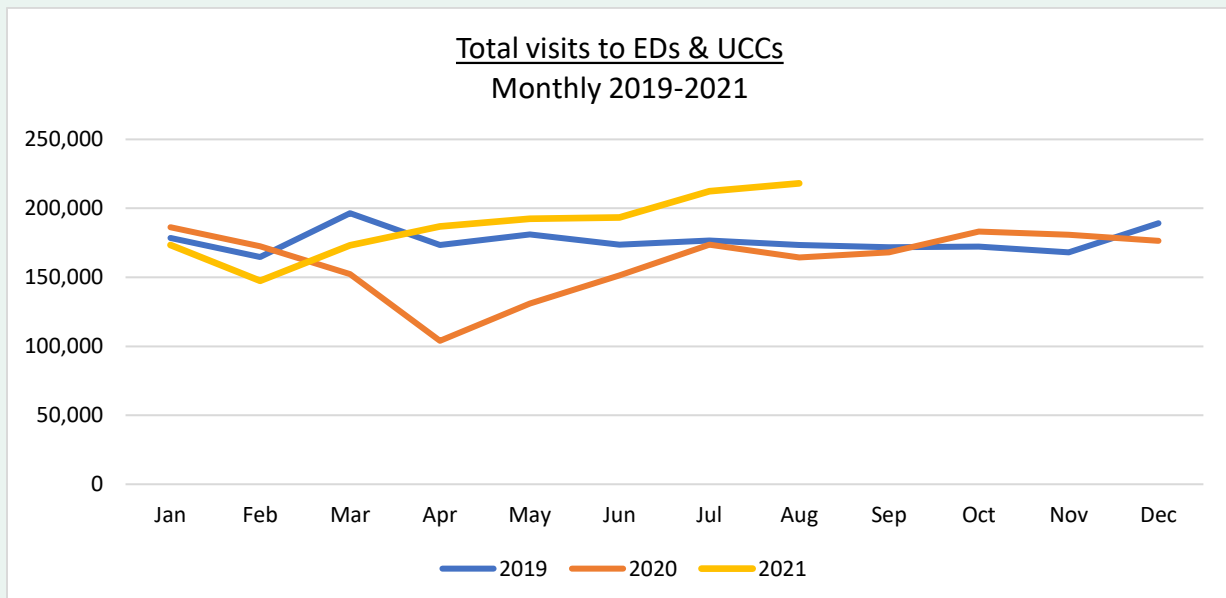
## Details of Findings: ORVDRS suicide deaths

Mortality data is still being processed and numbers for recent months may change. Suicide deaths in 2021 are similar to corresponding months in 2020.

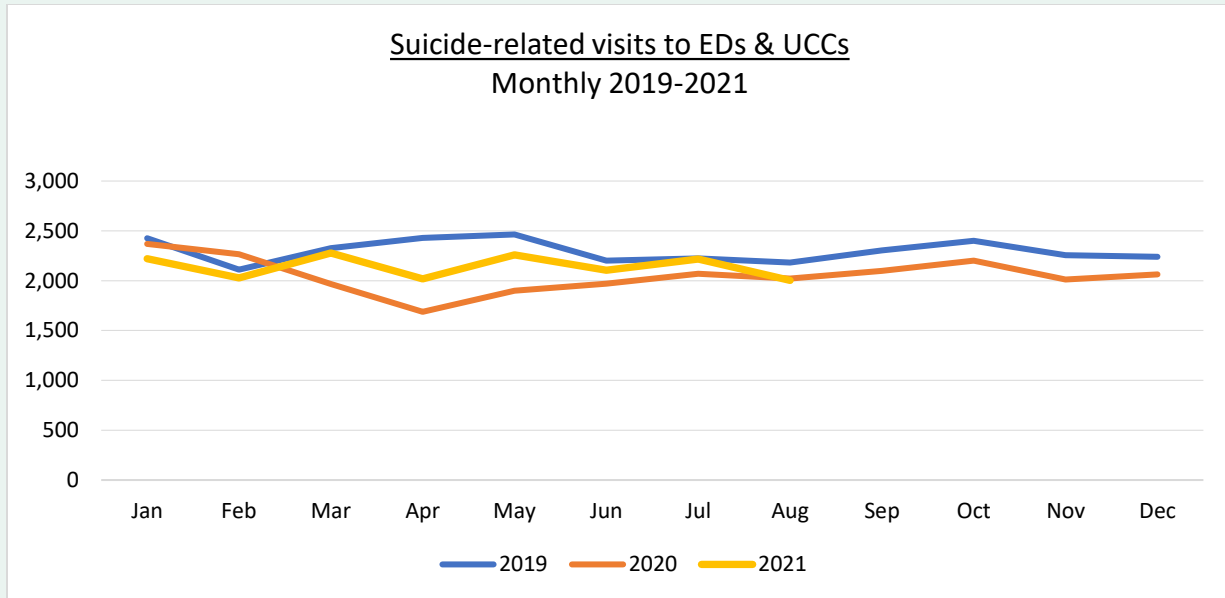


## Details of Findings: EDs and UCCs

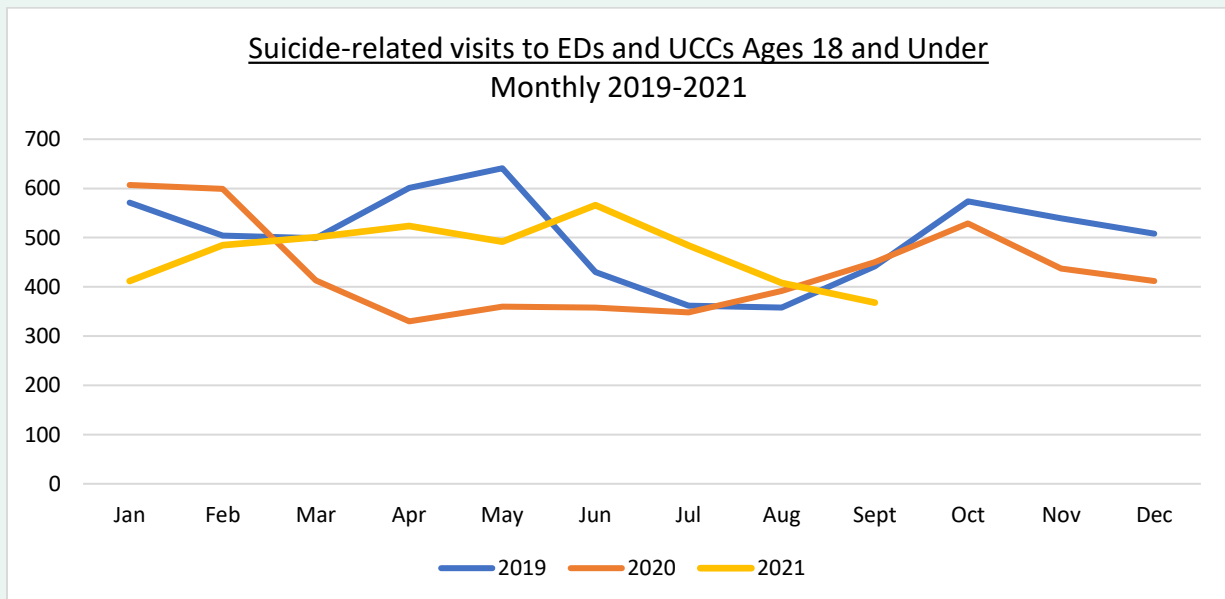
Total visits for all health concerns to EDs and UCCs in 2021 are similar to corresponding months of 2019.



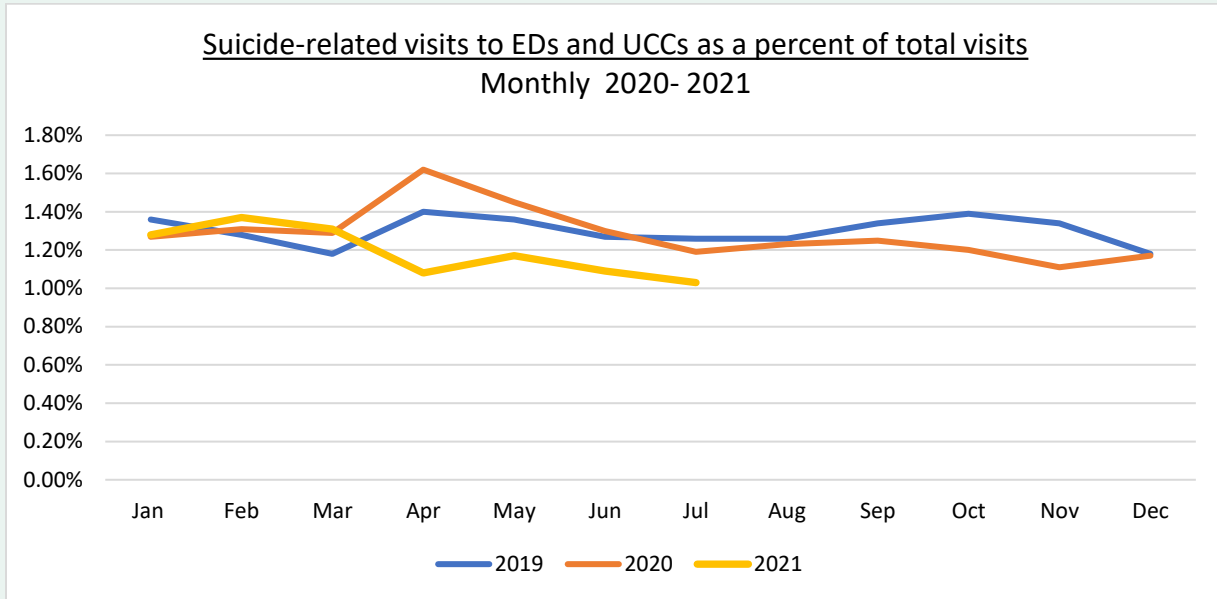
Suicide-related visits to EDs and UCCs in 2021 are slightly lower than the corresponding months of 2019.



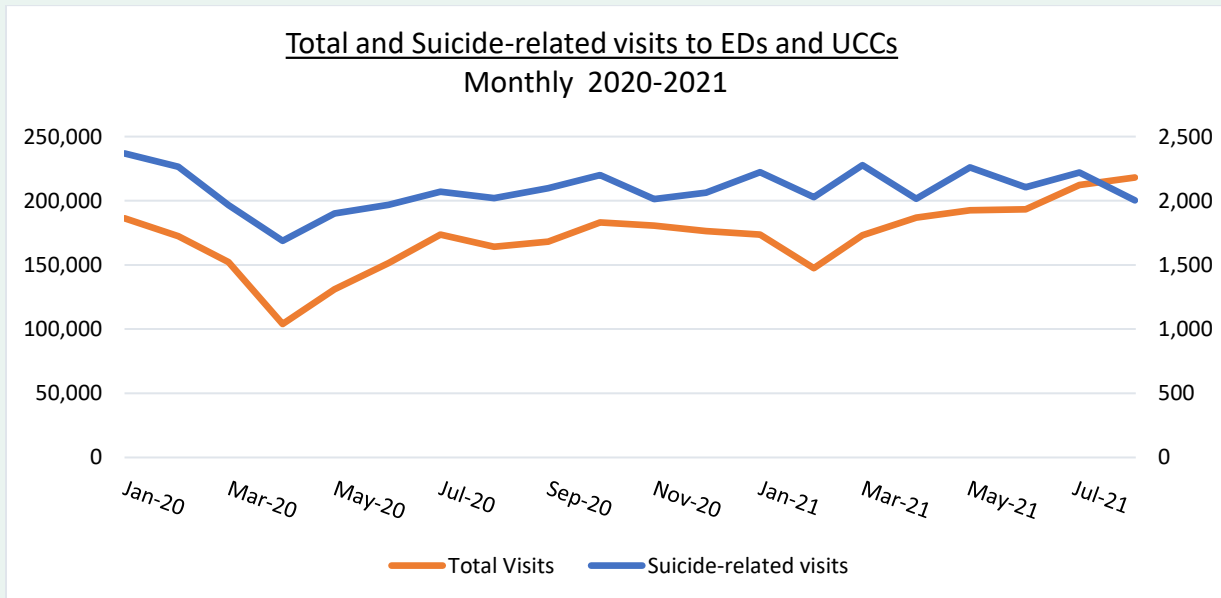
2021 suicide-related visits to EDs and UCCs for youths, ages 18 and under are similar to the corresponding months of 2019.



When measured as a percent of total visits, suicide-related visits to EDs and UCCs have historically hovered around 1.35%. The percentage increased in March and April of 2020 as the number of total visits for all health concerns decreased dramatically, leading to a smaller denominator.

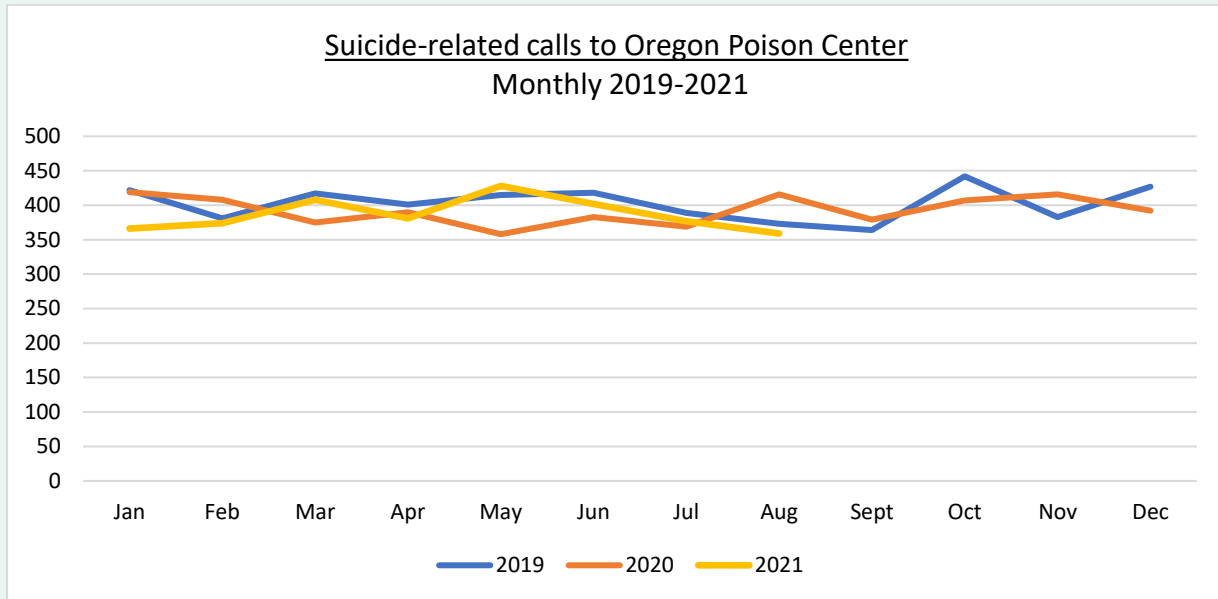


Total and suicide-related visits to EDs and UCCs presented side by side show a sharp decrease in total visits and a smaller decrease in suicide-related visits during March and April of 2020 when shelter in place orders were announced.



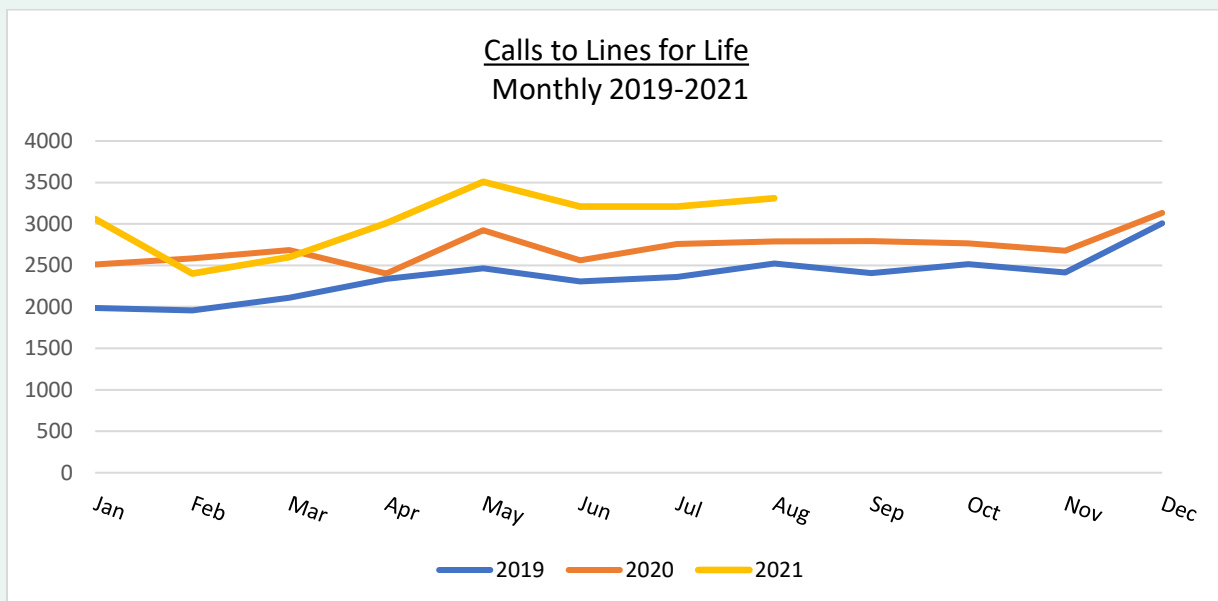
## Details of Findings: Oregon Poison Center (OPC) Calls

The number of suicide-related calls to Oregon Poison Center in 2021 are similar to corresponding months of 2020 and 2019.



## Details of Findings: Lines for Life Calls

Lines for Life call volume is influenced by many factors such as willingness to seek assistance, visibility of the lifeline phone number, or high-profile suicides of celebrities or community members. Calls have increased annually since 2016. Calls in 2021 align with this trend. No increases beyond the variation expected have been identified.



## Methods/ Data Sources

**Oregon Violent Death Reporting System (ORVDRS)** includes combined and abstracted data from medical examiners, death certificates, and law enforcement.

### **Emergency Departments (EDs) and Urgent Care Centers (UCCs)**

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) queried Oregon Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-Based Epidemics (ESSENCE) for suicide-related visits to Emergency Departments (EDs) and Urgent Care Centers (UCCs) using the [self-harm and suicide-related visits](#) query developed by the International Society for Disease Surveillance (ISDS) Syndrome Definition Committee with input from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Violence Prevention.

### **Oregon Poison Center (OPC)**

OHA queried Oregon Poison Center call data for suicide-related calls using the reason code for intentional and suspected suicides, defined as: an exposure resulting from the inappropriate use of a substance for self-harm or for self-destructive or manipulative reasons including suicides, suicide attempts and suicide gestures, whether suspected or confirmed.

### **Lines for Life**

Lines for Life is the Oregon affiliate of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and receives calls to 1-800-273-8255 that originate from Oregon area codes. Lines for Life provides crisis intervention services for drug addiction, suicidal ideations, and other mental health issues. Call data for 2019 and 2020 were supplied to OHA by Lines for Life.

## Strengths

To assess suicide-related visits to EDs and UCCs, OHA used the query developed by the International Society for Disease Surveillance (ISDS) Syndrome Definition Committee.

OHA evaluated 6,112 visits from January 1 through March 22, 2020 to determine the positive predictive value of this query. To be considered a true positive, a visit must contain a minimum of two suicide-related terms: chief complaint and discharge diagnosis. OHA further evaluated visits with non-suicide chief complaints using triage notes, when available. The positive predictive value of this query for this period is 98.6%.

## Considerations & Limitations

Data derived from emergency department and urgent care center visits are still being received/updated and minor fluctuation is anticipated.

Not all people in Oregon have access to an emergency department or urgent care center. People with suicidal ideations may forgo medical assistance.

Classification of suicide deaths may be delayed by required pathology.

### **Oregon ESSENCE**

OREGON HEALTH AUTHORITY  
Public Health Division

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[healthoregon.org/essence](http://healthoregon.org/essence)

### **Injury and Violence Prevention**

OREGON HEALTH AUTHORITY  
Public Health Division

[IVPP.General@dhsaha.state.or.us](mailto:IVPP.General@dhsaha.state.or.us)  
[healthoregon.org/suicideprevention](http://healthoregon.org/suicideprevention)