

## Overdoses from Heroin and Prescription Drugs Reach New Levels at Jersey Shore

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Deaths from heroin and prescription drugs more than doubled last year at the Jersey Shore, a locale well known as a vacation destination.

Three people in Ocean County, New Jersey have already died in 2014 from drug overdoses, according to NBC News.

Local police said a brand of heroin sold under the name "Bud Light" may be tainted.

Ocean County, which includes a number of beach towns, is home to the reality series "The Jersey Shore." The county has the highest number of heroin-related emergency room admissions in the state. In 2011, Ocean County had 11 percent of all heroin-related ER admissions. The following year, 11.4 percent of heroin-related admissions were in the county, although it has less than 7 percent of the state's population.

Deaths related to heroin and prescription drugs jumped from 53 in 2012, to 112 last year. The majority of the deaths were related to heroin, the article notes. A total of 1,188 people died from overdoses throughout New Jersey in 2013.

"It is a suburban epidemic facing us throughout New Jersey," said Angelo Valente, Executive Director of the Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey. "A lot of suburban counties are affected at dangerous levels." He said young people are starting with prescription drugs, and moving to heroin. "This is no longer just an inner city issue," added Al Della Fave, spokesman for the Ocean County prosecutor's office. He added people are snorting heroin, which is purer and cheaper than in the past.

Prosecutors in Ocean County have distributed warning cards to funeral homes, advising families to dispose of unused prescription medications left behind by the deceased.

Earlier this year, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie signed into law a measure that encourages people to report drug overdoses. The law allows people to call 911 to report a drug overdose,

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without the fear of getting arrested for drug possession themselves.