Impact of Fentanyl on Overdose Mortality in Oregon before and after Measure 110

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Background

- Opioid overdose mortality numbers have been increasing drastically in the United States over the past decade and are at highest rates ever.
- The primary driver of the increase nationally in overdose mortality has been the introduction of fentanyl into unregulated drug markets.
- Fentanyl entered unregulated drug markets in states at different time-points during the past decade, with Oregon being one of the last.
- One of the reasons that Oregonians voted for M110 was to decrease the negative consequences of drug use, including overdose deaths
- Three years after M110 was enacted, it is important to understand what kind of impact M110 had overdose mortality, keeping in mind other drivers of mortality, such as fentanyl entering unregulated drug markets.

Factors complicating assessment of M110 impact on overdose mortality

- National overdose mortality data are not made available for about a year. This means we can only assess first two years of M110 (2021-2022).

- M110 had two main components
  - Decriminalization of drug possession, enacted February 1, 2021.
  - Funding Behavioral Health Resource Networks to increase treatment, harm reduction, and housing, was fully granted 18 months later in September 2022.

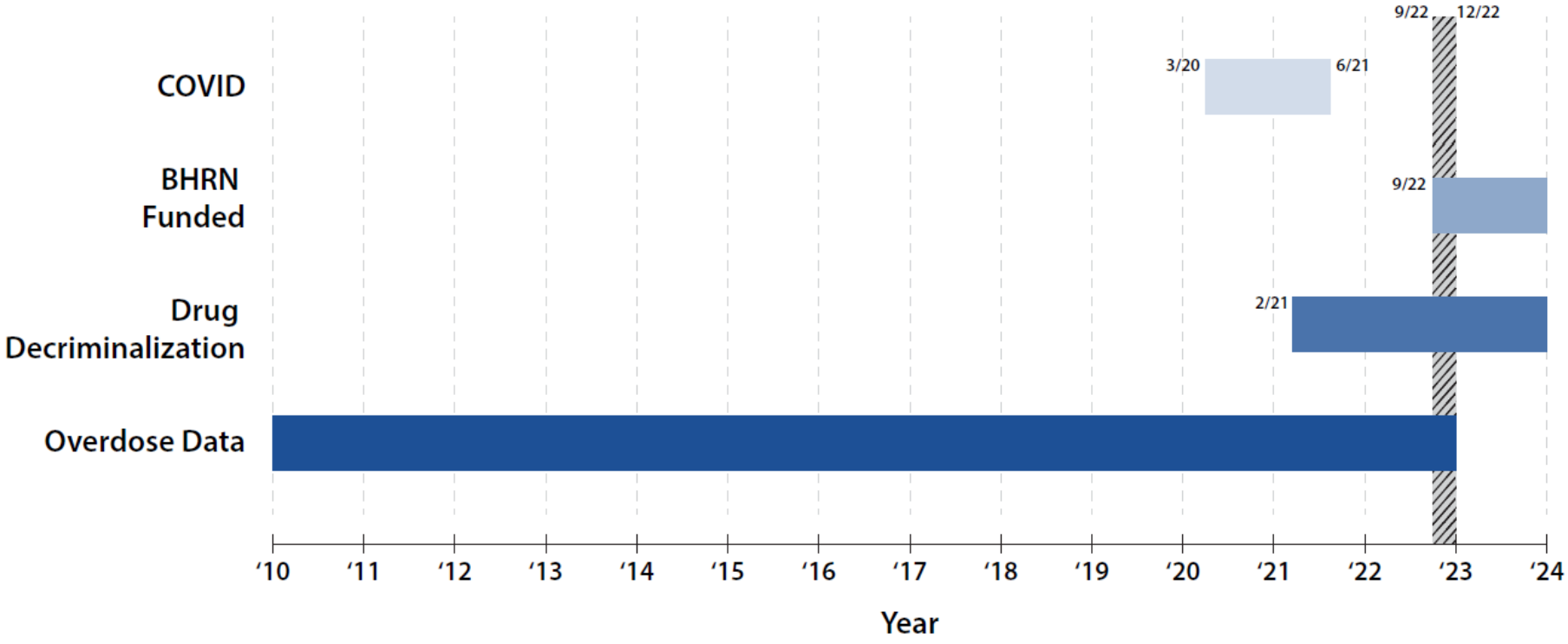
- Covid hugely impacted overdose mortality nationally in the period March 2020 to June 2021.

- Money granted to service organizations can take time to translate into improved delivery and uptake of evidence-based interventions.

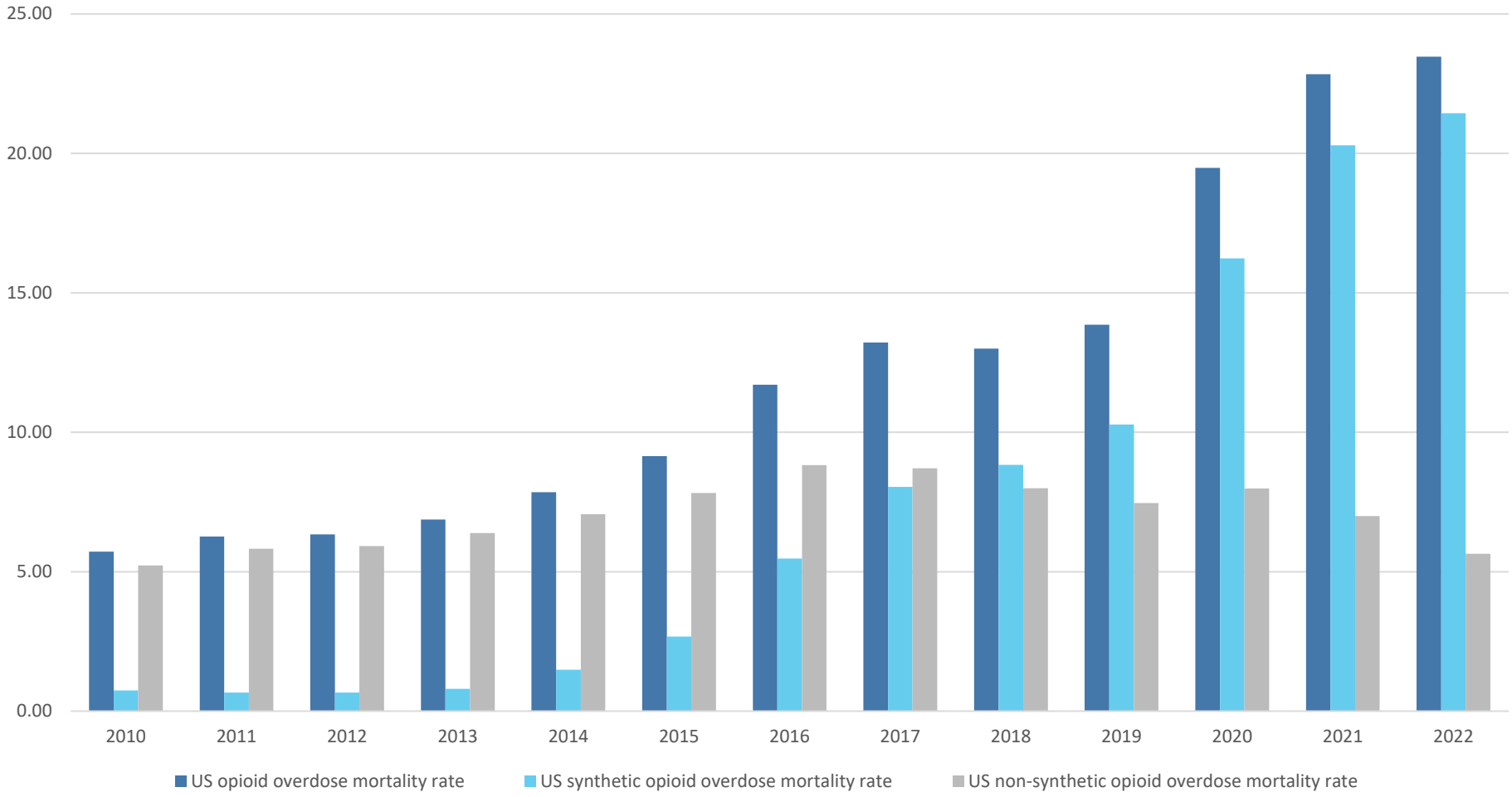
Methods for Showing Trends in Opioid Overdose Mortality

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Wonder Data on mortality
  - https://wonder.cdc.gov/
- United States
- United States Regions (Northeast, Midwest, South, West)
- Oregon and other Western states (CA, ID, NV, UT, WA)

Timeline for Data Collection and M110 Implementation

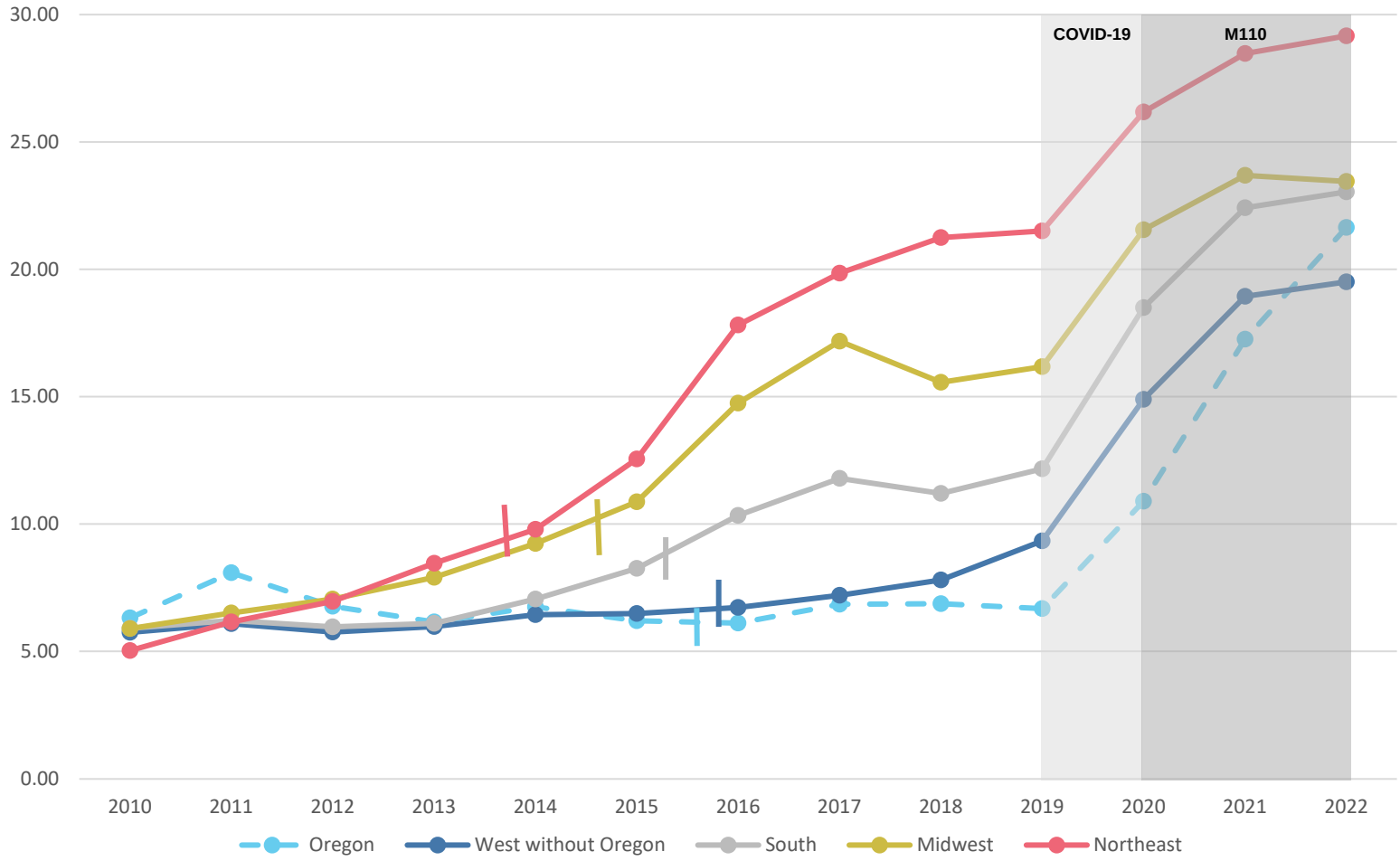


United States Opioid, Synthetic Opioid, and Non-Synthetic Opioid Overdose Mortality Rate



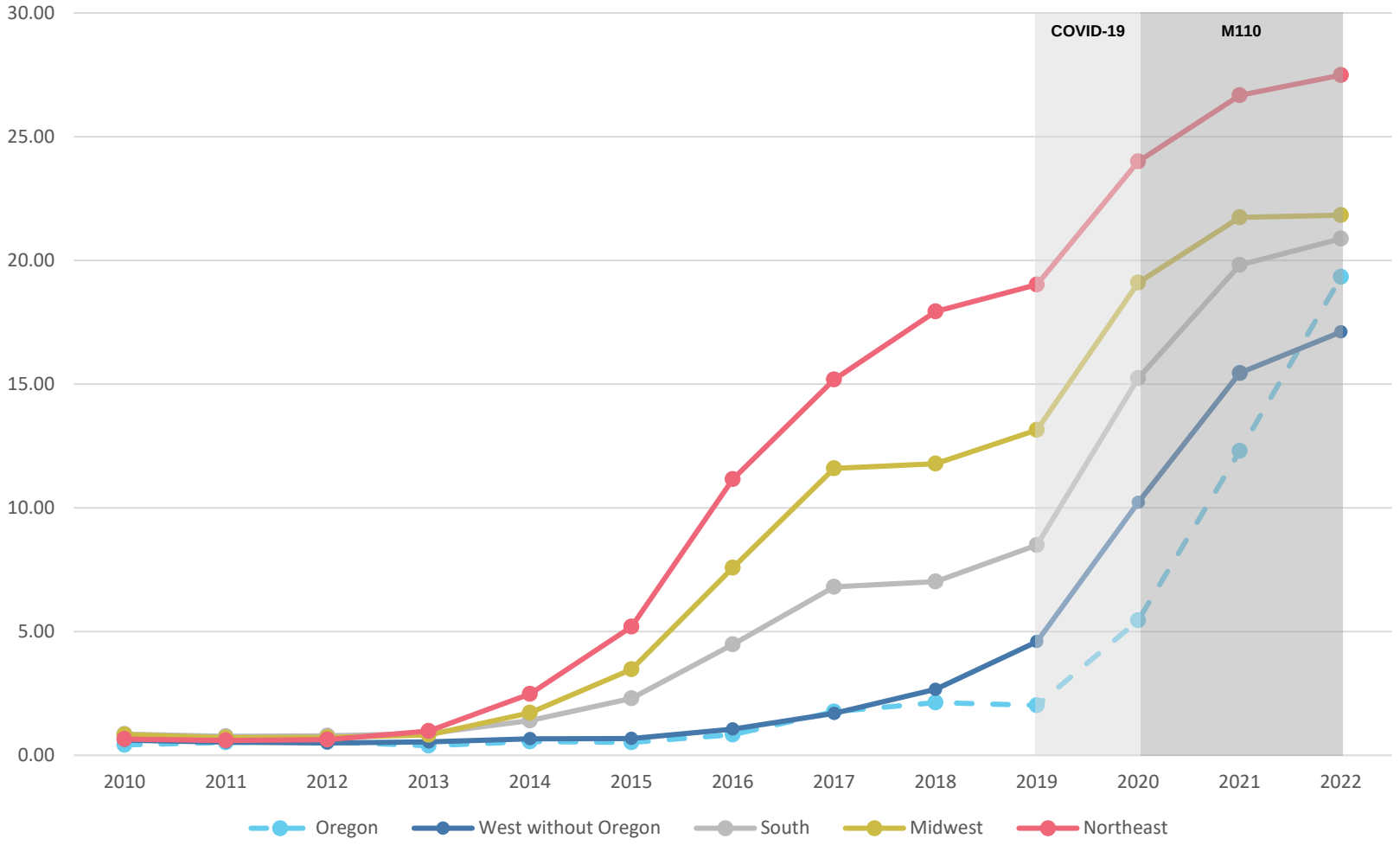
Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Wonder Data

United States Regions Opioid Overdose Mortality Rate



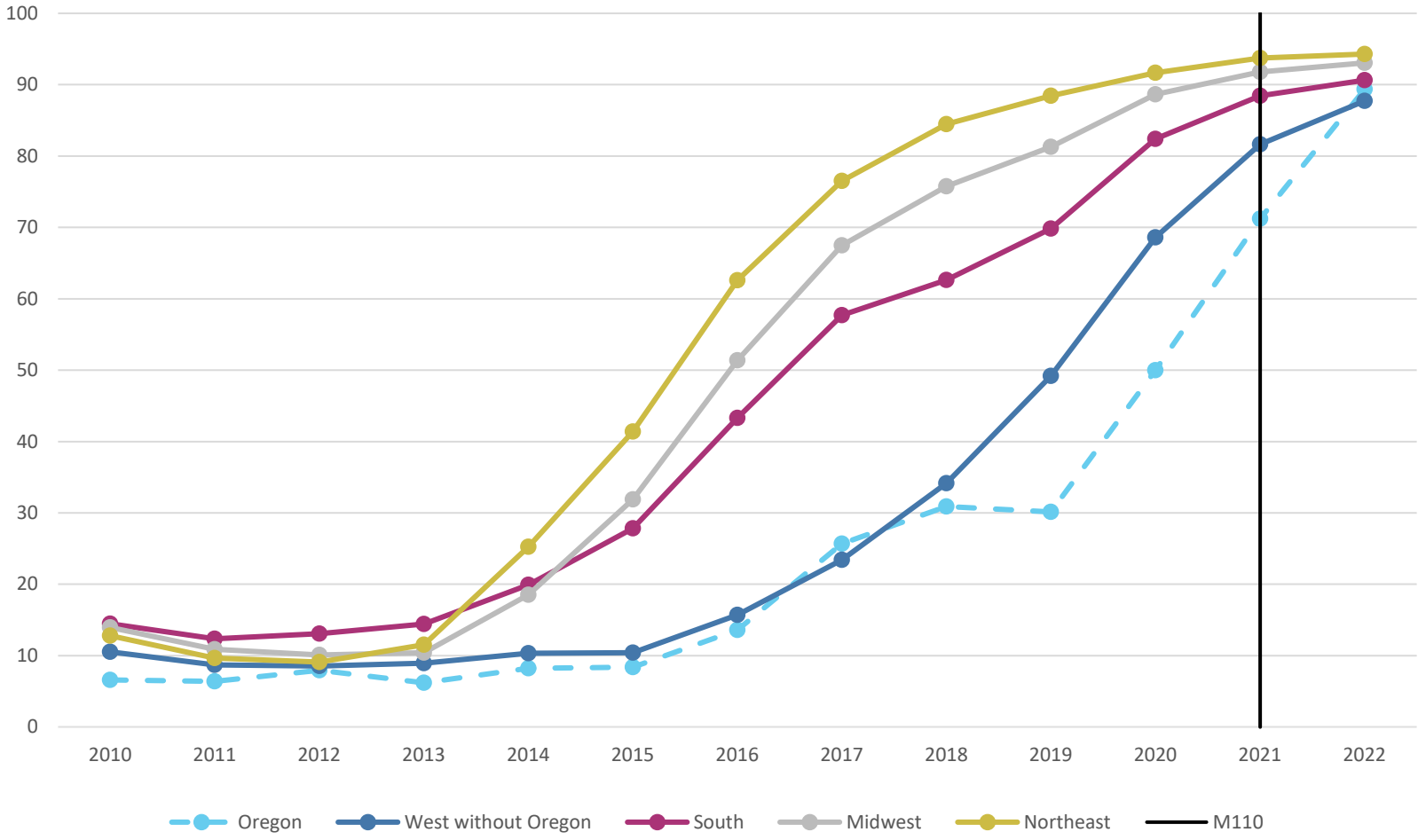
Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Wonder Data

United States Regions Synthetic Opioid Overdose Mortality Rate



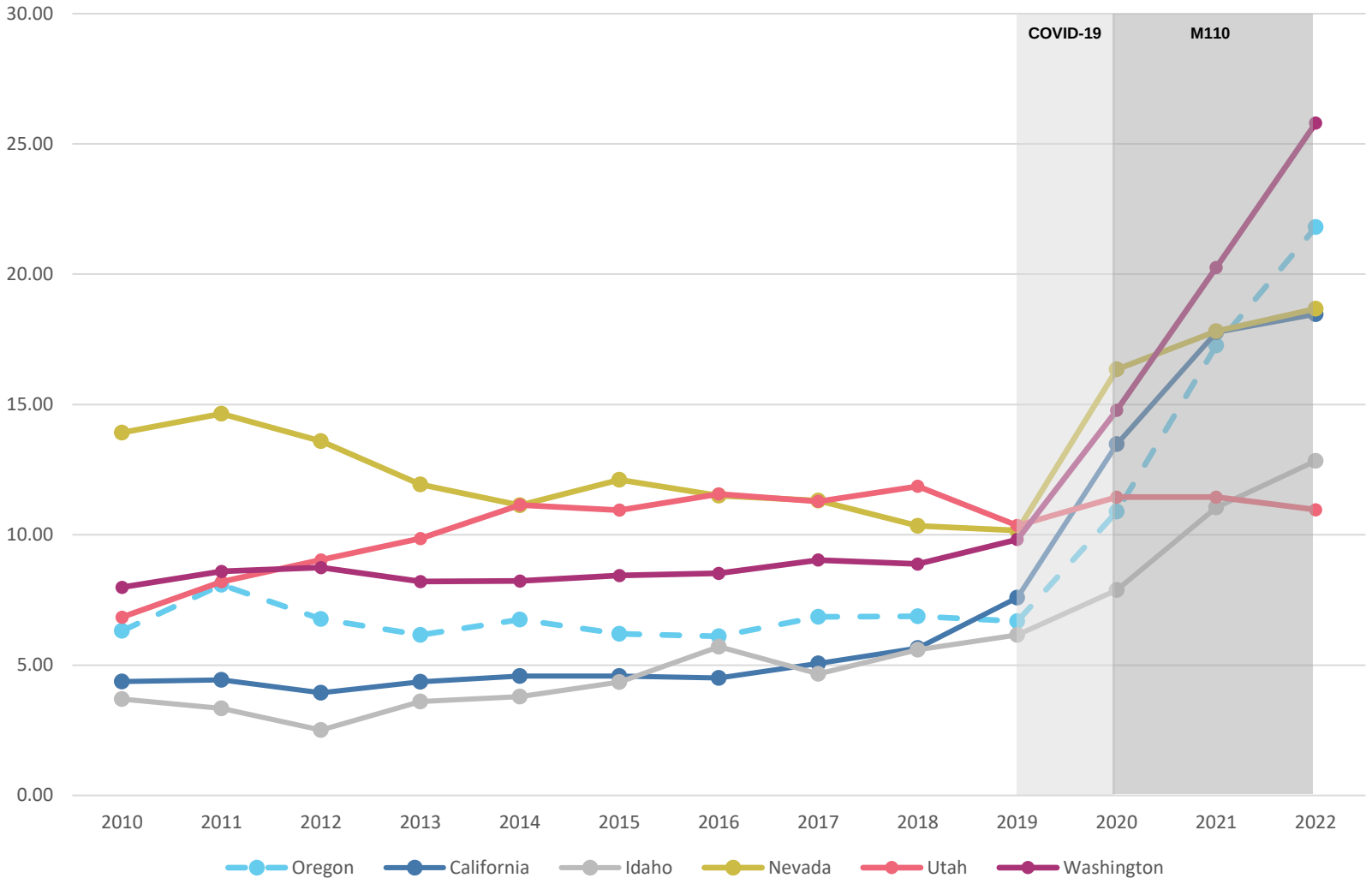
Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Wonder Data

Percent of Opioid Overdose Mortality Rate Attributable to Synthetics



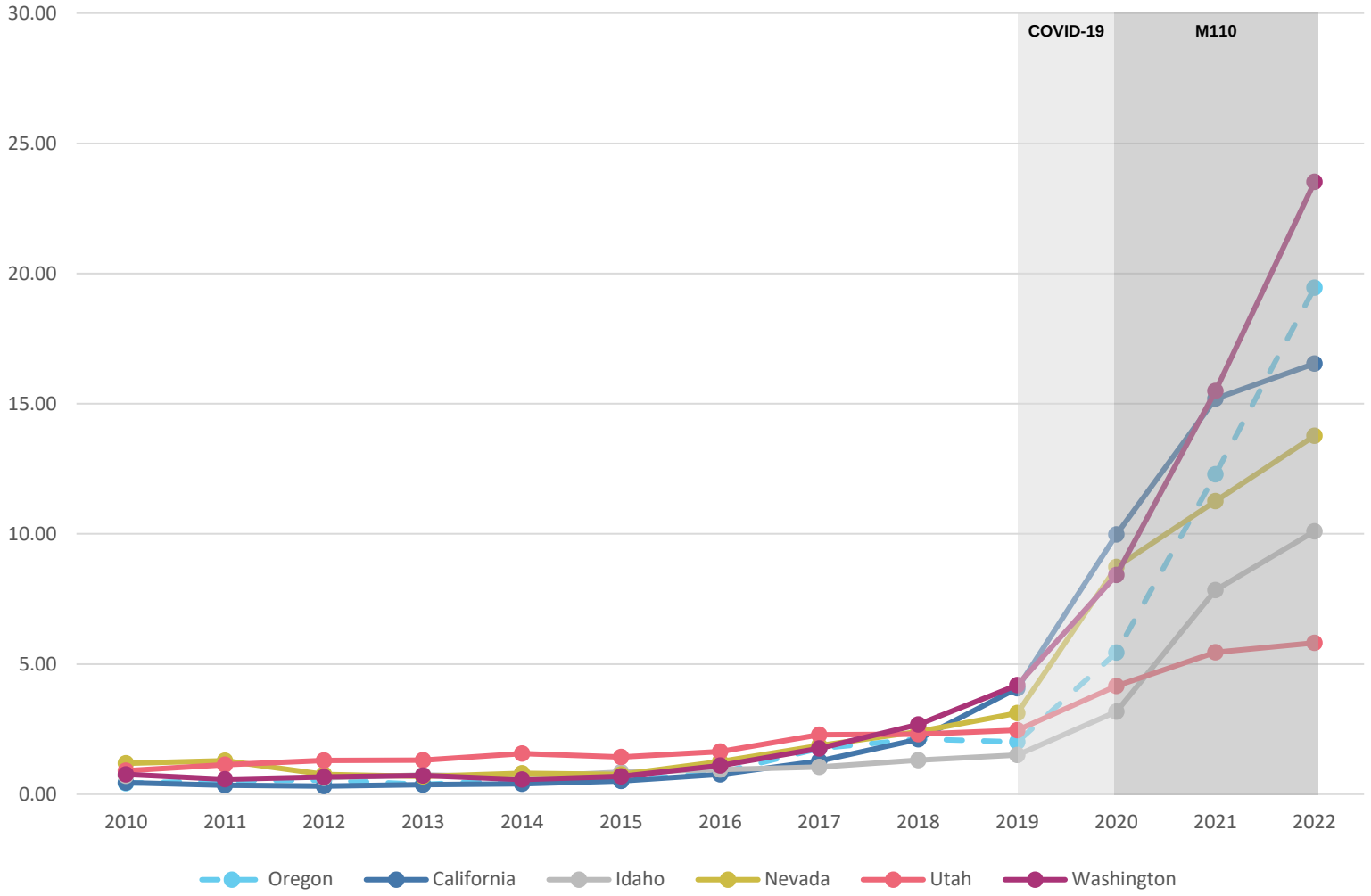
Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Wonder Data

United States West Opioid Overdose Mortality Rate



Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Wonder Data

United States West Synthetic Opioid Overdose Mortality Rate



Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Wonder Data

Summary of Results

- US overdose mortality rates started climbing in 2014 and has slowed in 2022.

- Overdose mortality rates started climbing in Northeast, South, and Midwest in 2014 as the percent of deaths related to fentanyl increased. Increases in overdose deaths continued for 8 years until leveling off in 2022.

- Overdose mortality rates in Western states did not start rising until 2020, during COVID and a year after the introduction of fentanyl

- Overdose rate in Oregon didn't start rising until fentanyl accounted for a majority of opioid overdose deaths in 2020.

- Overdose mortality in Oregon has been on the same trajectory as neighboring states CA, NV, and WA before and after M110 in 2021.

Discussion

- Oregon's large increases in opioid overdose mortality started once fentanyl entered the unregulated drug supply in 2020. This was six years after the Northeast, Midwest and South, and around same time as other Western States.

- If Oregon follows the trajectory of the rest of the US, we can expect opioid overdose mortality to keep rising for a few years until it slows down.

- There is no evidence that increases in overdose mortality in Oregon are due to M110.

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