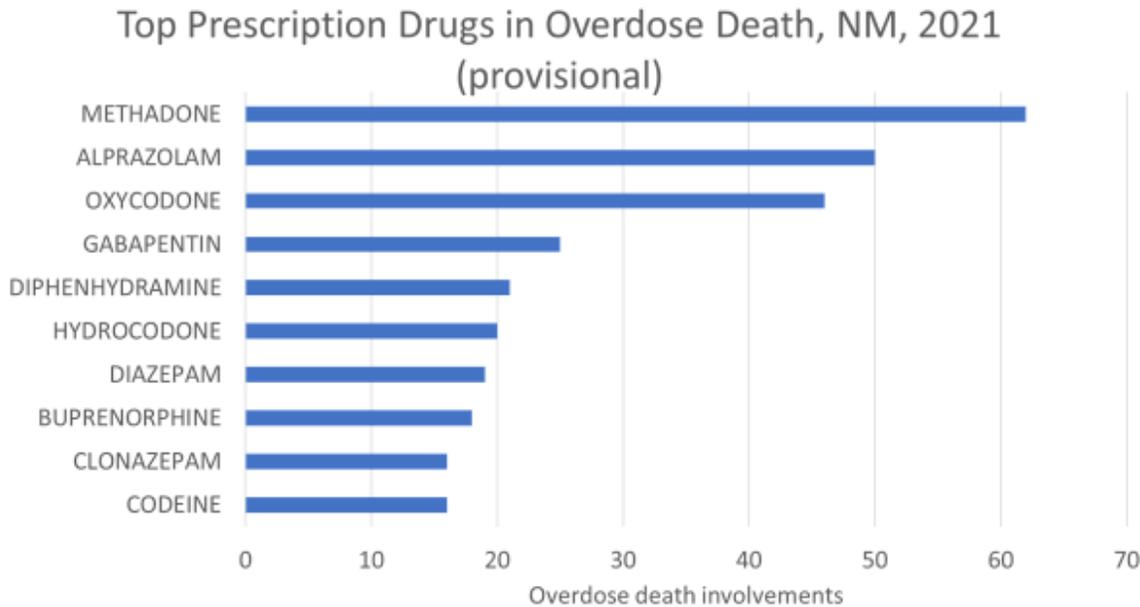


Dear Prescriber/Pharmacist,

In December of 2019, [the FDA issued a warning](#) that serious respiratory depression may occur in patients taking gabapentinoids who have respiratory risk factors, including the use of opioids and other central nervous system depressants, conditions such as COPD that reduce lung function, and the elderly.

Gabapentin has increasingly been associated with overdose deaths in the state of New Mexico. In 2020, Gabapentin appeared in the New Mexico Top 10 Prescription Drugs in Overdose Deaths for the first time, at #7. In provisional data for 2021, Gabapentin again appeared in the New Mexico Top 10 Drugs in Overdose Deaths, at #4:



Many deaths involve more than one drug

Source: NM DOH Bureau of Vital Records & Health Statistics Death Data

The FDA recommends that health care professionals should start gabapentinoids at the lowest possible dose, and monitor for symptoms of respiratory depression and sedation. Be especially cautious in patients with preexisting respiratory conditions, or patients who are using CNS depressants.

Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) reports can be useful in evaluating and monitoring for drug-drug interactions when prescribing or dispensing gabapentinoids. Please note that pregabalin is a Schedule V controlled substance. Gabapentin, on the other hand, is not currently controlled. Therefore, gabapentin is not required to be reported to the PMP, and will not consistently or reliably appear in patient reports. However, other CNS-depressant controlled substances, such as opioids and benzodiazepines, should appear in a patient's PMP report. Please consider this when evaluating risk of respiratory depression in patients taking a gabapentinoid and CNS depressant.

Thank you,

New Mexico Board of Pharmacy