

# The Opioid Epidemic: An Overview of the Problem and Treatment Approaches



KENDALL COUNTY  
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

# Drug Overdose Deaths in the United States Continue to Increase

- The majority of drug overdose deaths (more than six out of ten) involve an opioid.<sup>1</sup>
- Since 1999, the number of overdose deaths involving opioids (including [prescription opioids](#) and [heroin](#)) quadrupled.<sup>2</sup>
- From 2000 to 2015 more than half a million people died from drug overdoses.



# Prescription Medication Overdoses

- We now know that overdoses from prescription opioids are a driving factor in the 15-year increase in opioid overdose deaths.
- Since 1999, the amount of prescription opioids sold in the U.S. nearly quadrupled,<sup>2</sup> yet there has not been an overall change in the amount of pain that Americans report.<sup>3,4</sup>
- Deaths from prescription opioids—drugs like oxycodone, hydrocodone, and methadone—have more than quadrupled since 1999.<sup>5</sup>



# Prescription Opioids

- Providers wrote nearly a quarter of a billion opioid prescriptions in 2013—with wide variation across states. This is enough for every American adult to have their own bottle of pills.<sup>1</sup>
- The most common drugs involved in prescription opioid overdose deaths include:
  - Methadone
  - Oxycodone (such as OxyContin®)
  - Hydrocodone (such as Vicodin®)<sup>3</sup>
- We must prevent abuse, addiction, and overdose before they start.



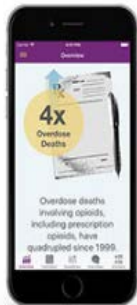
# Risk Factors for Prescription Opioid Abuse and Overdose

- Anyone who takes prescription opioids can become addicted to them. In fact, as many as one in four patients receiving long-term opioid therapy in a primary care setting struggles with opioid addiction.
- Once addicted, it can be hard to stop. In 2014, nearly two million Americans either abused or were dependent on prescription opioid pain relievers.
- Taking too many prescription opioids can stop a person's breathing—leading to death.
- Prescription opioid overdose deaths also often involve benzodiazepines. Benzodiazepines are central nervous system depressants used to sedate, induce sleep, prevent seizures, and relieve anxiety. Examples include alprazolam (Xanax<sup>®</sup>), diazepam (Valium<sup>®</sup>), and lorazepam (Ativan<sup>®</sup>). Avoid taking benzodiazepines while taking prescription opioids whenever possible.



# Prescription Medication Overdose Prevention

- The best way to prevent opioid overdose deaths is to improve opioid prescribing to reduce exposure to opioids, prevent abuse, and stop addiction.
  - Improving the way opioids are prescribed through a clinical practice guideline helps health care providers offer safer, more effective treatment while reducing opioid-related abuse and overdose.
  - Prescription drug monitoring programs, state prescription drug laws, Insurance strategies such as prior authorization, quantity limits, and drug utilization review, Quality improvement programs in health care systems to increase implementation of recommended prescribing practices, discussing with your doctor the risks and treatment options before taking opioid medication.
- Youth substance abuse prevention, such as intensive family or school-based programs
- Patient education on the safe storage and disposal of prescription opioids



**THE NEW OPIOID GUIDE APP IS AN EASILY ACCESSIBLE TOOL TO HELP PRESCRIBERS PUT CDC'S GUIDELINE INTO PRACTICE.**



**4 OUT OF 5 HEROIN USERS ABUSED PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS FIRST<sup>8</sup>**

# Today's Heroin Epidemic

- Heroin use has increased sharply across the United States among men and women, most age groups, and all income levels. Some of the greatest increases occurred in demographic groups with historically low rates of heroin use: women, the privately insured, and people with higher incomes.
- A heroin overdose can cause slow and shallow breathing, coma, and death.
- People often use heroin along with other drugs or alcohol. This practice is especially dangerous because it increases the risk of overdose.
- Heroin is typically injected but is also smoked and snorted. When people inject heroin, they are at risk of serious, long-term viral infections such as HIV, Hepatitis C, and Hepatitis B, as well as bacterial infections of the skin, bloodstream, and heart.

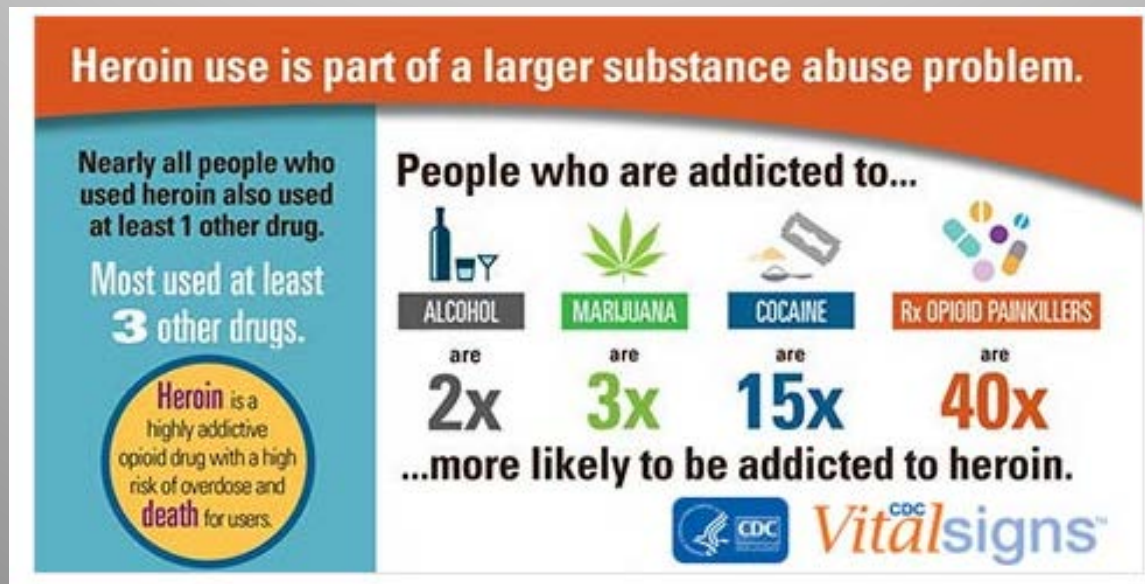
Heroin use **more than doubled** among young adults ages 18–25 in the past decade.

More than **9 in 10** people who used heroin also used at least one other drug.

**45%** of people who used heroin were also addicted to prescription opioid painkillers.

# Heroin Overdose

- Not only are people using heroin, they are also abusing multiple other substances, especially cocaine and prescription opioid pain relievers. Nearly all people who use heroin also use at least 1 other drug.
- As heroin use has increased, so have heroin-related overdose deaths. Between 2000 and 2015, the rate of heroin-related overdose deaths more than quadrupled, and more than 12,989 people died in 2015.

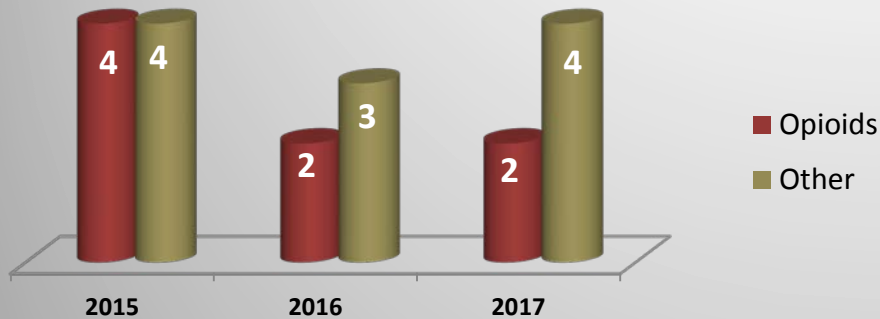




## Self-Violent Deaths, Kendall County

2015 through March 2017

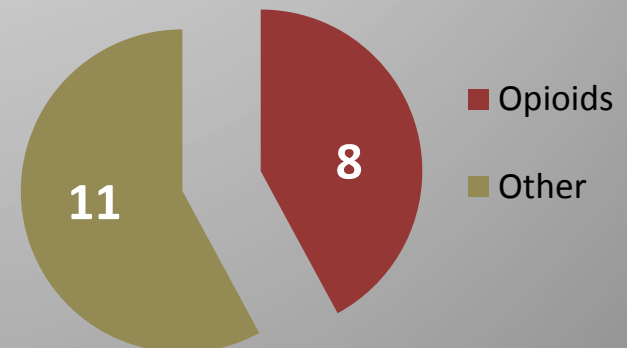
Source: Kendall County Coroner's Office  
(N=19)



## Self-Violent Deaths, Kendall County

2015 through March 2017

Source: Kendall County Coroner's Office  
(N=19)



**8 of 19 (or 42%) self-violent deaths attributed to opioid misuse!**

\*Other self-violent deaths includes : Suicide Hanging (3), Suicide firearm (2), Motor Vehicle Crash (THC), Fall, Motorcycle Accident (Alcohol, THC), Combined Drug Intoxication (including benzodiazepine), Overdose (2). 9

# Ways in which KCHD promotes protective factors....

- **Knowledge production:**
  - Conducting surveillance and sharing results
  - Acquiring up-to-date information through webinars and conferences
- **Providing cutting edge substance abuse and mental health programming**
  - Integrated mental health and substance abuse treatment services that focus on all aspects of wellbeing and addiction.
  - Comprehensive participatory psychosocial assessment
  - Promotion of protective factors in treatment including: impulse control / emotional regulation, parent education, promotion of academic and vocational engagement and efficacy, development of healthy support networks
  - Evidenced informed curriculum and culturally relevant service delivery
  - Family Systems throughout the treatment process
- **Community Outreach – Awareness/Prevention/Psycho-education**
- **Juvenile Justice Council team member**
- **Drug Court team member**
- **Prescription Monitoring:**
  - Illinois Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP)
    - **PA99-0480** - all prescribers and dispensers of controlled substances must enroll in the PMP either when registering for their initial state controlled substances license or when renewing the license.
    - Professional organizations actively working on informing their members of this requirement.
    - Since January 2008 over 30,000 prescribers and dispensers have enrolled with the PMP.

# Ways in which KCHD promotes protective factors (cont.)....

- **Promoting safe prescription medication disposal:**
  - Green Pages (*also promoting Fox Metro collection*)
    - USEPA 40 CFR Parts 261,262 & 266 were modified in September 2015 to allow pharmacies (reverse distribution partner) the ability to accept these medications.
    - NEW - Drug take-back kiosks at 45 Illinois Walgreens drugstores (*goal of 500 nationwide*)
      - Aurora – 1221 N. Lake St.
      - Joliet – 1801 Ingalls Ave.
      - Montgomery – 1799 Douglas Road
    - Kendall County Sheriff's Office – Safe medication disposal kiosk.



For more information on the opioid crisis, safe medication disposal and addictions treatment...

Please contact us, the Kendall County Health Department, at (630) 553-9100