

Opioid Epidemic – Efforts of the Attorney General

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Prescription Opioids – The Gateway

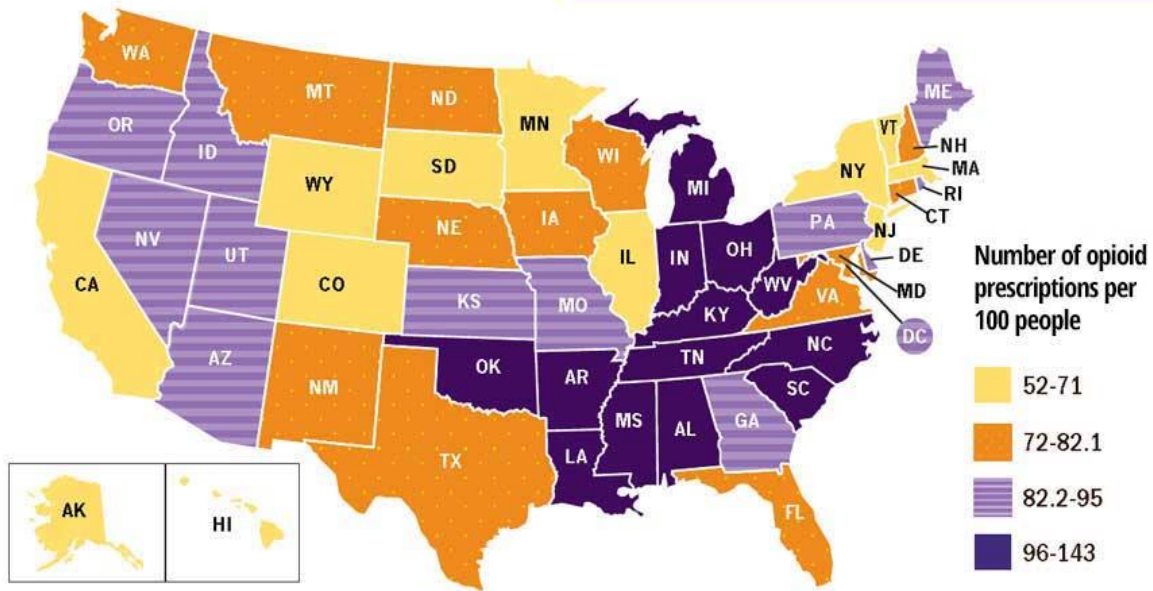
- The annual number of overdose deaths from prescription opioids has more than quadrupled since 2000, from 3,785 that year to an estimated 17,741 in 2016
- An estimated 80% of heroin users previously used prescription opioids
- As prescription opioids become more difficult or expensive to obtain, individuals pushed to heroin, which can be even more dangerous
- Intervention/Treatment plan at the time a suspected addict is losing access to prescription opioids
- Reducing access to prescription opioids still a key component to tackling the epidemic

PDMP – Benefits of Usage – Access Important

- PDMP usage can help save lives
 - Identify and Intervene – people doctor shopping, identify signs of addiction/diversion
 - A WV study found doctor shoppers are 7 times more likely to die than non-shoppers
- Law Enforcement Access - Important Tool
 - Access enables law enforcement to much more quickly determine if a case warrants further investigation
 - Enables much quicker investigations

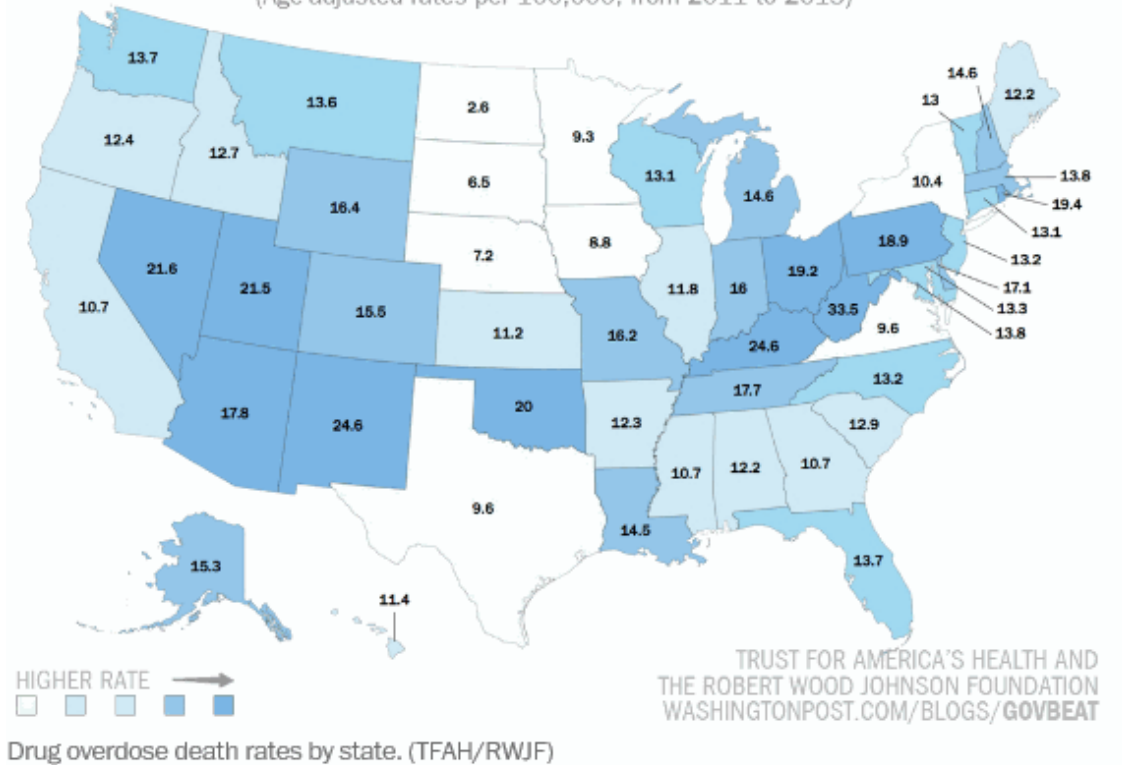
Prescribing Rate vs. Overdose Death Rate

Some states have more opioid prescriptions per person than others.



SOURCE: IMS, National Prescription Audit (NPA™), 2012.

Drug overdose death rates
(Age-adjusted rates per 100,000, from 2011 to 2013)



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North Dakota Crime Lab Stats

- Fifteen years ago, virtually no samples of opioids tested by the lab
- In 2016:
 - Heroin – 925 (#3)
 - Oxycodone – 289 (#5)
 - Hydrocodone – 119 (#9)
 - Furanyl Fentanyl – 59 (#14)
 - Fentanyl – 50 (#15)
 - Morphine – 37 (#19)
 - Total = 1,479

Prescription Drug Take-Back Program

- Available at 42 sites across 36 counties in the state
- Since its inception in 2009, 20,234 pounds, or 10.11 tons, of unused and dangerous prescription drugs have been collected and destroyed
- Majority of prescription opioid addicts receive them from a family member or friend
- Medicine cabinets
- Open houses

Investigation of Opioid Manufacturers/Distributors

- Coalition of 41 attorneys general
- Investigation of manufacturers and distributors for alleged unlawful practices in the marketing, sales, and distribution of opioids
- Lawsuits already filed, alleging manufacturers failed to disclose that opioids are highly addictive and may result in overdose or death, overstating benefits of opioids, understating risks
- Recent Washington Post/60 Minutes story
- Subpoenas/investigative demands sent to:
 - Endo
 - Janssen
 - Teva/Cephalon
 - Allergan
 - Purdue Pharma
 - AmerisourceBergen
 - Cardinal Health
 - McKesson

Letter to insurance companies

- Coalition of 37 state attorneys general
- Urges health insurance companies to examine financial incentives that contribute to the opioid epidemic
- Asks insurance companies to identify and encourage increased use of non-opioid alternatives for the treatment of chronic, non-cancer pain
- Contends incentives that promote use of non-opioid alternatives will increase medical providers' use of these alternatives
- Identifies the status quo, in which there may be financial incentives to prescribe opioids for pain which they are ill-suited to treat, is unacceptable

Zhang Indictment

- Case began in January of 2015 in Grand Forks
- Overdose death of an 18-year-old
- ND BCI, along with cooperation of other state and federal law enforcement offices, was able to trace source back to another Grand Forks resident
- Buying over the internet for more than a year from Jian Zhang in China
- Zhang ran an organization that manufactured fentanyl, pill presses, stamps, and dies and would ship to customers in the US
- Zhang and 8 others indicted in the District of ND on Sept. 20, 2017