



FIVE THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

1. Americans are dying every day from overdosing on opioids.

Opioids are drugs that act on the nervous system to relieve pain. Every day, 91 Americans die after overdosing on opioids.¹ The misuse of and addiction to opioids – including prescription pain relievers, heroin and synthetic opioids such as fentanyl – is a serious national public health crisis. In 2015, opioids killed more than 33,000 people, more than any year on record before that year.²

2. Opioid deaths in Michigan are increasing.

From 1999 to 2016, the total number of overdose deaths involving any type of opioid increased more than 17 times in Michigan, from 99 to 1,689.³

3. Collaboration among organizations and people will be key to tackling the opioid epidemic.

A range of efforts will be critical in addressing the opioid epidemic.⁴ These include:

- Offering educational prevention programs in school and community settings.
- Using prescription drug monitoring systems. (In our state, it's the Michigan Automated Prescription System or MAPS.)
- Carrying out programs that include the giving of naloxone (an overdose antidote drug) to opioid users and their family members.
- Encouraging law enforcement that addresses doctor shopping, and sending people with substance use disorders to a special court system for substance abuse.
- Making it possible for more people to receive treatment.

4. Every person can make a difference. Some things you can start doing today:

- Store medications safely.
- Don't share prescription medications.
- Learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of opioid abuse.
- Keep talking about the opioid epidemic and help break the stigma.

5. Don't wait to talk with your healthcare provider if you or a family member is facing an opioid use disorder.

Due to the highly addictive nature of opiate drugs, professional help is recommended. Use the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Treatment Locator (www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov/locator) or call 1-800-662-HELP (4357) for treatment information. Families have found benefit in seeking help and support through organizations such as Nar-Anon, Families Anonymous or local Families Against Narcotics (FAN) chapters. These groups will vary by community.

To learn more about the opioid epidemic, visit www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose

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Signs someone might be using opioids:⁵

- Constricted pupils
- Needle marks on the skin (if injecting drugs)
- Runny nose or nose sores (if snorting drugs)
- Sweaty, clammy skin
- Moving slower than usual
- Slurred speech
- Unable to move in a coordinated way
- Lack of awareness or inattention to the people and things around them
- Being sedated or acting drowsy

Symptoms someone using opioids could experience:

- Feeling unusually happy or excited, or feeling “high”
- Problems with attention and memory
- Feeling sad or losing interest in activities one normally enjoys
- Less sensitive to pain
- Feeling hopeless
- Confusion
- Constipation

Michigan communities face ongoing mental health and substance use challenges. In an effort to help support Michigan residents in this area, Michigan State University Extension offers educational programs and facilitates critical partnerships with community groups. For more information, visit www.msue.msu.edu/cbh.

Additional Resources:

Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT): www.samhsa.gov/about-us/who-we-are/offices-centers/csat

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA): www.drugabuse.gov

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): www.samhsa.gov

Sources:

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- 2) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2017, September 26). *Opioid overdose*. Retrieved from www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/index.html
- 3) Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. (2017). *Prescription drugs and opioids in Michigan*. Retrieved from www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71550_2941_4871_79584---,00.html
- 4) National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2015, May 1). *What is the federal government doing to combat the opioid abuse epidemic?* Retrieved from www.drugabuse.gov/about-nida/legislative-activities/testimony-to-congress/2016/what-federal-government-doing-to-combat-opioid-abuse-epidemic
- 5) Mayo Clinic. (2014, December 5). *Drug addiction: Symptoms*. Retrieved from www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/drug-addiction/basics/symptoms/con-20020970