



"Protecting the health of all Californians"

COMMUNICATE. PUBLIC. HEALTH.

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CDPH Awarded \$3.7 Million to Combat Opioid Misuse

The Department of Public Health has been awarded more than \$3,700,000 over four years to enhance the state's multi-agency effort to prevent deaths and injuries caused by opioid misuse. California is one of only 16 states to receive this prevention-strategy funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

This grant will be used to help improve safe prescribing of opioid painkillers.

In response to the national opioid epidemic, CDPH

together with executive leadership of several state partners, formed the Prescription Opioid Misuse and Overdose Prevention Workgroup in 2014.

These Agencies are working to identify opportunities to improve collaboration and expand joint efforts to address this epidemic. The workgroup has identified two priorities: expansion and strengthening of prevention strategies and improvement of monitoring and surveillance.

State Agency Partners

- Dept. of Public Health
- Dept. of Justice
- Dept. of Health Care Services
- Dept. of Managed Health Care
- Dept. of Education
- Dept. of Industrial Relations
- Dept. of Corrections and Rehabilitation
- Dept. of Consumer Affairs
 - Medical Board
 - Dental Board
 - Pharmacy Board
 - Board of Registered Nursing
- Emergency Medical Services Authority

Websites

[Department of Public Health: Opioid Misuse Workgroup](#)

[Board of Pharmacy: Prescription Abuse Prevention](#)

[Medical Board of California: Updated Prescribing Guidelines](#)

[Department of Education: Prescription Abuse Information](#)

[Department of Justice: CURES Database](#)

A National Epidemic

Prescription drug misuse is the fastest growing drug problem in the United States. The increase in drug overdose death has been driven by increased use of opioids. These prescription painkillers are used to treat moderate-to-severe pain and are often prescribed following a surgery, injury, or for health conditions such as cancer. In recent years, there has been a dramatic increase in the use of prescription opioids for the treatment of chronic, non-cancer pain, such as back pain or osteoarthritis.

The total number of opioid pain relievers prescribed in the

United States has increased from around 76 million in 1991 to nearly 207 million in 2013. People who take prescription painkillers can become addicted with just one prescription. In 2013, nearly two million Americans misused prescription painkillers.

From 2006-2013, a total of 11,287 Californians died as a result of prescription opioid overdose. In addition, non-fatal Emergency Department (ED) opioid related visits in California more than doubled, increasing from 3,180 cases in 2006 to 6,553 in 2013. Based on five years of data (2009-2013),

the highest overdose rates were found in several northern California rural counties, which had rates two to five times higher than the state average rate. Several large urban counties, such as San Francisco, Orange, San Diego and Los Angeles also have high numbers of overdose deaths.

As concerning as the rise in opioid misuse is the rise in the use of heroin. The increasing difficulty in obtaining opioid medications and the high cost of these drugs has led to a transition to abuse of heroin, which is cheaper and in some communities easier to obtain than prescription opioids.

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