

OVERDOSES, OVERDOSE DEATHS & FRAUDULENT PRESCRIPTIONS

Around the Commonwealth

Lehigh County –Salisbury Township doctor fakes prescriptions – aids illegal drug sales in 8 counties. Drugs resold without prescriptions in Lehigh, Northampton, Carbon, Monroe, Bucks, Montgomery, Schuylkill and Luzerne. Prescriptions for more than 10,000 Oxycodone pills, estimated street value of \$300,000. (*Morning Call, 8/21/13*)

Monroe County – Drug rings supply more than \$2 million in painkillers to Poconos, NJ, NY. Authorities said, “The demand for Oxycodone in Monroe County was so high that many pharmacies ran out of the drug or refused to fill prescriptions.” (*Morning Call, 3/28/13*)

Westmoreland County – County sees drug overdose surge. County Commissioner says, “This is a crisis that has grown to epidemic proportions.” (*Pittsburgh Post Gazette, 8/15/13*)

Westmoreland County – County on track to set record for overdose deaths – the leading cause of death among accidents and suicides. Excelsa Health Emergency Rooms reports about 400 near fatal overdoses in 2012. (*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 8/15/13*)

Erie County – Prescription drug poisoning in Erie county. Prescription drugs are the most common denominator between accidental death, overdose and suicides – number one culprit among teens is opiates, including Percocet, Vicodin and others. (*Erie Times-News, 3/19/12*)

Washington County – Coroner reports that the number of people who died of drug overdoses is almost double the number killed in car crashes. “The drug problem is rampant. It is frightening.” (*Washington Observer Reporter, 1/16/11*)

Washington County – The Washington Hospital Emergency Room reports seeing more patients with narcotic overdoses and that predominantly, the drugs are in the opiate family such as oxycontin, oxycodone and hydrocodone. (*Washington Observer Reporter, 1/16/11*)

Lackawanna County – Coroner gauges the area’s prescription drug abuse problem by how often he has to ask a family to identify the body of someone who overdosed. In 2003, he recalls meeting families about once every three weeks. Now, it’s closer to once a week. The county has averaged 41 deaths a year from prescription overdoses since 2008, 48 in 2012.” (*Scranton Times Tribune*, 2/13/13)

Delaware County – Four use bogus prescriptions to get 16,000 oxycodone pills. (*Delaware County Times*, 1/9/13)

Allegheny County – County Health Department reports that drug overdoses are the leading cause of injury deaths with the majority due to prescription opioid pain relievers. (*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 5/7/12)

Berks County – According to the state police, DUI arrests in Berks, parts of Lebanon & Schuylkill counties increased 27% in 2010 from 2009. They report “that was due in part to catching more drivers who are impaired by substances other than alcohol, such as prescription drugs.” (*Reading Eagle*, 11/17/11)

PA in Comparison with Other States

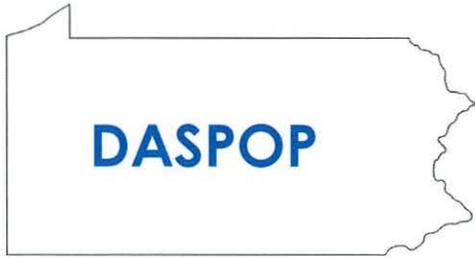
According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, prescription drug abuse is epidemic. The problem in PA is severe, with 15.1 drug overdose deaths for every 100,000 residents – the 9th highest rate among the states. (*CDC Morbidity & Mortality Report 2011*)

National

Opioids Other than Heroin Now Account for Two-thirds of All Youth Opioid Treatment Admissions, (SAMHSA, Treatment Episode Data Set, 8/2/12)

Number of U.S. Emergency Department Visits Involving Buprenorphine Increases Nearly Ten-Fold from 2005 to 2010 (SAMHSA, the Dawn Report, 1/29/13)

Number of Unintentional Opioid Analgesic Deaths Continue To Increase; Nearly Five Times as many as those involving heroin. (CDC, Multiple Causes of Death, 1999-2010)



Drug and Alcohol Service Providers Organization of Pennsylvania

ANNUAL

COSTS OF UNTREATED ALCOHOL AND DRUG PROBLEMS

LOSS TO U.S. ECONOMY:

ALCOHOL = \$185 BILLION*

OTHER DRUG = \$143 BILLION**

TOTAL COST = \$328 BILLION

COST TO PA = \$ 14.3 BILLION

*Costs include loss of productivity, alcohol-related illness, health care, crashes and crime.

**Costs include crime, incarceration, court and other enforcement activities and health care.

SOURCE: "The Economic Benefits of Drug Treatment: A critical review of the evidence for policy makers", Steven Belenko, Ph.D., Nicholas Patapis, Psy.D, and Michael T. French, Ph.D., Treatment Research Institute, University of Pennsylvania, February 2005.

Office of National Drug Control Policy (2004)