

Ohio's Opiate Epidemic

July 2011



John R. Kasich, Governor
Orman Hall, Director

The Problem

Ohio's opiate epidemic is a crisis of unparalleled proportions with devastating, often deadly, consequences. The most culpable substances are the opiate family, which includes heroin and prescription pain reliever medications. In fact, these substances accounted for nearly 40 percent of the state's 1,373 overdose deaths in 2009.

In addition to the human toll, Ohio's opiate and prescription drug epidemic has severely strained law enforcement, criminal justice and health care resources and stretched the capacity of Ohio's publicly-funded alcohol and other drug addiction treatment services system.

Evidence increasingly points to opiate addiction as a major driver of increasing health care costs as well. A study in the *Journal of Managed Care Pharmacy* estimates that the medical expenses of a person who is abusing opioids are *eight times* those of a non-addict. Meanwhile, CareSource, a leading managed care provider in Ohio, has reported that *one in four* Aged, Blind and Disabled (ABD) Medicaid recipients enrolled in its program, are using opiate painkillers.



On average, four Ohioans die each day as a result of drug overdose.

(Source: Ohio Department of Health)

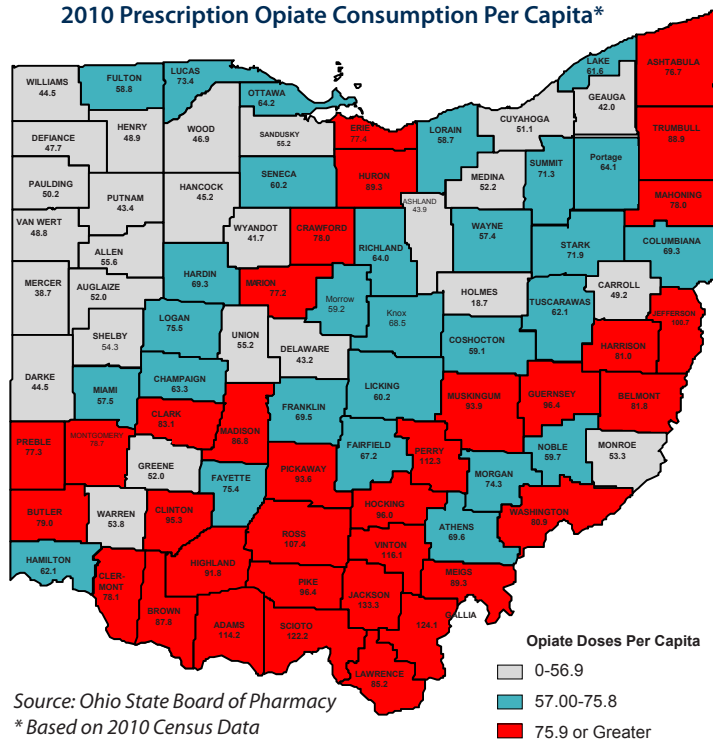
Southern Ohio, has been particularly hard-hit by this crisis, and is widely considered "a window on the world" in terms of the wreckage caused when prescription drug abuse and addiction becomes entrenched in a community. The Ohio State Board of Pharmacy reported 9.7 million doses were legally dispensed to Scioto County residents in 2010. This is more than twice the per capita rate dispensed in Cuyahoga County (Greater Cleveland.) Scioto County, which has 78,820 residents, has the third highest overdose death rate of all 88 counties in Ohio.

Developing and implementing cost-effective policies and strategies to resolve the crisis is a collective responsibility. From generating greater public awareness around the issue to toughening state laws and regulations around how controlled substances are prescribed, and embracing evidence-based treatment technologies such as Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) Ohio must act swiftly and decisively to formulate a coordinated response to rein in spiraling health care costs and prevent more tragic deaths.

Key Facts

- 9.7 million doses of prescription painkillers were legally dispensed to Scioto County residents in 2010. That amounts to 123 doses for every man, woman and child.
(Source: Ohio Board of Pharmacy, 2010)
- Since 2007, unintentional drug overdoses have been the leading cause of accidental death in Ohio. Fatal and non-fatal poisonings cost Ohioans \$3.6 billion annually.
(Source: Ohio Department of Health, "Burden of Poisoning in Ohio, 1999-2008")
- Prescription painkillers accounted for nearly 37 percent of unintentional overdose deaths in 2008.
(Source: Ohio Department of Health)
- The Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring (OSAM) Network reports a move from prescription painkillers to heroin among opiate abusers. Heroin is highly available in all regions of the state.
(Source: ODADAS, OSAM Network, 2011)
- 85 percent of substance abuse treatment requests at The Scioto County Counseling Center are now for opiate addiction, marking a 300 percent increase in just the past three years.
(Source: Scioto County Rx Drug Action Team)

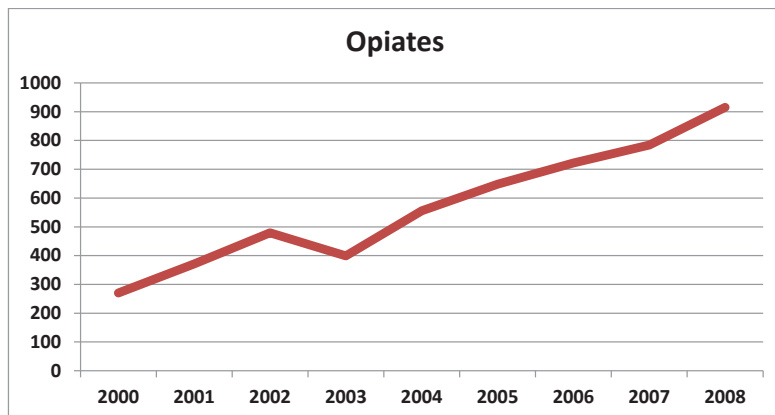
2010 Prescription Opiate Consumption Per Capita*



Source: Ohio State Board of Pharmacy
* Based on 2010 Census Data

Number of Deaths By Specific Drugs Mentioned on Death Certificate 2000-2008

Specific Drugs	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Opiates+	270	371	479	399	556	648	722	784	915



+ Opiates group includes heroin, other opioids, methadone, other synthetic narcotics, other narcotics and psychodysleptics
Source: Ohio Department of Health: Center for Public Health Statistics and Informatics

Note: more than one drug can be mentioned on a single death certificate.

Treatment Works

- Relapse rates for opiate addiction may range from 80-95 percent without some form of Medication-Assisted Treatment, counseling and other supportive services.
- Ohio has been utilizing methadone for the treatment of heroin and opiate addiction for more than 40 years. There are currently 12 ODADAS-licensed methadone programs in operation.
- A newer medication — Buprenorphine (marketed under the brand names Suboxone® and Subutex®) — successfully blocks the cravings and withdrawal symptoms that lead to drug-seeking behaviors. Buprenorphine is recognized by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) as a best practice in the treatment of opiate addiction.
- There are other emerging medication therapies in development. Given the lack of treatment success when medication assisted treatment is not used, Ohio's alcohol and other drug addiction services network will continue to evaluate and seek expanded access to the latest and most effective treatment technology available.