



Macon County Public Health

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Press Release

It Only Takes a Little to Lose a Lot **Prescription Opioid Abuse Is a Critical Public Health Issue**

Macon County Public Health recognizes the critical threat of prescription opioid addiction to the public and strongly supports the Rx Prescription Awareness Campaign launched by CDC. The purpose of this campaign is to increase awareness of the dangers of the risks associated with prescription opioids.

Prescription opioids are powerful pain-reducing medications that include oxycodone, hydrocodone, and morphine, among others, and have both benefits as well as potentially serious risks. Every day in the United States, more than 1,000 people are treated in emergency departments for misusing prescription opioids – and more than 40 people die from prescription opioid overdoses. Misuse of prescription opioids is also a strong risk factor for heroin use. In 2015, 12.5 million people misused prescription opioids.

More people start down the path of addiction through the misuse of opioid prescription drugs than any other substance. The abuse of these prescription drugs has fueled the nation's opioid epidemic, which has led to the highest rate of overdose deaths this country has ever seen. Educating the public and removing these medications from households across the United States prevents misuse where it often starts.

A combination of public education and awareness along with measures taken to reduce the number of opioid prescriptions given is showing success in North Carolina. A data dashboard developed by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services shows the state is beginning to see success in its efforts to combat the opioid crisis. The oversupply of prescription opioids is being reduced and access to treatment and recovery services has increased. In the fourth quarter of 2017, there were 20 million fewer opioid pills dispensed statewide, compared to the same period the year before when 141 million were distributed. Data also indicate more people are receiving care through medication-assisted treatment, coupled with clinical treatment services, for substance use disorder.

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Get the Facts

Prescription opioids (like hydrocodone, oxycodone, and morphine) can be prescribed by doctors to treat moderate to severe pain, but have serious risks and side effects.

The most common drugs involved in prescription opioid overdose deaths include:

- Oxycodone (such as OxyContin®)
- Hydrocodone (such as Vicodin®)
- Methadone

Overdose is not the only risk related to prescription opioids. Misuse, abuse, and opioid use disorder (addiction) are also potential dangers.

Anyone who takes prescription opioids can become addicted to them.

Learn more about opioid misuse and overdose, data, and prevention resources at www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose.

Resources for Patients, Family & Friends

- [Managing Chronic Pain in Adults with or in Recovery from Substance Use Disorders\[SAMHSA\]](#)
- [Facts and Recommendations for Individuals and Families\[Surgeon General\]](#)
- [Facts and Recommendations for Communities\[Surgeon General\]](#)
- [Facts and Recommendations for State, Local, and Tribal Governments\[Surgeon General\]](#)
- [Mental Health and Addiction Insurance Help](#) [HHS]

Prescription opioids can be
addictive and **dangerous**.
It only takes a little to lose a lot.

