



## Opioid Addiction Fact Sheet

### Opioid Addiction

Opioids are drugs based upon the chemical structure of opium. Opioid addiction occurs when a person develops a physical dependence on the drug (experiences withdrawal when use is ceased) and loses control over the desire to use the drug, experiencing overwhelming cravings and desires to use the drug. Opioid addiction is a chronic brain disease and, like other behaviorally based diseases such as heart disease or diabetes, opioid addiction can be effectively managed through the use of medication and lifestyle changes. The most common medications used in the treatment of opioid addiction approved by the Food and Drug Administration are methadone, naltrexone, and buprenorphine. The goal of medication-assisted treatment is to assist the individual to recover from addiction.

### Overall Scope of the Problem

- Of the 21.5 million Americans 12 or older that had a substance use disorder in 2014,<sup>1</sup> million had a substance use disorder involving prescription pain relievers and 586,000 had a substance use disorder involving heroin.<sup>2</sup>
- It is estimated that 23% of individuals who use heroin develop opioid addiction.<sup>3</sup>
- Interventions for opioid addiction include prevention through education of health professionals and the general public, prescription drug monitoring programs, medication disposal programs, substance use disorder treatment and distribution of overdose reversal medications.

### Impact on Adolescents (12 to 17 years old)

- In 2014, 467,000 adolescents were current nonmedical users of pain reliever, with 168,000 having an addiction to prescription pain relievers.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2014, an estimated 28,000 adolescents had used heroin in the past year, and an estimated 16,000 were current heroin users. Additionally, an estimated 18,000 adolescents had heroin a heroin use disorder in 2014.<sup>2</sup>
- People often share their unused pain relievers, unaware of the dangers of nonmedical opioid use. Most adolescents who misuse prescription pain relievers are given them for free by a friend or relative.<sup>3</sup>
- The prescribing rates for prescription opioids among adolescents and young adults nearly doubled from 1994 to 2007.<sup>4</sup>

1 National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2015). Drugs of Abuse: Opioids. Bethesda, MD: National Institute on Drug Abuse. Available at <http://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/opioids>.

2 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2015). Behavioral health trends in the United States: Results from the 2014 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Available at <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUH-FRR1-2014/NSDUH-FRR1-2014.pdf>.

3 National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2014). Drug Facts: Heroin. Bethesda, MD: National Institute on Drug Abuse. Available at <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/heroin>.

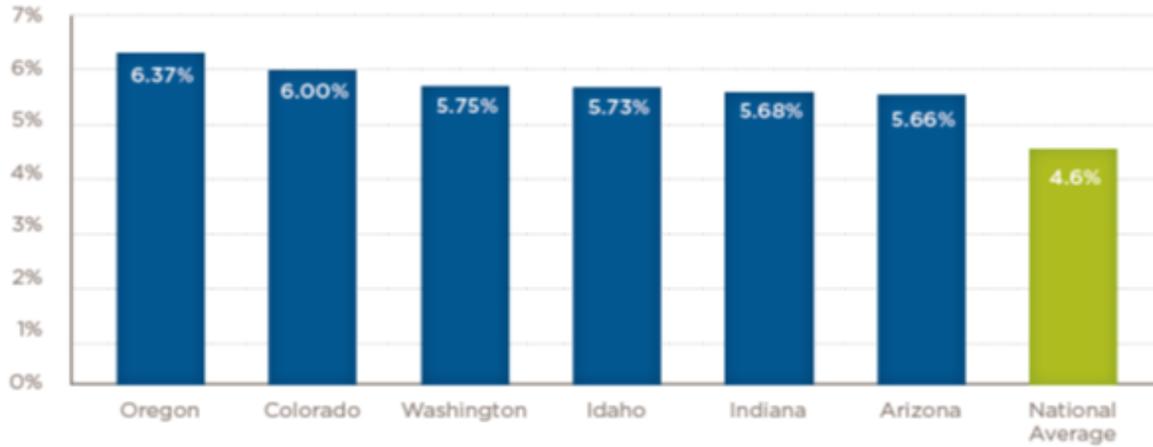
4 Fortuna RJ, Robbins BW, Caiola E, Joynt M, Halterman JS. Prescribing of controlled medications to adolescents and young adults in the United States. *Pediatrics*. 2010;126(6):1108-1116



**Colorado Statistics on Opioid Addiction**

Health Care Costs from Opioid Abuse: A State-by-State Analysis ranks Colorado the second highest state with opioid abuse.

**STATES WITH HIGHEST OPIOID ABUSE RATES  
(2010-2011)**



Source: SAMHSA 2013.

**Health Care Costs Associated with Opioid Abuse - Colorado**

Health Care Costs from Opioid Abuse	Percent of Abuse-Related Health Care Costs	Per-Capita Health Care Costs from Opioid Abuse
\$593,705,700	2.4%	\$111

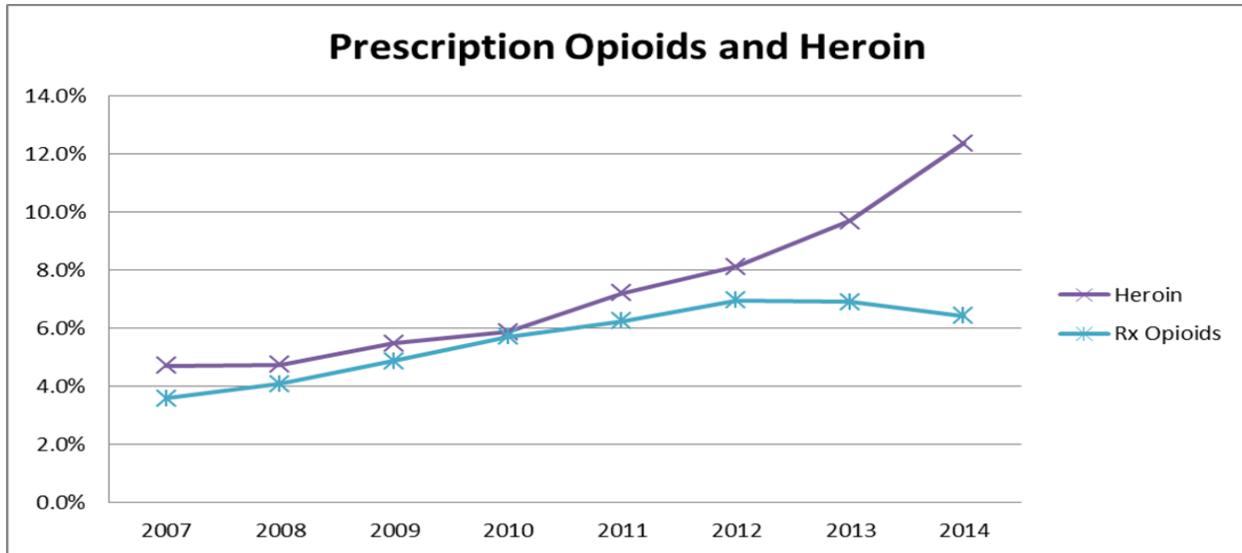
[Health Care Costs from Opioid Abuse: A State-by-State Analysis, Produced by MATRIX GLOBAL ADVISORS, LLC. In report prepared for the Partnership for Drug-Free Kids, April 2015]

**Colorado Specific data from National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2013-2014)**

- Approximately 23,000 adolescents (5.5% of all adolescents 12-17yrs old) reported nonmedical use of pain relievers.
- 3rd in Nation for non-medical pain reliever use 12-17 years old
- 7th in Nation for non-medical pain reliever use 18-25 years old
- 2nd in Nation for non-medical pain reliever use 12 and older

**Colorado Treatment Admission Data (OBH data) - Data shown represent % of all treatment admissions**

- Southeast Colorado has the highest percentage of treatment admissions for opioid abuse (prescription opioids and heroin).
- Treatment admissions for non-medical prescription opioid use increased from 3.6% in 2007 to a peak of 7% in 2012 and have begun to slowly decline to 6.4% in 2014.
- Treatment admissions for heroin increased from 4.7% of in 2007 to 12.4% in 2014.
- Below is a graph showing data to support the theory that people are shifting from seeking treatment for non-medical use of prescription opioids to heroin.



#### Opioid Addiction Prevention, Treatment and Evaluation

The Office of Behavioral Health engages in a variety of activities related to preventing and treating opioid addiction. OBH administers

- Licensing and oversight of substance use disorder treatment providers across the state including 13 opioid/narcotic addiction treatment programs. These programs are located in Longmont, Ft. Collins, Colorado Springs, Pueblo, Grand Junction, Alamosa and Durango.
- Rise Above program that works to prevent Prescription Drug Abuse. This important prevention effort addresses the fact that the majority of heroin users report using prescription opioids prior to using heroin.
- Speak Now program is an effort focused on providing evidence-based information and resources to parents and caregivers regarding youth substance abuse prevention in Colorado. Speak Now addresses the use of alcohol and drugs among Colorado's youth. It's an educational resource for parents and caregivers on how to keep conversations going about the risks of alcohol and drug use among youth. The Speak Now campaign includes messaging to discuss prescription drug abuse. <http://speaknowcolorado.org/>
- Contracts with 32 different community prevention groups throughout the state who are responsive to local concerns around alcohol and drug use including opioid use.
- Contracts with OMNI Institute to provide prevention training and technical assistance to all of the local grantees/contractors.
- Contracts with four Managed Services Organizations contracting with 40 substance use disorder detoxification and treatment providers across the state.
- Statewide Drug Use Trends and Needs studies describing the changing characteristics of individuals seeking treatment for substance use disorders.