


**Drug Enforcement Administration**



**The Drug Crisis**

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Prescription Drug Abuse: Is there really a problem?  
The misuse of prescription drugs is more prevalent than the use of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, MDMA, and PCP...

**COMBINED!**

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**Popular Prescription Drugs of Abuse**

- Opioids
  - Oxycodone (OxyContin, Percocet, Percodan)
  - Oxymorphone (Opana)
  - Hydrocodone (Vicodin, Norco, Lortab)
  - Suboxone
- Amphetamine-based: Adderall
- Alprazolam: Xanax
- Valium

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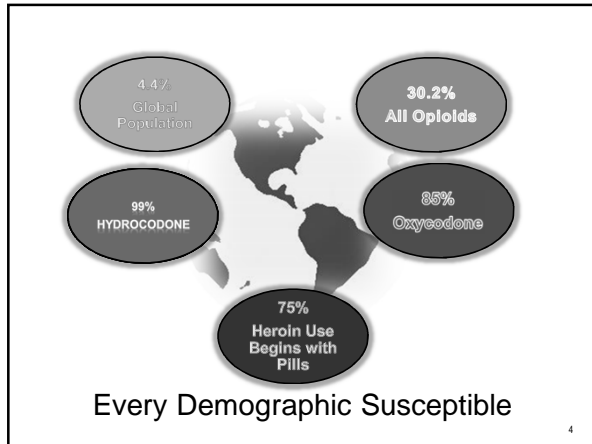
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### Non-Medical Use of Prescription Drugs

Can someone die from abusing prescription drugs?

**YES**

Deaths from prescription drugs have outpaced deaths from heroin and cocaine combined...

Heroin Deaths	Prescription Opioid Deaths
2013: 8,260	2013: 16,235
2014: 10,574	2014: 18,893
2015: 12,000	2015: 16,000

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### Prescription Drugs: Youth At Risk

- 41% of teenagers regard prescription drugs as "much safer" than traditional drugs of abuse like heroin, cocaine, marijuana, and methamphetamine
- Almost 4 in 10 Teens (38%) who have abused a prescription drug obtained it from their parent's medicine cabinet
- Nearly 3/4s of teens (73%) indicate that it's easy to get prescription drugs from their parent's medicine cabinet
- Over half of parents (55%) say that anyone can access their medicine cabinet
- High school students who legitimately take prescription opioids are 1/3 more likely to misuse the drug by age 23 than those with no history of the prescription

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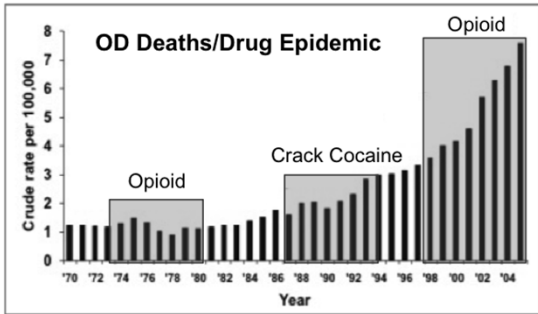
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### Opioid Epidemic: Historical Perspective



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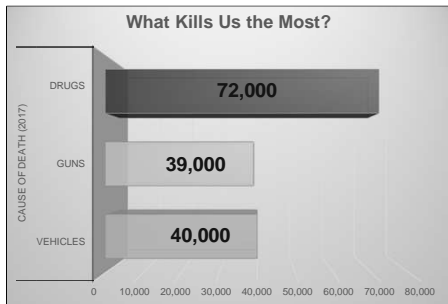
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### What Kills Us the Most?



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### Historical Fatality Cluster Events



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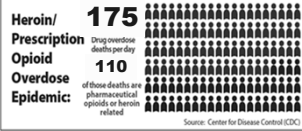
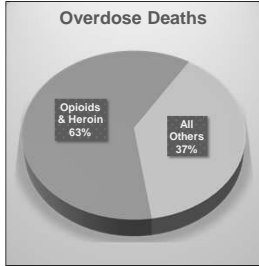
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### Daily Crisis: By the Numbers



September 2016: 129/81 per day; 23 day – 9/11 equivalent  
 September 2017: 144/91 per day; 21 day – 9/11 equivalent  
 Today: 17 day – 9/11 equivalent

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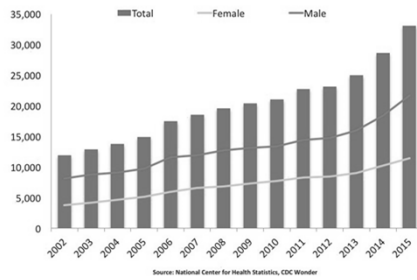
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### National Overdose Deaths

Number of Deaths from Opioid Drugs



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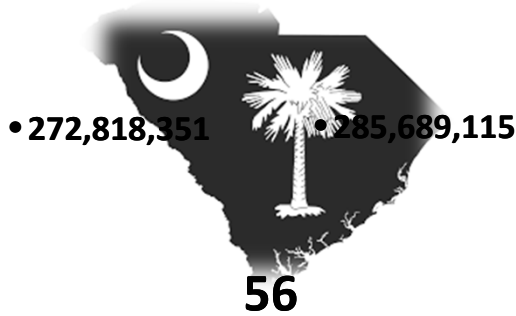
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### South Carolina: Prescription Opioid Disbursement in 2014 & 2017



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**Local Stats (Opioids & Heroin): Tri-County Charleston**

Charleston County  
OD Death Rate: 178% higher than national average (2017) (95 deaths\*)  
Opioids Dispensed: 15,676,050 (2014); 15,295,405 (2017)  
Population: 389,262 Per Person: 39

Dorchester County  
OD Death Rate: 182% higher than NA (2015)  
Opioids Dispensed: 7,431,890 (2014); 8,399,983 (2017)  
Population: 152,478 Per Person: 55

Berkeley County  
OD Death Rate: 200% higher than NA  
Opioids Dispensed: 10,521,904 (2014); 11,392,096 (2017)  
Population: 202,786 Per Person: 56

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**Local Stats (Prescriptions Only): What's the Effect?**

Clarendon County  
OD Death Rate: ???  
Opioids Dispensed: 2,146,402 (2014)  
Population: 34,113 Per Person: 63

Lee County  
OD Death Rate: ???  
Opioids Dispensed: 996,511 (2014)  
Population: 18,343 Per Person: 54

Sumter County  
OD Death Rate: ???  
Opioids Dispensed: 4,395,821 (2014)  
Population: 107,919 Per Person: 41

Williamsburg County  
OD Death Rate: ???  
Opioids Dispensed: 2,044,885(2014)  
Population: 32,695 Per Person: 63

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**Local Stats (Opioids & Heroin): What's the Effect?**

Jasper County  
Opioids Dispensed: 843,484 (2014)  
Per Person: 31  
OD Death Rate: ???

Beaufort County  
Opioids Dispensed: 5,064,396 (2014)  
Per Person: 28  
OD Death Rate: ???

Richland County  
Opioids Dispensed: 12,234,250 (2014)  
Per Person: 49  
OD Death Rate: ???

Lexington County  
Opioids Dispensed: 7,431,890 (2014)  
Per Person: 31  
OD Death Rate: ???

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### The Cycle of Addiction

- Starts with a low-level hydrocodone narcotic prescription, e.g. Vicodin, Lortab, or Lorcet
- Once addiction and tolerance occur, stronger narcotic is preferred such as Oxycodone-based drugs, e.g. Percocet or Percodan
- Eventually, an even more potent prescription drug, e.g. OxyContin, whose effect can last up to 12 hours at a cost of \$25-\$80 (street value) per pill is sought
- Due to high cost of OxyContin, a cheaper alternative "heroin" can be bought at \$10 per dosage unit



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### Where are prescription drugs coming from?

Practitioner Diversion

Internet

RX Fraud

Pain Clinics

Doctor Shopping

Drug Dealers



Medicine Cabinet

Friends & Family

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### Synthetic Opioids: Primary Drugs of Concern

- Increased demand largely being driven by prescription drug abusers switching to heroin which is cheaper and more readily available
- Some OxyContin abusers switched to heroin after reformulation made it more difficult to abuse
- Overdose deaths highest in history
- Synthetic opioids highly addictive both psychologically and physically
- Effects: slows breathing → respiratory failure
- Chronic use → collapsed veins, heart lining and valves infection, liver and kidney disease, abscesses
- "Heroin" overdoses quadrupled from 2010 - 2016



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### Heroin Overdose Deaths

**From 2010 to 2016  
Heroin death rate nearly quadrupled!!!!**

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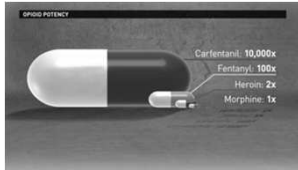
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### Powerful Opioids

- Marketed as "heroin"
- Cutting agent of "heroin"
- Multiple cases of "immediate" death
- "Death Drives Up Demand"
- Drugs Are Prolific in SC
- HazMat Scenes for Law Enforcement



Carfentanyl



Pink



Fentanyl



Grey Death

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### ~~OPERATION LETHAL DOSE~~

Tri-County Enforcement Initiative



- 9-Month Operation into Retail and Wholesale Opioid Distribution: Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester
- State, federal, local agencies involved
- Collaboration with County Coroner's to Identify OD Deaths
- Forensic and Electronic Analysis to Identify Dealers of Fatal Doses
- Other Undercover and Informant Operations to Identify and Develop Evidence on Local Dealers/Distributors
- Resulted in 50-Plus Arrests, Seizure of 20 Guns, \$20,000, and Various Seizures of Grey Death, Fentanyl, Heroin, and Carfentanyl
- Take-Away: These drugs are on Our Streets
- Take-Away: Dealers Continue Despite Knowledge Their Drugs are Killing Others
- After Action: **Enforcement Must Continue As a Deterrent and To Remove Unsympathetic Dealers**
- After Action: **Outreach Must Also Continue to Prevent Future Addiction and Deaths**

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### Synthetic Opioids: Sources of Supply

- Mexican Cartels – Fortune 500 Enterprises, Market Analysis, Supply Meets Demand
- Asian Sources of Supply
- Traditional Local Drug Suppliers Expanding Product Line
- The Internet – Small Quantities, Easily Purchased, Difficult to Track
- The Dark Web – Readily Available, Difficult to Infiltrate
- Unscrupulous Doctors, Nurses, and Pharmacists

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### Fentanyl & Other Opioid Investigations



- Transdermal & Airborne transmission
- False positives for any powdery substance
- Danger to Police
  - > K-9 units → Over 10 deaths nationwide
  - > Police personnel → respiratory arrest
- Require Level A-4 Suit
- Processing Evidence → Dangerous

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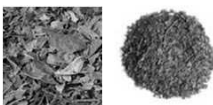
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### Kratom: Panacea to Opioid Crisis (Think Again!)

- *Mitragyna speciosa* korth (aka Thang, Kakuam, Thom, Ketum, Biak)
- Comes from tree native to Southeast Asia --> Naturally occurring opioid like substance, e.g. morphine --> affects same brain receptors
- Marketed as "alternative medicine" → pain killer, anti-diarrheal, and other ailments
- Claims to "moderate" opioid dependency
- No legitimate medical use
- No "organized" monitoring of use/abuse
- Illegal in several countries, including Thailand, Australia, Finland, Denmark, Poland, and others
- Long-term effects: addiction, weight loss, insomnia, aggression, hostility, psychosis
- Charleston County Kratom OD Deaths: 4 (2017), 4 (2018)



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### A History of Heroin and Opioids

The timeline consists of three rows of images with corresponding dates below them:

- Row 1: 3400 BC – 1800 AD (Opium poppy), 1803 - Present (Morphine), 1832-Present (Heroin), 1842 - 1853 (Cocaine).
- Row 2: 1874 - 1923 (Heroin), 1924 - Present (Heroin), 1937 (Heroin).
- Row 3: 1959 - Present (Heroin), 1974 (Heroin), 1976 (Heroin), 2017 (Heroin).

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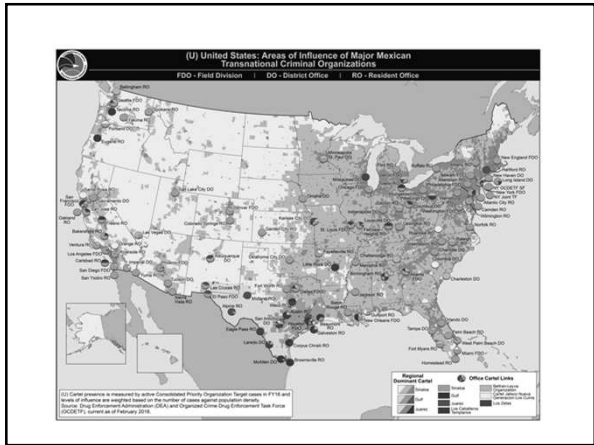
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DEA 360

## Solutions: Cutting Off the Source of Supply

A close-up photograph of a silver faucet with a cross-shaped handle. Instead of water, a stream of white and grey pills is falling from the spout, forming a large pile on the surface below. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

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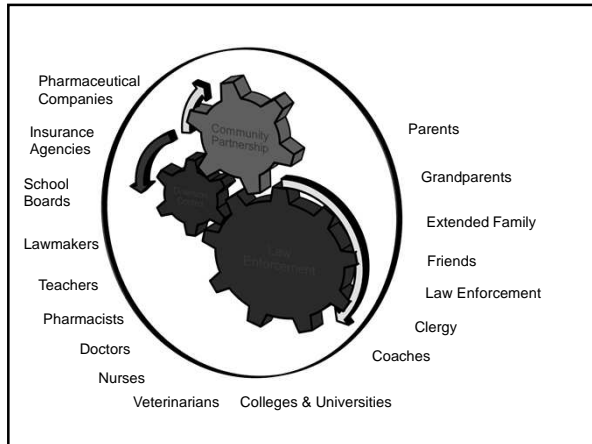
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### Community & Professional Partnerships: Critical Piece for Success



- Law Enforcement unable to solve problem alone
- Diversion control plays a role
- Community & Professional Outreach
  - Educate & Inform
  - Bring behaviors in line with gravity and reality
  - Treatment and support of existing addicts

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### Drug Culture: Glamorization. Legitimization. Normalization

Miley Cyrus' "We Can't Stop"  
"So la da da di we like to party  
Dancing with Molly  
Doing whatever we want,  
This is our house  
This is our rules"



Future's "Mask Off"  
"Percocets, Molly, Percocets  
Percocets, Molly, Percocets  
Rep the set, gotta rep the set  
Chase a check, never chase a b\*\*\*h  
(never chase no bitches)  
Mask on, f\*\*\* it, mask off  
Mask on, f\*\*\* it, mask off  
Percocets, Molly, Percocets  
Chase a check, never chase a b\*\*\*h"

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### COMMUNITY CALL TO ACTION

- Be Proactive in "Limiting Supply" During Take Back Events
- Take Back 24/7/365
- Educate Peers, Youth, Family, Patients: **EVERYONE** About Opioids (CDC.gov; DEA.gov)
- Persuade Parents to Control Youth Access to Prescription Drugs
- COUNTER-NARRATIVE: Create your own – TALK to young people
- COUNTER-NARRATIVE: Work with community organizations to de-glamorize, de-normalize, de-legitimize drug use

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### Law Enforcement & Regulatory Efforts: Professional Outreach & Engagement

- DEA exerting regulatory authority: Reduction of 2017 production quotas Schedule II prescription opioids (hydrocodone 34%, oxycodone 45%, hydromorphone 38%); 2018 additional 20% reduction across the board
- **US Surgeon General letter (September 2016): Alerted physicians to the opioid epidemic (first-ever)**
- Governor Haley: team commissioned in 2014 to evaluate and advise to combat epidemic in SC
- **SC is among states prescribing most painkillers: 96 to 143 painkiller prescriptions per 100 people (source CDC) versus 52 to 71 per 100 people in other states**
- Other states: legislation to limit opioid prescriptions from 30 to 7 days (i.e. NY, MA)

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Questions?



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