

New report on Rx abuse

Oklahoma drops to 2nd Quintile Rx painkiller abuse



Is OK winning?

The new SAMHSA report seems to indicate at first blush that the state is making great progress. The previous report projected 8.13% of Oklahomans 12 and over were abusing prescription painkillers but this report has dropped that to 5.19% . That would amount to a 36% drop in prevalence of abuse from one period to the next, enough to question the validity of the projection. Yet SAMHSA claims a 95% confidence interval for that projection of 4.26-6.30. So what is happening?

For those of us in the treatment field or law enforcement it is evident what is occurring. It was predicted in this email newsletter long ago. As law enforcement has been effective in shutting down cheap and easy access to prescription opiates, the price has spiked on the streets because these drugs are much harder to find. There has been a major shift converting to another opiate that is plentiful and cheaper, heroin.

I hear their stories everyday, from people much like you and me who got hooked on prescribed medication, abused it as their tolerance increased, then suddenly that supply was cut-off. Now, people who NEVER thought they would do heroin are on it, and people who NEVER thought they would stick a needle in their arms have collapsed their veins from abuse. And then there is the attendant decline in their social function and behavior, doing things they NEVER thought they would do - people much like you and me, like our sons and daughters.

The Bush and Obama Administrations have failed to address the demand-side of prescription addiction focusing entirely upon the supply-side. Oklahoma MUST do something different. Register for a Community Respose Guide, free to everyone who registers a request. At least we can make a difference in our respective communities.



Heroin: Suburban Youth

There seems to be a growing heroin epidemic among youth in suburban America. Their stories are similar starting with marijuana and pain pills. A SAMHSA report earlier this week stated that prescription painkiller abuse is only second to marijuana as the most abused substance. But the steep tolerance build up of opiates, plus the crackdown on the supply of pain pills, makes heroin the natural course for this most unlikely population sector.

Our kids are in grave danger, not just of a powerful addiction, but also of the attendant lifestyle that goes with it. While heroin addiction is associated with roughly 5% of those entering treatment in Oklahoma, it is associated with 26% of those in the penal system. This suggests that heroin addicts are roughly 5 times more likely to be involved with felony offenses than other types of addicts.

We need more emphasis on prevention and treatment. Learn how to organize such efforts in your community. Register for your copy of the Community Response Guide.



Other IMPACTS: Supply-Side Curtailment

“The number of people seeking treatment has come on faster than we thought,” Delany said. “The number of people going for treatment for prescription pain drug use has quadrupled from 2004 to 2010 and we have seen a similar increase in what’s going on in the emergency room.” In 2009, there were nearly 425,000 emergency department visits involving non-medical or inappropriate use of narcotic painkillers and an estimated 15,600 deaths involving these drugs, according to Dr. Douglas Throckmorton, deputy director for regulatory programs at the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, which is part of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Some people are concerned that by cracking down on prescription drug abuse, patients who need these pain medications will not be able to get them. Delany said these concerns must be taken into account as solutions to the problem are crafted and implemented. “The public health community has begun to recognize the scope of the epidemic,” said Dr. G. Caleb Alexander, co-director of the Center for Drug Safety and Effectiveness at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health in Baltimore. Alexander noted that the problem is partially the result of trying to correct another problem, namely, the under-use of narcotic painkillers to manage pain in those who need it. “One of the factors that has contributed to the epidemic are well-intentioned efforts to try to improve the identification and treatment of patients with pain,” he said. Another expert, Leo Beletsky, an assistant professor of law and health sciences at Northeastern University School of Law & Bouve College of Health Sciences in Boston, is concerned that government efforts to curb narcotic painkiller abuse may go too far. “Government officials have championed a number of solutions drawn primarily from the drug enforcement playbook, such as prescription monitoring programs, prosecutions of doctors accused of over-prescribing, and pill mill raids,” Beletsky said. Focusing only on drug supply is short-sighted and dangerous, he noted. “First, it may unduly restrict legitimate patient access to effective pain care and, second, recent data suggests that cutting patients with substance abuse problems off prescription opioid medications may actually push them towards injecting heroin,” Beletsky said.

“In other words, as we craft solutions to address prescription drug misuse, we must be extremely careful to avoid causing more harm than good,” Beletsky added. Along with actions to restrict supply, the answer to this problem must include wider access to substance abuse services, drug treatment, counseling and other investments in the scientifically proven ways to address substance abuse, Beletsky explained.



Longevity Gene also ADHD & Addiction

A study recently published in the Journal of Neuroscience examined the role that the gene DRD4 may play in longevity. The genotype, which is responsible for coding a receptor of the brain chemical dopamine, has been found to be 66 percent more common in people who live to the age of 90 or older. The gene means that the response to the dopamine system, prompting feelings of pleasure and reward, is lower. If not well monitored, the gene can lead to an all-encompassing pursuit of good feelings, prompting addiction and the dysfunctional behavior so common in individuals with ADHD.



Sac and Fox Tribal members chosen as freshman and sophomore Stroud High School Homecoming Attendants: (from left) Freshman Attendant: Cherokee Brown, daughter of Tammy Brown and Jeff Wilson escorted by Tiller Bucktrot and Sophomore Attendant: Whytleigh Guerrero, daughter of Silas and Mandy Guerrero escorted by Marc Gooch.



Sac and Fox youth join other Native American youth on the basketball court at the Stroud Tigers Homecoming Friday, January 18, 2013: (front row from left) Nicki Watashe, Santana Spang and Erin Riley. (back row from left): Sophomore Attendant: Whytleigh Guerrero, Tiller Bucktrot, Justin Morris, Ryan McElvany, Shawn Brown and Freshman Attendant: Cherokee Brown. (SFN photos)

SAIGE 2013 Youth Program now accepting applications!

Society of American Indian Government Employees announces 2013 Youth Program and invites college students to participate Native college students 18-25 years old are invited to apply for a fully paid week-long developmental experience at the SAIGE annual Training Program in Spokane, WA June 3-7, 2013. It will be held at the Northern Quest hotel owned by the Kalispel tribe.

Please see the link below for details Those who have recently graduated High School and are planning to attend college in the fall are also eligible. A great opportunity to meet professional native people and see the myriad of career paths available in federal, state and tribal governments. <http://saige.org/youth/youth-track-news/less>

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WHO MAY APPLY
To enroll in Oklahoma's Promise, you must:

- Be an Oklahoma resident.
- Apply during your 8th-, 9th- or 10th-grade year (homeschool students must apply while age 13, 14 or 15).
- Be the child of parents who earn \$50,000 or less per year at the time of application.
- Read and understand the requirements of the program as listed on back.

THE BENEFITS
Once you've completed the program's high school requirements and meet the college requirements, Oklahoma's Promise can help pay your tuition at an Oklahoma public two-year college or four-year university. It will also cover a portion of tuition at an accredited private college or university or for Oklahoma public technology center courses that qualify for credit from a public two-year college. (The Oklahoma's Promise scholarship amount does not cover items such as other required fees, books, supplies, or room and board.)

WAYS TO APPLY & GET MORE INFORMATION

- Apply online at www.okpromise.org.
- Contact the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education by e-mail at okpromise@osrhe.edu or by phone at 1-800-858-1840 (225-9152 in OKC).
- Get an application from your counselor.

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