Wisconsin Opiate-related Deaths per 100,000; 2000-2013

Note: Includes deaths involving heroin and/or prescription opioids

Source: Wisconsin resident death certificates, Office of Health Informatics, Dept. of Health Services

Source: Wisconsin Dept of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Office of Health Informatics: Hospital Patient Data System
Awareness – the Myths

**MYTH:** Painkillers are completely safe because they are prescribed by a doctor.

**DOSE OF REALITY:** Prescription painkillers are involved with more deaths than heroin and cocaine combined.
Awareness – the Problem in Wisconsin
Opiate Deaths: Opioids vs. Heroin

Source: Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services Wisconsin Epidemiological Profile on Alcohol and Other Drug Use, 2014
An even bigger storm may be coming….

As we reduce proliferation of Rx narcotics, addicted users will need a new source of opiates.
Awareness – the Problem in Wisconsin

**MYTH:** Illicit drugs are more dangerous than prescriptions

**DOSE OF REALITY:** Most of the increase in drug-related deaths is due to misuse of prescription drugs rather than illicit drugs

• Our experience reflects the national trend

(Wisconsin Epidemiological Profile on Alcohol & Other Drug Use, 2014)
Awareness – Who is being impacted?

**MYTH:** This is just affecting the “bad kids”

**DOSE OF REALITY:** Young people from all walks of life are becoming addicted
Awareness – Sources of Abused Opioids

**MYTH 1:** People obtain prescription painkillers “on the street”

**MYTH 2:** Most people abusing painkillers get them legally from a doctor
Awareness – Friends & Family

• **DOSE OF REALITY:**

  • 70.8% got or took them from friend or relative

  *(NIH: The Science of Drug Abuse 7 Addiction, 2010)*
Isn’t Heroin the real problem?

MYTH: Illicit drugs are the cause of most of the problem
Prescription painkillers are the root of the problem

DOSE OF REALITY: Nearly 4 out of 5 heroin users began by abusing prescription painkillers
Aren’t there bigger things to worry about

MYTH: This is an isolated problem and there are bigger public safety issues
Figure 1. Age-adjusted drug overdose death rates compared to other leading injury death rates, Wisconsin residents, 1999-2013

Age-adjusted death rates using the U.S. 2000 population as the standard
Awareness – “Not in our neighborhood”

**MYTH:** Heroin addiction is an urban problem stemming from street drugs.
Just an Urban Problem?

DOSE OF REALITY: It’s affecting communities of all kinds: urban, suburban and rural
HEROIN CASES IN 2008

Total Number of Cases: 273
Number of Counties with Cases: 28

HEROIN CASES BY COUNTY

- No Crime Lab Cases
- 1-9 Crime Lab Cases
- 10-19 Crime Lab Cases
- 20-29 Crime Lab Cases
- 30+ Crime Lab Cases

Information cutoff: December 31, 2008

Numbers based on cases analyzed by the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratories
HEROIN CASES IN 2014

Total Number of Cases | Number of Counties with Cases
--- | ---
1,136 | 53

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Information cutoff: December 31, 2014
Numbers based on cases analyzed by the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratories
In just 6 years:

**HEROIN CASES IN 2008**

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>28</td>
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DOSE OF REALITY
PREVENT PRESCRIPTION PAINKILLER ABUSE IN WISCONSIN.
Unintentional Opiate Poisoning
Hospitalizations & Emergency Department
Visits per 10,000 people; Wisconsin, 2002-2011

Source: Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Hospital Patient Data System
Note: Figure does not include three VA Hospitals. Emergency department visit counts exclude those admitted as inpatients.
Why is Heroin here?

Not our first battle with heroin

• But this one is very different

Two main factors:

1. New introductory drug
2. New sources of heroin
Why Has Heroin Use Increased?

-First prong-

It rarely starts with heroin

- Most start by recreational abuse of opioids
- Some become addicted to opioids after surgery
  - More and more that is the exception
Most start with diverted pharmaceuticals

- How can they be deadly if doctors prescribe?
- “Pharm parties”
- For some, addiction occurs rapidly

Searching for a vein?!?!

Tolerance builds:

- Popping pills = Need a higher high
- Snorting crushed pills = more rapid and higher peak
- Eventually = Crush, cook and inject

- Largest # die from Rx abuse
What are the sources of the Rx?

Over prescribing?
Take back day September 2014
  Over 34,000 pounds
Take Back Day May 2015
  Over 39,000 pounds
Take Back Day October 2015
  Over 44,000 pounds
A RECORD
64,247 LBS.
OF DRUGS WERE
COLLECTED!

DoseOfRealityWI.gov

DOSE OF REALITY
PREVENT PRESCRIPTION PAINKILLER ABUSE IN WISCONSIN.
DIVERSION

Schedule II Narcotics
Eventually, most use heroin

Diverted prescriptions are scarce – Heroin easier to obtain

Diverted prescriptions are expensive – Heroin is cheaper (at first)

✓ Tolerance builds
✓ Must use 2 to 6 times/day - from 2 to 15 bags/day
US has a different heroin source -Second Prong-

No longer coming from SW or SE Asia

Recent Purity levels=more ingestion options

- Ability to snort or smoke
- **No longer have to start with IV**
- High rates of purity increase potential for OD
## Comparison of Recent History Heroin Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1980’s</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 - 8% purity</td>
<td>15-26% average purity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National average all types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$350 - $400 per gram</td>
<td>$100 - $150 per gram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tight knit group of addicts</td>
<td>Street Level Sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.25 million chronic users of heroin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nationwide, 20-25% in treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of Ingestion Injection</td>
<td>Methods of Ingestion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Snorting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Smoking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Injection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
South American Heroin

Manipulation of purity percentages - Milwaukee:

- **2003:** 67% average at Milw. Crime Lab
- Subsequent to 2003: dramatic changes seen
  - Many more heroin addicts
  - Spikes in overdoses, particularly in suburban areas
- **2008:** 39% average
- **2010:** 30% average
- **2012:** levels hover around 30% average
- **2013:** some purity levels over 70%
- **2016:** Fentanyl and Carfentanyl
# LABORATORY REPORT

**TO:** Chicago Division  
Milwaukee District Office

**FROM:** North Central Laboratory  
Chicago, IL

**RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exh. No.</th>
<th>Lab. No.</th>
<th>Active Drug Ingredient (Established or Common Name)</th>
<th>Gross Weight</th>
<th>Net Weight</th>
<th>Conc. Or Parity</th>
<th>Amount of Actual Drug</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Heroin Hydrochloride</td>
<td>37.1 g</td>
<td>5.9 g</td>
<td>77.1 %</td>
<td>4.5 g (± 0.2 g)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CASE NUMBER:** [Redacted]
Links to Violence

Increases in Theft, Robbery, Burglary, Prostitution, ID Theft, Human Trafficking DIRECTLY linked to narcotics

Dramatic increases in violence in Mexico, especially near the US border largely due to narcotics trafficking
Multi-Faceted Approach

Law Enforcement
  • Locking addicted users up does not lead to long-term sobriety
  • Tougher dealer network to unravel

Treatment
  • 163,000+ opiate abusers in Wisconsin
  • Drug Treatment Courts
  • Medication Assisted Treatment

Prevention – Most important
Prevention Efforts

Shift from Heroin to Opiate awareness
Legislation
Drug take back/Med Return Units
Partner with Medical Community
  Changing practices
  Changing conversations
Involve schools
Involve employers
Dose of Reality

Very Simple Prevention Message:
• Take Meds ONLY as prescribed TO YOU by a physician
• Store medications safely and SECURELY
• DISPOSE of medications properly/promptly

Delivering the Message:
• Television, radio, online ads and billboards
  o Paid, in-kind, interviews, PSAs
• Articles in trade journals, etc.
• Website with resources for students, parents, educators, health professionals + community
PAINKILLERS
Prevent Prescription Painkiller Abuse in Wisconsin.

DOSE OF REALITY
Take the Pledge

DOSE OF REALITY
Prevent Prescription Painkiller Abuse in Wisconsin.
PRESCRIPTION PAINKILLERS CAUSE MORE DEATHS THAN ALL OTHER DRUGS.
Contact Information

Wisconsin Department of Justice

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Madison, WI 53707-7857