



## OPIOID FACTS

Fact sheet provided by the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM).

### Opioid Addiction Disease Basics

- Opioids are any of various compounds that bind to specific receptors in the central nervous system and have analgesic (pain relieving) effects including prescription medications such as oxycodone and hydrocodone and illicit substances such as heroin.
- Opioid addiction is federally described as a progressive, treatable brain disease.
- *American Society of Addiction Medicine addiction definition:* Chronic, relapsing brain disease characterized by compulsive drug-seeking behavior and drug use despite harmful consequence.
- Any type of opioid can trigger latent chronic addiction brain disease.
- 24.6 million people 12 or older (9.4% of the population) live with substance dependence or abuse.
- 1.9 million Americans live with prescription opioid abuse or dependence, while 517,000 Americans live with heroin addiction.
- Opioid addiction disease occurs in every American state, county, socio-economic and ethnic group.
- 23% of heroin users develop chronic opioid addiction disease.



## **National Opioid Overdose Epidemic**

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- Over 100 Americans died from overdose deaths each day in 2013.
- 46 Americans die each day from prescription opioid overdoses; two deaths an hour, 17,000 annually.
- While illicit opioid heroin poisonings increased by 12.4% from 1999 to 2002, the number of prescription opioid analgesic poisonings in the United States increased by 91.2% during that same time period.
- Drug overdose was the leading cause of injury death in 2013, greater than car accidents and homicide.
- About 8,200 Americans die annually from heroin overdose.
- About 75% of opioid addiction disease patients switch to heroin as a cheaper opioid source.
- In 2012, 259 million opioid pain medication prescriptions were written, enough for every adult in America to have a bottle of pills.
- Every day, 2,500 American youth abuse a prescription pain reliever for the first time.
- Nearly 1 in 20 high school seniors has taken Vicodin, 1 in 30 has abused OxyContin.
- Over 50% of individuals 12 years or older used pain relievers non-medically from a friend or relative.
- Adolescent abuse of prescription drugs is frequently associated with other risky behavior, including abuse of other drugs and alcohol.
- The number of opioids prescribed to adolescents and young adults (ages 15 to 29) nearly doubled between 1994 and 2007.

## **Women**

- Prescription opioid overdose caused five times as many women's deaths in 2010 than in 1999.
- In 2010, more than 6,600 women died from prescription painkiller overdoses (18 each day).
- Every three minutes, a woman goes to the emergency department for prescription painkiller misuse or abuse.

