




THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC AND NEED FOR PARITY IN PAIN TREATMENT




Unmet Need in Pain Treatment

Pain is one of the most common reasons patients visit their doctor. 


 Acute pain affects **~80 million adults** per year in the U.S.¹


Nearly **8.3% of opioid-naïve patients** treated with opioids for post-operative acute pain management **develop new and persistent opioid use (NPOU)**. 


 **~85,000 incidence of adults** in the U.S. diagnosed with **opioid use disorder (OUD)** within one year of opioid treatment for the management of acute pain.²


Current State of the Opioid Epidemic

Despite reductions in opioid prescribing and dispensing, prescription opioid misuse remains a significant issue.

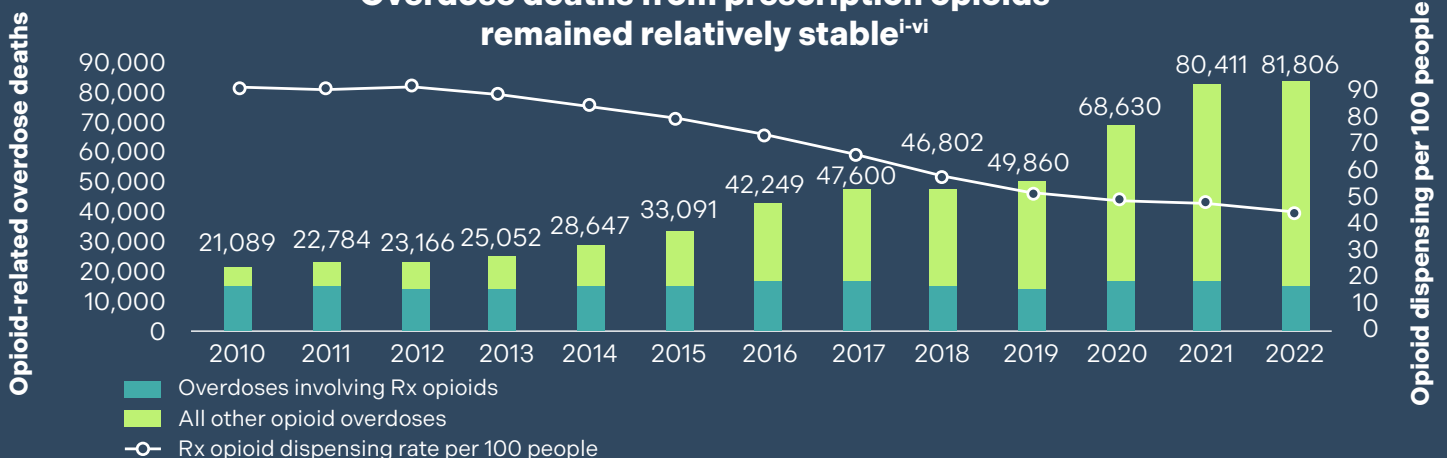
 **7 million people** in the U.S. were estimated to have an **opioid use disorder in 2019**.³

Among individuals using illicit fentanyl, heroin, or prescription opioids nonmedically, **48% initially used opioids prescribed to them for medical use**.³ 

 The number of opioid-related **overdose deaths reached 81,083** in 2023.⁴

Deaths due to prescription opioids have **remained constant** despite a decline in opioid prescribing rates. 

Overdose deaths from prescription opioids remained relatively stable^{i-vi}



References:

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- ii. Annual surveillance report of drug-related risks and outcomes, United States 2017. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. August 31, 2017. Accessed June 26, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/pubs/2017-cdc-drug-surveillance-report.pdf>
- iii. 2018 annual surveillance report of drug-related risks and outcomes, United States. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. August 31, 2018. Accessed June 26, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/pubs/2018-cdc-drug-surveillance-report.pdf>
- iv. Annual surveillance report of drug-related risks and outcomes, United States, 2019. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. November 1, 2019. Accessed June 26, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/pubs/2019cdc-drug-surveillance-report.pdf>
- v. United States dispensing rate maps. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Accessed June 26, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/rxrate-maps/index.html>
- vi. Overdose death rates. National Institutes of Health. Accessed June 26, 2024. <https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/trends-statistics/overdose-death-rates>

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Potential consequences of poorly controlled pain or pain treated with opioids include reduced quality of life, development of chronic pain, development of opioid use disorder and increased costs to the healthcare system and society.



Opioid prescribing continues to be high despite state-level legislation over the last decade

Economic Burden of Poorly Controlled Pain and Opioid Epidemic

- The total cost of the opioid crisis to the American economy remains high, at **\$180B per year**.⁵
- Healthcare costs for patients with OUD are **3-times that of patients without OUD**, resulting in billions in additional expenditures.²
- A 2022 analysis puts the incremental **healthcare cost per individual with OUD at \$22,593**.²

Access Challenges

Reducing or eliminating time on opioids matters – even in the acute discharge setting. While nonopioid pain treatments offer a potential solution, health insurance companies discourage this approach with access barriers that contribute to overprescribing of opioids.

- PBMs and health insurers **limit the use of nonopioid pain** management treatment alternatives through formulary placement and utilization management barriers.
- **91%** of physicians reported that prior authorization results in delayed access to necessary care.

Policy Solutions

- **Support pain parity measures** that create equal access between nonopioids and opioids and remove barriers to accessing innovative pain treatment options.
- **Encourage education on nonopioid options** and empower patients to advocate for treatment options.
- **Policymakers must continue to seek solutions** to the opioid crisis that support the full range of treatment options necessary for patients in pain.

Endnotes

1. Lopez A, et al. An evaluation of the prevalence of acute and chronic pain medication use in the United States: a real-world database analysis. Presented at: ASRA Annual Pain Medicine Meeting; November 10-11, 2023; New Orleans, LA.
2. Schoenfeld AJ, et al. An Evaluation of the Incidence of Opioid Use Disorder Among People with Acute and Chronic Pain Managed with Prescription Opioids and the Associated Economic and Societal Burden in the United States. Presented at PAINWeek 2024, Las Vegas, NV.
3. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2023). Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2022 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (HHS Publication No. PEP23-07-01-006, NSDUH Series H-58). Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/report/2022-nsduh-annual-national-report> (Source: SAMHSA, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2022)
4. National Center for Health Statistics. U.S. Overdose Deaths Decrease in 2023, First Time Since 2018. [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/nchs_press_releases/2024/20240515.htm). Published May 15, 2024. Accessed May 22, 2024. https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/nchs_press_releases/2024/20240515.htm.
5. Society of Actuaries. Economic impact of non-medical opioid use in the United States. October 2019. <https://www.soa.org/globalassets/assets/files/resources/research-report/2019/econ-impact-non-medical-opioid-use.pdf>. Accessed October 24, 2019.