

THE PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE EPIDEMIC

Prescription drug abuse is the fastest growing drug problem in the United States, and it is claiming the lives of thousands of Americans every year.

Senator Manchin believes America must refocus its priorities to fight prescription drug abuse.

In the United States:

Every day, 51 Americans die as a result of prescription opioid overdose.

Drug overdose was the leading cause of injury deaths in 2013. Among people 25 to 64 years old, drug overdose caused more deaths than motor vehicle crashes.

There were 41,982 drug overdose deaths in the United States in 2013. Of these, 22,767 (51.8 percent) were related to prescription drugs.

Drug misuse and abuse caused about 2.5 million emergency department (ED) visits in 2011. Of these, more than 1.4 million ED visits were related to prescription drugs. Among those ED visits, 420,000 visits were related to opioid analgesics.

Nearly 2 million Americans, ages 12 or older, either abused or were dependent on opioids in 2013.

Of the 2.8 million people who use an illicit drug for the first time in 2013, 20 percent began with the nonmedical use of prescription drugs, including pain relievers, tranquilizers, and stimulants.

The United States makes up only 4.6 percent of the world's population, yet consumes 80 percent of its opioids and 99 percent of the world's hydrocodone (Vicodin). Opioid abuse has jumped 287 percent in 11 years.

In 2012, health care providers wrote 259 million prescriptions for painkillers, enough for every American to have a bottle of pills.

Misuse and abuse of prescription drugs costs the country an estimated \$53.4 billion per year in lost productivity, medical costs, and criminal justice costs.

Currently only 1 in 10 Americans with a substance abuse disorder receives treatment.

In West Virginia:

Drug overdoses claim the lives of over 600 West Virginians per year.

Of the 628 drug overdose deaths in the state in 2014, most were linked to prescription drugs; 199 were Oxycodone-related, while 133 were attributed to Hydrocodone.

West Virginia had the highest rate of prescription drug overdose deaths of any state last year—31 per 100,000 people. The next closest state was New Mexico, at 25 deaths per 100,000 people.

The number of drug overdose deaths – a majority of which are from prescription drugs – in West Virginia increased by 605 percent between 1999 and 2010. Nationally, rates have doubled in 29 states since 1999, quadrupled in four of these states and tripled in ten more.

In West Virginia, providers wrote 138 painkiller prescriptions for every 100 people, the highest rate in the country.

Between 2007 and 2012, drug wholesalers shipped more than 200 million pain pills to West Virginia – 40 million per year. And this number doesn't include shipments from the two largest drug wholesalers.