Drug overdose deaths and opioid-involved deaths continue to increase in the United States. The majority of drug overdose deaths (more than six out of ten) involve an opioid. Since 1999, the number of overdose deaths involving opioids (including prescription opioids and heroin) has quadrupled. From 2000 to 2015, more than half a million people died from drug overdoses. Every day, 91 Americans die from an opioid overdose.

We now know that overdoses from prescription opioids are a driving factor in the 15-year increase in opioid overdose deaths. Since 1999, the amount of prescription opioids sold in the U.S. nearly quadrupled, yet there has not been an overall change in the amount of pain that Americans report. Deaths from prescription opioids—drugs like oxycodone, hydrocodone, and methadone—have more than quadrupled since 1999.

A Growing Problem


The Role of Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs)

- PDMPs collect data from pharmacies on controlled substance prescriptions that have been dispensed and make it available to authorized users by means of a secure, electronically-accessible database.
- Research demonstrates that PDMPs serve an essential function in combating prescription drug abuse.
- PDMPs improve patient safety by allowing clinicians to identify patients who are obtaining opioids from multiple providers, calculate the total amount of opioids prescribed (MME), and identify patients who are being prescribed other substances that may increase the risk of opioid or adverse drug reactions.

References

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