

## FACT SHEET

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- Prescription drug overdoses killed on average 35 Coloradans a month in 2013.<sup>1</sup>
- Deaths related to prescription medicine overdoses in Colorado quadrupled between 2000 and 2011.<sup>2</sup>
- Nearly 224,000 Coloradans misuse prescription pain relievers each year.<sup>1</sup>
- From 2011 to 2013, an average of 7,600 Coloradans made visits each year to an emergency department due to drug overdoses. 86 percent, or 6,500, of those visits were related to prescription painkillers.<sup>3</sup>
- Coloradans ages 18-25 made emergency department visits due to prescription painkiller overdoses at twice the rate of the general population from 2011 to 2013.<sup>3</sup>
- There are several types of prescription pain relievers – oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, etc. – and brands – Oxycontin, Percocet, Vicodin, etc. – that can block pain and help people deal with injury or surgery. When they're abused or misused, they can have dangerous, sometimes fatal, consequences.
- There are several types of prescription stimulants – amphetamines, methylphenidate, etc. – and brands – Adderall, Ritalin, etc. – that can increase energy and alertness. When abused or misused, they pose several health risks, including psychosis and strokes, and they can cause death.
- There are several types of anti-anxiety medicines – diazepam, chlordiazepoxide, etc. – and brands – Valium, Librium, Xanax, etc. – that can reduce anxiety and lower inhibitions. When abused or misused, they can cause sleep disturbances, memory problems and other conditions, and death.
- A third of Coloradans have used pain relief medication prescribed for someone else.<sup>4</sup>
- 4 in 10 Colorado adults say they've misused prescription medicine.<sup>4</sup>
- 1 in 7 Colorado high school students, including 1 in 6 of the state's high school seniors, have misused or abused prescription drugs.<sup>5</sup>

- 42 percent of Colorado's teens say it's easy to get prescription drugs from their parents' medicine cabinets.<sup>6</sup>
- 48 percent of Colorado households have prescription medicine that could be abused.<sup>4</sup>
- Few Coloradans store or lock their prescription medicine in places children can't access it.<sup>4</sup>
- Only 1 in 10 Coloradans have returned expired medicine to a police or sheriff's department.<sup>4</sup>
- A new survey shows strong support for increased spending to educate the public about the problem, as well as more resources for "take-back" programs sponsored by law enforcement.<sup>4</sup>

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## Sources:

1 Statistic provided by the University of Colorado Skaggs School of Pharmacy and the Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention.

2 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (January 8, 2013). The NSDUH Report: State Estimates of Nonmedical Use of Prescription Pain Relievers. Rockville, MD.

3 Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Vital Statistics Unit. Released January 2015.

4 2014 Statewide Survey, Dec. 2014, by National Research Center, Boulder, for Public Awareness Work Group, Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention.

5 Colorado Department of Education, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Colorado Department of Human Services-Office of Behavioral Health. Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (2013).

6 "Proceedings of the Denver Epidemiology Work Group (DEWG)," The Denver Office of Drug Strategy, The Denver Drug Strategy Commission," April 18, 2014.