

## Prescription Drug Abuse in Colorado Compiled by the Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Program

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1. Yearly deaths in Colorado due to drug-related poisoning more than doubled from 351 in 2000, to 807 in 2012. Deaths involving the use of opioid analgesics such as morphine, codeine, oxycodone, hydrocodone, methadone and fentanyl more than tripled from 87 in 2000, to 295 in 2012.<sup>1</sup>
2. In 2012, 36% of the drug poisoning deaths in Colorado were due to opioid analgesics.<sup>2</sup>
3. In 2012, 21% of the drug poisoning hospitalizations in Colorado were due to prescription opioid poisoning.<sup>3</sup>
4. In 2012, more than twice as many people in Colorado died from poisoning due to opioid analgesics (295) than from drunk-driving related fatalities (133).<sup>4</sup>
5. According to the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, oxycodone prescriptions for Colorado residents increased 54.3% from the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2007 through the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2013.<sup>5</sup>
6. According to the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 5.05 % of Coloradans reported using pain relievers non-medically in the past year. This is down from 6% in 2011. The age range with the highest misuse rates is still 18-25 year olds at 12.18%.<sup>6</sup>
7. During two National Take-Back Initiative events in 2013, hosted by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and local law enforcement agencies, Coloradans turned in more than 39,000 pounds of unused medication.<sup>7</sup>
8. A 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Survey conducted in Colorado revealed that 29.2% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders had taken a prescription medication without a doctor's prescription at least once in their lifetime. This is higher than the national average of 25.6%.<sup>8</sup>
9. Many teens feel that prescription drugs are "safer to use" than street drugs since they are prescribed by a physician. Teens state that they are "easier to get than beer" because prescription medications are easily obtained from friends and family medicine cabinets.<sup>9</sup>

For more information:

303.369.0039 | [www.PeerAssistanceServices.org/prescription](http://www.PeerAssistanceServices.org/prescription) | [facebook.com/RxDrugsNotYoursNotSafe](https://www.facebook.com/RxDrugsNotYoursNotSafe)



Peer Assistance Services

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1 Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Health Statistics Section (2012).

2 Ibid

3 Ibid

4 Ibid and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Traffic Safety Facts Colorado (2012)

5 Colorado Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies, Division of Registrations, Board of Pharmacy

6 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2012)

7 U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, Denver Field Division, October, 2013

8 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (Fall 2011), Colorado High School Survey Summary

9 Johnston, L.D., O'Malley, P.M., Bachman, J.G., and Schulenberg, J.E. (2011). Monitoring the Future national survey results on drug use, 1975-2012; Volume I, Secondary school students. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social research, The University of Michigan.