

# U and Universal

Opioid Abuse is on the rise in the U.S. and in North Carolina. Opioids are a class of drugs that include the illicit drug heroin as well as prescribed pain relievers such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, morphine, fentanyl and others. Here are some facts concerning opioids.

- 20,101 overdose deaths were related to prescribed pain relievers in 2015 (U.S.)
- 12,990 overdose deaths were related to heroin in 2015 (U.S.)
- The CDC estimates the cost of overdose deaths in N.C. totaled \$1.8 billion in 2015
- 13,000 people have died from overdoses in N.C. since 1999
- Overdose death rates are higher among men and people between the ages of 25-54
- Women are more likely to be prescribed pain relievers than men
- Women become more dependent on pain relievers than men
- In 2015, 276,000 adolescents had been prescribed pain relievers and 122,00 reported having an addiction
- 21,000 adolescents had used heroin in the past year

North Carolina has recognized this issue and DHHS Secretary Mandy Cohen has called on clinicians to join the fight against opioid addiction. Cohen sent a letter to clinicians in March of this year identifying ways clinicians can take an active role in curbing abuse. Cohen recommended: better screening for risk, connecting patients with evidence-based treatment and software to better track prescriptions.

Governor Cooper's proposed budget calls for more than \$14 million to address the opioid crisis.

To find recourses to battle opioid addiction go to: [www.addictiontreatment.com](http://www.addictiontreatment.com) or [www.treatment.psychologytoday.com](http://www.treatment.psychologytoday.com) . You can also discuss concerns or issues with your regular doctor.

## Did You Know?

As on Jan. 1 2017, teens in foster care in N.C. may continue receiving services from their 18<sup>th</sup> to their 21<sup>st</sup> birthdays. The state believes that extending the age to 21 provides additional guidance and assistance and offers a support network in early adulthood. More information can be obtained at your local Department of Social Services.

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[www.umhs.net](http://www.umhs.net)