## **Prescription Drug Abuse in Colorado**

Compiled by the Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Program

- Yearly deaths in Colorado due to drug-related poisoning more than doubled from 351 in 2000, to 838 in 2011. Deaths involving the use of opioid analgesics such as morphine, codeine, oxycodone, hydrocodone, methadone and fentanyl nearly quadrupled from 87 in 2000, to 304 in 2011.<sup>1</sup>
- 2. In 2011, nearly twice as many people in Colorado died from poisoning due to opioid analgesics (304) than from drunk-driving related fatalities (161).<sup>2</sup>
- 3. According to the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, oxycodone prescriptions for Denver residents increased 53.1% from the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2007 through the end of 2011. During the same time, the rate of hydrocodone prescriptions increased 10.6%.<sup>3</sup>
- 4. Other opioids (excluding heroin) were the most common type of drug (excluding alcohol) in Colorado death mentions in 2011, at a rate of 7.1 per 100,000. This is an increase from 5.9 per 100,000 in 2010.<sup>4</sup>
- 5. Colorado has the second-worst rate of pain pill abuse in the U.S. according to the 2011 National Survey on Drug Use and Health.<sup>5</sup>
- During two National Take-Back Initiative events in 2012, hosted by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and local law enforcement agencies, Coloradans turned in more than 30,000 pounds of unused medication.<sup>6</sup>
- 7. 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>7</sup>
- 8. 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>8</sup>

## For more information:

303.369.0039 | www.PeerAssistanceServices.org/prescription | facebook.com/RxDrugsNotYoursNotSafe



## Peer Assistance Services

Start believing.

PROGRAM of Peer Assistance Services, Inc. FUNDED by the Colorado Office of Behavioral Health

- 1 Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Health Statistics Section (2011).
- 2 Ibid and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Traffic Safety Facts Colorado (Dec. 2012)
- 3 Colorado Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies, Division of Registrations, Board of Pharmacy
- 4 Office of Behavioral Health, Data and Evaluation Section (August, 2012)
- 5 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2011)
- 6 U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, Denver Field Division, October, 2012
- 7 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (Fall 2011), Colorado High School Survey Summary
- 8 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.