



OPIOID USE IN COLORADO: Colorado Medicaid Addresses Addiction

Opioid abuse is a serious problem in Colorado and across the nation. In 2015, 259 people died in Colorado from prescription opioid overdoses — drugs like hydrocodone and oxycodone. That compares with 205 people who died from homicide.¹

Opioid Epidemic: State of Colorado

OPIOID OVERDOSE DEATHS
INCREASED FROM 2000-2015²



In 2015, approximately one Coloradan died every 36 hours from opioid overdose.²

OPIOID OVERDOSE DEATHS
DECREASED 6% in 2016²

HEROIN OVERDOSE DEATHS
INCREASED 23% in 2016²

Opioid Epidemic: Colorado Medicaid

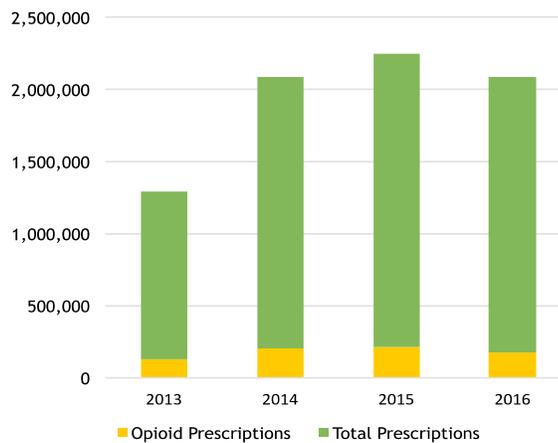
Colorado Medicaid members in 2015

22.8%
of Coloradans were Medicaid members³

87
prescription opioid overdose deaths were Medicaid members⁴

28.8%
of total overdose deaths were Medicaid members⁴

Opioid and Total Prescriptions⁵



During 2016
9.0%
of Rx were opioids⁵

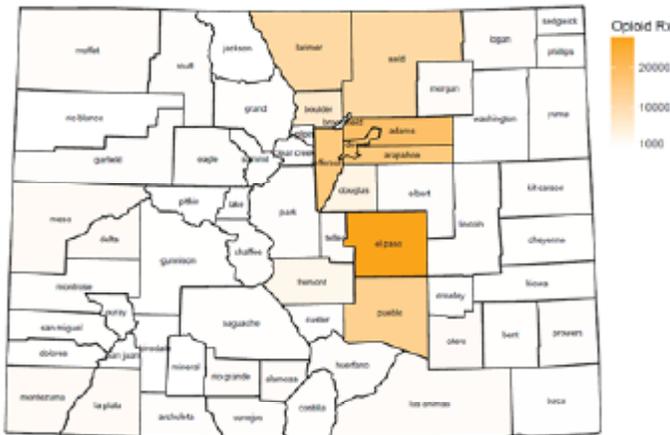
During 2013
11.3%
of Rx were opioids⁵

NEONATAL ADDICTION
UP 91%

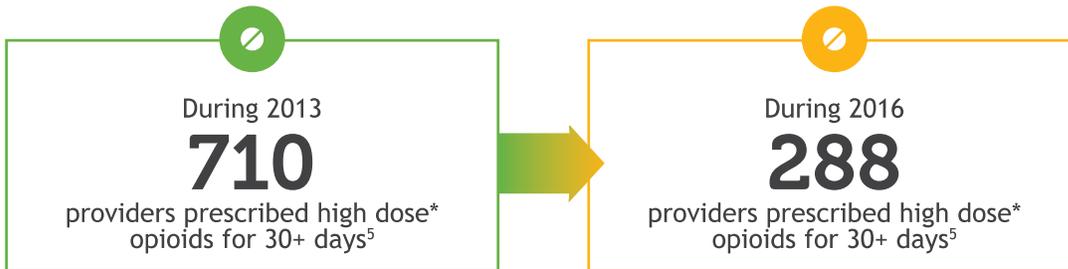
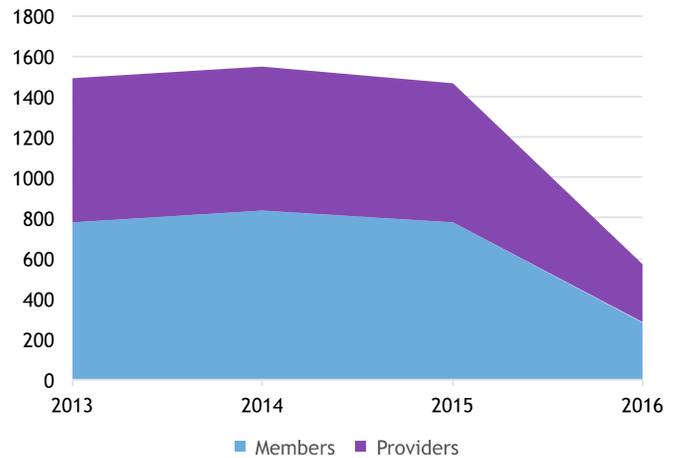
The effects of opioid addiction can impact Coloradans of all ages. Mothers who abuse opioids during pregnancy can give birth to drug-addicted babies who experience Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS). These newborns are addicted to opioids at birth and go through withdrawal. The number of annual NAS births identified via Colorado Medicaid claims data increased from 194 births in 2012 to 371 births in 2016.

Evolving Our Programs and Developing Solutions

Medicaid Member Opioid Prescriptions by County



Number of High Dose* Opioid Prescriptions for 30+ Days⁵



Treating Addiction and Dependence



We cover products to treat addiction or dependence, such as Suboxone® and buprenorphine. We also cover substance use disorder behavioral health services.

Overdose Antidote Administration



We cover a nasal atomizer device that can be used to administer an opioid overdose antidote (naloxone).

Drug Utilization Review Program



Pain consultations and recommendations for drug utilization, provider education, interventions, and best practices.

Additional Opportunities to Address This Issue

- Leveraging Nationwide Best Practices:** 35 other states allow Medicaid programs access to their Prescription Drug Monitoring Program databases. This access would allow Colorado Medicaid to understand utilization patterns and could help identify members at risk of an opioid overdose or who could benefit from care coordination services.⁶
- Better Aligning with Dosing Guidelines:** We will continue to encourage tapering of opioid use down to guideline supported doses and plan to make adjustments to our utilization management strategies.
- Providing Comparative Data to Prescribers:** Through our Drug Utilization Review Program, we will continue to communicate to prescribers about their opioid prescribing. We plan to add a comparison of prescribers where they will see how their prescribing habits compare to other similar prescribers.

¹Colorado's opioid and heroin overdose deaths outnumbered homicides in 2015, Denver Post, January 3, 2017.
²As prescription opioid deaths drop 6 percent in Colorado, heroin deaths rise 23 percent, Denver Post, March 7, 2017.
³According to CHI "Percent Enrollment in Medicaid" report, 22.8% of the total Colorado population was enrolled in Medicaid in 2015.
⁴CDPHE Health Watch No. 100 (Rosenthal et al, 2016) and CDPHE Vital Statistics Program Medicaid Death Certificate Extract, prepared by HCPF Data Analysis Section.
⁵Data is 4th Quarter MMIS data for each year.
⁶National Association For State Model Drug Laws.
 *Greater than 300 morphine milliequivalent doses or >300 MED.