



Prescription Drug Abuse in Florida: An Epidemic of Deaths

- An average of **7 persons die everyday in Florida** because of **lethal overdoses** from the illegal, non-medical misuse of one or more prescription drugs.¹
- An additional 7 persons die daily with at least one prescription drug detected often in combination with alcohol or other drugs. That is a total of **14 deaths per day** in Florida related to prescription drug abuse.¹
- There were **5,275 persons** who died in Florida during 2009 and another **2,579** in the first half of 2010 with at least one prescription drug in their system identified as either the cause of death or present in the decedent.¹
- **Most of these deaths were preventable.**
- **Treatment admissions** for prescription opioid addiction **increased 5½ times** in Florida over the past decade. Among those aged 12 to 30, the number of prescription opioid treatment clients rose from **488** in 1999 to **7,649** in 2009, a 1,467-percent increase.²
- The rate of **hospital emergency department cases** for non-medical oxycodone misuse among those aged 21-25 in South Florida is nearly double the national per capita rate.³
- **Florida leads nation** in sale of oxycodone with over **400,000,000 pills** sold annually.⁴
- **Benzodiazepines** (e.g., Xanax, Klonopin, Valium) and **muscle relaxants** (e.g., Soma) are also frequently linked to overdose deaths and medical emergencies across Florida.⁵
- As one of only 12 states without an operating **Prescription Drug Monitoring Program**, Florida is a source supplier of illegally diverted controlled medications for the nation.⁶
- Among Florida 12th graders in 2010, **11 percent have misused a prescription pain reliever non-medically** in their life; 3.4 percent have done so in the last month.⁷
- The number of **infants treated for withdrawal symptoms** in Florida hospitals increased 173-percent between 2006 and 2009; 635 cases were reported in the first half of 2010.⁸



The United Way of Broward County Commission on Substance Abuse
www.drugfreebroward.org

Sources:

1. *Drugs Identified in Deceased Persons by Florida Medical Examiners between January 2009 and June 2010*. Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) Medical Examiners Commission.
2. *Treatment Episode Data Sets (TEDS)* information submitted by the Florida Department of Children and Families to the US Department of Health and Human Services: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration as of September 30, 2010.
3. *Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN)* weighted estimates for 2009, US Department of Health and Human Services: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, December 2010.
4. *Automation of Reports and Consolidated Orders System (ARCOS)*. US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).
5. *Drugs Identified in Deceased Persons by Florida Medical Examiners between January 2009 and June 2010*. Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) Medical Examiners Commission.
6. *National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators (NADDI)*,
7. *2010 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey* conducted by the Florida Department of Children and Families.
8. *Florida Agency for Health Care Administration* records obtained by the *Orlando Sentinel*.