



Partnership for a  
Drug-Free New Jersey  
in Cooperation with the Governor's Council on Alcoholism  
and Drug Abuse and the NJ Dept. of Human Services



# Alternatives to Opioids

## The New CDC & VA Opioid Guidelines: What Prescribers Need to Know

### March 30, 2023

**\*\*Today's webinar has been approved for 1.0 EMT CEU, and American Academy of CME, Inc., designates this live activity for a maximum of 1.0 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits<sup>TM</sup> and ANCC credit. We have no disclosures for faculty or planners for this learning activity.\*\***



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# Update on the opioid crisis: *Why more cautious prescribing is still needed*

**Andrew Kolodny, MD**

Medical Director, Opioid Policy Research Collaborative  
Heller School for Social Policy and Management  
Brandeis University

President,  
Physicians for Responsible Opioid Prescribing

# 12 Month-ending Provisional Number of Drug Overdose Deaths by Drug or Drug Class

Based on data available for analysis on: March 5, 2023

After opening the *drug class dropdown*, click the top of the dropdown menu again to make the checkboxes disappear.

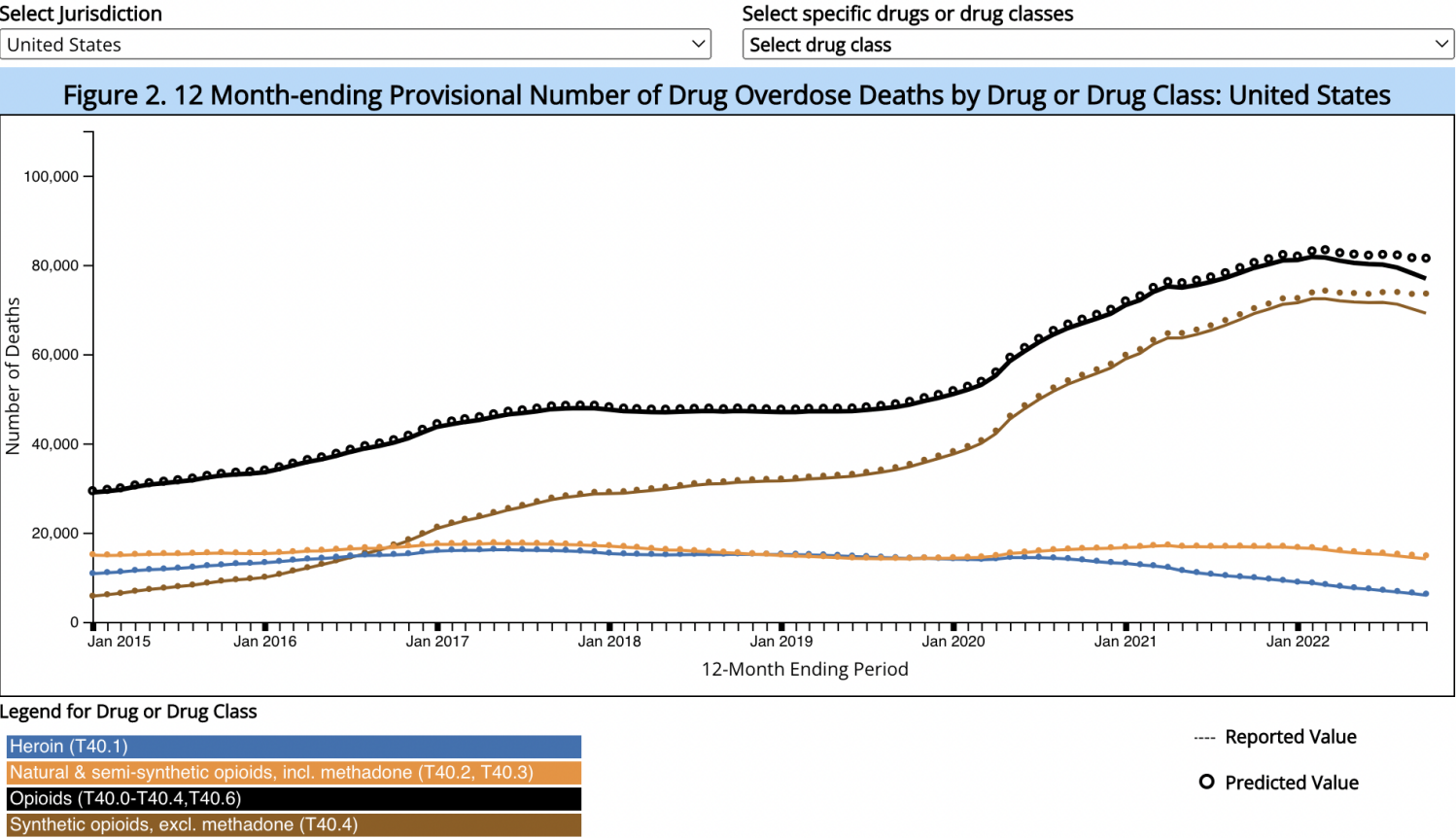
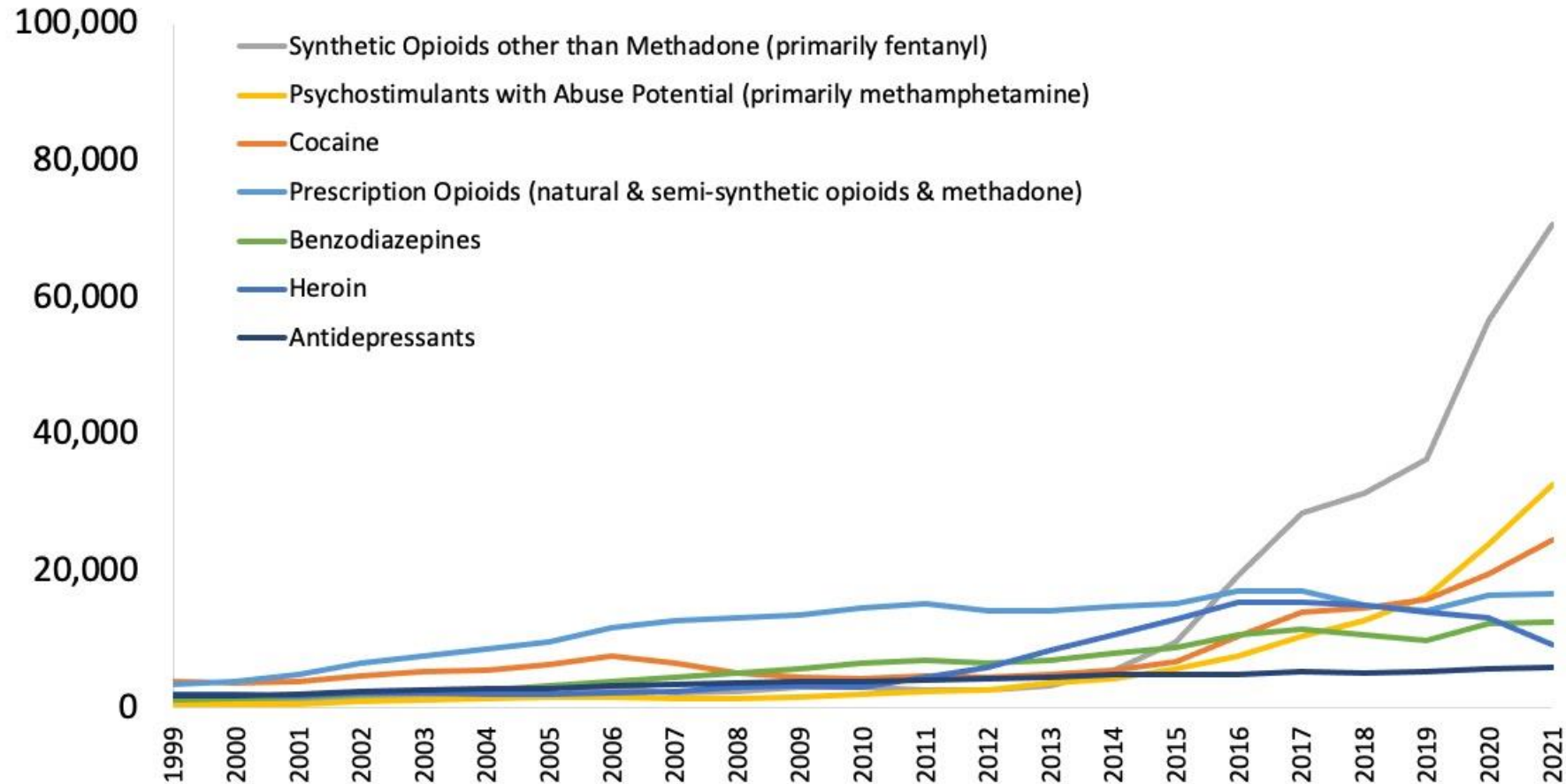
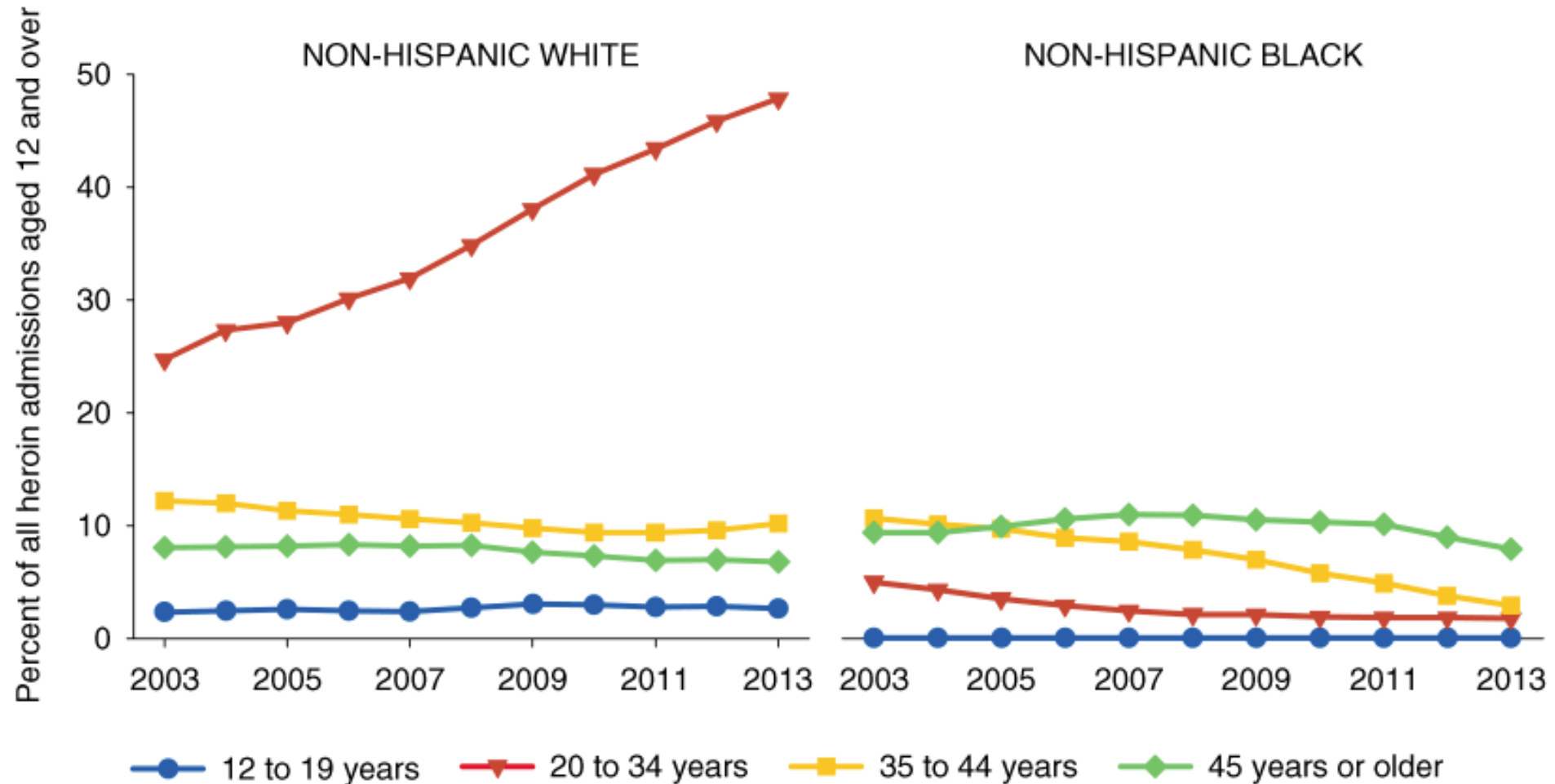


Figure 2. National Drug-Involved Overdose Deaths\*,  
Number Among All Ages, 1999-2021



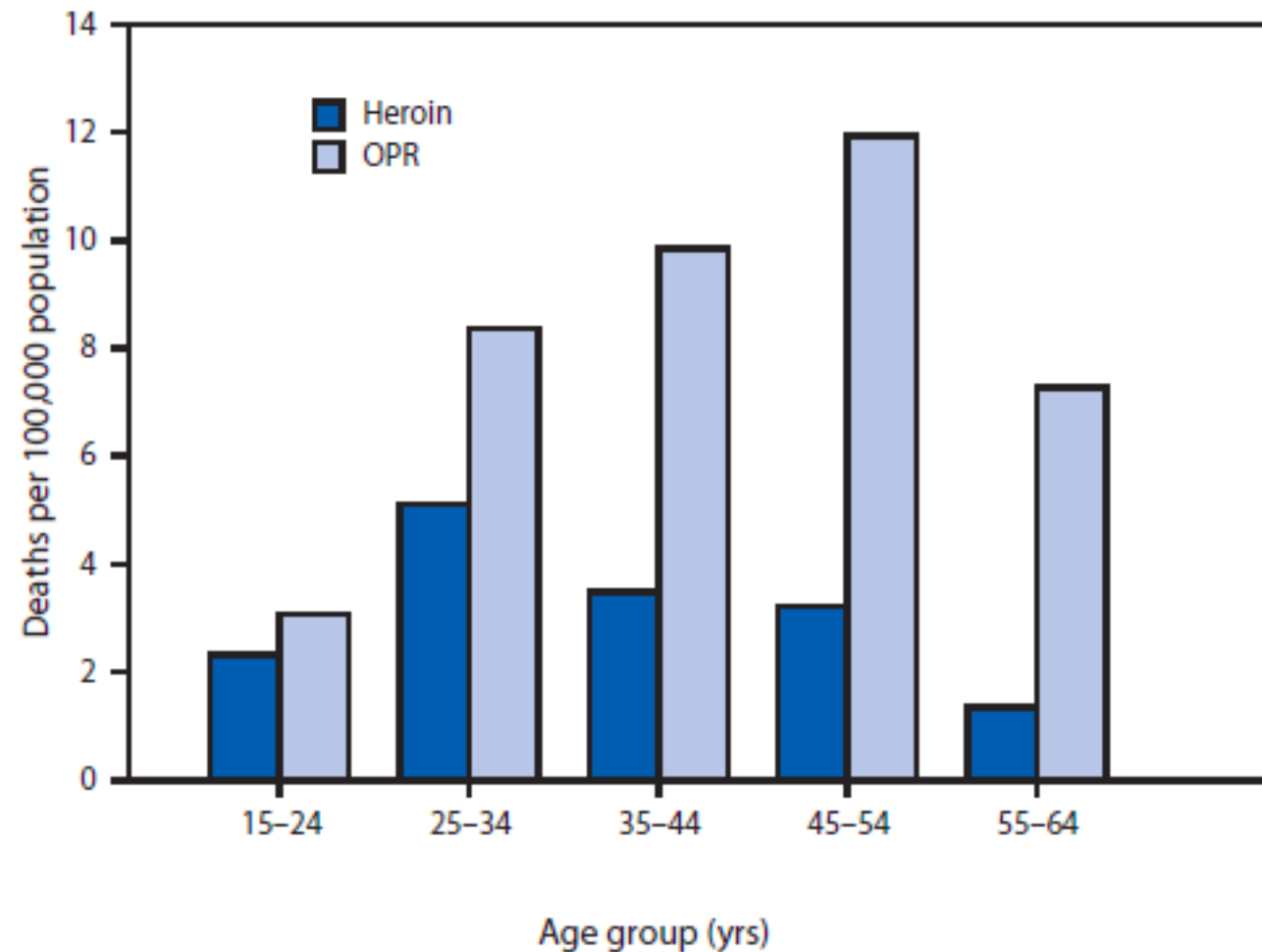
\*Includes deaths with underlying causes of unintentional drug poisoning (X40–X44), suicide drug poisoning (X60–X64), homicide drug poisoning (X85), or drug poisoning of undetermined intent (Y10–Y14), as coded in the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Revision. Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Multiple Cause of Death 1999-2021 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released 1/2023.

# Heroin treatment admissions : 2003-2013



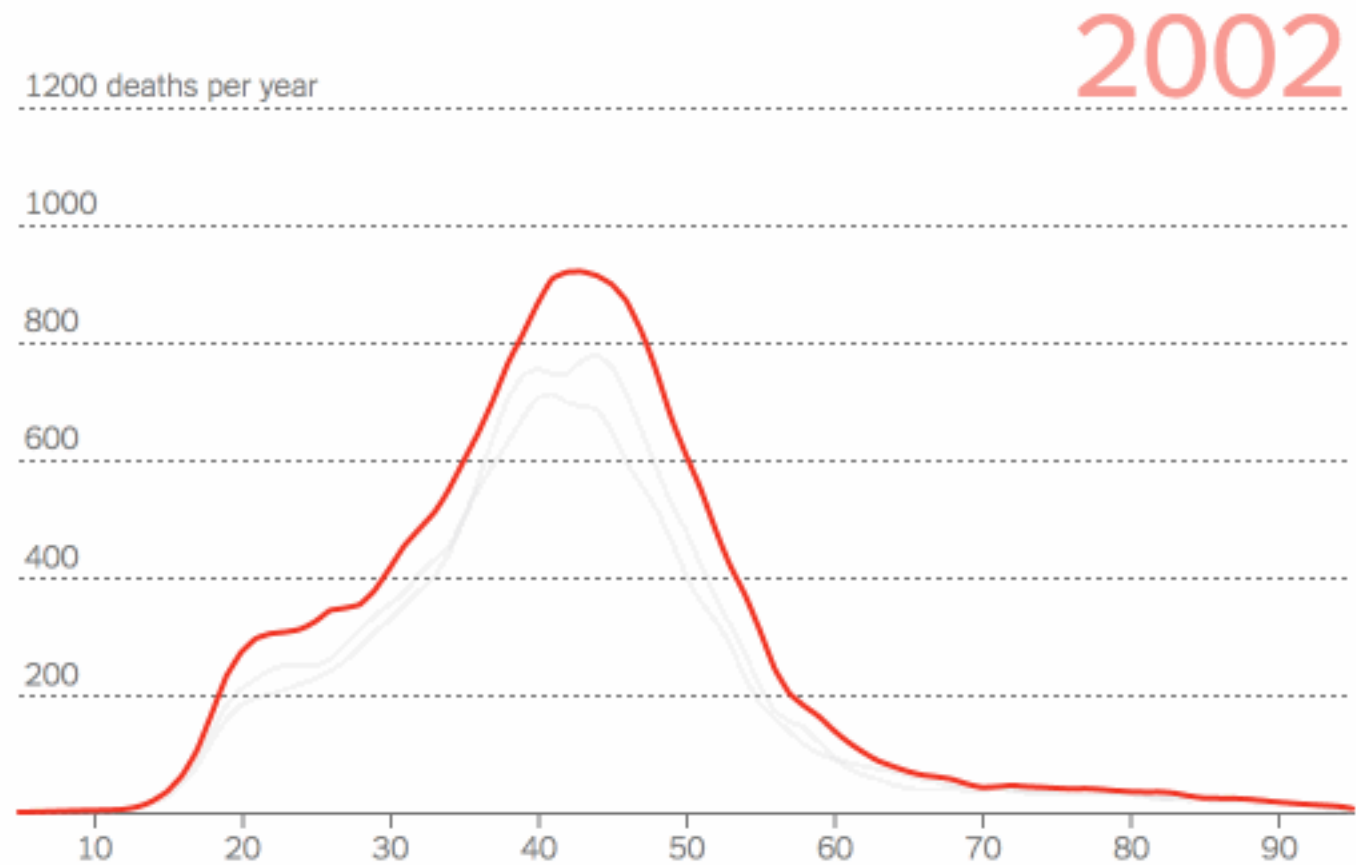
SOURCE: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS). Data received through 01.23.15.

## Death rates from overdoses of heroin or prescription opioid pain relievers (OPRs), by age group



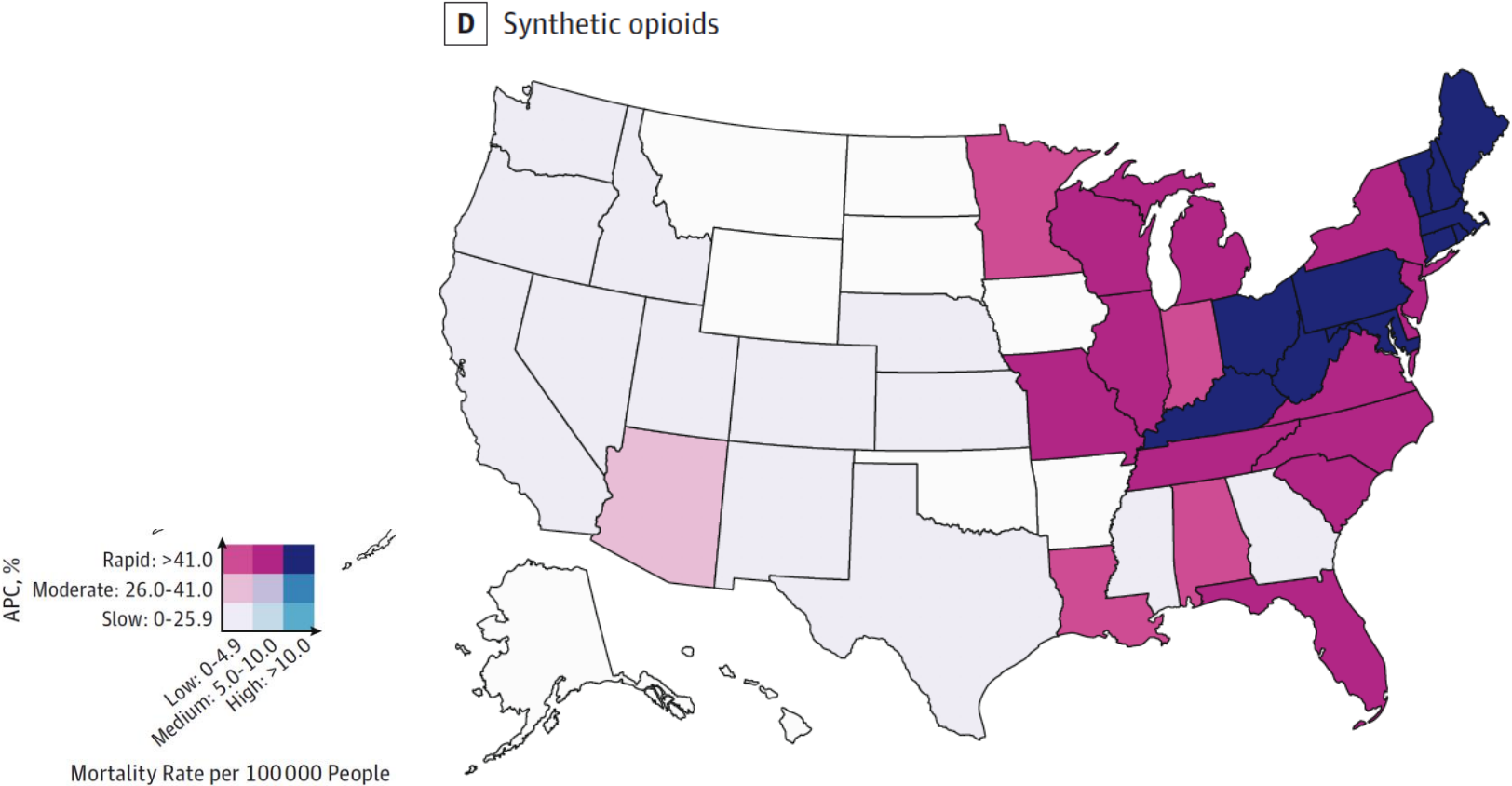
SOURCE: CDC. *Increases in Heroin Overdose Deaths — 28 States, 2010 to 2012*  
MMWR. 2014, 63:849-854

### Distribution of drug deaths by age



Source: J. Katz. NYT Short Answers to Hard Questions About the Opioid Crisis August 10, 2017

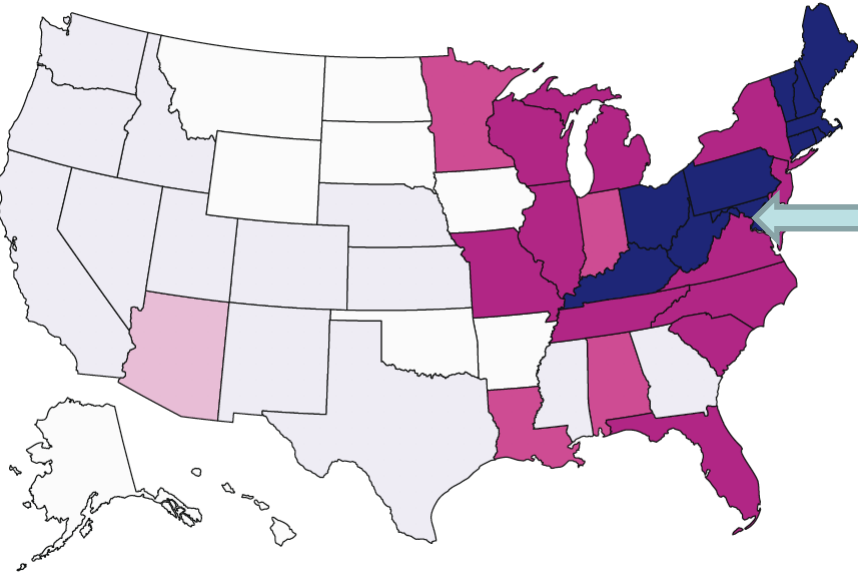
# Growth and Level of the Synthetic Opioid OD Deaths, 2016



Source: JAMA Network Open. 2019;2(2):e190040. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2019.0040

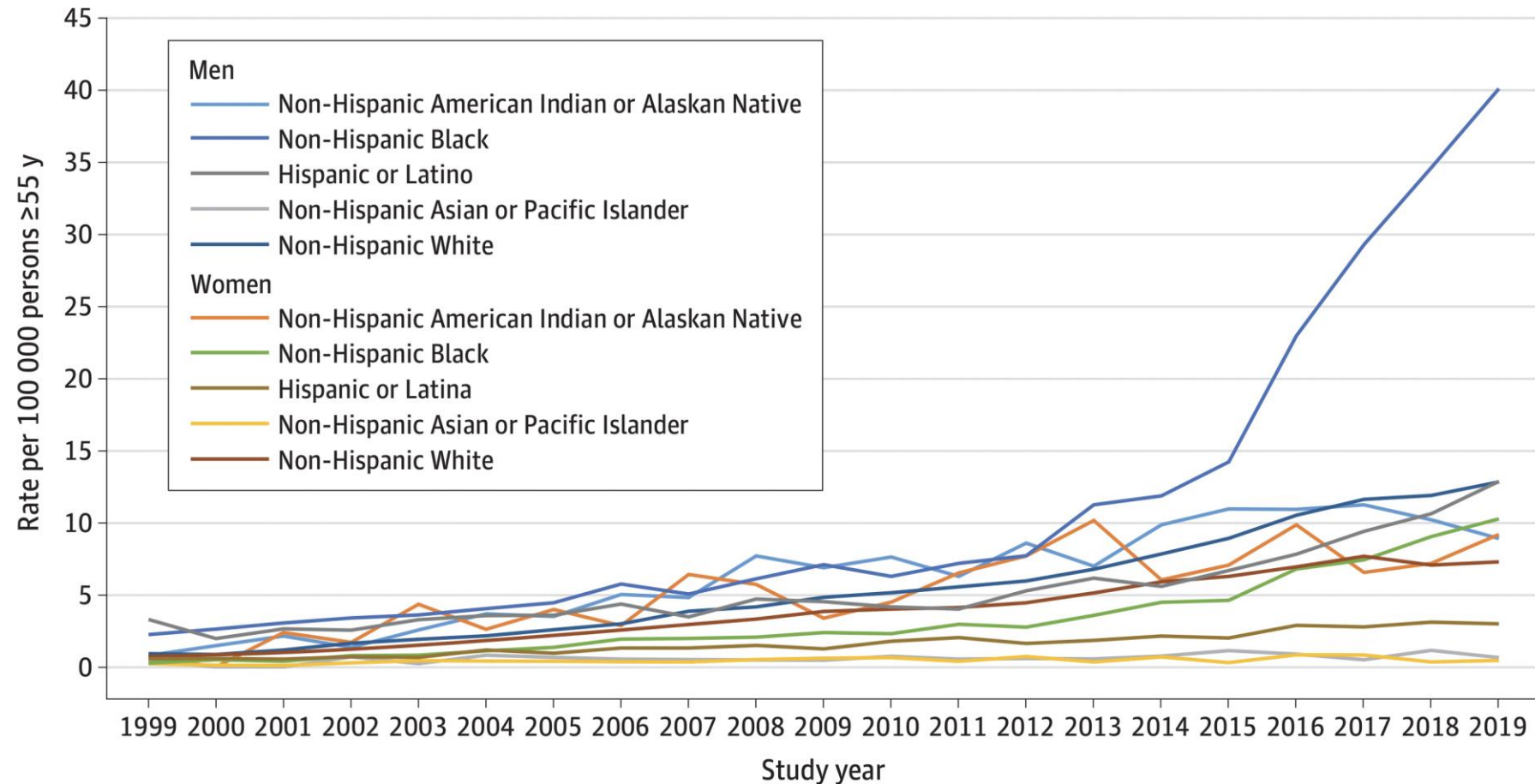
# Growth and Level of the Synthetic Opioid OD Deaths, 2016

D Synthetic opioids



The District of Columbia had the fastest rate of increase in mortality from opioids in the country, more than tripling every year since 2013

**Figure 2. Rates of Opioid Overdose Deaths per 100 000 Persons 55 Years and Older by Sex and by Race and Ethnicity, 1999 to 2019**



# Three Opioid-Addicted Cohorts

1. 20-40 y/o, disproportionately white, significant heroin use, opioid addiction began with Rx use (addicted after 1995)
2. 40 y/o & up, disproportionately white, mostly Rx opioids, opioid addiction began with Rx use (addicted after 1995)
3. 50 y/o & up, disproportionately non-white, mostly heroin users, opioid addiction began in teen years with heroin use (addicted before 1995)

# **In one year, drug overdoses killed more Americans than the entire Vietnam War did**

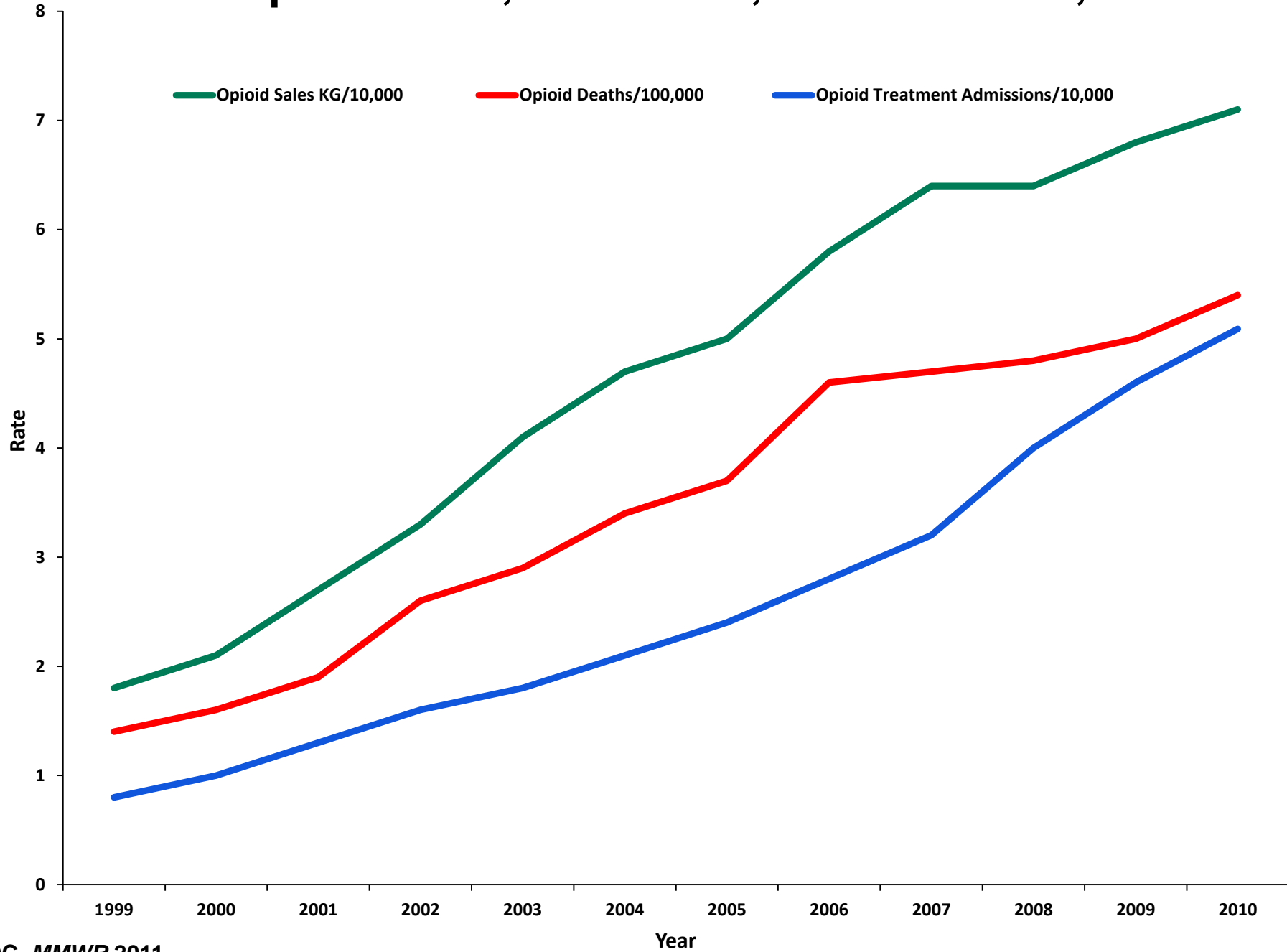
Dramatic Increases in Maternal Opioid Use and Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome

**Children of the Opioid Epidemic Are Flooding Foster Homes. America Is Turning a Blind Eye.**

**For the first time, drug overdose deaths have surpassed 100,000 in a 12-month period**

**How the opioid crisis decimated the American workforce**

# Rates of Opioid Sales, OD Deaths, and Treatment, 1999–2010



# Pro-painkiller lobby shapes policy amid drug epidemic

Matthew Perrone and Ben Wieder, Associated Press and Center for Public Integrity

Over the past decade, drug companies and opioid-friendly groups spent more than

**\$880 million**

on lobbying and political contributions.  
That's more than:

**8 times**

the gun lobby's spending

**200 times**

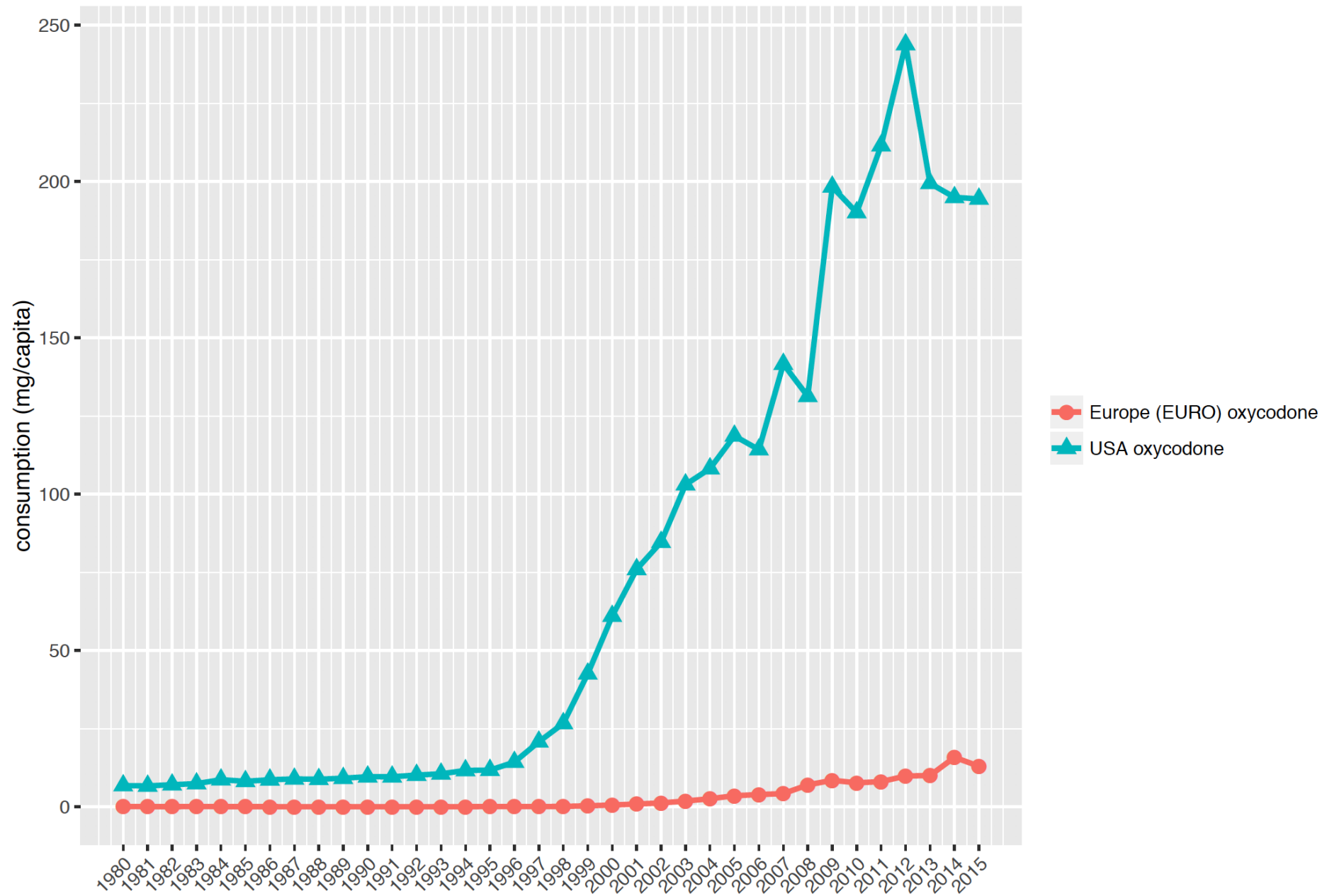
the spending of groups advocating  
stricter opioid prescription rules

## POLITICAL SPENDING

Opioid manufacturers and their allies have contributed roughly \$80 million to state and federal candidates and have spent about \$746 million on state and federal lobbying since 2006. How the spending breaks down:

to State	to Federal	for State/Federal candidates	
<b>\$109 mil.</b>	<b>\$716 mil.</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>54%</b>
		Dems	Reps

# USA oxycodone consumption (mg/capita) 1980–2015



# Industry-funded organizations campaigned for greater use of opioids

- Pain Patient Groups
- Professional Societies
- The Joint Commission
- The Federation of State Medical Boards



## **Johnson & Johnson And Drug Distributors Finalize \$26 Billion Settlement To End Opioid Crisis Lawsuits**

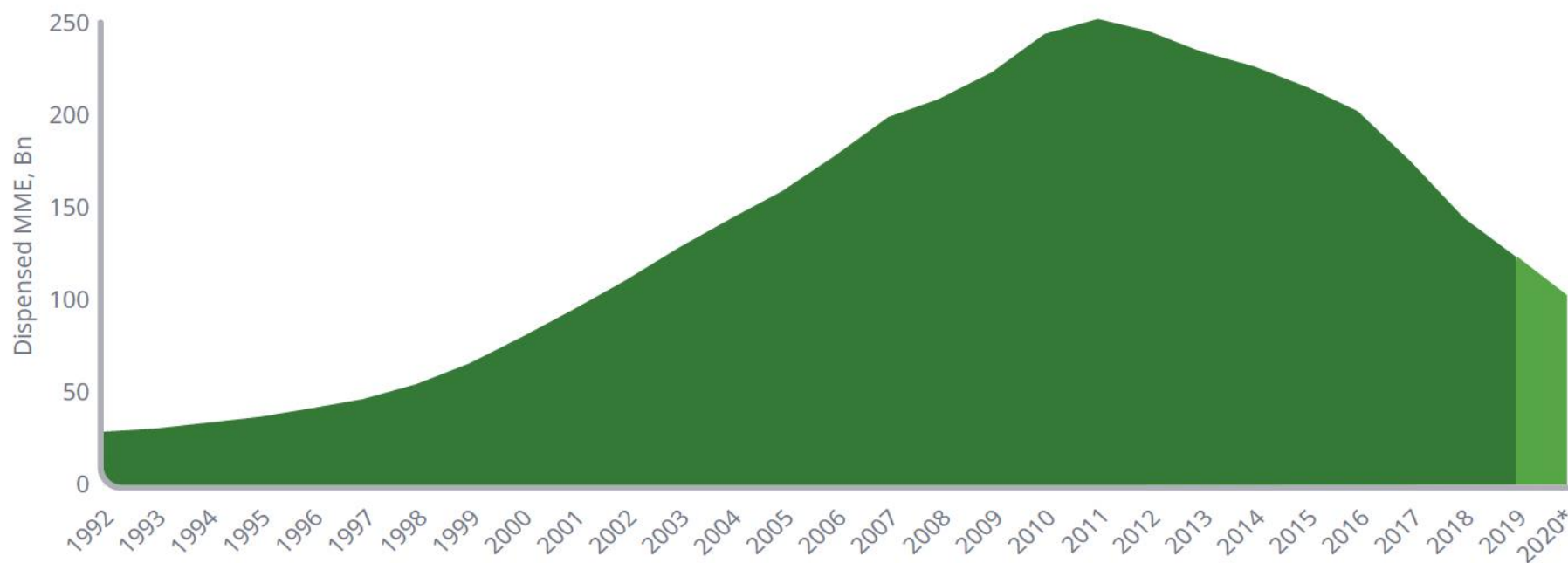
**Alabama settles opioid claims with J&J, McKesson, Endo for \$276 mln -attorney general**

## **Walgreens to pay \$683m to settle claims it exacerbated opioid crisis in Florida**

**Teva Pharm expects U.S. opioid case settlements to cost \$2.6 bln**

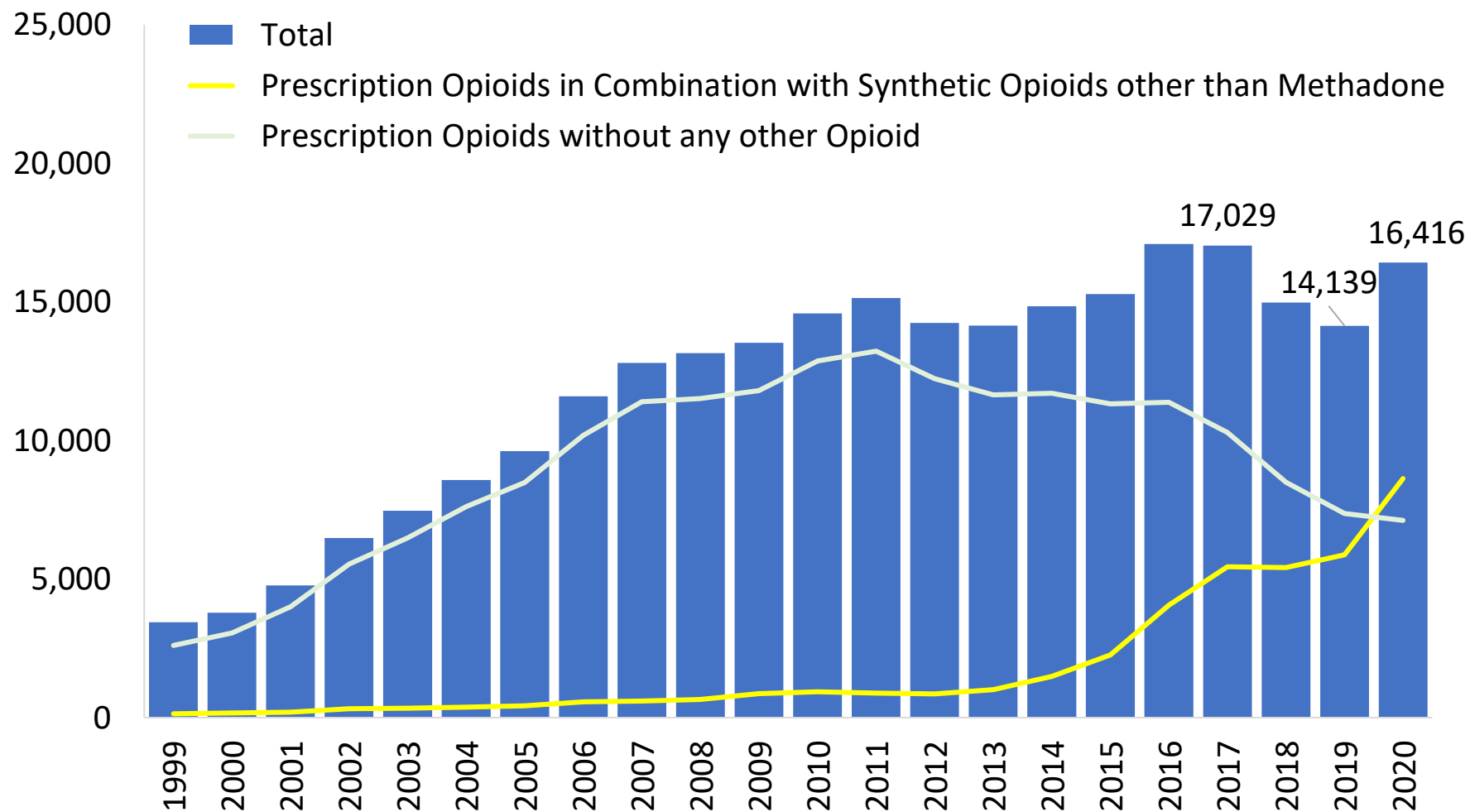
## Prescription opioid use has declined to 60% of the peak volume in 2011 after another year of double-digit decline expected in 2020

Exhibit 1: Prescription Opioid Use in Morphine Milligram Equivalents (MME) Bn, 1992–2020\*



Source: IQVIA Xponent, Mar 2020; IQVIA National Prescription Audit; IQVIA Institute, Nov 2020

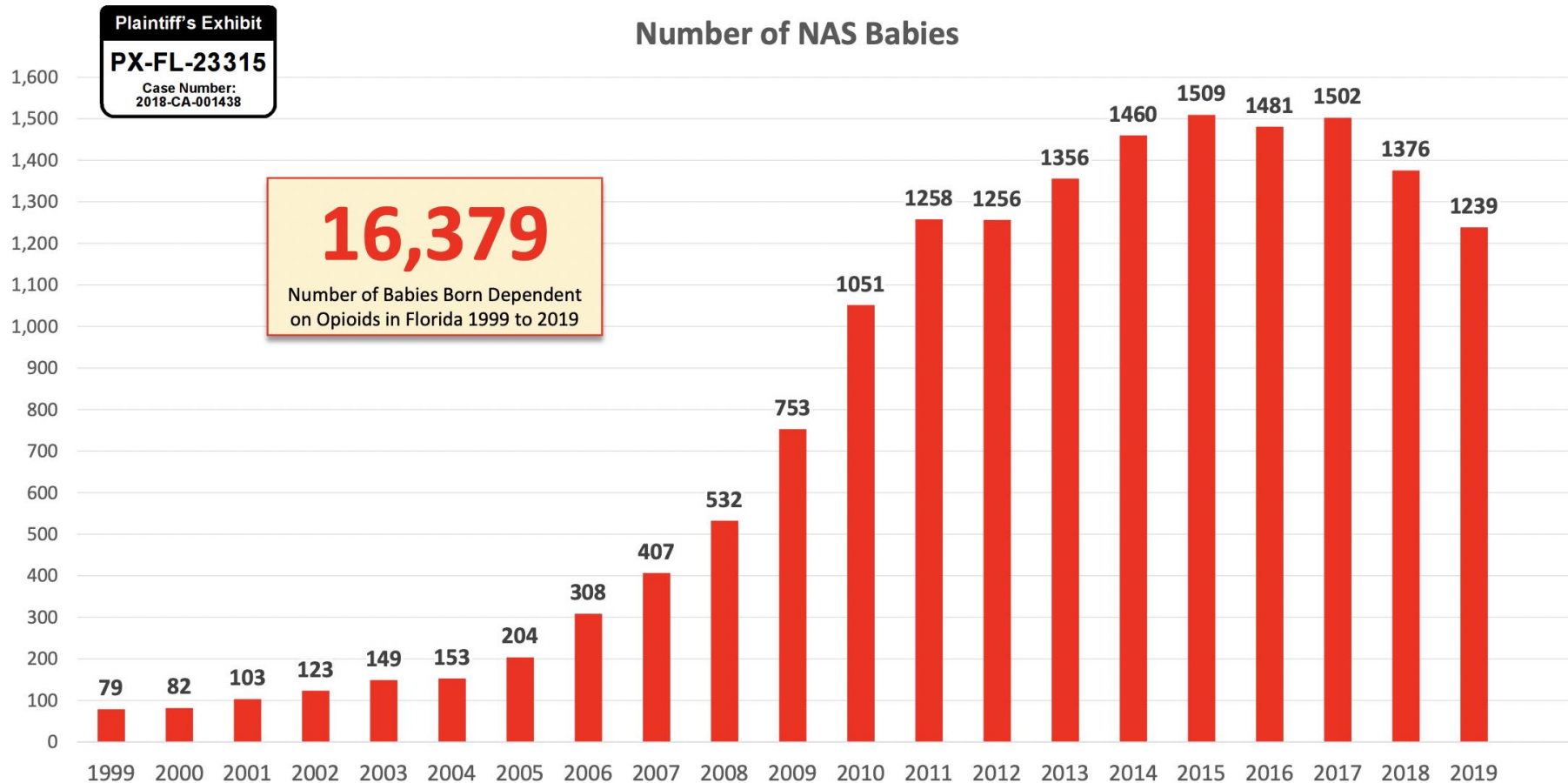
**Figure 4. National Overdose Deaths Involving Prescription Opioids\*, Number Among All Ages, 1999-2020**



\*Among deaths with drug overdose as the underlying cause, the prescription opioid subcategory was determined by the following ICD-10 multiple cause-of-death codes: natural and semi-synthetic opioids (T40.2) or methadone (T40.3). Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Multiple Cause of Death 1999-2020 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released 12/2021.

# In states across the U.S., neonatal opioid withdrawal is declining

## Number of Babies Born Dependent on Opioids in Florida Each Year



Source: Expert Report of Andrew Kolodny at 5, 17-18; DOH data.

# Controlling the epidemic:

- **Prevent** new cases of opioid addiction
- **Treat** people who are already addicted
- **Harm Reduction**
- **Interdiction (Law Enforcement)**

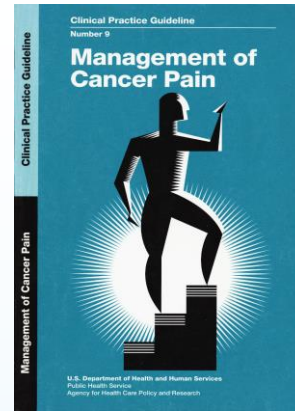
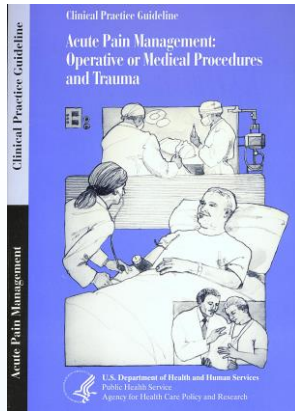
# Summary

- The U.S. is in the midst of a severe epidemic of opioid addiction and overdose deaths, which worsened during Covid.
- To bring the epidemic to an end:
  - We must prevent new cases of opioid addiction
  - We must improve access to treatment for people already addicted

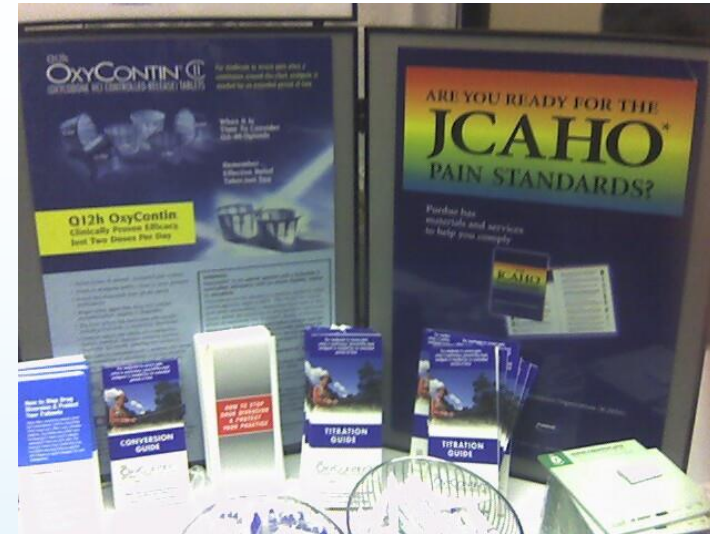


## **PROBLEM PRESCRIBING**

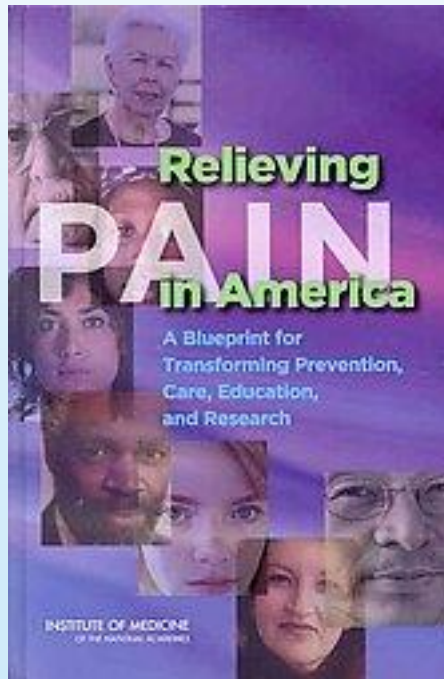
Jane C Ballantyne  
University of Washington, Seattle, US



1991-2 Agency for Healthcare Policy and Research



2001 The Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Hospital Organizations



2011 Institute of Medicine

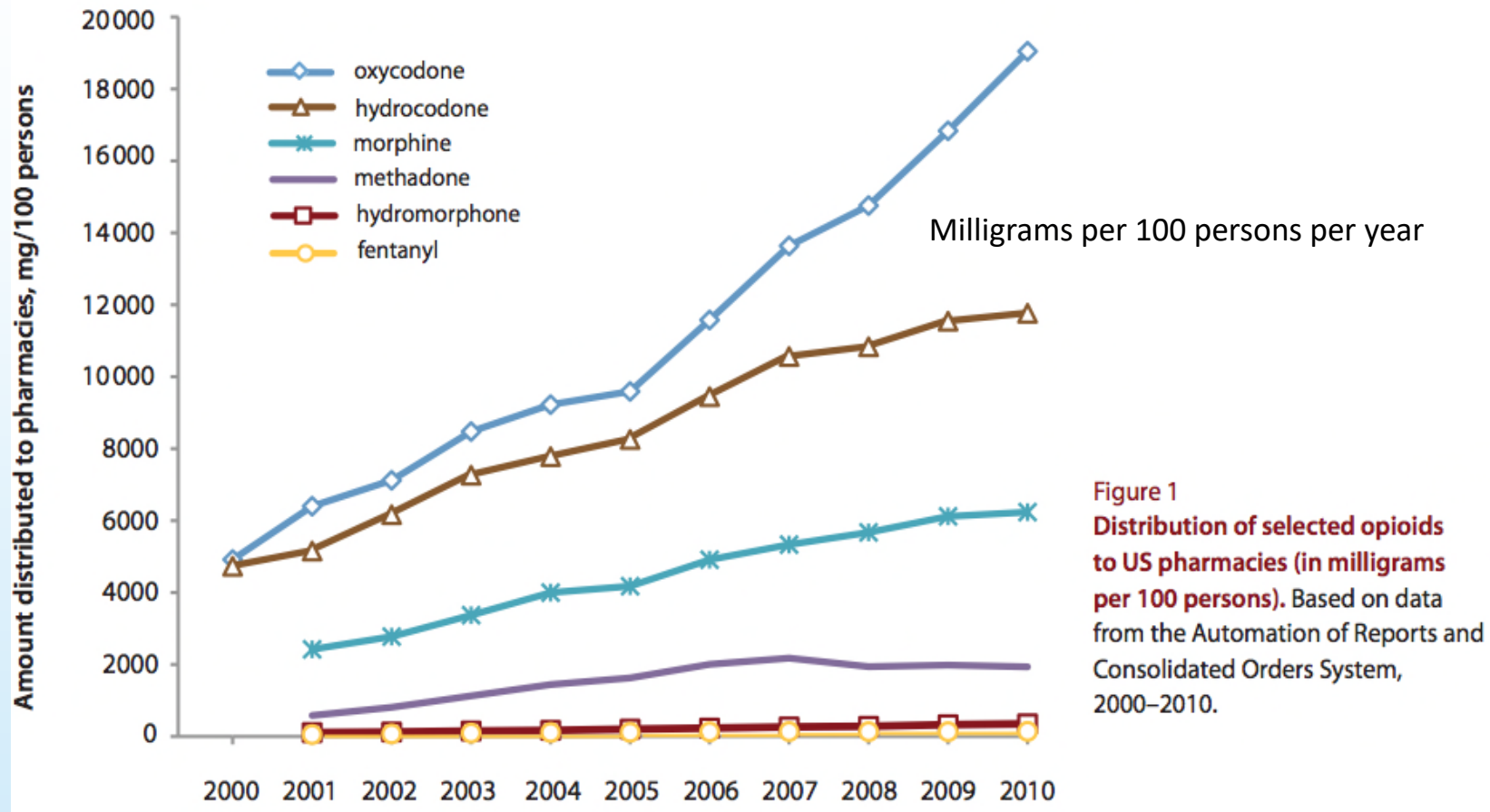
At least 100 million American suffer undertreated pain at a cost of \$635 billion in medical bills, lost productivity and missed work. Described as a 'public health crisis'

AHCPR 1992, AHCPR 1994, JCAHO 2001, IOM 2011

What is  
wrong  
with this  
picture?

It equates existent pain with  
untreated pain

## Distribution of Prescription Opiates to U.S. Pharmacies, 2000-2010 (DEA data)



Source: Kenan K, Mack K, Paulozzi L. Open Medicine 2012; 6:e41.

## CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain — United States, 2016



# Misapplication of the 2016 Guideline (per CDC)

- Extension to patient populations not covered in the guideline (eg cancer and palliative care)
- Opioid tapers and abrupt discontinuation without collaboration with patients
- Rigid application of opioid dosage threshold
- Application of the guideline's recommendations for opioid use for pain to medication for OUD
- Duration limits by insurers and by pharmacies
- Patient dismissal and abandonment



## **CDC Clinical Practice Guideline for Prescribing Opioids—United States, 2022**

Prepared by

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# Key findings of updated evidence review

“Diminishing returns” at higher than 50 MME

Alternatives to opioids often more effective for acute pain

Harm from abrupt rapid tapering

# KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN 2016 AND 2022 GUIDELINES

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IR = immediate release  
ER /LA = extended release/long acting  
MME = morphine milligram equivalence  
PDMP = prescription drug monitoring program  
UDT = urine drug toxicity

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Nonopioid approaches preferred for chronic pain                             | 2. Nonopioid approaches preferred for chronic pain   |
| 4. Start with IR not ER/LA   | 3. Start with IR not ER/LA   |
| 5. Start with lowest effective dose. Extra precautions > 50 MME, avoid >90 MME | 4. Start with lowest effective dose. Avoid increasing dosage above levels “likely to yield diminishing returns” (clearly identified as >50 MME in main body) |
| 6. 3-7 days usually sufficient for acute pain                                  | 1. Only consider for acute pain if benefit exceeds risk  |
|  | 6. No greater quantity than needed for the expected duration of pain severe enough to require opioid   |
| 7. Reevaluate 3 monthly. Taper if benefits do not exceed risks                 | 7. Reevaluate 3 monthly  |
|  | 5. For those already receiving high doses, consider tapering, but do not discontinue abruptly  |
| 8. Use risk management strategies  | 8. Use risk management strategies  |
| 9. Use PDMP  | 9. Use PDMP  |
| 10. Use UDT  | 10. Use UDT  |
| 11. Do not use concomitant benzodiazepines                                     | 11. Do not use concomitant benzodiazepines   |

*Update Now Open to Public for Comment*

# Revised CDC Opioid Guidance Marked by Pivot Away From Hard Prescribing Caps, Embrace of Clinical Judgment

Donald M. Pizzi

February 10, 2022 | 3 min read

**CDC proposes to roll back restrictions previously recommended for prescribing opioids**

story for pain experts, CDC's opioid prescribing guidelines

Joseph Feb. 10, 2022

**Proposes Softer Guidance**

Health agency is proposing changing — and in some instances loosening —

Feb. 10, 2022, at 3:20 p.m.

## US could loosen some restrictions on prescribing opioids

**CDC considers rolling back limits on which doses can be prescribed and for how many days in cases of acute pain**



## US could loosen some restrictions on prescribing opioids

CDC considers rolling back limits on which doses can be prescribed and for how many days in cases of acute pain



Melody Schreiber

MARCH 16, 2022

*Update Now Open to Public for Comment*

## Revised CDC Opioid Guidance Marked by Pivot Away From Hard Prescribing Caps, Embrace of Clinical Judgment

By Donald M. Pizzi

## CDC Proposes Softer Guidance on Opioid Prescriptions

The nation's top public health agency is proposing changing — and in some instances, softening — guidelines for doctors prescribing opioid painkillers.

By Associated Press | Feb. 10, 2022, at 3:20 p.m.

HEALTH

## In a victory for pain experts, CDC tones down its opioid prescribing guidelines



By Andrew Joseph | Feb. 10, 2022

Rep

February 10, 2022 | 3 min read

S

## CDC proposes to roll back restrictions previously recommended for prescribing opioids

# What the new guideline means for prescribers

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Patients already on chronic opioids are a different group from patients not yet on chronic opioids

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Do not taper abruptly

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It is rarely necessary or advisable to start chronic opioid therapy

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Nonopioids are often effective for acute pain

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Daily doses > 50 MME are rarely helpful

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## VA/DoD CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE FOR THE USE OF OPIOIDS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF CHRONIC PAIN

2022

Department of Veterans Affairs  
Department of Defense

1. We recommend against the **initiation** of opioid therapy for management of chronic non-cancer pain
2. We recommend against **long-term** opioid therapy, particularly for the younger age groups
3. We recommend against long-term opioid therapy, particularly for patients with **SUD**

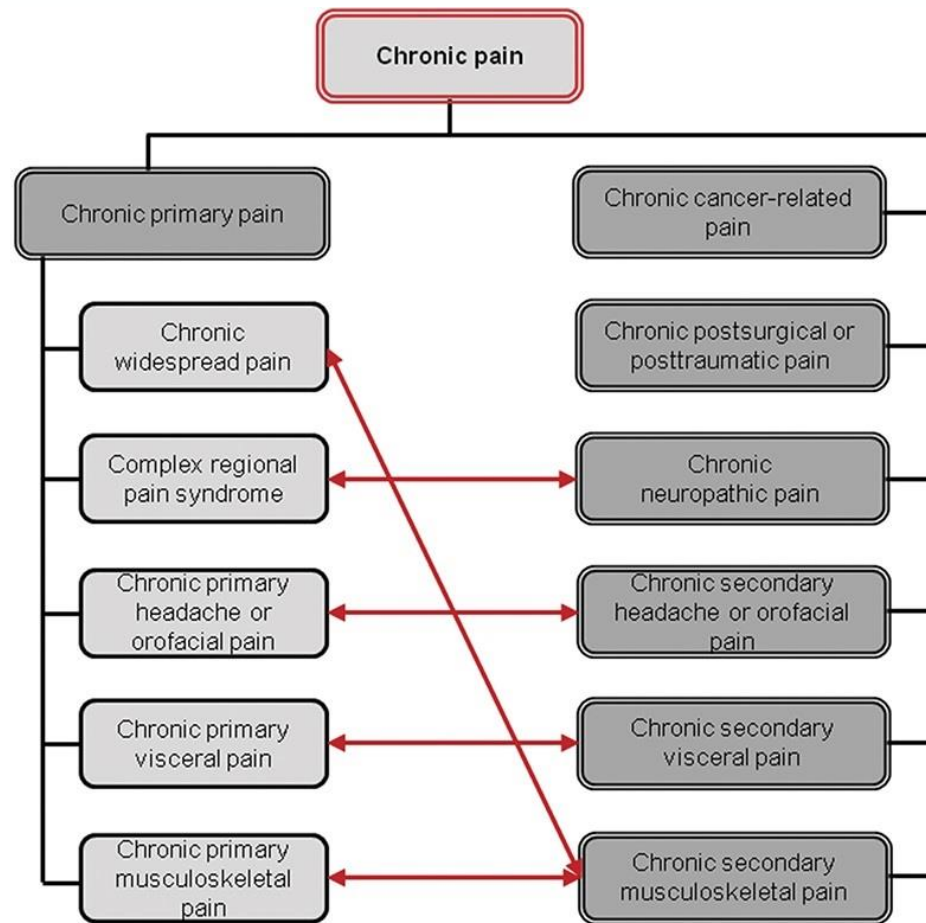


# VA/DoD CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE FOR THE USE OF OPIOIDS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF CHRONIC PAIN

2022

Department of Veterans Affairs  
Department of Defense

- The updated recommendation against opioid therapy in general for chronic pain is broader and *reflects the evidence that opioid therapy for any duration may be harmful*
- A new recommendation for buprenorphine in patient receiving daily opioid for the treatment of chronic pain
- No evidence to support one opioid over another for opioid maintenance treatment for OUD
- *Assess risk for suicide whenever making dose changes*
- *No evidence to support risk mitigation strategies*
- Although there are differences in the scope and aspects of pain management, the VA and CDC guidelines do not have any contradictory recommendations



Chronic secondary pain syndromes

From: Treede RD, Rief W, Barke A, et al. Chronic pain as a symptom or a disease: the IASP Classification of Chronic Pain for the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11). Pain 2019;160(1):19-27.

#### Legend

Chronic pain

Top level diagnosis

1st level diagnosis

Directly subordinate

Differential diagnosis



## VA/DoD CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE FOR THE USE OF OPIOIDS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF CHRONIC PAIN

2022



Department of Veterans Affairs  
Department of Defense

### Sidebar B: Non-opioid Treatments for Chronic Pain

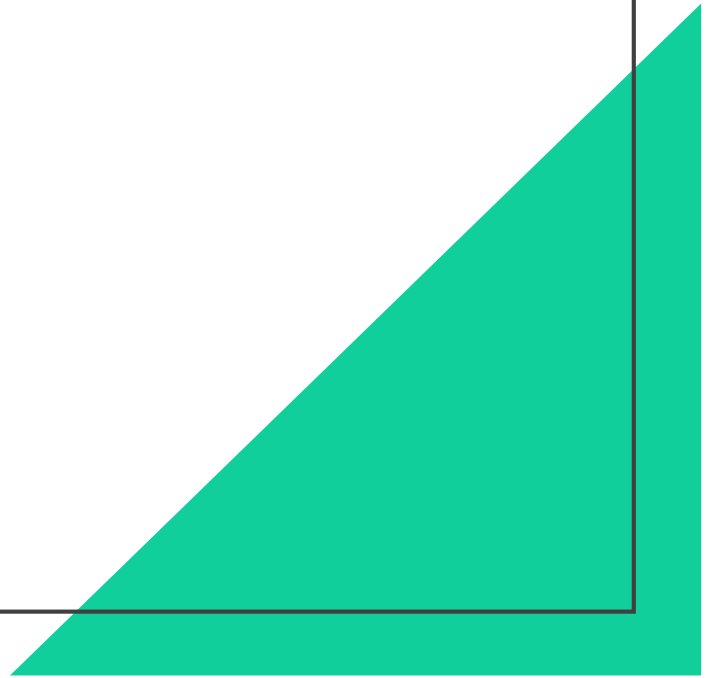
- Rehabilitation and manipulative therapies (e.g., provided by physical therapists, occupational therapists, chiropractors)
- Pharmacologic therapy (e.g., over-the-counter medications, non-opioid prescription pain medications)
- Interventional procedures (e.g., trigger point injections, joint injections, acupuncture)
- Psychological and behavioral interventions (e.g., motivational interviewing, CBT)
- Complementary and integrative treatments (e.g., yoga, tai chi)

Abbreviations: CBT: cognitive behavioral therapy

When it comes to patients already on high doses

- 
- Do not taper or discontinue abruptly
  - Only exceptions would be concerns about safety (usually concerns diversion or abuse, rarely concerns suicide or accidental overdose, always requires steps to maximize safety)
  - Follow HHS and other tapering guidelines
  - Make use of buprenorphine (effective for pain, opioid dependence and OUD)
- 

Why chronic opioids are neither safe nor effective



## Neuroadaptations to continuous opioid use

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Clinically manifest as tolerance and dependence

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Tolerance: need for higher dose to achieve the same effect

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Dependence: need to continue taking to avoid withdrawal

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But underlying adaptations are actually identical, and dependence should be thought of as a manifestation of tolerance

Tolerance

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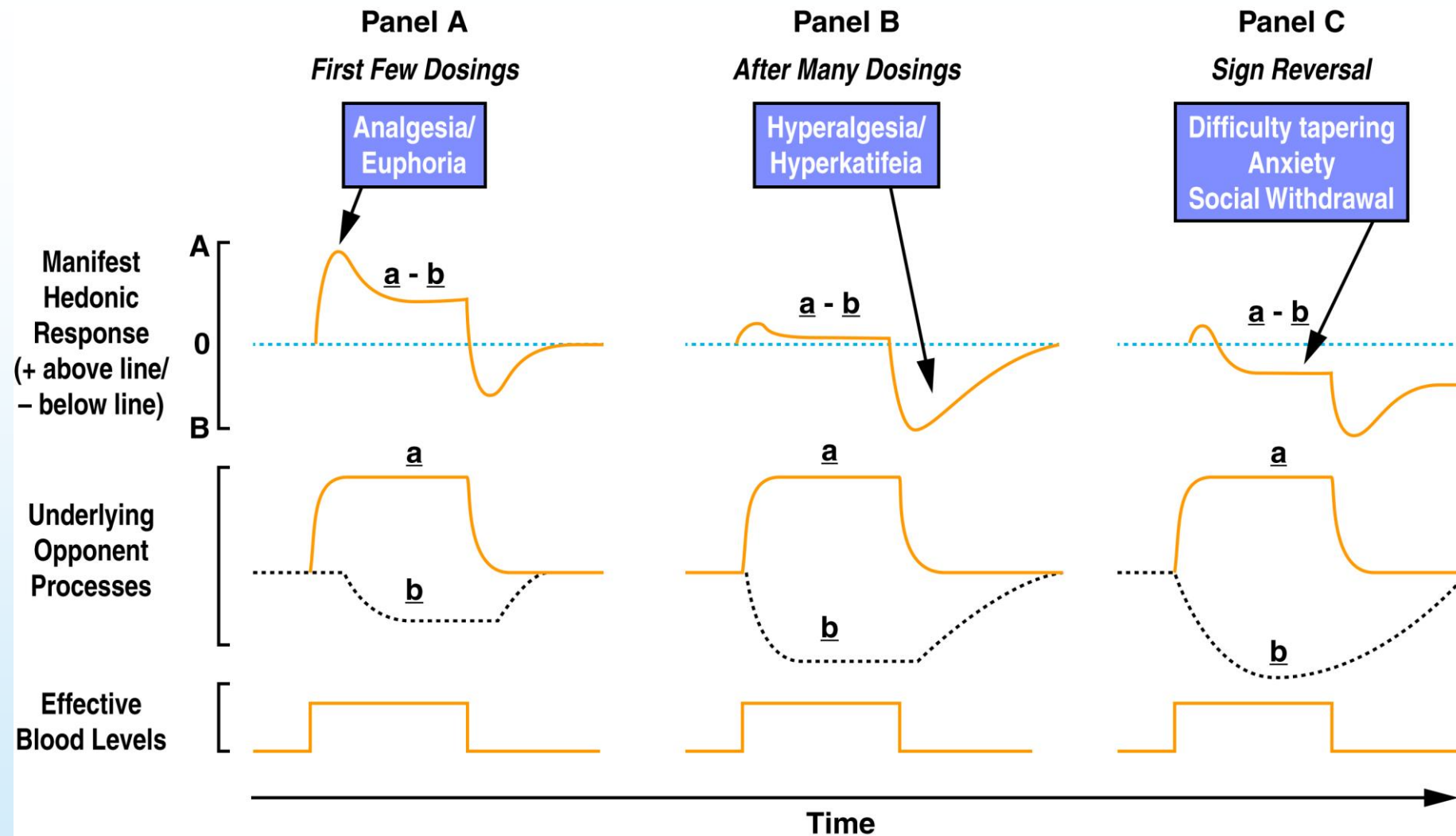
**Desensitization:**  
reversible

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**Opponent process:**  
persistent, enigmatic  
and pervasive

# Opponent- process theory of affective regulation linked to drugs

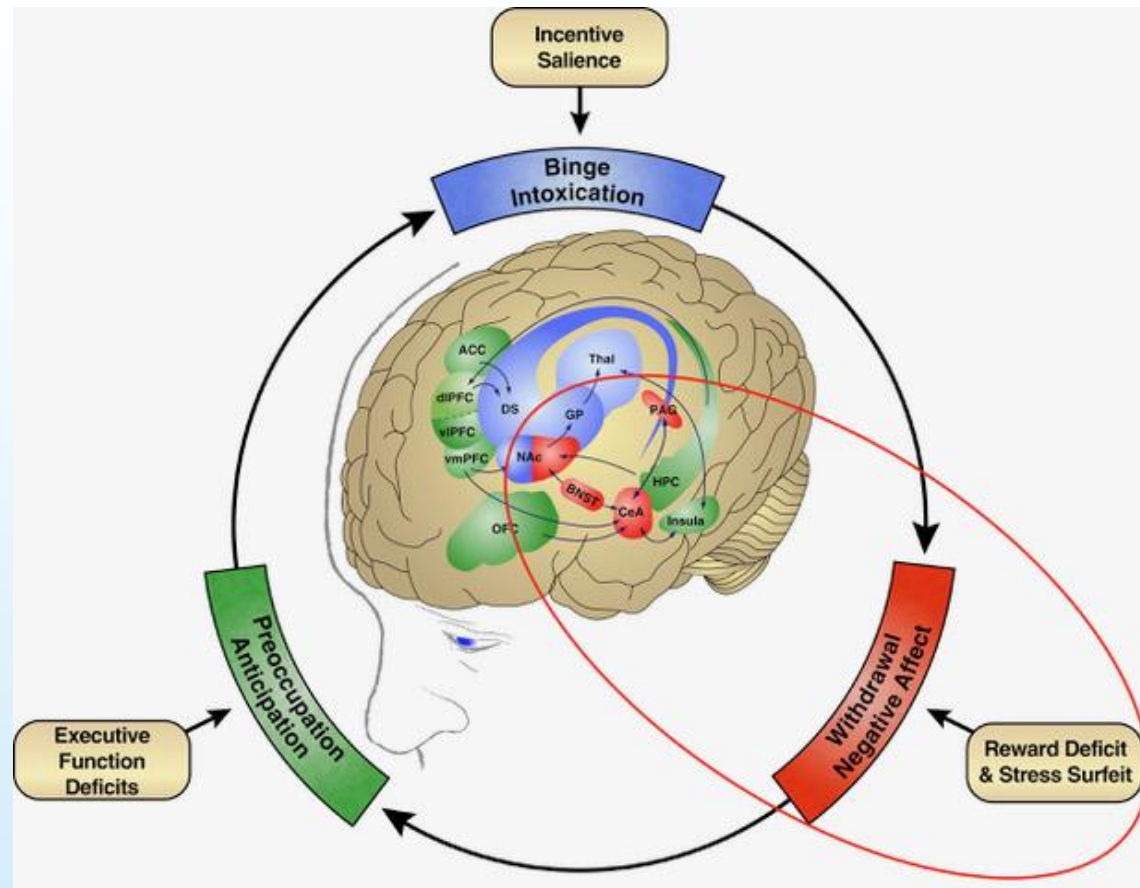
- *a-process*
  - Eliciting of pleasurable emotional state
- *b-process*
  - Counterregulatory, opponent-processes
  - Produces opposite effects such as dysphoria and depressed mood
  - Argued to have longer latency, more inertia, slower recruitment and more sluggish decay
  - Temporally linked to *a-process*
  - However, with repetition (continued drug use), *b-process* becomes sensitized and develops more rapidly
  - Argued to eventually mask the *a-process*



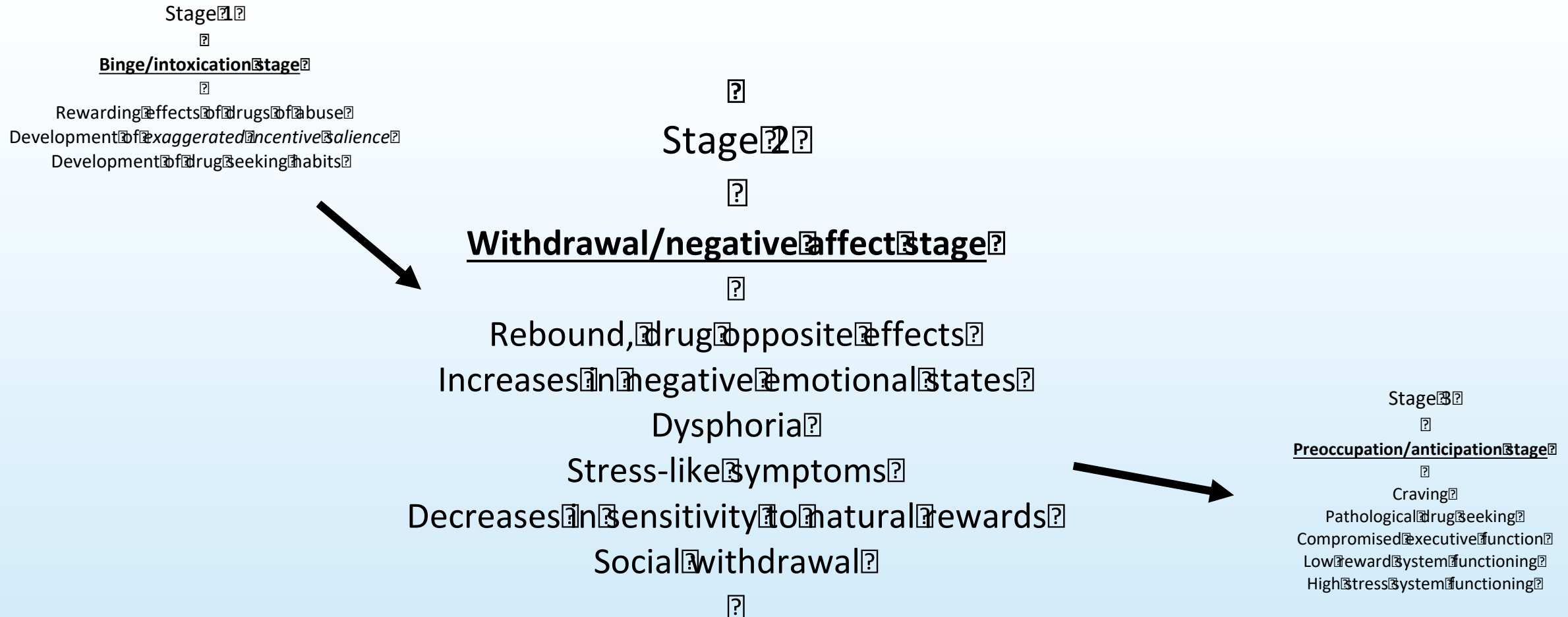
*a process* refers to a positive hedonic response, *b process* refers to the negative hedonic response

# Dependence

- A manifestation of tolerance
- Effects most obvious during drug withdrawal
- However, not confined to drug withdrawal because the underlying changes are subject to conditioning and regulation



# The 3 stages of addiction





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## **UPCOMING WEBINAR**

**The Collateral Impact of Opioid Misuse**

**11 a.m. Thursday, April 27, 2023**

**Register at [KnockOutDay.DrugFreeNJ.org/events](https://KnockOutDay.DrugFreeNJ.org/events)**