

## ABOUT OPIOIDS



Opioids are a class of drugs that include the illicit drug heroin as well as the licit (legal) prescription pain-relievers oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, morphine, fentanyl and others.

Opioids are chemically related and interact with opioid receptors on nerve cells in the brain and nervous system to produce pleasurable effects and relieve pain.

Addiction is a primary, chronic and relapsing brain disease characterized by an individual pathologically pursuing reward and/or relief by substance use and other behaviors.

Of the 21.5 million Americans age 12 or older that had a substance use disorder in 2014, 1.9 million had a substance abuse disorder involving prescription pain relievers and 586,000 had a substance abuse disorder involving heroin.

It is estimated that 23 percent of individuals who use heroin develop opioid addiction.

## CALL TO ACTION

- Payers and plan sponsors – both government and commercial – should make chiropractic care an accessible, affordable, option for chronic pain relief, with reimbursement of DCs as covered providers.
- Chiropractic services should be expanded in the Department of Defense and veteran's health care systems since neuro-musculo-skeletal pain is one of the leading causes of disability in the active military and veteran populations.
- Prescribers should heed CDC guidelines and begin prescribing safer alternatives such as chiropractic care for chronic pain management.
- Pharmaceutical manufacturers should institute more responsible marketing and physician education that will result in improved prescribing habits.
- Hospital emergency rooms should evaluate their options for managing patients' pain without the use of opioid painkillers.



To locate a doctor of chiropractic in your area, visit [www.f4cp.com/findadoctor/](http://www.f4cp.com/findadoctor/).

*Information provided by: Foundation for Chiropractic Progress (F4CP), a not-for-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness about the value of chiropractic care. [www.f4cp.com/opioidwp.pdf](http://www.f4cp.com/opioidwp.pdf)*

# SAVE LIVES.

## STOP OPIOID ABUSE.

## CHOOSE CHIROPRACTIC.



## THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Although the amount of pain that Americans report has not increased since 1999, the number of prescription opioids sold in the U.S. has almost quadrupled.

In 2013, providers wrote almost a quarter of a billion opioid prescriptions – that’s enough for every U.S. adult to have their own bottle of pills.

The following year, there were 18,893 overdose deaths related to prescription pain relievers.

## WHO IS AT RISK?

- Persons in moderate to severe pain have a 41 percent higher risk of developing prescription opioid use disorders
- Non-opioid users who are prescribed prescription opioids following a surgical procedure
- Improper use of medication (abuse)
- Family history of drug addiction
- Having anxiety, depression, loneliness, and a history of alcohol use disorder

## GUIDELINES

As the opioid epidemic continues to gain traction in the U.S., major organizations are beginning to call for a shift away from prescription painkillers toward non-pharmacological alternatives as a first option for pain relief:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
[www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/guidelines\\_fact-sheet-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/guidelines_fact-sheet-a.pdf)
- National Safety Council  
[www.nsc.org/RxDrugOverdoseDocuments/Prescription-Nation-2016-American-Drug-Epidemic.pdf](http://www.nsc.org/RxDrugOverdoseDocuments/Prescription-Nation-2016-American-Drug-Epidemic.pdf)
- Food and Drug Administration  
[www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/FactSheets/ucm484714.htm](http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/FactSheets/ucm484714.htm)

## PREVENT MISUSE, ABUSE AND OVERDOSE: UTILIZE CHIROPRACTIC CARE AS FIRST OPTION FOR PAIN RELIEF

Chiropractic care is a hands-on, non-invasive approach documented to be effective in the acute and chronic neuro-musculoskeletal pain environment, yielding improved clinical outcomes, reduced costs and high levels of patient satisfaction.

Chiropractic patients may receive spinal adjustments and/or alternative drugless therapies that assist the innate capabilities of the body to relieve pain, restore health and prevent disease.

Chiropractic care takes on even greater importance when one considers the opportunity it offers to potentially avoid the risks of prescription opioids: misuse, abuse, and opioid use disorder (addiction).

A recent study examining very large Medicare datasets suggests that the availability of chiropractic services may be able to limit the use of prescription opioids.

This issue demands an immediate change in provider and patient behavior. The problem remains that opioids frequently are prescribed for acute and subacute low back pain, despite low quality or inconclusive supporting evidence regarding their use in this circumstance. Furthermore, there are no randomized control trials that have shown opioids to improve function.

Evaluating structural balance and improving function has been a hallmark of chiropractic care since 1895 and effective in short and long term pain syndromes.

In fact, according to the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (AHCPR) Clinical Guideline #14: Acute Low Back Pain in Adults, of all the mentioned interventions for low back pain, chiropractic care was the only service noted to improve function.

