Pharmaceutical Abuse in the United States

What are we seeing?
What is being done!
What are we facing?
What is Rx drug abuse?

- The misuse of Rx drugs is a growing, under-recognized problem that puts young lives at risk.
- Misuse includes:
  - Rx drugs serve an important purpose when used *under a doctor’s care*.
  - Misuse can lead to overdose, addiction and even death.
Just as deadly as “real drugs”
United States

“Fastest growing drug problem in the US.”

“80% increase in the number of people abusing pharmaceuticals since 2001”
Winnebago battles spike in heroin abuses

With overdoses on the rise, Fox Valley on pace for worst year

By Meg Jones of the Journal Sentinel

April 17, 2011

Oshkosh - Stacked next to each other on a conference table Tuesday afternoon were the ravaged faces of the war Winnebago County law enforcement officers are waging.

Dead eyes, mottled and pockmarked skin, toothless grimaces, stringy hair. They were the faces of Winnebago County’s users of heroin and other opiates. They’re dying in alarming numbers.

A spike in the number of drug-related deaths, including fatal heroin overdoses, is worrying Winnebago County officials who say the Fox Valley county is on a pace for a record year.

Winnebago County Coroner Barry Busby sees the stark reality of heroin flooding into the county. He checked off the numbers at a new conference at the Sheriff’s Department:

From 2002 to 2010 the county averaged 15 to 16 drug-related death per year.

- Last year 24 people died of heroin and other illegal drug overdoses.
- Nine people have died so far this year. If that pace continues, as many as 36 people will die from heroin and other opiates this year.

Even more worrisome - the number of fatalities could have been higher. Medical personnel have given 49 doses of Narcan, a drug that counters the effects of opiate overdoses, to drug users in Winnebago County this year.

Last year, 130 doses of Narcan were used to treat drug addicts.

not addicted to drugs.
What is being abused?
Rx Drugs of Choice for Abuse

- **Strong Pain Relievers**
  - Used to relieve moderate-to-severe pain, these medications block pain signals to the brain
  - To get high, increase feelings of well being by affecting the brain regions that mediate pleasure
  - Vicodin, OxyContin, Percocet, Lorcet, Lortab, Actiq, Darvon, codeine, morphine, methadone
Sedatives or tranquilizers

- Used to slow down or “depress” the functions of the brain and central nervous system
- Feel calm, reduce stress, sleep
- Valium, Xanax, Ativan, Klonopin, Restoril, Ambien, Lunesta, Mebaral, Nembutal, Soma
Rx Drugs of Choice for Abuse

• Stimulants
  - Primarily used to treat ADHD type symptoms, these speed up brain activity causing increased alertness, attention, and energy that comes with elevated blood pressure, increased heart rate and breathing
  - Feel alert, focused and full of energy—perhaps around final exams or to manage coursework, lose weight
  - Adderall, Dexedrine, Ritalin, Concerta
How are drugs obtained?
What is Diversion?

Legal Drugs...

By

Illegal Distribution
Drug Diversion

- Pharmacy Diversion
  - Prescription fraud
  - Robberies/Burglaries
  - Internal theft

- Physician Diversion
  - Stolen prescription pads
  - "Doctor Shopping"
“Doctor Shopping”

An alert pharmacist in Milwaukee

A female sold to an undercover agent after she brought him along to her doctor appointment and then to the pharmacy.

and resold the medication in 17 southeastern WI communities.
Script fraud

Changed from Tylenol II to IV
Script fraud

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Quantity changed from 12 to 120
Script fraud

Script altered to add a drug (Alprazolam)
Scams & Cons

- Open houses
- Sleepovers
- Emergency visits
- I need to use your phone....
- Obituaries
- Caregivers
- Service providers
What is Being Done?
Education & Awareness

- Target audiences
  - Youth
  - Parents
  - Older adults
  - Health care

- Materials
  - PowerPoints
  - Handouts
  - Background
  - PSA’s

![Good Drugs Gone Bad](image)
Coalition formed in Fox Valley
Prescription Monitoring Programs

- Tool to address diversion and abuse

- Serve multiple functions:
  - Patient care tool
  - Early warning system
  - Diversion and insurance fraud investigative tool
    - LE needs subpoena for access

- 41 states have operational

- 7 states have legislation in place to create (*WI operational in Jan. 2013*)
Prescription Monitoring Program

Wisconsin PDMP

- Monitor CII & CIII and any other drug identified by the Pharmacy Examining Board as having a potential for abuse.

- “require a pharmacist or practitioner to generate a record documenting each dispensing of a prescription drug [controlled substance] and to deliver the record to the board.”
Disposal Programs

- Use Drop Boxes
  - Located at many LE agencies throughout state
  - Only LE can accept

- DEA take back days
Thank you!

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