

# SAFE



Campaign for Responsible Prescriptions

## ADDRESSING PRESCRIPTION DRUG MISUSE: A REGIONAL HEALTH CARE RESPONSE

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The Campaign for Responsible Prescriptions is a regional effort by the hospitals and health departments of Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte and DeSoto Counties in Florida.



### How are Prescription Drugs Typically Obtained?

The 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health asked those who reported using pain relievers non-medically in the past 12 months where they typically obtained their drugs.<sup>6</sup>

- 55%** Free from friend or relative
- 20%** From drug dealer or stranger
- 18%** Prescribed by doctor
- 10%** Bought from friend or relative
- 5%** Took from friend or relative without asking

#### County Rank, Unintentional Poisoning Age-Adjusted Death Rate Among 67 Florida Counties, 2007-2009

Sarasota	8
Manatee	16
Charlotte	56
DeSoto	59

### THE ISSUE

When taken as directed for a medical reason, prescription drugs can be safe and effective. However, abuse of prescription drugs to get high is a growing problem in the United States.

Prescription drug abuse has been described as the most threatening substance abuse issue in the State of Florida. The number of deaths caused by at least one prescription drug increased 102% between 2003 and 2009. This translates to 7 Floridian deaths per day.<sup>1</sup>

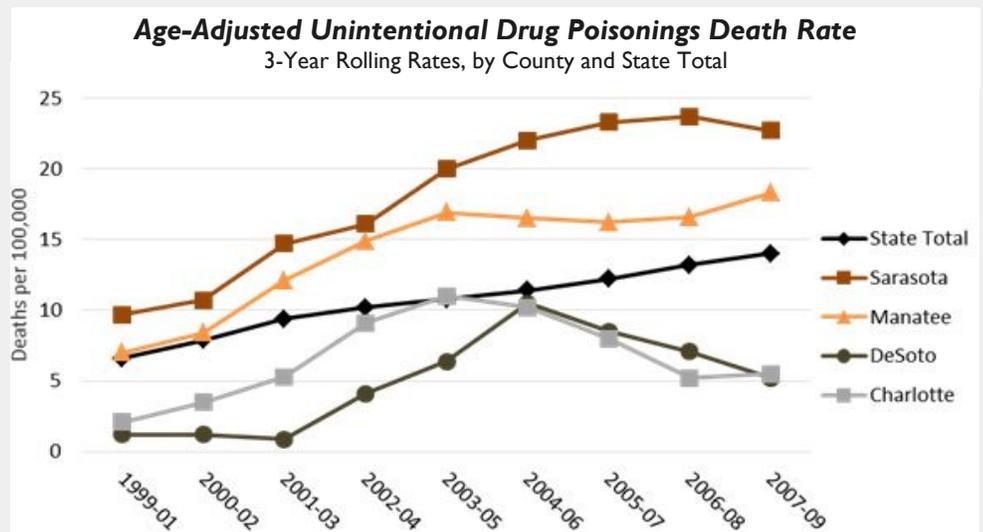
**Pain killers**, such as those drugs prescribed after surgery, are the most commonly abused prescription medication. **Depressants**, such as sleeping pills or anti-anxiety drugs; and **stimulants**, such as those drugs prescribed for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), are also commonly abused prescription medications.

### THE TRENDS

In the state of Florida, prescription drugs accounted for **79% of all drug-related deaths in 2009**, and the pain killer oxycodone caused the most drug-related deaths.<sup>2</sup>

At the County and regional level, data from death certificates, law enforcement, and hospitals help paint a picture of prescription drug misuse.

- For 2009, Medical Examiners from the 4-county region cited drugs as the cause of death in 249 instances. In 213 of these cases (86%), prescription drugs were the cause of death.<sup>3</sup>
- Since 2005, of all drug-related ER admissions in the 4-county region, opioid-related admissions have increased 25%, while all other drug categories have decreased.<sup>4</sup>
- The highest rate of unintentional drug poisoning deaths and hospitalizations is among young adults 20-24 years old. The majority of these deaths are due to prescription drug misuse.<sup>5</sup>





## THE REGIONAL RESPONSE

To effectively prevent and reduce prescription drug misuse, collaboration across organizational and geographic boundaries is key. Healthcare providers, law enforcement, and citizens must work together to address this problem. Drug-free coalitions help to facilitate the type of planning, coordination and collaboration necessary to develop and implement strategies to impact this problem.

With access to patients, physicians and other medical providers, hospitals and health departments also play an important role. Through the Community Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP), healthcare leadership partners are also working together to address prescription drug misuse on a regional level.

In the 4-County region representing Manatee, Sarasota, DeSoto and Charlotte Counties, some counties report much higher rates of prescription drug misuse (Sarasota and Manatee) than other counties (DeSoto and Charlotte) where this issue hasn't reached such critical levels. A targeted, collaborative approach to address this problem will help to ensure that the rate of misuse will be curbed and will prevent prescription drug misuse from growing.

This group will work together to implement a plan to:

- Share data and information which will help to raise awareness and collective understanding of the issue of prescription drug misuse;
- Educate patients and staff about safe prescription drug storage and disposal;
- Provide educational opportunities for health providers, with a focus on safe prescribing practices, local addictions resources and law enforcement efforts to curb misuse.

Hospital CEOs and Health Department administrators have declared 2011 as the year of the Campaign for Responsible Prescriptions. Representatives from the participating organizations will continue to meet throughout 2011 to share tools and best practices, and evolve strategies to address prescription drug misuse.

### Data Sources

1. Florida Office of Drug Control. 2010. *2010 Annual Report*.
2. Florida Department of Law Enforcement. 2009. *Drugs Identified in Deceased Persons by Florida Medical Examiners*.
3. Florida Department of Law Enforcement. 2010. *Medical Examiners Commission Interim Report*
4. Data from the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration (ACHA). 2008.
5. Florida Dept of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics. Accessed via [www.floridacharts.com](http://www.floridacharts.com)
6. US Dept of Health & Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. 2009. *Results from the 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Vol 1. Summary of National Findings*.

## THE REGIONAL HEALTH CARE PARTNERSHIP

### Hospitals

Blake Medical Center  
Charlotte Regional Medical Center  
Desoto Memorial Hospital  
Doctor's Hospital of Sarasota  
Englewood Community Hospital  
Fawcett Memorial Hospital  
Lakewood Ranch Medical Center  
Manatee Glens Hospital  
Manatee Memorial Hospital  
Peace River Regional Medical Center  
Sarasota Memorial Health Care System  
Venice Regional Medical Center

### Health Departments

Charlotte County Health Department  
DeSoto County Health Department  
Manatee County Health Department  
Sarasota County Health & Human Services

### Working in Collaboration with Local Substance Abuse Coalitions

Drug-Free Charlotte County  
[www.drugfreecharlottecounty.org](http://www.drugfreecharlottecounty.org)

Drug-free DeSoto County  
[www.drugfreedesoto.com](http://www.drugfreedesoto.com)

Manatee County Substance Abuse Coalition  
[www.drugfreemanatee.org](http://www.drugfreemanatee.org)

Sarasota Behavioral Health Strategic Planning Workgroup  
[www.scgov.net/drugfreesarasota](http://www.scgov.net/drugfreesarasota)

*Substance abuse coalitions in our region are working to build awareness and provide prevention services to reduce the impact of substance abuse, including prescription medication abuse in our communities. These coalitions, along with CHIP's Community Health Action Teams (CHATs) have joined this campaign to help create a strong, cohesive community outreach for our region.*

**CHIP**  
Community Health  
Improvement Partnership 

[www.chip4health.org/saferx](http://www.chip4health.org/saferx)