

IT'S IN THE NUMBERS – Winter 2014

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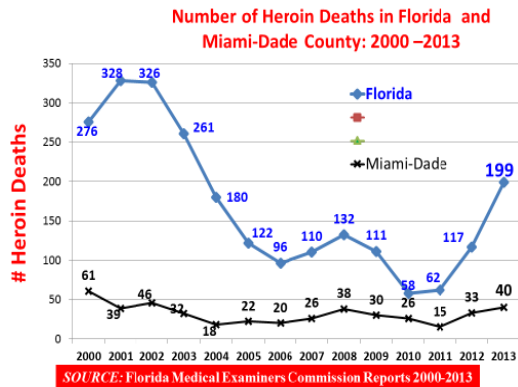
Opiate Epidemic Continues in Miami-Dade

Deaths and other indicators of opiate abuse for both the non-medical misuse of prescription opioid pain-relievers and illegal heroin continue to climb in Miami-Dade County. Heroin deaths have escalated statewide and locally. Prescription opioid mortalities have also increased in Miami-Dade since 2011 while declining in most other Florida counties. Nonetheless prescription deaths still far outnumber those for heroin.

| Prescription Opioid Related Deaths | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------|-----------------|
| | 2011 | 2013 | Δ 2011 vs. 2013 |
| Florida | 4,708 | 3,385 | Down ↓ 28 % |
| Miami-Dade County | 175 | 190 | Up ↑ 9 % |

SOURCE: Florida Medical Examiners Commission Reports 2011-2013

Occurrences of 4 different opioids detected in deceased persons declined 28-% in all of Florida from 4,708 in 2011 to 3,385 in 2013, but increased in Miami-Dade County by nearly 9-percent from 175 in 2011 to 190 in 2013. Occurrences of a drug include both those considered to be a cause of death as well as those where the substance was detected as present at the time of death. Between the same two years, heroin death occurrences increased 221-% statewide from 62 in 2011 to 199 in 2013.



In Miami-Dade, heroin-related deaths rose 167-% from 15 in 2011 to 40 in 2013. This period marked both the crackdown on illegal diversion of narcotic pain-relievers and the startup of Florida’s long-awaited Prescription Drug Monitoring Program for physicians and pharmacists to check for overprescribing. At the same time there has also been a national increase in the availability

of cheaper and more potent heroin from both Mexico and Colombia. New opiate abusers are young adults between 18 and 30 years of age of both genders and predominately White, non-Hispanic and Hispanic.

Heroin crime lab cases in South Florida (Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties) have also risen 50-% between 618 in 2011 to 925 in 2013. Across the same two-years, confiscated diverted prescription opioid South Florida crime lab cases decreased 39-% from 1,525 in 2011 to 933 in 2013. Opiate treatment admissions in Miami-Dade County reflect a similar trend with primary heroin admissions increasing 30-% from 227 clients in 2011 to 294 in 2013. Primary prescription opioid addiction treatment admissions declined 40-% from 302 in 2011 to 181 in 2013.

| South Florida Crime Lab Cases | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|------|-----------------|
| | 2011 | 2013 | Δ 2011 vs. 2013 |
| Prescription Opioids | 1,525 | 933 | Down ↓ 39 % |
| Heroin | 618 | 925 | Up ↑ 50 % |

Source: US DEA- National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS) for Miami-Dade, Broward , and Palm Beach Counties

It is not appropriate to attribute increasing heroin use and consequences to Florida’s aggressive crackdown on illicit prescription drug “pill mills” and high levels of doctor shopping. Without these supply-side strategies heroin use would have increased even more because prescription opioid abusers constitute the breeding ground for the nation’s heroin epidemic. However, Florida’s failure was in not expanding treatment and prevention resources while enforcing prescription diversion control. Most all opiate deaths are preventable, but that requires education and easy availability of the overdose reversal medication, naloxone, to vulnerable individuals and their significant others. Prevention of adolescent alcohol, marijuana, new synthetic drugs, and over-the-counter medication abuse is a key factor in cutting off the pipeline to heroin addiction. Prevention also includes only the appropriate use of all medications.

| Miami-Dade Primary Treatment Admissions | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|------------------------|
| | 2011 | 2013 | Δ 2011 vs. 2013 |
| Prescription Opioids | 302 | 181 | Down ↓ 40 % |
| Heroin | 227 | 294 | Up ↑ 30 % |

Source: Florida Department of Children and Families