



**Board of Pharmacy**  
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# Know the facts about Prescription Drug Abuse

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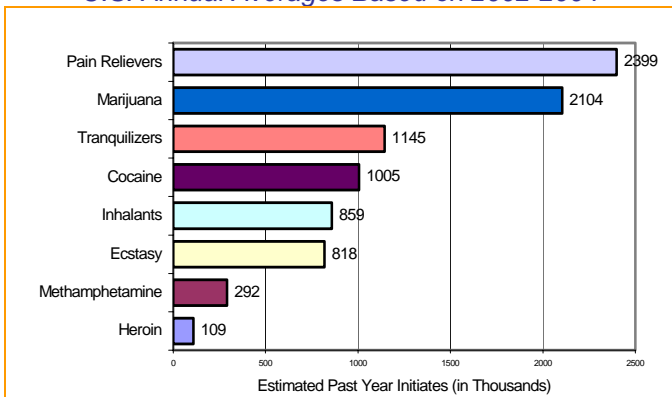
## What's the issue?

*Misuse, abuse and diversion of prescription drugs are a threat to public health and safety.*

Many people believe prescription drugs are safer than illicit drugs. While prescription medications are legal and important resources, data indicate prescription drug abuse is the most rapidly increasing form of substance abuse.

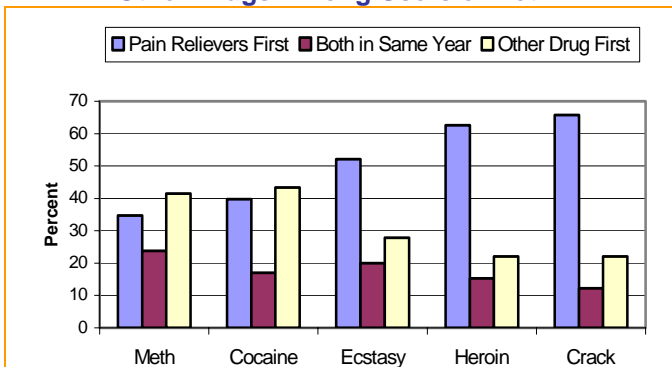
- Nationally more persons initiated nonmedical use of narcotic pain relievers in the past year than initiated use of marijuana or cocaine.<sup>1</sup>

### Initiation of Prescription Drug Abuse by Drug<sup>1</sup> U.S. Annual Averages Based on 2002-2004



- Abuse of prescription medications can be a gateway to further illicit drug use, such as methamphetamine, heroin and crack cocaine. National data show many persons abuse pain relievers *before* using other drugs.<sup>1</sup>

### Order of First Use of Prescription Pain Relievers and Other Drugs Among Users of Both<sup>1</sup>



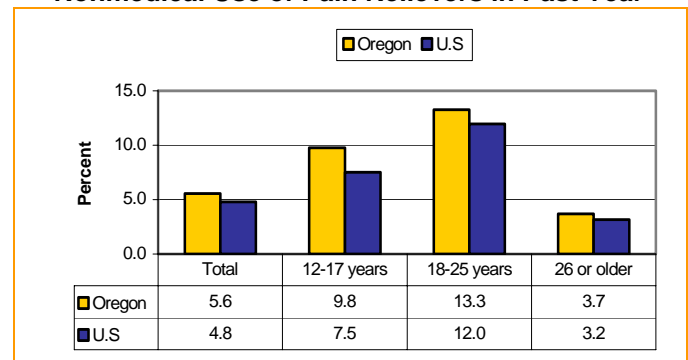
## What does it mean for Oregon?

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health asked individuals if they used prescription drugs for nonmedical purposes.<sup>1</sup>

*Results for Oregon show:*

- One out of every four adults in Oregon will abuse prescription drugs in their lifetime.
- The rate of nonmedical use of pain relievers in Oregon is higher than that of the nation.<sup>1</sup>

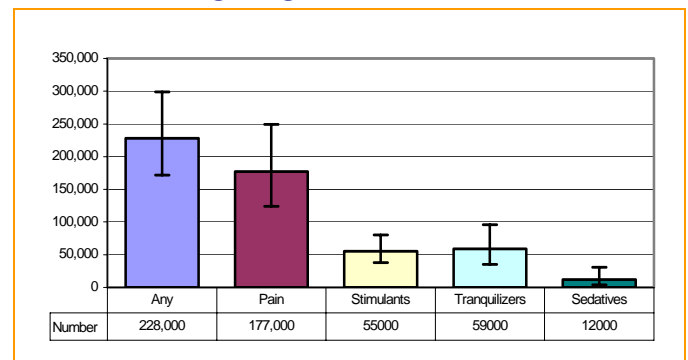
### Nonmedical Use of Pain Relievers in Past Year



Compared to the rest of the nation, Oregon ranks among the top ten states for:

- Annual abuse of prescription drugs for all ages (228,000 persons per year)
- Past year abuse of prescription drugs by youth 12 to 17 (34,000 persons per year)
- Past year abuse of prescription pain relievers (177,000 persons per year)
- Past year abuse of prescription stimulants (55,000 persons per year)<sup>1</sup>

### Annual Nonmedical Use of Prescription Drugs<sup>1</sup> Among Oregonians 12 and Older\*



Number of people using prescription drugs for nonmedical purposes each year falls within the following ranges: Any use 172,000 to 299,000; pain medications 124,000 to 249,000; stimulants 38,000 to 80,000; tranquilizers 35,000 to 96,000; sedatives 4,000 to 31,000.

# Prescription Drug Abuse

For more information, visit the DHS resource center @ [http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/addiction/resource\\_center.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/addiction/resource_center.shtml)

## How does it affect health care?

Based on national data from the Drug Abuse Warning Network, of those hospital emergency room visits involving drug misuse or abuse:

- 25% involved pharmaceuticals alone,
- 8% involved illicit drugs with pharmaceuticals, and
- 14% involved illicit drugs with pharmaceuticals and alcohol.<sup>3</sup>

In a study by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, physicians and pharmacists identified the three most common methods of prescription drug diversion:

- Doctor shopping,
- Forged or altered prescriptions, and
- Patient deception or manipulation of doctors.<sup>2</sup>

In the same study, 28.9 percent of the pharmacists indicated they had experienced theft or robbery of controlled drugs within the last five years.<sup>2</sup>

## Successful Approaches

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse recommends comprehensive and collaborative efforts that:

Train health care professionals,

Safeguard controlled prescription drugs from children,

Educate the public on the dangers of prescription drug abuse, and

Strengthen monitoring and enforcement to prevent and detect diversion through *Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs)*.<sup>2</sup>

## Why PDMPs?

Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs focus on identifying patterns of controlled substance prescription drug dispensing in the state.

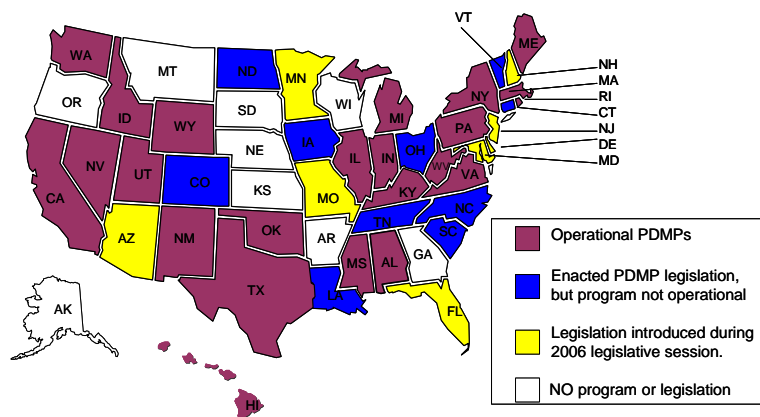
PDMPs capture information that, with specific security parameters applied, may be shared with healthcare and regulatory agencies, healthcare practitioners, and law enforcement to help identify inappropriate or illegal activities involving controlled substance prescription drugs. Data gathered through PDMPs is valuable in:

- Designing effective training for healthcare and law enforcement professionals,
- Producing reports on the quantity of drugs dispensed, and
- Identifying the most frequently diverted drugs.

An important aim of these programs is to use the data collected to promote appropriate drug use in a manner that is most efficient and useful for medical and pharmacy practice.<sup>2</sup>

For more information on PDMPs, go to [http://www.natlalliance.org/prescription\\_drug.asp](http://www.natlalliance.org/prescription_drug.asp)

## Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs)



Prepared by the National Alliance for Model State Drug Laws, current through August 23, 2006.



### ENDNOTES:

1. Colliver, J.D., Kroutil, L.A., Dai, L., & Gfroerer, J. C. (2006). *Misuse of prescription drugs: Data from the 2002, 2003, and 2004 National Surveys on Drug Use and Health* (DHHS Publication No. SMA 06-4192, Analytic Series A-28) Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies.
2. National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University. *Under the Counter: The Diversion and Abuse of Controlled Prescription Drugs in the U. S.* July 2005.
3. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. *Drug Abuse Warning Network, 2004: National Estimates of Drug-Related Emergency Department Visits.* DAWN Series D-28, DHHS Publication No. (SMA) 06-4143, Rockville, MD, 2006.
4. National Alliance for Model State Drug Laws 700 North Fairfax Street, Suite 306 Alexandria, VA 22314 accessed online 01/11/2007 < [http://www.natlalliance.org/prescription\\_drug.asp](http://www.natlalliance.org/prescription_drug.asp)>