Opioid Abuse in Rural Minnesota

County Farm Bureau Resource Guide
395
Number of opioid-related deaths in MN in 2016.

80 of every 100
Prescriptions nationwide are written for an opiate.

Three in four farmers (77%), as well as those who work in agriculture generally (76%), say it would be easy for someone in their community to access a large amount of prescription opioids or painkillers without a prescription.

41,558
Number of men vs. women overdose deaths in 2016 nationwide.

22,074

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Number of men vs. women overdose deaths in 2016 nationwide.
What are Opioids?

Opioids are a category of drugs that include heroin and other pain relievers that are generally available by prescription, including oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, codeine and many others. All of these drugs share a closely-related chemical makeup that makes them highly addictive and potentially dangerous. These drugs give the person who takes them a sense of euphoria coupled with pain relief. If taken for short periods of time, opioids can be effective in treating pain but when misused, they can lead to addiction, incidences of overdose and death.

The Opioid Epidemic

In October 2017, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported that opioid overdose rates in rural areas had surpassed rates recorded in urban areas. Drug overdose has been the leading cause of accidental death in the United States since 2010.

In 2016, there were 395 opioid or heroin-related deaths in the state of Minnesota. This figure increased nearly 18% from the statistics from 2015. Nationwide, of the approximately 64,000 drug-related deaths last year, 42,249 were from prescription medications alone. In 2016, there were over 3.5 million prescriptions written in Minnesota.

About the Farm Town Strong Initiative

In late 2017, the American Farm Bureau Federation joined with the National Farmers Union to bring awareness to this growing issue. The partnership is known as “FarmTownStrong” and seeks to utilize the agriculture network to help address the opioid crisis with local resources. These two organizations have a vast network of members all across the nation, and members are encouraged to get involved in helping shape their community’s response to this crisis. You can read more about the initiative by visiting www.farmtownstrong.org. In addition, you can use #FarmTownStrong in social media to join the conversation online.

Fact: 50% of farmers and farm workers say addiction to opioids is a disease, rather than due to a lack of willpower.

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Rural adults overwhelmingly recognize that opioid abuse can begin accidentally with the use of what are deemed safe painkillers, or opioids (75%).  

- American Farm Bureau Federation

Opioid-involved overdose deaths doubled in the past ten years and quadrupled in the past 16 years.  

- White House Council of Economic Advisors

The number of opioid-involved overdose deaths has risen by nearly one-third since 2013.  

- White House Council of Economic Affairs

Evidence suggests that drug overdose related to opioids are underreported by as much as 24 percent, which would raise the estimated 2015 opioid overdose death toll to over 40,000.  

- White House Council of Economic Affairs

Since 2000, over 300,000 Americans have died from overdoses involving opioids.  

- White House Council of Economic Affairs

People often share their unused pain relievers, unaware of the dangers of nonmedical opioid use. Most adolescents who misuse prescription pain relievers are given them for free by a friend or relative.  

- American Society of Addiction Medicine

More than 115 people per day overdose on opioids in the U.S.  

- National Institute on Drug Abuse

Did You KNOW?

“The opioid epidemic is a pivotal challenge for many rural places. More than a health concern, the opioid crisis is an issue of rural prosperity and will take the commitment, collaboration and creativity of a wide range of partners to address.”  

- Anne Hazlett, USDA Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development

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What Can **MY County Farm Bureau** Do to Help?

- Invite a local expert to discuss this issue with your county board
- Have a keynote speaker at your county’s annual meeting that can talk about the issue in your local community
- Partner with local organizations and law enforcement to host a Prescription Drug Take-Back Day
- Discuss potential policy recommendations to submit to the State Resolutions Committee

Visit the next page to find ways to access local resources

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**Fact:**
A strong majority of rural Americans believe increasing public education surrounding resources (68%) and reducing the shame or stigma around opioid addiction (57%) are effective means for solving the opioid crisis.
If you or someone you know is struggling with addiction, you can contact the Minnesota Department of Health at 651-201-5000 or 888-345-0823 to access resources. You can also find help or additional information at the following links:

- **Farm Town Strong Website**
  farmtownstrong.org
- **Managing Unwanted Medications and Drop-Off Locations**
  pca.state.mn.us/living-green/managing-unwanted-medications
- **Minnesota Department of Health Opioid Dashboard**
  health.state.mn.us/divs/healthimprovement/opioid-dashboard
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration**
  samhsa.gov
- **Minnesota Department of Human Resources—Know the Dangers**
  knowthedangers.com
- **Overdose Risks and Background on Naloxone (NARCAN)**
  mohopeproject.org/community-members
- **Host a Prescription Drug Takeback Day**
  deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/

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