

# HOW IS ARIZONA AFFECTED BY THE Rx DRUG MISUSE AND ABUSE EPIDEMIC?



## How Severe is the Problem?

- Enough Rx pain relievers were dispensed last year to medicate every adult in Arizona **around-the-clock for 2 weeks** - 348 million pain reliever pills in Arizona.
- 6.3% of Arizona youth report current Rx drug misuse. Most report getting them from friends and their home.
- 13% of adults living in Arizona report current Rx drug misuse.

**Arizona currently ranks 12<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation for individuals 12+ years misusing and abusing Rx drugs.**

## What is it Costing Us?

**Arizona has the 12<sup>th</sup> highest drug overdose mortality rate in the United States.**

- Hospitalizations and emergency department visits for poisonings (Rx drugs are a leading cause) cost Arizona more than \$213 million in 2013.
- The average emergency department poisoning visit cost **\$4,769 – the most costly single visit.**
- In 2013, there were **9,858 cases** involving opioid abuse/dependency in Arizona Emergency Departments.
- Between 2008-2013, almost **3 out of every 1,000 babies born** in Arizona were diagnosed with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (primarily caused by maternal opiate use).
- In 2013, there were 4,073 DUI-Drug arrests in Arizona, a **99.4% increase** in the past decade.
- In the past four years, arrest rates for narcotic drug possession have increased **24%** in Arizona (2010-2013).

## What is Amplifying the Problem?

- Rx drug misuse is considered “socially acceptable.” They are also easy to get and perceived as safe.
- Only 35%** of Arizona prescribers are using the Controlled Substance Prescription Monitoring Program.
- There is a lack of education and consistent guidelines for prescribing Rx narcotics.
- Many health consumers have unrealistic pain management expectations.

## What Can We Do?

- Practice and promote proper Rx drug storage in the home.
- Support the establishment of permanent Rx disposal drop boxes in your community.
- Talk to youth, families, and community members about the dangers of Rx drug misuse and abuse.
- Advocate for all physicians, all pharmacist, and necessary law enforcement officials to sign up and use the Controlled Substance Prescription Drug Monitoring Program.
- Encourage responsible prescribing and use of Rx drugs.

