

**LIVINGSTON COUNTY
HUMAN SERVICES COLLABORATIVE BODY
Health and Human Service Needs
FACT SHEET**

**Opioids in Livingston County
August 2020**

What are opioids?

Opioids are a class of drugs used for reducing pain. Opioids can be broken down into three categories:

- **Prescription opioids** (such as OxyContin or Vicodin)
- **Heroin** (an illegal and highly addictive substance)
- **Synthetic opioids** (such as illicitly manufactured fentanyl, which is 50-100x more powerful than morphine)

This image on the right shows a comparison between a lethal amount of heroin vs. a lethal amount of fentanyl. Aside from heroin, fentanyl can be found in cocaine or counterfeit pills without the user's knowledge.

(SOURCE: NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE POLICE FORENSIC LAB, 2016)



What's going on in Michigan?

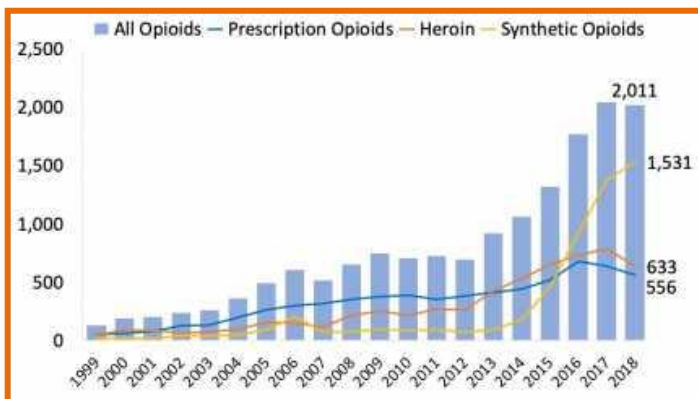
- In Michigan, about **78% of drug overdose deaths involved at least one opioid** in 2018 - a total of 2,011 deaths (a rate of 20.8).
- In 2018, Michigan providers wrote **62.7 opioid prescriptions** for every 100 persons compared to the average U.S. rate of 51.4 prescriptions.

What is the difference between "tolerance," "dependence," and "addiction"?

Opioid tolerance occurs when a person using opioids begins to experience a reduced response to medication, requiring more opioids to experience the same effect.

Opioid dependence occurs when the body adjusts its normal functioning around regular opioid use. Unpleasant physical symptoms occur when medication is stopped.

Opioid addiction (Opioid use disorder (OUD)) occurs when attempts to cut down or control use are unsuccessful or when use results in social problems and a failure to fulfill obligations at work, school, and home. Opioid addiction often comes after the person has developed opioid tolerance and dependence, making it physically challenging to stop opioid use and increasing the risk of withdrawal.

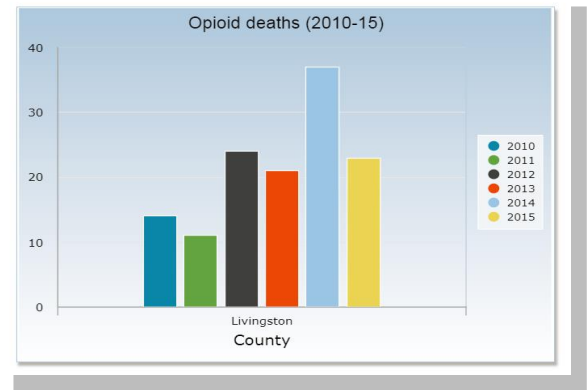


As you can see in this graph, there was a **decrease in deaths** involving prescription opioids and heroin between 2017-2018, however **deaths involving synthetic opioids continue to rise.**

(SOURCE: CDC WONDER, 2020)

Why is this issue so important to Livingston County?

- In 2015, **9,836 prescriptions** were written for opiate medications in Livingston County. This is a 35% increase from 2009.
- Death rates are hard to track. There are many factors related to identifying a death as an opioid death and matching it to our county. This is due in part to the person may overdose elsewhere or be treated elsewhere (like in Ann Arbor health systems). **In order to better track, the county recently hired an epidemiologist.**



What programs & services exist to support long-term recovery?

There are multiple pathways to recovery and what works for one individual may not work for someone else. Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD), also known as Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) is an important evidence-based treatment for individuals with an opioid use disorder. MOUD includes utilizing a medication such as methadone, buprenorphine, or naltrexone usually along with behavioral therapy. MOUD is recommended as the first line of treatment from agencies such as the American Medical Association and the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Additional forms of recovery may include individual therapy, family therapy, support groups, 12-step groups, faith-based groups, and peer support services.

Livingston County Health Services Access (CMH) – 517.546.4126

Livingston County Community Alliance - www.livingstoncountycommunityalliance.org

PAAL - www.keycenters.org/paal.html

Narcotics Anonymous - www.michigan-na.org/livingston/liv_meetings.htm

Celebrate Recovery - www.thenaz.org/ministries/celebrate-recovery

Alcoholics Anonymous - www.district8aami.org/index.html

Wake Up Livingston - www.wakeuplivingston.com

Key Development Center, Inc. - www.keycenters.org

Livingston County Catholic Charities - www.livingstoncatholiccharities.org

Stepping Stones Recovery – www.cmhliv.org

Michigan Opioid Collaborative – <https://michiganopioidcollaborative.org/>

Recovery Advocates in Livingston (RAIL) – www.recoveringallies.org

What can the community do to help?

Opioids within the community are everyone's business. The cause and solution cannot come from any one source. As a community, Livingston County must embrace its residents and work together to promote long-term recovery.

GET INVOLVED:

- Work with your township, municipality, school district, and/or local law enforcement agency to recommend policies to regulate access to prescription drugs.
- Join the Livingston County Community Alliance (LCCA). The LCCA is a broad-based, county-wide, coalition that works to establish healthy community norms regarding alcohol and other drug use through education, public policy development, and community services. www.livingstoncountycommunityalliance.org
- Participate in community presentations and actions to inform and educate, as well as address Opiates and Prescription drugs. Wake Up Livingston is a county wide initiative to address and combat opiate addiction and overdose through every sector of our community. To join us, contact www.wakeuplivingston.com
- Dispose of your unused and past date prescriptions by throwing them in the red barrels located at local police departments. For more information on the Big Red Barrel Program, go to www.livingstoncountycommunityalliance.org/bigredbarrel
- Check out other resources: www.livcpp.com www.itstopswithstudents.com