

## **THE GROWING PROBLEM OF PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE**

It has been called many things, "an epidemic"; "a public health threat"; "public enemy number one": These are all phrases that have been used recently to describe the growing problem of prescription drug abuse. According to the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, abuse of prescription painkillers now ranks second—behind marijuana—as the nation's most prevalent illegal drug problem.

An ever growing problem, statistics for prescription drug abuse are staggering:

- According to the DEA, prescription drug abuse has increased by 80 percent in the last six years, with more than 7 million Americans abusing prescription drugs every year—that's more than the number of people abusing cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens, ecstasy, and inhalants combined.
- One-fourth of all drug-related emergency department visits are associated with prescription drug abuse.
- In 2005, prescription drug abuse killed more than 8,500 Americans.
- Most prescription drug deaths are the result of mixing different kinds of painkillers or combining prescription drugs with alcohol. In fact, opioid drugs like Vicodin and OxyContin kill more people than cocaine and heroin combined.
- According to the FBI, with the exception of alcohol, opiates account for the largest portion of drug-related hospital admissions. In the 10-year period from 1996 through 2005, they averaged approximately 300,000 per year.

Highly addictive opiates like Vicodin and OxyContin can be difficult to quit because many people return to the drugs when their withdrawal symptoms become unbearable. But at Promises, opiate-dependent clients are treated with Suboxone, a medication that virtually stops withdrawal symptoms within 4-6 hours and allows clients to recover without the stress, anxiety, and pain that comes with withdrawal. Suboxone is also unique in that it makes it impossible to get high on other opiates while taking it.

In addition to Suboxone and other highly effective medications, Promises also provides comprehensive treatment that includes individual and family therapy and psychiatric consultation. At Promises, we believe this integrated approach is essential to sustained recovery. For those who suffer from chronic pain, clients are reintroduced to effective pain management methods such as exercise, physical therapy, meditation, nonaddictive medications, and biofeedback.

With staggering statistics like these, it's imperative that health care professionals and drug treatment centers work together to provide high-quality care for those seeking treatment for prescription drug abuse. At Promises, our multidisciplinary team is committed to working with you and your client toward a safe and healthy recovery. For more information on Promises Treatment Centers, please contact me. You may also contact our Admissions Department at 800-595-8779. For more information on prescription drug abuse or addictions, we invite you to visit our website at [www.Promises.com](http://www.Promises.com).

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