

Prescription Drug Overdose

CDC works 24-7 to save lives and protect Americans.

In this month's Vital Signs we're addressing the epidemic of prescription drug overdose. Prescription pain killer deaths have skyrocketed in women. In 2010, more than 6,600 women died from prescription pain killers, four times as many as died from cocaine and heroin combined. Prescription opiate overdose is a growing and under recognized risk for women in the United States.

Health care providers, policy makers, and people in our communities can work together so patients who need prescription medicines can get them safely and use them appropriately. Stopping this epidemic in women and men is everybody's business. Doctors need to be cautious about prescribing and patients about using these drugs. Together we *can* turn this epidemic around.