

Press Release
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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: Opioid Epidemic-Better or Worse?

A noteworthy article published by MarketWatch in August maintains the opioid epidemic keeps getting worse. Approximately 71,568 predicted drug overdose deaths were reported for the 12-month period to January, a jump from 67,114 predicted deaths from drugs in January 2017, according to newly released data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). There are even more suspected deaths which are still being investigated.

The predicted number of deaths from drug overdoses rose 33% in Nebraska and 24% in New Jersey over the same period. Nebraska had the largest increase, but it is also one of the states with the fewer numbers of drug overdoses: Only 152 reported deaths occurred for the 12-month period to January in that state, compared to 2,585 in North Carolina. Twelve states have seen a drop in overdose deaths year over year, most of which are in the Midwest and Rocky Mountain regions. Wyoming saw the greatest drop, at 33% for the 12-month period to January, and has one of the fewest numbers of predicted cases at 61 for the 12 months to January, down from 91 for the same period in 2017.

White Americans seem to be at the greatest risk for death by opioid, according to a study published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine last year. The rise in fatal drug overdoses is almost entirely responsible for the growth in mortality rates for white, non-Hispanic people between the ages of 22 and 56 in recent years. Mortality rates for that population rose by 21.2 deaths per 100,000 people between 1999 and 2015, the study found. If drug mortality rates had stayed at 1999 levels, mortality rates would have actually declined for men in that population considerably and risen only slightly for women.

Recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that increases in drug overdose deaths “are driven by continued sharp increases in deaths involving synthetic opioids other than methadone, such as illicitly manufactured fentanyl.” And all races have shown an increase in opioid-related deaths, the CDC found.

According to the CDC, from 2015 to 2016, opioid-involved deaths increased among men, women, people above the age of 15, whites, blacks, Hispanics, and Asian/Pacific Islanders, the largest relative rate change occurred among blacks (56.1%). Of the estimated 50,000 Americans who died of drug overdoses in 2015, some 63% involved opioids. That same year, more than 33,000 Americans died of drug overdoses involving opioids.

Some estimates put the nationwide cost at \$500 billion. The economic cost of the opioid crisis in 2015 was \$504 billion, much higher than previous estimates, according to a report from The Council of Economic Advisers (CEA). But the new analysis from CEA is higher as it goes beyond conventional methods to account for the value of lives lost, taking into account costs of hospitals, criminal justice agencies, businesses and medicare. Additionally, since the previous studies, the opioid crisis has worsened and caused more deaths. Even before the CEA’s analysis, the estimated costs of the crisis were staggering. Patients with untreated opioid use disorders tend to incur \$18,000 more in health-care costs annually than those without such a disorder.

MarketWatch operates as a financial information website that provides business news, analysis, and stock market data. It is a subsidiary of Dow Jones & Company, a property of News Corp, which also owns The Wall Street Journal. To read this article please visit <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/how-much-the-opioid-epidemic-costs-the-us-2017-10-27>.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is a federal agency that conducts and supports health promotion, prevention and preparedness activities in the United States, with the goal of improving overall public health. For more information please visit www.cdc.gov.

The American Journal of Preventive Medicine is a monthly peer-reviewed medical journal covering research in preventive medicine and public health. For more information please visit www.ajpmonline.org.

The Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) is a United States agency within the Executive Office of the President established in 1946, which advises the President of the United States on economic policy. The CEA provides much of the empirical research for the White House and prepares the annual Economic Report of the President. www.whitehouse.gov/cea/.

SAFE, Inc. is the only alcohol and substance abuse prevention, intervention and education agency in the City of Glen Cove. Its Coalition is conducting an opioid prevention awareness campaign entitled, "Keeping Glen Cove SAFE," in order to educate and update the community regarding opioid use and its consequences. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website to learn more about the Opioid Epidemic at www.safeglencove.org.