

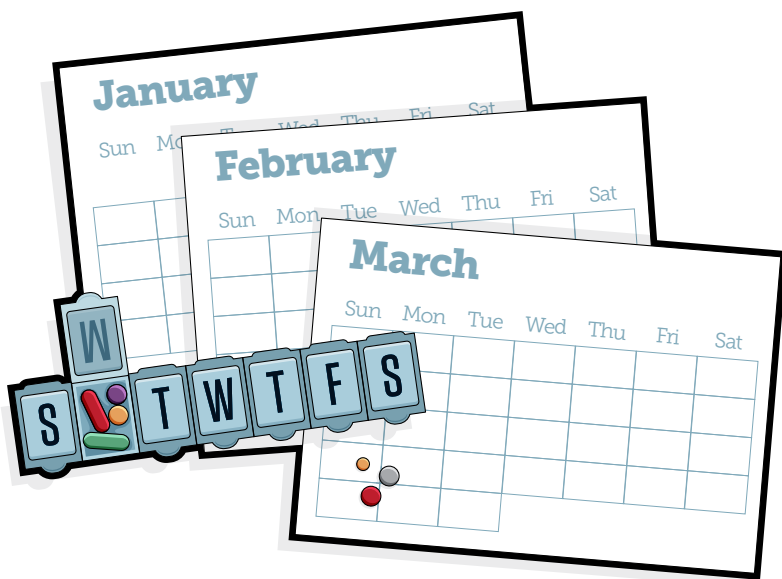


Risks of Opioid Use in the Elderly and Medicare Populations

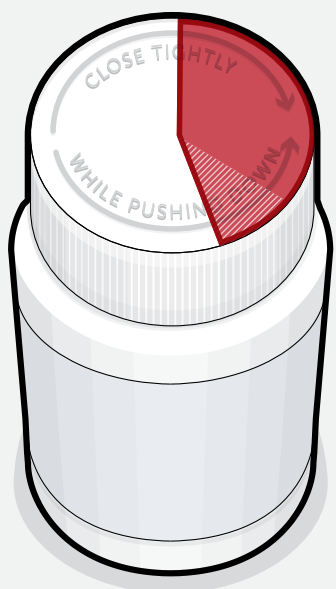
Nearly **9 million** Medicare Part D beneficiaries—28% of this population—received opioids for pain that was not associated with cancer treatment or hospice care in 2011.¹



More than **1.7 million** of these patients received a dose that put them at increased risk for overdose.²



Nearly **225,000** of these beneficiaries received these high doses for 90 or more consecutive days. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services determined that patients taking such regimens are at greater risk for adverse effects and are highly likely to be using these drugs inappropriately.³

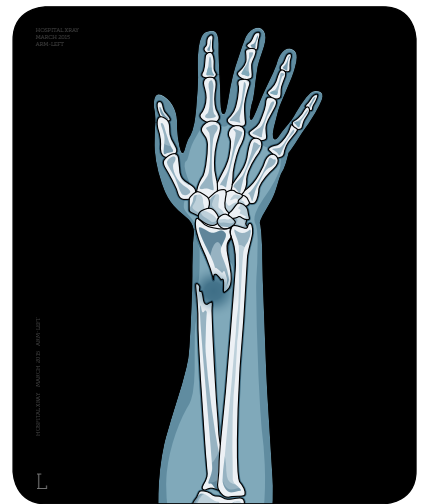


44% of disabled* Medicare beneficiaries used opioids in 2011.

23% of these individuals were chronic users.¹⁴

* These estimates are based on a study population that included patients under 65 years of age who were eligible for Medicare based on a disability. Patients with end-stage renal disease were excluded.

† Chronic use was defined as six or more prescriptions per year.



Seniors taking prescription opioids are approximately **4 to 5 times more likely** to suffer a fall or fracture than those taking non-opioid pain relievers, such as ibuprofen.⁵

Endnotes

- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, "Supplemental Guidance Related to Improving Drug Utilization Controls," correspondence from Cynthia G. Tudor, director, Medicare Drug Benefit and C&D Data Group, Sept. 6, 2012, <http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Prescription-Drug-Coverage/PrescriptionDrugCovContra/Downloads/HPMSSupplementalGuidanceRelated-toImprovingDURcontrols.pdf>.
- Ibid.
- Ibid.
- Nancy Morden et al., "Prescription Opioid Use Among Disabled Medicare Beneficiaries: Intensity, Trends, and Regional Variation," *Med Care* 52, no. 9 (2014): 852-9, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25119955>.
- Lydia Rolita et al., "Greater Number of Narcotic Analgesic Prescriptions for Osteoarthritis Is Associated With Falls and Fractures in Elderly Adults," *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 61, no. 3 (2013): 335-40, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3719174>; and Matthew Miller et al., "Opioid Analgesics and the Risk of Fractures Among Older Adults With Arthritis," *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 59, no. 3 (2011): 430-8, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3371661/pdf/nihms374994.pdf>.

For further information, please visit:

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