

The Myths and Realities of the Opioid Epidemic

AMERSA

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Richard C. Dart, MD, PhD
Director, Rocky Mountain Poison and Drug Center
Professor, University of Colorado School of Medicine

Competing Interest Statement

History

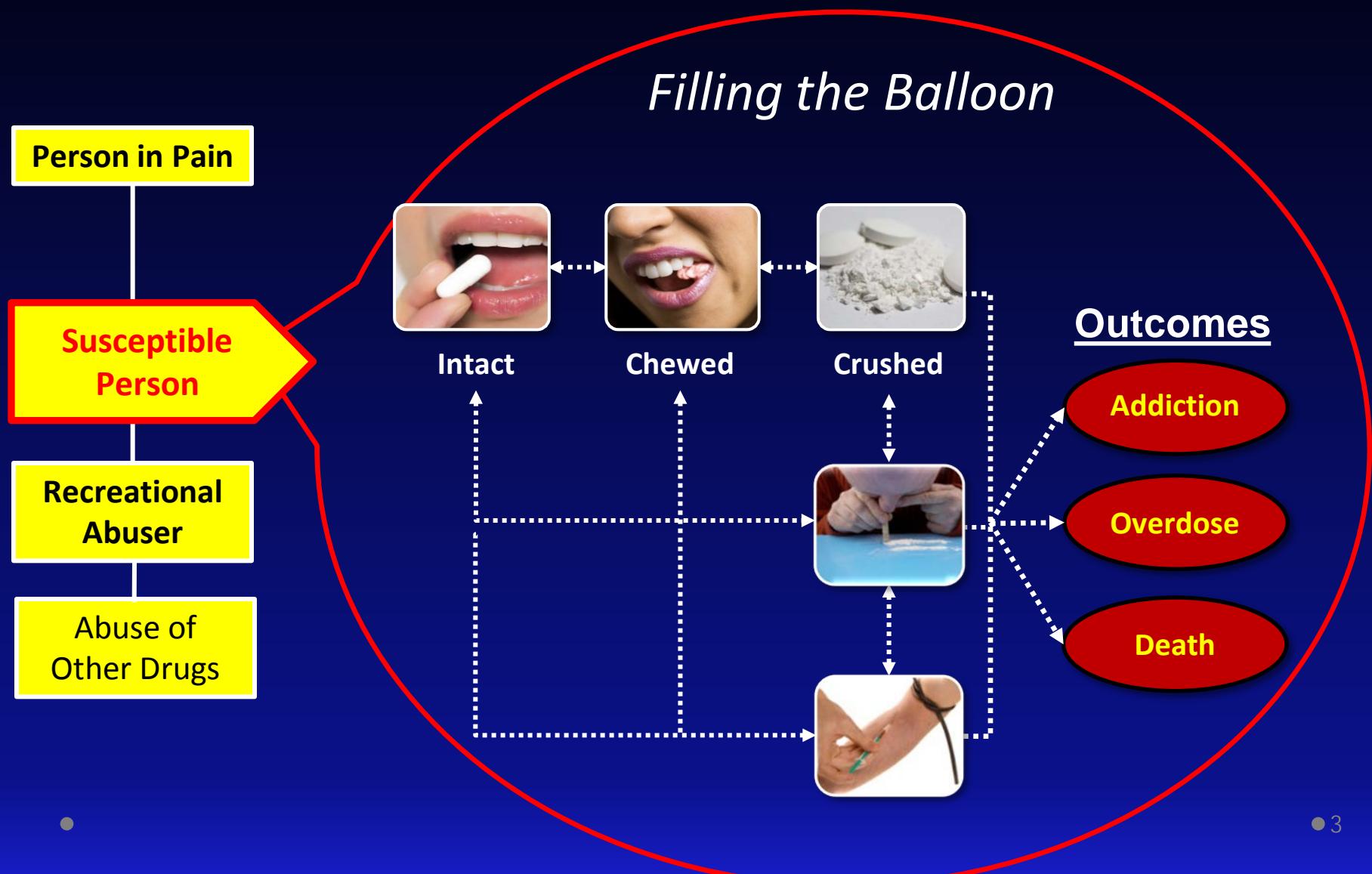
- 2002, launched by Purdue Pharma L.P.
- 2006, independent ownership by Denver Health and Hospital Authority
 - Denver Public Hospital for 150 years
 - State sanctioned independent authority



Conflict of Interest Statement

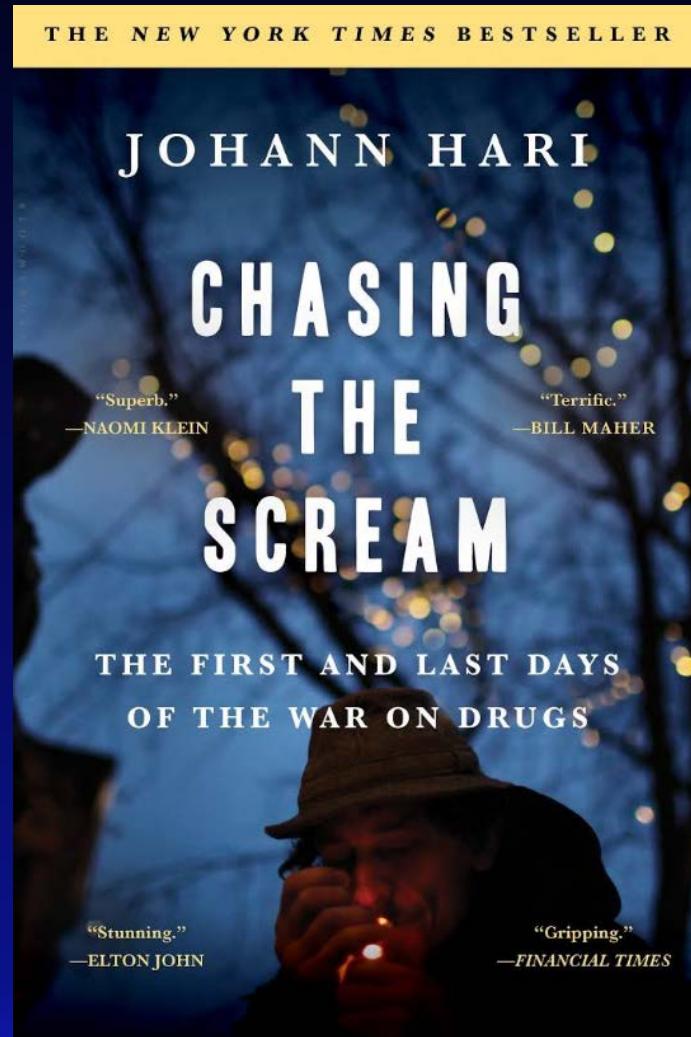
- Many manufacturers of prescription opioids or stimulants as well as federal agencies subscribe to RADARS System.
- RADARS System is the property of Denver Health and Hospital Authority, a political subdivision of the State of Colorado.
- Subscribers receive information, but do not participate in developing the System, data collection, or analysis of the data. They do not have access to the raw data.
- Employees are prohibited from personal financial relationships with any company.

What is the Problem We Need to Solve?



Opioid Addiction is a Random Event

- X% of people receiving an opioid analgesic will develop
 - Abuse
 - Abuse behaviors
 - Addiction



Prescription opioid abuse is at record highs and increasing



Health » Diet + Fitness | Living Well | Parenting + Family

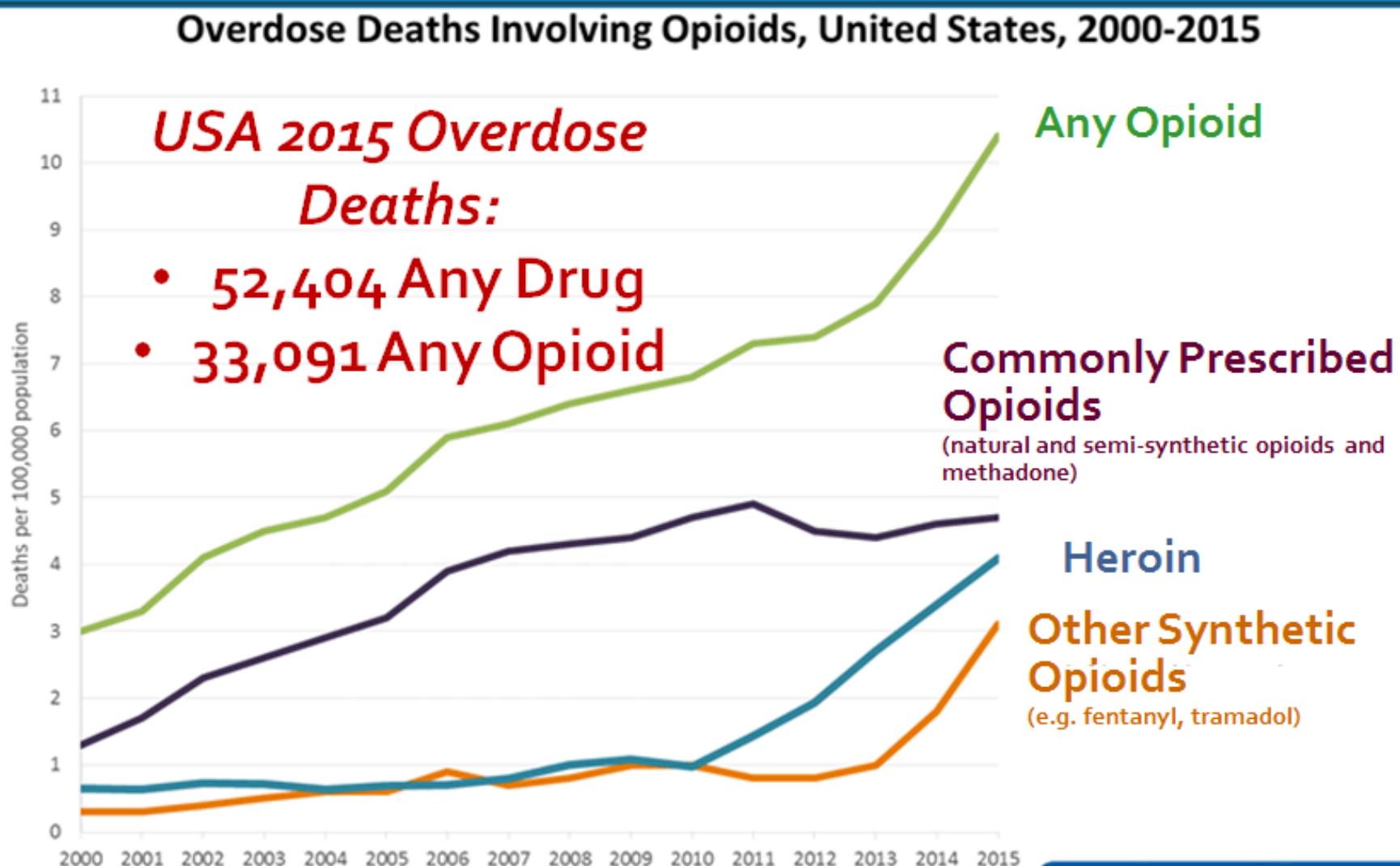
Live TV •

Opioid addiction rates continue to skyrocket

By Nadia Kounang

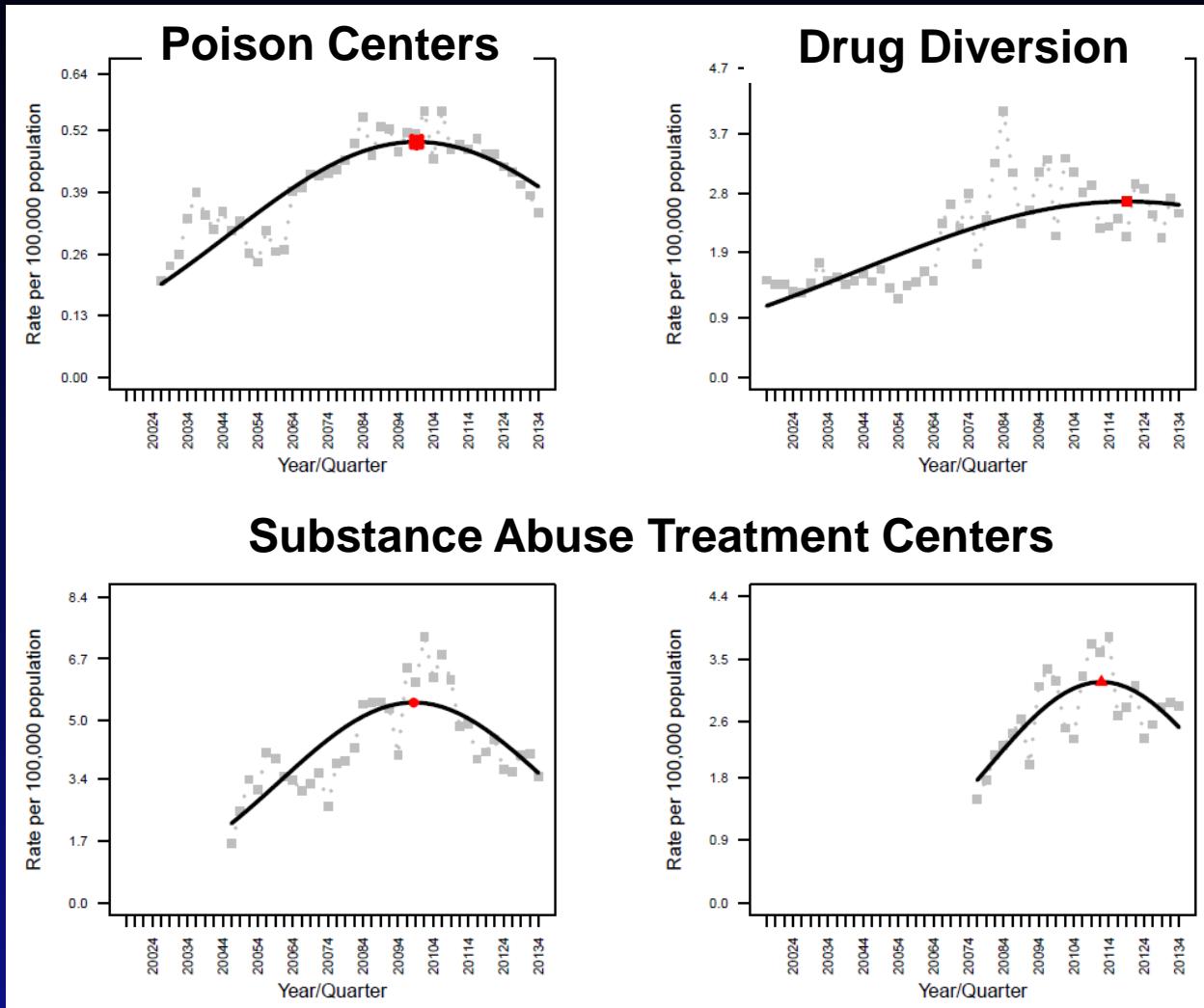
Updated 10:35 PM ET, Thu June 29, 2017

Marked Increases in Prescription Opioid and Heroin Overdose Deaths in the USA 2000 to 2015



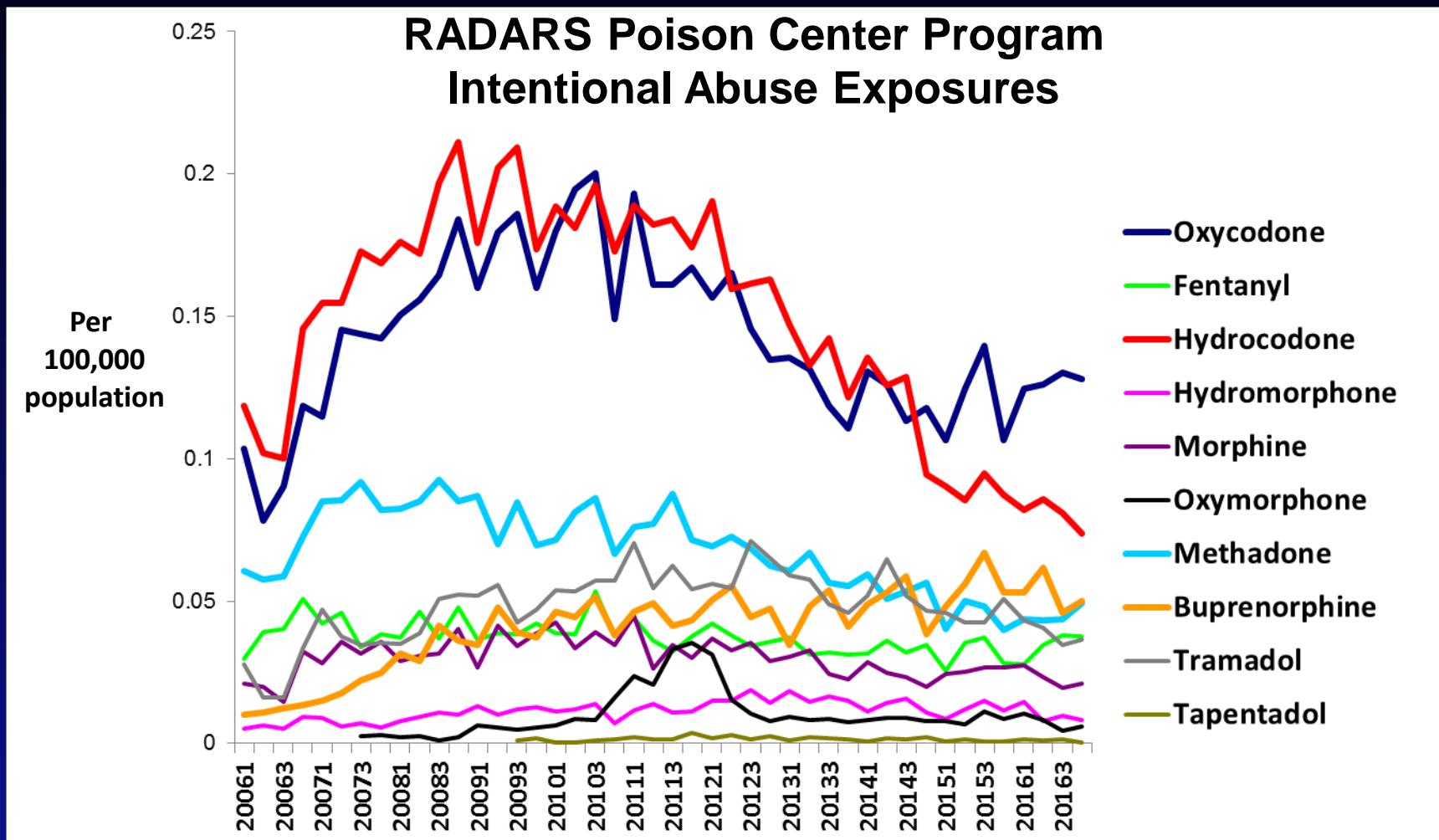
SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality. CDC WONDER, Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC; 2016. <https://wonder.cdc.gov/>.

Prescription Opioid Abuse Decreasing in US

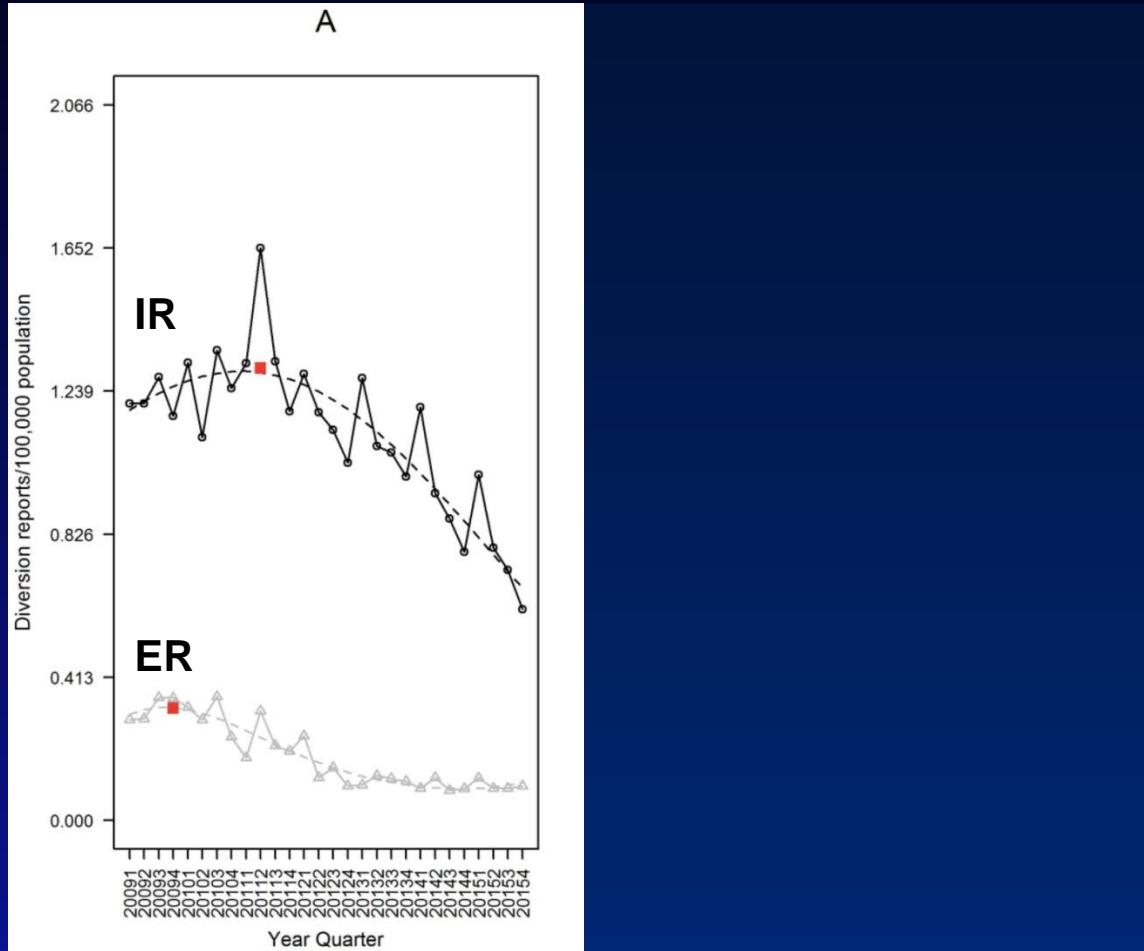


Trends in Opioid Analgesic Abuse and Mortality in the United States.
N Engl J Med 2015;372:241-8

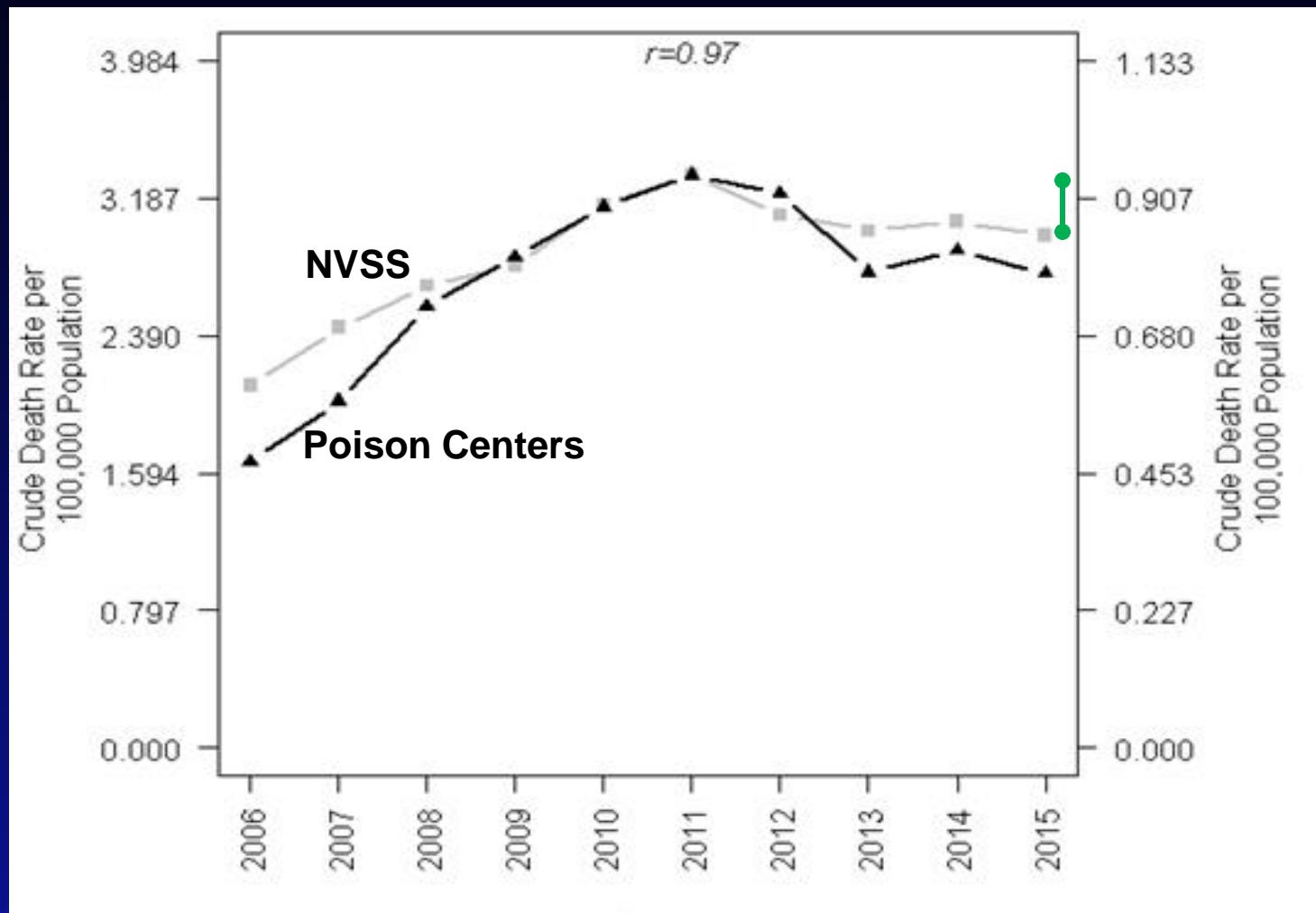
Rx Opioid Abuse by API



RADARS Opioid Treatment Program Abuse of IR More Common and ER

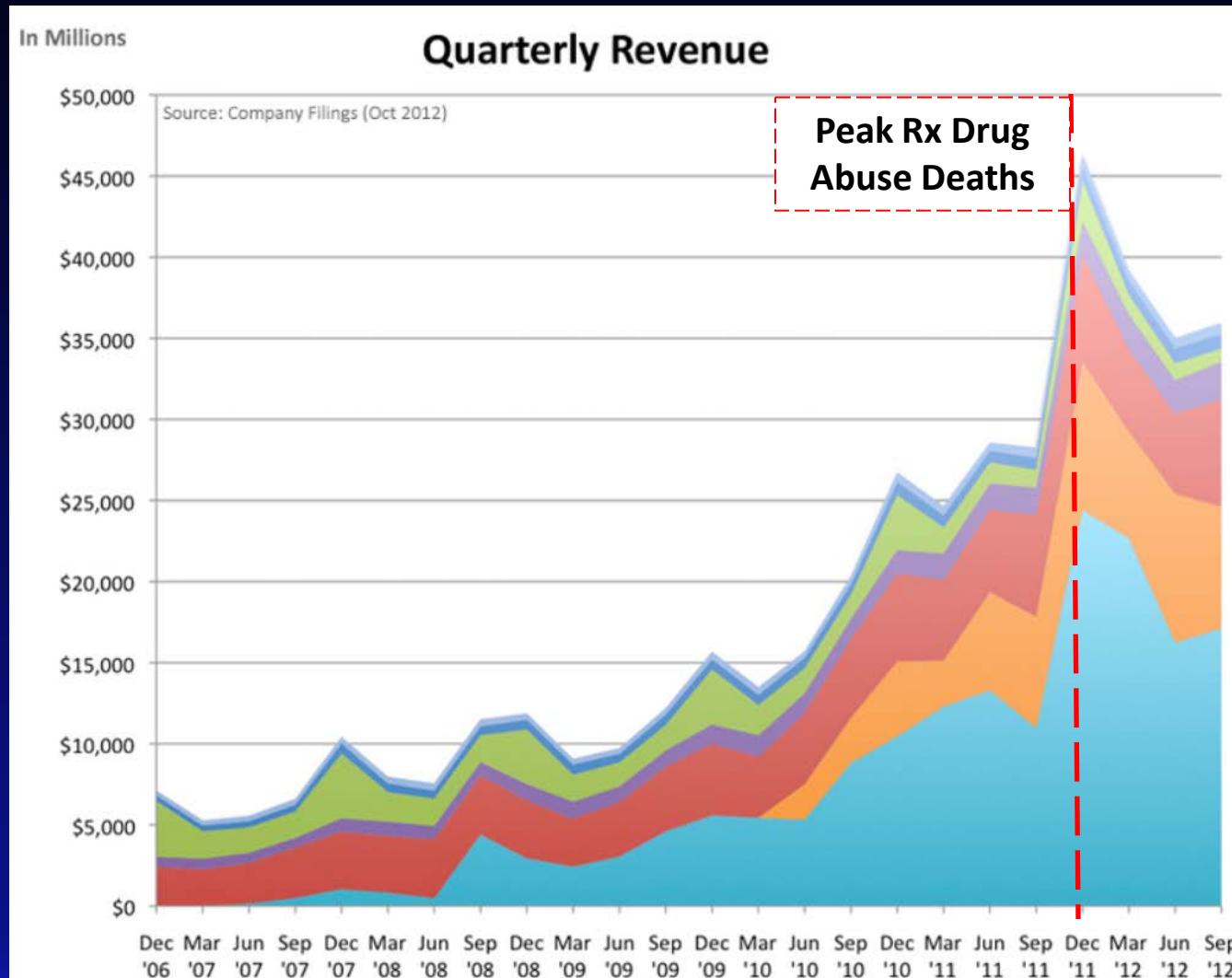


Deaths in CDC (NVSS) Decreasing (excl heroin & illicit fentanyl)



*Prescription Opioids are the Cause of
the Opioid Epidemic*

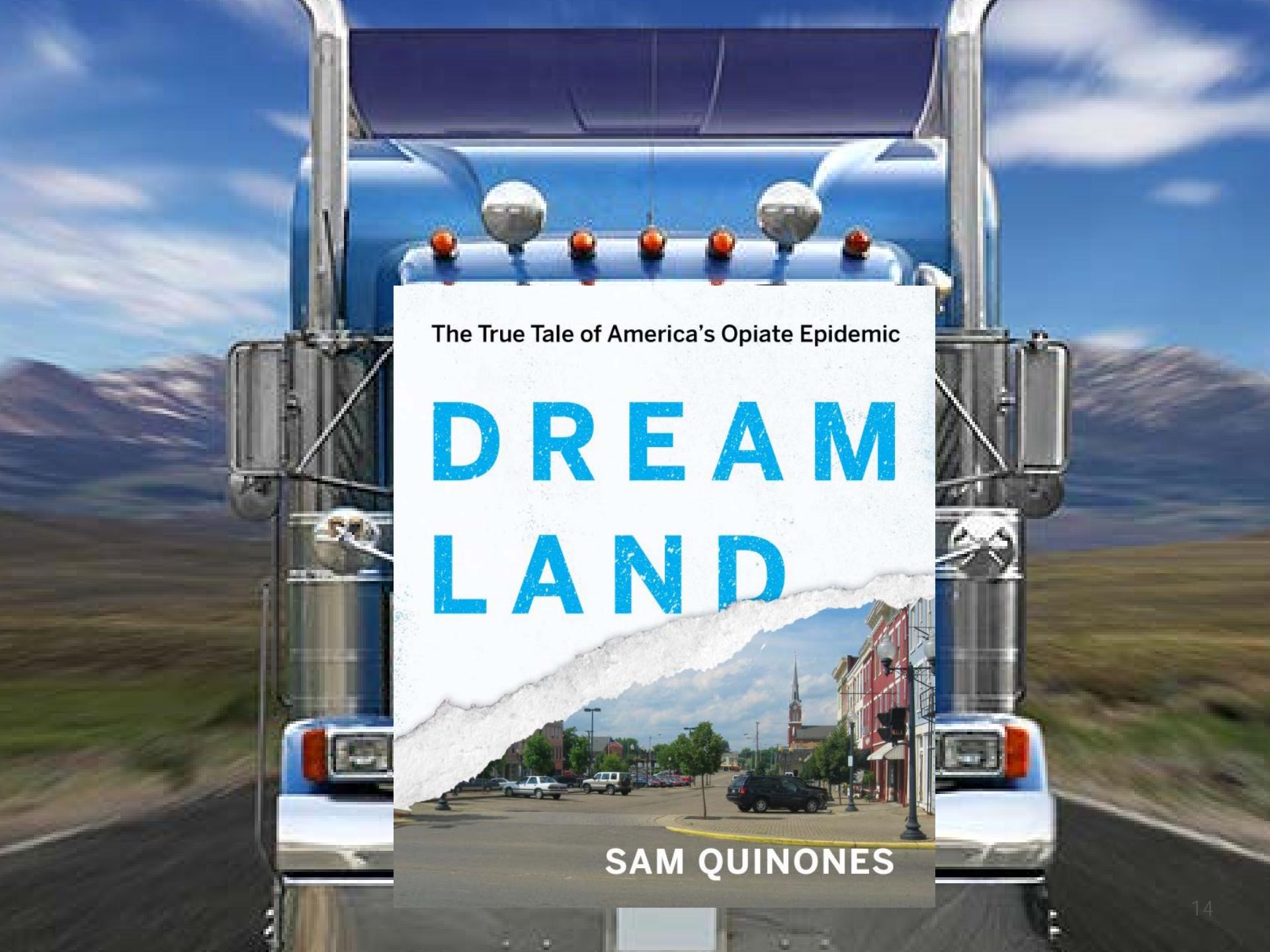
The problem is Apple!



Problems with a Reactionary Agenda



- “OxyContin is the Problem”
- “Drug manufacturers are the problem”
- “Addicts / Drug dealers are the problem”
- **The core problem is human frailty and susceptibility to opioids (or perhaps to mind altering substances in general?)**
- When we are looking back at the past...

The background of the book cover is a photograph of a semi-truck cab driving on a road. The truck is white with a blue stripe and has a chrome hood ornament. The road curves through a landscape with green fields and brown hills under a blue sky with white clouds.

The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic

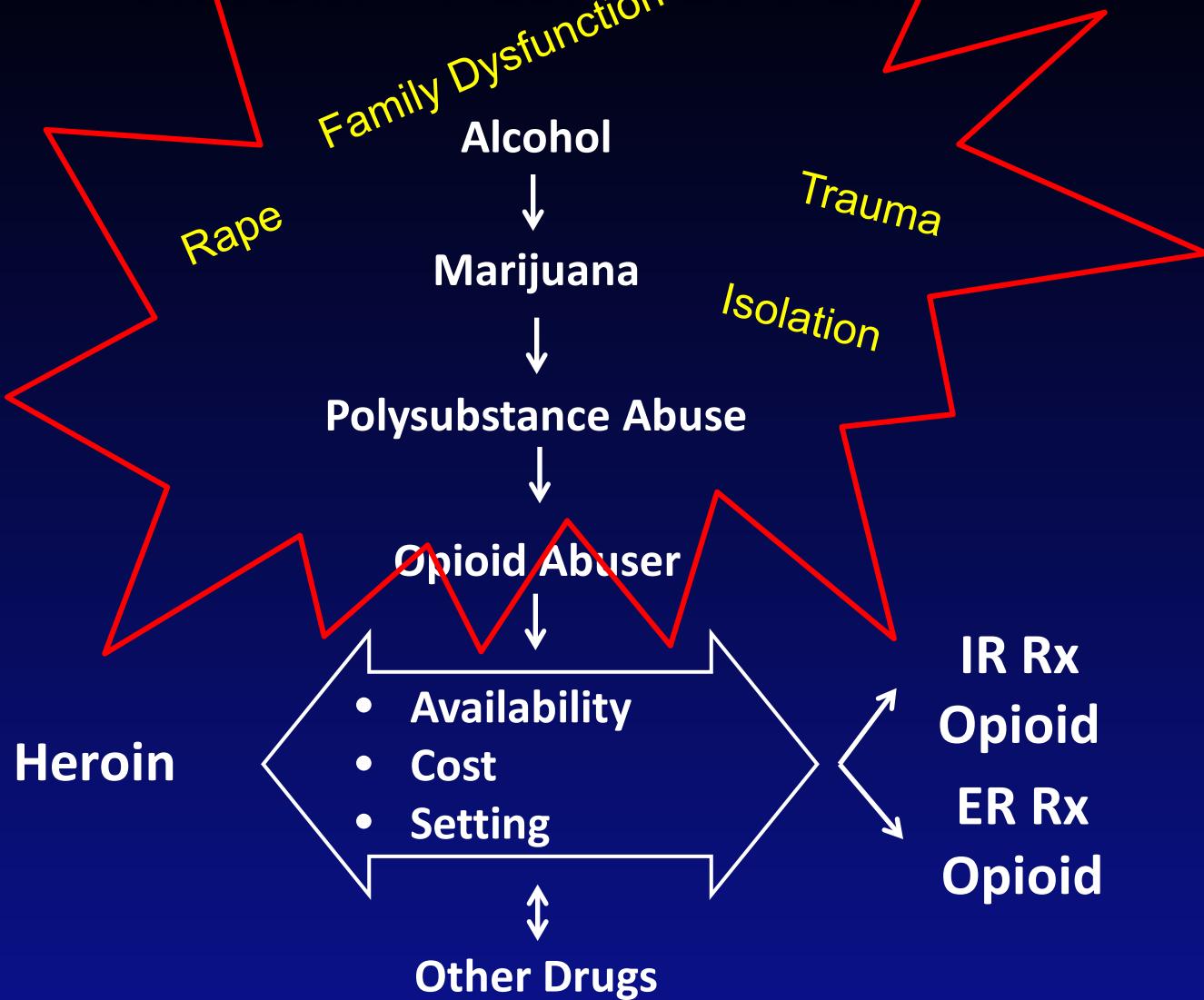
DREAM LAND

A photograph of a small town street. In the foreground, there's a paved road with a yellow curb. In the middle ground, there's a parking lot with several cars. On the right side, there are buildings, including a prominent red brick church with a tall steeple. The sky is clear and blue.

SAM QUINONES

*Prescription Opioids are One Cause of
the Opioid Epidemic*

~~Heroin - Push? Or Pull?~~





News Science

Medical Cannabis Use Leads To Decrease In Opioid Abuse

The opioid crisis is hitting large cities and small towns indiscriminately and included in this is prescription drugs

By Alexandra Hicks - August 21, 2017 313 1

U.S.

CAN LEGAL MARIJUANA SOLVE THE OPIOID CRISIS? MEDICAL POT STATES SEE DECREASE IN PAINKILLER ABUSE

Medical Cannabis Laws and Opioid Analgesic Overdose Mortality in the United States

- **OBJECTIVE**

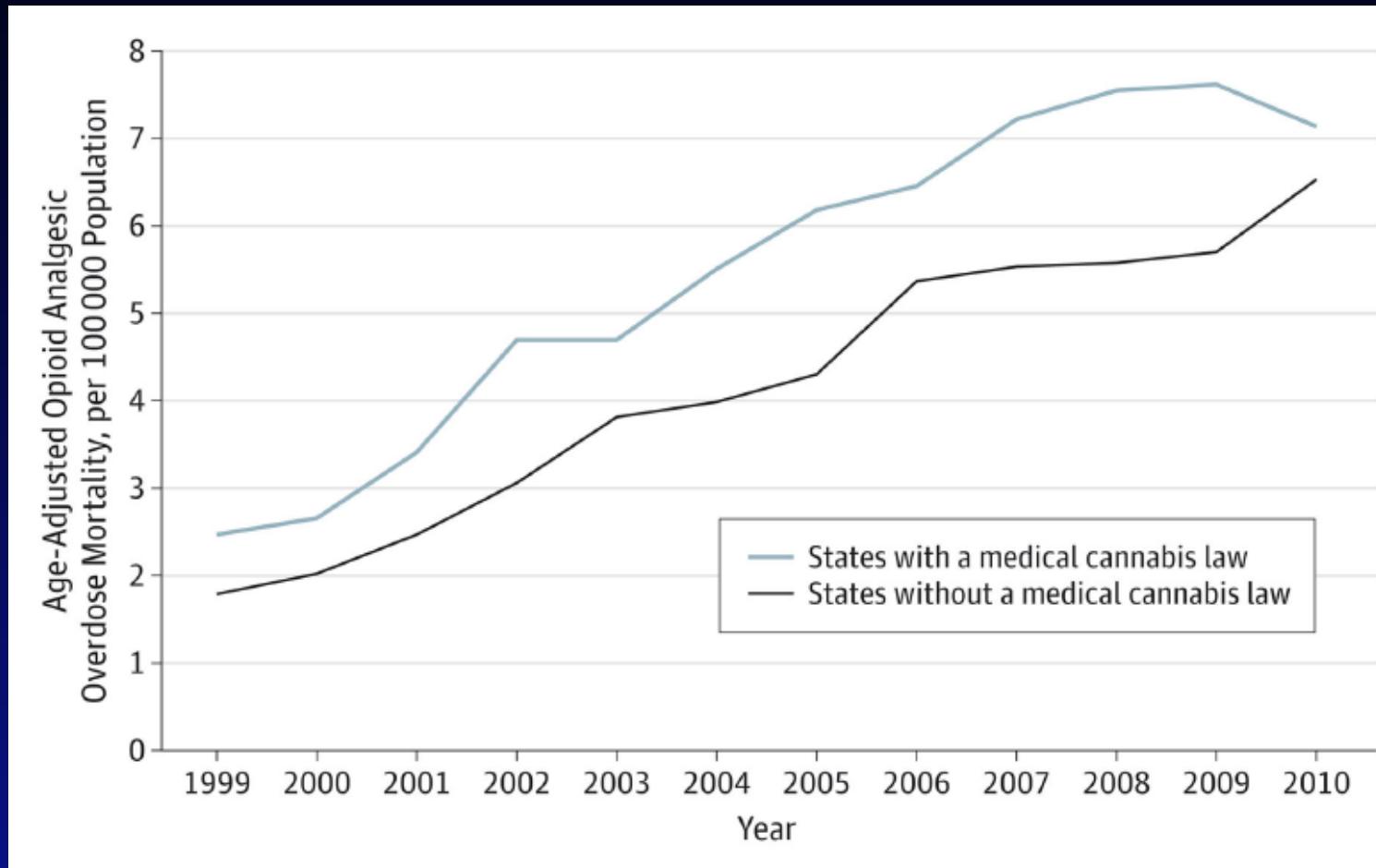
State medical cannabis laws related to opioid analgesic overdose mortality?

- **DESIGN, SETTING, AND PARTICIPANTS**

Time-series analysis of medical cannabis laws and state-level death certificate data in the United States from 1999 to 2010; all 50 states were included.

- Bachhuber MA, et al. *JAMA Intern Med.* 2014; 174(10): 1668–1673

Deaths from Opioid Analgesic



Bachhuber MA, et al. *JAMA Intern Med.* 2014; 174(10): 1668–1673

National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC)

- Methods
 - Associations between cannabis use at wave 1 (2001–2002) and nonmedical prescription opioid use and prescription opioid use disorder at wave 2 (2004–2005) of NESARC.
 - Cannabis and prescription opioid use by structured interview.
 - Other covariates included age, sex, race/ethnicity, anxiety or mood disorders, family history of drug, alcohol, and behavioral problems, and nonmedical opioid use.

<https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.2017.17040413>

NESARC: Cannabis Use Associated with Increased Opioid Use

- Cannabis use at wave 1 associated with
 - Increased incident nonmedical prescription opioid use (odds ratio=5.78, 95% CI=4.23–7.90)
 - Increased opioid use disorder (odds ratio=7.76, 95% CI=4.95–12.16) at wave 2
- Associations remained significant after adjustment for background characteristics.
- Among adults with pain at wave 1, cannabis use was also associated
 - Increased incident nonmedical opioid use (adjusted odds ratio=2.99, 95% CI=1.63–5.47) at wave 2

Conclusions

- Abuse and death of analgesic opioids are decreasing
 - Heroin and illicit fentanyl deaths are increasing more
- Dramatic changes in heroin distribution has rapidly changing the opioid abuse environment
 - Just call 1-800-Givememyfix
- Cannabis may or may not affect opioid use
 - Studies to date are intriguing, but more robust analytic designs are needed

Questions?

Richard.Dart@rmpdc.org

