



CONFRONTING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

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e-book: Introducing OptumRx® Opioid Risk Management



OPIOID ABUSE IS A CRISIS IN THE U.S.

OptumRx Opioid Risk Management attacks this complex, deeply embedded problem with a comprehensive approach featuring five interrelated strategies. This e-book is your entryway to our program, and contains a wealth of recent content produced by OptumRx. Our goal is to help define the opioid abuse problem, and detail the five OptumRx strategies designed to help manage the risks associated with this nationwide epidemic.

Let's continue the discussion. We'll be happy to explain more about how **OptumRx Opioid Risk Management** aims to deliver the right care, at the right time, to the right members.

[Please let us know how we can help.](#)



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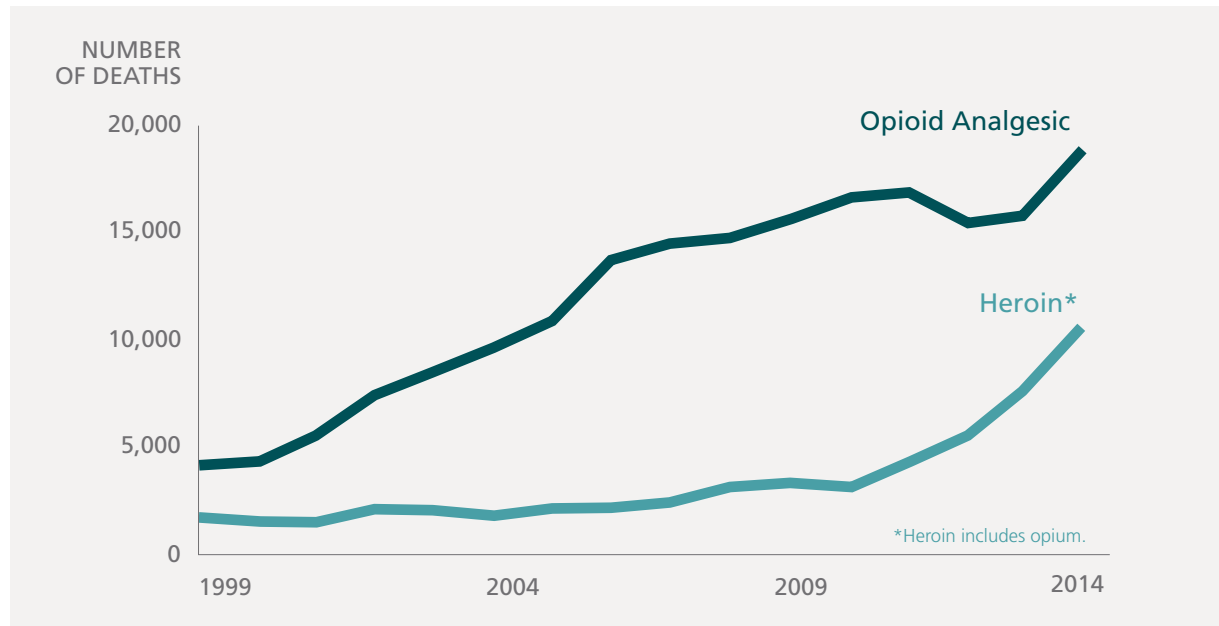
ORIGINS OF THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

The late 1990's and early 2000's saw a more aggressive approach to pain management combined with huge pharmaceutical company marketing efforts for prescription opioids. This led to steeply increased opioid utilization and to a subsequent epidemic of addiction and overdose that persists to this day.

Millions of Americans live with acute or chronic pain. Many of them rely on prescription drugs to improve their ability to function and maintain their quality of life. While all prescription drugs have some risk of misuse, prescription opioids like oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, morphine, fentanyl have high abuse potential when taken in excess or in combination with other drugs.

This is the story of how opioids — legal, FDA-approved drugs — have become the leading cause of accidental death in the U.S.

U.S. deaths from opioids and heroin: 1999–2014¹



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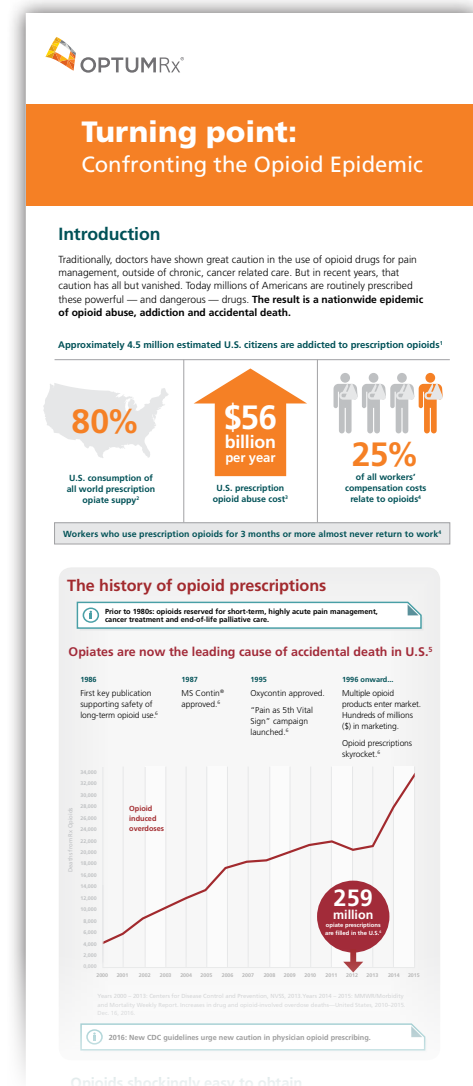
OPIOID INFOGRAPHIC: CONFRONTING THE EPIDEMIC

The opioid epidemic is not only growing, it's getting worse:

Traditionally, doctors have shown great caution in the use of opioid drugs for pain management, outside of chronic, cancer-related care. But this conservative treatment philosophy underwent a sudden change beginning in the 1990's. Today, millions of Americans are routinely prescribed these powerful — and dangerous — drugs.

The U.S. is awash with prescription opioids, with hundreds of millions of doses prescribed every year. That means millions of leftover drug doses potentially available for sale, theft or misuse. The result is a nationwide epidemic of opioid abuse, addiction and accidental death.

As the costs, in both human and financial terms, continue to soar, the question is, what can we do? See how OptumRx Opioid Risk Management is helping slow the trend.

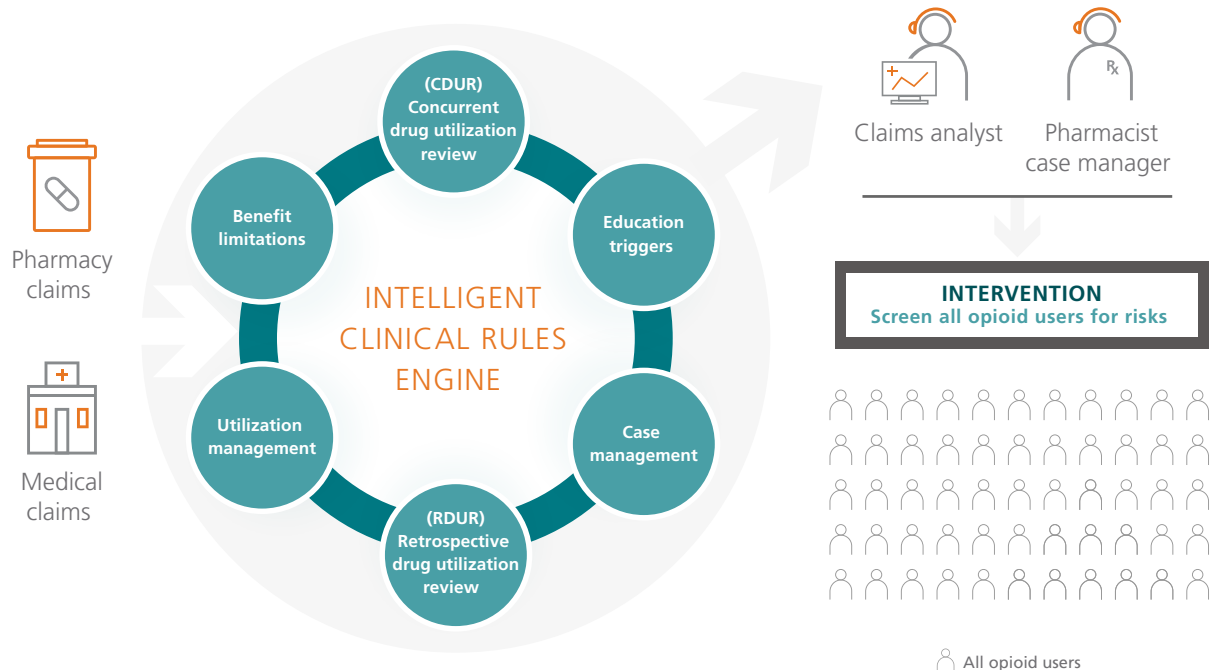


5 DEFLECTING THE CURVE (STRATEGIES 1 AND 2)

Drug overdose deaths are growing exponentially in the U.S. Analysts forecast around 300,000 new drug overdose deaths in the next few years if that trend is not deflected. Fortunately, we can take action today to deflect the curve and prevent needless addiction and death.

OptumRx Opioid Risk Management addresses the opioid epidemic through tightly linked, multi-dimensional efforts that include clinical programs, multiple outreach channels, and multiple member touch points. All of these are needed if we intend to prevent misuse, abuse, dependence, and illegal medication sharing before they start, while providing support and treatment for those in need.

Prevention, education and minimizing early exposure



OptumRx is driving opioid safety and prevention through engagement, smart prescribing and ongoing monitoring. Our intelligent engine system uses surveillance and analytics to identify at-risk populations quickly for interventions.

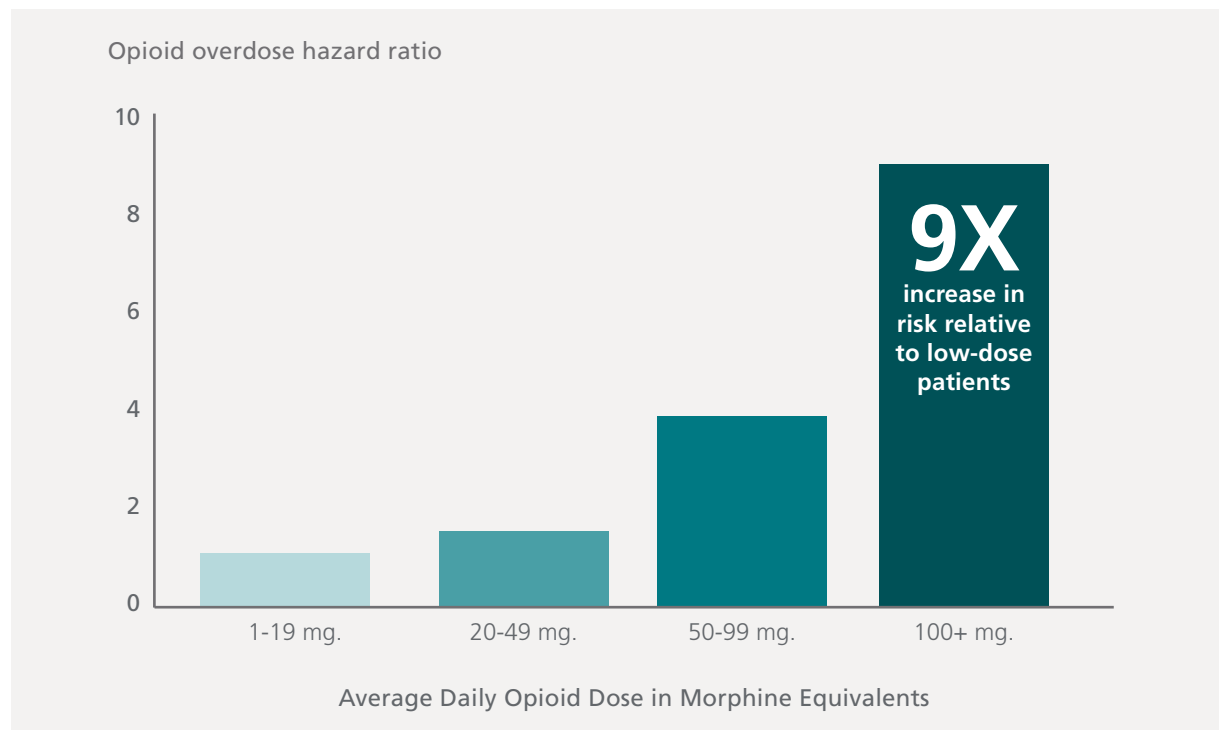
In strategies 1 & 2 we screen the entire opioid-using population to identify opportunities to reduce the risk of opioid misuse.

6 THE PROBLEM OF PAIN (STRATEGY 3)

While it is true that opioids are overprescribed, the reality is that multiple social and human needs are at stake that will require careful balancing. Millions of Americans live with acute or chronic pain, which is one of the most frequent reasons for physician visits. Many people rely on prescription drugs — including prescription opioids — to improve their ability to function and maintain their quality of life.

The problem of pain shows why there are no simple solutions to opioid abuse. How do we adequately treat pain without contributing to the problem?

Higher opioids dosing is deadly²

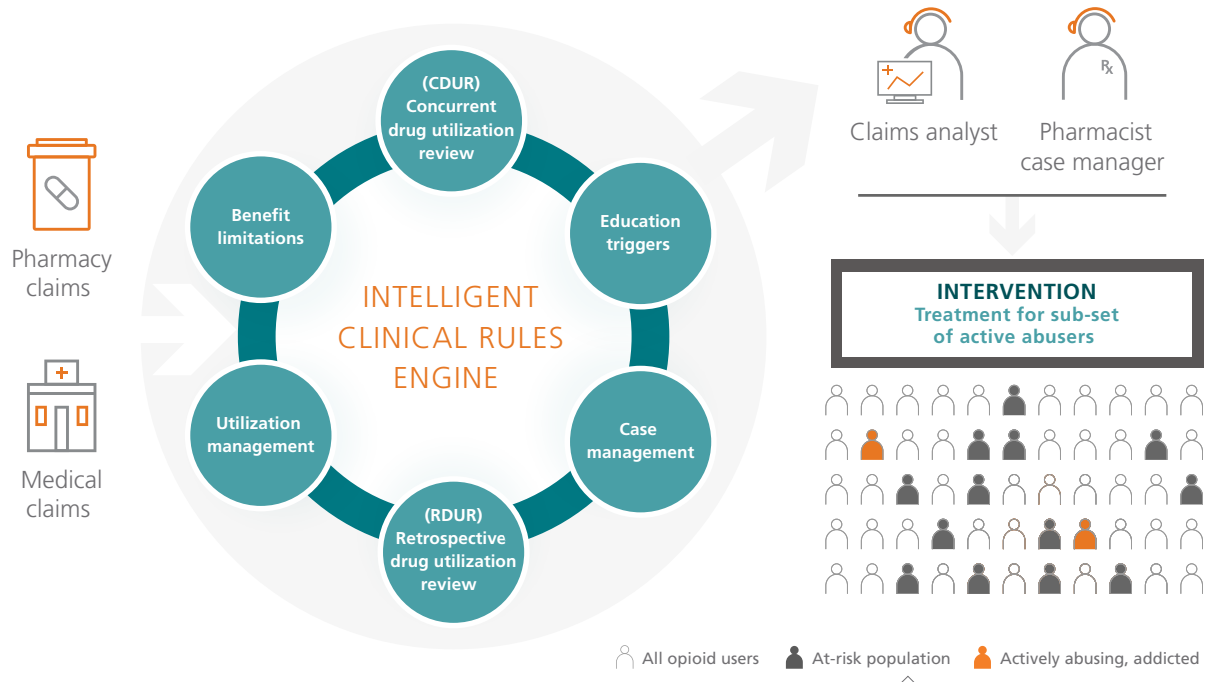


7 MANAGING COSTS BY MANAGING RISK (STRATEGIES 4 AND 5)

OptumRx Opioid Risk Management has specific strategies aimed at limiting the risks — and costs — posed by improper opioid use. These strategies include extensive education and advanced analytics to confront opioid misuse before it occurs, while also supporting the chronic opioid user and those with documented opioid use disorder. Ultimately, our goal is to improve health outcomes and reduce overall health care costs for all of our clients.

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Treating at-risk and high-risk populations



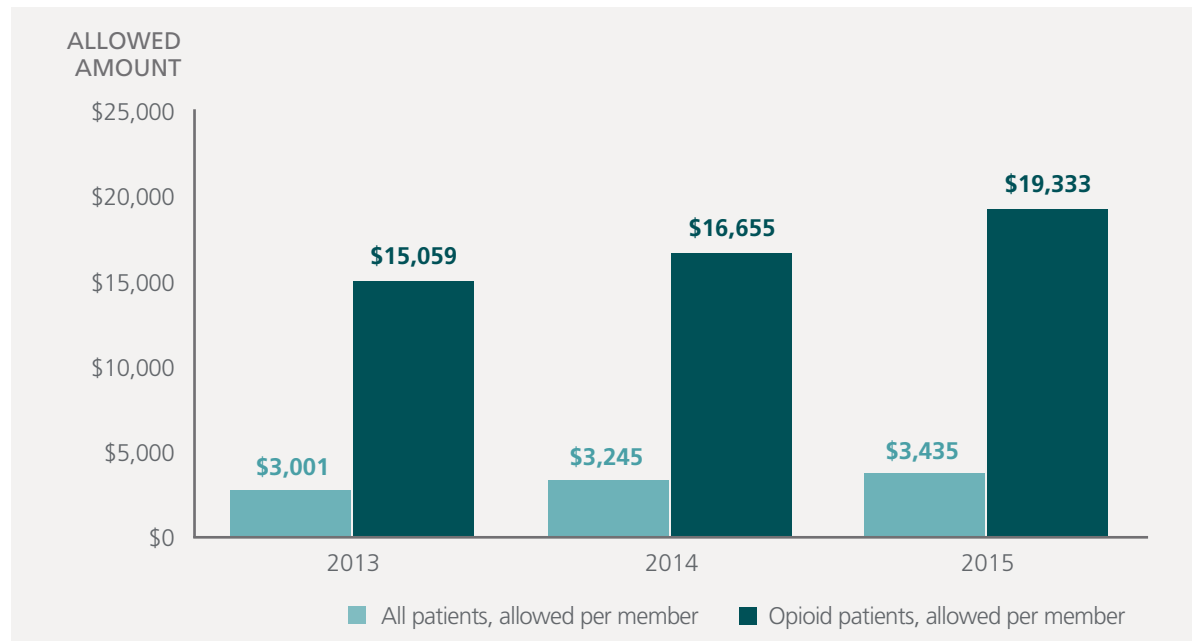
In strategies 4&5 surveillance continues for all users; interventions occur within the sub-set of potential/active abusers.

8 COUNTING THE COST OF OPIOID ABUSE

The increased opioids spending may only just be getting underway. There are more than 10 million people in the U.S. who are receiving daily, long-term treatment with opioid drugs. Treatment experts estimate that the total number of Americans suffering from opioid addiction may exceed 5 million people. Treating just these 5 million currently addicted persons would cost around \$100 billion dollars.

Costs associated with opioid abuse have increased dramatically in recent years. In just five years, the claims charged to insurance companies to treat opioid dependence or abuse grew from \$72 million to \$722 million — an increase of almost 1,000 percent.

Average allowed claims for all patients vs. patients with opioid abuse or dependence diagnosis (private insurance)³



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PROGRAM OUTCOMES: STATISTICS

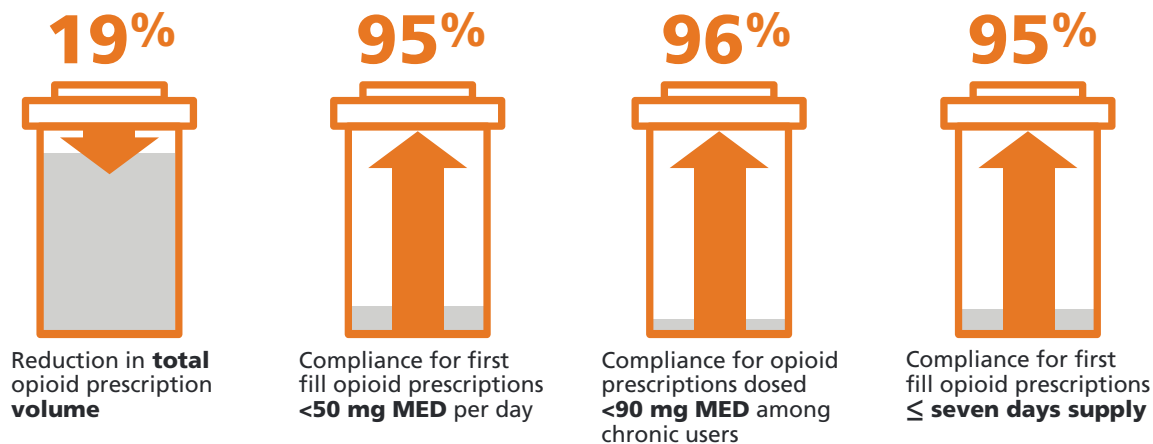
OptumRx is taking action in collaboration with people we serve across the health system. By leveraging our clinical, analytics and administrative services, and our deep connections to those who can affect change – patients, prescribers and pharmacists – OptumRx is uniquely positioned to help address the opioid epidemic. We are now prepared to share some promising early results:

“While these are early results, we expect these improvements to continue as the program gains momentum and we implement with more clients. Extrapolated over a longer period, this program has the opportunity to have a positive impact on curbing the nation’s opioid epidemic and promoting patient safety.”

Sumit Dutta,
Chief medical officer, OptumRx

The numbers are impressive

Compliance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines¹:



See how we can help

OptumRx is a full-service pharmacy care services company serving more than 65 million members with innovative prescription drug benefits services. Our [resource library](#) is full of great ideas and examples of how we are helping clients achieve better health outcomes and lower overall costs.

OptumRx is part of Optum®, a leading information and technology-enabled health services business dedicated to making the health system work better for everyone.

Statement regarding financial influence

This article is directed solely to its intended audience about important developments affecting the pharmacy benefits business. It is not intended to promote the use of any drug mentioned in the article and neither the author nor OptumRx has accepted any form of compensation for the preparation or distribution of this article.



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