

## **The Burden of Opioids in South Carolina**

### **Issue**

Opioid drugs are now the top prescribed medication in the United States. The state of South Carolina had more opioids prescribed than the national average. As a result, the number of overdose-related deaths are increasing. In 2016, South Carolina had a total of 616 opioid-related deaths in the state. This accounted for 70.3% of all drug-overdose deaths in South Carolina. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, opioids can also impact the fetus if taken during pregnancy and the likelihood of spreading Hepatitis C and HIV are increased. In addition, the state of South Carolina lacks an official comprehensive document that examines opioid misuse and abuse in the state.

### **Intervention**

In 2017/2018, Ayanna Woodberry, MPH student worked with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) to contribute to a document that examined the misuse and abuse of opioids in the state. The following data collection and evaluation tools were utilized to compose the document:

- 2016 South Carolina Reporting & Identification Prescription Tracking System (SCRIPTS)
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS) records
- Hospitalization records
- Emergency Department (ED) records
- Vital records

### **Impact**

The work of Ayanna Woodberry will be used to contribute to a future publication regarding the burden of opioids in South Carolina. As a result of the practicum project, the following objectives were addressed:

- Opioid-related overdose rates
- Opioid-related death rates
- At risk groups based on age, gender, race, and county of residence
- Associated risks of opioid addiction
- South Carolina comparison of opioid addiction to the United States
- Intervention strategies

Findings assisted in the process of addressing the epidemic and improvement of the overall quality of life for all South Carolinians.

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