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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