

## THE HISTORY OF THE

## OPIOID ADDICTION EPIDEMIC

## IN THE UNITED STATES

**Opioids are considered as the most effective for pain relief.**

Throughout history, their use for managing varying levels of severe and chronic pain has made opioids the standard choice of pain care in the modern world. As such, this also causes worry related to the drug's effect, safety, and misuse accountability. This debate has evolved over decades, sometimes inciting a restrictive perspective and other times leading to a more complacent perspective to endorse the use of opioids for pain treatment. In the more recent years, in the United States, views on these drug's appropriate role in the treatment of pain have shifted repeatedly as a response to the observations from the legal and regulatory communities.

1850

**Opium**

reaches the shores of the United States.

1860s

Opioids **commonly used** during the Civil War to treat soldiers.

1881

Bayer expands their horizons by selling heroin over-the-counter for pain relief and cough suppression. Within a year, tolerance to the drug was developing.

Late 1800s

**Surge in opioid dependency and addiction** due to the widespread marketing and prescription of many ailments from diarrhea to toothache.

Early 1900s

Americans were using opioids for pleasure by crushing and inhaling them.

1914

**Harrison Narcotics Act**

is passed making opioids available by prescription only to limit recreational use.

1920s-1950s

Opioids are prescribed for acute pain, for postoperative pain on a short-term scale and for the care of the dying.

Mid-1900s

**As public knowledge on the dangers of opioid addiction grew**, many in pain avoided opiates due to fear of "losing their minds," while doctors resorted to non-pharmaceutical methods to relieve chronic pain.

1970s

**The American Pain Society** advocates for nonaddictive pain relief for cancer-related pain.

1976-1983

**Percocet & Vicodin**

are approved by the FDA. The one thing these drugs had in common: short-term pain relief lasting between four to six hours.

1990s

**The United States sees it's first wave of the opioid epidemic in 1991.** The World Health Organization creates protocols and procedures for treating cancer pain, endorsing opioid use as a last measure. Purdue Pharma spends millions of dollars marketing OxyContin.

1997-2002

Morphine, Hydromorphone, Fentanyl, & Oxycodone prescriptions **experience a sharp increase**. This results in requiring medical centers to examine patient pain levels.

Mid-2000s

Teens begin to use opioids after finding prescription medications in their parent's bathrooms. In 2007, Purdue Pharma pleads guilty to federal charges related to misbranding of OxyContin.

2010

**The Second Wave of the Opioid Epidemic begins.** As prescriptions pills became harder to obtain, users turned to heroin as it was cheaper and widely available. This caused a surge in heroin-related overdose deaths.

2013

**The third wave of the opioid epidemic begins due to fentanyl.** The number of babies born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome is more than 27,000.

2015

**Overdose Deaths Grow**

to a national high of 52,404. The national record increases by 20% the following year.

2018

There were approximately **198 overdose deaths a day in the United States**. In 2.5 weeks, the U.S. population is reduced equal to the number of people lost on 9/11.

TODAY

U.S. Surgeon General, Jerome M. Adams reports: **"Addiction is a chronic disease of the brain** with the potential for both recovery and recurrence. Long-term outpatient care is the key to recovery."

If you or a loved one believe that long-term addiction treatment will be beneficial, contact GateHouse today at **(855) 448-3588**. You can **heal**, and we can **help** you achieve long-term sobriety through long-term treatment.

**Sources:**

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