

## **September 2022 is Opioid, Heroin, Fentanyl, and Prescription Drug Abuse Awareness Month**

The California Legislature has adopted [Senate Concurrent Resolution 115](#) designating September 2022 as Opioid, Heroin, Fentanyl, and Prescription Drug Abuse Awareness Month. The resolution is intended to remind consumers of the dangers and the increasing prevalence of abuse of opioids, heroin, fentanyl, and prescription drugs.

The resolution includes these findings by the Legislature:

- Opioids are drugs that act on the nervous system to conceal pain. In 2020, more than 14,800,000 opioid prescriptions were written in California. From 1999 to 2020, inclusive, over 500,000 people died from overdoses related to opioids in the United States.
- Drug overdoses kill more people in one year than do the number of motor vehicle fatalities in the United States. The number of deaths from fentanyl overdoses jumped by more than 2,100% in California in five years.
- Overdoses of synthetic opioids killed nearly 4,000 residents in California in 2020, with 3,946 attributed to fentanyl, according to the most recent estimate from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the State Department of Public Health. Fentanyl is 50 times more potent than heroin and 100 times more powerful than morphine, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Aggregate annual costs for prescription opioid overdose, abuse, and dependence were estimated at \$1.02 trillion nationally in 2017, up from \$78.5 billion in 2013.
- Abuse of opioid pain relievers is the strongest risk factor for heroin abuse. Seventy-five percent of new heroin users were first addicted to a legally prescribed prescription opioid.
- Most people who are addicted to opioids cannot taper off, or use less of the drug over time, without help. The long-term damage to individuals and families is highly detrimental.

The California State Board of Pharmacy supports Senate Concurrent Resolution 115 and urges licensees, consumers, and all Californians to be aware of the dangers of abusing opioids, heroin, fentanyl, and prescription drugs. Follow the Board on Twitter – [@CAPHarmBoard](#) – for facts about drug abuse as well as how to prevent abuse, save lives, and find treatment services.

The Board also provides resources regarding drug abuse awareness, prevention and treatment, as well as locations for disposing of unused, expired, or unwanted prescription drugs. Visit the Board online at [www.pharmacy.ca.gov](http://www.pharmacy.ca.gov) and scroll down to “Important Information for Consumers” to find links to [prescription drug abuse information](#) and [drug takeback locations](#).

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