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DATELINE: Ohio

Wright State University & the University of Akron

## High Levels of Pharmaceutical Opioid Availability and Abuse Continue

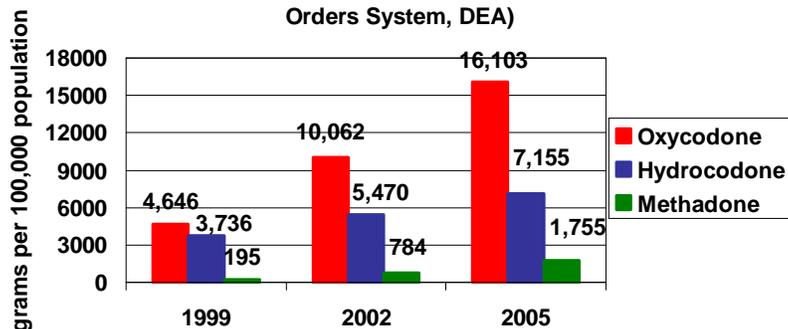
Since 2000, the OSAM Network has been reporting increasing levels of pharmaceutical opioid abuse across Ohio. According to data presented by Regional Epidemiologists at the June 2007 OSAM meeting, Vicodin® (hydrocodone & acetaminophen), Percocet® (oxycodone & acetaminophen) and OxyContin® (oxycodone controlled-release) remain the most commonly abused pharmaceutical opioids, with estimated street availability ranging from moderate to high (Table 1). Continuing increases in the availability of methadone tablets and wafers, typically prescribed for pain management, were reported in many areas of the state with an estimated moderate availability.

**Table 1. Availability of Diverted Pharmaceutical Opioids According to the OSAM Network Data**

Pharmaceutical opioids \ Area	Cincinnati	Akron	Toledo	Dayton	Athens	Cleveland	Columbus	Youngstown
hydrocodone	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H
oxycodone (other)	H	H	H	M	M	M	H	H
oxycodone (extended release)	H	H	H	M	H	M	H	H
methadone tablets/wafers	H	L	M	M	M	M	M	N/A
propoxyphene	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
hydromorphone	N/A	L	L	L	L	L	L	N/A
fentanyl	L	L	N/A	L	L	L	N/A	N/A

H=high, M=moderate, L=low availability according to users, service providers, and crime labs; N/A=no availability reported.

**Figure 1. Changes in Prescription Volume of Selected Opioids in Ohio (Automation of Reports and Consolidated Orders System, DEA)**



The continuing trend of high levels of pharmaceutical opioid availability and abuse is consistent with increases in the number of prescriptions being written for pharmaceutical opioids in Ohio. According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, between 1999 and 2005, prescriptions for products containing oxycodone increased more than three times, those with hydrocodone almost doubled, and those for methadone increased nearly ten times (Figure 1).

In 2006, the Ohio State Board of Pharmacy started implementation of the Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System (OARRS), a Web-accessed database that tracks controlled substance prescriptions dispensed within the state. OARRS provides a tool to help identify and prevent many types of illegal activity including indiscriminate prescribing, prescription forgery, and "doctor shopping," and may help halt the increasing trend of pharmaceutical drug abuse.

OSAM-O-GRAMS report key findings of the Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring (OSAM) Network. Regional Epidemiologists located throughout the state use qualitative and quantitative data to provide semiannual monitoring of substance abuse trends. The OSAM Network is funded by the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services by contract to Wright State University and by subcontract to the University of Akron. This OSAM-O-GRAM is based on the June 2007 OSAM Network meeting.

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