

# OSAM-O-Gram

## Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring Network

### "Opiate User Profiles"

November 2011



## Ohio's Opiate Epidemic: User Profiles

John R. Kasich, Governor  
Orman Hall, Director

A picture of Ohio's opiate epidemic emerges through the examination of data generated through the Department's Behavioral Health (BH) Module (client admissions for opiate abuse and dependence) and its Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring (OSAM) Network.

From 2005 to 2010, clients whose drugs of choice included opiates represented a larger share of the total BH Module admissions, rising from 12.5 to 22.8 percent. A majority of opiate admissions were male (54% in 2010), although admissions of females increased 7.7 percent from 2005 to 2010. White clients made up the largest racial group admitted during this six-year time span for opiate abuse/dependence (91.5% in 2010). Most opiate abusing/dependent clients reported heroin as their drug of choice (43.2%), followed by other opiates (37.1%) and alcohol and other drugs (19.7%).

Other departmental data substantiate the above findings. According to data obtained from the Department-sponsored 2010 Prescription Drug/Opioid Abuse Survey<sup>1</sup> of treatment providers across Ohio, of which nearly 80 percent participated, White males constitute the largest client group for opiate abuse/dependence statewide; providers also noted a continued increase of opiate abuse/dependence among females and reported now seeing an increase in opiate use among those in their teens and early 20s.

### **Prescription Opioid User Profile**

The majority of OSAM participants and community professionals describe the typical prescription opioid user as someone who may have suffered chronic pain from a serious illness or injury, or someone who is young (17–34 years old) and White. Participants describe first-time users to be as young as 11–12 years of age and more likely to obtain prescription opioids from medicine cabinets in their home or the homes of relatives or friends. Users and professionals note an alarming increase in use among young people (teens through early 20s).

### **Heroin User Profile**

The majority of OSAM participants and community professionals describe the typical heroin user as predominately White, male or female, between the age of 20 and 35 years, and more often than not addicted to other opioids. Several community professionals also continue to report increasing heroin use among adolescents, particularly teenaged females. In nearly all interviews, participants cited a link between prescription opioid abuse and an increase in heroin use. Many users attribute their switch from prescription opioids to heroin to the ease and affordability of obtaining heroin over prescription opioids. Users and professionals also named the reformulation of OxyContin<sup>®</sup> OC into OxyContin<sup>®</sup> OP as a reason for the spike in heroin use statewide. Similar to prescription opioids, an alarming number of young people have been noted as currently using heroin (teens and early 20s). Treatment providers indicate that young suburban White males with an opioid abuse history are those most often presenting for treatment for heroin abuse/dependence; an increase in the number of females was again noted.

<sup>1</sup> The entire survey, along with a complete report of results, is available for download on the ODADAS Web site.



Department of Alcohol &  
Drug Addiction Services



Ohio Substance Abuse  
Monitoring Network