

# The Opioid Crisis

**BY THE NUMBERS** Opioid misuse and addiction is a major public health crisis. Opioids, sometimes called narcotics, are a type of drug. They include strong prescription pain relievers and the illegal drug heroin. Millions of Americans suffer from opioid use disorder. Millions more suffer from chronic pain.

Earlier this year, NIH Director Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D., met with research and development leaders from the world's leading biopharmaceutical companies to discuss the opioid crisis.

The meeting highlighted new ways for government and private industry to work together to address the opioid crisis and find better ways to manage pain.

Stay tuned for updates on this important initiative from NIH.

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An estimated **2.1 million Americans** used prescription drugs nonmedically for the first time within the past year.



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Among those who reported past-year nonmedical use of a prescription drug, nearly **12%** met criteria for prescription drug use disorder.

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More than **1.2 million** emergency department visits in 2011 could be the result of nonmedical use of prescription drugs.



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**+72%**  
2002 → 2012

There was a **72%** increase in hospitalizations related to opioid use from 2002 to 2012.

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**SOURCE:** National Institute on Drug Abuse

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