

# The Mississippi Opioid Epidemic: Data and Actions At a Glance, 2016 and 2017



Data Brief, 9/22//2018

## Overdose Deaths in MS, 2016

- Total overdose deaths: **348**, an increase of 2.4% (8 more deaths ) since 2015
- Multidrug overdose deaths: **109**, an increase of 32.9% (27 more deaths) since 2015
- Opioid overdose deaths: **172**, an increase of 17.8% (26 more deaths) since 2015
- Heroin-involved deaths: **28**, a decrease of 20.0% (7 less deaths) since 2015

## Opioid-Related Hospitalizations in MS, 2017

- Total hospitalizations: **8,022**, a 11.7% increase since 2016
- Hospitalizations for opioid-related overdoses: **890**
- Total charges: **\$322,408,631**, a 17.1% increase since 2016
- Total charges per day: **\$883,311**

## Opioid-Related Emergency Department (ED) Visits in MS, 2017

- Total ED visits: **4,036**, a 7.4% increase since 2016
- ED visits for opioid-related overdoses: **865**
- Total charges: **\$23,425,614**, a 12.9% increase since 2016
- Total charges per day: **\$64,180**

## Prescriptions for Opioid Pain Medications in MS, 2016

- **3,238,334** (1.1 per person)
- 1.1% decrease since 2015
- 4.1% decrease since 2012

## Morphine Milligram Equivalents in MS, 2016

- **719.2** per prescription
- 0.6% decrease since 2015
- 8.6% increase since 2012

## Total Days of Opioid Supply in MS, 2016

- **57,986,245**
- 1.2% increase since 2015
- 6.1% increase since 2012

**Summary:** Between 2012 and 2016, opioid prescription numbers decreased statewide. At the same time, opioid overdose deaths as well as opioid-related hospitalizations and ED visits continued to climb. The strength of opioid prescriptions, as measured by morphine milligram equivalents, and the duration of opioid treatment have increased since 2012. These findings suggest that decreasing the number of opioid prescriptions is not enough to reduce opioid-related morbidity and mortality. Comprehensive preventive measures, including decreasing the strength and length of opioid treatments, are needed.

## MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH: KEY ACTIONS

**Saving lives:** In a continued effort to curb the opioid epidemic in Mississippi, State Health Officer Dr. Mary Currier signed a standing order that covers, without a prescription, the dispensing and administration of naloxone, a drug that reverses the effects of an opioid overdose. With this standing order, pharmacies will be able to provide naloxone to a family member, friend, or other person in a position to assist someone at risk of opioid overdose.

**Engaging the medical community:** Mississippi State Department of Health has started an active educational campaign among Mississippi's medical community since early 2017. This campaign involves presentations for health care providers by Deputy State Health Officer Dr. Thomas Dobbs on the scope of the state's opioid epidemic, the latest opioid treatment guidelines, and prevention strategies

**Working together:** In 2017, the Mississippi Opioid and Heroin Data Collaborative was established. A joint effort by MS State Department of Health, MS Department of Mental Health, MS Bureau of Narcotics, and MS Board of Pharmacy, this partnership's goals are to share data and conduct comprehensive statewide opioid surveillance.

**Notes:** Opioid-related hospitalizations and ED visits include primary and secondary opioid diagnoses. Total charges are for hospitalizations and ED visits for all-listed opioid-related diagnoses. Morphine milligram equivalents is a metric that converts opioids of various strengths into a standard value.

**Data analysis and reporting:** Manuela Staneva, MPH, Epidemiologist, Mississippi State Department of Health