

**Southern Alabama AHEC
Joins the Fight!**

Our mission is to enhance access to quality health care by improving the supply and distribution of healthcare professionals in under-served Alabama communities. Southern Alabama AHEC serves 10 counties in Southern/Southwest Alabama.

Southern Alabama AHEC:

- ⇒ Supports opioid use disorder diagnosis, prevention and treatment.
- ⇒ Provides opioid education for health profession students, practicing health professionals, and community members
- ⇒ Promotes opioid awareness/ education in high schools and other youth based organizations
- ⇒ Supports Veteran's wellbeing through the annual VA Mental Health Summit
- ⇒ Partners with community organizations for Prescription Drug Take back and other events

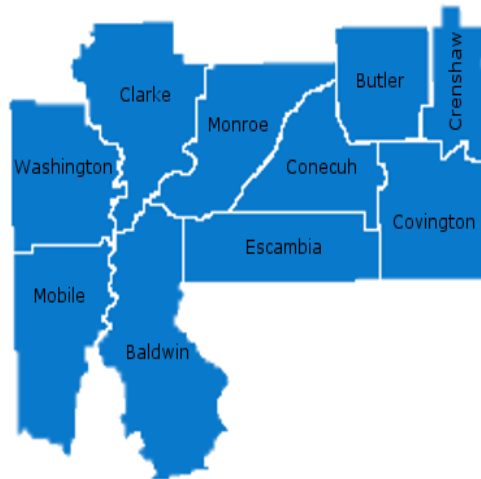
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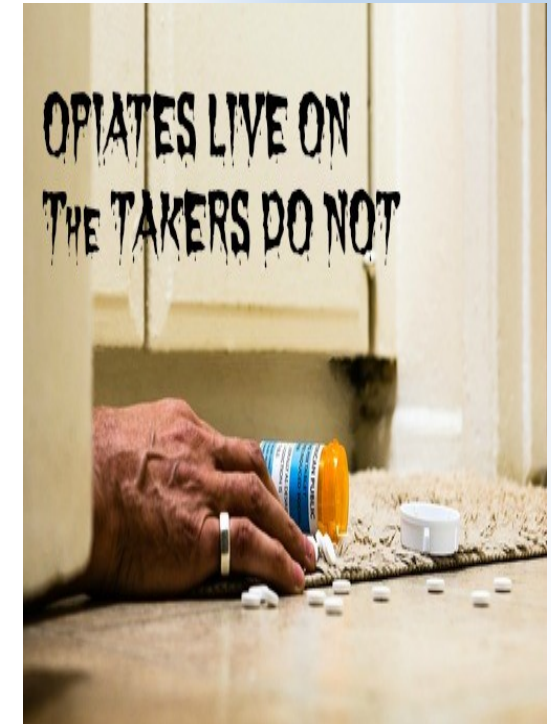
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**Opioids:
Alabama's
Silent Killer**





What are OPIOIDS?

Opioids are a class of drugs naturally found in the opium poppy plant. Opioids are often used as medicines because they contain chemicals that relax the body and can relieve pain. Prescription opioids are used mostly to treat moderate to severe pain, though some opioids can be used to treat coughing and diarrhea¹.

Common names of opioids:

- ⇒ Heroin
- ⇒ Hydrocodone (Vicodin)
- ⇒ Oxycodone (Percocet, OxyContin)
- ⇒ Morphine
- ⇒ Codeine (Tylenol #3)
- ⇒ Fentanyl
- ⇒ Methadone
- ⇒ and others¹

Alabama Opioid FACTS

In 2017, Alabama ranked 1st in the nation for the number of painkiller prescriptions per capita (107.2 per 100 people)³

In 2016, there were 343 opioid-related overdose deaths in Alabama—a rate of 7.5 deaths per 100,000 persons—nearly half the national rate of 13.3 deaths.¹

⇒ Between 2006-2014, there were 5,128 overdose deaths in Alabama. The CDC has indicated prescription opioids and heroin accounted for the majority of drug deaths.⁶

In 2016, two Alabama Congressional districts ranked among the top 5 in the nation in prescription painkillers (4th district- #1 and 1st district - #5)⁴

⇒ 1st Congressional district includes Baldwin, Clarke, Escambia, Mobile, Monroe, Washington Counties.

In 2015, Alabama ranked highest in the nation as having more opioid prescriptions than people with Alabama physicians writing an alarming 5.8 million prescriptions.⁵

State Action Plan

In August 2017, Governor Kay Ivey established the Alabama Opioid Overdose and Addiction Council to combat Alabama's opioid crisis.⁶

It provides a four-pronged approach:

- ⇒ Prevention of opioid misuse
- ⇒ Intervention within law enforcement and justice systems
- ⇒ Treatment of those with opioid use disorders
- ⇒ Community Response that engages Alabamians to help find solutions⁶



Sources

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5. BCBS. <https://www.bcbs.com/news/press-releases/opioid-epidemic-grows-alabama-ranks-first-nationally-having-more-opioid>
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