

# The Crisis of Chronic Pain Patients

## The other side of the opioid crisis

When you hear the word “Opioid Crisis”, you probably think about tragic deaths from addiction.

But there is another side of this crisis – the inability of chronic pain patients to access the medication they need to function.

The CDC Guidelines, although voluntary and intended only as recommendations for family practice physicians, have been widely adopted as mandatory rules by other federal agencies, states and insurers.

As a result, long-term legitimate pain patients with serious conditions who have relied on opioid analgesics can no longer fill their prescriptions. For many, being on prescription opioid comes as last resort. The healthcare system is failing people who live with chronic pain.

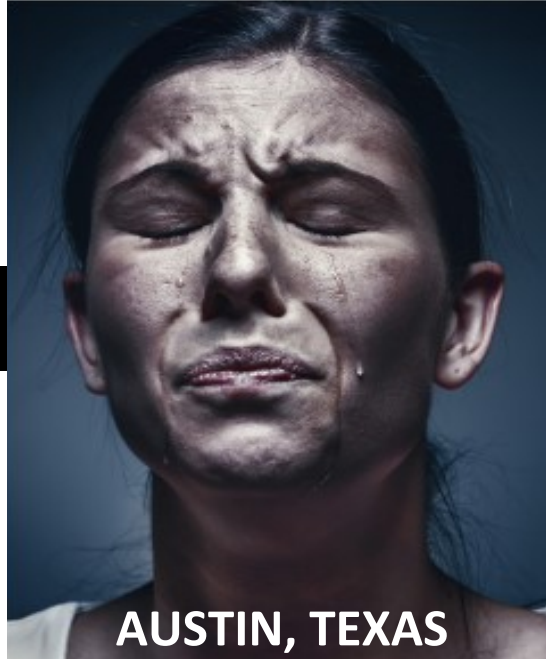
*“When a government puts in place regulations that make it almost impossible for a physician to prescribe an essential medication, or for a pharmacist to stock the medication, or for a patient to fill their prescriptions, **that becomes a human rights issue.**”*

- Chronic pain is the primary cause of disability in US. Approximately 100 million Americans suffer of Chronic Pain. Of those, 23% rely on prescription opioids to treat their pain.
- Chronic pain patients are generally neither addicts nor mentally ill. Chronic pain results from any number of valid medical conditions, severe trauma and/or botched surgical procedures.

85%

A PNN survey of over 3,100 pain patients found that 71% had their opioid medication stopped or reduced. **Nearly 85% said their pain and quality of life were worse.**

- Researchers in the CDC’s Division of Unintentional Injury Prevention say **many overdoses involving illicit fentanyl and other synthetic black market opioids have been erroneously counted as prescription drug deaths.**
- The CDC has recently implemented a new overdose surveillance system in 32 states that supplements data from death certificates with toxicology tests and death scene investigations to more accurately reflect which drugs are involved in overdose deaths. **We might not see these results until next year or later. Meanwhile thousand of pain patients are suffering.**



AUSTIN, TEXAS

## Did you know?

- Opioid overdose deaths escalated mostly from illicit heroin and Fentanyl laced drugs.
- The prescribing of opioids has dropped every year since 2012 and is at 10 year low – and yet drug overdose deaths have skyrocketed.
- Approximately 107,000 patients are hospitalized annually for gastrointestinal (GI) complications caused by **Nonsteroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drug (NSAID)** ranging from over the counter Aspirin and Ibuprofen to a whole host of prescription brands: celecoxib, diclofenac, indomethacin. **At least 16,500 NSAID related deaths occur each year among arthritis patients alone.**
- In 2016 out of 63,632 drug overdose deaths 15,469 were related to heroin 19,413 to synthetic opioids including Fentanyl, **14,487 to semi synthetic opioids including prescription opioids, and less than deaths related to over the counter NSAID medication. Further CDC data analysis determined that the deaths involving prescription opioids were close to 2,500.**



## We desperately need your voice, your empathy and your compassion.

The next time you hear yet another biased news story about opioids, do something about it. You can help save lives by contacting the source and insisting that they tell the *whole* truth about the opioid crisis. Call them. Write a letter. Send an email.

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