

America pain from an  
individual in severe



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America is in the depths of an opioid crisis. The root of the problem: OxyContin. Purdue Pharma, a private pharmacy that focuses on pain management, has been fueling unethical sales to the public for “ pain management.” In addition, mal-practice within pain clinics facilitates addicts to obtain infinite supplies of opioids. When individuals can no longer afford painkillers, they turn to heroin for the same effects. As the crisis progresses, Congress and the Drug Enforcement Administration are cracking down on pharmacies drug distributions. Opioid painkillers include, but are not limited to, Hydrocodone (aka Vicodin), OxyContin, Fentanyl and Morphine.

Each of them has the same affect, to relieve stress and pain from an individual in severe pain. Originally designed for cancer patients, Purdue Pharma made it accessible to the general public in the 90s for pain brought on from surgery, migraines and joint pain. Purdue thought they would profit if painkillers were available to more people. Purdue Pharmacies profited to a lethal degree. Not only were people immediately hooked to painkillers, they were rushing to get more. People who were introduced to painkillers because of breaking a bone or an operation started fabricating stories for prescriptions to pain medications. Individuals who can not obtain a renewed prescription in time have gone as far as go to the ER asking for pain medications, provided with phony reports of back pain.

Down in Florida, there are pain clinics, coined “ Oxy Expresses” and “ Pill Mills” that are essentially painkiller dispensaries. Shady doctors give “ patients” a brisk exam and prescribe them strong painkillers. People drive from the Southeast and Midwest America to buy drugs from pharmacies, which are typically located in strip malls. A strip mall where one can

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purchase powerful painkillers? Sounds like an addict's paradise. Painkillers are expensive. Many addicts bleed their bank account dry spending thousands of dollars on drugs. Painkillers make a person feel the same way as heroin- the rush of euphoria and tranquility.

When funds fade, a lot of individuals hit the street for heroin. Heroin is one of the most notorious hard drugs and a lot of people say they " never expected to get that desperate to catch a high." At this point, people who were simply taking Hydrocodone for headaches are hooked on heroin. Even if they wanted to stop, they could not without rigorous professional help.

Throughout blue-collar towns throughout the Midwest and South there is a plethora of ghost towns ridden with overdoses and addiction. In towns like Petersburg, West Virginia (the state that leads the nation in highest overdose rate) has an average rate of one overdose every ten hours around the clock. Paramedics spend their shifts driving from one overdose to the next, where they may or may not save a life. Towns like Petersburg have an opioid crisis because of the culture and not because of pain management.

This plague of addiction is not intentional for everyoe, many addicts want to stop, but the power of opioids is harrowing. Even when a person wants to kick the drug, they cannot, because their body is dependent on the drug and death is a side effect from detox. In order to come off opioids, medical attention is necessary. Even with help, detox is extremely unpleasant and much of the opioid population does not want to endure the process. The best way to prevent the opioid emergency is to cut distribution vigorously and raid Pill Mills. Alternative medicines are surfacing in place of OxyContin and other opioids that are non-addictive. By cutting down distribution of opioids

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and replacing them with safer remedies, pharmacies can be a safer place for patients. The Pill Mills are easy to seek and even easier to shut down.

Opioids are meant for people suffering. Someone being treated by Hospice needs relief with a powerful painkiller, but someone who is suffering a broken bone must be prescribed with an alternative antidote. For the population who is already in the wrath of addiction, treatment needs to be accessible. Treatment centers in America are typically owned by private businesses and the costs are only affordable for the wealthy.

Detox centers exist, but the patients aren't given enough resources or therapy to continue on with sobriety. 12 Step meetings are an excellent recovery resource, however they are one hour a day and people coming off something as hard as heroin need a stringent treatment. Congress needs to push affordable care for those suffering from addiction because addiction is a disease. Those who suffer from addiction are lucky, because they have the choice to survive and good treatment will make them reach their goals. Pharmacies have been the supplier to the opioid crisis.

In a perfect world, researchers would invent a medication that is non-addictive. People with serious diseases, like cancer, need these pills to alleviate their pain. But, anyone with minor health issues is vulnerable to dependency on painkillers. Therefore, Congress and the DEA need to work together to limit the distribution of pharmaceutical painkillers. As long as the government is on high alert and willing to change policies, the public emergency will dissolve.