

In this Issue: Opioid Addiction

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According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse of the National Institutes of Health, “abuse of tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drugs is costly to our nation, exacting more than \$740 billion annually in costs related to crime, lost work productivity and health care” (see Figure 1, gathered from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics>).

Figure 1. Overall Cost of Health Care

	Health Care	Overall	Year Estimate Based On
Tobacco ^{1,2}	\$168 billion	\$300 billion	2010
Alcohol ³	\$27 billion	\$249 billion	2010
Illicit Drugs ^{4,5}	\$11 billion	\$193 billion	2007
Prescription Opioids ⁶	\$26 billion	\$78.5 billion	2013

It is in the overdose deaths due to heroin and opioid, that the NIH has reported the most dramatic increases in both men and women (<https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics/overdose-death-rates>), and we focus this edition of the Delaware Journal of Public Health on the Opioid Crisis and Delaware. Our guest editor for this issue is Terry Horton, MD. Dr. Horton is nationally recognized as an expert in the field, and a frequently called upon expert in testimony in Dover, and in the United States Congress.

Addiction related to tobacco, alcohol, and drugs other than opioids has enormous health burden and economic impact. Addiction & abuse of non-dependence-producing substances (laxatives, steroids, antidepressants) and behaviors (gambling, sex, and the internet) are serious issues facing society as well.

Our focus on opioids reflects a nationwide interest in the public health of this complex topic. It does not suggest one addiction or abuse being worse than another. Ask anyone who is addicted or in recovery, or knows someone who is, and the answer will be similar – addiction is a disease, and it is serious. While this issue focuses on opioids, the lexicon of terms, glossary, and resources sections address addiction and substance abuse more broadly. We hope you find this issue of the DJPH useful, thought provoking, and to result in a deeper understanding of a pressing public health concern that faces us all directly or indirectly.

As always we want to hear from you. Drop us a line at: ehealy@delamed.org and review the entire DJPH issue lineup at: www.djph.delamed.org or at www.issuu.com/dam-dpha

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