



LAWYERS' ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
Real Problems. Real Help.
Real Experts.™

The Opioid Epidemic: Should the Legal Community be Concerned?

Illinois Lawyers' Assistance Program
www.illinoisLAP.org
312-726-6607

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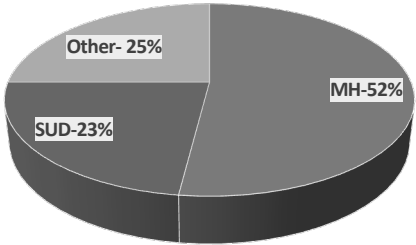


Danger

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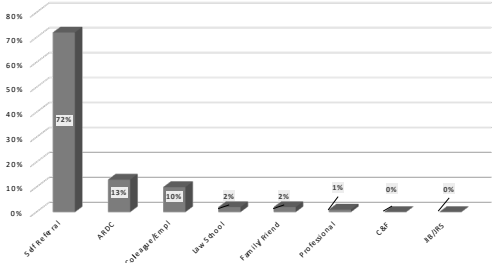
FY 2024-2025: Primary Problems Identified



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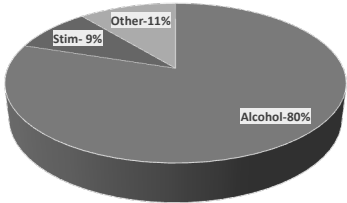
FY 2024-2025 Referral Source



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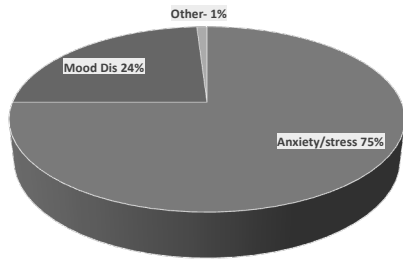
FY 2024-2025 Substance use



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FY 2024-2025 Mental Health

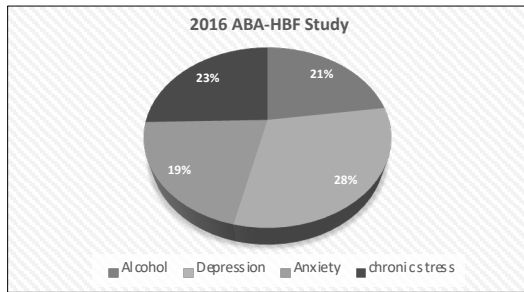


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2016 National Study of 12,825 Licensed Employed Lawyers

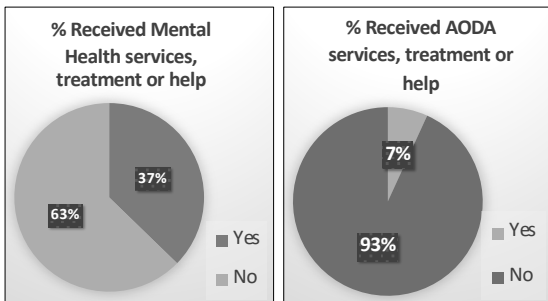
Funded by ABA, Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation



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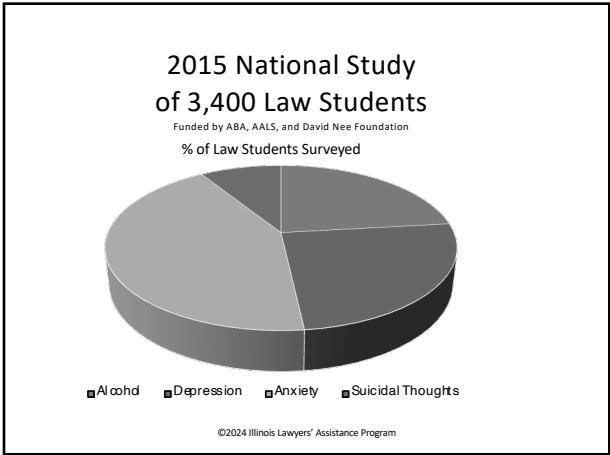
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Reported Treatment Rates from Study

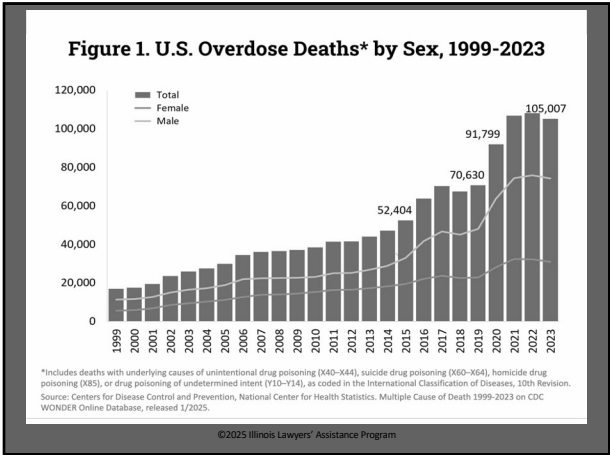


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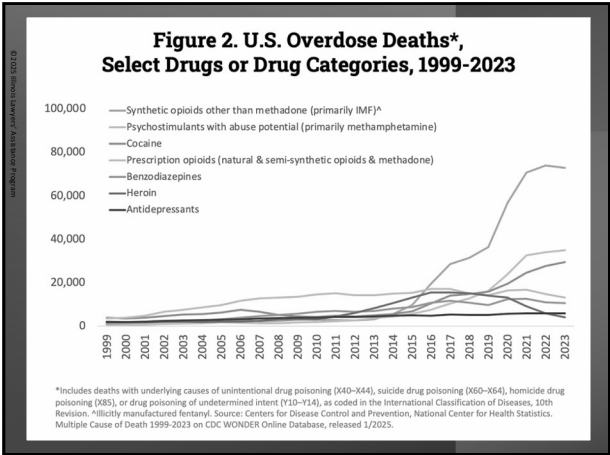
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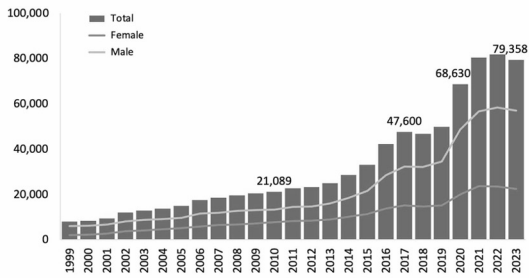


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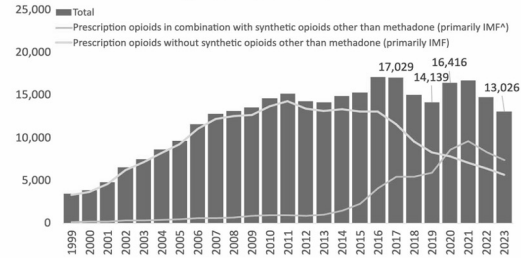
Figure 3. U.S. Overdose Deaths Involving Any Opioid* by Sex, 1999-2023



*Among deaths with drug overdose as the underlying cause, the "any opioid" subcategory was determined by the following ICD-10 multiple cause-of-death codes: natural and semi-synthetic opioids (T40.2), methadone (T40.3), other synthetic opioids other than methadone (primarily illicitly manufactured fentanyl or IMF) (T40.4), or heroin (T40.1). Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Multiple Cause of Death 1999-2023 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released 1/2025.

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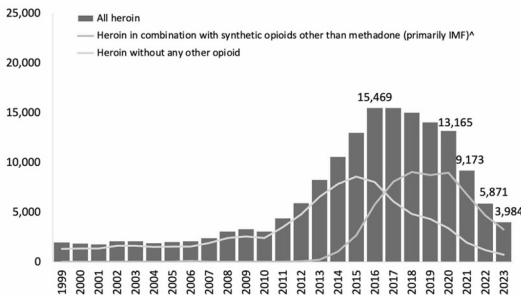
Figure 4. U.S. Overdose Deaths Involving Prescription Opioids*, 1999-2023



*Among deaths with drug overdose as the underlying cause, the prescription opioid subcategory was determined by the following ICD-10 multiple cause-of-death codes: natural and semi-synthetic opioids (T40.2) or methadone (T40.3). *Illicitly manufactured fentanyl. Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Multiple Cause of Death 1999-2023 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released 1/2025.

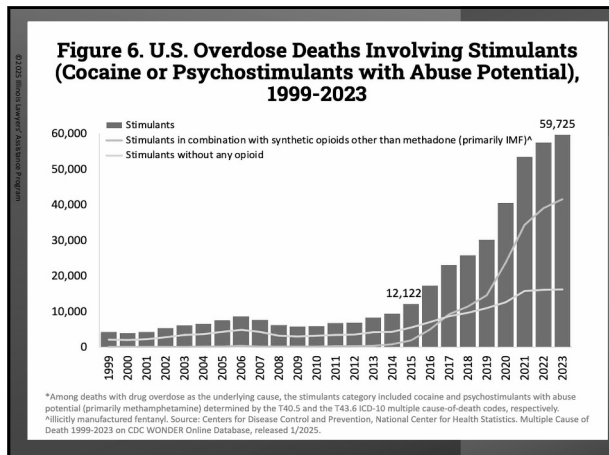
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Figure 5. U.S. Overdose Deaths Involving Heroin*, 1999-2023

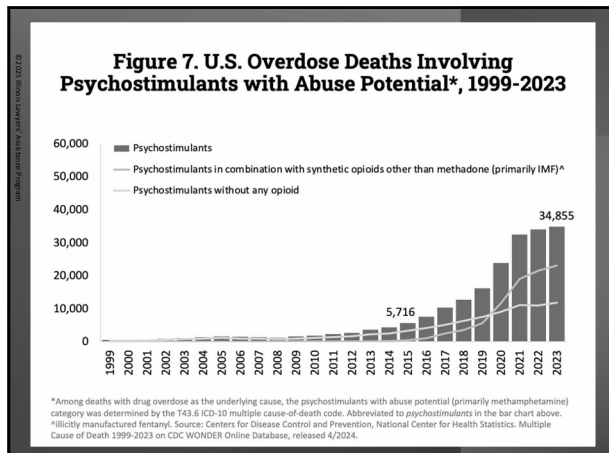


*Among deaths with drug overdose as the underlying cause, the heroin category was determined by the T40.1 ICD-10 multiple cause-of-death code. *Illicitly manufactured fentanyl. Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Multiple Cause of Death 1999-2023 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released 1/2025.

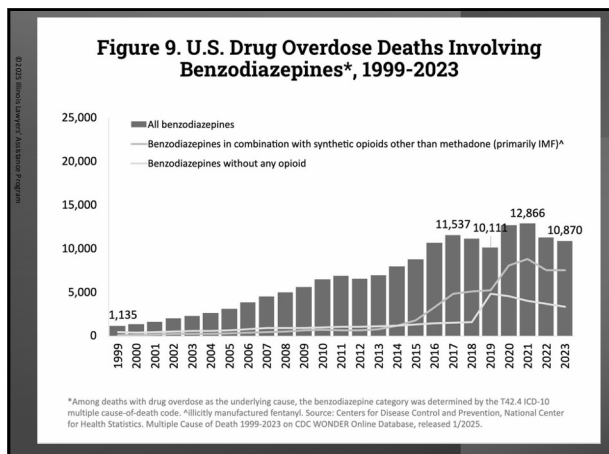
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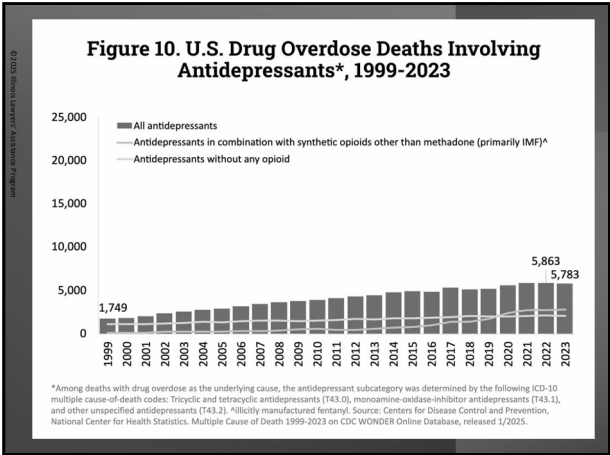
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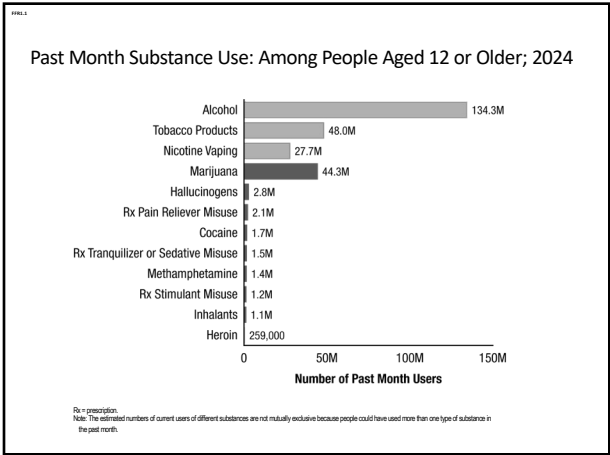
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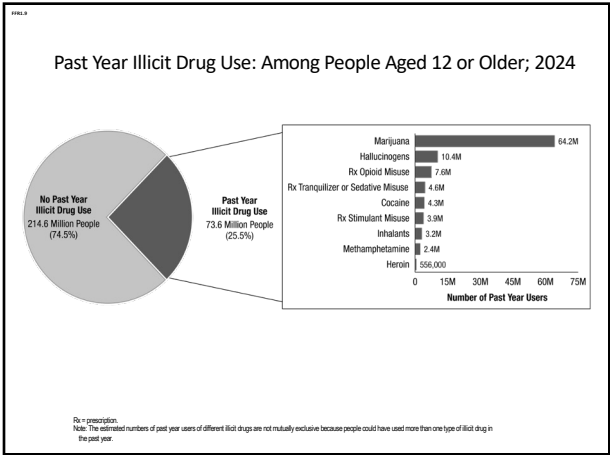
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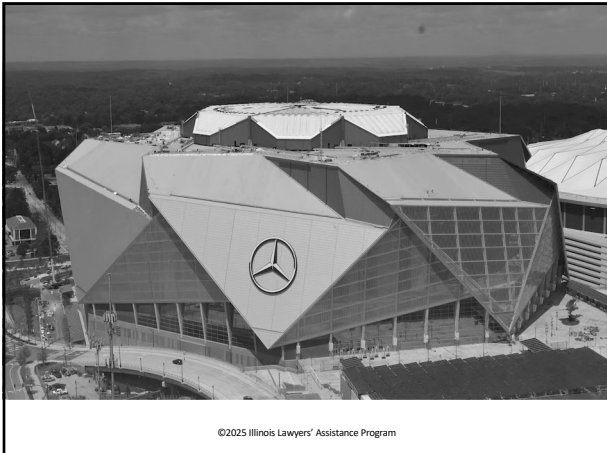


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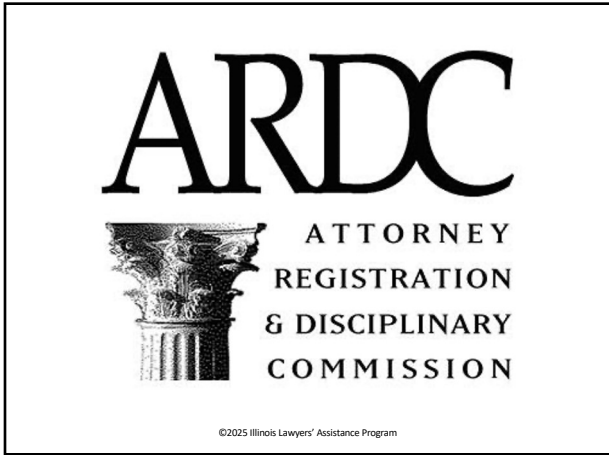
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**OPIOID
INFORMATION**

- The overall national opioid dispensing rate declined steadily from a rate of 46.8 opioid prescriptions dispensed per 100 persons in 2019 to a rate of 37.5 opioid prescriptions dispensed per 100 persons in 2023¹
- Nearly 80,391 people in the US died from drug involved overdose in 2024²
- (48,422 from synthetic opioids)

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**2024 ARDC
STATISTICS**

- 96,821 registered lawyers; 65,456 in Illinois
- 66% of lawyers in private practice
- 4,706 grievances against 3,352 lawyers representing 3.5 % of all registered lawyers
- Neglect (30%); Incompetent Representation (14%); Failure to Communicate (11%); Billing and Fee Issues (11%)

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**DISCIPLINED
LAWYERS
2024-ARDC**

- 26% were between the ages of 40 and 49
- 15% were recidivists
- 20 of the 60 lawyers disciplined had one or more identified substance use or mental impairment issues
- 60 sanctions by IL Supreme Court with 17 disbarred
- 28 lawyers referred to LAP accounting for 10% of LAP referrals

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A. It's Hydrocodone, 10 milligrams.
 Q. And how often were you buying them?
 A. At that time probably a couple times a week.
 Q. Who were you buying them from?
 A. Some guy. His name is Shaky. I'm sorry. I don't know his real name. He's from the street.
 A. When I first started, I was taking just two 3 pills a day.
 Q. So two 10 milligram pills per day?
 A. Right

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Q. So did that usage increase at some point?
 A. Yes. It steadily increased. I don't know exactly when, but from that point until I was hospitalized -- at the time I was hospitalized, I was taking approximately 40 to 50 a day.
 Q. Forty to fifty of 10 milligrams?
 A. Yes.
 Q. A day?
 A. Yes.
 Q. How much were you spending at that point?
 A. Each one was five bucks so what is that. 400 bucks a day.

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Q. Where were you getting the money for that?

A. I would buy some on credit and then sell some and then pay them and wherever I could get money. I got cash from clients that I never filed the cases for which were the ones we just spoke about.

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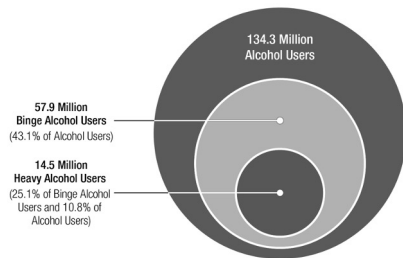
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Alcohol Use, Binge Alcohol Use, or Heavy Alcohol Use in the Past Month: Among People Aged 12 or Older; 2024



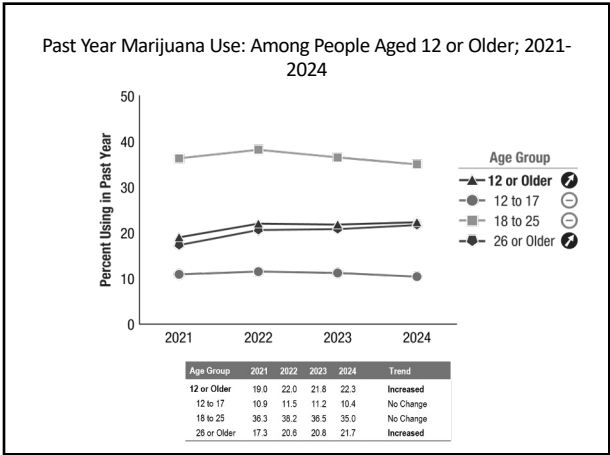
Note: Binge Alcohol Use is defined as drinking five or more drinks (for males) or four or more drinks (for females) on the same occasion on at least 1 day in the past 30 days. Heavy Alcohol Use is defined as binge drinking on the same occasion on 5 or more days in the past 30 days; all heavy alcohol users are also binge alcohol users.

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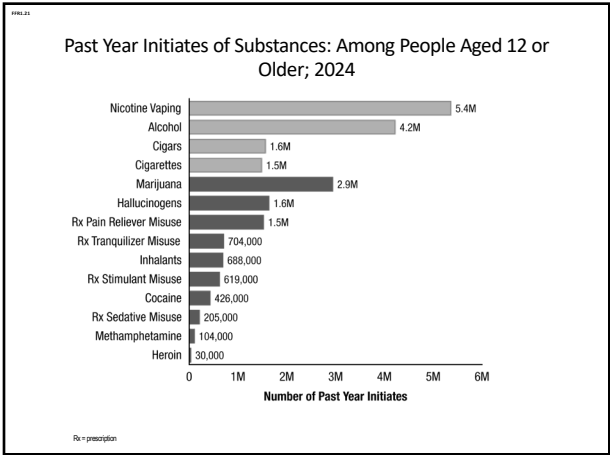
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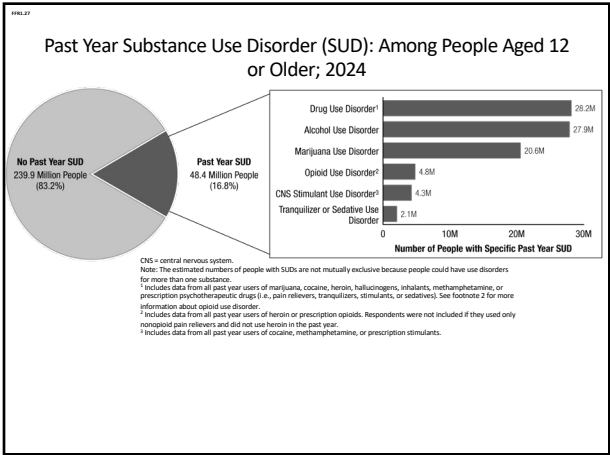
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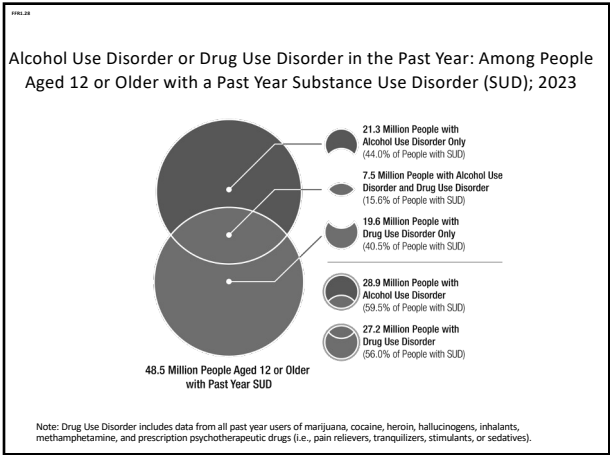
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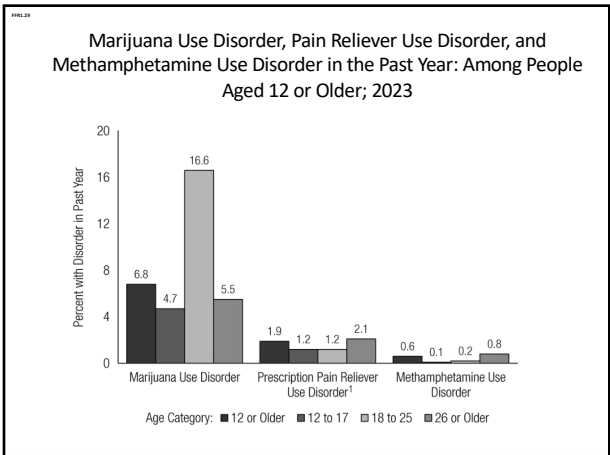
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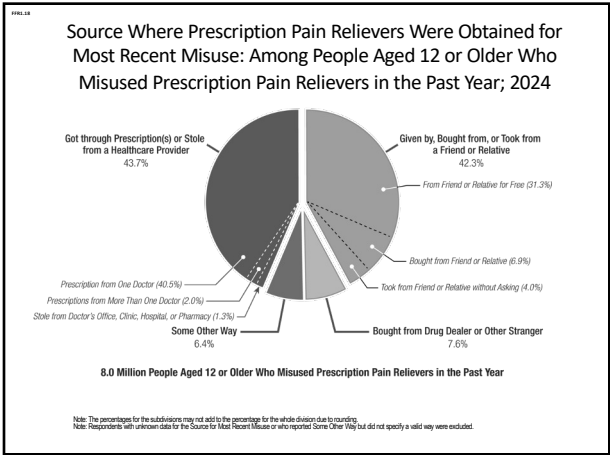
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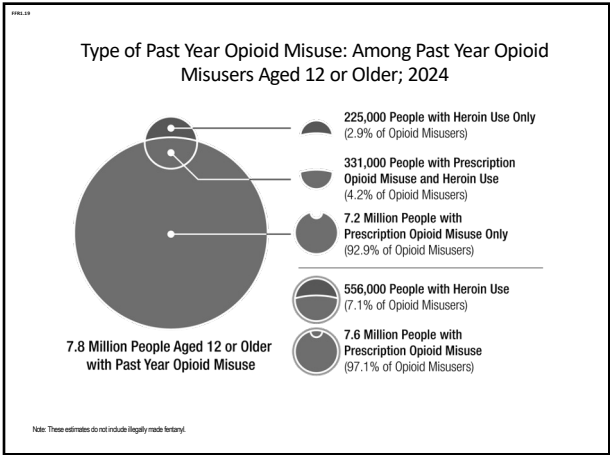
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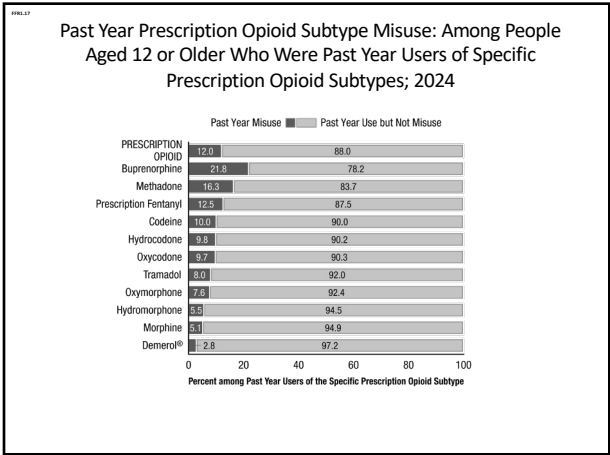
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You are abusing opioids if . . .	Risks
they were prescribed to you, but you take more (higher doses or more often) than you were directed.	If the pain medication isn't relieving your pain, why not go back to the doctor? Your condition may be getting worse and a different remedy might be needed. By taking more medication, you could be masking important symptoms.
you got them from a friend to help relieve your pain.	Pain medications come in different varieties and doses. Some are made for people who have chronic pain and need high doses to relieve their pain. Their bodies have adapted to the repeated opioid exposure, but yours has not. Taking one of their pills could have serious repercussions for you.
you take them to get high.	Whether or not they were prescribed to you, if you are taking opioids to get high, you are setting yourself up to become addicted. The risks increase when you take them in combination with other drugs (like alcohol or marijuana or other prescription medications) or by methods other than those prescribed.

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Why LAP

- Free
- Confidential
- Familiar with legal environments
- Services tailored to judges, lawyers and law students (i.e. support groups)
- Peer Support
- Referrals for ARDC & Character and Fitness issues

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Talking to someone about LAP

- Call or email LAP. We will coach you on what to say to your colleague
- Show them the LAP website/social media
- Highlight LAP's guaranteed confidentiality
- Say:
 - ☐ "Calling LAP is easy, free and totally confidential. No one has to know."
 - ☐ "Let's call LAP together right now." (and dial the phone)
 - ☐ "Do you want me to call LAP for you?"

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WE CAN HELP WITH

Stress - Anxiety - Grief
Depression
Career Transitions
Addiction - Substance Abuse
& Much More

Services tailored to the legal profession:

- > Short-term counseling
- > Support Groups
- > Referrals
- > Interventions
- > Help with ARDC Concerns

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All donations are tax deductible. All donations go towards helping Illinois attorneys in need.

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Treatment Assistance Program

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