

# Understanding the Opioid Epidemic

A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT FROM LEIDOS

HYDROCODONE  
TAKE 1-2 TABLETS BY  
MOUTH EVERY 4-6 HOURS AS  
NEEDED FOR PAIN





Leidos employee John Hindman holds a soccer ball that belonged to his son, Sean. He watched his son grow up playing soccer on this field in Pittsburgh. Soccer is how he bonded with his son.

# THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC: A call to action

By Roger Krone, Leidos CEO

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## Let me tell you the story of Sean Hindman.

Growing up, Sean loved to swim, skateboard, hang out with friends and most of all, play soccer. After high school, he earned his associate degree and worked as an electrical technician in his home town of Pittsburgh. When Sean was a teenager, he became addicted to prescription opioid painkillers, and spent the following decade in and out of rehabilitation. On Sept. 19, 2016, Sean Hindman fatally overdosed on heroin. He was thirty years old.

Sean's father, John Hindman, has been a Leidos employee since before Sean's birth. Not long after his son's tragic death, John spoke with a young man who, thanks in part to Sean's encouragement, overcame his own battle with addiction. This conversation reaffirmed John's decision to become an advocate for preventing drug addiction, a crisis he rightly describes as "a tsunami threatening the very fabric of our society."

The opioid epidemic is one of the most urgent health emergencies in our communities today. It has been called the worst drug crisis in American history<sup>1</sup>. According to a recent study<sup>2</sup>, drug overdose is now the leading cause of death for Americans under 50. The 2016 death toll likely exceeded 59,000, making drug overdose more deadly than car accidents in our country. In 2017, the number of Americans who will die from drug overdose will be roughly the same as the number of Americans who died in the Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan wars combined. Families are being torn apart, with children entering foster care at alarming rates due to their parents' addiction.<sup>3</sup>

If we're going to improve these numbers, it has to start with compassion and open dialog. Opioids have been described as a "mass killer we're meeting with a shrug."<sup>4</sup> Too many people live in denial about drug addiction. There's a stigma attached to the issue that prevents awareness and education. Sweeping the issue under the rug may be an effective way to avoid

uncomfortable conversations, but it's also a dangerous trap that stands in the way of prevention.

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Every day, **142** people die from an overdose of heroin or prescription opioids.

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As it turns out, John is not the only member of the Leidos family affected by the opioid epidemic—far from it. As the news of Sean's death spread across the company, John realized he wasn't alone. John told me he was stunned by how many colleagues, customers, and friends in our industry have approached him to share their own stories of loss due to opioid addiction. Why was he surprised? Because most of them have never told these stories publicly.

In a brave and poignant email, John challenged me and this company to take action. We accept his challenge. We're exploring employee support programs and forums. We're pursuing partnerships with non-profit organizations, including CADCA, an organization dedicated to building drug-free communities. We're supporting the Chris Atwood Foundation's efforts to provide addiction recovery support. We plan to support the Drug Enforcement Agency's 360 Strategy through education initiatives to help prevent heroin and opioid use.

We're exploring awareness campaigns with our friends in the athletic community. In the future, we hope to leverage our technology and our business relationships to create practical solutions that help address the problem head-on.

Sean's life and death matter. John is determined to turn his son's story into a positive for others, and we want to help give him a voice. If we foster an environment that allows one person to feel more comfortable engaging, we will have made an important difference. We believe education is the key, and that awareness and prevention are deeply intertwined. If nothing else, we can be a conduit that arms others with important information about the scourge of addiction.

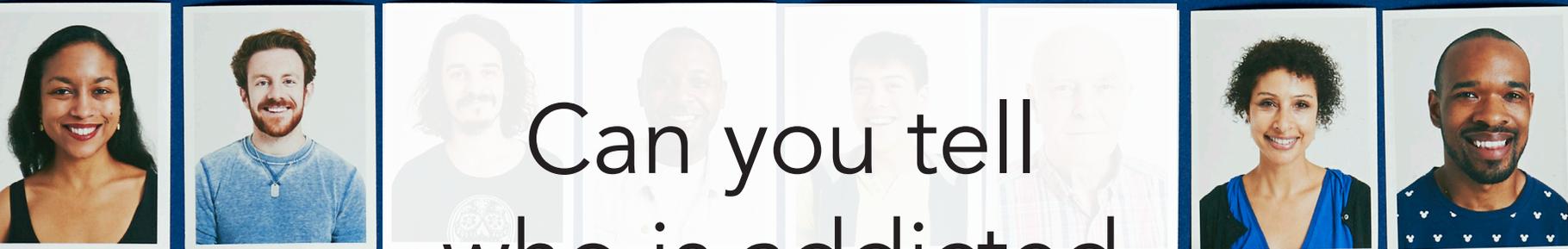
Finally, I challenge other companies to speak up as well. Our industry is fortunate to include responsible corporate citizens that do incredible work in our communities. I hope our peers will join us on this journey; let's leverage our resources to advance this cause. As an industry and a society, let's come together and talk about the changes that are needed. That's exactly what Leidos will do.

1 Childress, Sarah. Veterans Face Greater Risks Amid Opioid Crisis (Frontline, 2016).

2 Katz, Josh. Drug Deaths in America Are Rising Faster Than Ever (The New York Times, 2017).

3 Lurie, Julia. Children of the Opioid Epidemic Are Flooding Foster Homes. American Is Turning a Blind Eye (Mother Jones, 2017).

4 Kristof, Nicholas. Opioids, a Mass Killer We're Meeting With a Shrug (The New York Times, 2017).



Can you tell  
who is addicted  
to opioids?



# UNDERSTANDING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

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## Why it Matters to You

SINCE 2000, NEARLY 500,000 PEOPLE IN THE U.S. HAVE died due to a drug overdose.<sup>1</sup> You might think you are not at risk of becoming an addict. However, there are hundreds of millions of opioid painkillers given out each year in the U.S. In 2012, that number reached 259 million,<sup>2</sup> enough for each adult in the U.S. to have one bottle of pills. Studies show that medically sanctioned prescriptions are often a gateway to addiction if instructions are not followed properly.

ADDICTION IS NOT A MORAL FAILING. IT IS A MEDICAL ISSUE. Our society attaches a stigma to those who suffer from addiction, and this needs to change. An NIH study shows that nearly 10 percent of adults have suffered from an addiction disorder at some point in their lives, and that nearly 75 percent never seek treatment.<sup>3</sup>

THE COST OF TREATING A PATIENT DIAGNOSED WITH addiction is more than 550 percent higher<sup>4</sup> than treating non-addicts. Professional charges for opioid abuse and dependence diagnoses rose by more than 1,000 percent from 2011 to 2015.<sup>5</sup> That is an increase of \$650 million billed to insurance companies in just four years. Those costs are passed on to companies and individuals all across our country. If you have health insurance, you are paying for this problem too.

1, 2 Dowell D, Haegerich TM, Chou R. CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain — United States, 2016. MMWR Recomm Rep 2016;65(No. RR-1):1–49. DOI

3 10 percent of US adult have drug use disorder at some point in their lives (NIH, 2015).

4, 5 *The Impact of the Opioid Crisis on the Healthcare System* (FAIR Health, Inc, 2016).



# UNDERSTANDING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

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## How Did We Get Here?

OPIUM HAS BEEN AROUND SINCE AT LEAST 3400 BC. Known as the “joy plant,” it was cultivated by Sumerians in current-day Iraq.<sup>1</sup> Its use, both as a pain reliever and soporific, spread through the Middle East, India, Greece, China and Europe. In Colonial America, doctors prescribed opium to patients to help manage pain, as well as to help with dysentery, coughs, and other maladies. In the early 1800s, morphine was isolated from opium, and was first manufactured in the United States. In 1898, a German pharmaceutical company first synthesized heroin from morphine.<sup>2</sup>

Today, following the timeline of events pictured on the right, opioid-related deaths have increased to alarming rates. More than 6 out of 10 drug overdose deaths are opioid-related.<sup>3</sup> 142 people die every day<sup>4</sup> from an overdose of heroin or prescription opioids. In 2016, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released guidelines<sup>5</sup> for prescribing opioids for chronic pain. It encourages non-opioid therapies, prescribing lower doses and short-acting opioids, and monitoring progress.

1 PBS

2 Meldrum

3, 4, 5 Dowell D, Haegerich TM, Chou R. CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain — United States, 2016. MMWR Recomm Rep 2016;65(No. RR-1):1–49. DOI

# 1970s

## NEW PAIN KILLERS DESIGNED

Percocet (oxycodone and acetaminophen) and Vicodin (hydrocodone and acetaminophen) come on the market. Both are short-acting pain relievers.

# 1990s

## OXYCONTIN DEBUTS

OxyContin, a long-acting painkiller, hits the market. In an aggressive marketing campaign, the drug's manufacturer claims OxyContin is less addictive than its short-acting cousins, Percocet and Vicodin.<sup>1</sup>

# 2010s

## NATIONAL EPIDEMIC

As street-level costs of illegally gained prescription pills climb, the cost of heroin drops and many addicts transition to heroin. Extremely powerful new synthetic variants of heroin appear with devastating results.

# 1980s

## OPIOIDS DEEMED SAFE

The New England Journal of Medicine publishes a letter to the editor titled "Addiction Rare in Patients Treated with Narcotics," which indicates that opioids are not addictive.

# 2000s

## WARNING SIGNS ABOUND

Prescriptions of opioids quadruple in one decade. The U.S., with 5 percent of the world's population, consumes 99 percent of the world's Vicodin and 80 percent of the world's Percocet and Oxycontin.<sup>2</sup>

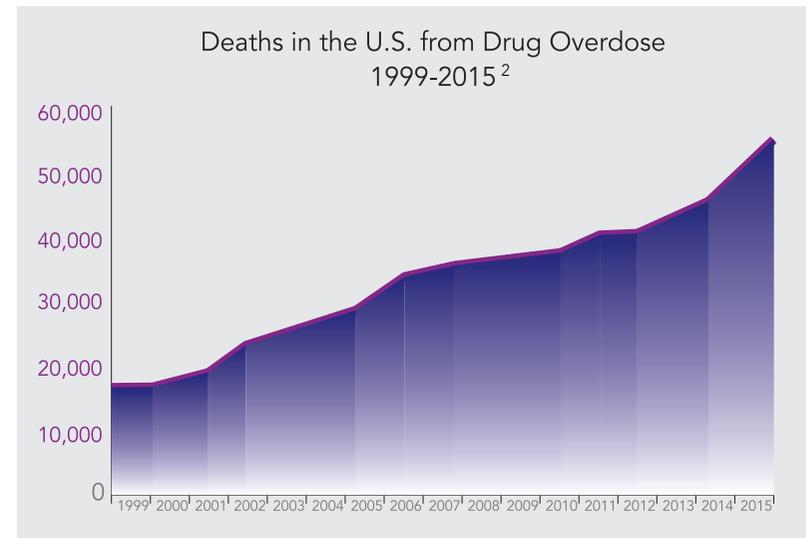
<sup>1</sup> The New York Times  
<sup>2</sup> National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA), 2017

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# Striking at the Heartland

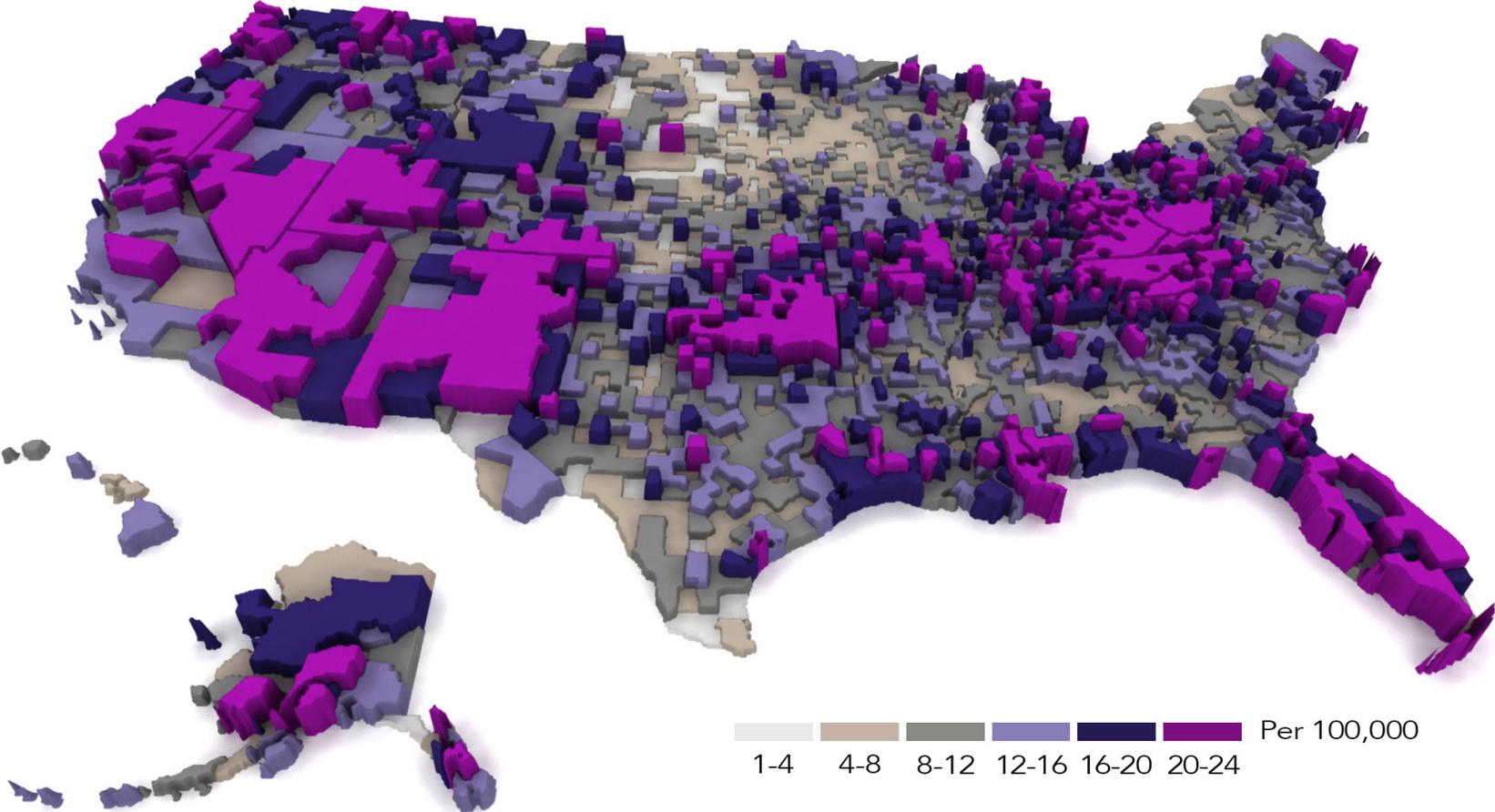
WHEN THE CDC PUBLISHED OPIOID PRESCRIPTION guidelines<sup>1</sup> in 2016, it brought national attention to a problem plaguing Americans across the country. Overdose deaths related to prescription opioids and heroin addiction have reached epidemic proportions. In fact, they have quadrupled since 1999, according to the CDC.



1 Dowell D, Haegerich TM, Chou R. CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain — United States, 2016. MMWR Recomm Rep 2016;65(No. RR-1):1–49. DOI

2 Rossen LM, Bastian B, Warner M, Khan D, and Chong Y. Drug poisoning mortality: United States, 1999–2015. National Center for Health Statistics. 2017.

# OVERDOSE DEATHS IN 2014<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Rossen LM, Bastian B, Warner M, Khan D, and Chong Y. Drug poisoning mortality: United States, 1999–2015. National Center for Health Statistics. 2017.

For more information on the prevention of opioid abuse, visit:  
[cadca.org/resources/prevent-rx-abuse](https://cadca.org/resources/prevent-rx-abuse)

