

ADDICTION TO PRESCRIPTION

The Problem of Prescription Drug Abuse

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The non-medical use of prescription medications, particularly pain relievers, has reached an unprecedented level in our society.

Results of a 2004 national survey indicate that about 6 million Americans age twelve and older (2.5% of the population) used psychotherapeutic drugs for non-medical purposes.

Abuse of prescription drugs is a serious problem among teens (currently 9% of 12th graders report use of Vicodin without a prescription; 5% report using Oxycontin, a powerful prescription opiate drug) and increasingly among the elderly.

Prescription painkillers cause more lethal drug overdoses than either cocaine or heroin. From 1990 to 2002 the mortality rate from unintentional drug poisoning increased by more than 200 percent. Most of those deaths involved middle-aged men.

This presentation meets the California State Bar criteria for 1 hour of MCLE credit on the prevention, detection and treatment of substance abuse.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Learn the warning signs of prescription drug abuse
- Identify the most commonly abused medications
- Understand what to do, and what resources are available, if someone you know is abusing or addicted to prescription drugs
- Review best practices for safe use of prescription and over-the-counter medications
- Find out about new developments in treating pain



Rebecca A. Stanwyck, LCSW, is a psychotherapist, organizational consultant and trainer with over 20 years of experience solving behavioral problems in the workplace. She has taught CLE classes on substance abuse since 1995. She's been an Employee Assistance Program counselor and manager, a consultant to organizations on behavioral health issues, and has worked in the substance abuse treatment field. She has a private practice in the East Bay, specializing in addiction and recovery as well as depression, anxiety, stress and relationship counseling.

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