

# “Talking About Chronic Opioids With Your Doctor”

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# *Papaver somniferum*



# Morphine

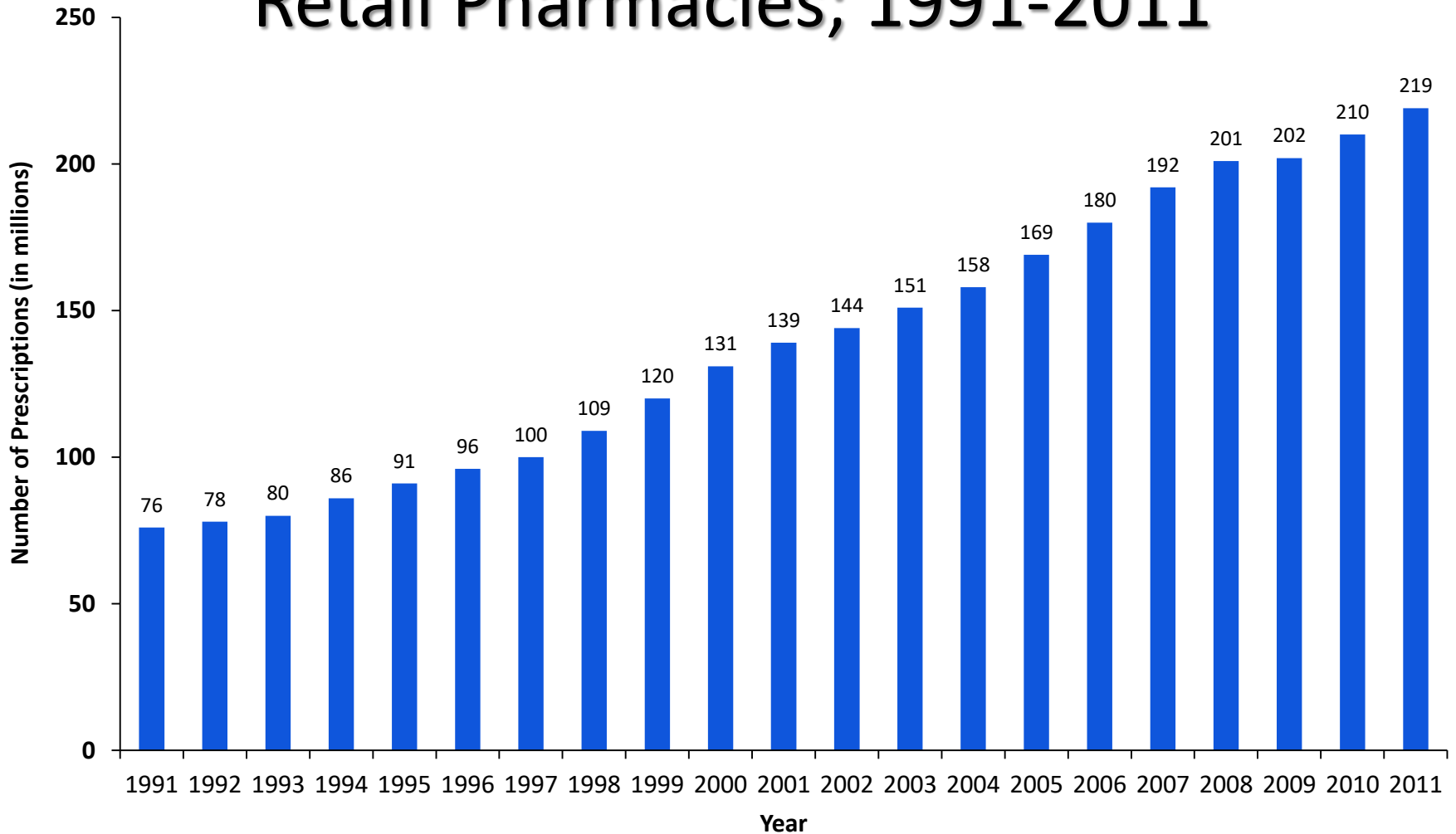
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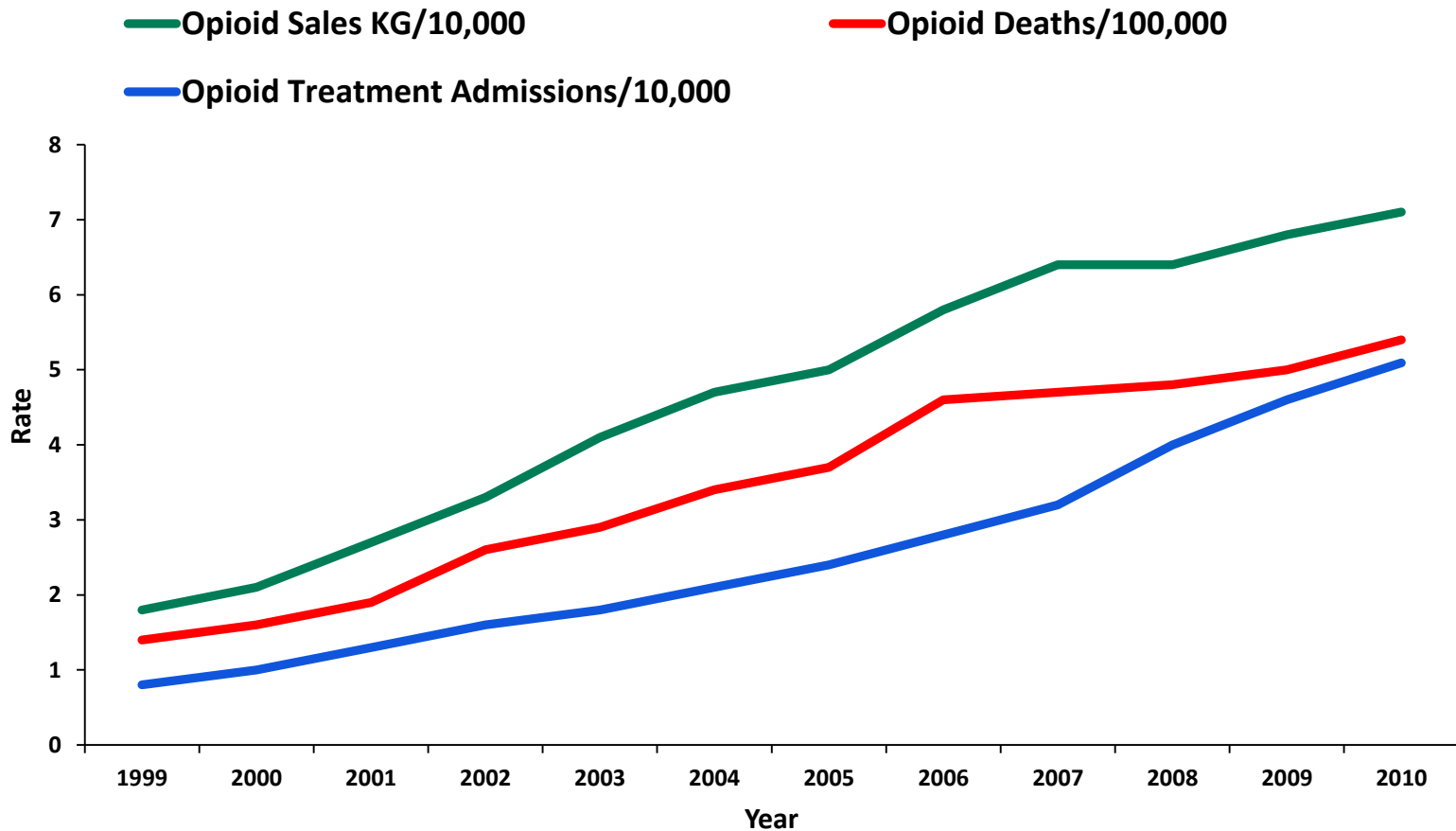
# Medical School Graduation 1989



# Opioid Prescriptions Dispensed by U.S. Retail Pharmacies; 1991-2011



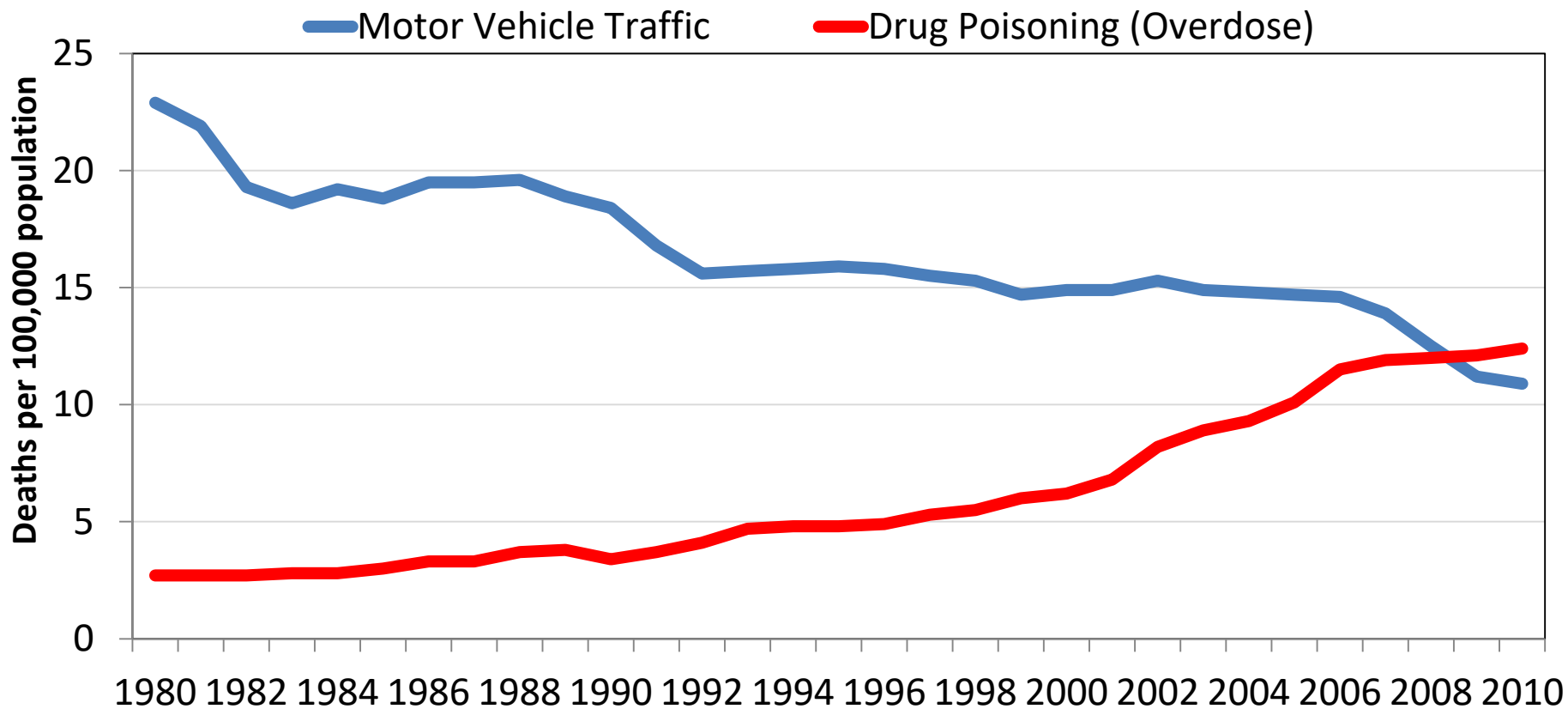
# Rates of Opioid Sales, Opioid Overdose Deaths, and Treatment Admission Rates, U.S. 1999-2010



SOURCES: National Vital Statistics System, 1999-2008; Automation of Reports and Consolidated Orders System (ARCOS) of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), 1999-2010; Treatment Episode Data Set, 1999-2009

[http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm60e1101a1.htm?s\\_cid=mm60e1101a1\\_w](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm60e1101a1.htm?s_cid=mm60e1101a1_w). Updated with 2009 mortality and 2010 treatment admission data.

# Motor Vehicle Traffic, Poisoning, and Drug Poisoning (Overdose) Death Rates United States, 1980–2010



# The Challenge of Chronic Opioid Therapy

- ***Given:***
  - Chronic opioid therapy may benefit some persons with chronic pain.
  - The risks of chronic opioid therapy appear to outweigh the benefits in a large percent of persons.
- ***How can we:***
  - ***safely*** utilize chronic opioid therapy for persons in chronic pain for whom opioids are ***effective?***
  - Recognize and manage those persons for whom chronic opioid therapy has failed?



# Safe Use of Chronic Opioid Therapy

- Educate yourself regarding the risks and benefits of chronic opioid therapy, avoiding mixing with other medicines/ETOH, driving risks
- Ask your doctor to complete an opioid agreement that lays out treatment goals and expectations
- Keep your medicine safe and secure to prevent diversion
- Ask your doctor for Narcan prescription

# Opioids Fail

*How can I know if opioids have failed me or my loved ones?*

# ***SafeRx Santa Cruz County:*** **Opioid Failure Definition**

- 1.) Are serious opioid adverse effects occurring?
- 2.) Are opioids being used appropriately?
- 3.) Are chronic opioid therapy treatment goals being achieved?

# Adverse Effects of Chronic Opioid Therapy

- Respiratory failure
- Constipation
- Nausea/vomiting
- Low blood pressure
- Itching
- Dry eyes
- Dry mouth/tooth decay
- Urinary retention
- Hyperalgesia
- Disruption of normal sleep
- Osteoporosis/fractures
- Decreased testosterone
- Sleepiness
- "brain fog"
- Depression/apathy
- Anxiety

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# Are opioids being used appropriately?

Acute risk of danger,  
Illegal activities  
Opioid use disorder  
Absence of Appropriate Dx

Lost/stolen Rx's "Chemical coping"  
Resistance to Rx change despite AEs/lack of benefit  
Rx's from multiple clinicians      Frequent ED/UC visits for pain  
Selling Rx's      Craving meds      Decline in fxn at home/work  
Frequent requests for early refills      Medication hoarding  
Multiple cancelled/no show appts      Unauth dose increases  
Opioid-related monopolization of visits  
Use of additional opioids other than prescribed

# Chronic Opioid Therapy Goals Achieved? (PEG) Scale

- ***“What number for 0-10 best describes your pain in the past week?”***
- ***“What number from 0-10 describes how, during the past week, pain has interfered with your enjoyment of life?”***
- ***“What number from 0-10 describes how, during the past week, pain has interfered with your general activity?”***

# What can I do if I think opioids have failed me or my loved ones?

- Wean down/off of opioids
  - slowly
- Functional restoration/exercise
- Behavioral health support
- Complementary therapies
- What if I can't wean?
  - Switch to Buprenorphine



# Buprenorphine

- A “partial opioid agonist”
  - Has pain relieving effect
  - Prevents withdrawal
- Safer
  - Respiratory suppression plateaus
- Less effect on brain
  - More alert
  - Less depression
- Maybe less constipating?

# Buprenorphine (cont.)

- Different names: Butrans, Belbuca, Suboxone, Subutex, Zubsolv
- Requires special 8 hour training to prescribe for opioid use disorder
- Usually requires authorization for insurance coverage
- Do you have to be in opioid withdrawal first?
- Ask your doctor for more information, referral to someone who can prescribe it.

# Health Care Apology

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