

The Rise in Stimulant Prescribing

May 2026

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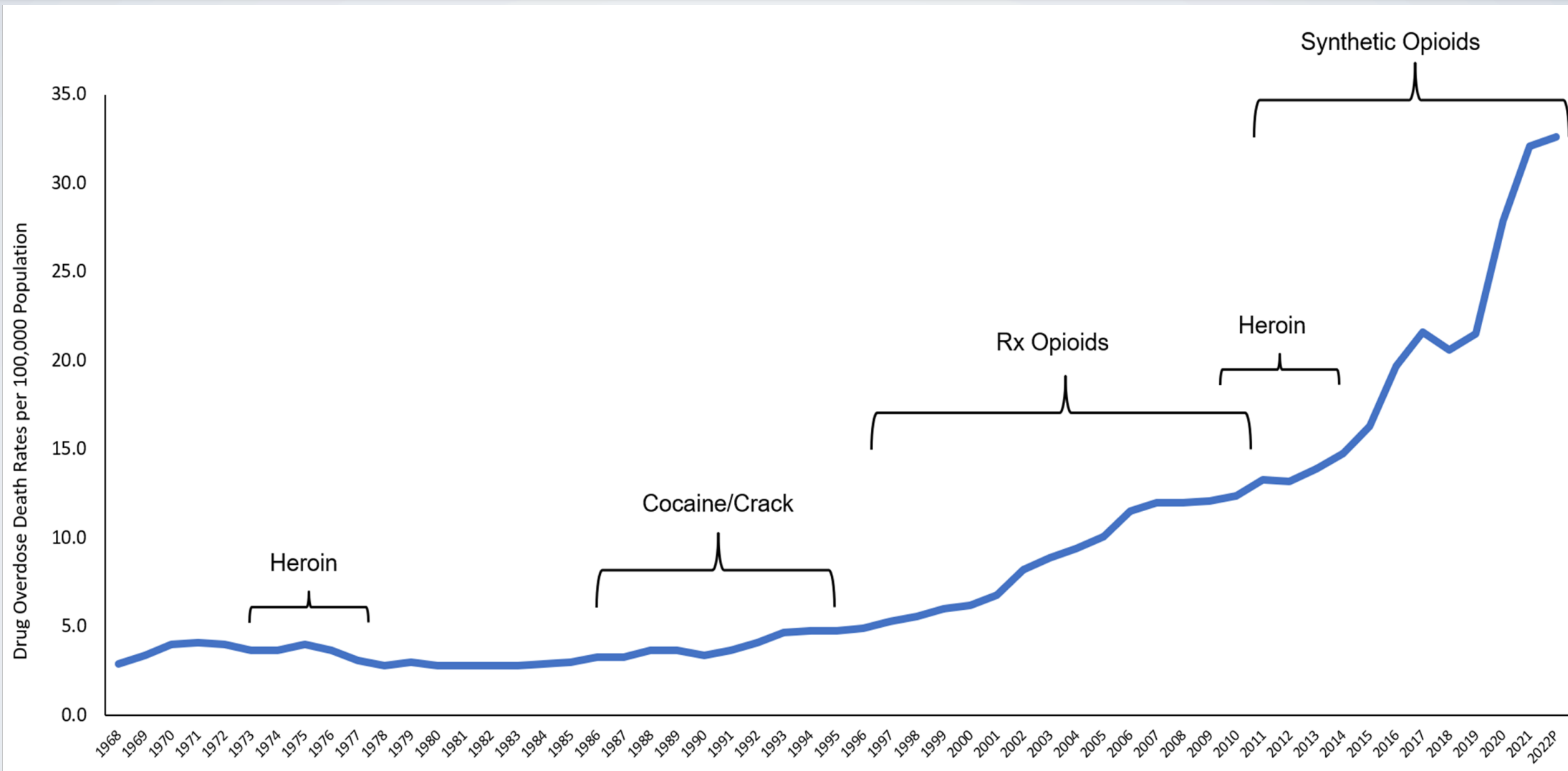


Virtually all U.S. regions have experienced rising overdose death rates over the past two decades.

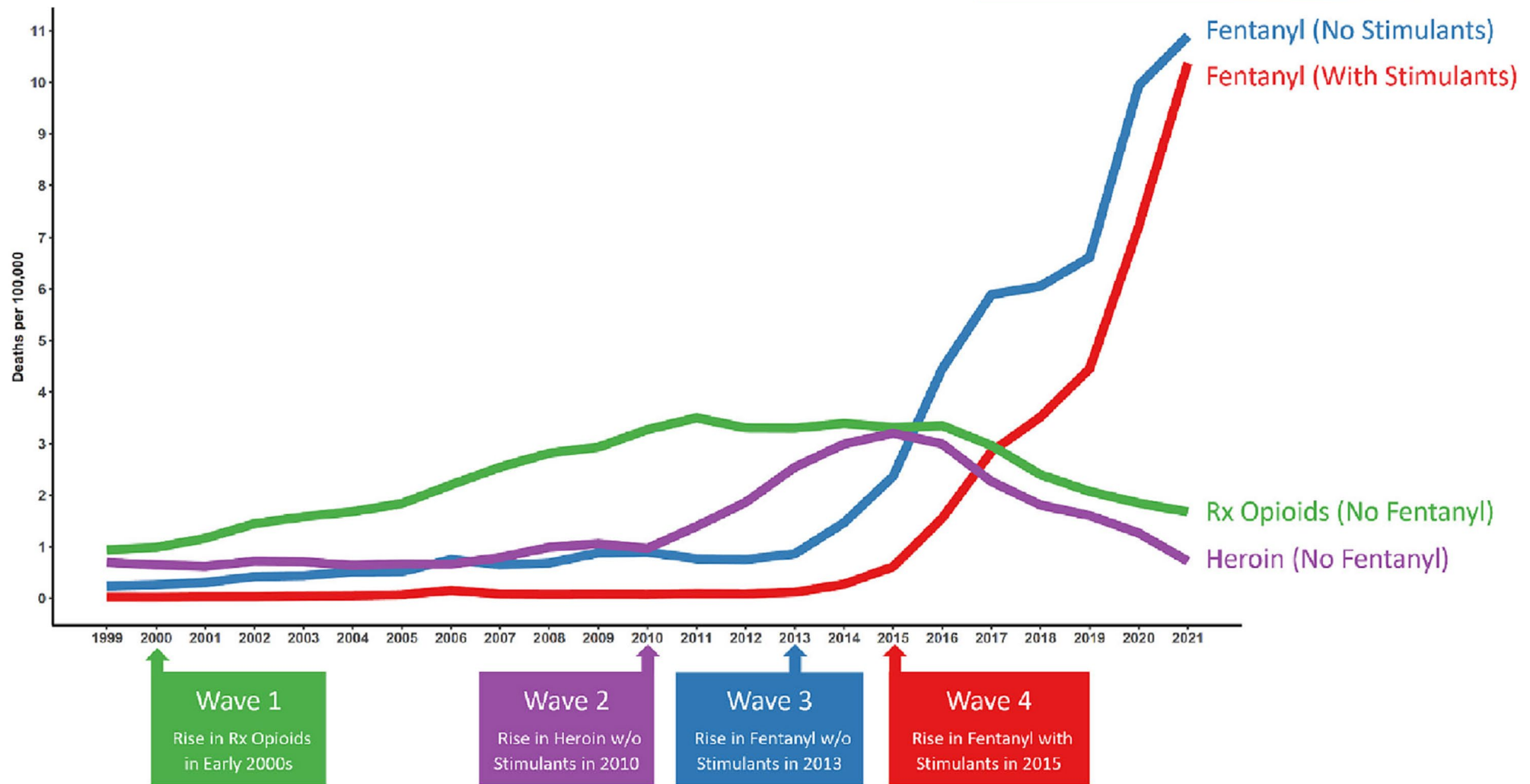
- 106,881 reported deaths in 2023
- 80,719 from opioids (prescription and illicit)
- 73,690 predicted deaths (May 2024 – April 2025)*

* CDC Provisional Drug Overdose Death Counts, accessed 01/07/2026

TRAJECTORY OF THE U.S. OVERDOSE CRISIS



CHARTING THE FOURTH WAVE: POLYSUBSTANCE TRENDS



HOW DID WE GET HERE? 1980



Vol. 302 No. 2

CORRESPONDENCE

ADDICTION RARE IN PATIENTS TREATED WITH NARCOTICS

To the Editor: Recently, we examined our current files to determine the incidence of narcotic addiction in 39,946 hospitalized medical patients' who were monitored consecutively. Although there were 11,882 patients with a history of addiction.

We conclude that despite widespread use of narcotic drugs in hospitals, the development of addiction is rare in medical patients with no history of addiction.

JANE PORTER
HERSHEL JICK, M.D.
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Waltham, MA 02154

Boston University Medical Center

1. Jick H, Miettinen OS, Shapiro S, Lewis GP, Siskind Y, Slone D. Comprehensive drug surveillance. *JAMA*. 1970; 213:1455-60.
2. Miller RR, Jick H. Clinical effects of meperidine in hospitalized medical patients. *J Clin Pharmacol*. 1978; 18:180-8.

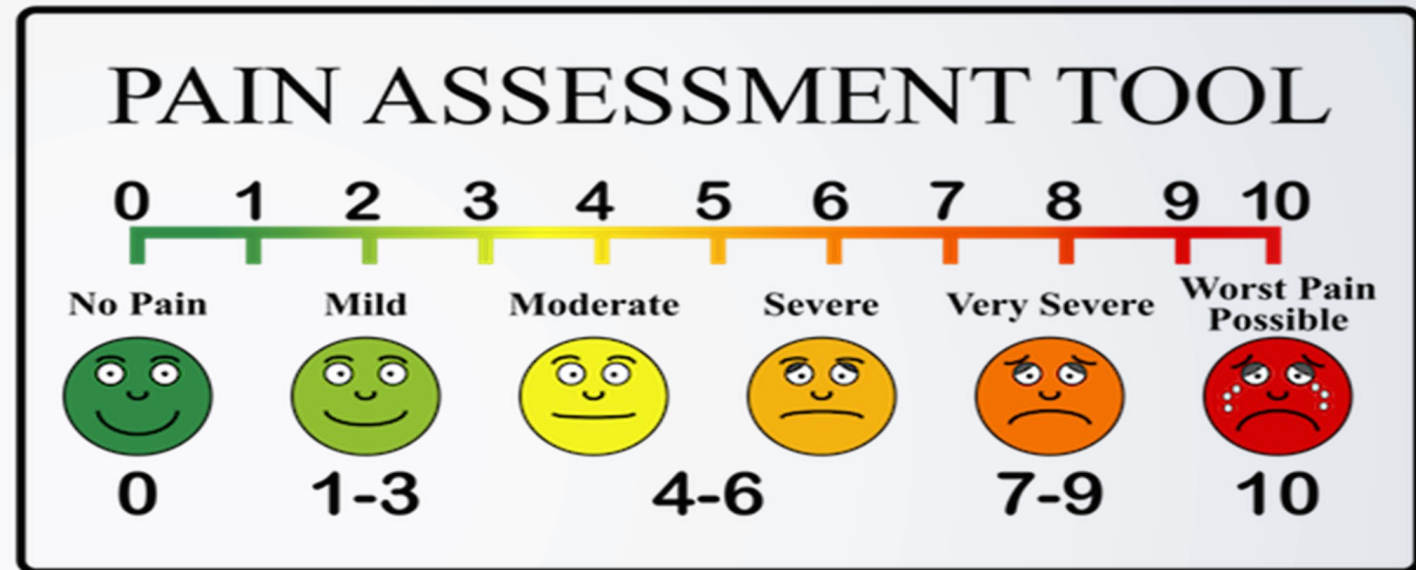
THE FIFTH VITAL SIGN



1990 – Initiated by the American Pain Society

2001 – Joint Commission (JCAHO) introduced standards to improve the care of patients in pain

1. Temperature
2. Heart Rate
3. Blood Pressure
4. Respiration
5. Pain



EXPLOITATION OF THE INTERNET - 2005



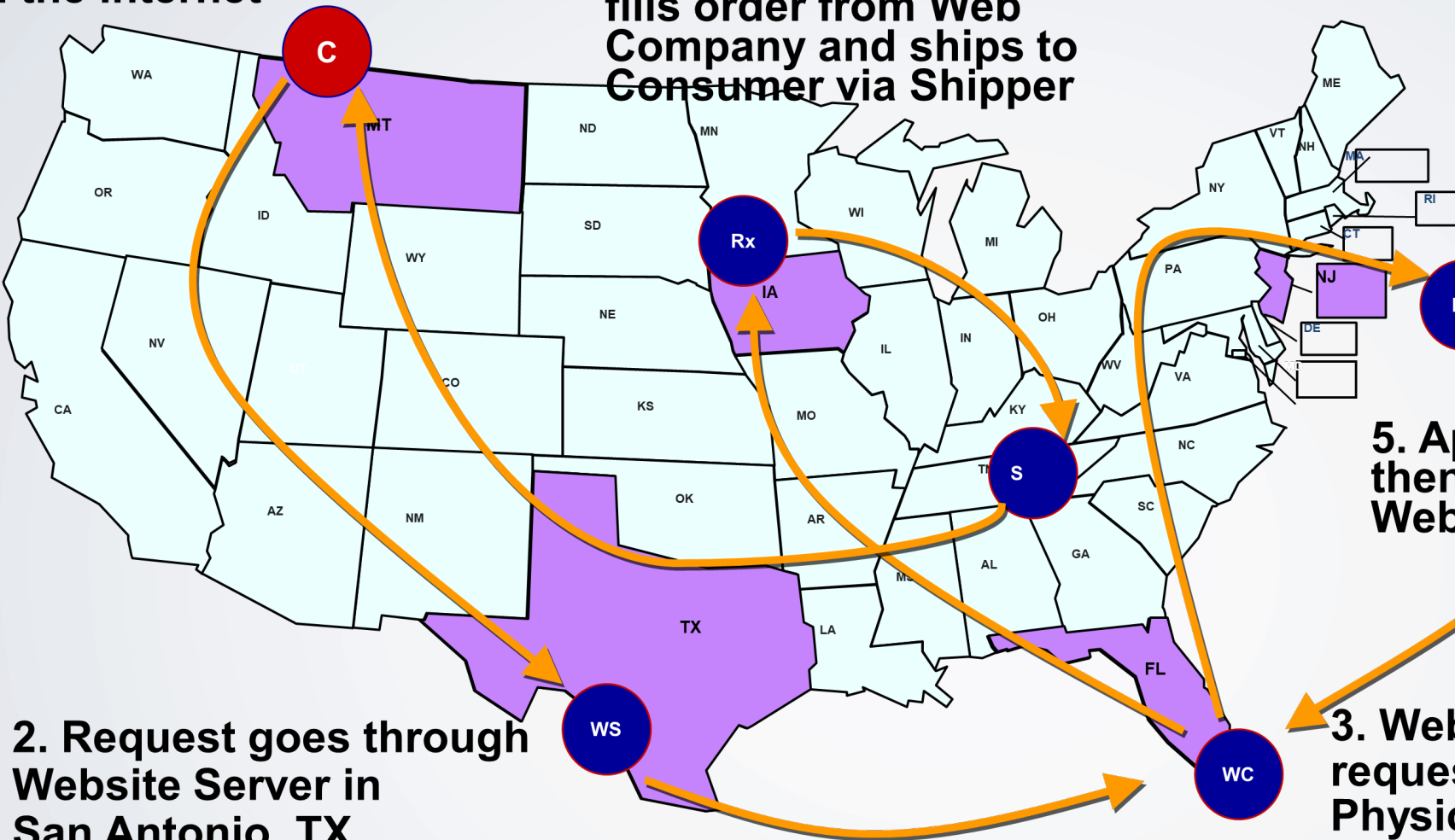
1. Consumer in Montana orders hydrocodone on the Internet

6. Pharmacy in Iowa fills order from Web Company and ships to Consumer via Shipper

4. Order is approved by Physician in New Jersey

5. Approved order then sent back to the Web Company

3. Web Company adds request to queue for Physician approval



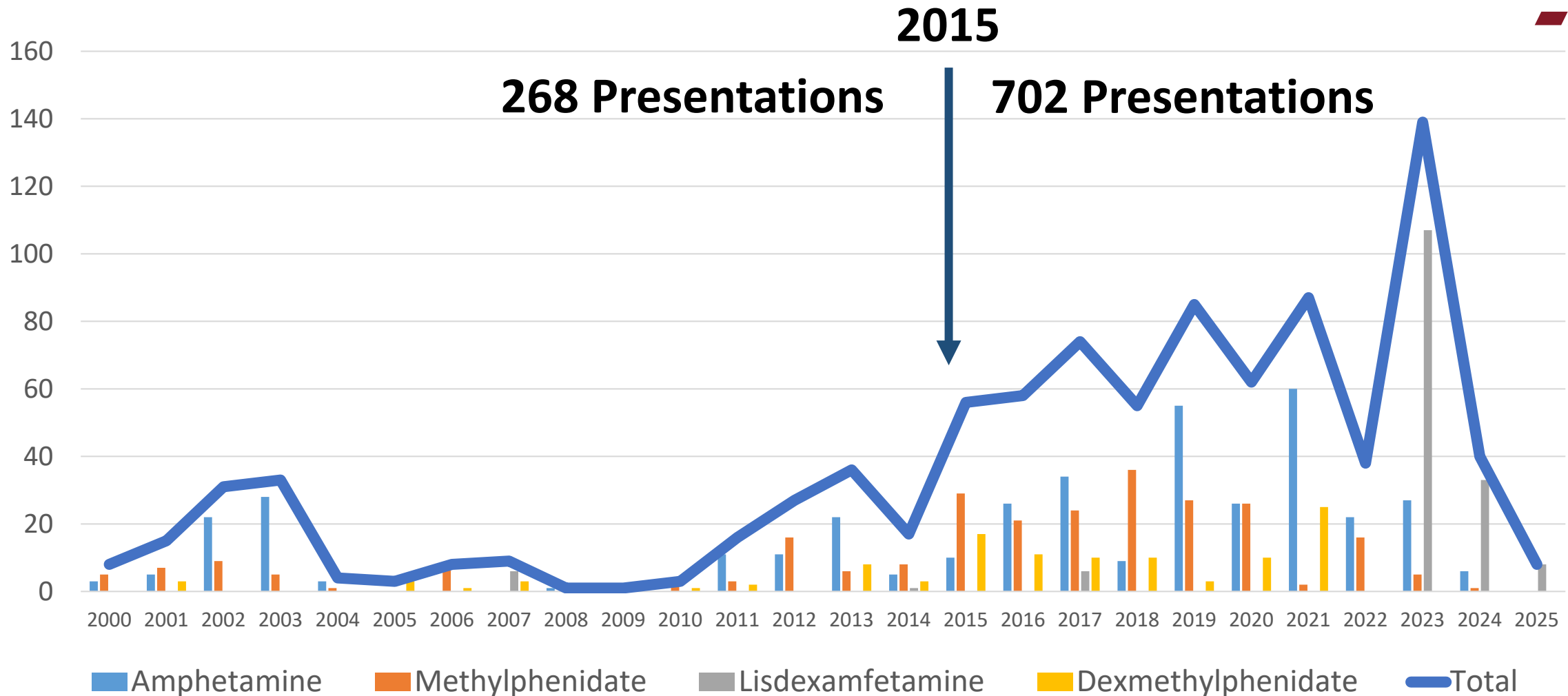
2. Request goes through Website Server in San Antonio, TX

COMPETITION – FDA DRUG APPROVALS



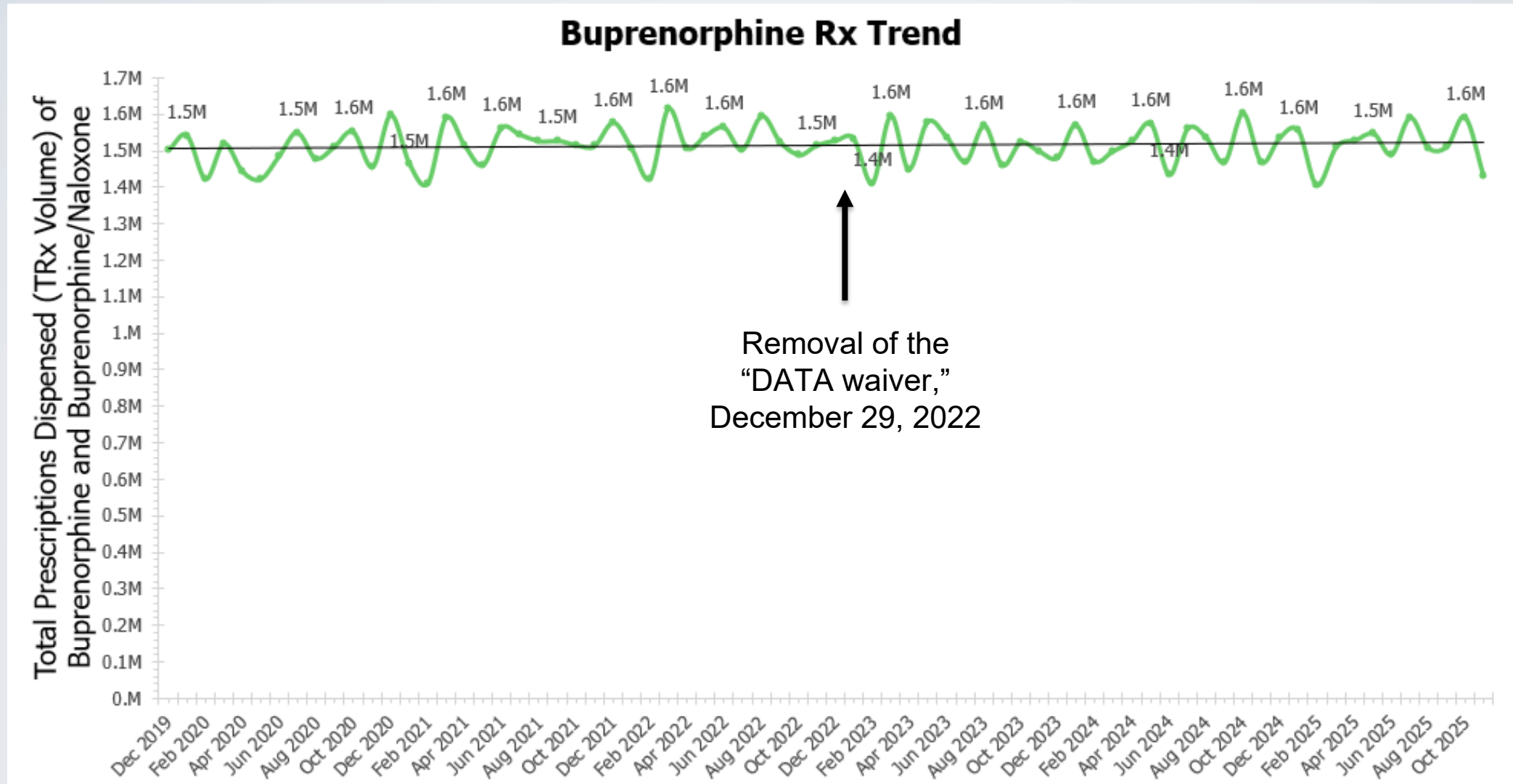
Source: FDA Orange Book, retrieved December 16, 2025

FDA DRUG APPROVALS



Source: FDA Orange Book, retrieved December 16, 2025

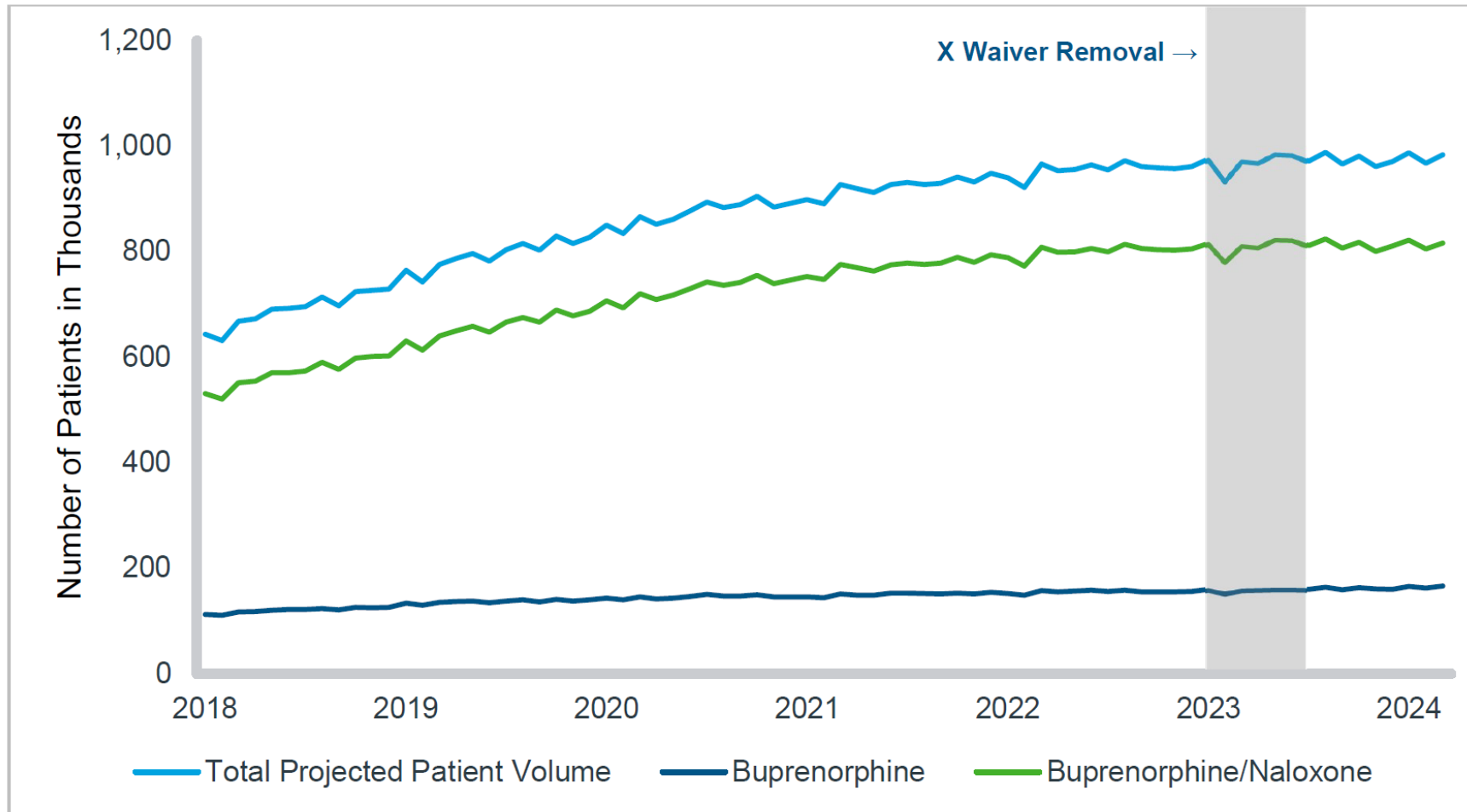
TREATMENT - BUPRENORPHINE



IQVIA BUPRENORPHINE REPORT

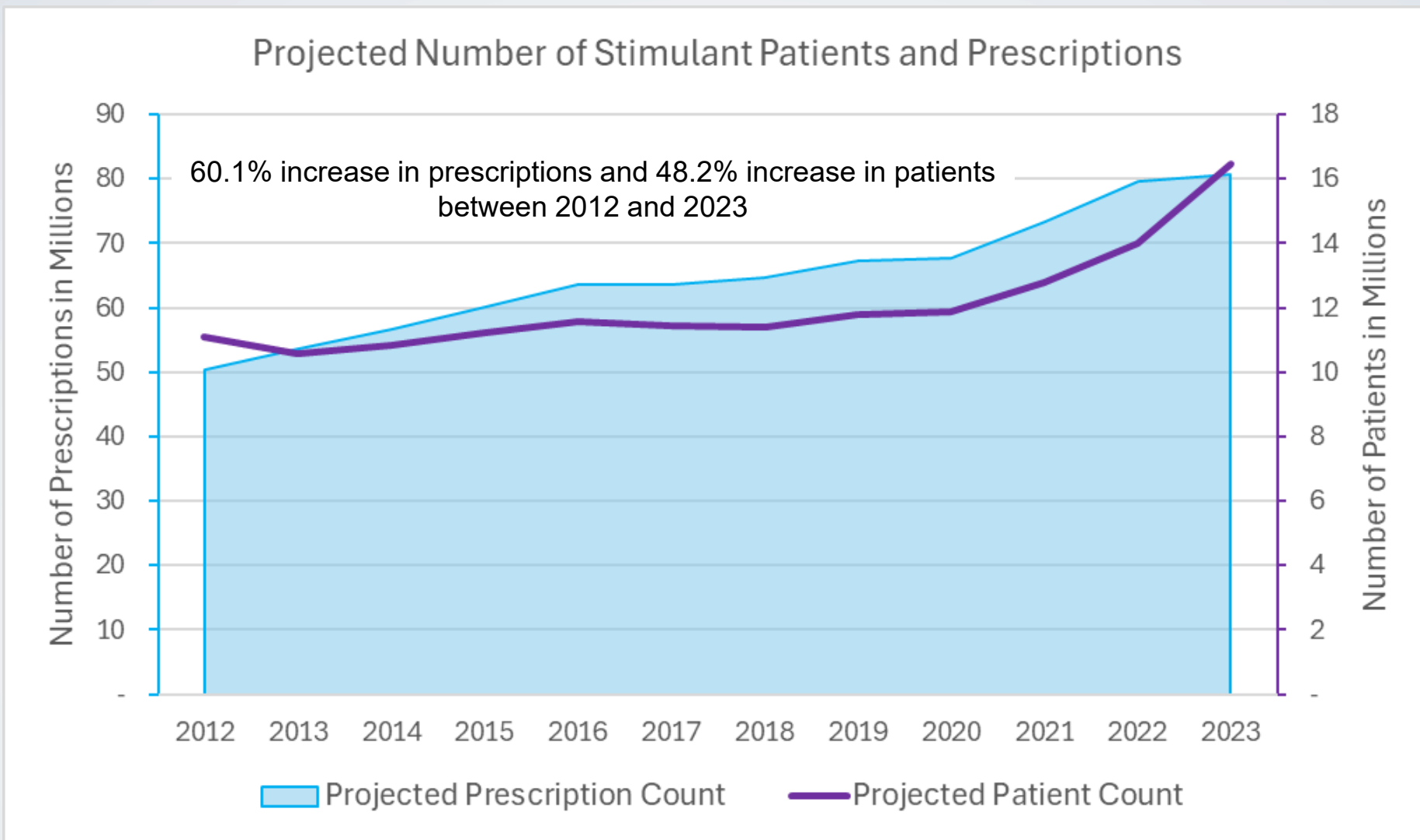


Figure 1: Monthly Projected Number of Buprenorphine Patients, Total and by Product (2018 – 2024)

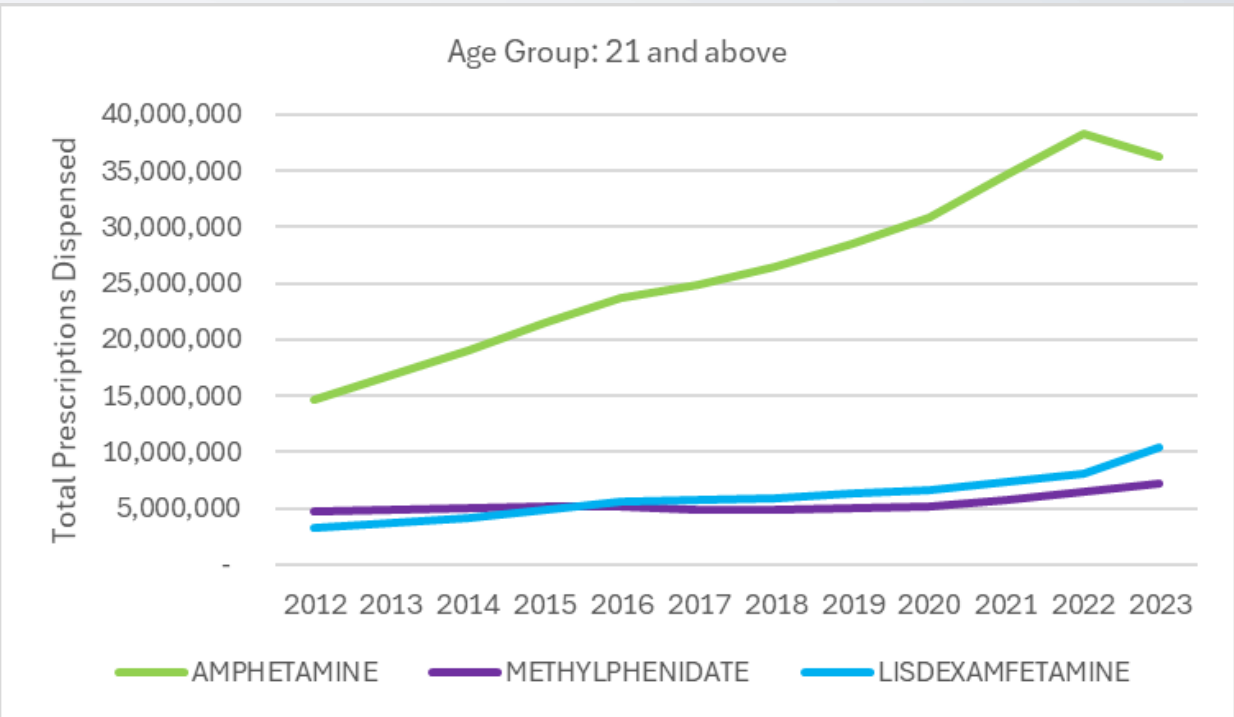
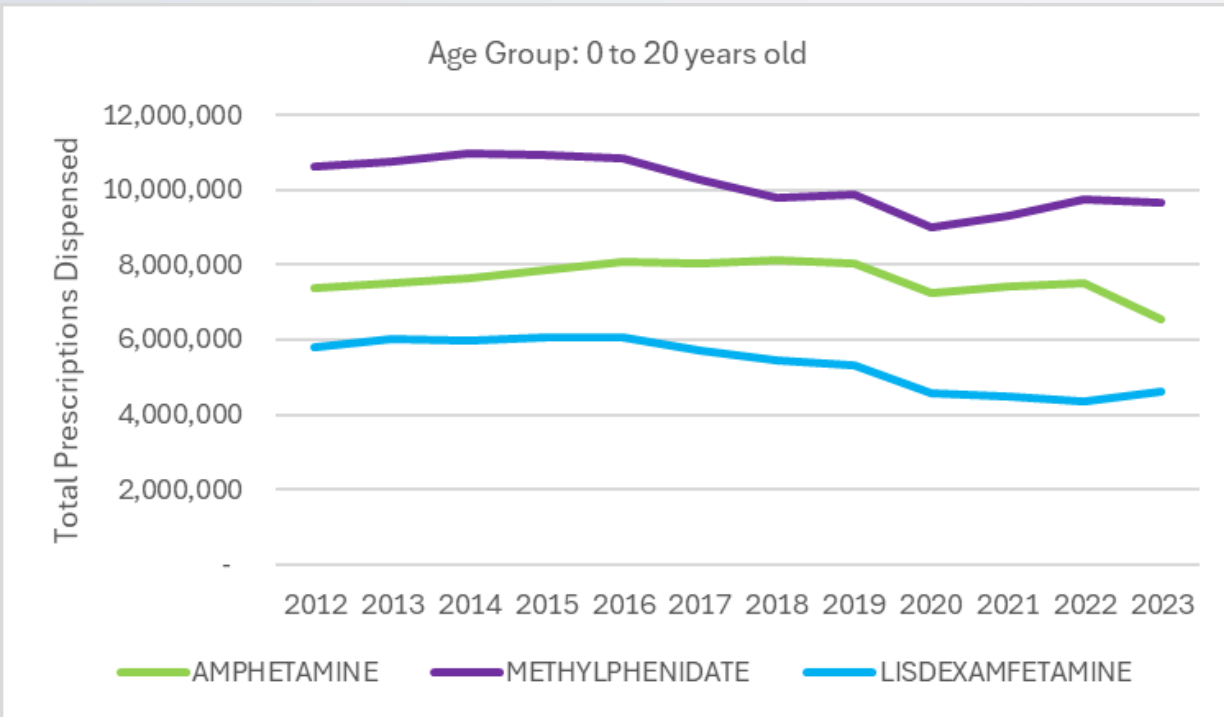


Note: December 2020 removed due to unreliable projection estimate

STIMULANT USE



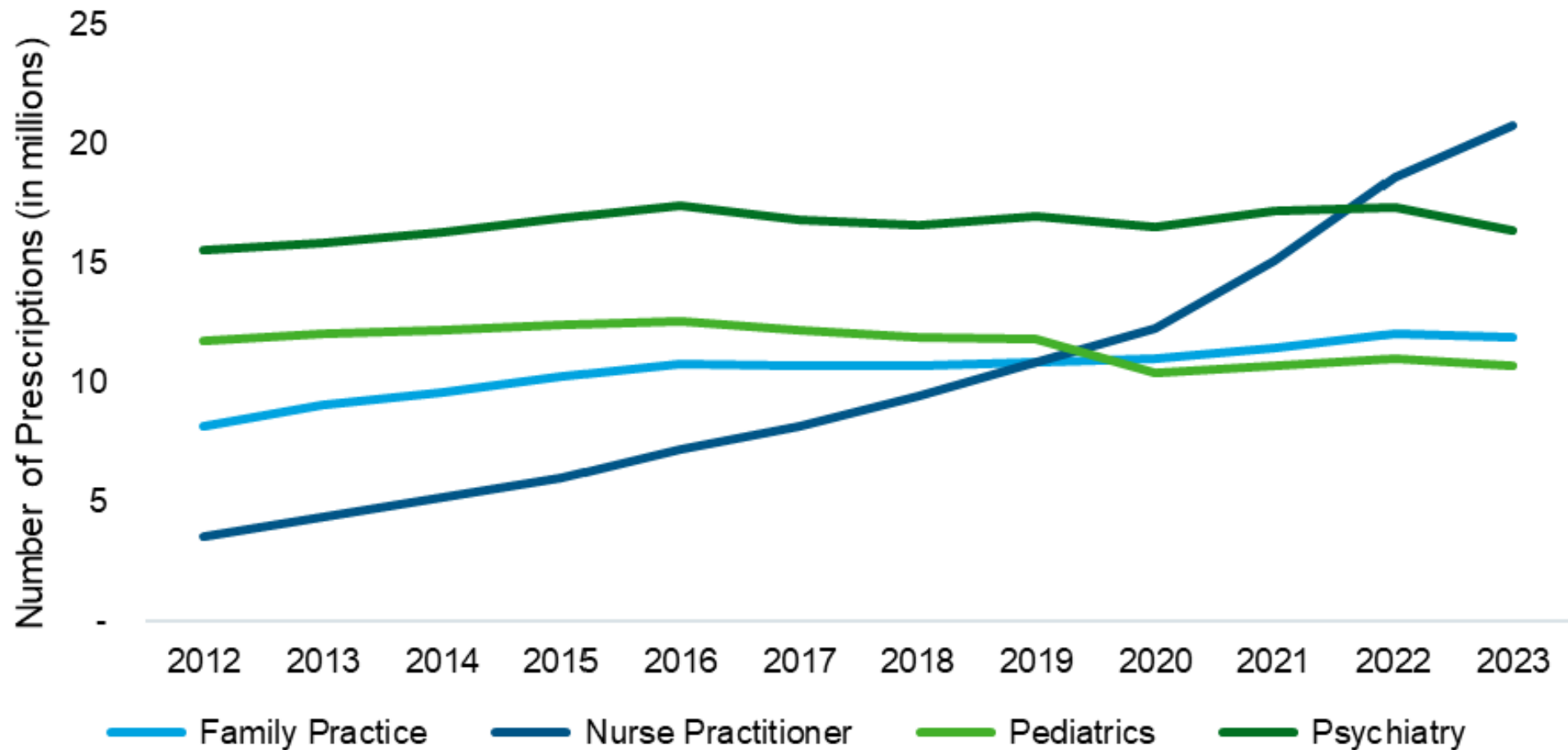
STIMULANT PRESCRIBING IN ADULTS



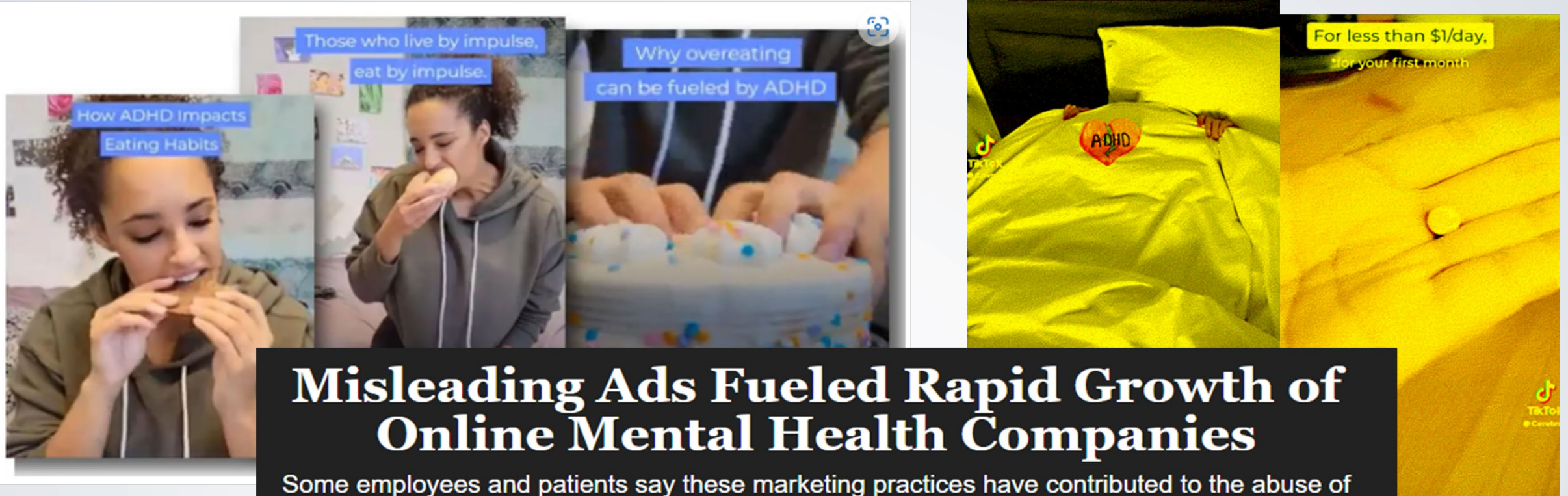
STIMULANT PRESCRIBERS BY SPECIALTY



Figure 4. Projected Stimulant Prescriptions by Top Prescriber Specialties (2012 – 2023)



DTC MARKETING – SOCIAL MEDIA



Misleading Ads Fueled Rapid Growth of Online Mental Health Companies

Some employees and patients say these marketing practices have contributed to the abuse of controlled substances

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

EASY ACCESS VIA TELEMEDICINE



Brightside Health

Individual Therapy
Medication Management

Treatment for anxiety, depression,
& insomnia

\$95 - \$349 monthly

Insurance Accepted

Video or Phone Sessions
Texting between sessions

Medication Prescribed

Cerebral

Individual Therapy
Medication Management

Treatment for anxiety,
depression, ADHD,
insomnia, addictions, & more






\$99 - \$325 monthly

Insurance Accepted


Video or Phone Sessions
Texting between sessions

Medication Prescribed

< With *ahead* there's a Simplified Treatment

-  1 Fill Out An Online Form
-  2 Prescriptions Delivered  5779
-  3 Appointments are online  396

@helloaheadco · 2/17
We help people manage ADHD. Get started now!
Promoted Music Pro



OBSERVATIONS ABOUT ONLINE INTERMEDIARIES

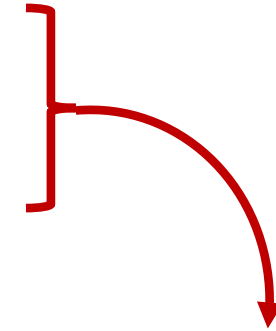


- Commercial and government insurance is NOT accepted. Therefore, patient is only payer.
- Only subscription based – NOT per visit – disincentive for practitioners to do any follow-ups in the same month. Patients who may suffer from suicidal thoughts or other serious ailments requiring more than one visit do not receive treatment during the month.
- All practitioners of telehealth primarily offer only one service and lack of individualized therapy. The one service always leads to one type of controlled substance.
- Percentage of controlled substances is extremely high (above 90 percent) instead of minority.
- Nurse Practitioners are the overwhelming majority of providers at these companies and not Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners (**PMHNPs**) for diagnosis of ADHD.

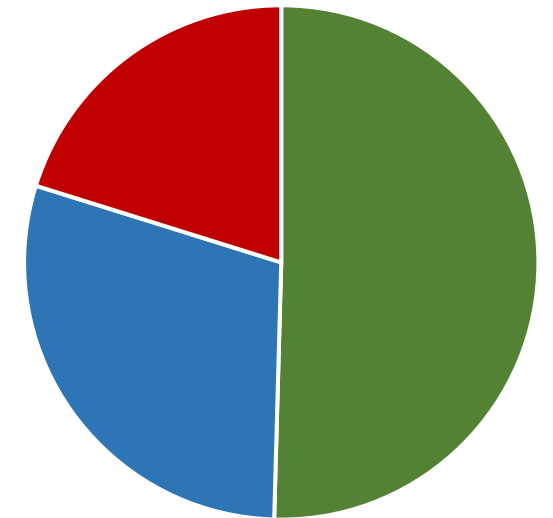


Drug Shortages for Controlled Substances

	March 2024	March 2025
Total Presentations	1894	1944
Total CS Presentations	396 (21%)	443 (23%)
Lisdexamfetamine	87	100
Amphetamine	73	73
Methylphenidate	39	55
Morphine	29	29
Hydromorphone	22	27
Fentanyl	20	30
Remifentanyl	9	9
Sufentanyl	4	4
Oxycodone	3	
Methamphetamine	2	2



Schedule II Stimulants



■ Available ■ Limited ■ Unavailable ■

80% of schedule II stimulants listed as being in Shortage are either:

- available
- limited availability

TIME AND SPACE FOR CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS



Top Ten Counterfeit Pill Imprints (Since 2013)

M / 30 (Oxycodone 30 mg)	A 215 (Oxycodone 30 mg)
AD / 30 (Amphetamine 30 mg)	XANAX / 2 (Alprazolam 2 mg)
b 974 / 30 (Amphetamine 30 mg)	dp / 30 (Amphetamine 30 mg)
S903 (Alprazolam 2 mg)	B707 (Alprazolam 2 mg)
G 3722 (Alprazolam 2 mg)	GG 249 (Alprazolam 2 mg)

Top Ten Pill Imprints Seen As Counterfeits by Pill Count

(Select Image to View Stats for the Imprint)

179,933,356

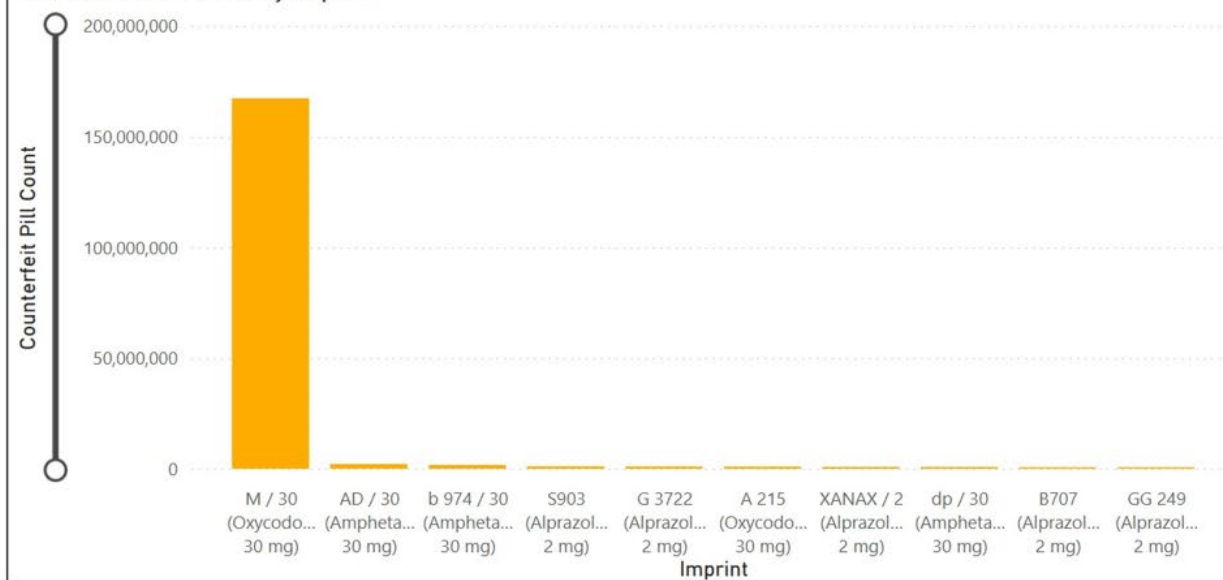
Counterfeit Pill Count

40,348

Counterfeit Exhibit Count

Reset All Filters

Counterfeit Pill Count by Imprint



HALLMARKS OF A DRUG OVERDOSE EPIDEMIC



- ✓ Public Health Concern - undertreatment of pain
- ✓ Free market forces – competition, DTC advertising, social media
- ✓ Prescription growth, expansion
- ✓ Intervention – Public Health and Public Safety Officials – limits supply; drug shortages; expanding treatment options
- ✓ Transnational Criminal Organization Exploitation – counterfeiting
- ✓ Lagging Use of Treatment Medications – especially when they are controlled substances

Thank You