



# Prescription Drug Abuse and Overdose: “A Public Health Emergency”

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# The problem of drug overdoses in Massachusetts

- Car accidents is the number one cause of accidental death in the country, **except** for 16 states where more people die from drug overdose. **Massachusetts** is one of those 16 states (CDC, 2009)
- In Massachusetts **2 people die every day** from drug overdoses (MDPH, 2009)

# The problem of drug overdoses in Ashland

- 16 Overdoses in Ashland in past year (many 1<sup>st</sup> time users)

Most recent last weekend

Fatal overdose last month

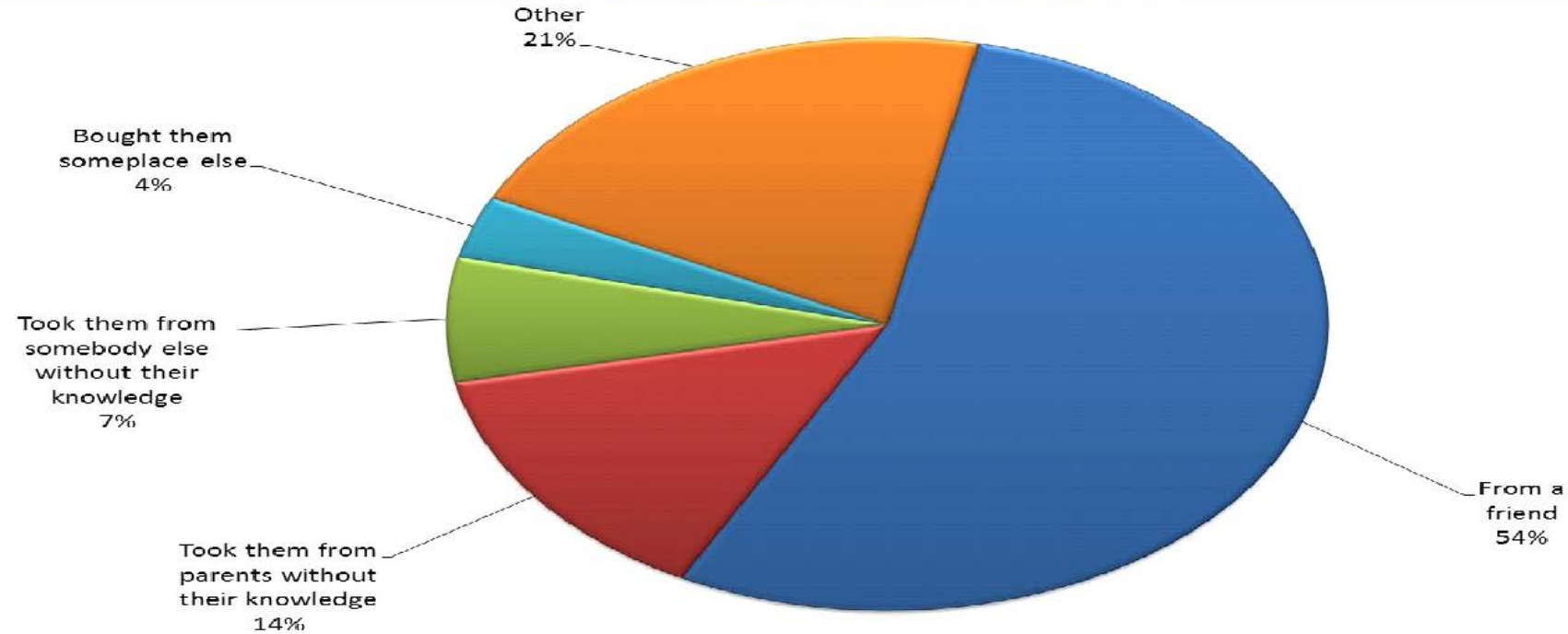
# Most commonly used opioids

- Heroin
- Codeine
- Demerol
- Morphine
- Darvocet
- Fentanyl
- Dilaudid
- Methadone
- Opium
- Hydrocodone
- Oxycodone
- Levorphanol
- Vicodin
- OxyContin
- Tylenol 3
- Tylox
- Percocet
- Percodan



# Where They Come From

**Figure 2-9. Access to Prescription Drugs\*, 2012**  
**Ashland High School (Grades 9-12)**  
*MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey*



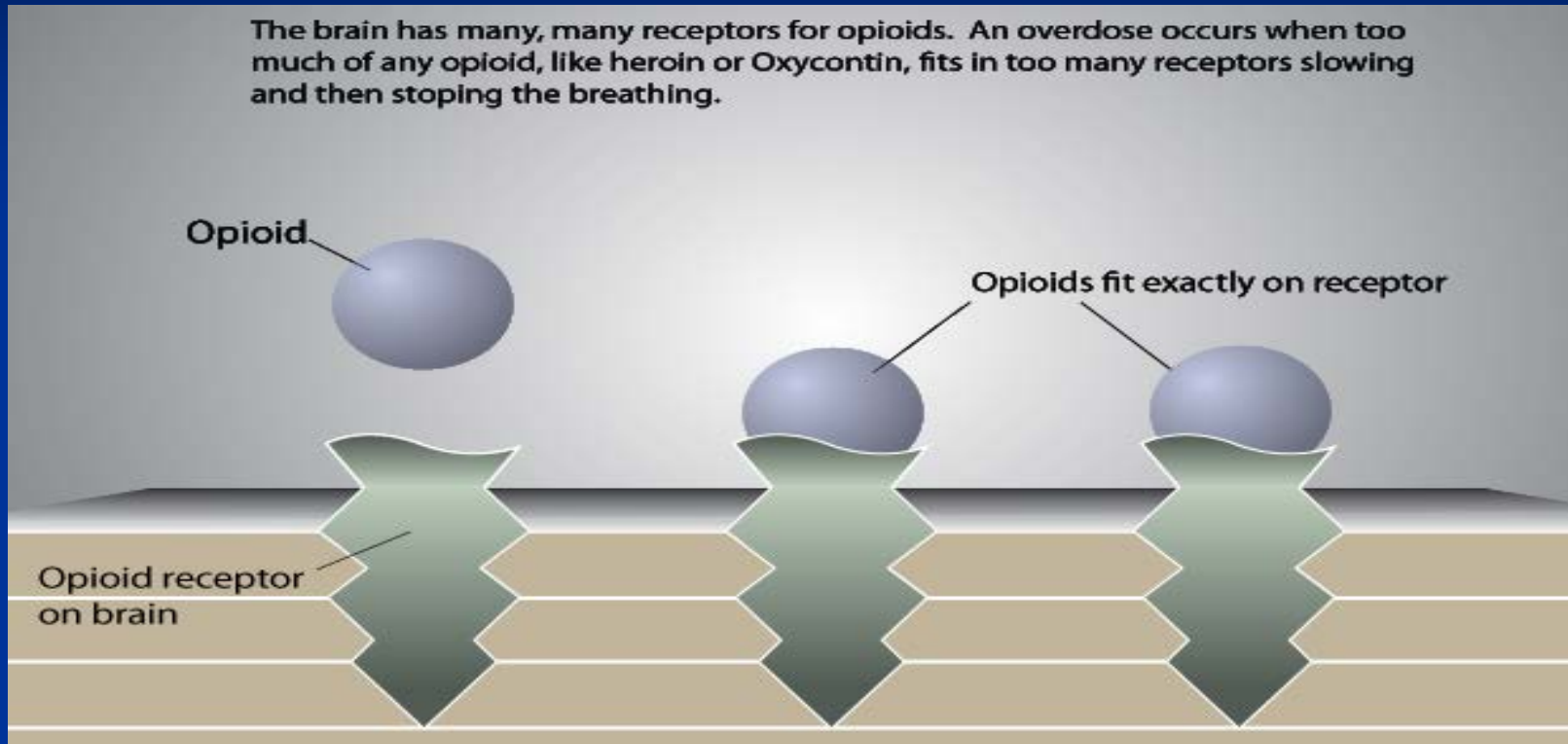
\* Among students who misused prescription drugs in their lifetime



# Pills to Heroin

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- Pills getting harder to get, more expensive-
- Turn to heroin, cheaper, easier for drug dealers to get, adulterated
- Heroin-Small percentage of population affected but those affected are addicted
- Once addicted very hard to recover

# What is an opioid OD?



- when someone is having an opioid overdose, they stop breathing and could die
- OD= Death/debilitating stroke like effects
- Call 911- EMS response, police will not arrest-lifesaving is priority



# Community wide strategy

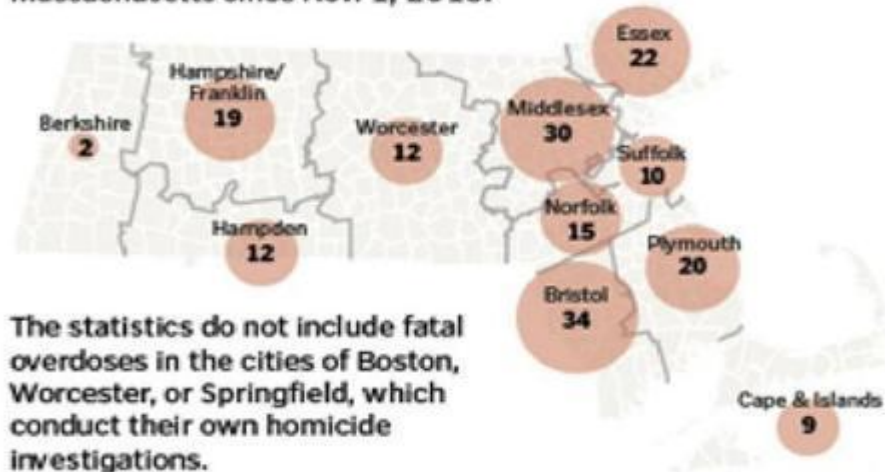
- **Prevention**- (best chance of success) education, disposal of unused medications
- **Intervention**- early
- **Treatment** –many community based resources
- **Enforcement**- for crimes associated with drug addictions





## Heroin overdoses by county

State Police say heroin overdoses caused 185 deaths in Massachusetts since Nov. 1, 2013.



The statistics do not include fatal overdoses in the cities of Boston, Worcester, or Springfield, which conduct their own homicide investigations.

SOURCE: Massachusetts State Police

DAVID BUTLER/BOSTON GLOBE

- Once decision is made to illicitly use opiates you may lose ability to not use them
- Families/lives changed forever

Thank you!