

04/25/2022

# Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, 2022

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Epidemiology, Drug Surveillance Unit



# THE PRESCRIPTION DRUG MONITORING PROGRAM (PDMP)

The purpose of this report is to describe opioid prescribing patterns in Georgia during 2022. Prescription data from the Georgia Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) were analyzed by the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) Epidemiology Program Drug Surveillance Unit. Certain prescribing practices are considered high-risk, and may predispose patients to opioid use disorder and overdose, hence contributing to the growing opioid epidemic (for more information about the opioid epidemic in Georgia, see the Georgia opioid overdose surveillance reports available at <https://dph.georgia.gov/drug-surveillance-unit>). These prescribing practices are presented as PDMP indicators in this report; detailed analyses of the PDMP data were conducted to measure the total number of opioid prescriptions, number of patients receiving opioids, drug type, days dispensed, and other indicators of prescribing such as opioid and benzodiazepine prescriptions.

In 2016, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released opioid prescribing guidelines for healthcare providers for pain management (<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/rr/rr7103a1.htm>). Appropriate prescribing and adhering to these CDC guidelines to prevent problematic prescribing may help improve patient care and safety and decrease the risk of opioid use disorder and overdose. Data in this report will be used to educate partners and inform prevention efforts across the state.

The PDMP can help prescribers and dispensers of controlled substances identify patients who are at risk of a substance use disorder, who “doctor shop”, or who are prescribed dangerous amounts and/or combinations of controlled substances. PDMP data is only accessible to prescribers or dispensers, who can use it to help identify inappropriate prescribing practices. The PDMP does not interfere with appropriate, professional prescribing and dispensing; it is intended only to help eliminate duplicative prescribing, overprescribing, and diversion of controlled substances. PDMP data are also used to support and inform Georgia’s overarching statewide opioid and substance use response strategic plan, which spans a myriad of agencies and activities.

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## PDMP Requirements

Since July 1, 2017, dispensers have been required by Georgia law ([https://dph.georgia.gov/sites/dph.georgia.gov/files/HB249\\_law.pdf](https://dph.georgia.gov/sites/dph.georgia.gov/files/HB249_law.pdf)) to enter prescription information for any Schedule II-V controlled substance within 24 hours of dispensing. Prescribers were required to register into the PDMP system by January 1, 2018. Beginning July 1, 2018, prescribers are required to check the PDMP before prescribing schedule II opioids and cocaine derivatives, or benzodiazepines, with some exceptions (<https://dph.georgia.gov/pdmp>). The PDMP is a tool for prescribers to review a patient’s prescription history to assist with appropriate and safe prescribing of controlled substances.

Only prescribers and dispensers who practice in Georgia are required to use the PDMP. Prescribers and dispensers are allowed to register two delegates (staff without a DEA number) per shift or rotation to check the PDMP and retrieve patient prescription histories.

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## PDMP Data Sharing

Georgia law (2017 Georgia House Bill 249) allows DPH to share PDMP prescription information with electronic health record systems, and other States, including law enforcement from other states through subpoenas. Law enforcement agencies may need these data when they are conducting investigations into inappropriate prescribing or dispensing of controlled substances.

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## Georgia Opioid and Substance Misuse Response

### **For more information:**

- County level data and other Georgia drug surveillance reports:  
<https://dph.georgia.gov/drug-surveillance-unit>
- Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) Main Opioid Page:  
<https://dph.georgia.gov/stopopioidaddiction>
- Georgia drug overdose mortality interactive maps and statistics:  
<https://oasis.state.ga.us/PageDirect.aspx?referer=MortalityDrugOverdoses>
- Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) information, GA PDMP Overview, and FAQs:  
<https://dph.georgia.gov/pdmp>

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*Note: The data in this report should not be compared to reports prior to 2021 due to changes in data processing.*

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## Georgia PDMP, 2022: Key Findings

Georgia saw improvements in opioid prescribing practices from 2021 to 2022, as evidenced by these PDMP indicators:

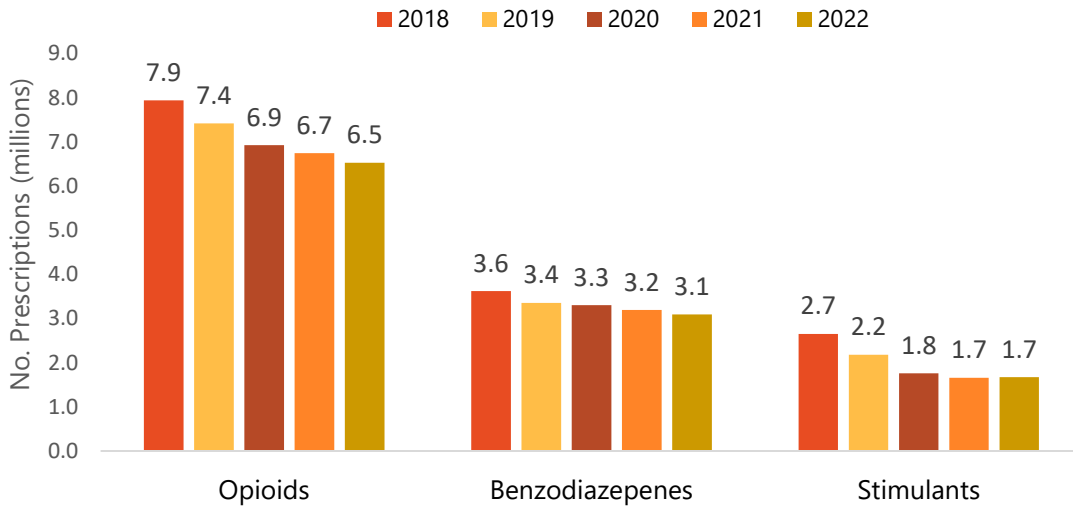
- ❖ In 2022, there were 6,525,725 opioid prescriptions dispensed to 1,867,887 patients in Georgia. These prescriptions averaged 18.0 days of opioids dispensed per prescription.
- ❖ From 2021 to 2022, the number of opioid prescriptions statewide decreased by 3%, benzodiazepine prescriptions by 3%, and stimulants increased by 1%.
- ❖ The number of patients receiving opioid prescriptions did not change from 2021 to 2022. The average number of days dispensed per opioid prescription decreased by 1%.
- ❖ In the first quarter of 2021 (Q1), there were 1,669,678 opioid prescriptions dispensed compared to 1,626,586 prescriptions in the last quarter of 2022 (Q4).
- ❖ From 2021 to 2022, the rate of opioid prescriptions dispensed in Georgia decreased by 4% among persons aged 5-54 years, 3% among those aged 55-64 years, increased by 2% among those aged 65-74 years, increased by 7% among those aged 75-84 years, and increased by 3% among those aged 85+. Opioid prescriptions decreased by 5% among males and 3% among females.
- ❖ High opioid dosages are associated with an increased risk of opioid use disorder and overdose; the 2022 CDC opioid prescribing guidelines recommended that daily opioid dosages should not exceed 90 morphine milligram equivalents (MME) per day. The percent of patients in Georgia who were receiving an average daily dose of  $\geq 90$  (MME) of opioids decreased by 4% from Quarter 1 (Q1) 2021 to Q4 2022.
- ❖ Hydrocodone, Oxycodone, and Tramadol were the most-prescribed opioids in Georgia during both 2021 and 2022.
- ❖ The number of registered PDMP users increased by 7% from December 2021 to December 2022.
- ❖ Patient queries by prescribers (or their delegates) and dispensers increased from 11.7 million queries in 2021 to 13.9 million queries in 2022.

## PDMP Data Indicators

<b>Data Source</b>
All schedule II-V drug prescriptions dispensed and reported to the Georgia Prescription Drug Monitoring Program during 2018–2022.
<b>PDMP Indicator Description</b>
<p><b><i>Opioid analgesic prescriptions</i></b></p> <p>Opioid analgesic-controlled substance prescriptions dispensed and reported to the PDMP. Drugs administered to patients by substance abuse treatment programs are usually excluded from PDMP files and therefore are not captured by this indicator. Additional exclusion criteria include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drugs not typically used in outpatient settings or otherwise not critical for calculating dosages in morphine milligram equivalents (MME), such as cough and cold formulations including elixirs, and combination products containing antitussives, decongestants, antihistamines, and expectorants;</li> <li>• All buprenorphine products. Rate is calculated per 1,000 population (Georgia residents). Rate is age-adjusted except when age categories are presented. County level prescription rates are age adjusted.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Opioid prescription patients</i></b></p> <p>The number of individual patients receiving an opioid analgesic controlled substance prescription that was dispensed and reported to the PDMP. Rate is calculated per 1,000 population (Georgia residents). Rate is age-adjusted except when age categories are presented.</p>
<p><b><i>Days per opioid prescriptions</i></b></p> <p>The average number of days of opioid analgesics supplied per prescription.</p>
<p><b><i>Patients receiving avg. daily dose <math>\geq</math> 90 morphine milligram equivalents</i></b></p> <p>% of patients with an average of <math>\geq</math>90 MME of opioid analgesic drugs prescribed per day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numerator: the number of patients with an average of <math>\geq</math>90 MME of opioid analgesic drugs prescribed per day</li> <li>• Denominator: state residents who received an opioid analgesic prescription</li> </ul> <p>Average MME per day is calculated from total number of MMEs from all-drugs prescribed per day, inclusive of overlapping prescriptions of either the same and/ or differing drugs, divided by the total number of prescription days</p>
<b>Other Definitions or Limitations</b>
Not all out of state pharmacies report to the Georgia PDMP, therefore some prescriptions obtained in another state, or by mail, could be missing from these data.
<p>Some 2021 prescription data were missing sex and age (&lt;2% missing), therefore the race and age data represents only prescriptions for which sex and age where completed.</p> <p>Rate indicates the number of events that occurred among Georgia residents per 1,000 population using 2020 census data as the denominator, and all rates are age-adjusted unless age category is presented.</p> <p>We report on three categories of controlled substances in this report, these categories include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opioids: Buprenorphine, Butorphanol, Codeine, Dezocine, Dihydrocodeine, Fentanyl, Fentanyl, Hydrocodone, Hydromorphone, Meperidine, Methadone, Morphine, Nalbuphine, Opiate Agonists, Oxycodone, Oxymorphone, Pentazocine, Tapentadol, Tramadol, and other opioids</li> <li>• Benzodiazepines: Alprazolam, Chlordiazepoxide, Clonazepam, Clorazepate, Diazepam, Estazolam, Flurazepam, Lorazepam, Oxazepam, Temazepam, Triazolam, and other benzodiazepines</li> </ul> <p>Stimulants: Amphetamine, Benzphetamine, Desoxyephedrine, Dexmethylphenidate, Dextroamphetamine, Lisdexamfetamine, Methylphenidate, and other stimulants.</p>

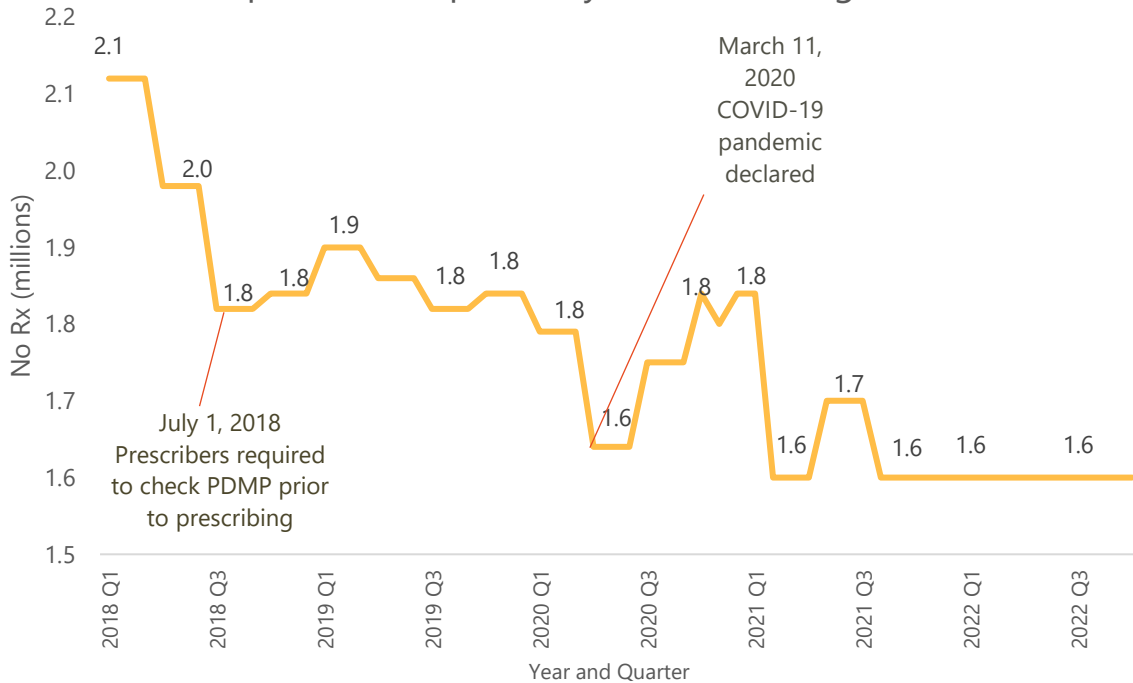
# Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Data Indicators

## Prescriptions by Drug Type and Year, Georgia, 2018-2022



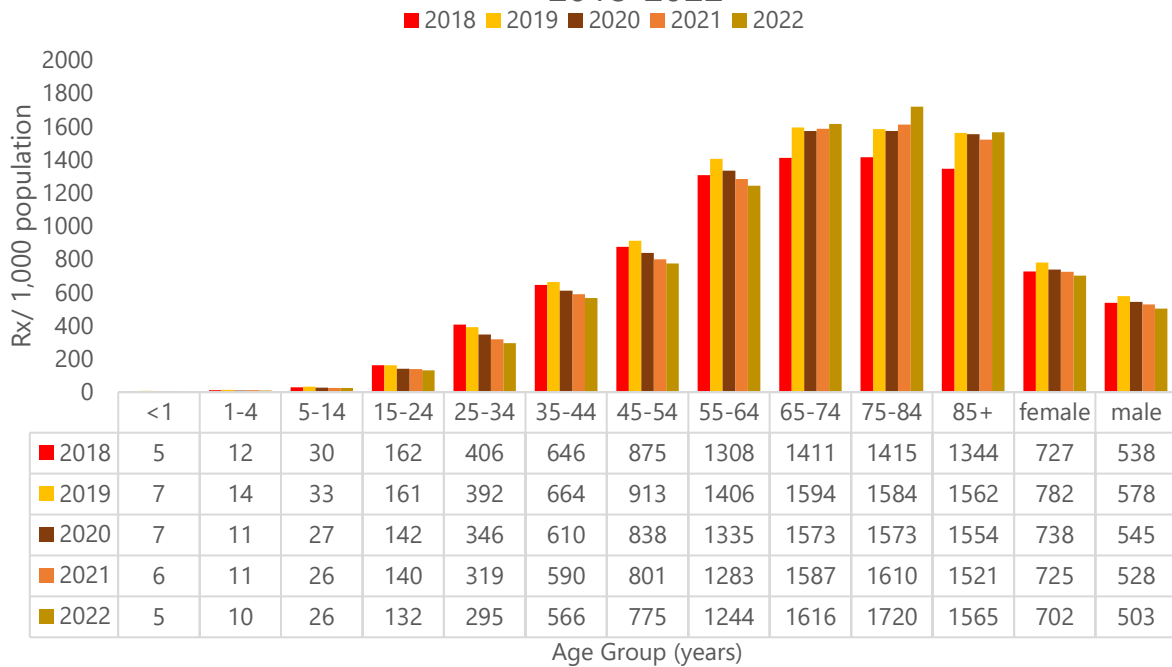
- From 2021 to 2022, the number of opioid prescriptions decreased by 3%, benzodiazepine prescriptions by 3%, and stimulants increased by 1%.
- Opioids are the most frequently prescribed controlled substance in Georgia, followed by benzodiazepines and stimulants.

## Opioid Prescriptions by Quarter, Georgia, 2018-2022



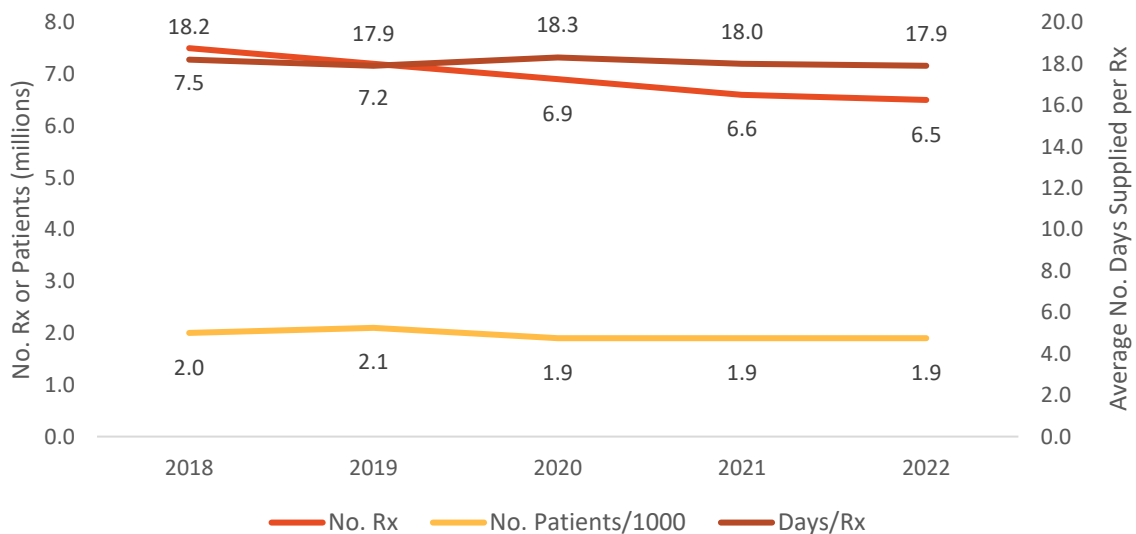
- In the first quarter of 2021, there were 1,643,937 opioid prescriptions dispensed compared to 1,586,318 prescriptions in the last quarter of 2022.

## Opioid Prescription Rates, by Age and Sex, Georgia, 2018-2022



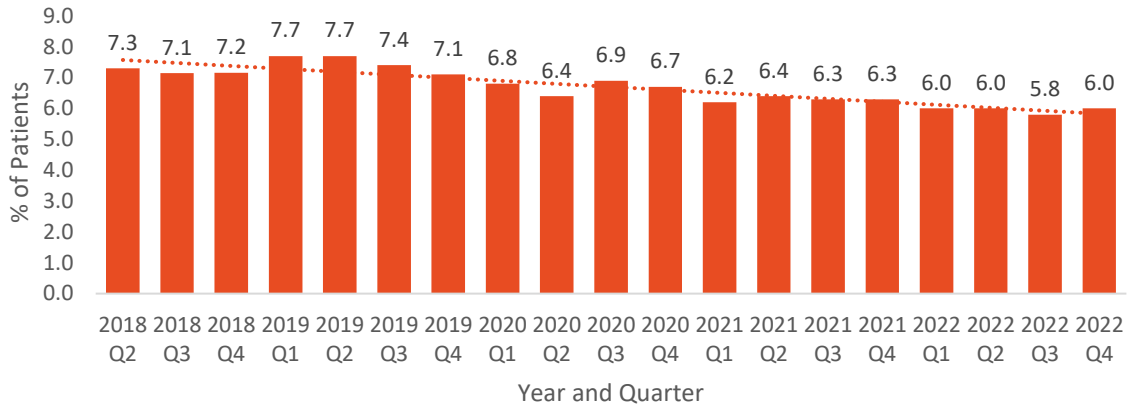
- From 2020 to 2021, the rate of opioid prescriptions dispensed in Georgia decreased by 4% among persons aged 5-54 years, 3% among those aged 55-64 years, increased by 2% among those aged 65-74 years, increased by 7% among those aged 75-84 years, and increased by 3% among those aged 85+.
- Opioid prescriptions decreased by 5% among males and 3% among females.

## Opioid Prescriptions, Patients, and Average Days Supplied per Rx, Georgia, 2018-2022



- The number of opioid prescriptions decreased by 1% and no changes seen in patients receiving opioid prescriptions, from 2021 to 2022.
- The average number of days dispensed per opioid prescription decreased by 2%.

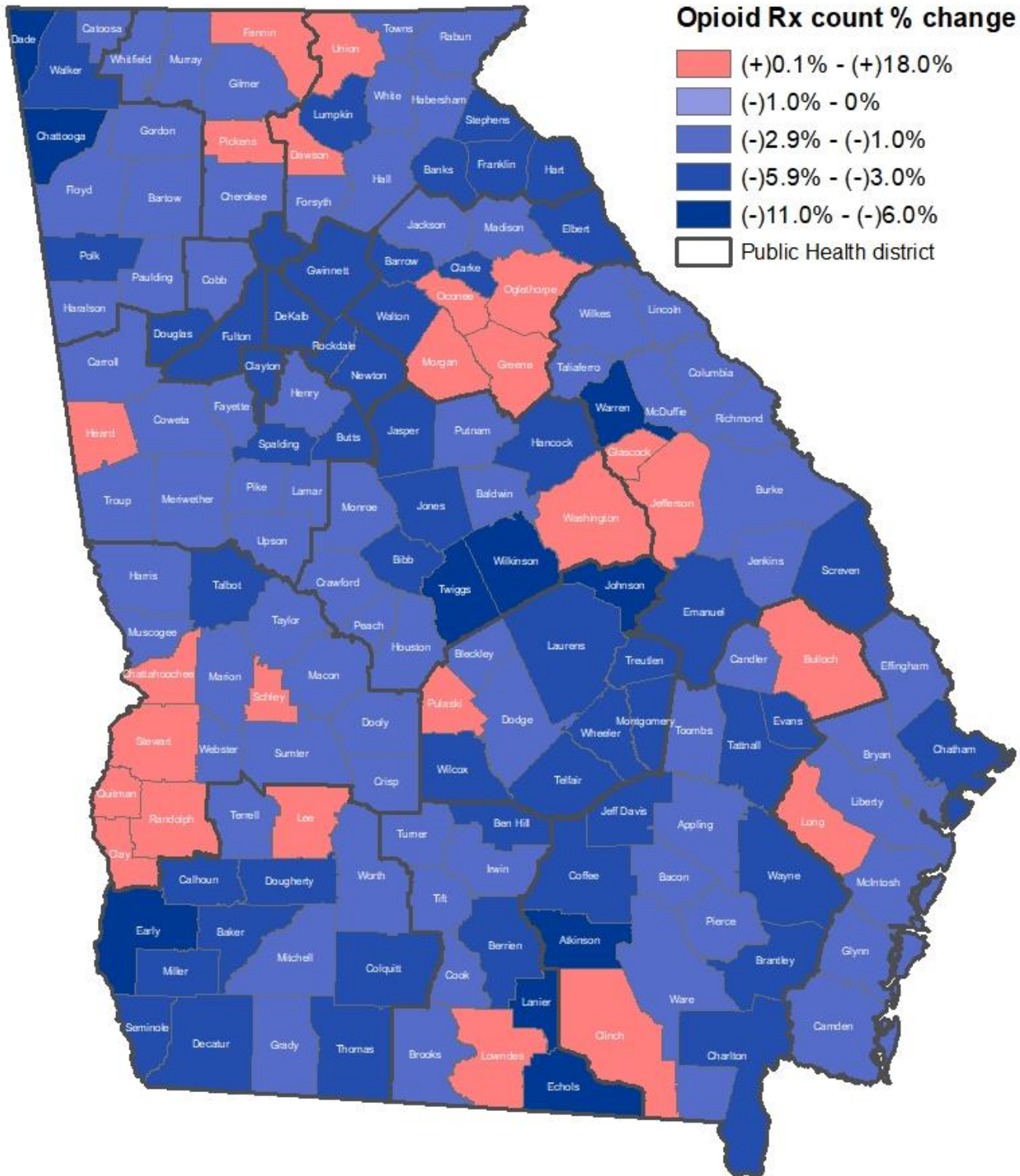
## Percent Patients Receiving an Average Daily Dose $\geq$ 90 Morphine Miligram Equivalents of Opioids, by Quarter, Georgia, 2018-2022



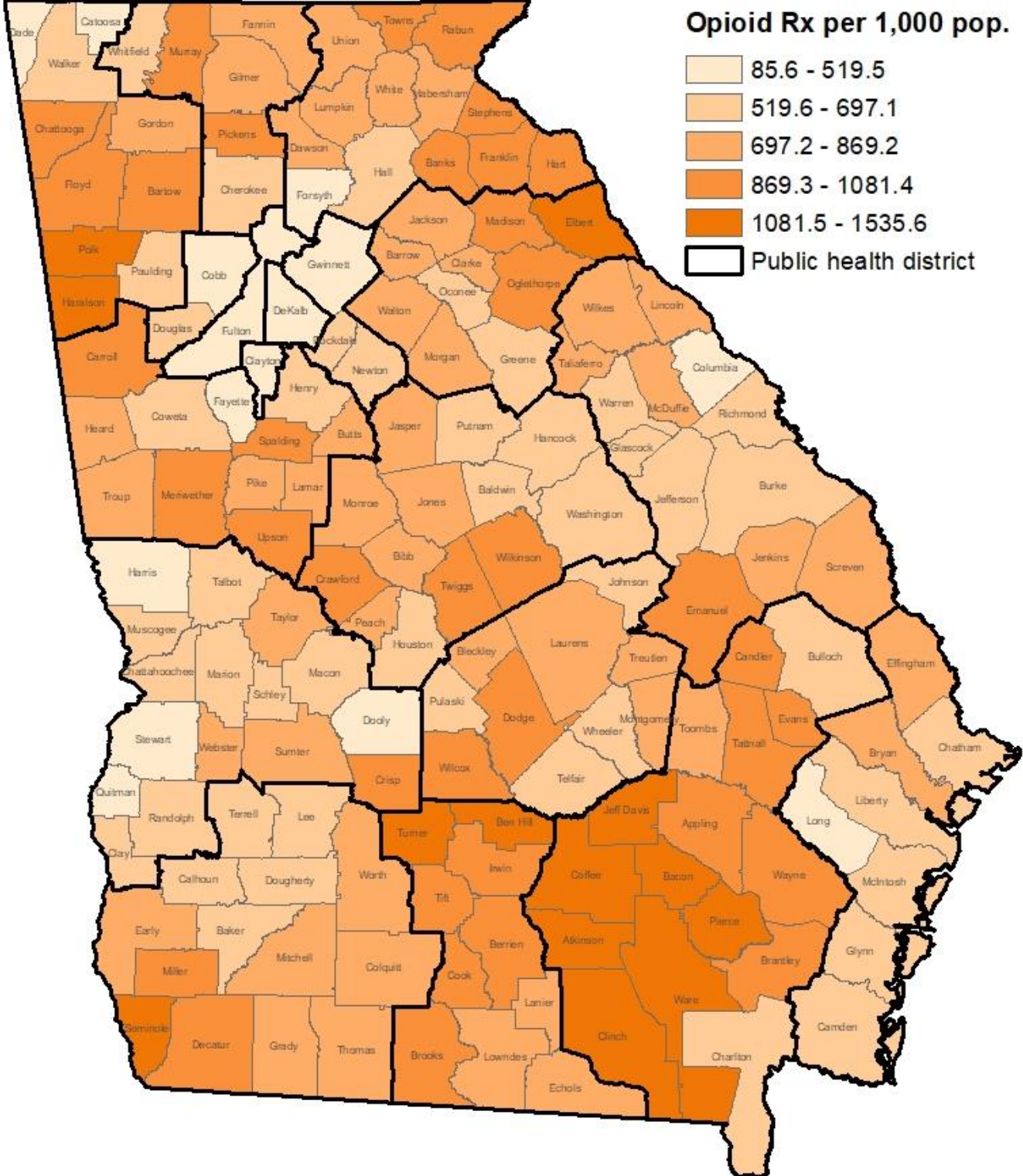
- High opioid dosages are associated with an increased risk of opioid use disorder and overdose.
- The graph above represents the quarterly percent of patients in Georgia who were receiving an average daily dose of  $\geq$ 90 (MME) of opioids during 2018-2022.
- The percent of patients in Georgia who were receiving an average daily dose of  $\geq$ 90 (MME) of opioids decreased by 6% from Q1 2021 to Q4 2022.



# Percent Change in Opioid Prescription Count by County, Georgia, Jan - Dec 2022 vs Jan - Dec 2021



# Age-Adjusted Opioid Prescription Rate by County, Georgia - 2022



### Top Ten Opioids Prescribed, Georgia, 2021–2022

Rank	Opioid drug	No. prescriptions 2021	No. prescriptions 2022
1	Hydrocodone	2,256,119	2,136,284
2	Oxycodone	1,740,226	1,734,241
3	Tramadol	1,445,006	1,376,600
4	Codeine	473,779	471,805
5	Buprenorphine	328,838	336,005
6	Morphine	246,195	237,222
7	Fentanyl	84,778	75,227
8	Hydromorphone	60,210	61,148
9	Methadone	57,270	52,493
10	Codeine, Bupropion	21,401	19,862

### Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Registrations and Patient Queries, Georgia, 2021–2022

PDMP user type	No. registered as of 12/31/2021	No. registered as of 12/31/2022	No. patient queries 2021	No. patient queries 2022
<b>Dentist</b>	5,085	5,214	61,705	51,082
<b>Dispensing Physician</b>	42	34	2,612	10,188
<b>Medical Resident</b>	3,695	4,312	59,915	86,380
<b>Midwife</b>	164	171	7,295	2,938
<b>Nurse Practitioner</b>	7,840	8,583	1,459,237	1,491,945
<b>Optometrist</b>	1,049	1,057	5,042	92
<b>Out-of-State Pharmacist</b>	177	183	1,498	1,442
<b>Out-of-State Prescriber</b>	275	301	7,242	11,500
<b>Pharmacist</b>	13,536	14,489	4,087,125	4,338,460
<b>Pharmacist's Delegate</b>	429	507	54,074	72,030
<b>Physician (MD,DO)</b>	30,916	32,341	4,889,312	4,667,013
<b>Physician Assistant</b>	3,835	4,189	632,821	617,114
<b>Podiatrist</b>	554	567	12,521	10,367
<b>Prescriber Delegate</b>	1,839	2,004	480,392	238,972
<b>Veterans Affairs Prescriber</b>	202	203	13,739	13,571
<b>TOTAL</b>	69,638	92,132	11,774,530	11,602,906

## Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Indicators, Georgia, 2021–2022

See Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Data Indicators table for description of indicators below

	2021					2022				
Indicator description	Total	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Total	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec
<b>No. opioid prescriptions</b>	6,743,732	1,669,675	1,708,774	1,683,265	1,682,018	6,525,725	1,625,268	1,641,479	1,633,868	1,625,110
<b>No. stimulant prescriptions</b>	1,656,746	414,064	406,160	418,422	418,100	1,674,106	433,840	403,245	399,606	437,415
<b>No. benzodiazepine prescriptions</b>	3,192,057	804,775	801,127	800,520	785,635	3,092,130	778,461	780,494	775,351	757,824
<b>Opioid Rx/ 1,000 population (age adjusted)</b>	726.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	737	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>No. opioid patients</b>	3,210,428	791,281	815,268	798,907	804,972	3,040,343	755,828	766,053	761,458	757,004
<b>Opioid patients/ 1,000 population</b>	305.0	75.2	77.5	75.9	76.5	281.4	70.0	70.9	70.5	70.0
<b>Days/ opioid prescription</b>	17.9	17.9	17.8	18.0	17.9	17.9	18.0	18.0	18.0	17.9
<b>% Patients receiving avg. daily dose <math>\geq</math> 90 morphine milligram equivalents</b>	6.3	6.2	6.4	6.3	6.3	6.1	6.1	6.0	6.0	6.1

## Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Indicators by Age and Sex, Georgia, 2022

See Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Data Indicators table for description of indicators below

Indicator							
	No. opioid Rx	No. stimulant Rx	No. benzo. Rx	Opioid Rx/ 1,000 population	No. opioid patients	Opioid patients/ 1,000 population	Avg days/ opioid Rx
<b>Age Group</b>							
<1 year	680	3	113	5.4	572	4.5	12.0
1-4 years	5,227	755	7,580	10.0	4,275	8.0	9.0
5 -14 years	34,774	433,566	32,164	24.6	26,582	18.8	10.0
15-24 years	185,918	317,310	72,222	128.6	142,857	98.8	6.0
25-34 years	422,545	283,359	218,671	286.8	214,639	145.6	10.4
35-44 years	757,299	280,743	427,090	551.7	261,568	190.5	15.0
45-54 years	1,066,912	201,179	543,603	755.9	295,441	209.3	18.0
55-64 years	1,567,657	110,808	676,915	1,219.3	352,336	274.0	20.0
65-74 years	1,421,657	38,982	610,748	1,587.7	317,559	354.6	20.0
75-84 years	707,509	7,094	357,631	1,691.1	174,297	416.6	19.0
85+ years	226,778	911	145,498	1,546.6	58,834	401.2	18.0
<b>Sex</b>							
Male	2,600,988	830,783	1,034,311	493.5	755,131	143.2	18.0
Female	3,792,185	843,809	2,054,975	685.7	1,092,342	197.5	18.0

DPH Epidemiology, Drug Surveillance Unit  
<https://dph.georgia.gov/drug-overdose-surveillance-unit>