04/25/2024

Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, 2023

Epidemiology, Drug Surveillance Unit

DPH
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

THE PRESCRIPTION DRUG MONITORING PROGRAM (PDMP)

The purpose of this report is to describe opioid prescribing patterns in Georgia during 2023. 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 seek multiple medical providers, 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.

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) 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.

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.

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

Note: Due to changes in the definition of stimulant prescriptions, reports as of 2023 can't be compared to previous reports. For more information see: https://www.cdc.gov/opioids/data-resources/index.html

Georgia PDMP, 2023: Key Findings

Georgia saw improvements in opioid prescribing practices from 2022 to 2023, as evidenced by these PDMP indicators:

❖ In 2023, there were 6,234,101 opioid prescriptions dispensed to 1,799,618 patients in Georgia. These prescriptions averaged 18.0 days of opioids dispensed per prescription.

❖ From 2022 to 2023, 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 decreased by 1% from 2022 to 2023. The average number of days dispensed per opioid prescription increased by 1%.

❖ In the first quarter of 2022 (Q1), there were 1,587,798 opioid prescriptions dispensed compared to 1,542,903 prescriptions in the last quarter of 2023 (Q4).

❖ From 2022 to 2023, the rate of opioid prescriptions dispensed in Georgia decreased by: 7% among persons aged 5-54 years; 7% among those aged 55-64 years, 6% among those aged 65-74 years, 5% among those aged 75-84 years; and 3% among those aged 85+. Opioid prescriptions decreased by 4% among both males and 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 ≥90 (MME) of opioids increased by 8% from Quarter 1 (Q1) 2022 to Quarter 4 (Q4) 2023.

❖ Hydrocodone, Oxycodone, and Tramadol were the most-prescribed opioids in Georgia during both 2022 and 2023.

❖ The number of registered PDMP users increased by 7% from December 2022 to December 2023.

❖ Patient queries by prescribers (or their delegates) and dispensers increased from 13.9 million queries in 2022 to 14.0 million queries in 2023.

PDMP Data Indicators

Data Source
All schedule II-V drug prescriptions dispensed and reported to the Georgia Prescription Drug Monitoring Program during 2019–2023.

PDMP Indicator Description

Opioid analgesic prescriptions 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: • 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; • 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.
Opioid prescription patients 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.
Days per opioid prescriptions The average number of days of opioid analgesics supplied per prescription.
Patients receiving avg. daily dose $\geq$ 90 morphine milligram equivalents % of patients with an average of ≥90 MME of opioid analgesic drugs prescribed per day. • Numerator: the number of patients with an average of ≥90 MME of opioid analgesic drugs prescribed per day • Denominator: state residents who received an opioid analgesic prescription 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

| Other Definitions or Limitations |
| --- |
| 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. *Due to changes in the definition of stimulant prescriptions, reports as of 2023 can't be compared to previous reports. For more information see: https://www.cdc.gov/opioids/data-resources/index.html* |
| Some 2023 prescription data were missing sex and age (<2% missing), therefore the race and age data represents only prescriptions for which sex and age where completed.
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.
We report on three categories of controlled substances in this report, these categories include:
• Opioids: Buprenorphine, Butorphanol, Codeine, Dezocine, Dihydrocodeine, Fentanyl, Fentanyl, Hydrocodone, Hydromorphone, Meperidine, Methadone, Morphine, Nalbuphine, Opiate Agonists, Oxycodone, Oxymorphone, Pentazocine, Tapentadol, Tramadol, and other opioids
• Benzodiazepines: Alprazolam, Chlordiazepoxide, Clonazepam, Clorazepate, Diazepam, Estazolam, Flurazepam, Lorazepam, Oxazepam, Temazepam, Triazolam, and other benzodiazepines
• Stimulants: Amphetamine, Benzphetamine, Desoxyephedrine, Dexmethylphenidate, Dextroamphetamine, Lisdexamfetamine, Methylphenidate, and other stimulants. |

Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Data Indicators

## Prescriptions by Drug Type & Year, Georgia, 2020-2023
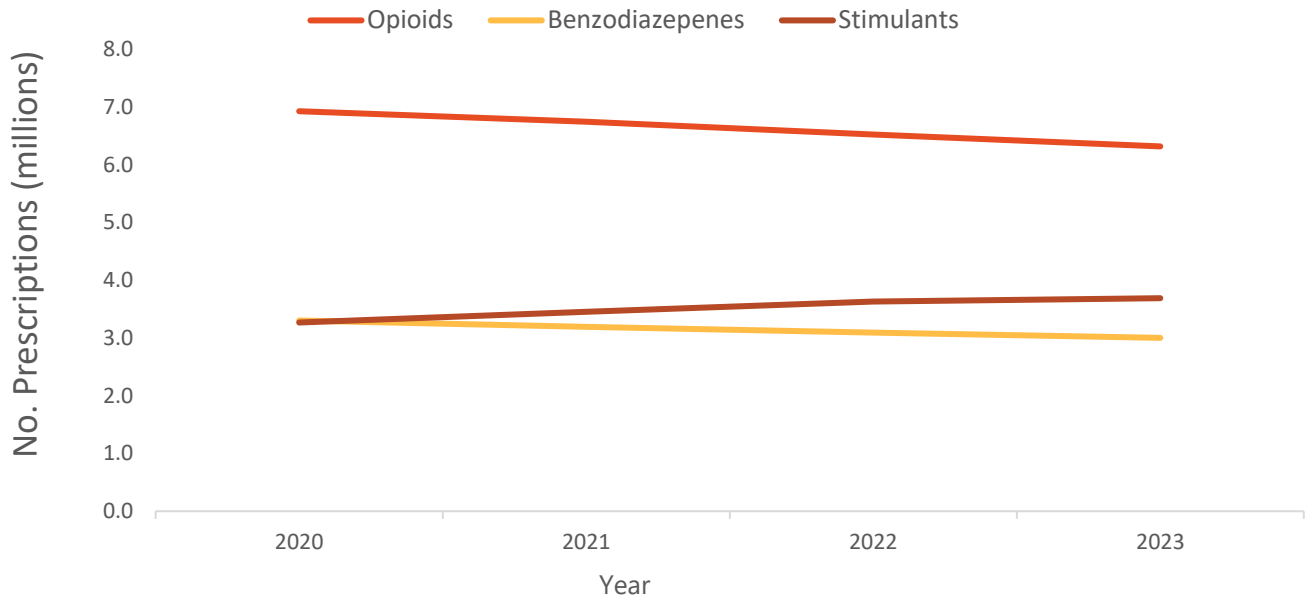
- .From 2022 to 2023, the number of opioid prescriptions decreased by 3%, benzodiazepine prescriptions by3%, and stimulants decreased by 1%.
- Opioids are the most frequently prescribed controlled substance in Georgia, followed by Stimulants and benzodiazepines.

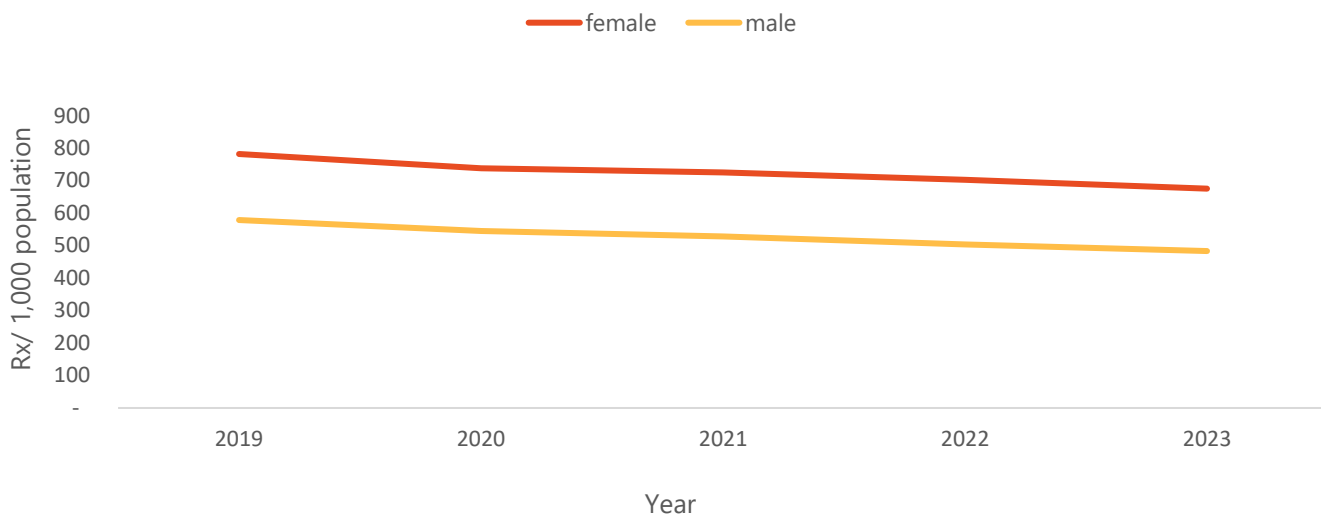## Opioid Prescriptions by Quarter, Georgia, 2019-2023
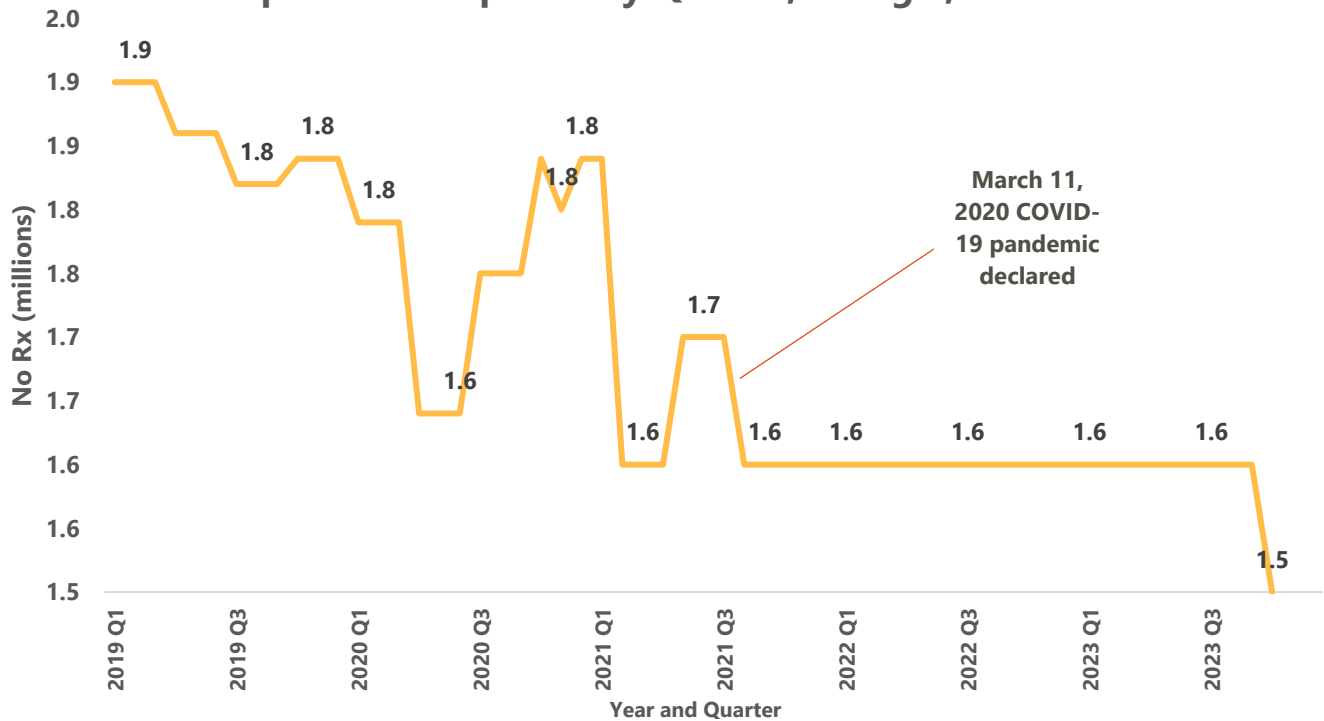
- In the first quarter of 2022, there were 1,587,789 opioid prescriptions dispensed compared to 1,544,068 prescriptions in the last quarter of 2023.

Opioid Prescription Rates, by Age Georgia, 2019-2023
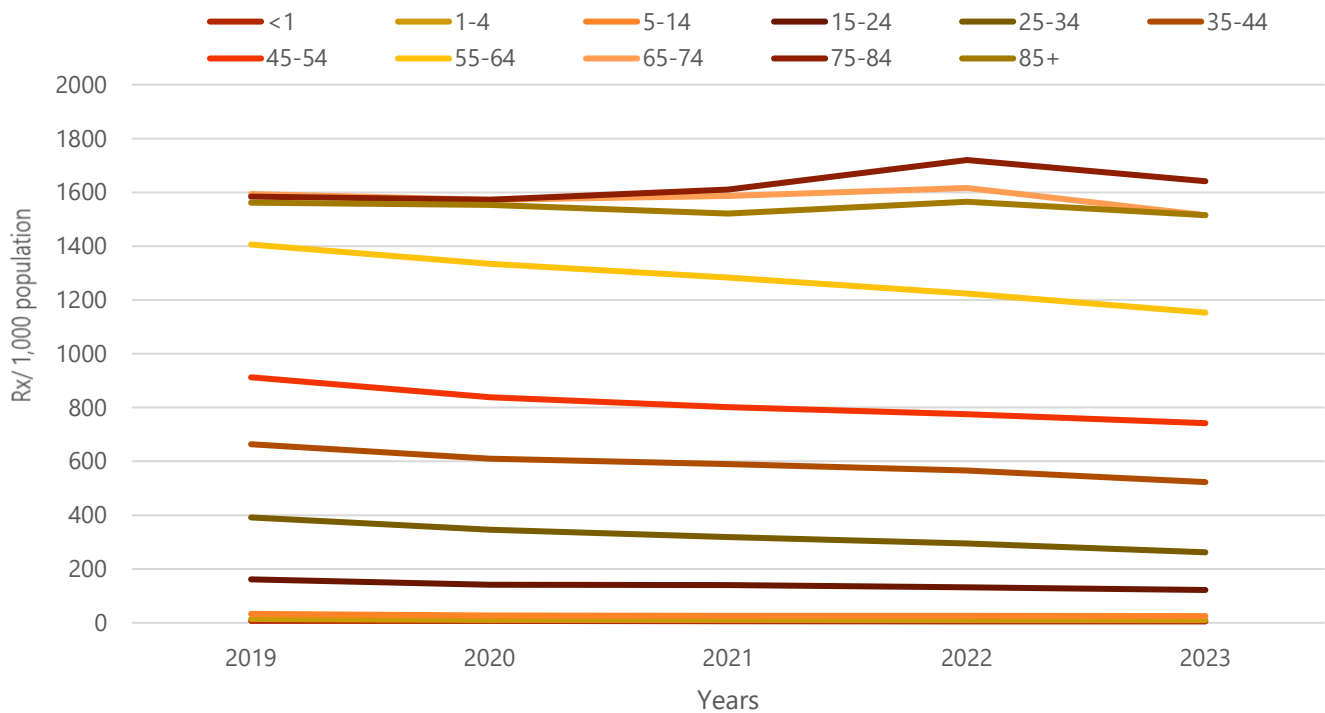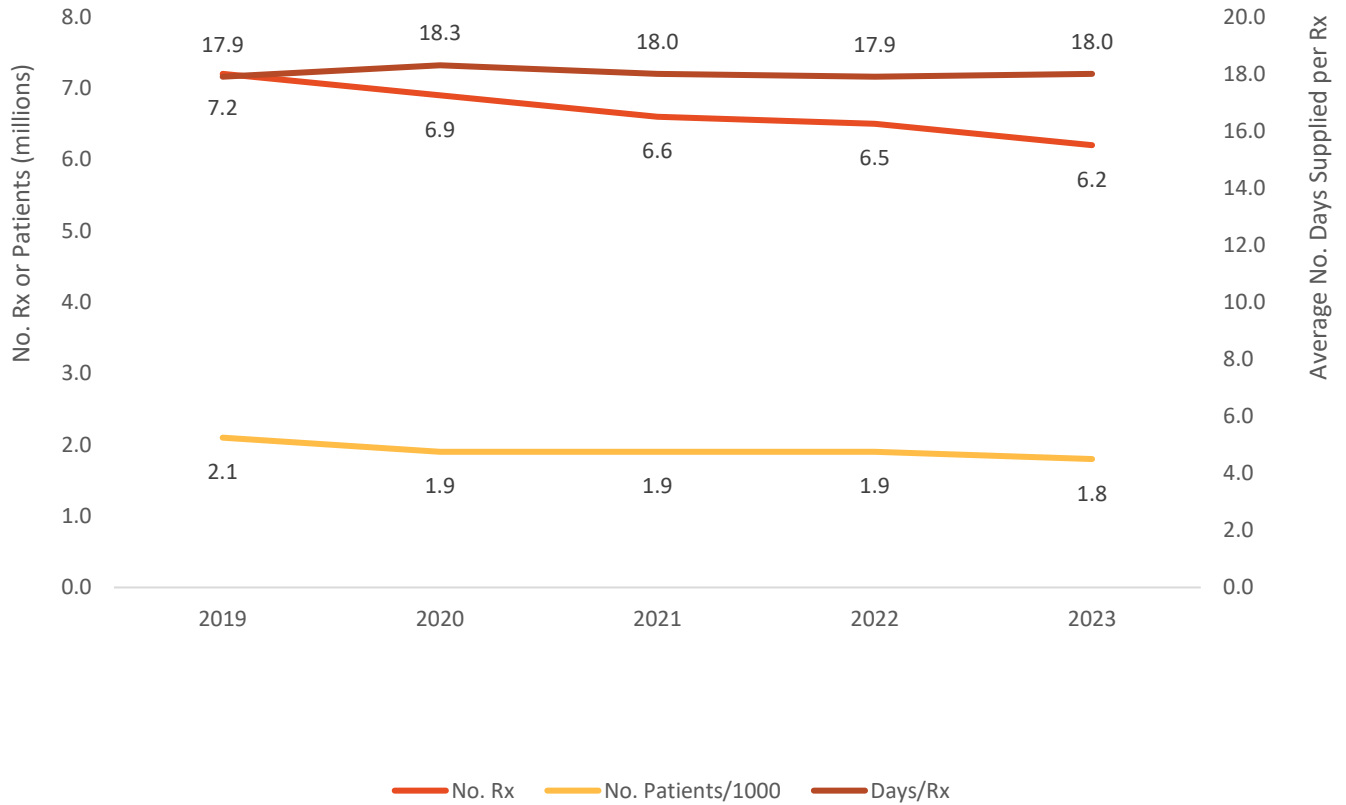

- From 2022 to 2023, the rate of opioid prescriptions dispensed in Georgia decreased by: 7% among persons aged 5-64 years;6% among those aged 65-74 years; 5% among those aged 75-84 years; and decreased by 3% among those aged 85+.

Opioid Prescription Rates, by Sex, Georgia, 2019-2023

- Opioid prescriptions decreased by 4% among both males and females from 2019 - 2023.

Opioid Prescriptions, Patients, and Average Days Supplied per Rx, Georgia, 2019-2023

- The number of opioid prescriptions decreased by 5% and 1% decrease in patients receiving opioid prescriptions, from 2022 to 2023.
- The average number of days dispensed per opioid prescription decreased by 1%, from 2022 to 2023.

Percent Patients Receiving an Average daily Dose ≥ 90 Morpine Miligram Equivalents of Opioids, by Quarter, Georgia, 2019-2023
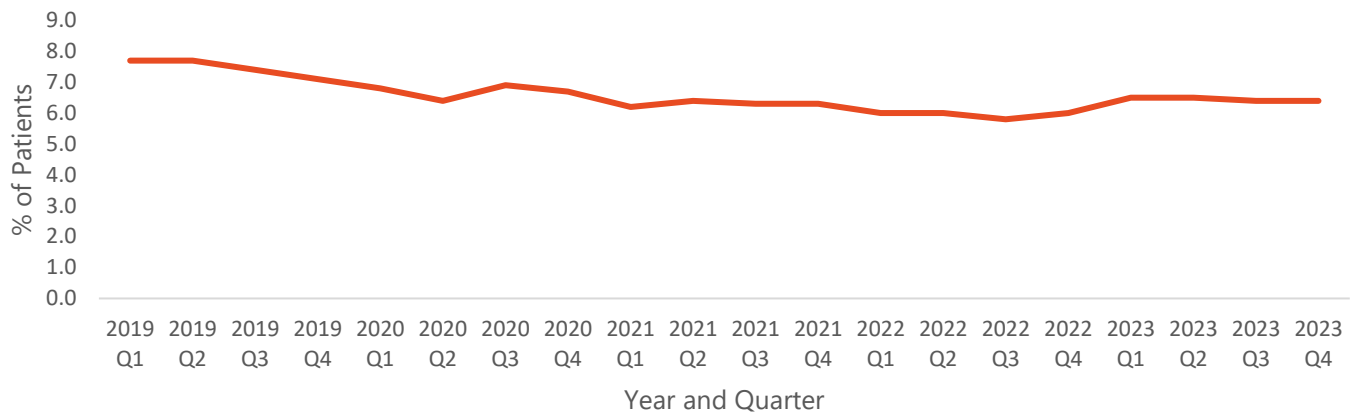
- High opioid dosages are associated with an increased risk of opioid use disorder and overdose.
- The graph above represents the quarterly percent of patients in Georgia who were receiving an average daily dose of ≥90 (MME) of opioids during 2018-2023.
- The percent of patients in Georgia who were receiving an average daily dose of ≥90 (MME) of opioids increased by 8% from Q1 2022 to Q4 2023.

% Change in Opioid Prescriptions by County, Georgia, 2023 vs 2022

Opioid Rx count % change

▨	(+)0.1% - (+)68.0%
▨	(-)0.6% - 0%
▨	(-)0.9% - (-)0.6%
▨	(-)9.9% -(-)1.0%
▨	(-)17.0% - (-)10.0%
☐	Public Health district
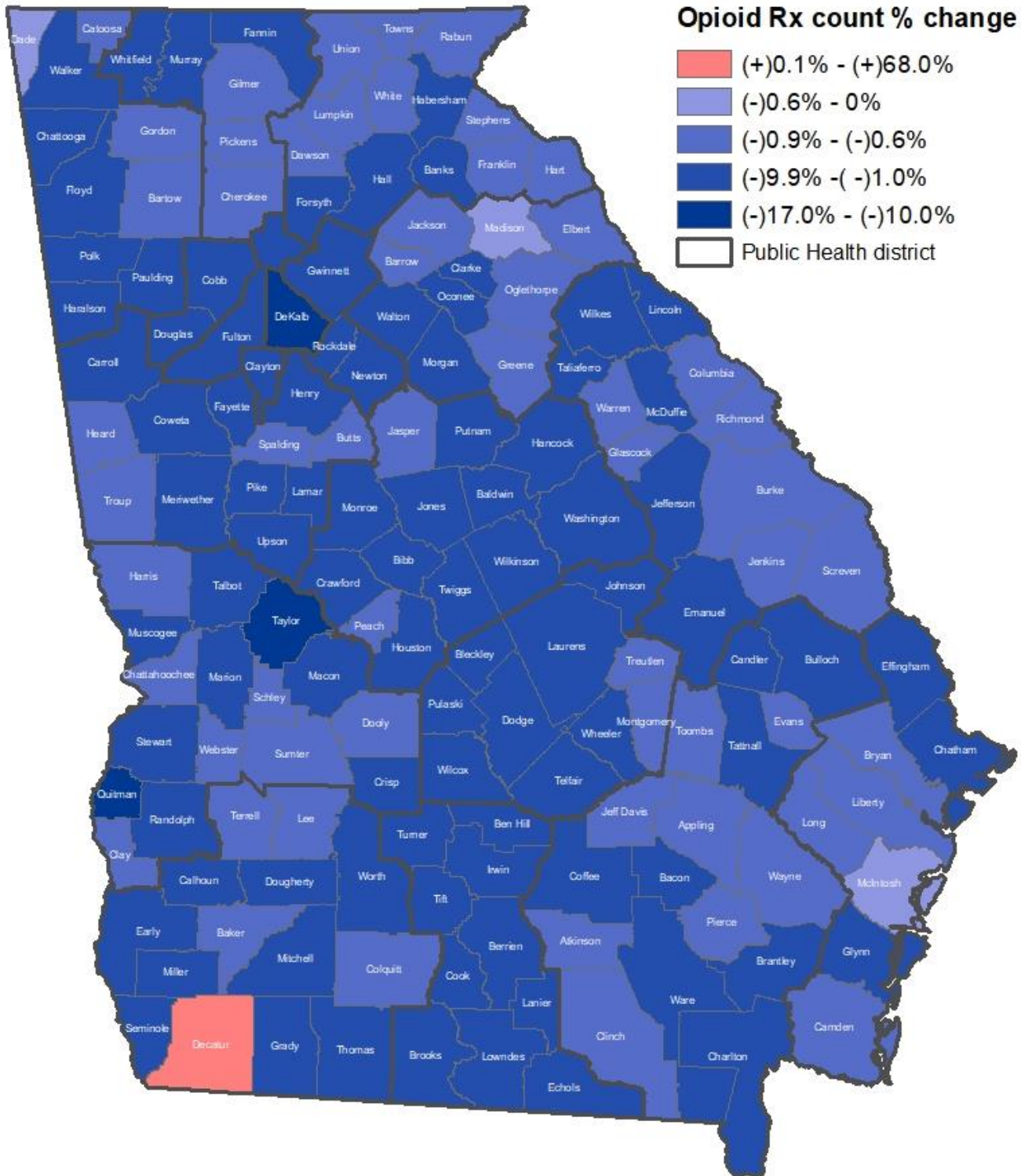
Age-Adjusted Opioid Prescription Rate by County, Georgia - 2023

Opioid Rx per 1,000 pop.

- 98 - 571
- 572 - 773
- 774 - 961
- 962 - 1209
- 1210 - 1654
- Public health district
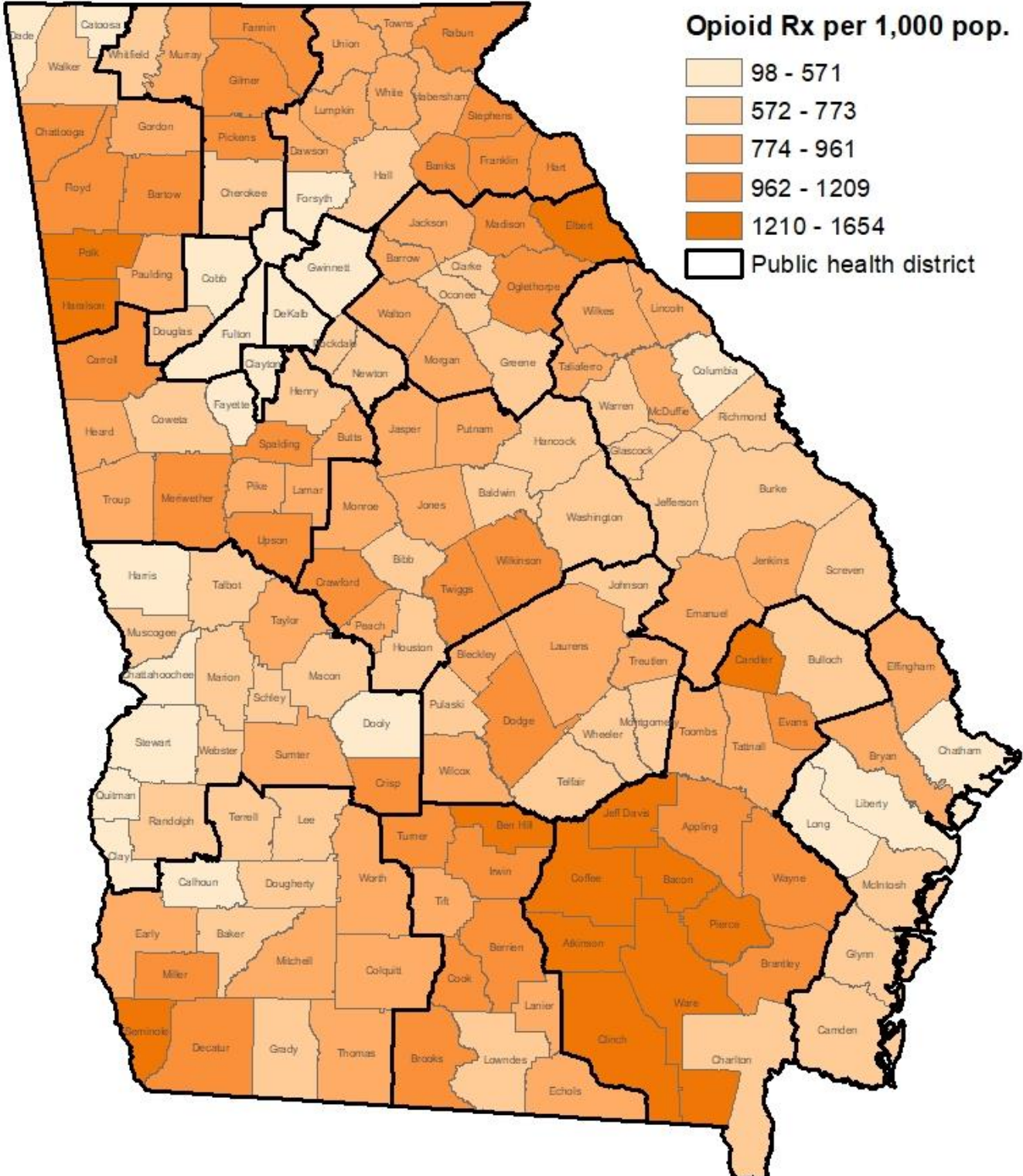
Top Ten Opioids Prescribed, Georgia, 2022–2023

Rank	Opioid drug	No. prescriptions 2022	No. prescriptions 2023
1	Hydrocodone	2,136,284	1,978,107
2	Oxycodone	1,734,241	1,768,370
3	Tramadol	1,376,600	1,355,970
4	Codeine	471,805	434,791
5	Buprenorphine	336,005	352,223
6	Morphine	237,222	232,175
7	Fentanyl	75,227	66,862
8	Hydromorphone	61,148	64,916
9	Methadone	52,493	48,201
10	Codeine, Bultabital	19,862	18,422

**Prescription Drug Monitoring Program
Registrations and Patient Queries, Georgia, 2022–2023**

PDMP user type	No. registered as of 12/31/2022	No. registered as of 12/31/2023	No. patient queries 2022	No. patient queries 2023
Dentist	5,214	5,445	51,082	42,605
Dispensing Physician	34	43	10,188	7,607
Medical Resident	4,312	5,074	86,380	113,071
Midwife	171	184	2,938	2,100
Nurse Practitioner	8,583	9320	1,491,945	1,608,652
Optometrist	1,057	1,121	92	37
Out-of-State Pharmacist	183	1,498	1,442	878
Out-of-State Prescriber	301	357	11,500	12,519
Pharmacist	14,489	15,246	4,338,460	5,9050,43
Pharmacist's Delegate	507	588	72,030	76,534
Physician (MD,DO)	32,341	34,371	4,667,013	4,856,608
Physician Assistant	4,189	4,612	617,114	638,379
Podiatrist	567	599	10,367	9,053
Prescriber Delegate	2,004	2,198	238,972	468,143
Veterans Affairs Prescriber	203	228	13,571	14,427
TOTAL	74,155	80,884	11,613,094	13,755,656

Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Indicators, Georgia, 2022–2023
See Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Data Indicators table for description of indicators below

Indicator description	2022					2023				
	Total	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Total	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec
No. opioid prescriptions	6,525,725	1,625,268	1,641,479	1,633,868	1,625,110	6,314,628	1,598,878	1,597,406	1,568,495	1,579,849
No. stimulant prescriptions	3,629,344	912,170	901,323	915,263	900,588	3,689,033	921,896	909,483	927,300	930,354
No. benzodiazepine prescriptions	3,092,130	778,461	780,494	775,351	757,824	3,023,255	764,567	762,301	752,724	743,663
Opioid Rx/ 1,000 population (age adjusted)	737	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	702	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
No. opioid patients	3,040,343	755,828	766,053	761,458	757,004	3,055,960	769,893	764,750	754,268	767,049
Opioid patients/ 1,000 population	281.4	70.0	70.9	70.5	70.0	280.0	71.0	70.0	69.0	70.0
Days/ opioid prescription	17.9	18.0	18.0	18.0	17.9	17.9	17.9	17.9	18.0	17.9
% Patients receiving avg. daily dose ≥ 90 morphine milligram equivalents	6.1	6.1	6.0	6.0	6.1	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.4

Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Indicators by Age and Sex, Georgia, 2023
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
Age Group							
<1 year	637	51	349	5.1	1,008	8.1	11.4
1-4 years	5,113	1,734	8,061	10.0	4,273	8.4	9.2
5 -14 years	35,414	762,904	34,507	25.0	28,506	22.9	9.9
15-24 years	178,477	515,546	70,362	116.8	140,238	91.8	5.6
25-34 years	393,951	610,176	207,213	261.0	205,185	135.7	10.3
35-44 years	730,202	725,209	414,636	505.2	253,509	175.4	15.3
45-54 years	1,032,338	571,641	527,252	738.6	289,079	206.8	18.2
55-64 years	1,525,574	342,006	654,458	1,140.7	351,747	263.0	20.2
65-74 years	1,453,323	131,871	601,288	1,461.7	327,137	329.0	20.5
75-84 years	754,916	25,750	361,988	1,523.0	181,197	365.6	19.8
85+ years	235,842	2,525	143,973	1,520.4	57,013	367.6	18.3
Sex							
Male	2,538,683	1,592,170	1,013,932	483.1	736,461	138.2	18.1
Female	3,698,893	2,095,463	2,008,339	674.5	1,060,930	190.0	18.2