



MA Prescription Monitoring Program County-Level Data Measures (2018 Quarter 3)

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

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The Department of Public Health's (DPH) Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PMP) serves as a repository of data for all prescription drugs dispensed statewide, including those prescriptions that are sought after for illicit and non-medical use and thus represent the highest potential for abuse (federal Schedules II – V, including certain narcotics, stimulants and sedatives). The PMP also enables prescribers and dispensers to access a patient's prescription history and can be used as a clinical decision-making tool, allowing the provider to have a holistic view of the patient's medications.

When interpreting PMP county-level data, it is important to emphasize that increases or decreases in a single measure may not indicate an increase or decrease in prescription misuse or abuse. Put simply, use does not always equate to abuse. There are many factors that might explain an unusually high rate of prescribing in a given area. For instance, an area which contains a large number of residents in long-term care facilities may result a high rate of opioid prescribing.

These datasets inform critical discussions about opioid prescribing, provide an important baseline to better inform future policy decisions and allow the state and stakeholders to more meaningfully measure whether policy initiatives are effective.

Effective October 6, 2014, all hydrocodone combination drug (HCD) products (e.g., Vicodin) were reclassified from Schedule III to Schedule II. This reclassification during the last quarter of 2014 makes comparisons over time difficult to interpret. Beginning with CY 2015 data, reports of Schedule II products will include all HCD prescriptions.

Individuals with activity of concern "thresholds" for this report are based on a 3-month time period. MDPH also releases an annual county-level report that provides thresholds that are based on a 12-month time period. Although the numbers (or rates) generated may appear to be comparable, they represent different time periods and are NOT an apples-to-apples comparison. The results are only comparable when the thresholds (e.g., 4 different providers and 4 different pharmacies), time interval (e.g. over a three-month period), and drug products analyzed (e.g. Schedule II opioids) are the same. Meaning, the total number (or rates) of individuals who received Schedule II-V opioid prescriptions from 4 or more providers and had them filled at 4 or more pharmacies in a 3-month period cannot and should not be compared with the total number of individuals (or rates) who received Schedule II-V opioid prescriptions from 4 or more providers and had them filled at 4 or more pharmacies in a 12-month period.

County (County classifications are by patient zip code; patient state must also = MA)	Census Population*	Total Schedule II Opioid Prescriptions	Total Number of Schedule II Opioid Solid Dosage Units	Individuals Receiving Schedule II Opioid Prescription	% of Individuals Receiving Schedule II Opioid Prescription (of total population)	Individuals with Activity of Concern	Rate of Individuals with Activity of Concern (per 1,000)
Barnstable	216,343	22,970	1,194,101	10,064	4.7	17	1.7
Berkshire	127,457	13,973	729,047	6,042	4.7	9	1.5
Bristol	566,414	64,738	3,861,967	26,398	4.7	21	0.8
Dukes	17,364	1,507	84,634	752	4.3	<5	NR
Essex	791,568	64,492	3,444,223	29,655	3.7	21	0.7
Franklin	71,509	8,584	503,161	3,505	4.9	<5	NR
Hampden	473,588	52,876	3,087,533	22,064	4.7	19	0.9
Hampshire	164,339	15,080	941,042	6,146	3.7	<5	NR
Middlesex	1,614,538	91,295	4,768,212	45,434	2.8	37	0.8
Nantucket	11,237	1,022	41,928	506	4.5	0	0
Norfolk	706,950	48,152	2,700,658	22,983	3.3	28	1.2
Plymouth	520,230	47,055	2,726,210	21,579	4.1	28	1.3
Suffolk	802,474	43,603	2,576,554	20,261	2.5	24	1.2
Worcester	832,834	71,713	4,384,857	31,762	3.8	22	0.7
MA	6,916,845	547,060	31,044,126	247,151	3.6	226	0.9

Note 1: Individuals with activity of concern "thresholds" for this report are based ONLY on a 3-month time period; see notes on previous page; CY18-Q2

Note 2: Counts greater than 0 but less than or equal to 5 are not reported. Rates based on these small values also are not reported (NR).

Note 3: Rates of individuals with activity of concern are based on the population of individuals who have received one or more Schedule II opioid prescriptions during the specified time period.

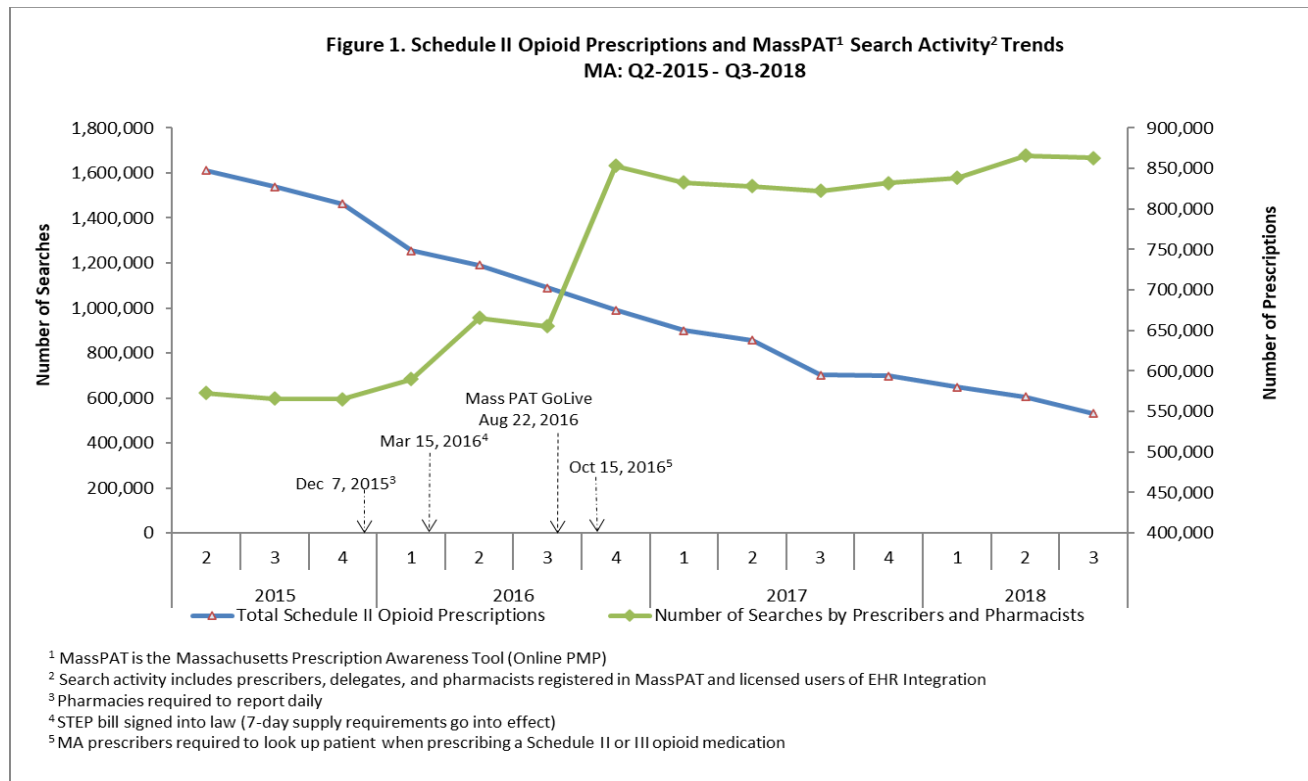
Note 4: PMP data are preliminary and subject to updates. The MA PMP database is continuously updated to allow for prescription record correction data submitted by pharmacies. This data were extracted on 10/25/2018; Release Date: **October 2018**.

Note 5: Citation: Small Area Population Estimates 2011-2020, version 2017, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Bureau of Environmental Health
Population estimates used for years following the decennial census were developed by the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute (UMDI) in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Bureau of Environmental Health. Detailed population estimates at fine levels of geography are prone to estimation error. Estimated error was best described by age and population size and was used to adjust final population numbers, however a margin of error exists for all estimates.

MA Prescription Monitoring Program Data

Trend Analyses for Schedule II Opioids Only

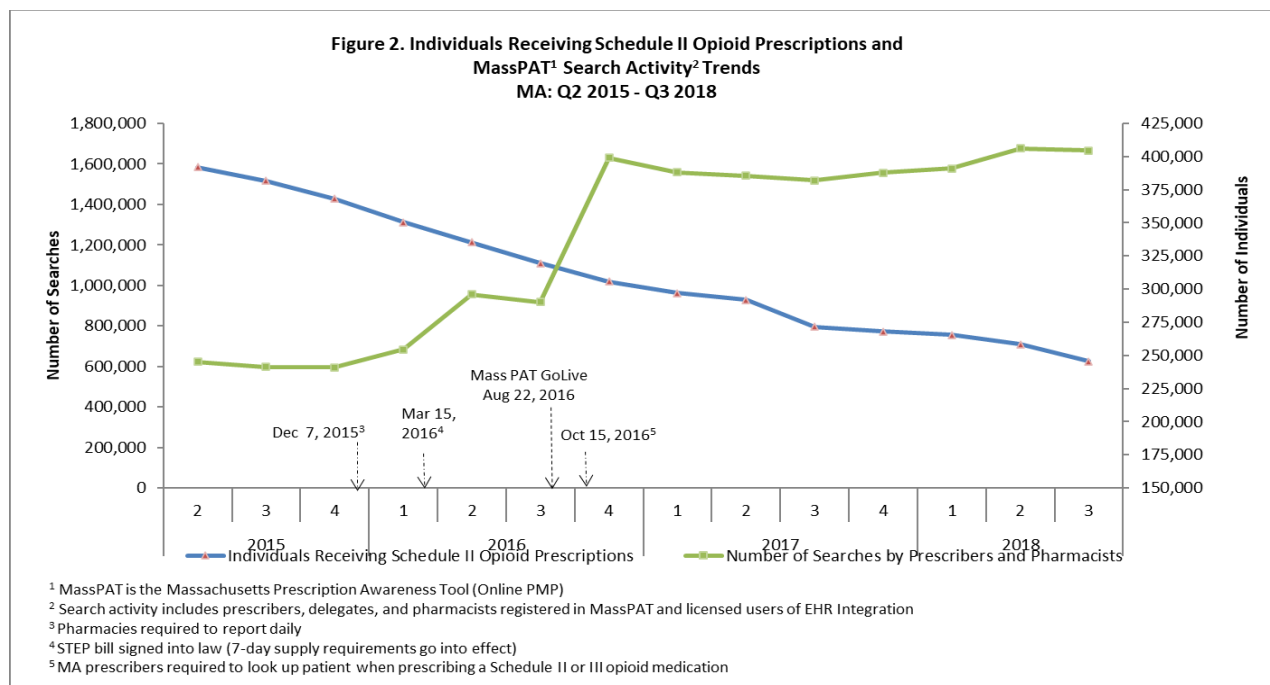
- In the 3rd Quarter of 2018, there were just over 547,000 Schedule II opioid prescriptions reported to the MA PMP; this is a small decrease from the previous quarter and a 35% decrease from the 1st Quarter of 2015 (n = 841,990 Schedule II opioid prescriptions).



Note:

- PMP data are subject to updates. The MA PMP database is continuously updated to allow for prescription record correction data submitted by pharmacies. The data for the quarterly trends were extracted on 10/24/2018.
- Some discrepancies were identified in search counts reported by data vendor. Reports prior to Q2 CY23 were inflated due to overrepresenting the number of Gateway (i.e., Integration) searches. Archived PMP reports going back to Q3 CY 2018 (beginning of Gateway or Integrated searches) are now updated to reflect the accurate counts. (Dated: March 2024)

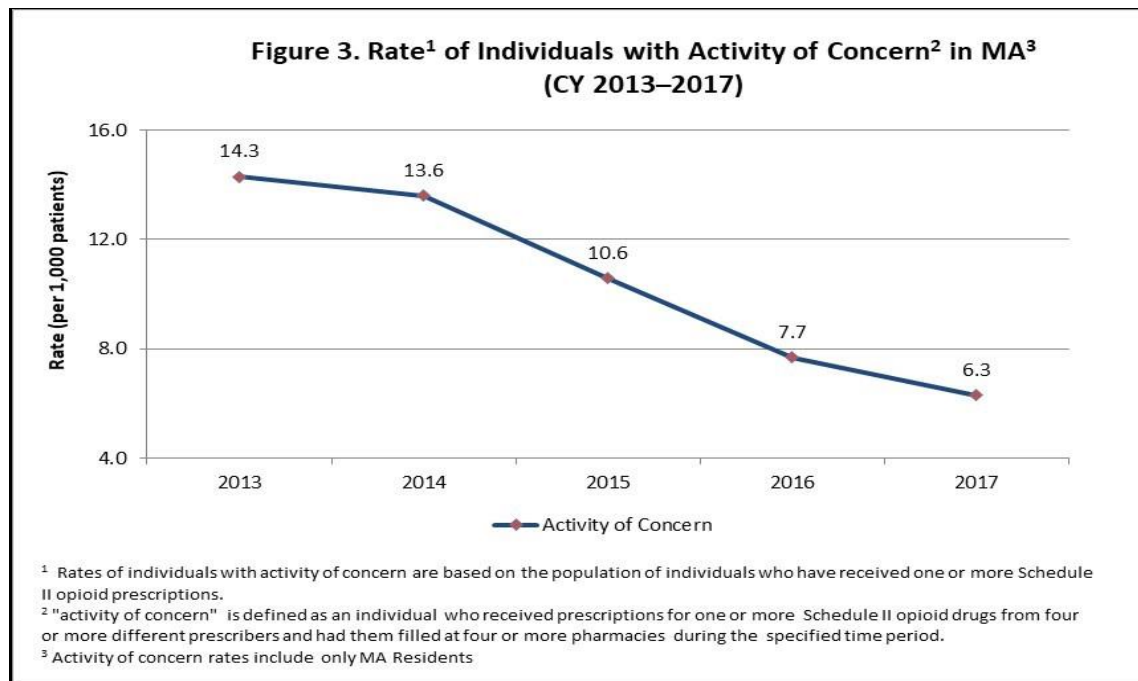
- Approximately 246,000 individuals in MA received prescriptions for Schedule II opioids in the 3rd Quarter of 2018; this is a small decrease from the previous quarter and a 37% decrease from the 1st Quarter of 2015 (n = 390,532).



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- The rate of individuals with activity of concern (also referred to as multiple provider episodes) decreased from 14.3 to 6.3 per 1,000 individuals between CY 2013 and CY 2017, a 56% reduction in activity of concern.



Note: PMP data are subject to updates. The MA PMP database is continuously updated to allow for prescription record correction data submitted by pharmacies. The data for CY 2017 were extracted on 01/12/2018.

Source

Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, Bureau of Health Professions Licensure, MDPH