



MA Prescription Monitoring Program County-Level Data Measures (Calendar Year 2022 Quarter 4 and 2023 Quarter 1)

Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Bureau of Health Professions Licensure, April 2023

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 in 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 has previously released annual county-level reports that provide thresholds 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.

MA Prescription Monitoring Program: October – December 2022 and January – March 2023

October - December 2022 (Quarter 4)

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	228,996	20,767	954,566	9,117	4.0	11	1.2
Berkshire	129,026	10,958	556,180	4,869	3.8	<5	NA
Bristol	579,200	51,895	3,030,867	21,100	3.6	6	0.3
Dukes	20,600	1,189	61,651	564	2.7	0	0
Essex	809,829	52,613	2,521,598	25,097	3.1	11	0.4
Franklin	71,029	6,852	393,328	2,828	4.0	0	0
Hampden	465,825	38,945	2,087,437	17,433	3.7	12	0.7
Hampshire	162,308	12,296	709,190	5,280	3.3	<5	NA
Middlesex	1,632,002	76,392	3,511,557	38,930	2.4	23	0.6
Nantucket	14,255	654	29,832	329	2.3	<5	NA
Norfolk	725,981	39,658	2,015,851	19,156	2.6	14	0.7
Plymouth	530,819	39,046	2,092,610	18,326	3.5	5	0.3
Suffolk	797,936	34,921	1,897,971	16,548	2.1	9	0.5
Worcester	862,111	59,043	3,231,527	26,927	3.1	10	0.4
MA	7,029,917	445,229	23,094,164	205,450	2.9	107	0.5
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; CY2022-Q4							
Note 2: Counts greater than 0 but less than 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: Totals for all counties combined exclude a small number of prescription records that could not be assigned a county due to inaccurate zip code/city town information reported to the program.							
Note 5: The total sum for the "Number of Individuals Receiving Schedule II Opioid Prescription" will be slightly different than the sum presented for the state in Figure 2 due to a small number of double counting of individuals moving from one county to another during the specified time period.							
Note 6: 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 04/18/2023; Release Date: Apr 2023.							
Note 7: Beginning in 3rd quarter of 2016 the Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) facilities began submitting data to the MA PMP.							
Note 8: UMDI Interim 2020 Population Estimates by Age, Sex, Race, and Municipality, UMass Donahue Institute Population Estimates Program, March 1, 2022							

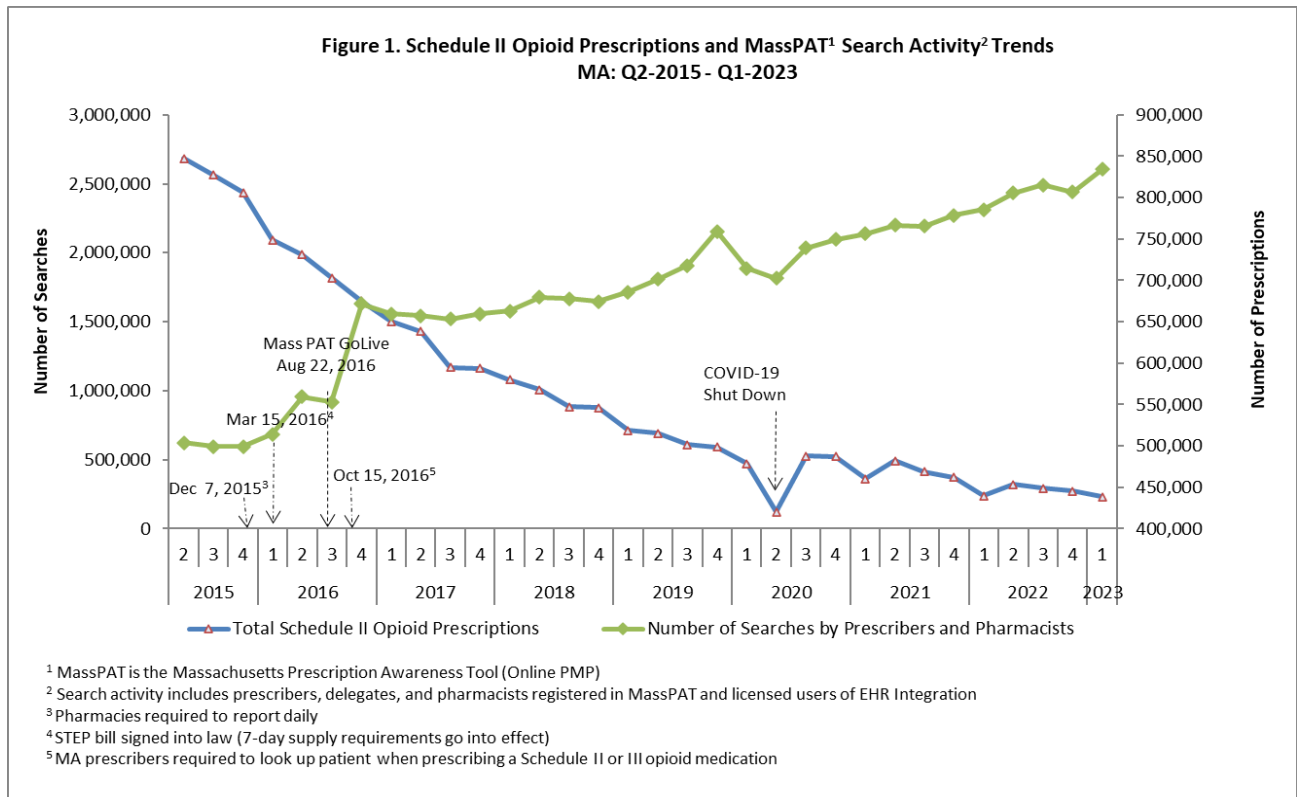
January – March 2023 (Quarter 1)

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	228,996	19,819	916,635	8,897	3.9	7	0.8
Berkshire	129,026	10,904	540,177	4,859	3.8	<5	NA
Bristol	579,200	50,627	2,934,220	20,692	3.6	9	0.4
Dukes	20,600	1,206	58,597	596	2.9	0	0
Essex	809,829	52,029	2,442,836	24,619	3.0	22	0.9
Franklin	71,029	6,703	385,705	2,746	3.9	0	0
Hampden	465,825	37,744	2,012,376	17,100	3.7	11	0.6
Hampshire	162,308	12,087	698,046	5,231	3.2	6	1.1
Middlesex	1,632,002	75,498	3,413,127	38,341	2.3	28	0.7
Nantucket	14,255	641	28,616	337	2.4	0	0
Norfolk	725,981	39,311	1,962,364	19,010	2.6	13	0.7
Plymouth	530,819	38,352	2,044,071	17,502	3.3	7	0.4
Suffolk	797,936	35,154	1,866,539	16,844	2.1	17	1.0
Worcester	862,111	58,423	3,118,125	26,176	3.0	17	0.6
MA	7,029,917	438,498	22,421,433	201,840	2.9	138	0.7
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; CY2023-Q1							
Note 2: Counts greater than 0 but less than 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: Totals for all counties combined exclude a small number of prescription records that could not be assigned a county due to inaccurate zip code/city town information reported to the program.							
Note 5: The total sum for the "Number of Individuals Receiving Schedule II Opioid Prescription" will be slightly different than the sum presented for the state in Figure 2 due to a small number of double counting of individuals moving from one county to another during the specified time period.							
Note 6: 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 04/18/2023; Release Date: Apr 2023.							
Note 7: Beginning in 3rd quarter of 2016 the Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) facilities began submitting data to the MA PMP.							
Note 8: UMDI Interim 2020 Population Estimates by Age, Sex, Race, and Municipality, UMass Donahue Institute Population Estimates Program, March 1, 2022							

MA Prescription Monitoring Program Data

Trend Analyses for Schedule II Opioids Only

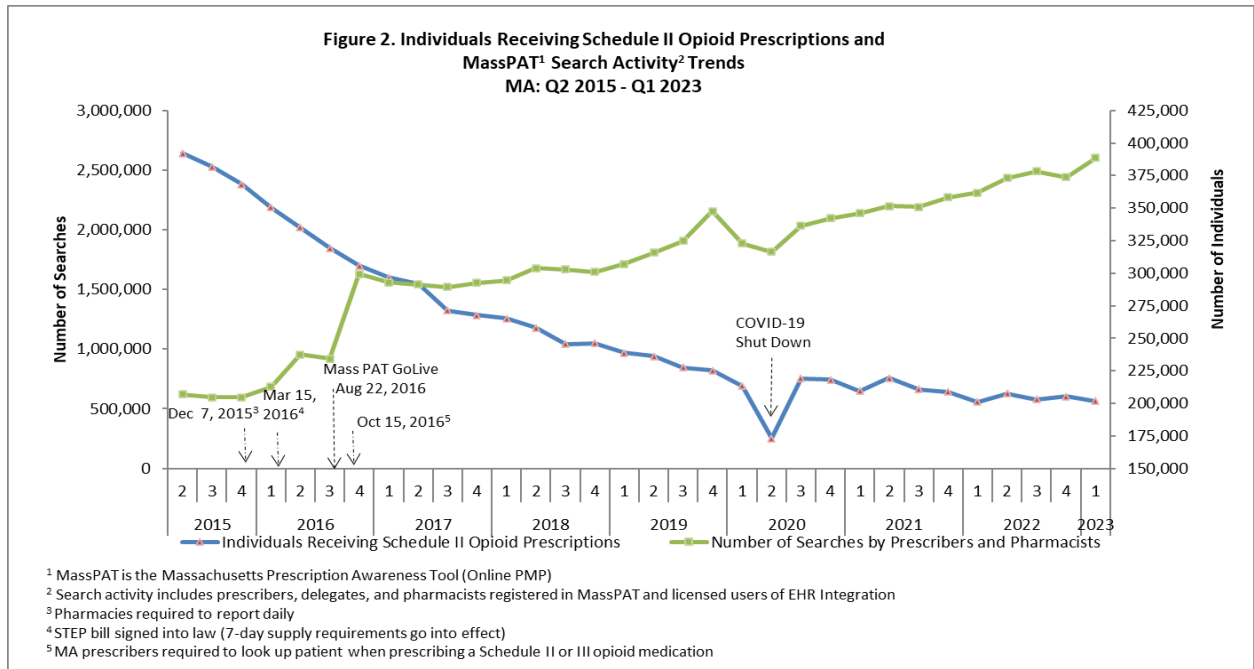
- In the 4th Quarter of 2022, there were approximately 445,000 Schedule II opioid prescriptions reported to the MA PMP; this is a small decrease from the previous quarter and over a 47% decrease from the 1st Quarter of 2015 (n = 841,990 Schedule II opioid prescriptions).
- In the 1st Quarter of 2023, there were approximately 438,000 Schedule II opioid prescriptions reported to the MA PMP; this is a small decrease from the previous quarter and almost 48% decrease from the 1st Quarter of 2015.



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 CY2022 Q4 and CY2023 Q1 data were extracted on 04/18/2023.
- 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)

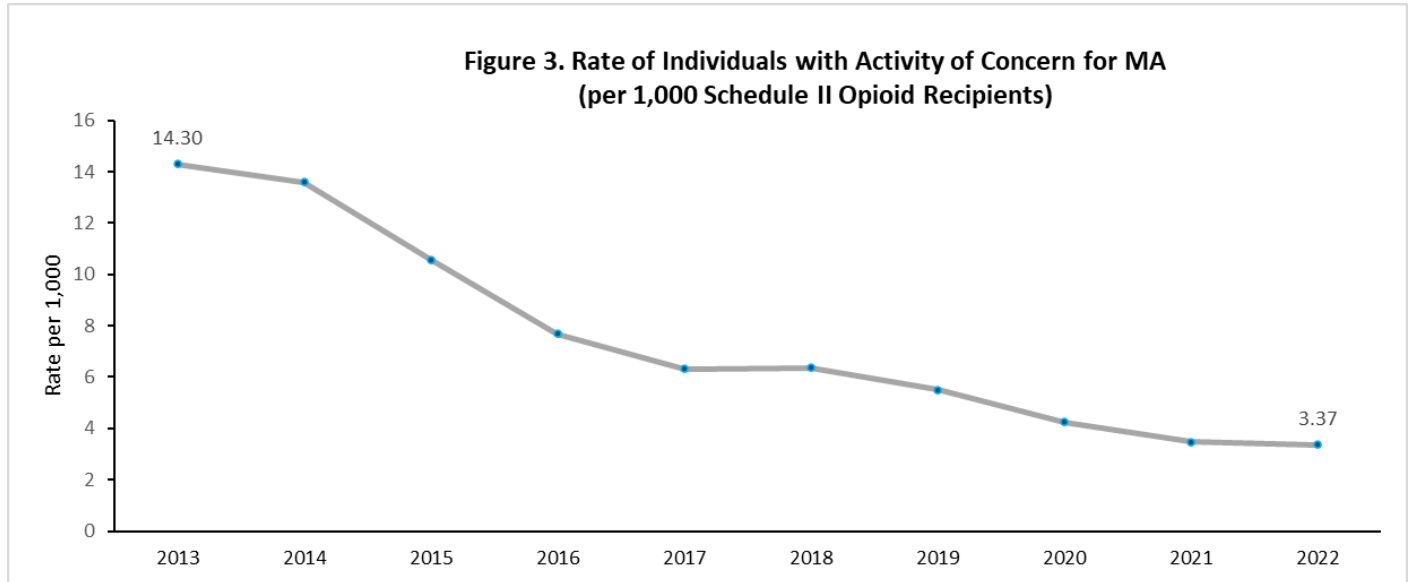
- Approximately 205,000 individuals in MA received prescriptions for Schedule II opioids in the 4th Quarter of 2022; this is a slight increase from the previous quarter (an increase of about 2,400 individuals), but over a 47% decrease from the 1st Quarter of 2015 (n = 390,532).
- Approximately 201,000 individuals in MA received prescriptions for Schedule II opioids in the 1st Quarter of 2023; this is a slight decrease from the previous quarter (a decrease of about 3,600 individuals) and over a 48% decrease from the 1st Quarter of 2015.



Note:

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- 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)

- The rate of individuals with activity of concern (also referred to as multiple provider episodes) decreased from 14.3 to 3.4 per 1,000 individuals between CY 2013 and CY 2022, more than a 76% reduction in activity of concern. Between CY 2021 and CY 2022 the rates of individuals with activity of concern decreased from 3.5 to 3.4 per 1,000 patients.



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 CY2022 were extracted on 04/06/2023.

Source

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