

THE TRANSITION TO HEROIN



Opioid pain medications, like hydrocodone and oxycodone, are chemically similar to heroin and have a similar effect on our minds and bodies.

As opioid pain medication use dramatically increased, the United States also experienced an increase in heroin use and deaths. More than 900,000 people reported heroin use

in 2014, a 153 percent increase since 2007. (COMPTON, JONES, & BALDWIN, 2016) Tragically, heroin deaths tripled in the 5 year period from 2010 to 2014, increasing from 3,300 to more than 10,000 deaths. (CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL & PREVENTION, 2016)

These facts clearly show heroin use patterns have changed. In the 1960's,

80 percent of heroin users reported heroin was the first opioid they used. Today, of the 600 people who begin using heroin, (SAMHSA, 2015) four out of five report that they started with opioid pain relievers. (JONES, HEROIN USE AND HEROIN USE RISK BEHAVIORS AMONG NONMEDICAL USERS OF PRESCRIPTION OPIOID PAIN RELIEVERS - UNITED STATES, 2002-2004 AND 2008-2010, 2013)

Opioid Pain Medications and Heroin are Chemically Similar and just as Addictive

