 Click to Print[EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

## Florida Has Prescription Problem

Tribune Staff Report

Published: December 28, 2007

Athletes aren't the only ones struggling with addiction and abuse of prescription drugs. The illegal sale of prescription drugs now constitutes the fastest-growing segment of the illicit drug market in Florida, authorities say. Increased use has resulted in more emergency room visits and deaths. Here are the numbers:

Florida medical examiners blamed prescription drugs for 2,181 overdose deaths in 2004, or roughly six people per day.

For the first half of 2007, cocaine caused 398 deaths in Florida, more than any other drug. Prescription drugs caused nearly all of the rest, lead by the painkiller and anti-addiction medicine Methadone (392); tranquilizers in the benzodiazepines family (353); oxycodone, the painkilling ingredient in OxyContin (323); hydrocodone painkillers (134); and morphine (122).

Deaths caused by oxycodone increased 9.5 percent in Florida during the first half of 2007. In that time, the painkiller caused the deaths of 99 people in Tampa and St. Petersburg.


Nationally, the number of emergency room visits that noted abuse of painkillers jumped to 119,000 in 2002, up 168 percent from 1994.

Nationally, recreational use of prescription drugs trailed only marijuana use as the most prevalent illegal drug activity. Annually, 4.8 percent of people 12 or older reported using prescription drugs recreationally, about half the number of those who claimed to have used marijuana.

Sources: Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

### Find this article at:

<http://www2.tbo.com/content/2007/dec/28/florida-has-prescription-problem>

 Click to Print[EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

©2007 Media General Inc. All Rights Reserved.

[Member agreement](#) and [privacy statement](#)