

# Pill Mills Prescribe Drug Addiction

There's a lot more than oranges that visitors to south Florida can get these days.

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South Florida has a booming pain clinic industry- and purveyor of pain pills. The region has begun to be known as the pill mill capitol of the United States. Authorities in the area are struggling with the embarrassing and deadly problem. There is much debate as to the reasons this part of Florida became the nation's medicine cabinet.

***"That is the \$21-million question,"*** said Joel Kaufman, executive director of the United Way of Broward's Commission on [Drug Abuse](#). ***"The loose regulation and oversight has been one contributing factor."***

During the 1990's the Appalachian region saw a huge spike in deaths from the pain drug oxycontin. The states took quick action and implemented programs which tracked who was writing and receiving prescriptions in the area.

This did not happen in Florida. The large concentration of doctors served as a foundation for a huge industry to emerge. Whether the officials simply did not realize the imposing problem or if they were motivated by huge profits, the result is the same – large numbers of travelers to Florida who pass by Disney World and keep going south. Because the pills wind up in other hands, it creates problems for the rest of the country.

Florida recently closed a loop hole in its laws, which allowed pain clinics to operate largely without supervision. The move is being lauded. However the results may not be seen for several years. Meanwhile it will be business as usual for "Pill Mills" and treatment centers need to keep their sleeves rolled up.

Mary Rieser, executive director of an addiction treatment facility in Atlanta Georgia states:

***"In the last 20 years the number of drug addicts seeking addiction treatment has increased dramatically... where before we saw mainly illegal drug use now it is almost overwhelmingly prescription drugs which account for most of the new admissions."***

The program Ms. Rieser directs is a non-profit non-traditional [addiction treatment](#) program in Atlanta, Georgia. The program there has proved extremely successful in recovering the ruin that drug addiction causes.

In 2005, non-medical use of painkillers contributed to more than 8,500 deaths. Overdose deaths involving prescription pain relievers increased 114 percent from 2001 to 2005, according to the Office of National Drug Control Policy.