

# News From the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## Cancer Rate Dips as PSA Tests Drop

Thirty states have met the Healthy People 2020 goal to reduce colorectal cancer cases to 39.9 per 100 000 population or fewer, and 27 states reached the cervical cancer target of no more than 7.2 cases per 100 000 females, according to a CDC analysis of 2012 cancer registry data.

The investigators reported that the overall incidence of cancer was lower in 2012 than in 2011 due to fewer prostate cancer diagnoses as men forgo prostate-specific antigen tests in accordance with US Preventive Services Task Force recommendations.

In 2012, about 1.5 million new invasive cancers were diagnosed in the United States (excluding Nevada), for an annual incidence rate of 483 per 100 000 population for males and 412 per 100 000 for females (Henley SJ et al. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep.* 2015;64[49]:1353-1358). Cancer rates varied among states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, but overall incidence was lowest in Puerto Rico. Four cancers—female breast, prostate, lung and bronchus, and colon and rectum—comprised roughly half of all cancers diagnosed in 2012.

Two-thirds of people diagnosed with cancer between 2001 and 2011 survived 5 years or longer, with survival rates reaching 81% for those diagnosed before age 45 years. The highest 5-year survival rates were for prostate cancer (97%) and female breast cancer (88%); the lowest was for lung cancer (18%). Survival rates were also lower for black patients (60%) than for white individuals (66%).

Cancer surveillance data can help public health officials meet the nation's Healthy People 2020 cancer goals by guiding them to direct cancer care and services to areas in greatest need. In addition, health care professionals play a key role in reducing cancer by advising their patients on prevention, recommending cancer screening tests, and following up on abnormal screening results.

## Opioid Overdoses Continue to Climb

Fatal drug overdoses in the United States reached an all-time high in 2014, driven largely by heroin and prescription opioid pain reliever abuse. The CDC's recent analysis of mortality data found that of the 47 055 drug overdose deaths in 2014, 61% involved opioids, a 14% increase from the previous year (Rudd RA et al.

*MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep.* 2016;64[50-51]:1378-1382).

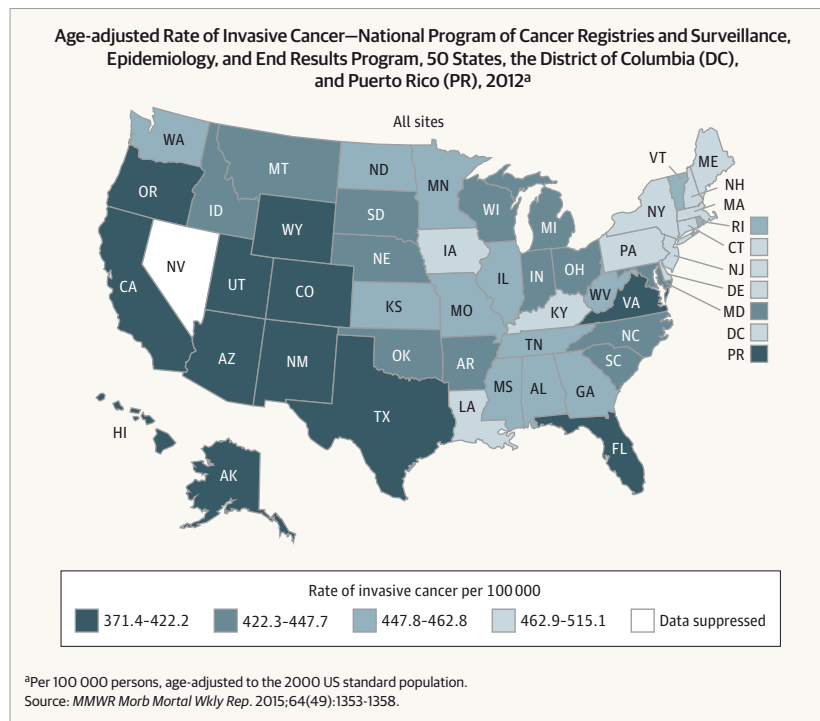
The rise in opioid overdoses has tracked an increase in prescriptions for opioid pain relievers, which have quadrupled since 1999. Since 2000, opioid deaths have surged by 200%, affecting adults of all ages, races, and genders. Overdose deaths from synthetic opioids (not including methadone) increased by 80% from 2013 to 2014. Illicitly produced fentanyl, a short-acting opioid, is suspected in many of those deaths.



Abuse of prescription opioids such as oxycodone and hydrocodone also is the strongest risk factor for experimenting with heroin, the researchers noted. Heroin-related deaths increased by 26% from 2013 to 2014 and have tripled since 2010. Cheap prices, easy availability, and high purity have fueled the increase.

The researchers called for safer prescribing of opioid pain relievers as well as improved access to medication-assisted treatment and behavioral therapies, naloxone to reverse opioid overdoses, and syringe service programs to prevent HIV and hepatitis C virus infections.

"To curb these trends and save lives, we must help prevent addiction and provide support and treatment to those who suffer from opioid use disorders," CDC Director Tom Frieden, MD, MPH, said in a statement. "This report also shows how important it is that law enforcement intensify efforts to reduce the availability of heroin, illegal fentanyl, and other illegal opioids."



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