

## **Opioid Update for Wednesday, April 19, 2017**

### **Division of Behavioral Health**

### **Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)**

#### **Items for this week's Opioid Update include:**

- Legislative Update
- Brief History of Fentanyl
- SAMHSA Update: Where Pain Relievers Were Obtained
- In the News

#### **Legislative Update**

- HF 524 - An Act relating to controlled substances, including interstate connectivity under the drug prescribing and dispensing information program, has passed the Senate and will now go to the Governor
- HF 532 - An Act relating to prescribing practitioner registration with the drug prescribing and dispensing information program, has been placed on the Senate unfinished business calendar.

#### **Brief History of Fentanyl**

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid medication, which was originally developed in the 1960s to treat the chronic pain of cancer patients. In the mid-1990s use of the fentanyl patch became widespread. By 2012, fentanyl was the most widely used synthetic opioid in the United States and other industrialized nations including Canada and through the United Kingdom.

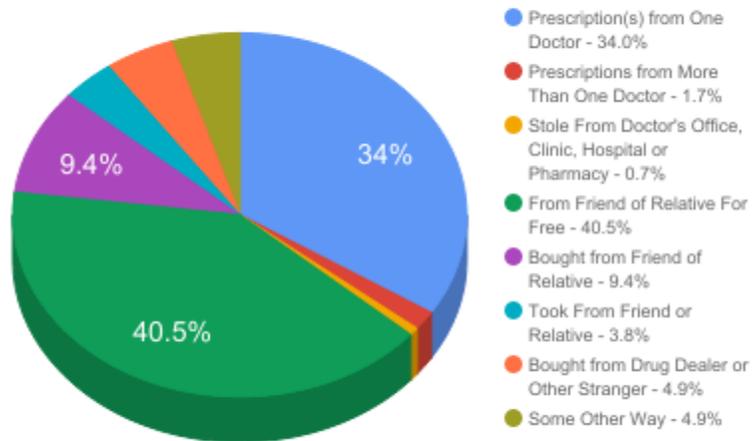
Illicit use of fentanyl dates back almost as far as its creation, and began to gain the attention of the medical community and law enforcement in the 1970s. Currently, illegally produced fentanyl is frequently "cut" into heroin and cocaine and is largely to blame for a recent spike in drug overdose deaths. Pure fentanyl powder is very potent, and persons who use heroin and cocaine that are "cut" with fentanyl often underestimate the strength of the product. Users of illicit drugs mixed with fentanyl who either underestimate the drug's strength or are unaware of its presence often end up overdosing. Fentanyl is cheaper to produce than cocaine and heroin, and has recently gained considerable attention from law enforcement and the media for flooding the illegal drug market.

#### **SAMHSA Update: Where Pain Relievers Were Obtained**

At the 2017 Iowa Governor's Conference on Substance Abuse, keynote presenter Lieutenant Commander Jorielle Brown Houston, Ph.D., of the Public Health Service Corps shared the following information regarding where pain relievers were obtained by people aged 12 or older

who misused prescription pain relievers. We thought this information was worth passing along.

Source Where Pain Relievers Were Obtained for Most Recent Misuse among People Aged 12 or Older Who Misused Prescription Pain Relievers in the Past Year: Percentages, 2015



#### In the News

- [The Link Between Opioids and Unemployment](#)
- [You Draw It: Just How Bad Is the Drug Overdose Epidemic?](#)