

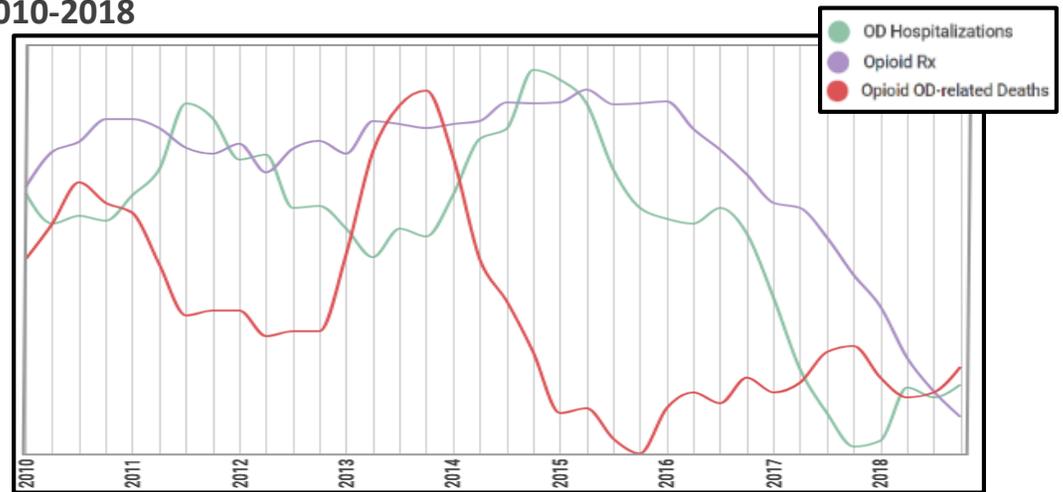


“I have seen people turn their lives around.”

There was a period of time when I had a medical issue in which I was given a script for Norco and was instructed to take 2 tablets, 30 minutes before the home nurse arrived. That dosage knocked me out and I remember her slapping my feet telling me to wake up, so she could complete my intake. I was on [Norco] for several months. A habit never formed, however, I do remember referring to them as “my happy pills.” The colors and light literally got brighter; it made the world full of sunshine.

My perspective has significantly changed since I first entered the field as an SUD counselor. There is so much more to methadone treatment than just taking the medication. There is a counseling component that many do not realize and this is where significant change begins. I have seen women come in broken, pregnant, and hopeless. They learn to maintain a healthy pregnancy, engage in the joys of their pregnancy, and deliver a healthy baby free of illicit drugs. More importantly, I have seen people turn their lives around and become productive members of society again. They are able to regain family trust, hold a job, and live a drug-free lifestyle. There is no person that is safe from the devastating grips of addiction and what works for me, may not work for you. Allowing individuals to explore their options and engage in recovery without judgment or criticism is the key. Medication-assisted treatment is a proven form of treatment that has saved countless lives. However, many never make it in, due to the stigma that society holds, including family members.

Opioid Prescriptions, hospitalizations, and overdose-related deaths, 2010-2018



Source: California Opioid Overdose Surveillance Dashboard