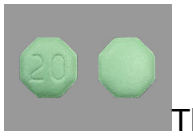
NCADD
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG DEPENDENCE, INC.

# Opana's Popularity Illustrates Challenge of Tackling Prescription Drug Abuse




The rise in popularity of the painkiller Opana illustrates the challenges facing law enforcement authorities, addiction specialists and pharmaceutical companies trying to tackle prescription drug abuse, USA Today reports.

Opana misuse became more common after the company that makes OxyContin reformulated the drug to make it more difficult to abuse.

"It's almost like a game of Whac-A-Mole. You get a handle on OxyContin; they switch to Opana," Jeffrey Reynolds, Executive Director of the Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence in Mineola, New York, told the newspaper. "My guess is it will be something new tomorrow."

The company that makes Opana, Endo Pharmaceuticals, has introduced a new formulation that is more difficult to abuse. The new pill, which is crush-resistant, received approval from the Food and Drug Administration late last year. Addiction experts and police say they now expect to see Opana users switching to heroin.

"They will adapt the same way drug traffickers or criminals will adapt to a new law. They are going to find a way to satisfy their addiction," said DEA Special Agent Gary Boggs of the Office of Diversion Control. "When they either can't get those particular pharmaceuticals or can't afford them, they now gravitate to heroin."

Opana abuse has been seen in areas including Nassau County, New York; Pennsylvania, including Philadelphia; and Ohio, including Akron, Cincinnati and Athens.

NCADD Affiliates across the country are working in their communities to respond to increased prescription drug use, abuse, addiction and overdoses. recently, USA Today ran a story titled, "Opana abuse in USA overtakes OxyContin" which includes several quotes from Jeff Reynolds, PhD, Executive Director of NCADD's Long Island Affiliate, the Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (LICADD). To read the story, please click here.

For more information about prescription drugs, click here.