

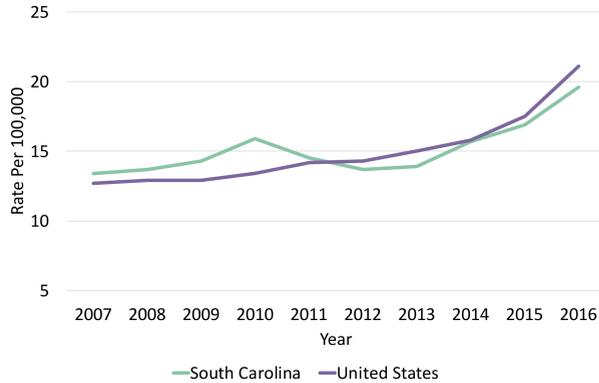
Purpose

To engage health professions students at the University of South Carolina (USC) in meaningful discussions around the opioid crisis at the state and national level by sponsoring a three-event series on opioids and substance use in Spring 2018.

Background

- 2 million people are estimated to have a substance use disorder related to opioid pain relievers¹
- Among people with an opioid prescription:
 - 21-29% misuse them²
 - 8-12% develop an opioid use disorder²
 - 4-6% who misuse them transition to heroin³
- On average, 115 Americans die from an opioid overdose each day⁴
- In 2016, there were more than 5 times as many overdose deaths involving opioids than in 1999⁴
- Prescription opioid overdose deaths in South Carolina and across the nation are rising (Figure 1)
 - Overdose deaths in South Carolina climbed 16% between 2015 and 2016⁵

Figure 1. Opioid-Related Age-Adjusted Mortality^a



^a Opioid overdose deaths identified using underlying cause-of-death codes X40-X44, X60-X64, X85, Y10-Y14, and opioid overdose deaths that have T40.1, T40.2, T40.3, T40.4, T40.6 as a contributing cause. Source: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC WONDER.

- In 2015, more South Carolinians died from heroin and opioid overdoses than homicides⁶
- In 2017, Governor Henry McMaster declared South Carolina's opioid crisis a public health emergency⁶

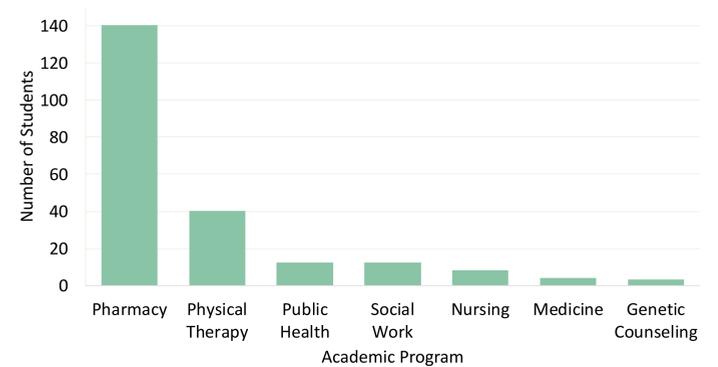
Methods

- USC IHI hosted three themed events between January and April 2018 centered on the opioid epidemic:
 - **A National View of the Opioid Epidemic** (January 2018)
 - **Opioids in Our Community and in South Carolina** (February 2018)
 - **Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)** (April 2018)
- Each event included a talk by an expert (e.g., a researcher, faculty member, or head of a state government agency with extensive experience with the opioid epidemic at the state and/or national level)
- With the exception of Event 3 (which was a training), the talks at each event were followed by an activity to help students think more deeply about the information presented and how it related to population health and/or clinical care

Student Participation

- In total, 212 students from programs in pharmacy, physical therapy, public health, social work, nursing, medicine, and genetic counseling participated in these three events (Table 1)
- The majority of students (65.6%) were in the College of Pharmacy, followed by students in the Physical Therapy program (18.4% of attendees)

Table 1. Total Attendance, by Academic Program



Event Overview

Event 1: A National View of the Opioid Epidemic

Traced the origins of the opioid crisis and discussed trauma-informed approaches to prevention and treatment

Event 2: Opioids in Our Community and in South Carolina

Explored the opioid crisis in SC, the current response of our community, and what is needed to turn the tide

Event 3: Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)

Provided instruction and practice using the evidence-based, early intervention method, SBIRT

Example Event Activity: Addersfield, SC

Scenario:

The city council of Addersfield, SC (population 60,000) received a grant to combat opioid use and has asked your group of healthcare workers to develop the plan for utilizing the grant funds over the next year in the most effective way possible. Review the resources provided in order to develop an outline for fund utilization over the next five years. The grant will be \$100,000 in 2018 and increase \$100,000/year until 2022, when it will total \$500,000.

[students were provided information about the hospital, emergency response, and law enforcement systems, as well as city demographics]

Discussion Questions:

1. What are your healthcare team's 2-4 goals for utilizing the grant funds?
2. How would you recommend the City Council spends its \$100,000 grant in 2018?
3. Why would you allocate funding this way?
4. How would you recommend the City Council spends its \$500,000 grant in 2022? Why have or haven't your spending recommendations changed over time and with increased funding?
5. What information would you want to know that is not available? How would that information influence your recommendations?
6. What role would each of you, as health professionals, play in this scenario?

Conclusions and Future Directions

- Feedback was generally positive, although some students noted that they would have liked more information about "how [they] can get involved in managing the opioid crisis as students"
- Pharmacy students were overrepresented, which may have been due, in part, to program requirements that mandated their attendance
- Future events centered on large issues such as the opioid crisis should strive to (a) provide more concrete actions for students to take in response and (b) be more inclusive of all health science students

References

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Contact:

Jennifer Mandelbaum & Julia Brown
The USC IHI Open School Chapter
ihipenschoolusc@gmail.com