



**WISCONSIN HEALTH
INFORMATION ORGANIZATION**

**Use of Opioids from Multiple Providers
in Persons Without Cancer
January 2024**

The Wisconsin Health Information Organization (WHIO) is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to “create more health data and better information to advance actions.” The WHIO is certified through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) program as a Qualified Entity. As a Qualified Entity, the WHIO has received Medicare Fee for Service claims data from CMS for service dates in 2021. The Medicare Fee for Service claims data was combined with other 2021 claims data the WHIO receives from commercial health plans, self-funded employers, and the Wisconsin Medicaid program to create this report.

Why Does this Information Matter?

Opioids block pain signals in the brain. When prescribed and used properly, opioids can help to make pain more manageable. Opioids also have dangerous side effects such as sleepiness, impaired thinking, addiction, overdose, and even death. Studies have shown that people who are prescribed opioids from multiple prescribers or obtain their opioid prescriptions from multiple pharmacies are more likely to overdose compared to those who receive their opioid prescriptions from only one prescriber.

It is estimated that 1 in 4 adults (age 18 and older) were prescribed an opioid in 2022, with the highest percentage of prescriptions provided to people 65 years of age and older. The top three reasons for an opioid prescription included surgeries (46%), dental pain (12.6%), and back pain (10%). In 2021, the Wisconsin counties with the highest death rates related to opioid prescriptions included Jackson (14.5 deaths/100,000 people) and Milwaukee (13.7 deaths/100,000 people) counties when the statewide average was 6.1 deaths/100,000 people. More information on opioids in Wisconsin can be found at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/opioids/index.htm>.

Report Overview

This report was created using the Pharmacy Quality Alliance (PQA) measure “Use of Opioids from Multiple Providers in Persons Without Cancer.” This measure looks at people 18 years of age and older who received a prescription for an opioid from four or more prescribers and four or more pharmacies in the measurement year. Additional information on this measure can be found at <https://www.pqaalliance.org/opioid-measures>.

To be included in this report, a person must meet the following criteria:

- 18 years of age or older as of January 1, 2021
- Have two or more prescription claims for an opioid and 15 or more consecutive days supply in 2021

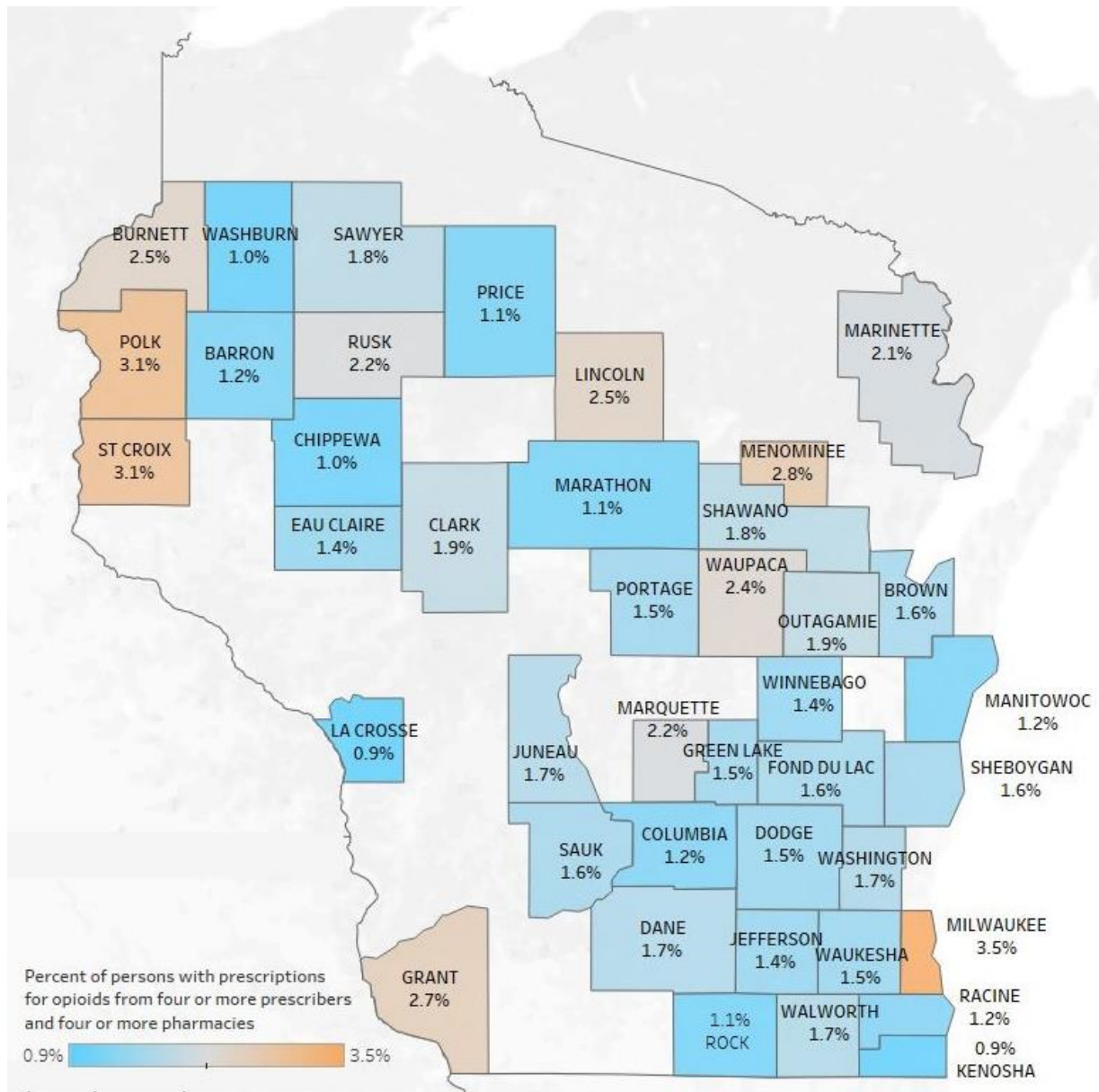
The following people were excluded:

- Any person in hospice at any point during 2021
- Any person in palliative care during 2021
- Any person with cancer during 2021
- Any person with sickle cell disease during 2021

To be counted in the numerator, a person must have had an opioid prescription from four or more prescribers and obtained their prescription from four or more pharmacies in 2021. To calculate the rate, the people meeting the numerator criteria were divided by all the people included in this report, and then multiplied by 100. The results are displayed by Wisconsin county and include only those counties with at least 11 people meeting the numerator criteria.

The map and table below indicate that there are differences across the 36 Wisconsin counties in this analysis in opioid usage patterns in persons without cancer. **A lower rate indicates better performance.**

Use of Opioids from Multiple Providers in Persons Without Cancer, 2021



Note: Counties with less than 11 people meeting the numerator criteria were not included in this report.

County	Percent of persons with prescriptions for opioids from ≥ 4 prescribers and ≥ 4 pharmacies
Barron	1.2%
Brown	1.6%
Burnett-Washburn	1.6%
Chippewa	1.0%
Clark	1.9%
Columbia	1.2%
Dane	1.7%
Dodge	1.5%
Eau Claire	1.4%
Fond du Lac	1.6%
Grant	2.7%
Jefferson	1.4%
Juneau	1.7%
Kenosha	0.9%
La Crosse	0.9%
Lincoln	2.5%
Manitowoc	1.2%
Marathon	1.1%
Marinette	2.1%
Marquette-Green Lake	1.9%
Milwaukee	3.5%
Outagamie	1.9%
Polk	3.1%
Portage	1.5%
Racine	1.2%
Rock	1.1%
Sauk	1.6%
Sawyer-Rusk-Price	1.7%
Shawano-Menominee	2.0%
Sheboygan	1.6%
St Croix	3.1%
Walworth	1.7%
Washington	1.7%
Waukesha	1.5%
Waupaca	2.4%
Winnebago	1.4%
Wisconsin	2.0%

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is WHIO?

A: The WHIO is Wisconsin's All-Payer claims database, whose purpose is to provide health care data and information to evaluate the health of Wisconsinites and the performance of Wisconsin's health care delivery system. The WHIO Board of Directors includes health care organization, clinician, health plan, employer, state agency, and health IT representatives.

Q: Are you using records that identifies a patients' confidential information?

A: No. Patient privacy is the highest priority for the WHIO. The data used for this report has been "scrubbed" to remove data that would identify an individual person.

Q: Where does the information that generated this report come from?

A: The WHIO receives medical and pharmacy claims, and insurance eligibility records, from Wisconsin health plans, a large self-funded employer coalition, a pharmacy benefits management organization, the Wisconsin Medicaid program, and CMS. These records contain the data elements needed to create the measure results in this report.

Q: What is the minimal amount of data required to be included in this report?

A: Each county must have 11 or more people in the numerator in 2018 who met the criteria for this measure to be included in this report, according to CMS.

Q: Who is included in this report?

A: Any person 18 years of age or older with two or more prescription claims for opioid medications with a cumulative days' supply for 15 or more days during 2021.

Q: Who is excluded from this report?

A: All people with cancer, sickle cell disease, or in palliative care or hospice at any time during 2018.

Q: What are the numerator criteria for this measure?

A: All people in the denominator that had an opioid prescription claim from four or more prescribers and four or more pharmacies in 2021.

For more information about the WHIO or this report, please contact us at info@whio.org or visit our website whio.org.



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