

Transcript for "Pill Mills Part 1: Introduction"

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Narrator: Prescription drug abuse, particularly the abuse of opioids such as hydrocodone, is becoming a national pandemic. Consider this: the United States is ranked number one in the world for hydrocodone dispensing at over 79,700kg per year, according to the 2013 statistics. The United Kingdom comes in at second, dispensing only 200kg per year. Given the disparity in population between the two countries, perhaps this isn't surprising.

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Narrator: But then consider the theoretical percentage of population receiving hydrocodone in each country. In the US, it is nearly double that of the UK. In 2009, of the 4.6 million drug related emergency visits, roughly half were related to drug abuse. Of this staggering statistic, pharmaceutical abuse occurred at a rate of 405 visits for every 100,000, versus only 317 visits related to illicit drugs.

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Narrator: Even more concerning, between 2004 and 2009, emergency visits related to abuse of pharmaceuticals nearly doubled, increasing 98.4%.

Graphic Reads: "Ask a pharmacist: Have you seen a rise in prescription pain medication?"

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Billy Steele, RPH: Yes, one thing I have- that's really come to my attention having done pharmacy a long time: pain medications, we only got a couple way back when, and now there seem to be more and more options, and I can see a considerable increase in those, especially with the growth of the pain management clinics. They seem to focus a lot on the pain pills, and that seems to be an issue that's really in every pharmacy.

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Narrator: These statistics are based on only documented incidents of abuse. By most estimates, abuse of pharmaceuticals has become a full blown epidemic. No culprit is more at fault than the so-called pill mill. A pill mill engages in the non therapeutic dispensing of drugs when there is no valid medical need to do so. This is often at the monetary benefit of the doctors, pharmacists and pharmacy owners who are complicit.

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Narrator: As a pharmacist, you may not knowingly be complicit in a pill mill scheme, but the DEA and subsequently the Texas State Board of Pharmacy, identifies corresponding responsibility as the pharmacist's role to ensure proper therapeutic dispensing. In this series, we will highlight many of the major warning signs your pharmacy may be a pill mill. Use the links provided in the description box below the video to navigate between series installments, or click on one of the items listed on your screen.

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Narrator: For a text summary of this video. Please see the link below in the description box.