Kentucky ranks second in the nation along with New Mexico for the most drug overdose deaths per capita. Only West Virginia has more overdose deaths.\(^1\) Drug overdose deaths in Kentucky quadrupled from 241 in 2000 to 1,077 in 2014.\(^2\) Since 2008, more Kentucky adults have died each year from drug overdoses than from motor vehicle accidents.\(^3\)

The 2015 Kentucky Health Issues Poll (KHIP) asked Kentucky adults about the influence of drug misuse on their family members and friends.

**More than 1 in 10 knows someone who has had problems because of heroin use**

KHIP asked, “Have any of your family members or friends experienced problems as a result of using heroin?” More than 1 in 10 Kentucky adults (13%) said yes. This is about the same as in 2014 (11%), but it is an increase since 2013, when only 9% of adults knew someone who had problems due to heroin use.

Responses varied by region. More than 3 in 10 Northern Kentucky adults (35%) reported that they knew someone who had problems due to heroin use. That compares with nearly 2 in 10 Louisville area adults (17%). About 1 in 10 adults knew someone who had problems because of heroin use in the Lexington area (14%), in Eastern Kentucky (10%) and in Western Kentucky (8%). Since 2013, the percentage of adults who said yes to this question has remained stable in Eastern and Western Kentucky, but has risen in other regions.

*Continued on back*
Young adults more likely to know someone who has used heroin

Young adults are more likely than older adults to report having friends or family members who had problems as a result of using heroin. One in 4 adults ages 18 to 29 (25%) reported knowing someone who had problems due to heroin use. This compares with about 1 in 10 adults 30 to 45 (12%), 46 to 64 (10%), and 65 and older (7%).

Responses to this question did not vary significantly by sex, race, education or income.

1 in 4 knows someone who had misused prescription drugs

KHIP also asked, “Have any of your family members or friends experienced problems as a result of abusing prescription pain relievers such as OxyContin, Vicodin, Percocet or codeine?” One in 4 Kentucky adults (25%) said yes.

Western Kentucky adults were less likely than adults in other regions to report knowing someone who had problems due to prescription drug misuse. Fewer than 2 in 10 Western Kentucky adults (16%) reported this. That compares with about 3 in 10 adults in Eastern Kentucky (33%), Northern Kentucky (30%) and the Louisville area (27%), and more than 2 in 10 adults in the Lexington area (25%).

Since 2014, the percentage of adults who reported this has risen from 20% to 27% in the Louisville area, but has remained steady in other regions.

Some adults more likely to know someone who had misused prescription drugs

White adults (26%) were three times more likely than African American adults (9%) to report knowing someone who had problems due to prescription drug abuse. Likewise, adults earning less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)4 (29%) were more likely than adults earning more than 200% FPL (23%) to report this.

About 3 in 10 adults ages 18 to 45 (32%) knew someone who had problems due to prescription drug misuse. This compares with about 2 in 10 adults 46 to 64 (23%) and fewer than 2 in 10 adults 65 and older (16%).

4 In 2014, 200% of the Federal Poverty Level was $47,700 for a family of four.