



# SIENA RESEARCH INSTITUTE

SIENA COLLEGE, LOUDONVILLE, NY

[www.siena.edu/scri](http://www.siena.edu/scri)

Embargoed Release:

Sunday, April 15, 2018

Contact:

Don Levy, 518-783-2901, 518-944-0482, [dlevy@siena.edu](mailto:dlevy@siena.edu)

PDF version; crosstabs; website:

[www.Siena.edu/SCRI](http://www.Siena.edu/SCRI)

## **A Special Four-Part Siena College Poll: New York State's Opioid Epidemic Conducted as part of the Prescription for Progress\***

### **54% of NY'ers Personally Touched by Opioid Abuse; 1 of 4 Know Someone that Died of an Opioid Overdose**

*80% Agree: US in Middle of Opioid Epidemic; 83% Say Opioid Abuse  
has Gotten Worse in Past Few Years*

### **2/3 see Prescription Drug Abuse, Heroin & Growing Availability of Synthetic Opioids as VERY Serious Public Health Problem**

**Loudonville, NY.** Twenty-four percent of New Yorkers personally know of someone, a family member, friend or acquaintance that has died due to an opioid overdose. Additionally after measuring those that have an immediate or extended family member, or someone they know through work that have abused opioids, 54 percent have been touched by the opioid epidemic according to a new Siena College (SCRI) poll of New Yorkers.

Eighty percent of state residents agree that our country is in the middle of an opioid epidemic and 83 percent think the problem of opioid abuse has gotten worse over the past few years while only 4 percent think the situation has improved. Sixty-three percent have heard a great deal about our country facing an opioid crisis and 82 percent say that opioid abuse is either a very (41 percent) or somewhat (41 percent) serious problem in their area. The vast majority of New Yorkers, 77 percent, think of both the abuse of legal prescription drugs like OxyContin and illegal opioids like heroin when they hear a discussion of the opioid crisis.

Asked how serious a public health problem nine different issues pose, the three seen as most serious are heroin use (69 percent very serious), the growing availability of synthetic opioids (68 percent very serious) and prescription drug abuse (66 percent very serious). The remaining six issues in descending order of very serious are: mental illness (53 percent), obesity (51 percent), alcohol abuse (43 percent), tobacco use (43 percent), e-cigarette use (29 percent) and marijuana use (26 percent).

The survey is part of a community effort by **Prescription for Progress: United against opioid addiction**, a newly formed coalition of leaders in healthcare, media, law enforcement, education and business in New York's Capital Region committed to raising awareness and taking positive steps to address the crisis.

“Often we’re asked what finding is surprising in a poll,” said Siena College Research Institute Director, Don Levy. “That one in four of us know someone that this epidemic has taken and nearly 6 in 10 of us are currently touched by it, is shocking.”

“Touched by opioid abuse doesn’t even do justice to the extent. Sixteen percent of New Yorkers say that they or an immediate family member has abused opioids. One in four have a friend or extended family member that has abused opioids and fourteen percent know someone through work that has or is struggling with opioids. And, a quarter of us has had a friend or coworker share with them that one of their family members has abused opioids.

“Fewer than half of New Yorkers told us that they don’t know of anyone who has abused opioids. With eighty-three percent now saying that the crisis is getting worse and not improving, the percentage of us that are touched by opioid abuse may increase unless the tide can be turned,” Levy said.

Over half of New Yorkers were able to identify oxycodone (84 percent), morphine (70 percent), heroin (69 percent), hydrocodone (67 percent), fentanyl (58 percent) and methadone (53 percent) as opioids.

In the coming weeks, the Siena College Research Institute (SCRI) will release three additional chapters of data drawn from this survey of nearly 1400 New Yorkers.

Part II: Who is responsible for this crisis? What should we do about it?

Part III: What happens at the doctor? Can we access treatment?

Part IV: What do we believe about opioid abuse? What initiatives do we support?

**Prescription for Progress** seeks to unite businesses, nonprofits and government agencies to strive toward the shared goal of fighting addiction. The initiative will include town hall meetings, public service messages in local media and gatherings of stakeholders to identify positive steps. An upcoming survey by SCRI, also commissioned by **Prescription for Progress**, will poll professionals working to address opioid abuse. All **Prescription for Progress** data for this and future surveys will be made available to journalism outlets, research organizations and other stakeholders in New York State.

To learn more about the **Prescription for Progress** coalition, including how your organization can participate, please contact Patti Hart, [pahart@timesunion.com](mailto:pahart@timesunion.com) or 518-454-5067. Or sign up here: [www.RXforprogress.com](http://www.RXforprogress.com)

###

This Siena College Poll was conducted online February 8-14, 2018 through a proprietary panel developed by Lucid: <https://lucid.com> of 1384 New York State residents age 18 and older in English. It has an overall margin of error of  $\pm 3.0$  percentage points including the design effects resulting from weighting. Data was statistically adjusted by age, region, and gender to ensure representativeness. The Siena College Research Institute, directed by Donald Levy, Ph.D., conducts political, economic, social and cultural research primarily in NYS. SCRI, an independent, non-partisan research institute, subscribes to the American Association of Public Opinion Research Code of Professional Ethics and Practices. For more information, call Don Levy at (518) 783-2901. For survey cross-tabs: [www.Siena.edu/SCRI](http://www.Siena.edu/SCRI).

