



# Most believe addiction is a disease; half know where to find treatment

The 2019 **Kentucky Health Issues Poll** asked Kentucky adults several questions about substance use and addiction and whether they believe addiction is a disease. KHIP is sponsored by Interact for Health and the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky.

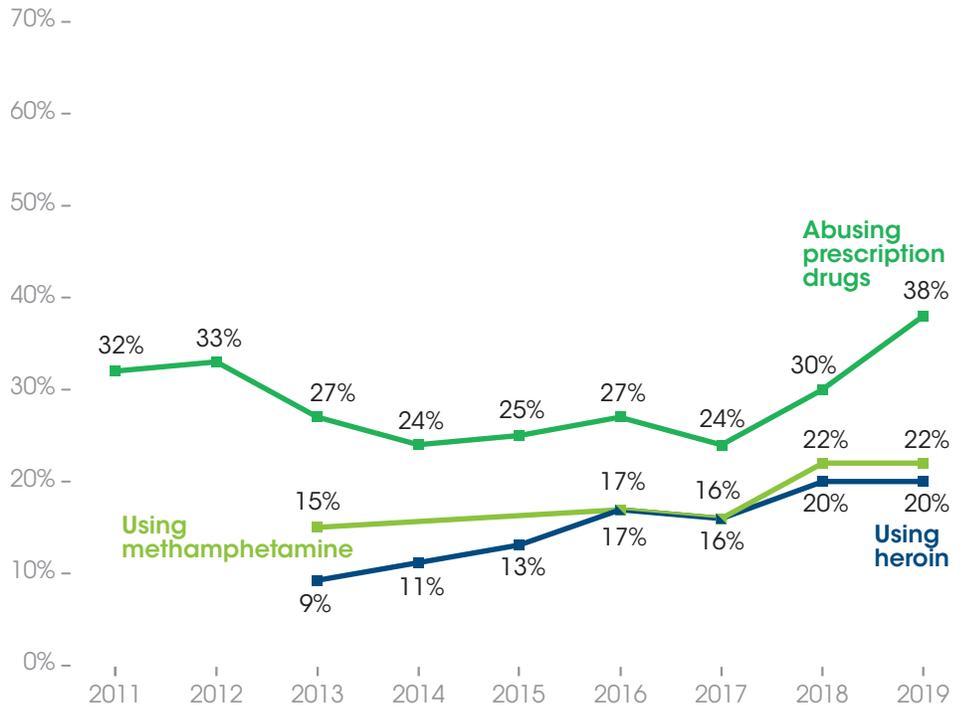
## Uptick in prescription pain reliever abuse

According to the U.S. Surgeon General, substance use disorder is a public health crisis.<sup>1</sup> This is true both in the nation and in Kentucky. The 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that, in the past year, nearly 10 million Americans ages 12 and older had misused prescription pain relievers, nearly 2 million had used methamphetamine and more than 800,000 had used heroin.<sup>2</sup> In 2017, the most recent year for which data are available, Kentucky ranked fourth in the nation in drug overdose death rates.<sup>3</sup> KHIP

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2019). *Surgeon General Priority: Opioids and Addiction*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2NLgj3i>

<sup>2</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2019). *Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2Gdy1s6>

**Percentage of Kentucky adults who know someone who has experienced problems as a result of ...**



\* The methamphetamine question was not asked on KHIP in 2014 and 2015. SOURCE: 2019 Kentucky Health Issues Poll (released January 2020)



asked Kentucky adults about their knowledge of substance abuse among their family members and friends.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> National Center for Health Statistics. (2019). *Drug Overdose Mortality by State*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/37hFxOu>

<sup>4</sup> KHIP asked, "Do you have any family members or friends who have experienced problems as a result of ... abusing prescription pain relievers? ... using heroin? ... using methamphetamine?"

Nearly 4 in 10 Kentucky adults (38%) reported knowing someone who has had problems as a result of abusing prescription pain relievers. This has increased since 2018. Two in 10 Kentucky adults (20%) know someone who has used heroin. About 2 in 10 (22%) know someone who has used

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methamphetamine. Knowledge of heroin and methamphetamine use are unchanged since 2018.

## Nearly 7 in 10 Kentucky adults believe addiction is a disease

Research has shown that addiction is a chronic but treatable disease of the brain that affects millions of Americans.<sup>5</sup> KHIP asked, "Do you believe addiction is, or is not, a disease?" About 7 in 10 Kentucky adults (66%) reported they believe addiction is a disease, unchanged from 2017 (70%), the last time KHIP asked this question.

KHIP asked those who believe addiction is a disease, "Do you believe addiction is a physical disease, a psychological disease or both a physical and psychological disease?" Among adults who believe addiction is a disease, about 8 in 10 (82%) believe it is both a physical and psychological disease, more than 1 in 10 (14%) believe it is a psychological disease only, and fewer than 1 in 10 (4%) believe it is a physical disease only. This has not changed since 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Volkow, N.D., Koob, G.F., & McLellan, A.T. (2016). Neurobiologic Advances from the Brain Disease Model of Addiction. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 374(4), 363-371.

**Do you believe that addiction is — or is not — a disease?** (Percentages do not add to 100% because the response 'don't know' is not included.)



Do you believe that addiction is a physical disease, a psychological disease or both a physical and psychological disease?



SOURCE: 2019 Kentucky Health Issues Poll (released January 2020)



## Half know about treatment referral

Addiction treatment exists and is available in Kentucky. However, as noted in *Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health*, there is a need to continue to develop more effective practices and policies for prevention, treatment and recovery from substance use disorder.<sup>6</sup> KHIP asked Kentucky adults, "Suppose a family member or friend asked you for help finding services or

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2016). *Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2urn0AJ>

treatment as a result of using drugs. Would you know who to contact to help them find services or treatment?" Just more than half of Kentucky adults (56%) reported they would know whom to contact.

For information on how to access addiction treatment in Kentucky, visit <https://findhelpnowky.org/>. The site includes a real-time locator to find available substance use disorder treatment providers. Or for help by phone, call 1-833-8KY-HELP (1-833-859-4357). A live specialist will conduct a brief screening assessment and connect callers with the most relevant treatment services.