



Hyperbaric Oxygenation works to heal
Concussion/TBI/PTSD/PCS

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The Twenty Year 2003-2023 TBI/PTSD Veteran Opioid Epidemic

- **A primary cause of suicide by service members is untreated brain injury.** A TBI is a physical wounding of the brain. Untreated and/or misdiagnosed brain wounds do not get “better.” Symptoms may recede, but the underlying injury can fester for a long time, leading to behavioral, emotional, physical, psychological, and spiritual breakdowns that can lead to violence and suicide. **Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy is proven to eliminate suicide ideation.**
- An estimated 109,000+ opioid deaths from 2005-2023 (16.6 per day) and the number continues to escalate yearly.¹
- An average of 105,875,335 opioid pills were delivered per year to the VA and if 877,253 Veterans were prescribed opioids, that is an average of 121 pills for every Veteran (105,875,335/877,253). The effective CMS opioid prescription rate if **every single America** was prescribed opioids equates to **1.49 opioid pills per person for the year** (489,161,282/326,971,407). There were 679,376 OUD Veterans in Q4FY2012 which **equates to an estimate of 156 opioid pills per Veteran per year** (105,875,335/679,376). If we calculate every Veteran enrolled in the VA healthcare system in 2012 was 5,680,374 it equates to **19 opioid pills for every Veteran per year** (105,875,335/5,680,374) as compared to the national **Center for Medicare/Medicaid Services average of 1.49 per person.**²
- Post 9/11 VA Healthcare veterans now account for 30.4 percent of enrolled veterans and 72.6% reported serving in a combat zone.³ Approximately 23% of the combat Veterans returned home with TBI/PTSD.⁴
- 2021 Veterans enrolled in VA Healthcare taking 5 or more prescriptions daily accounts for 30.7% of Veterans.⁵
- The U.S. military veterans have been heavily impacted by the opioid overdose crisis, with drug overdose mortality rates increasing by 53 percent from 2010-2019,⁶ overdose deaths increased 65% from 2010-2016.⁷
- The opioid overdose public health crisis persists, the highest number of overdose fatalities during 2020–2021 among the general population.

¹ The National Brain-Wounded Veteran Brain Drain: Cost-Benefit Analysis of Changing the DoD and VA Standard of Care for TBI and Suicide Prevention. www.treatnow.org, Page 18-19

² The National Brain-Wounded Veteran Brain Drain: Cost-Benefit Analysis of Changing the DoD and VA Standard of Care for TBI and Suicide Prevention. www.treatnow.org,

³ Ibid.

⁴ The National Brain-Wounded Veteran Brain Drain: Cost-Benefit Analysis of Changing the DoD and VA Standard of Care for TBI and Suicide Prevention. www.treatnow.org

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9262363/>, U.S. Military Veterans and the opioid overdose crisis: a review of risk factors and prevention efforts, 2022

⁷ Ibid.

- Addressing drug overdose in the veteran population requires accessible and non-judgmental, low threshold, wraparound, and holistic solutions that recognize the complex aetiology of overdose risk for veterans.⁸
- The most frequently identified risk factor among Veterans who died by suicide was pain.⁹
- The VHA has found 1 in 5 Veterans report persistent pain, 1 in 10 Veterans report severe persistent pain, and 1 in 3 are diagnosed with chronic pain.¹⁰ The American Pain Society 1995 designation of pain as the “Fifth Vital Sign” as rationale for widespread prescription opioids.¹¹
- Veterans have 1.5 times greater risk of dying by an opioid overdose than the general US population.
- The VA prescribes dozens of non-FDA approved off-label medications to TBI veterans that have contributed to the suicide epidemic. **(NOTE: No drug has been approved by the FDA for TBI).**
- Veterans with TBI had more than a 3-fold increased risk of opioid overdose compared with those without.¹²
- Purdue used the American Pain Foundation to target veterans in Nashville and Memphis, according to the lawsuit, via a campaign entitled “Exit Wounds,” a website and related literature designed to convince veterans that OxyContin was safe, and they should demand it.¹³
- The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) website DEA.gov reflects over 847,002,681 opioid pills were delivered to the VA from 2006 through 2014. That equates to 105,875,335 opioids per year (847,002,681/8).
- There is a strong correlation between this regimented prescription protocol and the instances of TBI/PTSD veterans succumbing to overdose and or who committed suicide during this time.
- It should be noted we only identified the distribution of opioid pills in four of the eight of VA regional Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacies (CMOP) or related pharmacies having opioids distributed during 2006-2014 period based on the DEA.gov data. The VA CMOPs distributes 80% of all prescription medications to Veterans.
- In 2014 there were 21,619,731 total Veterans, 9,111,955 VA enrolled Veterans, 5,908,042 used VA Healthcare or 27% (5,908,042/21,619,731), 708,921 non-veterans used VA Healthcare.¹⁴ In 2023 the Veteran population is estimated to be 18,592,457.¹⁵ If 27% is applied, approximately 5,019,963 use VA Healthcare.
- In Q4 FY 2013, over **869,000 Veterans were prescribed opioids** including tramadol, and by Q1 FY 2018, that number was reduced to slightly under **544,000**. In Q3 FY 2011, approximately 61,000 Veterans were prescribed opioid doses ranging from 100-400 mg Morphine Equivalent Daily Dose (MEDD).¹⁶

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ The Behavioral Health Autopsy Report, VA VISN 2 Center of Excellence for Suicide Prevention, May 2015

¹⁰ Hsrdr.research.va.gov, Trends in Veterans Reporting Chronic Pain from 2008 to 2016: A National VA Study, Seattle Denver Center of Innovation, Evan Carey

¹¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9262363/>, U.S. Military Veterans and the opioid overdose crisis: a review of risk factors and prevention efforts, 2022

¹² <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31834063/>, Traumatic Brain Injury and Opioid Overdose Among Post 9/11 Veterans with Long-Term Opioid Treatment of Chronic Pain, May/June 2020

¹³ Knownews.com, “OxyContin Maker Sued Subterfuge to Sell Public on Safety, Targeted Veterans, Elderly, Jamie Satterfield and Kristi Nelson, July 16, 2018

¹⁴ Congressional Research Service, The Number of Veterans That Use VA Health Care Services: A Fact Sheet, June 3, 2014

¹⁵ <https://vaclaimsinsider.com/how-many-veterans-are-there/#:~:text=According%20to%20our%20research%20and,%25%20from%202023%20to%202050>.

¹⁶ Department of Veteran Affairs, The VA Opioid Safety Initiative-How Did We Get Here and What is Ahead? By Friedhelm Sandbrink, MD and Von Moore, PharmD, HSRD.research.va.gov US

- VA data indicated an eight (8) fold increase in suicide risks in OUD Veterans prescribed 20-40 mg MED versus 100 mg/day¹⁷
- 17.8% of Veterans with PTSD, and 11.7% with another mental health problem, received opioid prescriptions.¹⁸
- **NOTE: Not one of the hundreds of therapies, processes, procedures, devices, countless computer applications, nor the 100+ prescription drugs have been approved by the FDA for TBI, not do they “treat” the invisible wound.** ¹⁹

¹⁷ The National Brain-Wounded Veteran Brain Drain: Cost-Benefit Analysis of Changing the DoD and VA Standard of Care for TBI and Suicide Prevention. www.treatnow.org, Page 45

¹⁸ Teeters, J.B., Lancaster, C.L., Brown, D.G, & Back, S.E. (2017). [Substance use disorders in military Veterans: prevalence and treatment challenges](#). *Substance Abuse and Rehabilitation*, 8, 69-77.

¹⁹ https://treatnow.org/knowledgebase/va_dod-interventions-and-responses-to-invisible-wounds/