

# Opioid Abuse and Dependence



SEA Tripartite  
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D-H&SS



# Why do we need to discuss this?

- The North American Building Trades Unions have recognized that there is a problem.
- They have formed an Opioid Task Force and President Jones has assigned me to sit on the task force to represent the Boilermakers.

# Why do we need to discuss this?

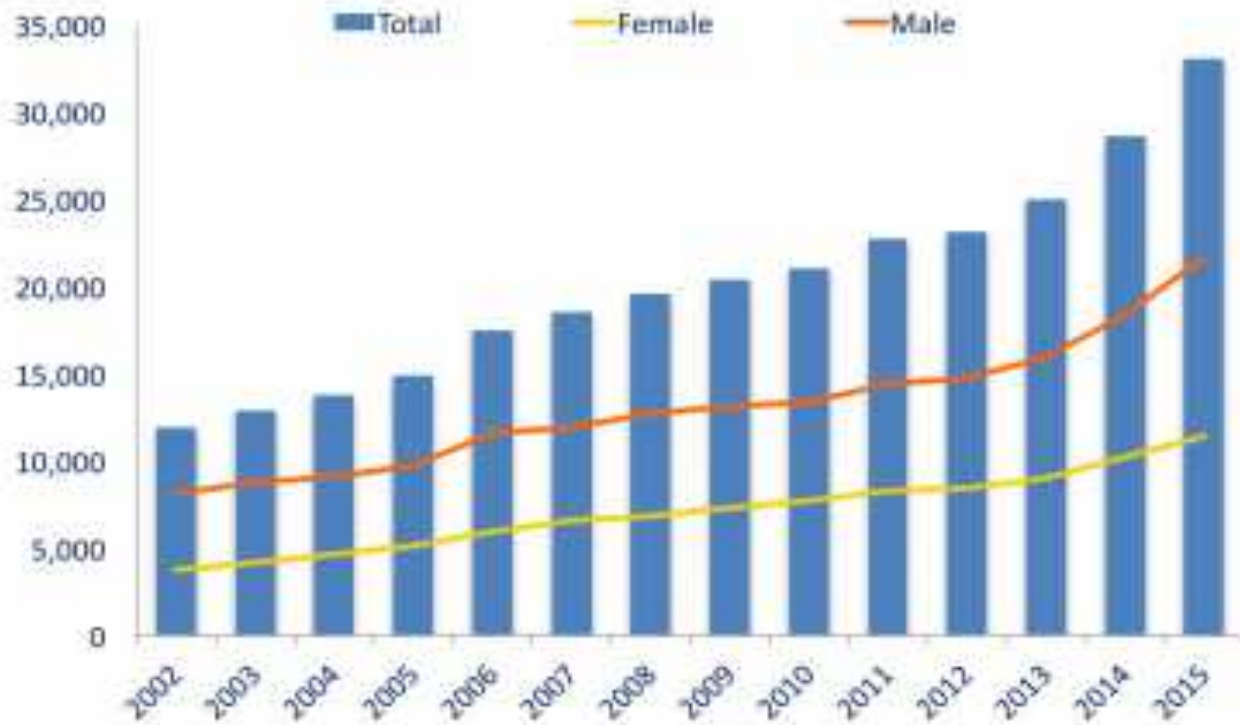
- It's a tough item to discuss, but it is time that we confront this problem head on.
- Use of opioids:
  - ↑ in US
  - 12<sup>th</sup> graders:
    - 1991: 1%
    - 2017: 13%

# What's happening?

NIH National Institute on Drug Abuse



## National Overdose Deaths Number of Deaths Involving Opioid Drugs



Source: National Center for Health Statistics, CDC Wonder

# What are the Rx drugs?

hydrocodone,  
oxycodone,  
methadone,  
morphine, and  
codeine

# Where is organized labor now?

Boilermakers - 36.5%  
(hydrocodone, oxycodone,  
methadone, morphine & codeine)

Other Crafts - 51% (hydrocodone,  
oxycodone, methadone, morphine  
& codeine)

# Where is it heading?

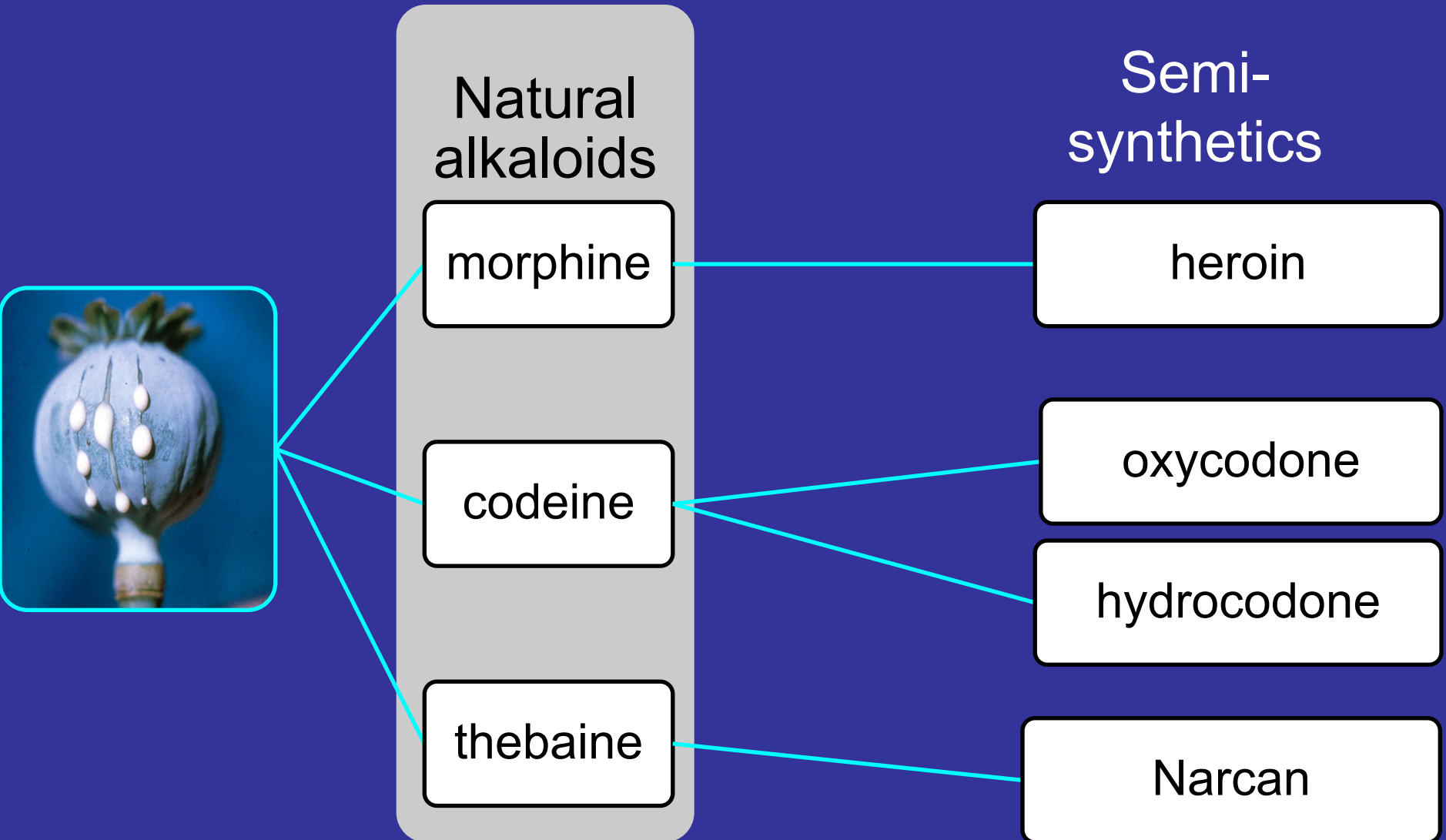
It has been determined that 90% of heroin users started with an opioid prescription for pain management.

# History

- **Egyptians**
  - Medicinal value
- **Morphine: early 1800' s**
- **Heroin: late 1800' s**
- **Methadone: prior to WW II**



# Opiates



# Medical Use of Opioids

- **Analgesia**
- **Severe diarrhea**
- **Cough suppressant**
- **Maintenance of opioid dependence**

# Rx Opioids

## Misuse

- **Incorrect use**
  - By patient
- **Mismanaged**
  - By physicians

## Non-medical

- **Illegal use**
  - Not prescribed
  - Took for euphoria

# Dependence

- Tolerance
- Withdrawal
- Larger & longer use than intended
- Can't quit
- Much time obtaining, using, or recovering
- Continued use despite problems

# Opioid Tolerance

- **With repeated use**
- **Need ↑ doses to maintain effect**
- **Can see in pain patients**

# Opioid Withdrawal

- After quit or less use of:
- Unhappy mood
  - Muscle aches
  - Tearing/runny nose
  - Pupillary dilation
  - Goose bumps or sweating
  - Nausea/Vomiting
  - Diarrhea – Fever - Yawning

# Opioid Overdose

- **Life threatening**
  - **Drowsiness or coma**
  - **Slurred speech**
  - **Constricted pupils**
  - **Poor attention and memory**

# What can we do now?

- **Help individuals lower use or even stop using.**
- **Be open minded when we come across someone with an issue. Not blame, but help.**



# What can we do now?

- **Work together with contractors and owners to recognize if there is a problem and work together to solve it.**
- **Lets get past just firing someone for a failed drug screen. Offer some type of assistance and/or see if the person is willing to be helped.**

# Summary

- **Pain relief, but ... misuse/dependence**
- **Face the problem head on.**
- **Offer assistance to members, contractors, and owners.**
  
- **Almost everyone of us knows someone with an opioid dependence.**

# THANK YOU!

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