

# Are You Worried About All The Opiate Drugs Mom Takes?

By Joseph M. Considine, P.A.

A friend happened to go into his mother's medicine cabinet and was stunned at the variety of painkillers he found. Names like hydrocodone, oxycontin and tramadol. He asked me "With all the talk about opiate addiction, should I be concerned?"

Yes, you should be concerned. Opiate or opioid addiction is not just for young people. In fact, so many senior citizens are getting addicted to opiates and other pain killers that legislation has been filed in the U.S. Senate to deal with the problem.

In announcing their bill Senators Sherrod Brown (D. OH) and Pat Toomey (R. PA) said "the image of opioid addiction in America is often that of a working-age adult that started using painkillers as relief or a young person introduced to drugs like oxycodone as a party drug and turned to heroin when the pills became too expensive." This is the usual age group which the Marchman Act is designed to help get into recovery from drug addiction.

**At the Law Offices of Joseph M. Considine** we have helped many families get help for loved ones addicted to opiates, painkillers, alcohol and other drugs. However, recovery through the Marchman Act is not just for younger people or working men and women. A group that is often overlooked are senior citizens, who the senators say are, unknowingly or unwittingly, given duplicate and unsafe prescriptions for opiates.

The fact of the matter is that seniors have a higher risk of cognitive impairment, falls, and fractures and even overdose deaths from prescription opiates. Between 1993 and 2012, inpatient hospital stays related to opioid overuse by Medicare beneficiaries rose more than 10 percent annually according to the senators.

Get this: Nearly one-third of all people using Medicare benefits will be given at least one opioid prescription each year, but Medicare Payment Advisory Commission says that **less than one percent of the beneficiaries account for 70 percent of the painkiller spending.**

While opioids control intense pain quickly, long term use can lead to a lessening of the effects of the drug and seniors using opiates regularly aren't likely to be healthier than seniors who control pain with other medicines.

**Can the Marchman Act help with the elderly patient who is addicted to opiates like oxycodone, Norco, vicodan or oxycontin?** Absolutely. The Marchman Act has helped untold numbers of people get into recovery because concerned families took positive steps to help their loved ones, regardless of age.

If you fear that someone in your life might be addicted to opiates or other drugs, call us. We're here to help you and your family.

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