



## Feature Story

### Pain Management and Opioid Addiction

By Justin Ebert, PA-C, MCHC Health Centers Medical Director

Opioids are narcotic painkillers that have been used for years to treat pain. When brand name pills like OxyContin, Percocet, and Vicodin came on the market, they were touted as miraculous, non-addictive medications to reduce pain. Health care providers prescribed them to help patients, unintentionally creating an unhealthy culture of dependence in our country. When patients began dying from accidental opioid overdoses in record numbers and new research indicated that opioids actually exacerbate pain over the long term, the national medical dialogue changed dramatically.

At the national level, doctors are working with policy makers to set dose limits, define clinical guidelines and create best practices. At the local level, a coalition called Safe Rx Mendocino is working with Assemblyman Jim Wood, who introduced legislation to regulate opioid prescription practices in California.

Mendocino County, like many around the country, has high opioid prescription rates. [HealthyMendocino.com](http://HealthyMendocino.com) has pulled data from the California Department of Justice's Controlled Substance Utilization Review to show that as of January, there are 718 opioid prescriptions per 10,000 population in our area. Click [HERE](#) to view the data. Also, about 5 percent of people in Mendocino County have a prescription for opioids (and this number does not address those who use opioid pain killers without prescriptions). Click [HERE](#) to view the data.

To read more click [HERE](#).

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## **Oral Health for Mendocino County**

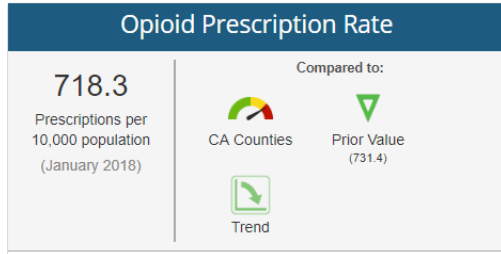
By Meredyth Reinhard, Oral Health Program Coordinator

In early 2018, Mendocino County, Health and Human Services, Public Health, Prevention and Planning Unit was one of 61 Local Health Departments who was awarded 5 years of funding from the State of California, Department of Public Health to develop and implement a county-wide Oral Health Plan with the primary focus for the underserved and vulnerable populations. In addition, priority service areas will be provided to Kindergarten through sixth grade students.

Click [HERE](#) to read more.

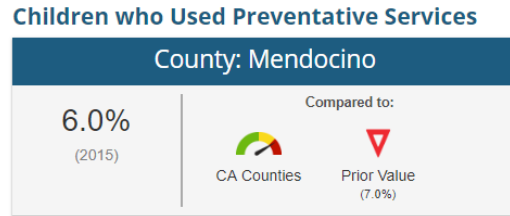
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## June Featured Indicators



This indicator shows the rate of prescriptions of opioid drugs in patient's locale per 10,000 population. Opioids are natural or synthetic chemicals that bind to receptors in your brain or body. Common opioids include heroin and prescription drugs such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, and fentanyl. Opioid abuse is a serious public health issue, but preventive actions, limiting the number of opioid prescriptions, and treatment for addiction to prevent future use can help.

Since 1999, the rate of overdose deaths involving opioids (including prescription opioid pain relievers) nearly quadrupled. According to the CDC, overdoses from prescription opioid pain relievers are a driving



This indicator shows the percentage of children aged 0-20 who used preventative dental services in the past year. Preventative dentistry helps avoid cavities, gum disease, enamel wear, and many more oral issues. To maintain optimal oral health, the American Dental Association recommends regular visits to the dentist, in addition to teaching children proper oral hygiene and best practices at an early age. Dental cleanings and exams allow dentists to identify problems and take care of them immediately instead of them growing into larger, more complicated issues. Additionally, other preventative services can further help children's oral health and include in addition to examinations and cleanings: full-mouth and other x-rays, fluoride treatments, space maintainers, and

factor in the increase in opioid overdose deaths.

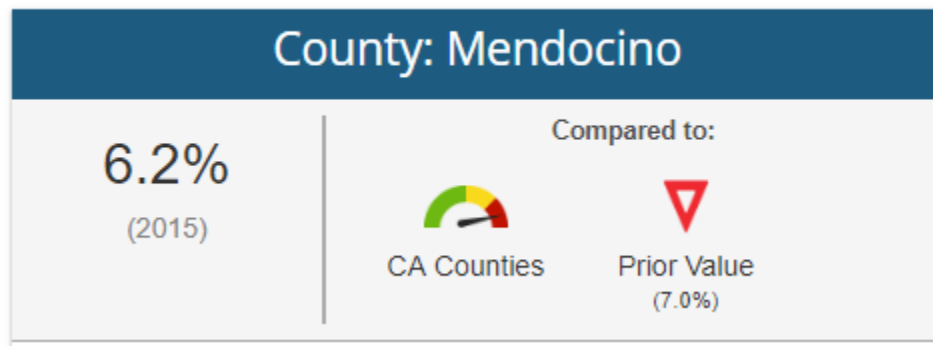
tooth sealants.

Click [HERE](#) to view the indicator.

Click [HERE](#) to view the indicator.

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## Children who have had Oral Health Evaluations



## New Oral Health Data Indicators

Healthy Communities Institute, the developer of the Healthy Mendocino website, has created oral health indicators from [Kids Count](#) (Children Now) after hearing that the California County Department of Public Health received grant funding for this priority. In fact, Mendocino County was one of the health departments that received this funding since oral health is a statewide focus.

Click [HERE](#) to view the indicators.

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## Presentations Available for your Organization!

Do you want to learn more about [HealthyMendocino.org](#)?

Learn about the new Community Dashboards, how to navigate the site, tools you can use to help write reports and grants, and how to add a custom Dashboard to your website.

**Email:**

[healthymendocino@ncoinc.org](mailto:healthymendocino@ncoinc.org) or call **707-476-3228** to schedule a presentation and find ways you can utilize its many resources.



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