

## ***IT'S ABOUT PAIN***

### **WHY ALL THE CHAOS ABOUT PRESCRIPTIONS?**

It all started because the number of opioid overdose deaths was rising in parallel with the number of prescriptions for opioids. A well intentioned coalition of attorneys and governments created a plan to restrict prescriptions and obtain money to offset high costs of caring for opioid and homeless issues. After the Obama and Trump administrations restricted production, settlements were collected (see <[opioidsettlementtracker.com](http://opioidsettlementtracker.com)>):

- Oxycontin owners (Sackler family): \$6,000,000,000
- Manufacturers: \$8,000,000,000
- Wholesalers: \$26,000,000,000
- Retail Chains: (Walmart, Walgreens, CVS): \$12,000,000,000
- Rite Aid and Kroger: \$1,800,000,000 and \$1,400,000,000, respectively (after stopping scripts)
- Safeway: (\$5B for Walgreens, \$3B or less for WalMart and \$5B for CVS)
- Total: \$55,200,000,000, plus whatever Safeway pays

Meanwhile conditions called “Injunctive Relief” were placed on wholesalers, to reduce allotments to suspicious “Red Flagged” pharmacies that dispensed a high percentage of total prescriptions for opioids, and filled orders from high volume (and high dose) prescribers. Doing this reduces penalties by pharm chains.

In 2020, Walmart stopped opioid scripts for chronic pain. RiteAid and Kroger/Fred Meyer, stopped in September and August, and Safeway stops on December 15th.

Meanwhile, the Centers for Disease Control Guidelines state that pharmacies, health care companies (clinics), insurance companies, and government agencies should not try to force patients to taper or discontinue their opioid doses.

And the latest statistics from CDC show that 91% of opioid overdose deaths are due to fentanyl, cocaine, heroin, and meth, and only 9% involve a prescription opioid. Apparently, the DEA and Coalition don't know about the CDCs latest statistics and guidelines. As you can see, this has nothing to do with your pharmacist, though he or she may seem hostile towards chronic pain patients.