



## **United Way of Broward County Commission on Substance Abuse**

*To empower our diverse community to live healthy and drug-free*

### **Broward County Continues to Lead the Nation in Amount of Rx Oxycodone Dispensed Directly by Physicians**

Among the 50 physicians in the United States who dispensed the largest quantities of the powerful narcotic pain medication, Oxycodone, directly from their offices in the six months from October 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009, 25 or half were from Broward County. Of the remaining 25 physicians from the top 50 list, 24 were from 8 other Florida counties. The 25 Broward practitioners dispensed 5,233,785 dose units (or tablets) of Oxycodone in the period that included the last quarter of 2008 and the first quarter of 2009. The total does not include the number of dose units dispensed by pharmacies, hospitals, or other dispensing physicians not included among the top 50 in the nation. Oxycodone is the opioid pain medication found in *Percocet* (with acetaminophen), *Percodan* (with aspirin), *Roxicodone*, or *OxyContin* (sustained release form).

The number of Broward County Oxycodone dispensing practitioners from the top 50 in the nation declined from 33 to 25 as compared to the previous six month reporting period, and the number of dose units declined from 6,584,200 to 5,233,785. However, during the same time periods, the number of dispensing practitioners from the top 50 list increased in Palm Beach County from 9 to 14, and the number of dose units also increased from 1,809,400 to 2,368,430. In Miami-Dade County, the number of dispensing practitioners from the top 50 list increased from 3 to 4, and the number of dose units they dispensed rose from 450,000 to 646,500.

While many legitimate physicians may directly dispense some medications, most do not offer the highly controlled Schedule II opioids directly to patients. Rather they would write a prescription to be filled at a pharmacy. Physicians directly dispensing large quantities of Schedule II narcotics are frequently associated with so called "Pill Mills" offering "medications for cash" unlike legitimate pain management doctors.

There were 171 deaths in Broward County during 2008 in which Oxycodone was detected including 109 where the drug was considered the cause of death. Across Florida, there were 1,574 deaths in which Oxycodone was detected during 2008 including 941 where the drug was considered the cause of death.