

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Australia's most dangerous drugs are from the doctors, not the dealers**

The Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF) is calling for greater public education about the dangers of prescription drug use.

The ABC's *Lateline* program highlighted the issue in last night's show, discussing the rising rates of prescription opioid addiction in Australia and the US.

"People are at risk of serious harm – and they don't even know it," said Julie Rae, the ADF's National Program Manager - Knowledge and Information.

"We're talking about your mums, dads, construction workers, healthy individuals. Average Australians are dying from these addictive medications. Most shockingly, the majority of overdoses are accidental, which means they could have been prevented."

"Chronic pain, anxiety, stress, trauma and insomnia are all very serious conditions but are often treated long-term with addictive medicine like pain killers or relaxant-type medications."

"Strong painkillers – like codeine, Oxycontin™ and Endone™ – help a lot of Australians manage intense pain after surgery or dental work. But they are also opioids, just like heroin, and they can be fatal."

Ms Rae says that many Australians do not know that opioids are specifically designed to treat pain in the short-term only.

"The scary thing is, almost half of all prescriptions handed out in Australia are not for treating these conditions. People are using opioids for everything from the common headache to dealing with a bad day at work."

"We need to get the message out that legal drugs can be harmful if overused."

"GPs need better training in pain management, particularly for advising their patients of alternatives to medication, such as counselling and lifestyle changes, and all states and territories must implement the Electronic Recording and Reporting of Controlled Drugs system to prevent prescription shopping."

For more information go to: <http://adf.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/ADF-PreventionResearch-Nov16.pdf>

**ENDS**

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**About the Alcohol and Drug Foundation:** Celebrating more than 55 years of service to the community, the Alcohol and Drug Foundation is one of Australia's leading bodies committed to preventing alcohol and other drug problems in communities around the nation. The Foundation reaches millions of Australians in local communities through sporting clubs, workplaces, healthcare settings and schools, offering educational information, drug and alcohol prevention programs and advocating for strong and healthy communities.