


OPIOID ABUSE: THE COST TO BUSINESS

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The Ethics Disclosure

I function as an independent journalist, and Meramec Regional Planning Commission is an organization that I may cover in the future. I accepted the invitation today to speak here as a community outreach effort for St. Louis Public Radio, and to share my expertise with the community at large. I am receiving no compensation or consideration for my presentation.

Additionally, my wife, Anita Ahl, is an accountant for Meramec Regional Planning Commission. She was not involved in today's program and had no influence over the choice of me as a presenter, nor does her employment status affect my approach to covering or working with MRPC.

Opioid Definition

Opioids are a class of drugs that include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and pain relievers available legally by prescription, such as oxycodone (OxyContin[®]), hydrocodone (Vicodin[®]), codeine, morphine, and many others.

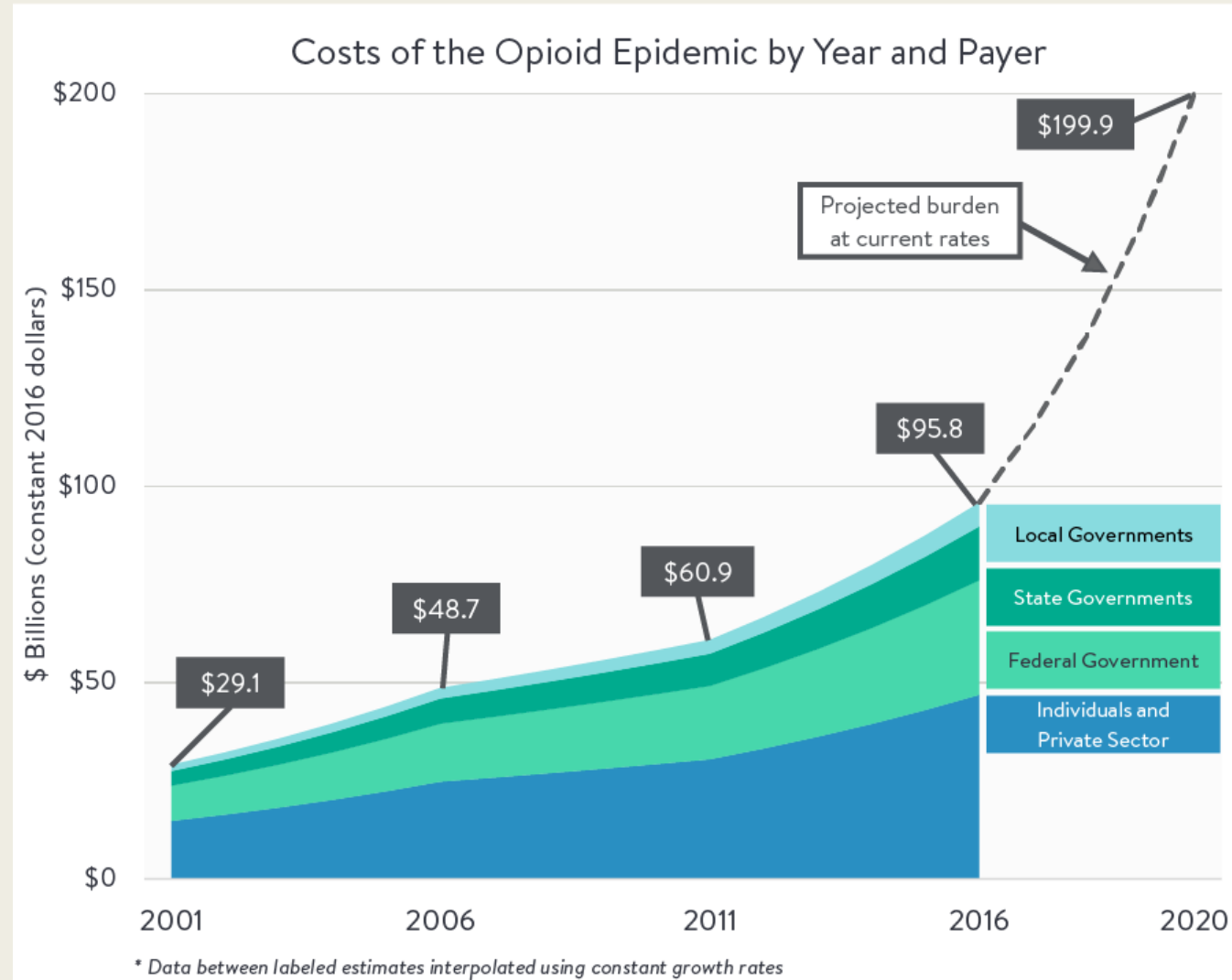
Source: National Institutes of Health

The Opioid Epidemic

What I hear a lot:

- It's not my problem
- It's a health care problem
- It's a government problem
- It's a legal problem

It's A Business Problem



Source: Altarum, a non-profit health agency

More Specifics On Cost To Business

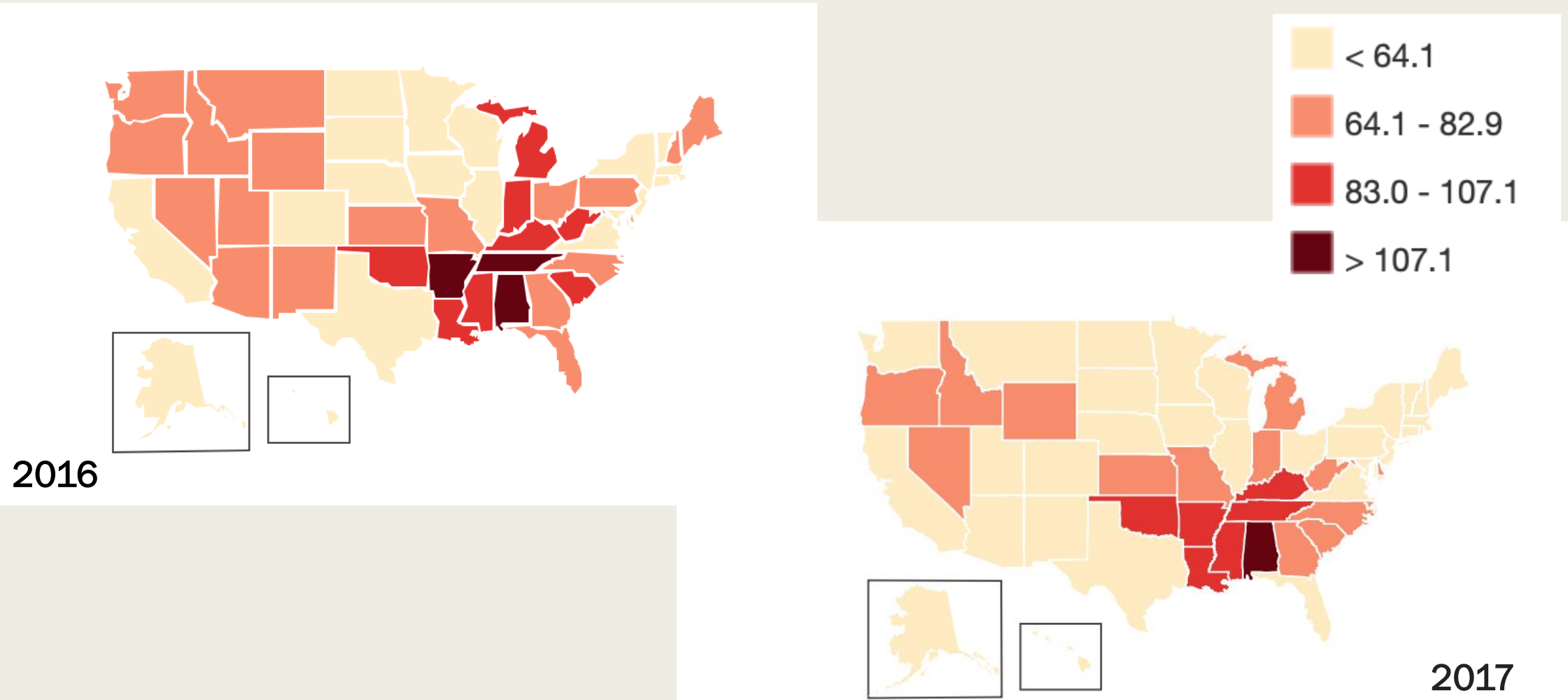
- \$42 billion: The annual cost to U.S. employers for lost productivity relating to opioid abuse, according to the [National Safety Council](#).
- 2 million: Prime-age workers (25 to 54 years old) absent from the country's labor force between 1999 and 2015 because of opioids, according to the [American Action Forum](#).
- 0.8%: Reduction in Ohio's real annual GDP growth between 1999 and 2015 as a result of opioids, meaning the state's economy would have grown about 90% faster without the crisis, according to the [American Action Forum](#).

Opioid Prescription Rates

- Definition: Annual number of prescriptions for opioids per 100 residents. Number of pills and dosage was not considered.
- In 2016, Missouri's rate was 80.4 prescriptions per 100 people. 14th worst in the nation. (National average was 66.5)
- Other states: Indiana 11th, Iowa 32nd, Wisconsin 35th and Illinois 44th

Source: Centers for Disease Control

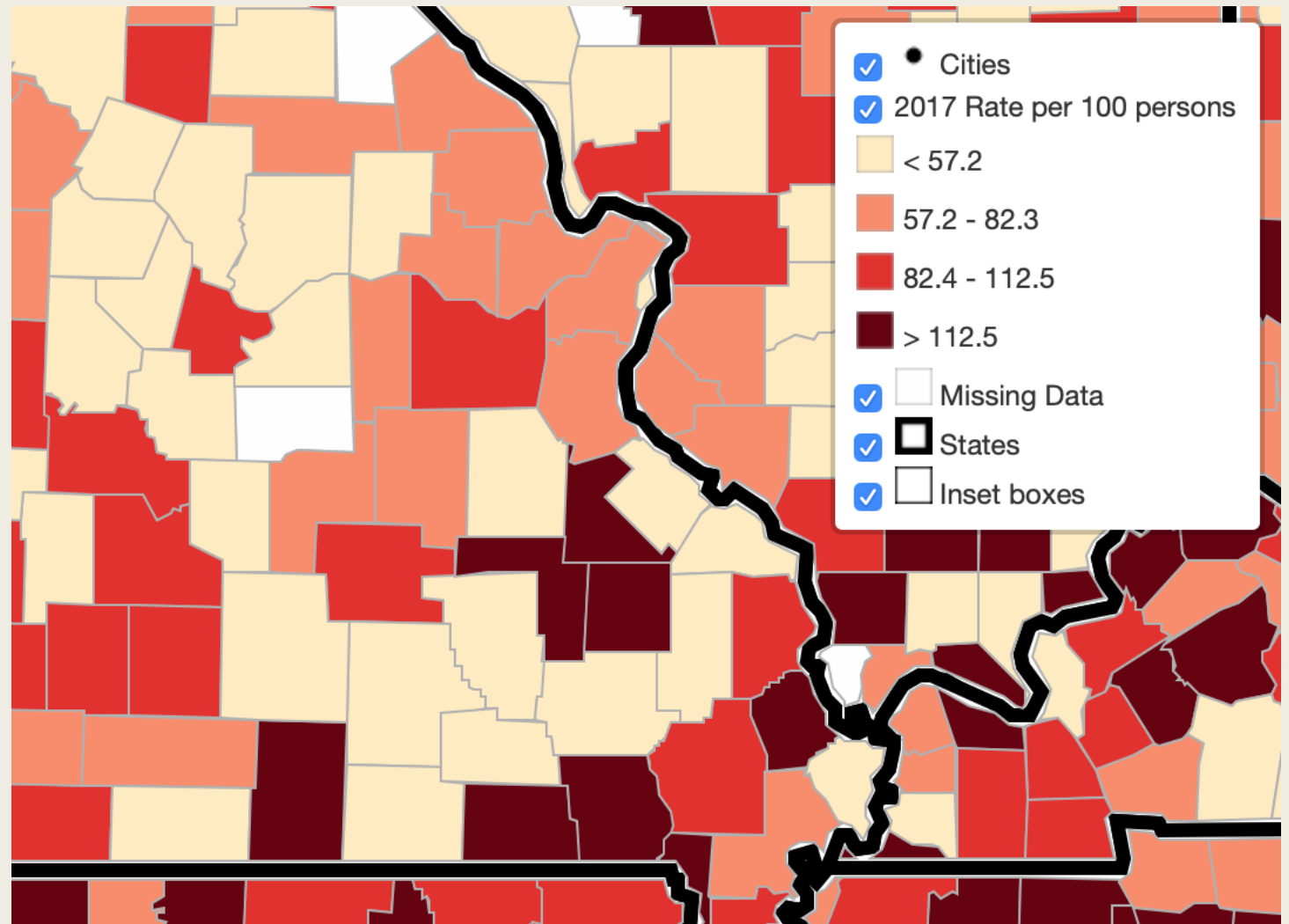
Opioid Prescription Rates



Source: Centers for Disease Control

Opioid Prescription Rates

Closer to home:



Source: Centers for
Disease Control

Opioid Prescription Rates

A personal anecdote.

Calculating The Cost To Business

Some Missouri Numbers (all from 2016)

- 49,500 documented cases of opioid abuse
- 39,000 documented cases of pain reliever abuse
- 17,000 documented cases of heroin abuse
- 2,000 people in Missouri jails for opioid related crimes

Source: Altarum, a non-profit health agency

Calculating The Cost To Business

Factors that go into the calculating the cost to business:

- Increased health care costs to employer provided health care due to opioid abuse
- Time lost on the job from employees that are suffering from opioid addiction
- Lost productivity and company efficiency due to open positions caused by employees termination due to opioid abuse
- Reduction in available workforce due to opioid addiction issues

The Opioid Cost To Business In Missouri

In 2016, the cost to Missouri Businesses from the Opioid Epidemic was...

\$243 Million Dollars

Source: Altarum, a non-profit health agency

Where do we rank?

The cost of opioid abuse to business ranked Missouri with the 19th highest amount in the nation (per capita).

Other states

Indiana was 14th

Illinois was 22nd

Wisconsin was 23rd

Iowa was 50th

Source: Altarum, a non-profit health agency

A Tool To Estimate Costs At Your Business

From the National Safety Council:

<https://www.nsc.org/forms/substance-use-employer-calculator>

Questions and Contact Information

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