

Human Rights Group Warns that Fast-Rising Benzo Abuse Signals Another Psychiatric Drug Epidemic

The National Institute on Drug Abuse reports 8,791 overdose deaths involving benzodiazepines, in 2015, an 800% increase from 1,135 benzo deaths in 1999.

CLEARWATER, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, September 5, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Earlier this year, the [Citizens Commission on Human Rights](#) (CCHR) reported that [benzodiazepines](#), commonly called benzos, were a factor in the deaths of Tom Petty, Prince, Heath Ledger, Whitney Houston, Michael Jackson and other creative artists. In the same article, CCHR, a non-profit mental health watchdog that has, for 49 years, worked to restore human rights and dignity to the field of mental health, also reported that in the United States more people die from psychiatric drug overdose than heroin overdose, citing the fact that in 2014, 10,574 people died of heroin overdose while 15,778 (nearly 50% more) died from an overdose of [psychiatric drugs](#). Not surprisingly, the biggest killers were sedatives such as benzos, antidepressants, psychostimulants, and antipsychotics.



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It is unconscionable that promoters of psychiatric drugs are permitted to cause such damage and we will continue to target this irresponsibility as a human rights abuse.”

*Diane Stein, President CCHR
Florida*

According to NBC Health News, the number of prescriptions for benzodiazepines such as Xanax and Ativan are skyrocketing and while many doctors are unaware of their debilitating or deadly side effects, numerous experts are starting to compare the abuse of prescription benzos to the beginnings of a new opioid crisis.[2]

This crisis is prompting more people to come forward including filmmaker Holly Hardman who is producing a

documentary called “As Prescribed” about the dangers of benzos. It took Hardman two years to taper off Klonopin, with major disturbing side effects. “People are given these medications for normal life experiences and don’t realize what can happen,” she says.

Additionally, Dr. Anna Lembke, chief of addiction medicine at Stanford University Medical Center, said complications such as dependency and addiction are fueling a hidden benzo epidemic similar to the opioid crisis and experts at the nonprofit Lown Institute of Brookline,

Massachusetts are reporting that the withdrawal symptoms from benzos are even worse than opioids.[3]

The National Institute on Drug Abuse reports 8,791 overdose deaths involving benzos in 2015, an 800% increase from 1,135 benzo deaths in 1999. Adults filling benzo prescriptions have been on a steady upswing since the late '90s, 13.5 million in 2013.[4]

“CCHR has been issuing warnings on the dangers of these psychiatric drugs for decades,” said Diane Stein, President of the CCHR chapter in Florida. “Now we are seeing the start of a benzo epidemic to match the opioid epidemic.”

Anyone wanting more information on the dangers of psychiatric drugs is encouraged to contact CCHR Florida at 727-442-8820 or visit the center located at 109 N. Fort Harrison Avenue in downtown.

About CCHR: Initially established by the Church of Scientology and renowned psychiatrist Dr. Thomas Szasz in 1969, CCHR’s mission is to eradicate abuses committed under the guise of mental health and enact patient and consumer protections. L. Ron Hubbard, founder of Scientology, first brought psychiatric imprisonment to wide public notice: “Thousands and thousands are seized without process of law, every week, over the ‘free world’ tortured, castrated, killed. All in the name of ‘mental health,’” he wrote in March 1969. For more information visit, www.cchrflorida.org

Sources:

[1] HeartBreaker: Another Celebrity Lost to Benzo-Opioid Mix—Tom Petty’s Death Ruled Accidental Overdose, CCHR International, January 25, 2018 <https://www.cchr.org/2018/01/25/heartbreaker-tompettydeath-accidentaloverdose/>

[2] Dangers of rising benzo prescriptions raise alarms of next drug crisis, by Avichai Scher and Ali Galante, NBC News, July 27, 2018 <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/dangers-rising-benzo-prescriptions-raise-alarms-next-drug-crisis-n895361>

[3] As dangerous as opioids – Benzo overprescription becoming a crisis, Lown Institute, <http://lowninstitute.org/news/addictive-opioids-benzo-overprescription-becoming-crisis/>

[4] Our Other Prescription Drug Problem, The New England Journal of Medicine, Anna Lembke, M.D., Jennifer Papac, M.D., and Keith Humphreys, Ph.D., February 22, 2018,



The headquarters for CCHR Florida are located in downtown Clearwater



Restoring Human Rights Dignity in the Field of Mental Health

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1715050>

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