

Opioid Crisis Escalates in Appalachia: Rural Areas Hit Hardest, Study Finds

PHILADELPHIA,, PA, UNITED STATES, July 8, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A recent study reveals a troubling surge in opioid-related deaths across the Appalachian region, with rural areas suffering the highest rates. From 2018 to 2021, opioid-related fatalities steadily climbed in urban, suburban, and rural counties, underscoring an urgent call for targeted interventions and healthcare reforms to combat the epidemic's devastating impact on these communities.

The study titled "Differences in Opioid-Related Deaths in the Appalachian Region in 2018-2021 by State and Rural-Urban County Classification" examines opioid-related death rates across different county classifications (urban, suburban, rural) within the Appalachian region from 2018 to 2021. The study was organized and funded by the Rothman Opioid Foundation. The study focuses on understanding how these death rates vary by geographic and demographic factors. Opioid-related deaths, on average and by population, have risen steadily in the Appalachian region from 2018 to 2021 across all geographic areas (urban/metropolitan, suburban, rural). Rural counties consistently showed the highest opioid-related deaths per population compared to urban/metropolitan and suburban areas.

"The results emphasize the need for targeted community and health system interventions to address the disproportionately high rate of opioid prescribing and deaths in the Appalachian region," says Dr. Asif Iliyas, co-author of the study. He is President of The Rothman Institute Foundation for Opioid Research and Education (Rothman Opioid Foundation) in Philadelphia, a Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at Thomas Jefferson University, and an Associate Dean of Clinical Research at the Drexel University College of Medicine in Pennsylvania.

Santiago Rengifo, Alice Wu, and Patrick Ioffreda are co-authors of the study. The complete study can be found at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10349683/>.

About the Rothman Institute Foundation for Opioid Research and Education.

The Rothman Orthopaedic Foundation, for short, is a non-profit 501c3 organization dedicated to raising awareness of the ongoing opioid crisis, educating physicians and patients on safe opioid prescribing and use – respectively, and advising policymakers on sound opioid and pain management policy. Most importantly, the Rothman Opioid Foundation performs and supports the highest quality research on [opioids](#) and alternative pain modalities to yield findings that can better inform patients, physicians, and the greater healthcare community in the most evidenced-

based pain management strategies while working to mitigate opioid abuse and addiction.

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