

Press Release



Heroin and Synthetic Opioids Have Driven the Recent Acceleration in Opioid-Involved Fatalities

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Today the American Action Forum released research examining the recent rise in opioid-involved fatalities. AAF research found that despite opioid prescriptions declining since 2010, the number of opioid-involved deaths has accelerated due to a staggering rise in heroin and synthetic opioid-involved overdose fatalities. The annual growth rate of heroin-involved overdose fatalities increased from 4.1 percent before 2010 to 31.2 percent after 2010, while the annual growth rate of synthetic opioid-involved overdose fatalities also increased, from 13.7 percent to 36.5 percent. Synthetic opioid-involved overdose fatalities have risen particularly fast in recent years, increasing 84.2 percent per year since 2013. AAF's Ben Gitis concludes that combating opioid dependency requires a comprehensive approach that continues to address the supply of legal prescription opioids, but also more effectively treats dependency and cuts off the supply of illicit opioids.