

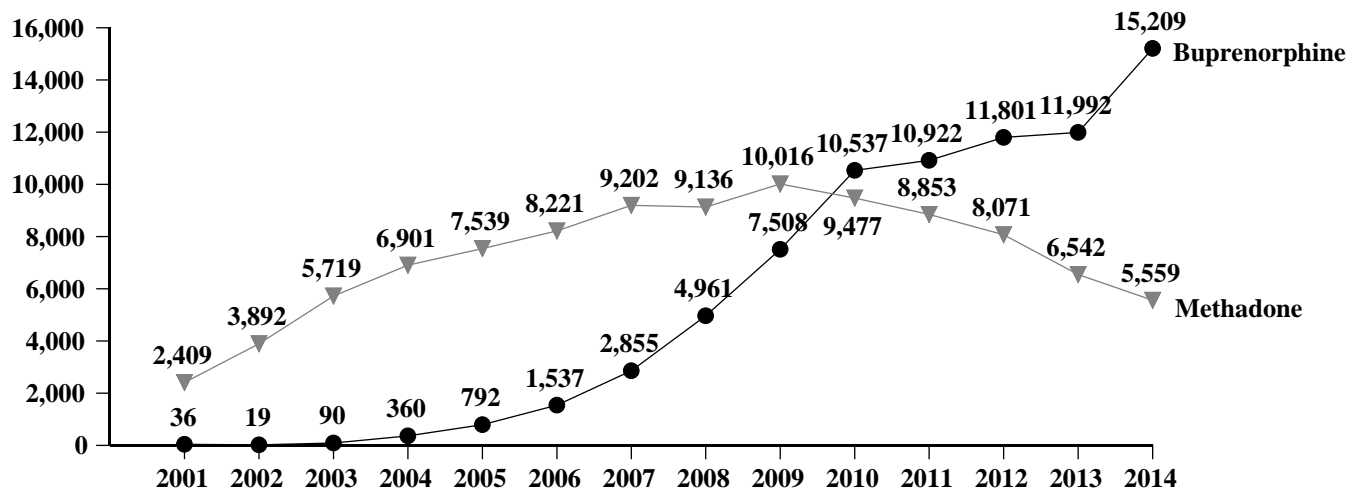
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

2014 NFLIS Finds Nearly Three Times More Buprenorphine Than Methadone Reports

The National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS) collects drug test results from law enforcement-encountered drug items submitted to and analyzed by state and local forensic laboratories across the country. NFLIS data can provide valuable information about trends in the drugs seized by U.S. law enforcement. In 2014, the number of NFLIS reports for buprenorphine reached a high of 15,209, almost three times the number of methadone reports (5,559). Buprenorphine reports increased from 90 in 2003 (one year after buprenorphine was approved to treat opioid dependence) to 15,209 in 2014. In contrast, methadone reached a peak of 10,016 reports in 2009, and has since decreased each year. In 2014, the Northeast had the highest rate of buprenorphine reports (9.79 per 100,000 persons aged 15 or older), while the West had the lowest rate (2.09 per 100,000 persons). More information about buprenorphine can be found in the *CESAR FAX Buprenorphine Series*, available online at <http://go.umd.edu/cesarfaxbuprenorphine>.

Estimated Number of Total NFLIS Reports for Methadone and Buprenorphine, 2001-2014



NOTES: Estimates are calculated using the National Estimates Based on All Reports (NEAR) methodology, which has strong statistical advantages for producing national and regional estimates. Estimates are based on drug cases and items submitted to participating state and local laboratories during the calendar year and analyzed within three months of the end of the calendar year. Up to three drugs can be reported for each drug item (or exhibit) analyzed by a laboratory. State and local policies related to the enforcement and prosecution of specific drugs may affect drug item submissions to laboratories for analysis. Laboratory policies and procedures for handling drug evidence may also vary. For example, some analyze all items submitted, while others analyze only selected items. Many laboratories do not analyze drug evidence if the criminal case was dismissed from court or if no person could be linked to the item. Thus, NFLIS data might underestimate the availability of drugs in the illicit market that state or local labs do not systematically identify.

SOURCES: Adapted by CESAR from data provided by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Office of Diversion Control, Drug and Chemical Evaluation Section, Data Analysis Unit and from NFLIS Annual Reports (available online at <https://www.nflis.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/Reports.aspx>).

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