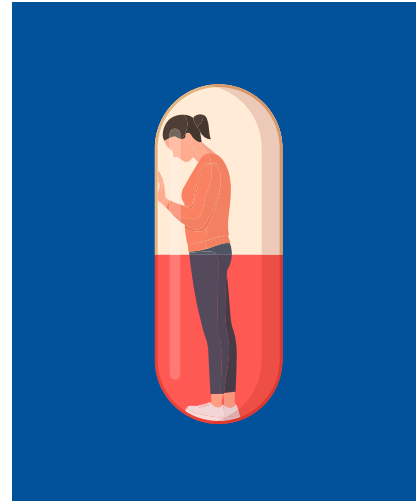


Drug Use Disorders Disparities in People Enrolled in Medicare Fee-For-Service

Drug use disorders (DUDs) impact the lives of millions of Americans in the general population, including individuals that are enrolled in the Medicare and Medicaid program. According to the 2023 United States National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), about 48.5 million Americans 12 or older reported battling a substance use disorder (SUD) in the past year, including 27.2 million who had a DUD.¹ SUD is a treatable mental disorder that affects a person's brain and behavior, leading to their inability to control their use of substances like legal or illegal drugs, alcohol, or medications.² DUD could occur when there is use of one or more narcotic drugs: marijuana, cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens, inhalants, methamphetamine, or any use of prescription psychotherapeutic drugs (i.e., pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, and sedatives).^{1,3} DUD is among the leading causes of premature mortality and disability.



The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS's) claims data indicate that 3.3% of people enrolled in Medicare fee-for-service (FFS) had claims with a diagnosis of DUD in 2022, as shown in Figure 1. The DUD prevalence increased over time compared to 2.1% in 2013, and it reached 3.7% in 2019 then started declining slowly.⁴ The [Mapping Medicare Disparities \(MMD\) Tool](#) developed by CMS presents that the prevalence rate of DUD among people enrolled in Medicare FFS varied by age group, race and ethnicity, Medicare and Medicaid dual eligibility, original reason for entitlement, and geographic areas (Figure 2 – 5).⁵

Figure 1. Prevalence rate of DUD among People Enrolled in Medicare FFS by Year, 2013-2022

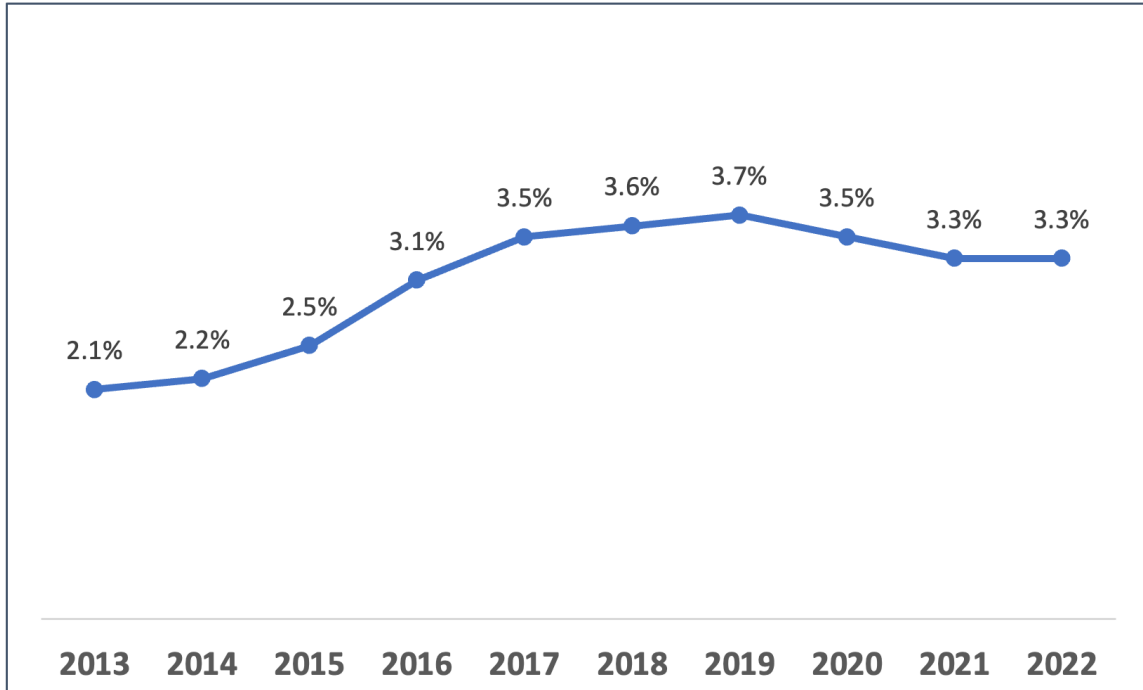
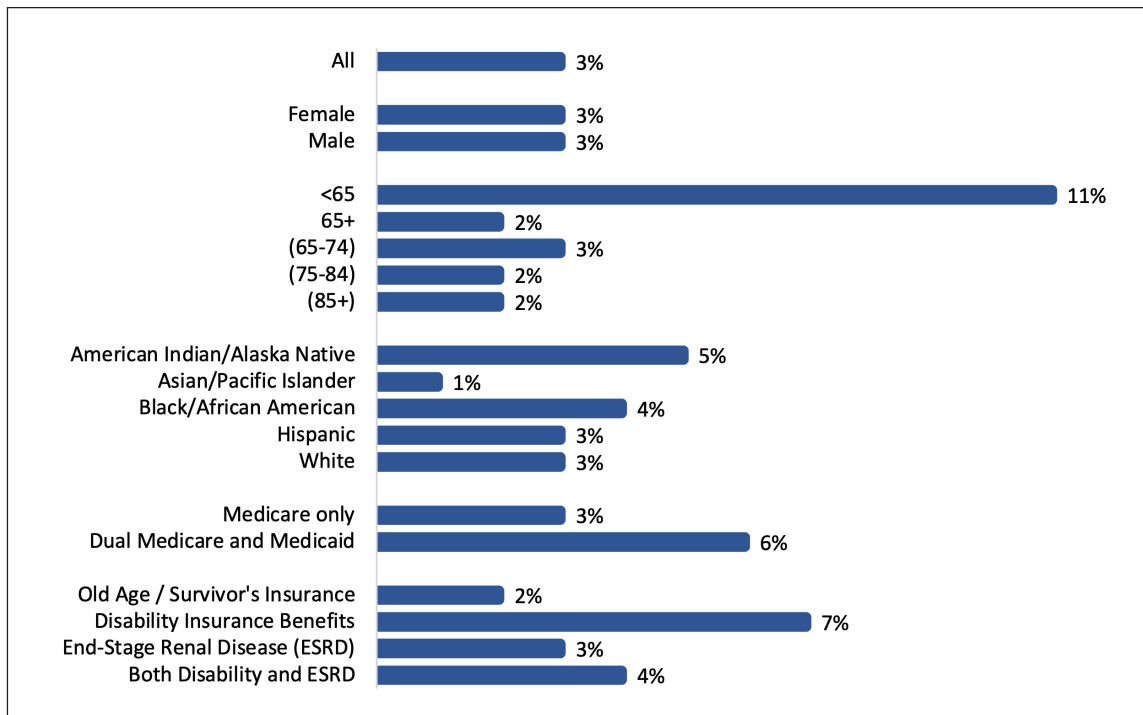


Figure 2. Prevalence rate of DUD among People Enrolled in Medicare FFS by Enrollee Characteristics, 2022



Note: Prevalence rates for sex, race and ethnicity, dual Medicare and Medicaid eligibility, and original reason for entitlement were age standardized rate.

As shown in Figure 2, the prevalence rate of DUD was higher among people enrolled in Medicare FFS who are aged <65 (11%) compared to the aged 65+ (2%). The age standardized prevalence rate was higher among American Indian/Alaska Native (5%) and Black/African American (4%) enrollees than White (3%), Hispanic (3%) and Asian/Pacific Islander (1%) enrollees, and it was higher among Medicare and Medicaid dual eligible enrollees (6%) compared to the Medicare only (3%) enrollees and those whose original reason for entitlement was Disability Insurance Benefits (7%), ESRD (3%), or both (4%) compared to the Old Age / Survivor's Insurance (2%). Male and female FFS enrollees had the same prevalence rate of DUD in 2022.

Figure 3 and 4 shows the prevalence rate of DUD differed by state/territory and county. Florida, Nevada and Oklahoma had the highest DUD prevalence rate at 5%, and American Samoa, Virgin Islands, Northern Mariana and Guam had the lowest rate at 0% – 1%. Also, the prevalence rates among each racial and ethnic group differed by geographic areas as shown in Figure 5. See the [MMD Tool](#) for details.

Figure 3. DUD Prevalence among People Enrolled in Medicare FFS by State/Territory, 2022

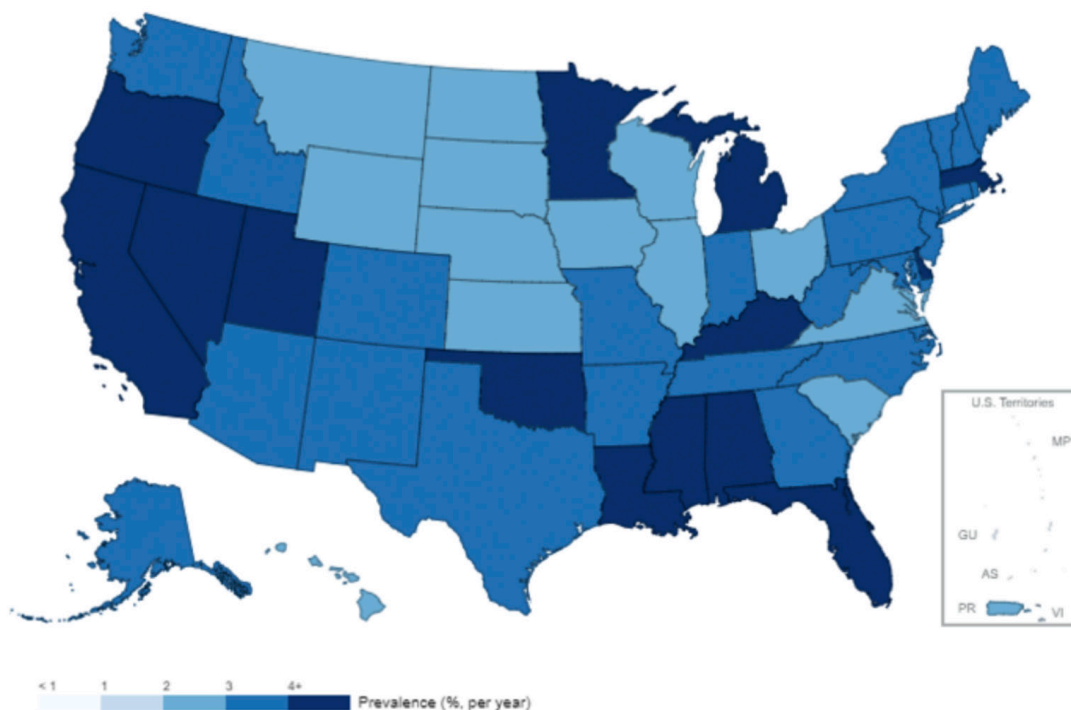


Figure 4. DUD Prevalence among People Enrolled in Medicare FFS by County, 2022

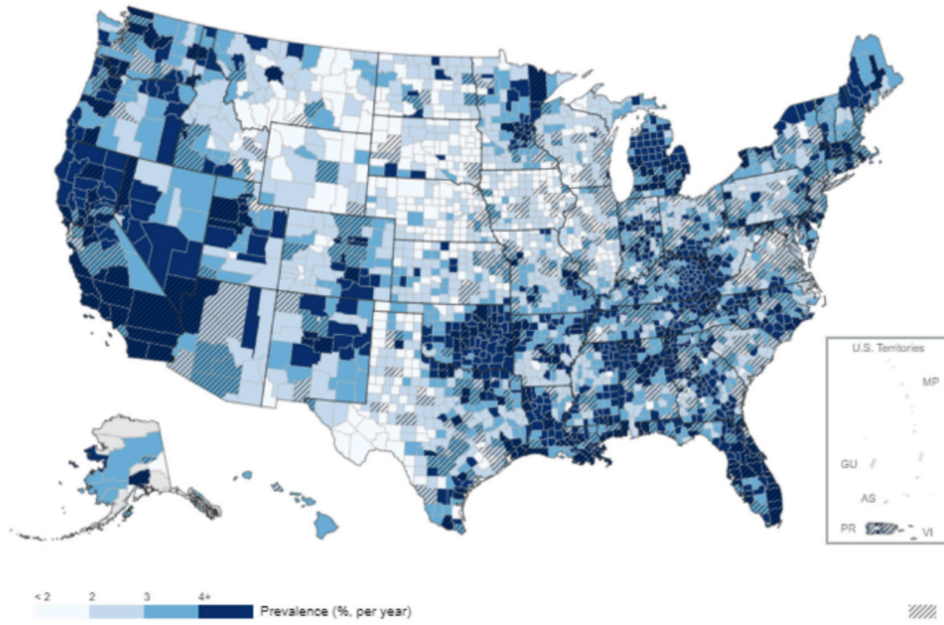
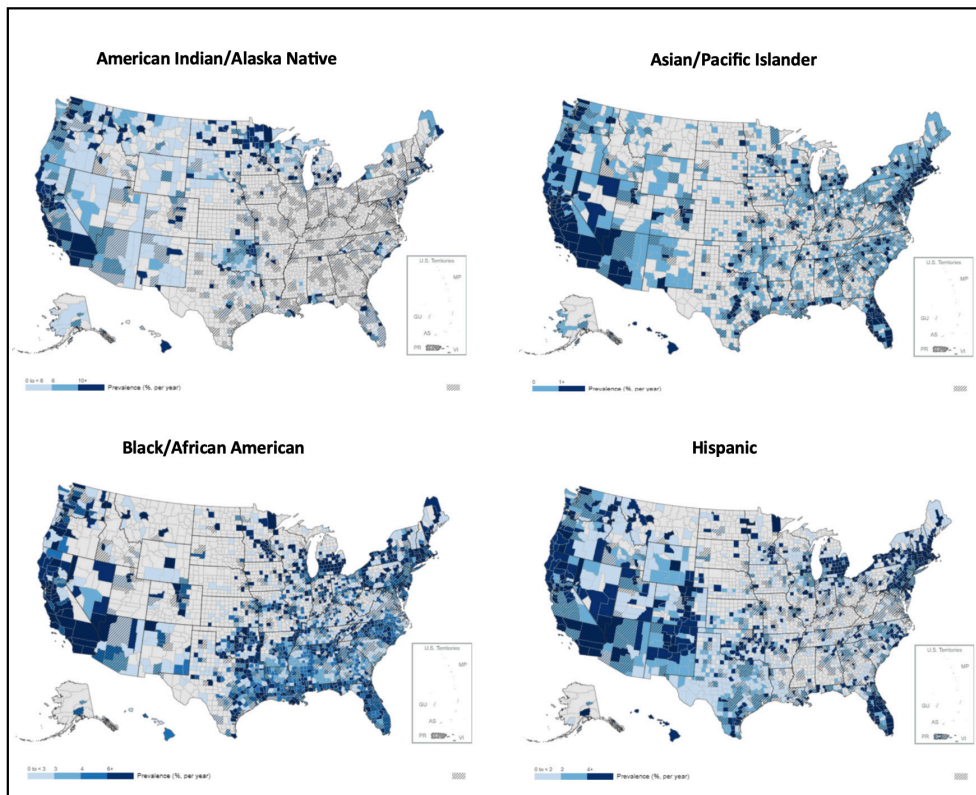


Figure 5. Prevalence of DUD among Minority Race/Ethnicity Group Enrolled in Medicare FFS, by County, 2022



DUDs are linked to many health problems and can lead to overdose and death, and reducing DUD is key to preventing drug overdose deaths. DUD also confer substantial burden on families, social networks, and society as a whole through violent and property crime, incarceration, poverty, and homelessness.⁶ Healthy People 2030 focuses on preventing SUDs and helping people with these disorders get treatment. The CMS Behavioral Health Strategy focuses on: 1) substance use disorders prevention, treatment and recovery services, 2) ensuring effective pain treatment and management, and 3) improving mental health care and services; **the Medicaid/CHIP Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Action Plan** outlines three strategies to improve treatment and support for people enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP. Medicare covers certain screenings, services, and programs that aid in the treatment and recovery of mental health and SUD.

Beneficiary Resources

- [What is a Substance Use Disorder?](#)
- [Your Medicare Coverage: Mental health & substance use disorders](#)
- [“Talk. They Hear You.” Campaign](#)
- [What is addiction? | APA \(video\)](#)
- [Where do I go for treatment help?](#)

Provider Resources

- [Addiction Medicine Toolkit](#)
- [Treatment of Substance Use Disorders](#)
- [2022 CDC Clinical Practice Guideline at a Glance](#)
- [CMS | CMCS - Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Action Plan](#)
- [Substance Use Disorder Tools & Resources](#)

References/Sources

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