

Santa Cruz County's Opioid Use

2017



SafeRx Santa Cruz County

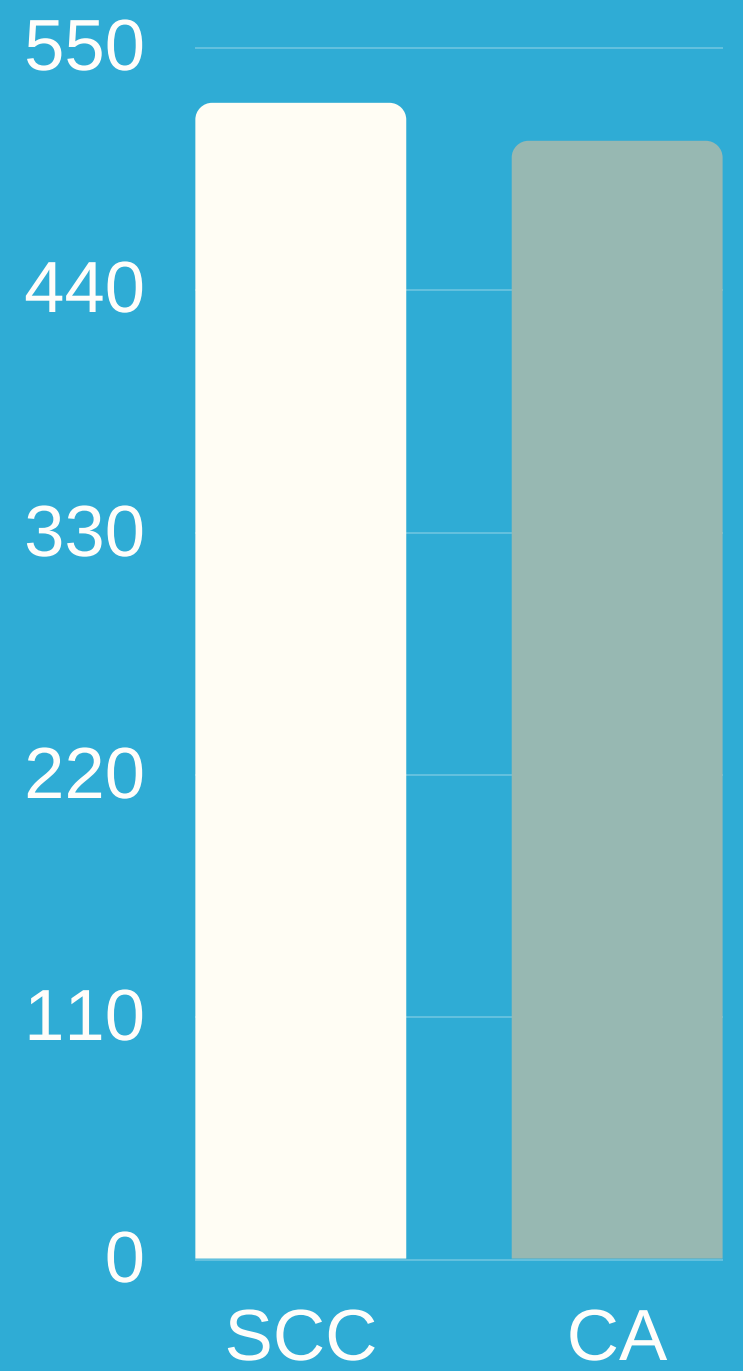
We hear a lot about the opioid epidemic in the news, but not so much about how we are going to stop it. SafeRx Santa Cruz County has been working in collaboration with doctors, pharmacists, and other community members on prevention. Preventive measures include changing prescribing practices, providing alternatives for long-term pain management, locking medications, and encouraging the disposal of unused medications at drop off sites around Santa Cruz County.



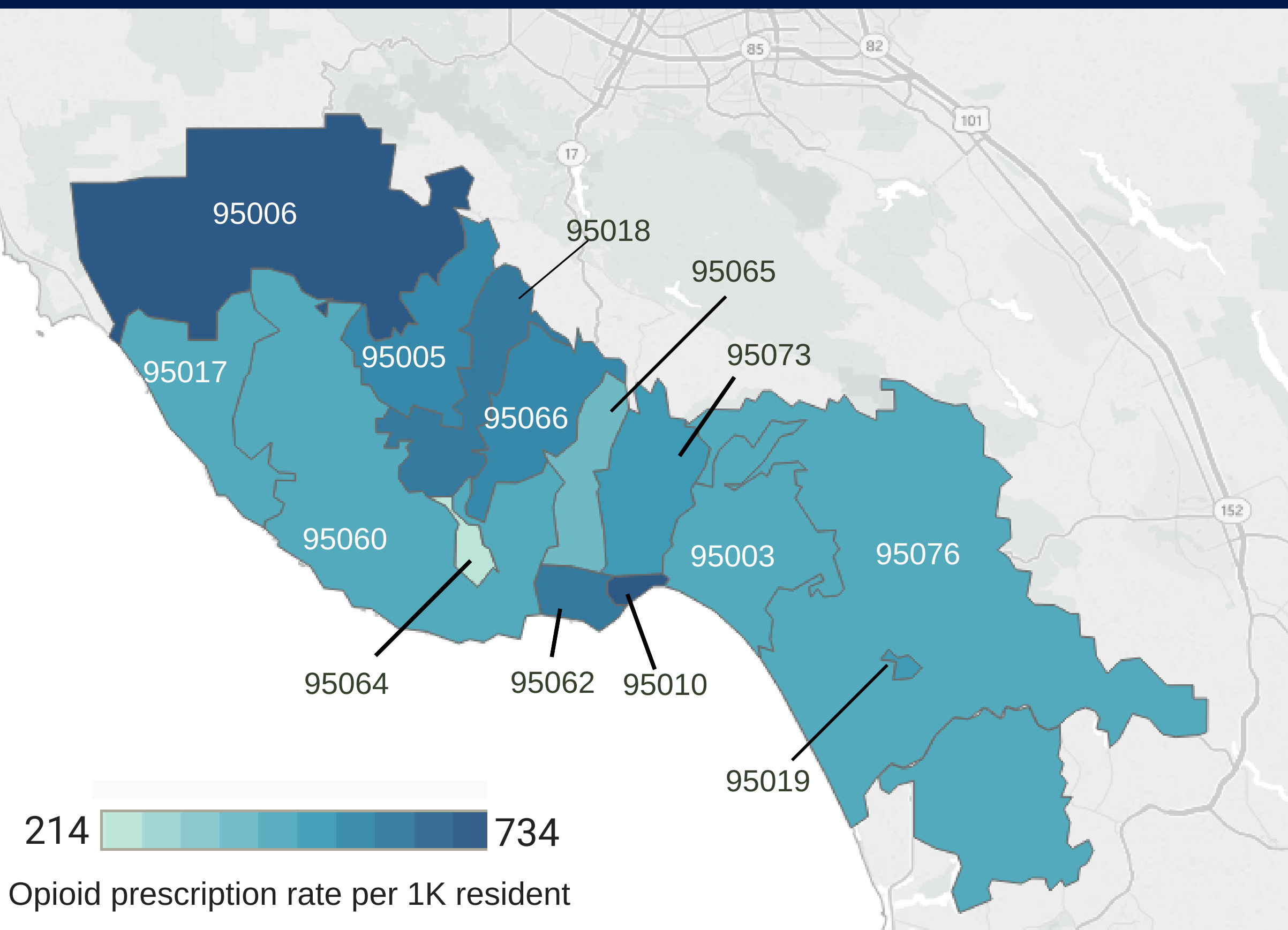
Since 1999, the number of overdose deaths involving opioids has quadrupled. California is one of many states struggling with the opioid epidemic. Although Santa Cruz County's opioid prescription rate is higher than California's average, it is moving in the right direction after a 15% decrease in opioid prescribing rates from 2016-2017.

Opioid Prescription Rate

Per 1K Residents



This map demonstrates the prescription opioid distribution throughout Santa Cruz County in 2017. Zip codes 95010 and 95006 had the highest rate of opioid prescriptions, with each having more than 650 prescriptions per 1K residents. Conversely, zip codes 95064 and 95065 had the lowest rate of prescribed opioids with each having less than 400 prescriptions per 1K residents.

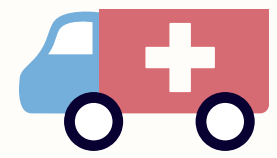


in 2017...



162,870

Opioid prescriptions were written in Santa Cruz County



17

Residents of Santa Cruz County died from an opioid overdose



10

Of the 17 overdose deaths were related to prescription opioids

What are opioids?

Opioids are natural and synthetic forms of opium that are widely used as pain relievers. Opioids include heroin and prescription medications such as morphine, hydrocodone (Vicodin or Norco), oxycodone (Percocet or OxyContin), fentanyl, codeine, and methadone.

Even when taken as directed, prescription opioids can lead to heightened tolerance, causing a person to take more of the medication to achieve the same pain relief. Consuming too many opioids can stop a person's breathing and lead to death.

How is Santa Cruz taking action?

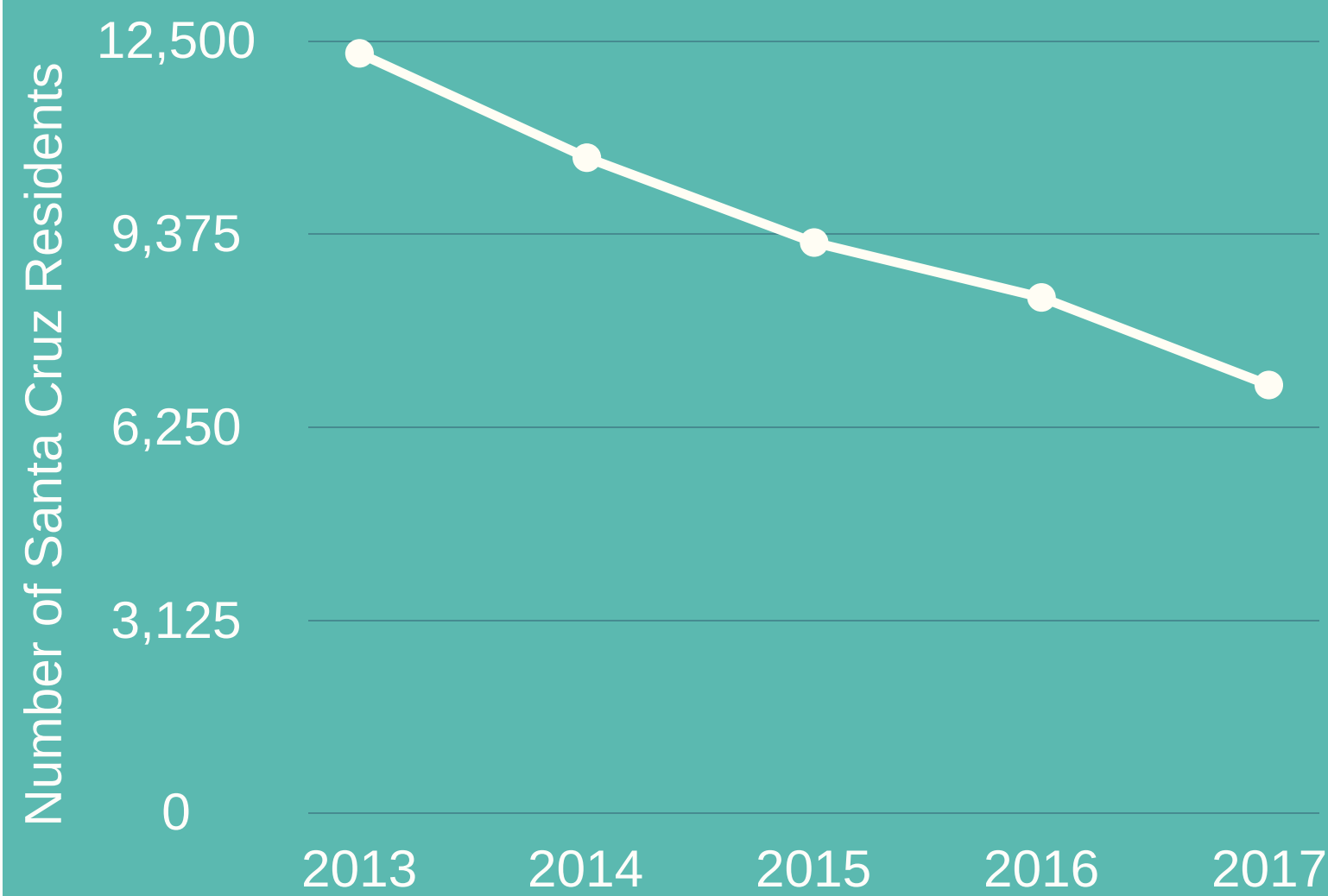
Santa Cruz County requires pharmaceutical companies to fund proper medication disposal sites throughout the county. Local pain management guidelines are being written to aid healthcare providers to safely prescribe opioids. More and more healthcare providers are becoming licensed to prescribe buprenorphine, a treatment medication for opioid dependency proven to help patients decrease opioid use by diminishing the effects of dependency (including withdrawal symptoms and cravings).

Where do you come in?

There are many things you can do every day to help make a positive impact on the opioid crisis in Santa Cruz.

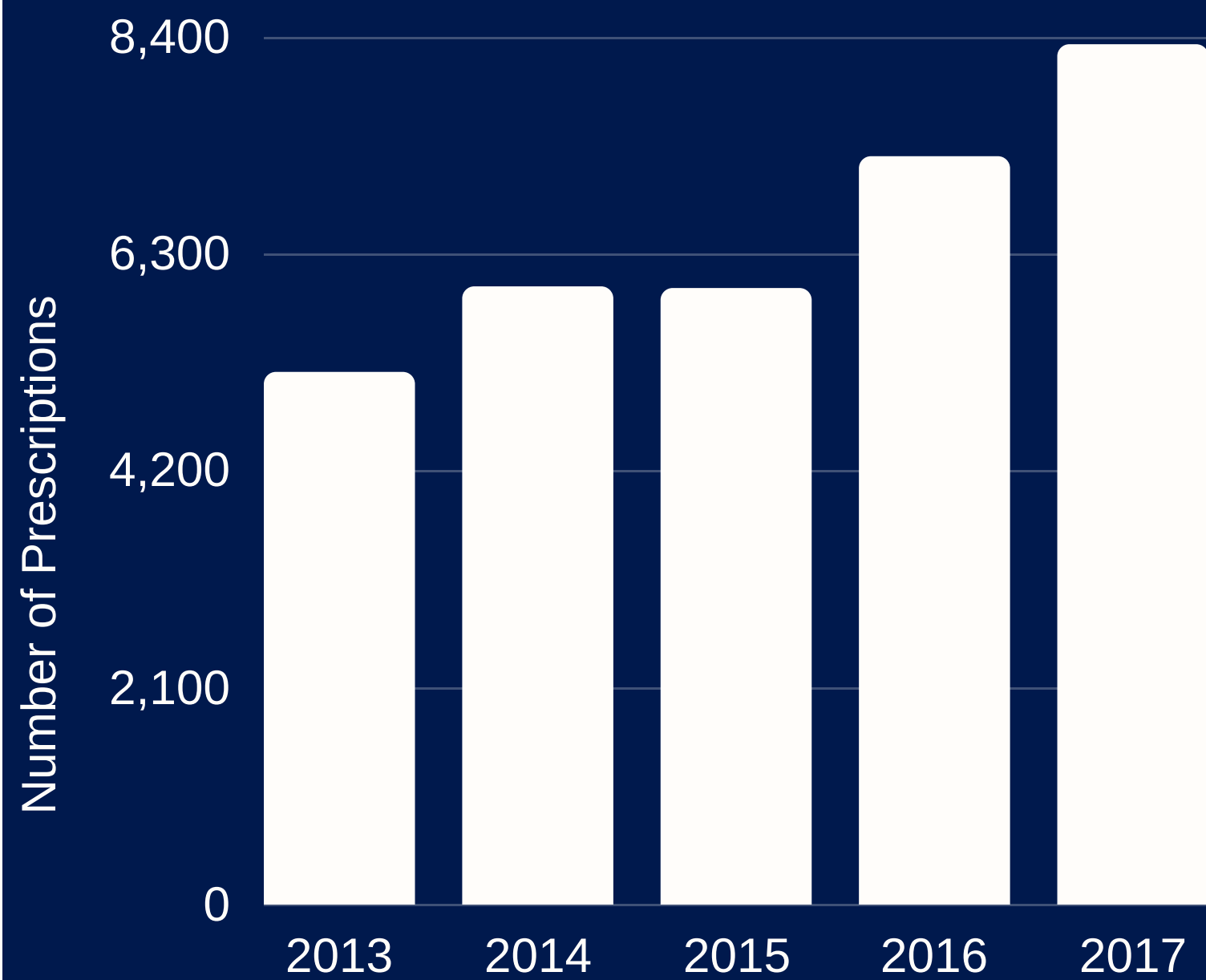
- Know which medicines are opioids. You may be surprised by what you didn't know.
- Always monitor, secure, and properly dispose of medications. Learn more at med-project.org
- Learn about Naloxone, a lifesaving opioid overdose reversal medication. Get training on how to administer it and keep some with you at all times. You never know whose life you might save. Learn more at pharmacy.ca.gov.

Santa Cruz County Residents on High Doses of Opioids*



*more than 90 mg MME daily

Buprenorphine Prescriptions



SafeRx Santa Cruz County



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