Methadone is the Second Deadliest Drug in Oregon

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ROSEBURG (KMTR) –
The prescription drug methadone is used to help wean heroin addicts. But Oregon's Medical Examiner says last year, ironically, methadone was almost as deadly as heroin.

More methadone is consumed in Oregon, per capita, than in any other state.

The FDA approved methadone as a prescription drug in 1972 to treat heroin addicts. More recently, it's being given to patients to treat chronic pain.

But experts say recreational methadone users can easily overdose because, while it's powerful, it doesn't get the user very high.

Paul Farmer, adult outpatient program director for ADAPT, a drug rehabilitation program in Roseburg explains, “Somebody might take some because they want to get high. So they get a pill from a friend. They take one, and an hour later, 45 minutes later, they're not high. They haven't experienced any kind of drug euphoria. So they take another one. And what they're not aware of is it is, in fact, acting on their body and acting on their brain chemistry, and so they end up overdosing on it."

Heroin was the most deadly drug in Oregon in 2004, killing 94 people.

At the same time, methadone became the second biggest killer, claiming 83 lives.

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