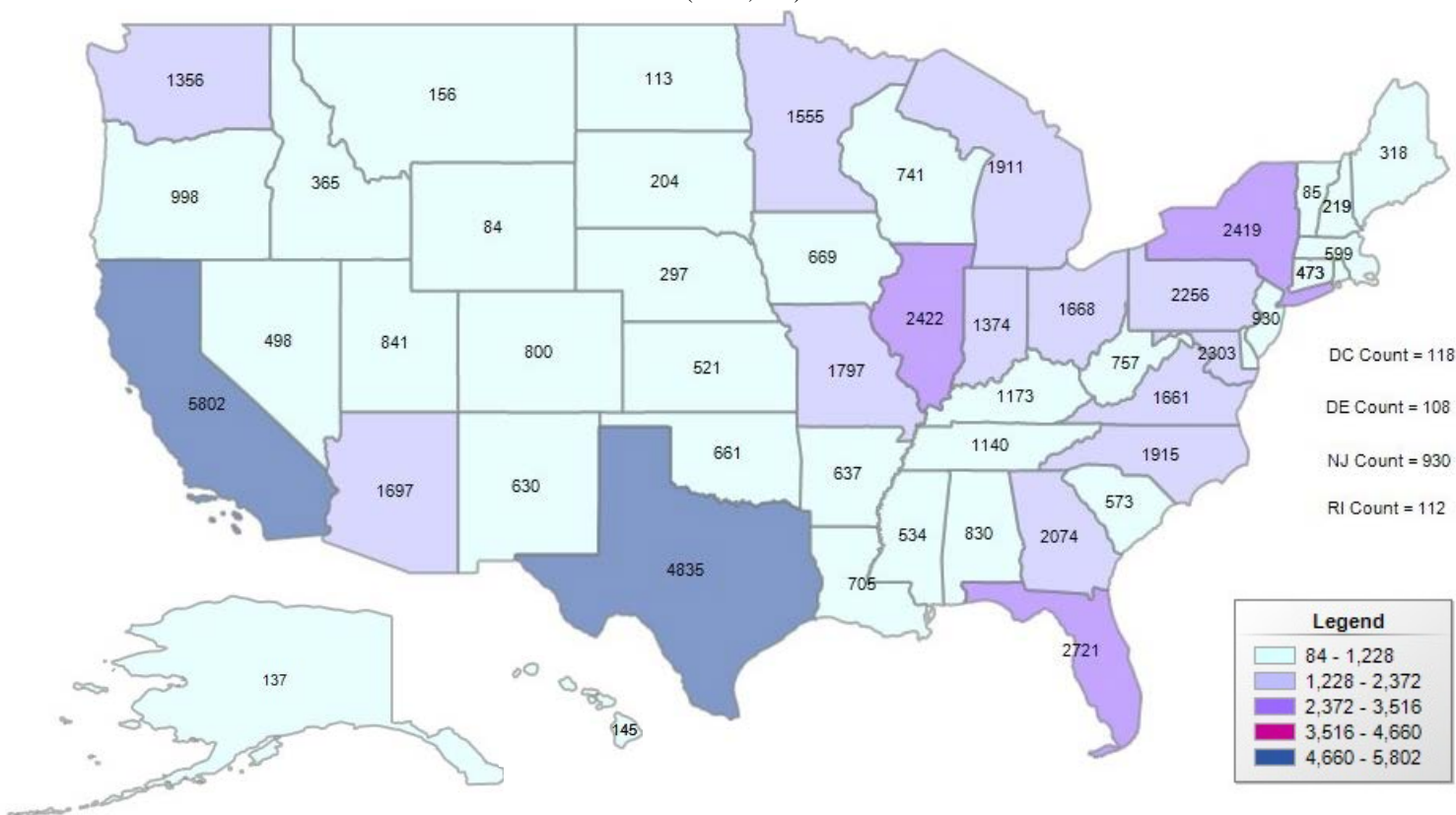


While U.S. Poison Centers in Every State Report Receiving Opioid Calls, Majority of Calls Concentrated in East Coast States, California, and Texas

The number of calls to U.S. poison control centers for human exposure to opioids reached 57,307 in the first eleven months of 2017, according to data from the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC). Calls were reported in every state in the U.S., but the majority were concentrated in the East Coast and in the two most populous states, California and Texas. The data do not demonstrate the full severity of the opioid epidemic as they are “largely reflective of those users/abusers who have experienced adverse effects from the use of these products significant enough” to justify calling a poison center. Still, “the data are a good surrogate marker for rising use/abuse patterns and patterns of adverse medical outcomes associated with [opioid] use,” according to the AAPCC. Poison centers are often among the first public health entities to detect emerging drug problems. For example, the Georgia Poison Center was the first agency in Georgia to detect and address a synthetic opioid exposure outbreak in their state (see *NDEWS News*, Issue 4).

Number of Calls to U.S. Poison Control Centers Involving Human Exposure to Opioids, January 1, 2017–November 30, 2017

(n=57,307)



Notes: These data are only representative of calls received by the poison centers and may not reflect the actual severity of the problem in the U.S. or any specific geographic location. As there is no mandatory reporting, there may be emergency room presentations and hospital admissions of which poison centers are unaware. The term human exposure means someone has had contact with the substance in some way; for example, ingested, inhaled, absorbed by the skin or eyes. Not all exposures are poisonings or overdoses.

AAPCC data for 2017 are considered preliminary because it is possible that a poison center may update a case anytime during the year if new information is obtained. In the fall of each year, the data for the previous year are locked, and no additional changes are made.

Source: American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC), *Opioid (Narcotic) Pain Medications Alert*, Accessed 12/4/2017 (<http://www.aapcc.org/alerts/opioids/>). Information about poison control center calls, including regularly updated call data for opioids and synthetic cannabinoids, is available at www.aapcc.org.