

Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership

Annual Report



2021



The Governor's Office
of Youth, Faith
and Family



Arizona
Substance Abuse
Partnership

SubstanceAbuse.AZ.gov



STATE OF ARIZONA

DOUGLAS A. DUCEY
GOVERNOR

MARIA CRISTINA FUENTES
DIRECTOR

July 31, 2021

Governor Doug A. Ducey
State Capitol Executive Tower
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Governor,

It has been an honor to serve as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership (ASAP) during these unprecedented times. We would like to acknowledge the phenomenal work of ASAP members and its workgroups over the past year. Their dedication and commitment to address the pervasive issue of substance abuse has made this work possible. The following report includes an overview of activities, goals, outcomes and future work.

During this last year, ASAP received presentations highlighting the tremendous efforts taking place across the state to support the prevention of substance use and support individuals diagnosed with a substance use disorder. ASAP has continued to promote the expansion of substance use prevention programming, discussed best practices for expanding substance use disorder treatment, and encouraged multi-pronged recovery efforts throughout Arizona.

Since its creation, ASAP has sought to support evidence-based research, prevention, enforcement and treatment practices by establishing activities aligned with [Executive Order 2013-05](#). With ongoing support of the Arizona National Guard Drug Demand Reduction Outreach, ASAP has continued to:

- Track and evaluate current substance use data trends;
- Educate the public on emerging substance use issues;
- Engage in shared planning to build the capacity of local communities to respond to substance use; and
- Evaluate targeted strategies to address public health and safety issues secondary to substance use.

Through these efforts, and in collaboration with partners across Arizona, we can better serve communities statewide as they work to combat this formidable challenge.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Sheila Polk in blue ink.

Sheila Polk, Chair

Handwritten signature of Sara Salek in blue ink.

Sara Salek, Vice-Chair

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COMMISSION OVERVIEW

The Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership (ASAP) is authorized under [Executive Order 2013-05](#) to collaboratively address substance abuse related issues in Arizona. ASAP serves as a statewide council on substance abuse prevention, enforcement, treatment and recovery efforts.

ASAP evaluates and supports improvements in substance abuse policy, develops dynamic partnerships and participates in informed planning processes. ASAP has the following duties and responsibilities:

- Compile and summarize information and data on substance misuse and abuse and associated consequences and correlates, including mental illness and emerging trends, through a collaborative and cooperative data-sharing process.
- Identify and address data gaps in order to provide Arizona with a comprehensive picture of substance misuse and abuse.
- Utilize evaluation and research reports to promote the most effective and evidence-based programs, policies and practices across the state and make recommendations for modifications as needed.
- Encourage state and local partnerships to engage in shared planning processes and build the capacity of local communities to meet identified needs and maximize resources.
- Identify and share effective practices to integrate strategies across systems that leverage existing funding and increase access to services at the community level.
- Analyze current state and federal laws and programs governing substance misuse and abuse prevention, treatment and enforcement, recommending any changes that would enhance the effectiveness of these laws and programs.
- Recommend specific drug and alcohol related policy and budget line-items for consideration by Arizona state agencies and/or the Arizona legislature.

COMMISSION GOALS

The following goals guide the Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership and its workgroups:

GOAL 1: Track and evaluate current substance use data trends in Arizona.

GOAL 2: Educate the public on emerging substance use issues in Arizona and related strategies to address these issues.

GOAL 3: Evaluate targeted strategies to address public health and safety issues secondary to substance use.

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

The ASAP consists of 24 active members who are appointed by the Governor. ASAP includes representatives from a broad spectrum of stakeholders across the state. Including law enforcement, service providers, state agency leaders, behavioral health, among others.

Sheila Polk, Chair

Yavapai County Attorney

Sara Salek, Vice-Chair

Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System

Alberto Gutier

Governor's Office of Highway Safety

Andrew LeFevre

Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

Angela Paton

Arizona Attorney General's Office

Brenda Cochran

Pure Heart Church

Cara Christ

Arizona Department of Health Services

Dawn Mertz

High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area

David Klein

United States Department of Veterans Affairs

David Shinn

Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry

Ed Gilligan

Adult Probation Services Division

Heston Silbert

Arizona Department of Public Safety

Jeff Hood

Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections

John Cocca

Arizona Department of Liquor Licenses & Control

Kathleen Grimes

Graham County Substance Abuse Coalition

Kathy Hoffman

Arizona Department of Education

Lawrence LaVeque

Cisco Systems

Leah Landrum-Taylor

Arizona Department of Economic Security

Lee Pioske

Crossroads Inc.

Maria Cristina Fuentes

Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family

Merilee Fowler

MATFORCE

Michael Faust

Arizona Department of Child Safety

Tobi Zavala

Arizona Board of Behavioral Health Examiners

Thomas Kelly

Apache Junction Police Department

Wanda Wright

Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

Vanessa Bustos

Pascua Yaqui Tribe

COUNCIL MEETING PRESENTATIONS

During the past year, the Council received presentations from issue-area experts on topics related to substance abuse prevention, enforcement, treatment, and recovery efforts. The Council continues to learn and evaluate strategies to support substance abuse related work throughout the state. All presentation materials can be found [here](#). The following are summaries of presentations heard throughout the year.

Crossroads Role in Prevention, Treatment and Recovery

Lee Pioske, Executive Director, Crossroads Inc.

September 3, 2020

Crossroads Inc., established in 1960 as a 12 step-based recovery program, is now one of the largest substance abuse treatment programs in the United States. Crossroads Inc. delivers comprehensive care for all participants and promotes long-term recovery. The agency's various roles in prevention, treatment and recovery include: providing Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT), offering complete [integrated care](#) for in-patient residents, and partnering with Pure Heart to provide [extensive after-care services](#).

Lee Pioske, Executive Director of Crossroads Inc. for the past 15 years, attributes program success to staff expertise, underscoring the fact that ninety percent of agency employees are former Crossroad residents. In his presentation, Mr. Pioske highlighted the success of Crossroad's pretrial program for medium to high-risk re-offenders who receive free room and board during treatment participation. In addition, Crossroads does their best to reintegrate individuals who voluntarily discharge, recognizing that relapse can be a part of recovery. Further, descriptions of skill-based family education classes for coping with addiction issues are included. Finally, in response to intake data, Crossroads, Inc. staff determined methamphetamine and opioids to be the highest reported drugs of choice for the 2019 calendar year. With this data in mind, Crossroads, Inc. created targeted strategies for methamphetamine and opioid prevention. These strategies include parent/family education classes, prevention partnering and collaboration, and the development of a Central Phoenix coalition.

[Click here](#) to learn more about Crossroads Inc.

Graham County Substance Abuse Coalition's Role in Prevention

Kathy Grimes, Director, Graham County Substance Abuse Coalition

September 3, 2020

Established originally in 2003, the Graham County Substance Abuse Coalition is a cross-system substance abuse coalition providing community resources and education focused on reducing youth substance use.

Graham County Substance Abuse Coalition continues to expand their programming to support criminal justice involved individuals who are re-entering society. For the past three years, the coalition has diligently worked to launch a sober living house. This project will further support the work of the Gila Valley Coalition in partnership with Graham and Greenlee Counties.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the Graham County Substance Abuse Coalition.

Arizona Department of Veteran Services' Role in Prevention and Treatment

Colonel Wanda Wright, Director, Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

December 3, 2020

Colonel Wanda Wright, Director of Arizona Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS), provided an overview of the department's role in substance abuse prevention and treatment.

Through the [State Opioid Response Grant II](#), ADVS provides trauma-informed services for veterans with an Opioid Use Disorder. This includes resource navigators and benefit counselors to support veterans seeking substance abuse treatment and an increased outreach to support warm handoffs to the [Be Connected](#) program. ADVS also provides transportation to treatment facilities and has a working relationship with [Veterans Courts](#). Additionally, the department provides support through direct service coordination of the [Military Family Relief Fund](#), [Veteran Benefit Counselors \(VBCs\)](#), [Arizona State Veteran Homes](#) and [Arizona Veterans' Memorial Cemeteries](#).

[Click here](#) to learn more about the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services.

Arizona Department of Public Safety's Role in Prevention

Captain Tony Mapp, Commander of the Major Offender District, Arizona Department of Public Safety

December 3, 2020

The Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS) maintains offices in more than 80 Arizona communities and has close to 1,900 full-time department employees to help the agency fulfill its operational objectives in the critical areas of highway and public safety, criminal interdiction, and scientific analysis. Last year, DPS highway patrol officers conducted 515,184 traffic stops and made 17,000 arrests, with over 9,000 being drug-related. Additionally, DPS supports substance abuse prevention through the facilitation of community outreach panels, participation in the Arizona Drug Overdose Fatality Review Board, and service on the Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the Arizona Department of Public Safety.

ASU Center for Health Information and Research Overview

Dr. George Runger, Professor, Arizona State University

Gevork Harootunian, Principal Statistical Programmer, Arizona State University

December 3, 2020

The Center for Health Information and Research (CHiR) is a multi-disciplinary research unit within the Arizona State University College of Health Solutions. CHiR serves as a partner for individuals and organizations seeking comprehensive health information and data analytics for public, private and research uses. Through a variety of sources, CHiR collects identifiable health information and information on social determinants of health. With this information housed in CHiR's centralized repositories, they are able to track the health care and well-being of individuals and populations over time and across providers and health insurers.

[Click here](#) for more information on Arizona State University's Center for Health Information and Research.

Opioid Data Update

Sheila Sjolander, Assistant Director, Arizona Department of Health Services

February 4, 2021

Following an increase in opioid related deaths in Arizona and across the nation, Governor Doug Ducey issued the first [public health emergency declaration](#) to enhance opioid overdose surveillance in June 2017. As the state's public health agency, the [Arizona Department of Health Services \(ADHS\)](#) has the responsibility of tracking suspected opioid overdoses, deaths, neonatal abstinence syndrome, naloxone dispensed by pharmacists and naloxone administered by first responders. Sheila Sjolander, Assistant Director of ADHS, offered an update on current surveillance data. The opioid overdose data for 2019 and 2020 included a decrease in heroin

deaths. The highest number of overdose deaths occurred in individuals between the ages of 25 to 34 years old. Additionally, as of January 2021, fentanyl was the most commonly identified opioid in verified overdoses.

A summary of all related activities and current surveillance data can be found on the [ADHS Opioid Dashboard](#).

2020 Arizona Drug Threat Assessment

Dawn Mertz, Executive Director, Arizona High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area

February 4, 2021

Arizona High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (Arizona HIDTA) was established in 1990. The agency works to facilitate, support and enhance collaborative drug control efforts among law enforcement agencies and community-based organizations. Together, these partners collaborate to significantly reduce the impact of illegal trafficking and use of drugs throughout Arizona. The agency has evolved into a trusted counter-drug program, which supports the assessment of regional drug threats, facilitates the creation of cooperative strategies to address drug threats, and provides law enforcement agencies with the necessary resources to enhance their efficiency in counter-drug strategy implementation.

The components of Arizona HIDTA include an intelligence support center, overdose response strategies, training department and demand reduction program. The agency also manages the [HIDTA resource center](#) as a support to community organizations.

[Click here](#) for more information on Arizona High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas.

State Opioid Response Grant Strategies

Dr. Sara Salek, Chief Medical Officer, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System

Hazel Alveranga, Grants Administrator for Opioid Grants, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System

February 4, 2021

Founded in 1982, the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) serves as Arizona's Medicaid agency, offering health care programs to serve all eligible Arizona residents. As the Single State Agency for Substance Abuse Treatment, AHCCCS received the [State Opioid Response II \(SOR II\)](#) award notice for \$63 million over the course of two years to increase prevention programming, treatment activities and recovery support. These activities include support for substance use prevention coalitions in areas such as [Peach Springs](#) and [Glendale](#), expanding [24/7 Treatment Access Points](#) and an updated [24/7 Opioid Assistance & Referral Line](#) among many other projects.

[Click here](#) for more information on the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS).

2020 Arizona Youth Survey

Andrew LeFevre, Executive Director, Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

February 4, 2021

The [Arizona Youth Survey \(AYS\)](#) is administered every two years to a statewide sample of 8th, 10th, and 12th grade youth, under the direction of the [Arizona Criminal Justice Commission Statistical Analysis Center](#) and in partnership with the Arizona State University School of Criminology & Criminal Justice. Based on the nationally recognized Risk and Protective Factor model and the Communities That Care Survey (Hawkins et al., 1992), the AYS assesses the prevalence and frequency of youth substance use, gang involvement, and other high-risk

behaviors, to help stakeholders better understand the risk and protective factors that are correlated with these behaviors. Andrew LeFevre, Executive Director of the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission, offered an update on the 2020 AYS data. The most commonly used substance among participating Arizona youth was alcohol, with forty-two percent of youth reporting they obtained alcohol at a party. Participants also reported commonly using e-cigarettes and marijuana. The 2020 AYS report also highlighted dangerous driving practices among youth. Texting while driving was the highest form of dangerous driving and marijuana use while driving was the second highest.

[Click here](#) to review the 2020 Arizona Youth Survey.

Arizona Adult Probation's Role in Prevention, Treatment and Recovery

Ed Gilligan, Adult Probation Services Division Director, Arizona Office of the Courts

March 6, 2021

The Arizona Office of the Courts Department of Adult Probation supports offenders charged with or convicted of drug crimes and drug-related crimes through [Specialty Courts](#). These courts include drug court programs, mental health courts, veteran's courts and DUI courts.

Through the state's implementation of [evidence-based supervision](#), the Arizona probation department has seen an increase in individuals successfully completing probation. This supervision strategy has allowed probation officers to target their efforts on high-risk populations and establish individualized case plans. Additionally, probation officers have enjoyed the expansion of an [integrated care model](#), which integrates primary care and behavioral health services for the purpose of better coordination for adults with behavioral health needs transitioning from the Criminal Justice System. All of these practices continue to result in strong outcome data for individuals with a substance use disorder.

[Click here](#) for more information on the Arizona Office of the Courts Department of Adult Probation.

Substance Abuse Coalition Leaders of Arizona Statewide Counterfeit Fentanyl Campaign

Merilee Fowler, MATFORCE Executive Director, SACLAz

Shelly Mowrey, Demand Reduction Coordinator for Arizona HIDTA, SACLAz

March 6, 2021

The Substance Abuse Coalition Leaders of Arizona (SACLAz) is a group of coalition leaders focused on preventing the use of drugs and alcohol among youth. Through the [State Opioid Response Grant II](#), SACLAz has developed a [Statewide Counterfeit Fentanyl Campaign Toolkit](#) which includes prevention education, naloxone awareness, youth resiliency and addresses the stigma associated with substance abuse. All materials have been translated into Spanish and are available for specialized branding. State agencies and community stakeholders are encouraged to post on social media to help [spread awareness](#) and [encourage naloxone distribution](#).

[Click here](#) for more information on Substance Abuse Coalition Leaders of Arizona.

CURRENT WORKGROUPS

In addition to quarterly meetings, ASAP has issue-specific workgroups composed of state agency staff, issue-area experts and community stakeholders. Through the support of the Arizona National Guard Counterdrug Task Force Drug Demand Reduction Outreach, these workgroups meet regularly to support substance use prevention efforts.

ARIZONA SUBSTANCE ABUSE EPIDEMIOLOGY WORKGROUP

Established through Executive Order 2013-05, the Arizona Substance Abuse Epidemiology Workgroup collects and reports on substance abuse and consequence-related data to help guide a data-driven decision-making process.

Over the past year, the epidemiology workgroup collected and developed a data profile on substance use behaviors and complex trauma in Arizona. During FY 2022, the workgroup will continue to focus their efforts on analyzing multi-source data on substance use-related morbidity to improve data gaps and determine trends. This work will continue to be supported by the [Partnership for Success Grant](#) and the [State Opioid Response Grant](#).

PROGRAM INVENTORY WORKGROUP

The Program Inventory Workgroup has worked to identify promising practices and provide recommendations to ASAP. Over the last year, members recruited from various sectors of government and non-government organizations reviewed a broad scope of programming and strategies, ranging from primary to tertiary substance abuse prevention. The workgroup presented the following prioritized [recommendations](#) to ASAP in September 2020:

- **Recommendation 1**
Arizona should conduct a prevention mapping inventory by geographic service area. This inventory should identify the service area and the specific populations being served through prevention programming. The inventory should specify between primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. When completed, this map will illustrate geographic resources, or lack thereof, across the state and help to provide prevention programming for all residents.
- **Recommendation 2**
Develop uniform and consistent prevention measurements for all funded programs. All prevention funding that is overseen by state agencies should implement a single, multi-pronged approach to evaluate programs by tracking 1) outputs 2) outcomes and 3) cost per unit for direct and indirect programming
- **Recommendation 3**
Collection and analysis of all prevention program data should occur in Arizona on an annual basis.

EPI Workgroup members have been invited to join the Program Inventory Workgroup to further support ongoing assessment efforts in FY 2022.

In partnership with the Arizona National Guard Drug Demand Reduction Outreach, the workgroup has also created the Prevention Desert Subcommittee to further support Recommendation 1 and prioritize areas of need across Arizona. This workgroup will convene as needed and based upon additional findings.

SUBSTANCE FOCUSED REPORTS

Each quarter, ASAP focused their efforts on a substance that had been identified as a top drug threat in the state by the Arizona High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Drug Threat Assessment. ASAP members engaged in a discussion regarding the impact of each identified substance within Arizona communities. ASAP members formed workgroups focused on each substance to gather data, evaluate trends and make recommendations for the state. In partnership with the Arizona National Guard Drug Demand Reduction Outreach, the workgroups created publications on both methamphetamine and counterfeit and illicit fentanyl. These documents have been released to the public through the Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family website.

- **Methamphetamine in Arizona**

In Arizona, accessibility, costs and lack of prevention education play a significant role in drug-use behaviors and methamphetamine addiction. Due to increased methamphetamine production in Mexico and declining costs, Arizona is seeing a tremendous increase of sellers and users within its communities. The Arizona High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area has indicated that Methamphetamine is Arizona's greatest drug threat. See Appendix A.

- **Counterfeit Fentanyl**

Counterfeit fentanyl is now one of the most common drugs involved in drug overdose deaths throughout the United States, including Arizona. Although data shows an increase in arrests and seizures, there is still a vast amount of counterfeit fentanyl found in Arizona. The Arizona High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area has indicated that Synthetic Opioids, specifically counterfeit fentanyl, is Arizona's second greatest drug threat. See Appendix B.

ASAP GOALS 2021/22

In State Fiscal Year 2021, ASAP will continue to fulfill the mission statement of raising awareness of substance abuse in the State of Arizona. ASAP hopes to focus their efforts on Arizona's identified drug threats, analyzing data through geographical mapping and the collection of substance abuse related consequences data. The partnership will continue to support agencies in key substance use prevention initiatives and the development of a research-based approach for emerging drug threats.

ASAP will establish workgroups as needed to support the following:

- Collect and report on substance abuse and consequence-related data to help guide a data-informed decision-making process;
- Locate and prioritize areas of need in Arizona through geographical mapping and data analysis in prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery services;
- Encourage state and local partners to engage in shared planning processes and build the capacity of local communities to meet identified needs and maximize resources; and
- Identify and share effective practices to integrate strategies across systems that will leverage existing funding and increase access to services at the community level.

METHAMPHETAMINE

Arizona data trends, interdiction, and statewide prevention



PREVENTION RESOURCE LINKS

[GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF YOUTH, FAITH AND FAMILY](#)

[ARIZONA SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION RESOURCE](#)

[ARIZONA HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREA](#)

[ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES](#)

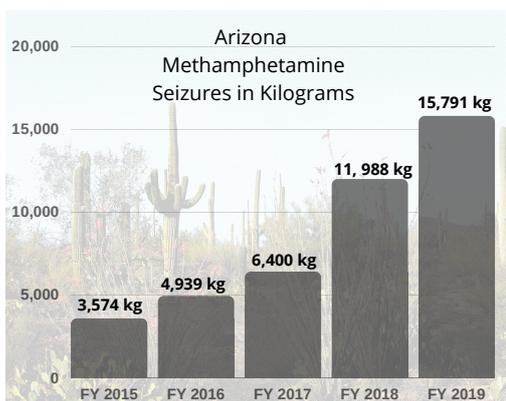
[SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMIN.](#)

Know the Facts: Arizona Data Trends

Resources: National Institute on Drug Abuse and the AZ HIDTA

Methamphetamine is a powerful, highly addictive stimulant drug that affects the central nervous system. The drug's ability to rapidly release high levels of dopamine in reward areas of the brain creates physical and psychological dependence and can lead to a substance use disorder. In Arizona, accessibility, costs and lack of prevention education play a huge role in drug-use behaviors and methamphetamine addiction.

Due to increased methamphetamine production in Mexico and declining costs, Arizona is seeing a devastating increase of sellers and users of the illegal substance within its communities. The Arizona High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area has indicated that **Methamphetamine is Arizona's #1 drug threat**. The data below represents Arizona specific trends:



DATA PROVIDED BY: AZ HIDTA

- **Street Value:** Phoenix retail price decreased 58%, from an average of \$350 per ounce in 2015 to \$140 per ounce in 2019.
- **Interdiction:** Federal, state, and local law enforcement saw a 342% increase in methamphetamine seizures from FY 2015 to FY 2019.
- **Fatal Overdoses:** In Maricopa and Pima County, most overdose deaths in 2019 were attributed to methamphetamine (670 fatal overdoses).

Arizona data trends continued:

- **Drug Arrests:** The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission indicated in **FY 2019, 90% of task forces arrests were drug-related.** The task force also **seized 4,561 lbs of methamphetamine, which was 123% increase from previous fiscal year.**
- **Treatment:** Crossroads, Inc. indicated that **40% of all clients tested positive for methamphetamine upon admission into treatment.**
- **Families Affected:** In 2019, the AZ Families First Program had **6,324 parents participate- 36% (2,276 participants) reported meth use within 30 days of start of program,** second only to marijuana.
- **Youth at Risk:** The 2018 Arizona Youth Survey (AYS) indicates 30-day methamphetamine use has decreased from 0.5% in 2014 to 0.3% in 2018. However, there are indications that **electronic cigarettes are being used as a delivery system for methamphetamine.** According to the 2018 AYS data, **use of e-cigarettes has increased across all grade levels** since it was first assessed in 2016.

Interdiction AND Prevention

Resource: AZ HIDTA

Seizure analysis indicates the main highway corridors from Sonora, Mexico to Arizona are used as primary gateways to move methamphetamine into Arizona communities. Interdiction efforts in Arizona are imperative to preventing drug trafficking along this corridor. Although data shows an increase in arrests and seizures, unfortunately there is still a vast amount of the illegal substance getting into the hands of Arizona residents.



Prevention efforts are critical to eliminating methamphetamine from Arizona communities as it minimizes the demand and decreases the use of targeted illegal substances. Prevention and early intervention efforts not only minimize the demand and use of illegal substances but also promote informed decision-making and healthy behaviors. As it relates to business, stopping the demand will eliminate the need for supply.

Recommendations for Arizona:

Members of the Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership provided agency specific data trends and have worked diligently to identify areas of need in prevention. **The goal is to maximize the substance use prevention efforts** of federal, state, and local law enforcement in partnership with other state agencies.

Areas of need include:

- Increase in reporting among state agencies and data sharing agreements.
- ICD-10 code specific to methamphetamine for proper reporting at medical facilities and health care agencies.
- Statewide campaign on methamphetamine awareness, education, and resources.
- Flexibility in substance use/misuse prevention funding.
- Support for displaced youth whose parents have a methamphetamine substance use disorder, i.e. youth who are in foster care, children of incarcerated parents, etc.



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Partnership

COUNTERFEIT FENTANYL

Arizona data trends, interdiction, and statewide prevention



PREVENTION RESOURCE LINKS

[GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF YOUTH, FAITH AND FAMILY](#)

[ARIZONA SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION RESOURCE](#)

[ARIZONA HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREA](#)

[ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES](#)

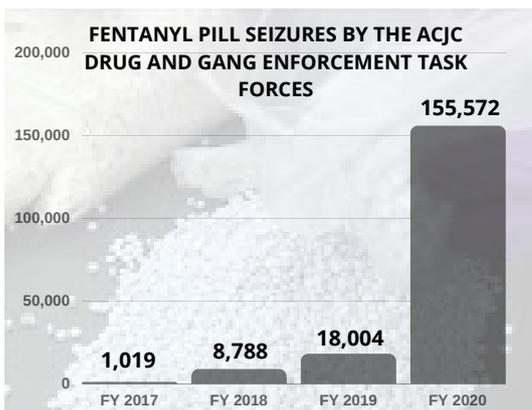
[SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMIN.](#)

Know the Facts: Counterfeit Fentanyl in Arizona

Resources: National Institute on Drug Abuse and the AZ HIDTA

Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid that is similar to morphine but is 100 times more potent. Counterfeit opioids, including fentanyl, are now the most common drugs involved in drug overdose deaths not only in the United States, but more specifically, in Arizona. Accessibility and lack of prevention education play a huge role in drug-use behaviors and fatal overdoses within Arizona.

Counterfeit fentanyl is smuggled into Arizona across the southwest border, primarily in powder and pill form. The Arizona High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area has indicated that **Synthetic Opioids (specifically fentanyl) is Arizona's #2 drug threat**. The data below represents Arizona specific trends:



DATA PROVIDED BY: AZ CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION

- **Drug Arrests:** The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission indicated in **FY 2020, 91% of task force arrests were drug-related**. The task forces also **seized 4,192 lbs of fentanyl (5,012% increase from previous fiscal year) and 155,572 fentanyl pills (764% increase from previous fiscal year)**.
- **Interdiction:** Through the Arizona HIDTA task forces, there was a **490% increase in fentanyl pill seizures from FY 2018 to FY 2019**.

Arizona data trends continued:

- **Fatal Overdoses:** In Maricopa and Pima County, the **2nd highest number of overdose deaths in 2019 were attributed to fentanyl (577 fatal overdoses).**
- **Treatment:** Crossroads, Inc. indicated that of the **43% of all clients who tested positive for methamphetamine upon admission into treatment, 30% of those also tested positive for fentanyl, but self reported methamphetamine only.** This presents the unknown of illegal substances as many are mixed within one another without the user knowing.
- **Youth at Risk:** The Arizona High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) conducted an analysis of Pima County which found that **fentanyl is the 2nd highest in number of deaths of youth 15-17 years of age.** The AZ HIDTA has also found that **youth are accessing illegal substances through the social media platforms Snap Chat and Instagram.**

Interdiction AND Prevention

Interdiction efforts in Arizona are imperative to preventing drug trafficking along the main highway corridors. Recent efforts include a traffic stop on the Loop 202 on August 9, 2020, where police recovered a total of **400,000 counterfeit fentanyl pills.** More recently, on November 13, 2020, Yuma Sector Border Patrol agents seized **over 1 pound of fentanyl pills** during a checkpoint inspection on Interstate 8. Although data shows an increase in arrests and seizures, unfortunately there is still a vast amount of counterfeit fentanyl getting into the hands of Arizona residents.



Prevention efforts are necessary to eliminate fentanyl from Arizona communities as it minimizes the demand and reduces the use of this illegal substance. Prevention and early intervention efforts not only minimize the demand and use of illegal substances but also promote informed decision-making and healthy behaviors. These efforts have a direct impact on decreasing the fatal overdose rates within the Arizona community.

Recommendations for Arizona:

Members of the Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership provided agency specific data trends and have worked diligently to identify areas of need in prevention. **The goal is to maximize the substance use prevention efforts** of federal, state, and local law enforcement in partnership with other state agencies.

Areas of need include:

- Statewide counterfeit fentanyl alert utilizing the business community and social media markets.
- Provide Naloxone to treatment facilities and increase accessibility to the community.
- Statewide campaign on counterfeit fentanyl awareness and education.
- Targeted campaign on counterfeit fentanyl resources with direct dissemination to parents and/or caregivers.

