

## 2021 Annual Drug Report

### I. Purpose

Wisconsin Statute §961.565 dictates that the governor and attorney general shall submit a joint report to the legislature “describing the activities in this state during the previous year to enforce the laws regulating controlled substances.”<sup>i</sup> In accordance, this report first outlines narcotics investigation activities throughout Wisconsin for the calendar year of 2021. It describes general arrest data, drug types, and case numbers. Next, this report identifies various law enforcement agencies with units dedicated to narcotics enforcement throughout the state. It describes the role of local, state, and federal law enforcement organizations in narcotics investigations throughout Wisconsin during 2021.

### II. Drug Enforcement in Wisconsin

Two sources provided most of the data used in Part II of this report: the Wisconsin Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Information and Analysis (BJIA), and the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratories (WSCL), which is housed in the Division of Forensic Sciences (DFS). BJIA data provides the most comprehensive information about annual arrest numbers according to crime type across Wisconsin. It also delivers the most accurate compilation of data arrest numbers regarding possession and sale of illicit drugs. These general trends are then complemented using WSCL data, which measures the specific types of drugs identified in cases across the state. This combination, of comprehensive arrest numbers from BJIA and specific drugs per case from WSCL, provides foundational data about drug enforcement trends. The data in this study does not include reporting from federal cases.

While the COVID-19 pandemic continued to surge and alter many events across Wisconsin in 2021, we remain uncertain how the pandemic impacted the data described in this report. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime does assess that increased economic hardship brought on by the pandemic has made illicit drug cultivation more appealing to fragile rural communities.<sup>ii</sup> UNODC, also, stipulates that the social impact of the pandemic, including rises in inequality, poverty, and mental health conditions, represents factors that could push more people into drug use, especially those among already vulnerable populations.<sup>iii</sup>

## Drug Arrests Reported in 2021

BJIA data reflects Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) standards used by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).<sup>iv</sup> Consistent with practices across numerous law enforcement agencies, UCR drug-related arrests involve:

- Violation of laws prohibiting the production, distribution, and/or use of certain controlled substances.
- The unlawful cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, purchase, use, possession, transportation, or importation of any controlled drug or narcotic substance.
- Violations of state and local laws, specifically those relating to the unlawful possession, sale, use, growing, manufacturing, and making of narcotic drugs.

UCR data delivers the most comprehensive and accurate information for Wisconsin arrest data currently available, despite some challenges. Specifically, the way UCR data is recorded and categorized makes trend analysis difficult for comparing specific, different drugs. UCR categorizes information on arrests for drug abuse violations based on the narcotics involved but does not break down arrests by the specific drug type or legal status of that drug. For example, cocaine (illegal), heroin (illegal), and morphine (legal when prescribed) are all included under same category, “opium or cocaine and their derivatives.” Also, when reporting UCR statistics, agencies must include all arrests for violations, including attempts, and subdivide them into sale/manufacturing and possession.<sup>v</sup>

When querying the BJIA UCR dashboard, one may notice that drug arrest numbers of past years have changed slightly from the date they were originally extracted for the purpose of this report. When a new year of data is made available on the dashboard, the previous years that are displayed are refreshed at the same time. This can cause slight changes in the data because law enforcement agencies can retrospectively make alterations to previous years' data. However, for the purpose of this report, we will continue to keep past years' data as they were when we first extracted them from the UCR dashboard to maintain continuity between past and present publications of this report.

In Wisconsin, during 2021, agencies' use of UCR reporting systems continued an ongoing shift away from Summary Based Reporting (SBR) to Incident Based Reporting (IBR). This larger shift to IBR is related to FBI reporting requirements that encourage units to transition as SBR is gradually discontinued. In the meantime, both IBR and SBR continue to exist under the general UCR system. From 2020-21, the number of Wisconsin agencies using IBR increased from 272 to 336, adding 64 more agencies, which signifies a 23.5% increase.<sup>vi</sup> This continued trend of conversion to IBR reporting likely facilitated an increased number of entries for the

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possession of drugs “other-dangerous.” No other significant changes occurred in 2021 regarding UCR drug categories or how UCR data is measured.

**Figure A: Wisconsin UCR Reported Drug Arrests (2017 - 2021)<sup>vii</sup>**

Total Arrests						Amount	% Change	4-year	2021 v.	2021
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change	2020-21	Mean avg	Mean	v. Annual
						2020-21	2020-21	2017-20	Average	Avg. 2017-20 (%)
Drug Sale Opium/Cocaine	1229	1114	823	579	551	-28	-4.8%	936.3	-385.3	-41.1%
Drug Sale Marijuana	1870	1822	1352	1077	852	-225	-20.9%	1530.3	-678.3	-44.3%
Drug Sale Synthetic	481	345	241	199	120	-79	-39.7%	316.5	-196.5	-62.1%
Drug Sale Other Dangerous	1263	1229	1213	809	760	-49	-6.1%	1131.0	-371.0	-32.8%
Drug Possession Opium/Cocaine	2960	2959	2755	2446	2657	211	8.6%	2780.0	-123.0	-2.1%
Drug Possession Marijuana	17022	17392	14692	11488	11702	214	1.9%	15148.5	-3446.5	-22.8%
Drug Possession Synthetic	1860	1604	1483	1325	949	-376	-28.4%	1568.0	-619.0	-39.5%
Drug Possession Other Dangerous	4142	4407	4276	4305	5853	1548	36.0%	4282.5	1570.5	36.7%
Drug Unknown	330	513	574	381	514	133	34.9%	449.5	64.5	14.3%
Total Drug Arrests Sale	4843	4520	4435	2664	2283	-381	-14.3%	4115.5	-1832.5	-44.5%
Total Drug Arrests Possession	25984	26363	23206	19564	21161	1597	8.2%	23779.0	-2618.0	-11.0%
Total Drug Arrests	31157	31395	28215	22609	23958	1349	6.0%	28344.0	-4386.0	-15.5%

**Total drug arrests increased by 6% in 2021.** The total 23,958 reported drug arrests were 1,349 more than 2020, a 6% increase. The total arrests represented about a 15.5% decrease compared with the four-year average (mean) from 2017-2020.<sup>viii</sup> While 2021’s data is an increase from 2020, it remains less than the 4-year average.

**Arrests for possession were more than nine times greater than arrests for sale.** Of the total 23,958 drug arrests, the 21,161 for possession accounted for 88.3% compared to the 2,283 arrests for sale (9.5% of total). During this time, total arrests for sale decreased by 381, or 14.3%, compared with the previous year. The total arrests for possession in 2021 represent a 44.5% decrease compared with the four-

year average (mean) from 2017-2020. Total arrests for possession underwent an increase of 1597 (8.2%) compared with the previous year.<sup>ix</sup>

**Marijuana-related arrests accounted for more than 52% of all other drug arrest types.** Arrests in 2021 for marijuana drug sales (852) and possession (11702) represented 52.4% of all annual drug arrests despite steadily decreasing in total amounts over the course of this study. Arrests for marijuana possession were just under twice the amount of the next closest category, “Drug Possession Others-Dangerous” with 5,853, and over four-times the amount of the combined category, “Opium/Cocaine Possession” with 2,657 cases.<sup>x</sup>

**Arrests for selling opium/cocaine reduced again in 2021. The 551 arrests represent an all-time study low.** The 551 arrests in 2021 represents a 4.8% decrease from 2021. The total number of arrests for the sale of opium/cocaine in 2021 is a 41.1% decrease compared with the four-year average (mean) from 2017-2020.<sup>xi</sup>

**The category of “Drug Sale-Synthetic” represents the greatest percentage decrease relative to other drug categories.** The sale of synthetic drugs accounted for 120 of reported arrests in 2021, 79 less than the previous year. This signifies a 39.7% drop compared to 2020. The total number of arrests for the sale of synthetic drugs in 2021 represents a 49% decrease when compared with the four-year average from 2017-2020.<sup>xii</sup>

**The category of “Drug Possession-Other Dangerous” represents the largest percentage increase relative to other categories.** In 2020, the only category increase was that of “Drug Possession-Other Dangerous”. This increase continued in 2021 when cases rose to 5853, which was 1548, or 36% more than 2020.<sup>xiii</sup> Overall, this increase is likely related to the increase in IBR reporting. Exclusive to IBR reporting, there is a category that exists labeled, “X- More than 3 Drugs.”<sup>xiv</sup> This category is included in the “Other-Dangerous Drugs” category when using the conversion from SBR to IBR. However, this is only a possible reason for the change, numerous other explanations do exist.

**The “Drug-Unknown” category spiked after a significant drop occurred in 2020.** The total of “Unknown” drugs at 514 remains small relative to other categories, however 2021’s data represents a 34.9% increase compared to 2020. The total number of arrests for unknown drugs in 2021 is a 14.3% increase from the four-year average (mean) from 2017-2020.<sup>xv</sup>

### **Drug Types Identified in Referred Cases 2021**

Data from the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) Division of Forensic Science (DFS) Wisconsin State Crime Laboratories (WSCL) reflects standards used by the National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS).<sup>xvi</sup> This process includes itemizing each specific drug identified during cases referred to the WSCL, and this report relies on the WSCL summaries. However, not all drugs or all cases with drugs are tested at the WSCL. Also, the presence of multiple drugs in a single case or a single drug across multiple cases can make interpretations difficult in some circumstances or alter some of the statistics. In addition, maximum weights thresholds for samples may alter how much is tested. Therefore, WSCL data represents the number of times a specific drug was identified in any case, with generalizable results, but not absolute accuracy or complete comprehensiveness.<sup>xvii</sup> Acknowledging these considerations, WSCL data remains the best source for specific data about types of drugs identified in Wisconsin cases for 2021.

**Figure B: WSCL Case Numbers by Drug Type, (2017 - 2021)<sup>xviii</sup>**

Drug Type	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2020-2021 change	2020-21 % Change	2021 v. 2017-2020 Mean AVG (%)
Cocaine	1172	1146	1311	821	765	-56	-6.8%	-5.0%
Heroin	1286	981	818	584	447	-137	-23.5%	-14.9%
Prescription Opioids	323	213	175	111	75	-36	-32.4%	-17.5%
Marijuana (THC)	1857	1620	1793	1029	1189	160	15.5%	10.2%
Methamphetamine	1689	1437	1801	1563	1792	229	14.7%	14.1%
Fentanyl and Analogs	159	224	411	468	583	115	24.6%	36.5%
NBOMe Synthetic Hallucinogens	5	2	0	0	0	0	Undefined	0.0%
Synthetic Hallucinogen Analogs				76	23	-53	-69.7%	n/a
Ketamine	11	11	15	17	7	-10	-58.8%	-74.1%
Totals	6502	5634	6324	4669	4881	212	4.5%	3.7%

**WSCL total cases rose slightly after reaching an all-time low in 2020.** In 2021, WSCL had 212 more cases compared to 2020, representing a 4.5% increase. Compared with the four-year annual average mean from 2017-2020 (5,782.3), the total number of cases in 2021 was approximately a 3.7% increase.<sup>xix</sup>

**Methamphetamine represented the highest number of cases.** The 1,792 methamphetamine cases in 2021 totaled to a 14.7% increase when compared to 2020. When 2021’s total number of methamphetamine cases is analyzed in relation to the 2017-2020 annual average, a 14.1% increase is observed.<sup>xx</sup> For the third consecutive year, methamphetamine was more prevalent than marijuana.

**Fentanyl-related cases continue to rise.** Fentanyl cases in 2021 totaled to 583, which is 115 more than what was recorded in 2020, signifying a 24.6% increase. When 2021’s total number of fentanyl-related cases is compared to the 2017-2020 annual average, a 36.5% increase is seen.<sup>xxi</sup>

**Marijuana proved to be the second-highest number of cases.** Marijuana case numbers increased by 15.5% from 2020. 2021’s total number of marijuana cases is a 10.2% increase from the 2017-2020 four-year mean (1574.8).<sup>xxii</sup> After 2020’s data reached the lowest amount of WSCL marijuana cases observed in over five years, 2021 failed to replicate a continued downward trend.

**Opioids showed continued reduction in 2021.** Heroin cases declined for the fourth straight year and represents the new lowest number in this study’s history. This decline by 137, or 23.5%, was also a 14.9% decrease compared to the four-year mean of 2017-2020.<sup>xxiii</sup>

- **Prescription Opioids also displayed a continued reduction.** The total 75 cases recorded in 2021 were 36 less than 2020 and reduced across both most frequently identified variants. Hydrocodone reduced to 17 cases (-13, or -43.3%); Oxycodone reduced to 57 cases (-22, or -27.8%).<sup>xxiv</sup>

**Cocaine cases decreased for the second consecutive year.** 2021 possessed 56 less cases than what was reported in 2020, representing a 6.8% decrease. 2021's total number of cocaine cases represented a 5% decrease from the four-year annual average mean.<sup>xxv</sup>

**Ketamine experiences a large decline following last year's spike.** The 7 cases recorded in 2021 was a decrease of 10 cases, or -58.8%, from 2020. 2021's total number of Ketamine cases was a 74.1% decrease from the four-year annual average mean.<sup>xxvi</sup>

**NBO Synthetic Hallucinogens experienced zero cases for the third consecutive year.**<sup>xxvii</sup>

**Synthetic Hallucinogen Analogs displayed a decrease following its first year on this study.** 2021's 41 reported cases were a decrease of 35 cases, or a 46.1% drop. Isotonitazene appeared in 6 cases, which is 12 less cases than 2020. Flualprazolam appeared in 35 cases, which is down from 2020 where there were 58 cases of flualprazolam reported.<sup>xxviii</sup>

Fig. C: WSCL Annual Case Trends, 2017-21 by Drug

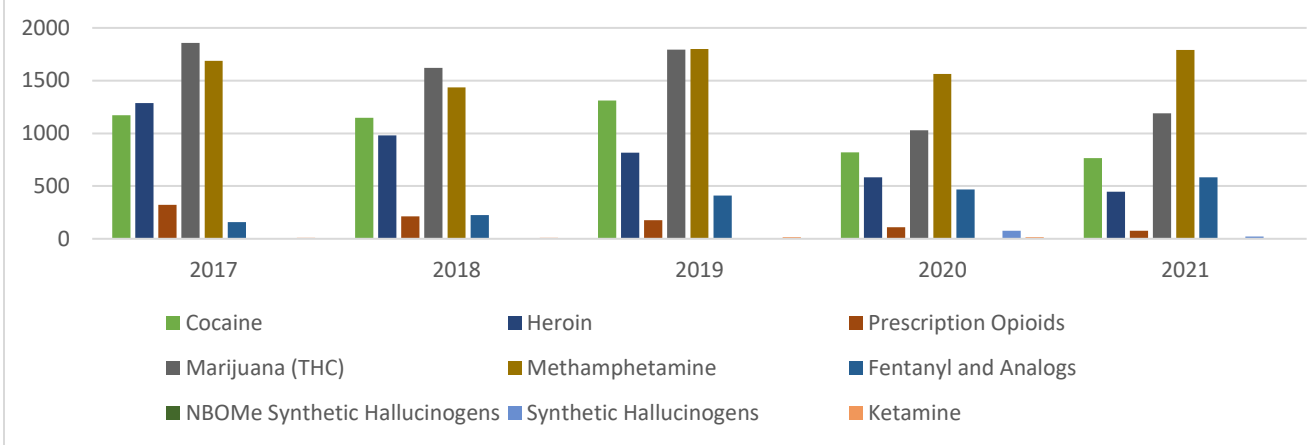
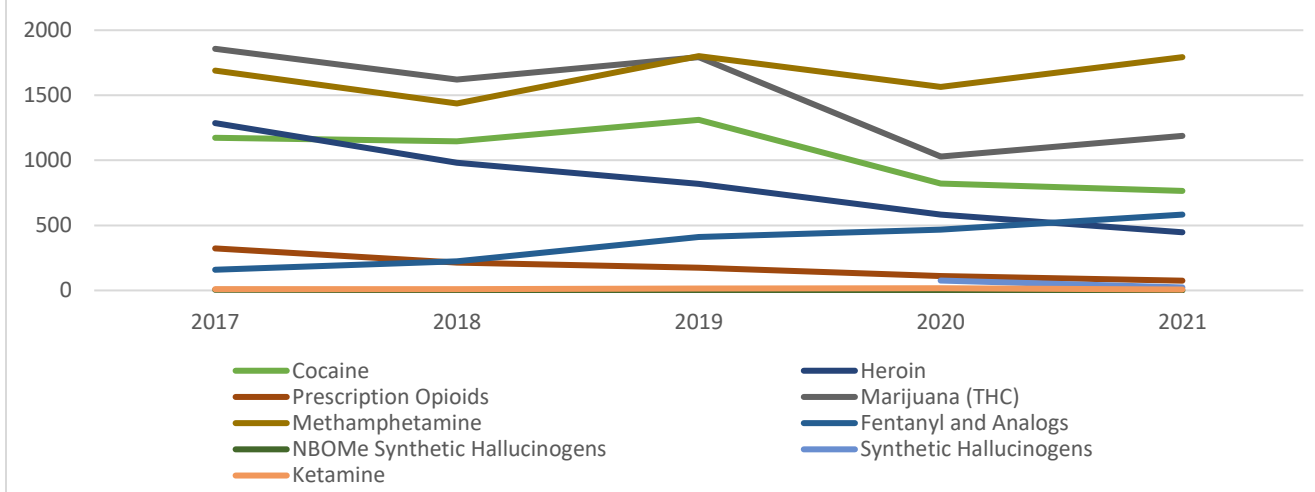


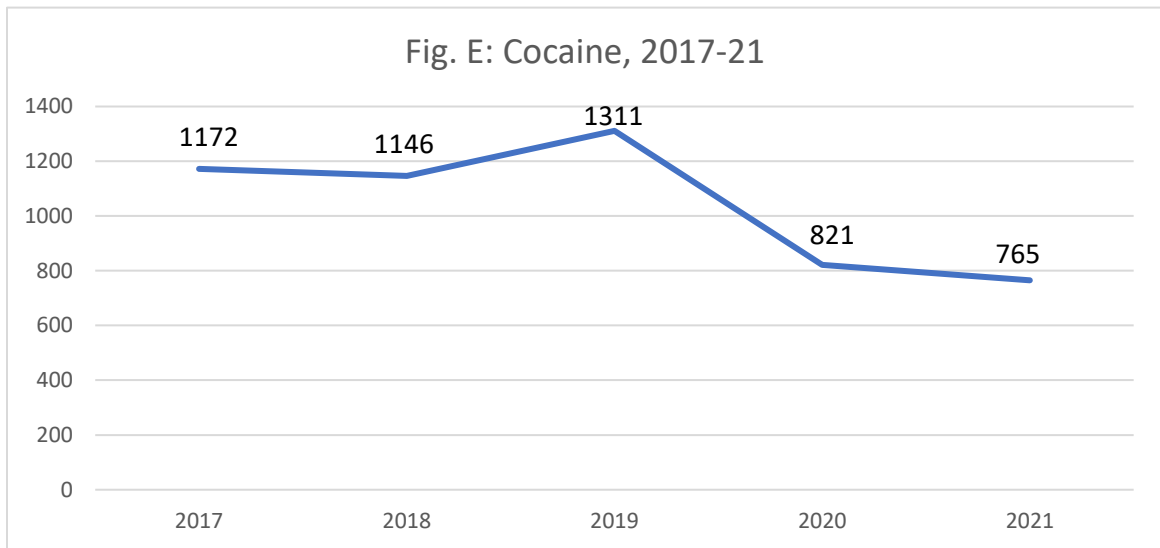
Fig. D: WSCL Case Annual Comparison, 2017-21 by Drug



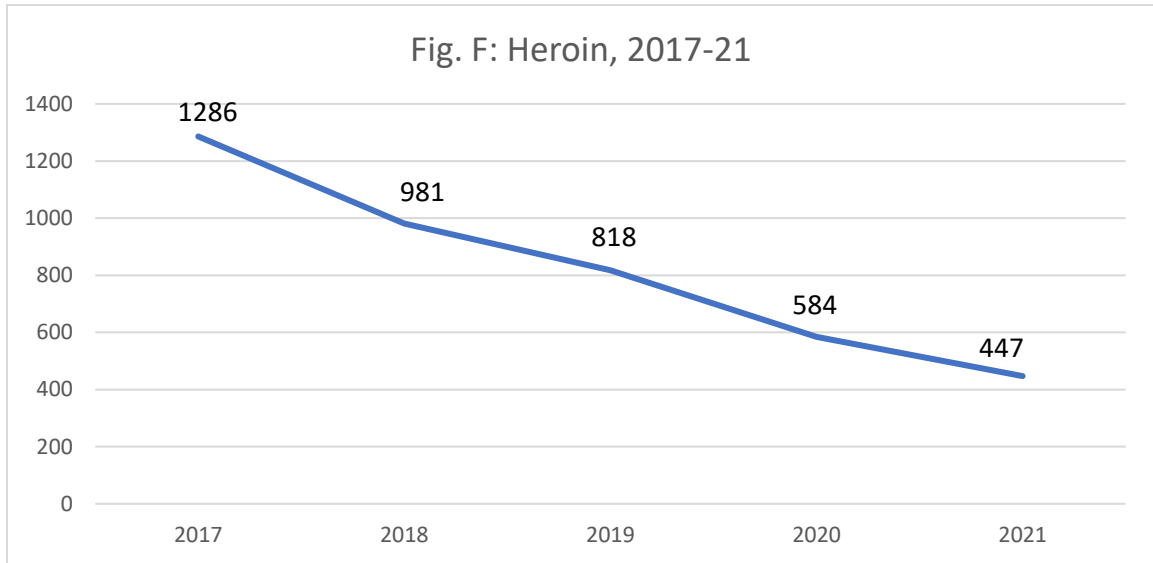


Specific drug type descriptions and data comparison:

**Cocaine** is a powerfully addictive stimulant drug made from coca plant leaves. Short-term effects include feelings of euphoria, increased energy, irritability, hypersensitivity, and paranoia.<sup>xxix</sup> Cocaine can be powder or base form, both of which are included in this category. In 2021, the number of cocaine cases dropped by 56 cases, or -6.8%, compared to 2020. 2021's data represents a second consecutive decrease in reported cocaine cases. The total number in 2021 represented a 5% decrease from the four-year annual mean during that period.<sup>xxx</sup>

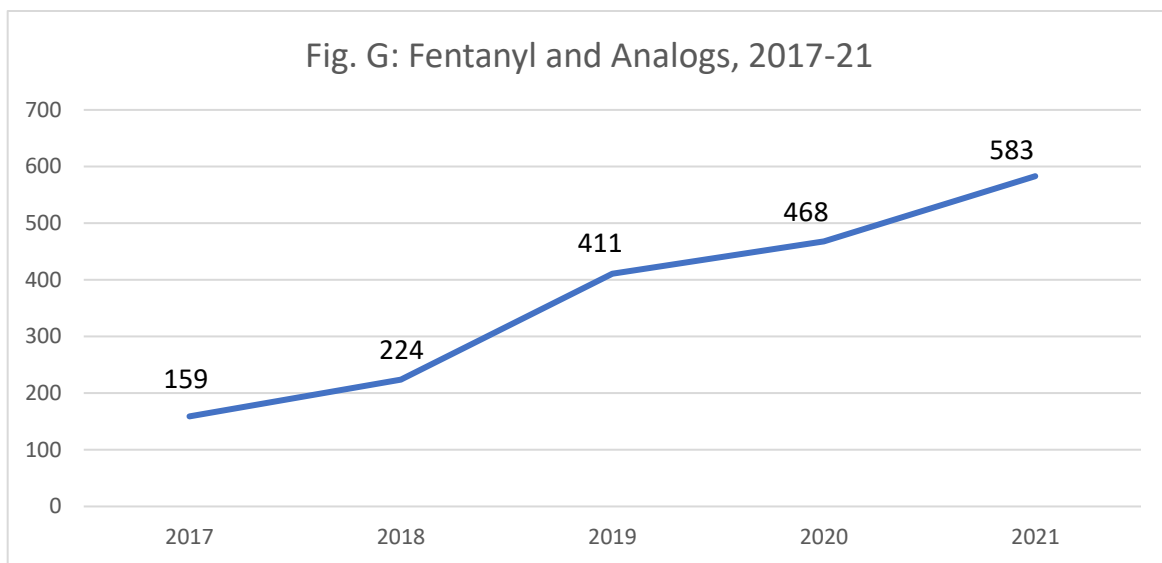


**Heroin** is a highly addictive opioid drug derived from morphine, a naturally occurring substance in various poppy plants. Heroin usually appears as a white or brown powder, or as a sticky, black substance. Heroin rapidly enters the brain and can cause a surge of euphoria.<sup>xxxi</sup> Heroin use is a continued concern in Wisconsin. In 2021, heroin cases reached an all-time study low, with 447 cases. Compared to the previous year, the 447 cases were 137 cases less, or -23.5%. When analyzed in comparison to the annual mean average since 2017, heroin's total numbers in 2021 was down 14.9%.<sup>xxxii</sup>



**Fentanyl and Analogs: High Concern and Sharp Increase.** Fentanyl is a highly potent synthetic opioid analgesic, 50-100 times more potent than morphine or heroin. According to the National Institute of Health, synthetic opioids, including fentanyl, are “the most common drugs involved in drug overdose deaths in the United States.”<sup>xxxiii</sup> Pharmaceutical fentanyl can be diverted for misuse but increasingly cases of fentanyl-related morbidity and mortality have been linked to illicitly manufactured fentanyl and fentanyl analogs, collectively referred to as non-pharmaceutical fentanyl. Often sold via illicit drug markets for its heroin-like effect, fentanyl is often mixed with heroin and/or cocaine to increase its euphoric effects. In Wisconsin, fentanyl, and fentanyl analogs—compounds structurally from fentanyl with small differences in chemical formula—similarly present a significant concern with increased appearances over the last several years.

- **Fentanyl and Fentanyl Analog cases continued to rise.** The 583 cases in 2021 represented 115 more cases than the year before, an increase of 24.6%. Compared to 2017, fentanyl cases in 2021 were more **than three and a half times higher**.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

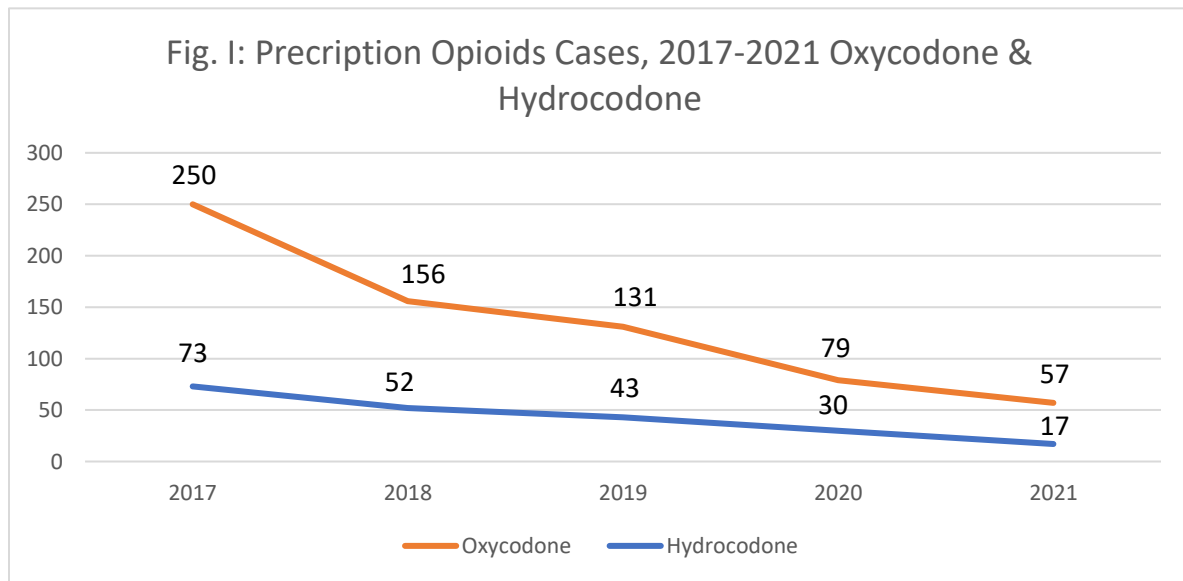
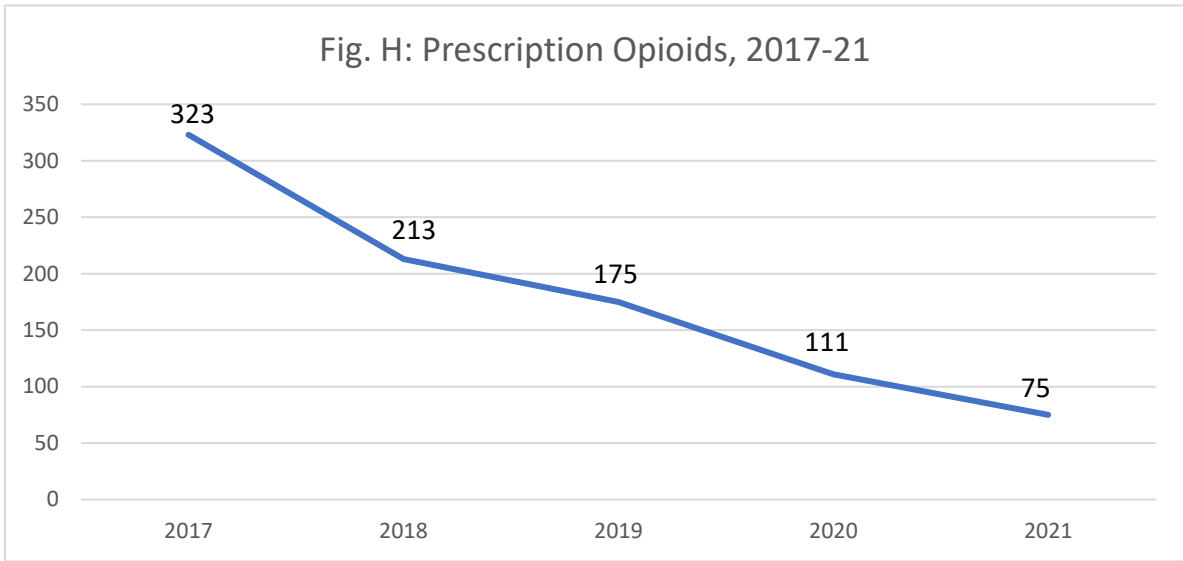


**Prescription Drug Misuse.** Prescription medications may be misused by taking them other than prescribed or by someone not prescribed. Nationwide, prescription drug misuse has increased over the last 15 years with consequences on public health and infrastructure. Nationally, the most misused classes of prescription drugs are opioids, central nervous system depressants, and stimulants.<sup>xxxv</sup>

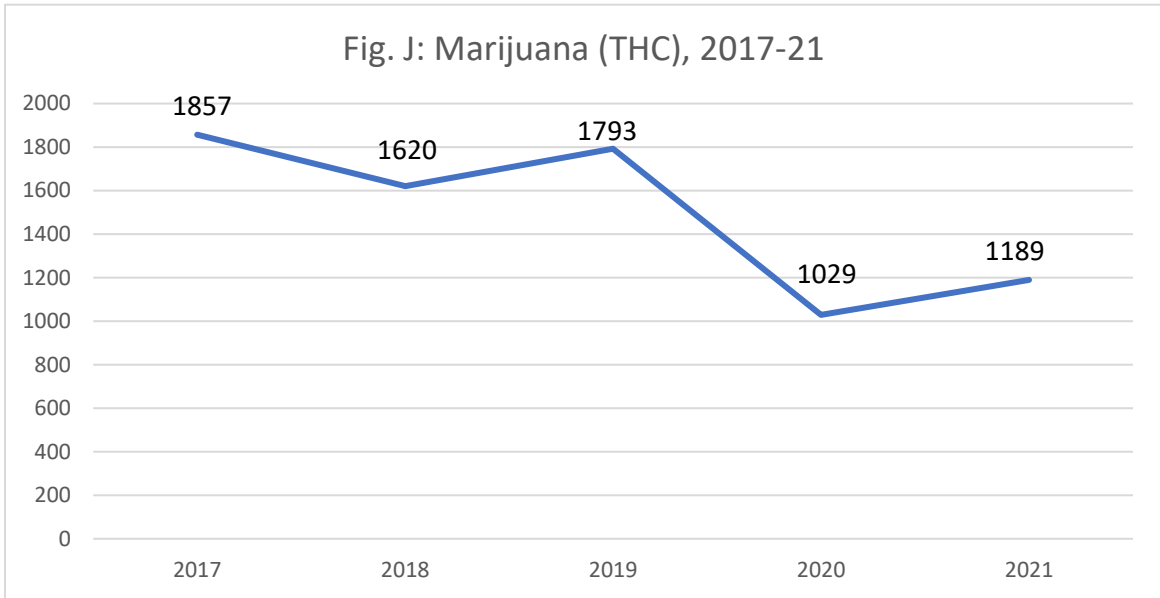
- **Opioids** pose a concern for prescription misuse in Wisconsin, with three main variants identified most frequently in WSCL cases. **Hydrocodone** is a frequently prescribed opioid associated with more drug abuse and diversion than any other opioid in America. Used to treat pain, it has analgesic potency like morphine, with numerous brand and generic variants. **Hydromorphone** is a pain reliever more potent than morphine with greater sedation, but shorter duration.<sup>xxxvi</sup> It may be ingested or injected, often as a substitute for heroin.<sup>xxxvii</sup> **Oxycodone** is a semi-synthetic opioid derived from the poppy plant.<sup>xxxviii</sup> Oxycodone, historically, has been a popular drug of abuse among the narcotic abusing population.<sup>xxxix</sup>

In 2021, WSCL cases continued to drop for combined prescription opioids of hydrocodone and oxycodone. This declining trend has been occurring since 2015. Both categories reached their lowest amounts in the report's time period. The combined total of 75 cases in 2021 was 36 less than 2020: hydrocodone reduced to 17 cases (-13, or -43.3%); Oxycodone reduced to 57 cases (-22, or -27.8%).<sup>xl</sup>

The Wisconsin Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, or ePDMP, is an online database that houses data about the controlled substances prescriptions dispensed in Wisconsin. In 2021, the ePDMP recorded a total of 2,328 events reported to them by law enforcement agencies.<sup>xi</sup> These events are reported when a law enforcement officer receives notice of a stolen prescribed controlled substance prescription, reasonably suspects that a violation of the Controlled Substances Act involving prescription drugs has occurred, or when an officer believes someone has experienced an opioid-related overdose. 47% of the reports submitted to ePDMP in 2021 were for non-fatal opioid-related overdose events.

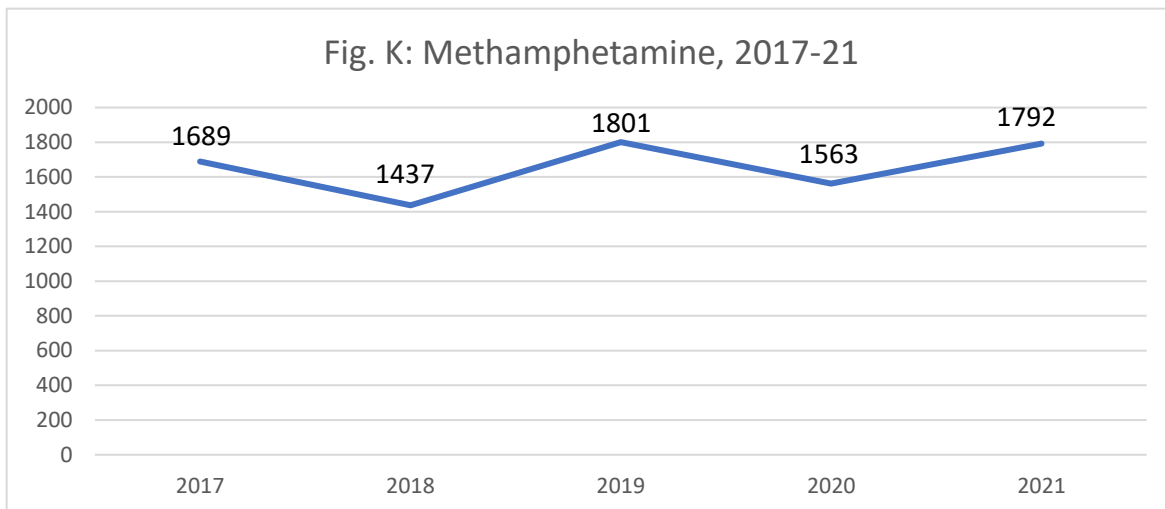


**Marijuana:** Marijuana refers to the dried leaves, flowers, stems, and seeds from the hemp plant *Cannabis sativa*, which contains the psychoactive (mind-altering) chemical delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). This plant material can also be concentrated in a resin called hashish or a sticky black liquid called *hash oil* or *Butane Honey Oil (BHO)*.<sup>xliii</sup> In 2021, marijuana increased compared with the previous year, up to 1,189 cases, or increased by 15.5%. 2021's total number of marijuana cases is a 10.2% increase from the 2017-2020 four-year mean. For the third year in a row, marijuana represented the second largest drug category, behind methamphetamine.<sup>xliii</sup>



**Methamphetamine** is an extremely powerful, highly addictive stimulant that affects the central nervous system. Also called meth, crystal, chalk, crank, ice, speed, and other terms, methamphetamine takes the form of a white, odorless, bitter-tasting powder or pill, with crystal meth resembling glass fragments or blue-white rocks. The drug's quick effect may cause people to take repeated doses, for multiple days, with binging and crashing.<sup>xliv</sup>

- **Methamphetamine represented the highest number of cases compared to other drugs in 2021.** In 2021, WSCL reported 1,792 meth cases. This data is a 14.7% increase compared to 2020. 2021's total number of meth cases is a 14.1% increase from the annual average mean from 2017-2020.<sup>xlv</sup>



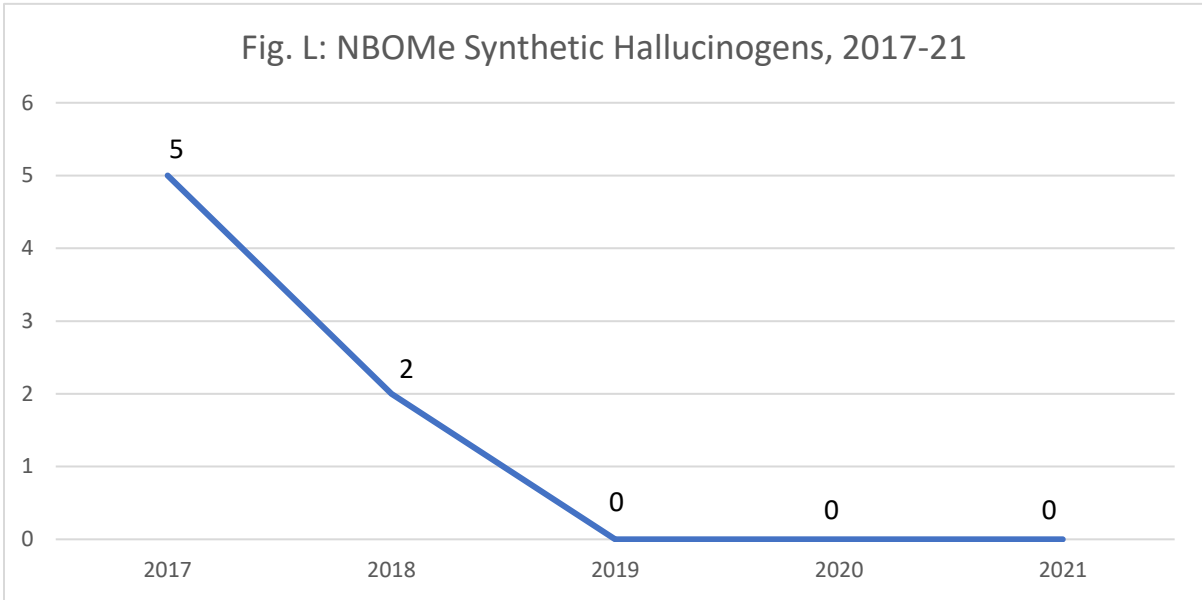
**Isotonitazene** and **Flualprazolam** have now been charged as a controlled substance analog under Wisconsin statutes. Synthetic opioids, which are chemically manufactured drugs linked to many deaths in the United States, may be powder or tablets and mixed with traditional opioids. These drugs may present a potential hazard to communities, to include challenges for detection and assessing potency, increasing risks for drug users, and responding officials.<sup>xlvi</sup>

**Isotonitazene** is a potent synthetic opioid like etonitazene, which is nationally controlled.<sup>xlvii</sup> In its second year as an official controlled substance in the state of Wisconsin, isotonitazene appeared in 6 cases, which is 12 less cases than what was reported in 2020.<sup>xlviii</sup>

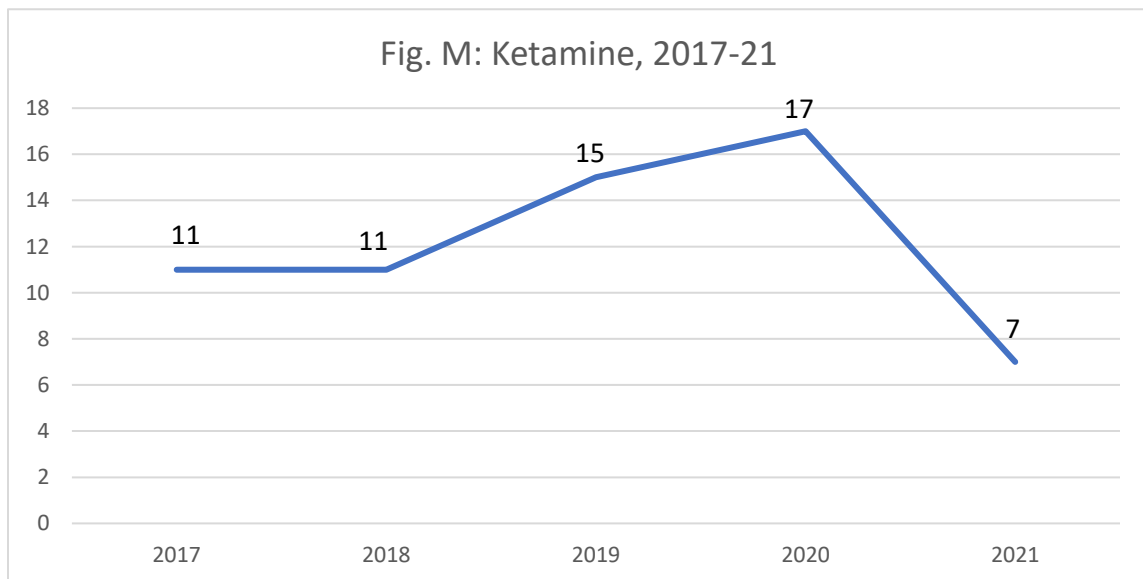
**Flualprazolam** is a synthetic benzodiazepine resembling alprazolam with added elements. Flualprazolam may be prepared as a powder or tablet and can be mixed with traditional benzodiazepines and opioids. Highly potent at low doses, Flualprazolam produces strong sedation and amnesia. It can cause loss of coordination, drowsiness, dizziness, blurred vision, slurred speech, and death.<sup>xlix</sup> In 2021, flualprazolam appeared in 35 cases, down from 58 cases in 2020.<sup>l</sup>

**“N-bomb” Remains at Zero for the Second Year.** “N-bomb,” refers to closely related illegal synthetic hallucinogens 25I-NBOMe, 25C-NBOMe, 25B-NBOMe. Marketed as substitutes for LSD or mescaline, synthetic hallucinogens generally are powders, liquids, soaked into blotter paper, or laced on something edible. More powerful than LSD, they act on serotonin receptors like other hallucinogens.<sup>li</sup> WSCL encountered NBOMe in 2012 and

numbers peaked in 2015 but reduced to zero in 2019 and has stayed at zero cases since.<sup>lii</sup>



**Ketamine: Continued Concern Despite Low Cases:** Also called “K,” and “Special K,” Ketamine is a general, short-acting anesthetic with hallucinogenic effects. It causes people to feel disconnected and at a loss of control, to include sedation, immobility, and amnesia – likely contributing to its use to facilitate sexual assault. Ketamine liquid can be injected, applied to a material and smoked, or consumed in drinks, often in powder that may resemble cocaine.<sup>liii</sup> 2021’s total number in Ketamine cases is a 74.1% decrease from the averaged mean between the years of 2017-2020.<sup>liv</sup>



### III. Organizations for Narcotics Enforcement in Wisconsin

Organizations across local, state, and federal levels combine to enforce the laws regulating controlled substances throughout Wisconsin. This collective arrangement combines different types of functional specialties as well as geographic responsibilities to provide the diverse capabilities essential for narcotics enforcement.

Numerous drug task forces operate across the state. Many receive state or federal grant funds to enforce drug-related law. State grants include the COPS Anti-Heroin Task Force (AHTF)<sup>lv</sup> and the COPS Anti-Methamphetamine Program (CAMP).<sup>lvi</sup> These grants have been awarded to WI DOJ-DCI in recent years. Federal grants most notably include the federal Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG).<sup>lvii</sup> Administered by the Division of Law Enforcement Services, a strategic plan shapes JAG funding priorities and resources.<sup>lviii</sup> Spending plans and funding decisions prioritize:

Initiatives to reduce drug crime by allocating resources to multijurisdictional drug enforcement task forces that actively enforce illegal drug manufacturing and distributing laws that support crime prevention programs; that initiate and implement information sharing, and that allow for effective communication and collaboration among outside law enforcement jurisdictions.<sup>lix</sup>

Nineteen multi-jurisdictional drug task forces in Wisconsin receive federal funding via the Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant.<sup>lx</sup> These multijurisdictional efforts cover 58 of the state's 72 counties. In addition, funds support an intertribal task force, which has representation from 9 of the state's tribal nations.<sup>lxi</sup>

#### Drug Task Forces in Wisconsin 2021

**Brown County Drug Task Force** enforces drug violations in the Brown County area. Participating agencies include the Brown County Sheriff's Office, Green Bay Police Department, De Pere Police Department, and Ashwaubenon Public Safety.<sup>lxii</sup>

**Central Area Drug Enforcement Group** (Marathon) enforces drug violations in Marathon County and includes all county police agencies.<sup>lxiii</sup>

**Central Wisconsin Narcotics Task Force** enforces narcotics violations in Marathon and Lincoln counties. The task force is based out of the Marathon County Sheriff's office, and includes the Everest Metro Police Department, Lincoln County Sheriff's Office, Wisconsin Department of Justice's Division of Criminal Investigation, Wisconsin State Patrol, the Wisconsin National Guard, and the Wausau Police Department as participating agencies. The team primarily focuses on larger drug conspiracy cases and seeks federal prosecution.<sup>lxiv</sup>



**Central Wisconsin Drug Task Force** enforces drug violations in Adams, Green Lake, Juneau, Marquette, Portage, Waupaca, Waushara, and Wood counties.<sup>lxv</sup>

**Dane County Narcotics and Drug Task Force** enforces drug violations in Dane County. Participating agencies include Madison Police Department, Dane County Sheriff's Office, and the UW- Madison Police Department.<sup>lxvi</sup>

**Kenosha Drug Operations Group** enforces drug violations in Kenosha County. This drug task force includes personnel from the Kenosha County Sheriff's Office and the Twin Lakes Police Department. KDOG is an active HIDTA initiative and receive funds from the HIDTA program.<sup>lxvii</sup>

**Kenosha Police Department Special Investigations Unit** enforces drug violations in Kenosha County. This drug task force includes personnel from the Kenosha Police Department, the Pleasant Prairie Police Department and the A.T.F. This drug task force is a HIDTA initiative under the name of, 'KenPrarie DGTF'.<sup>lxviii</sup>

**Lake Winnebago Area Metropolitan Enforcement Group (LWAM)** is a collection of investigators from local law enforcement Calumet, Fond du Lac, Outagamie, and Winnebago counties. One DCI special agent serves as project director and two others as unit coordinators, acting with local law enforcement who conduct investigations for reducing narcotics trafficking in the Fox Valley. LWAM is controlled by a board of directors from participating agencies and has 15 narcotics investigators employed by the State of Wisconsin and local police and sheriff departments.<sup>lxix</sup>

**Manitowoc County Metro Drug Unit** enforces drug violations in the Manitowoc County area.<sup>lxx</sup>

**Milwaukee Metropolitan Drug Enforcement Group** enforces drug violations in the Milwaukee County area.<sup>lxxi</sup>

**North Central Drug Enforcement Group** enforces drug violations in Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Oneida, Price, Taylor, and Vilas counties.<sup>lxxii</sup>

**Northeast Tri-County Drug Enforcement Group** enforces drug violations in Forest, Florence, Marinette, Oconto, Forest and Shawano counties.<sup>lxxiii</sup>

**Native American Drug and Gang Initiative (NADGI) Tribal Task Force** is a collaboration between the Wisconsin Tribal Law Enforcement agencies and the Wisconsin Department of Justice's Division of Criminal Investigation to combat drug and gang activity on tribal reservations.<sup>lxxiv</sup>

**Northwest Area Crime Unit** enforces drug violations in Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Sawyer, and Washburn counties.<sup>lxxv</sup>

**Prairie du Chien Police Department Drug Enforcement Unit** enforces drug violations in the city of Prairie du Chien.<sup>lxxvi</sup>

**Richland-Iowa-Grant Drug Task Force** enforces drug violations in Iowa, Grant, and Richland counties.<sup>lxxvii</sup>

**Rock County Drug Task Force** enforces drug violations in the Rock County area.<sup>lxxviii</sup>

**South East Area Drug Operations Group (SEADOG)** enforces drug violations in Dodge, Jefferson, Kenosha, Racine, and Walworth counties.<sup>lxxix</sup>

**Sheboygan County Multi-Jurisdictional Enforcement Group (MEG Unit)** enforces drug violations in the Sheboygan County area.<sup>lxxx</sup>

**Saint Croix Valley Drug Task Force** enforces drug violations in Pierce, Polk, and Saint Croix counties.<sup>lxxxi</sup>

**State-Line Area Narcotics Team (SLANT)** enforces drug violations across northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. Three Wisconsin agencies are members of SLANT. These three agencies include the Lafayette County Sheriff's Office, the Green County Sheriff's Office, and the Monroe Police Department. Each of these agencies have one officer assigned to the Illinois State Police office in Freeport, Illinois.<sup>lxxxii</sup>

**Washington County Multi-Jurisdictional Drug Unit** enforces drug violations in Washington County.<sup>lxxxiii</sup>

**Waukesha County Metropolitan Drug Enforcement Group** enforces drug violations in Waukesha County.<sup>lxxxiv</sup>

**West Central Drug Task Force** enforces drug violations in Buffalo, Clark, Chippewa, Dunn, Eau Claire, and Pepin counties.<sup>lxxxv</sup>

**West Central Metropolitan Enforcement Group** enforces drug violations in Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Trempealeau, and Vernon counties.<sup>lxxxvi</sup>

**Single County Law Enforcement Drug Task Forces:**

Barron County; Columbia County; Crawford County; Door County; Jefferson County; Kewaunee County; Lafayette County; Ozaukee County; Rusk County; Sauk County; Walworth County.

**Additional drug task forces in Wisconsin include, but are not limited to:**

**South Central Wisconsin Gang Task Force** is a task force formed with the FBI Safe Street Violent Crimes Initiative, a national collaborative effort with local law enforcement. The South Central Wisconsin Gang Task Force addresses gang and drug-related violence around Dane County, and members of the Madison Police Department, the Dane County Sheriff's

Office, and the FBI may assist this task force. This task force was established in 2019 and its primary focus remains to investigate drug-related crime and build intelligence relating to violent gangs.<sup>lxxxvii</sup>

**Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Gang Task Force** and the **Milwaukee Area Safe Streets Task Force (MASSTF)** are task forces formed with the FBI Safe Streets Violent Crimes Initiative, a national collaborative effort with local law enforcement.<sup>lxxxviii</sup>

## State Drug Enforcement Trends

Multiple state agencies combat drug crimes in Wisconsin to include, but not limited to, the Wisconsin Department of Justice, the Wisconsin State Patrol, and the Wisconsin National Guard.

**Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ)** represents the interests of the state of Wisconsin in court and provides advice to state law enforcement officers and agencies regarding their legal rights and responsibilities. It also possesses several law enforcement duties.<sup>lxxxix</sup> In 2021, efforts included:

**Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI).** State statutes assign certain active law enforcement duties to DOJ, typically involving crimes statewide in nature, importance, or influence. These responsibilities are addressed by the Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI), charged with a purely criminal investigative mission and function. DCI employs special agents which are sworn law enforcement officers with statewide jurisdiction charged to enforce state laws. DCI also has civilian analysts for intelligence and criminal case support, as well as forensic analysts. DCI has regional field offices in Madison, Milwaukee, Appleton, Eau Claire, and Wausau. Additionally, supervisors and staff work at the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) in Milwaukee, and the Lake Winnebago Area Metropolitan Enforcement Group (LWAM) around Fox Valley. Special agents, analysts, and staff work as a team to investigate various types of crime, to include large-scale, multi-jurisdictional drug trafficking.<sup>xc</sup> DCI also oversees drug programs and specialized units:

**Cannabis Enforcement and Suppression Effort (CEASE)** is a law enforcement program managed by DCI and funded by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).<sup>xcii</sup> It aims to reduce cultivated and non-cultivated marijuana throughout Wisconsin, by supporting federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to curb marijuana cultivation, distribution, and use.<sup>xciii</sup> CEASE's primary goal is to augment local law enforcement, with program management compiling statewide statistics, intelligence data, and distributing funds, equipment, and information. The participants include sheriff departments, drug task forces, Wisconsin State Patrol, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Forest Service, the Civil Air Patrol, and the Wisconsin National Guard.

**Clandestine Laboratory Enforcement and Response (CLEAR) Team** responds to callouts for clandestine, illegal labs, often those associated with methamphetamine, DMT, opioid conversion, or explosives. Personnel are certified, trained, and equipped for this specialized role, augmented by federal, municipal, and county law enforcement with similarly trained personnel. The CLEAR Team has an investigative element capable of a Level A response, which is the highest threat level response pertaining to chemical exposures. The CLEAR Team also maintains a tactical response element for serving warrants on clandestine lab locations.<sup>xciii</sup>

**Department of Justice's Methamphetamine Initiative** has placed an emphasis on traditional illicit drug trafficking routes for methamphetamine. Much methamphetamine available in Wisconsin has come from Mexico, transported to Wisconsin from California and other southwest border states.<sup>xciv</sup>

**Wisconsin Alliance for Drug Endangered Children (WI DEC)** focuses on protecting children that are exposed to dangerous drug environments, often from a parent or caregiver.<sup>xcv</sup> WI DEC uses a multi-disciplinary approach through law enforcement, human services, prosecutors, the medical community, health departments, probation and parole, schools, treatment centers, non-profit groups, and concerned community members.<sup>xcvi</sup>

**Technical Services Unit (TSU)** provides specialized investigative, tactical, and surveillance support to federal, state, local, tribal, and campus law enforcement partners across the state on a wide range of criminal cases.<sup>xcvii</sup> Equipment used by TSU often is too expensive for many organizations independently to own and maintain, and therefore, is offered to law enforcement free of charge.

**Wisconsin Statewide Intelligence Center (WSIC)** is Wisconsin's designated primary intelligence fusion center and serves as a focal point for information sharing in the state. As a member of the national network of fusion centers, WSIC works closely with federal, state, local, tribal, and campus law enforcement partners along with fire service, emergency management, public health, military, and private sector security agencies, to foster information-sharing related to topics that include drug trends and trafficking. WSIC provides a variety of services, including but not limited to criminal case support, specialized intelligence-gathering, and analytical products.<sup>xcviii</sup> WSIC may access national criminal intelligence information and provide finished tactical, operational, and strategic intelligence products, on a variety of topics that include drugs.

**ACISS Case Management System.** Acquired in 2004 and administered by DCI, ACISS is an automated, central, web-based records management system (RMS) and data sharing system. ACISS allows drug task forces to share certain key data with other participating agencies in the Wisconsin Department of Justice, and the Wisconsin High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA). ACISS provides tools and a shared system for documenting investigative activities for multi-jurisdictional task forces for major cases, gang, and drug investigations, and a standard means for task forces to gather and maintain statistics on activities. Wisconsin was the first state to implement a statewide shared case management system involving drug task forces with federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement partners.

**Division of Forensic Science (DFS)** with Wisconsin State Crime Laboratories (WSCL), is entrusted by state statute to provide technical assistance to the criminal justice system in the investigation of criminal matters.<sup>xcix</sup> It involves the recognition, recovery, packaging, marking, sealing, and analysis of physical evidence; preparation of technical reports of the analyses; and court testimony. Laboratory staff also train law enforcement officers in advanced evidence handling procedures and the processing of some crime scenes.

**Controlled Substance Unit** analyzes evidence for the presence or absence of controlled substances.<sup>c</sup>

**Toxicology Unit** identifies and determines the amounts of drugs, alcohols, and poisons in biological samples such as blood, urine, or tissue. The information is used by law enforcement and the courts to help determine if laws have been broken and/or if criminal charges are warranted.<sup>ci</sup>

**Trace Evidence Unit** examines a wide variety of evidence, commonly small or microscopic in nature, for the purpose of identification and comparison.<sup>cii</sup>

**WSCL Drug Cases** This dashboard provides a distinct count of Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory (WSCL) cases in which the selected drug type was listed as one of the substances identified and the date in which the case was closed (when the case had a report issued) falls within the year that was selected.<sup>ciii</sup>

**Wisconsin State Patrol (WSP)**, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, continues to emphasize public safety through, but not limited to, traffic law enforcement, commercial motor vehicle inspections, educational outreach, criminal interdiction, mutual aid/assistance, civil disturbance response, aerial support, technical crash reconstruction, and dignitary protection.<sup>civ</sup> The WSP also is charged with combatting crime and terrorism.<sup>cv</sup> WSP is tasked to locate, identify, and apprehend people using the interstate corridors and state highways for criminal acts, violations which often include illegal drugs and narcotics.

**Criminal interdiction component** of the WSP includes an “all threats, and all hazards, all crimes” approach to have officers trained to identify suspicious behavior and other indications of illegal activity, especially during traffic stops for routine offenses.<sup>cv</sup>

**K-9 teams** assist WSP troopers and inspectors to detect drugs that are transported, sold, and used in Wisconsin. K-9 teams throughout the state may be requested by local, county, and state partners to assist with narcotics investigations.<sup>cvii</sup> The teams also include explosive-detection K-9’s, often used for planned events such as VIP visits, large scale sporting events, and emergency responses to bomb threats.<sup>cviii</sup>

**Wisconsin National Guard Counterdrug Program (CDP).** Since 1992 the CDP has worked with law enforcement agencies, schools, and community organizations to reduce the supply and demand for illegal drugs.<sup>cix</sup> Through partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies, CDP provides specialized personnel and resources at no cost, and may support law enforcement agencies in counter-narcoterrorism activities. CDP priorities are to disrupt the flow of illegal drugs and illicit finances within Wisconsin; to deter drug trafficking organizations’ ability to transport drugs and illicit finances utilizing interstate transportation; to maximize impact and support to Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) cases focusing on heroin in the state; and to focus analyst support on financial investigations within federal agencies and state fusion centers.<sup>cx</sup> Examples include:

**Counterdrug Case Support Analysts** assist law enforcement agencies in Wisconsin by helping to develop narcotics investigations into complete and prosecutable cases. In 2021, counterdrug analysts supported drug-related cases across 18 agencies.<sup>cx</sup>

**Aviation Support** in RC-26B and UH-72A surveillance aircrafts and crews assist law enforcement investigations against criminal organizations and persons trafficking illicit drugs. In 2021, RC-26B crews assisted counterdrug missions and exercises with over 242.2 flying hours in support of at least 25 law enforcement agencies.<sup>cxii</sup>

## **Federal Drug Programs and Law Enforcement in Wisconsin**

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) is the parent agency of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and others.<sup>cxiii</sup>

**Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)** aims to protect communities from violent criminals, criminal organizations, the illegal use and trafficking of firearms, the illegal use and storage of explosives, acts of

arson and bombings, acts of terrorism, and the illegal diversion of alcohol and tobacco products.<sup>cxiv</sup> Field offices are in Milwaukee and Madison.<sup>cxv</sup>

**Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)** enforces controlled substances laws and regulations of the United States. It brings to the criminal and civil justice systems those involved in the growing, manufacture, or distribution of controlled substances appearing in or destined for illicit traffic in the U.S. The DEA recommends and supports non-enforcement programs aimed at reducing the availability of illicit controlled substances on the domestic and international markets.<sup>cxvi</sup> In Wisconsin, DEA is based out of the Chicago Division, with a District Office in Milwaukee and resident offices in Madison and Green Bay.<sup>cxvii</sup>

DEA Prescription Drug Take Back Day and the **National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day** aim to provide safe, convenient, responsible means for disposing prescription drugs, while also educating the public about the potential for abuse of medications.<sup>cxviii</sup> In 2021, 118,009 pounds of drugs were collected and disposed of. After being limited to one collection day in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the program returned to its standard two drug take-back days.

**DEA Tactical Diversion Squads (TDS)** combine DEA resources with those of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies in an innovative effort to investigate, disrupt and dismantle those suspected of violating the Controlled Substances Act or other appropriate federal, state, or local statutes pertaining to the diversion of licit pharmaceutical controlled substances or listed chemicals. The Wisconsin TDS office is in Milwaukee.<sup>cxix</sup> TDS includes DEA Special Agents, DEA Diversion Investigators, and task force officers from the Greenfield Police Department, Milwaukee Police Department, Racine Police Department, and DCI.<sup>cxx</sup>

**DEA Authorized Central Storage (ACS) Program** assists state and local law enforcement with cleanups of clandestine methamphetamine drug laboratories. The program focuses on small cleanups under the 220-pound hazardous waste threshold for Very Small Quantity Generator (VSQG) status as defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). DEA administers and oversees the implementation and management of the ACS Program in states that have joined the program. All participating states are provided with the initial startup supplies and equipment, and continuing support and training from DEA. Wisconsin DCI possesses 7 container sites.

**Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** works to combat criminal and security threats around the globe to include the enforcement of organized crime and drug trafficking. FBI jurisdiction covers more than 200 categories of federal law,

generally falling under nine priorities including national security and criminal acts. For this report, the criminal priority of interest is to combat transnational organized crime, gangs, and related drug state crimes.<sup>cxxi</sup> The FBI regional office in Milwaukee works with satellite offices in Eau Claire, Green Bay, La Crosse, Madison, and Wausau.<sup>cxxii</sup> The FBI has three task forces which target drugs in WI: The Southwestern Regional Gang Task Force, Southcentral Regional Gang Task Force, and the Central Wisconsin Narcotics Task Force.

**Department of Homeland Security (DHS)** is the parent agency for the U.S. Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement. DHS is tasked with securing the nation from a variety of threats, including threats related to drug trafficking.<sup>cxxiii</sup>

**Customs and Border Protection (CBP)** is charged with keeping terrorists and their weapons out of the U.S. while facilitating lawful international travel and trade.<sup>cxxiv</sup> In Wisconsin, CBP works out of the Chicago Field Operation Office with a satellite office in Milwaukee and is responsible for ports of entry that include Appleton, Green Bay, Milwaukee, and Racine.<sup>cxxv</sup>

**Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)** conducts criminal and civil enforcement of federal laws governing border control, customs, trade, and immigration.<sup>cxxvi</sup> ICE enforces a wide range of criminal statutes including Title 18 and Title 19 of the U.S. Code, addressing smuggling and customs violations. ICE also enforces Title 21 about the importation, distribution, manufacture, and possession of illegal narcotics.<sup>cxxvii</sup> ICE Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) combat criminals illegally exploiting U.S. travel, trade, financial, and immigration systems, to include cross-border criminal activity related to narcotics and weapons smuggling/trafficking.<sup>cxxviii</sup> HSI for Wisconsin is based out of the Chicago Field Operation Office with a satellite office in Milwaukee.<sup>cxxix</sup>

## **ADDITIONAL DRUG RELATED EFFORTS**

The Federal Government awards competitive grants to help states in their efforts to reduce drug use and its harmful consequence.

**North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)** is one of 34 HIDTAs throughout the country.<sup>cxxx</sup> HIDTA's aid federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies in areas for countering drug trafficking. Designated in 1998 and administered by the DEA, Wisconsin's HIDTA aims to apply enhanced intelligence processes, operational coordination, and prosecution to reduce organized drug distribution, drug related violent crime, and money laundering, and the demand for illegal drugs across the state.<sup>cxxxi</sup> North Central HIDTA includes 30 law enforcement agencies and covers approximately half of the state's population.<sup>cxxxii</sup> North Central HIDTA covers



Brown, Eau Claire, Dane, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Racine, Rock, and Waukesha counties, as well as seven counties in Minnesota. It is headquartered in Milwaukee.<sup>cxxxiii</sup>

**The Safe and Sound Initiative**, of the Wisconsin HIDTA, which grew out of the weed and seed program of the 1980s, is an integral part of Milwaukee strategy to reduce drug related violent crime through targeted law enforcement, community building, and proactive engagement of youth and activities, which increase prosocial skills and behaviors, and teach drug, gang, gun, and crime resistance.<sup>cxxxiv</sup> Safe and Sound was founded with the theory that improvements in public safety require the combination of law enforcement, community organizing, and youth development.<sup>cxxxv</sup>

**Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services' Enhanced Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (ePDMP)** provides information about controlled substance prescriptions dispensed in the state.<sup>cxxxvi</sup> It contains data from pharmacies and practitioners, such as physicians and dentists. In 2021, healthcare users made over 9,086,588 patient queries in the Wisconsin ePDMP, 3.8% more than 2020.<sup>cxxxvii</sup>

#### IV. Conclusion

This report addressed requirements referenced in Part I from Wisconsin Statute §961.565, that the governor and attorney general shall submit a joint report to the legislature “describing the activities in this state during the previous year to enforce the laws regulating controlled substances.”<sup>cxxxviii</sup> As such, Part II outlined narcotics investigation trends throughout Wisconsin for calendar year 2021 by describing general drug trends according to arrest data and case analysis. Then, Part III identified various organizations dedicated to narcotics enforcement, and described the role of local, state, and federal law enforcement organizations in overall narcotics investigations throughout Wisconsin.

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