

(U) Wisconsin Heroin Assessment

Joint Intelligence Assessment



February 2014

**Wisconsin
Heroin
Working
Group**



(U) About the Wisconsin Heroin Assessment

(U) The Wisconsin Heroin Working Group (WHWG) prepared this joint intelligence assessment, which includes representatives from two law enforcement agencies, two intelligence fusion centers, and one drug enforcement program. The study relied on information and data from January 2003 to January 2014 with the goal to: evaluate both long-term and recent developments to heroin trafficking in the state of Wisconsin; examine the dynamics of heroin movement within the state of Wisconsin; and assess recent trends of heroin abuse as well as project likely developments in the state of Wisconsin.

(U) This intelligence product relied on information received from local law enforcement agencies who participated in four statewide heroin assessment roundtables in Milwaukee, Madison, Appleton and Eau Claire during April 2013; health and medical departments in Wisconsin; interviews conducted by WHWG intelligence analysts; Intelligence Community sources; WHWG member information; and open source material.

(U) Any assessment of heroin availability is based on analysis of several indicators to include heroin price and purity data; law enforcement survey data; treatment data; heroin seizure statistics; and smuggling, transportation, and distribution trends. Each of these data sets, while not conclusive by itself, offer insight into heroin availability and use in Wisconsin.

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Bottom Line: Heroin use in Wisconsin has steadily increased since 2008 and the trend is expected to continue. The use of heroin is likely driven by the increased abuse of addictive opiate-based prescription pills in conjunction with heroin serving as a lower price alternative. The abuse of heroin is further exacerbated by a lowered overdose risk due to the increased availability and use of Narcan®. An increase in abuse of opiate-based prescription pills in Wisconsin is expected to mirror the national trend, and further drive the increased use of heroin due to these pills serving as a gateway to heroin abuse. Law enforcement efforts alone are unlikely to mitigate heroin use in Wisconsin due to the myriad factors contributing to its spread, resulting in increased strain on state, local, and private resources.

(U) Wisconsin Heroin Working Group (WHWG) assesses with high confidence heroin is increasingly available in Wisconsin.

Increasing numbers of heroin overdoses, individuals receiving heroin treatment, law enforcement investigations involving heroin, and open source reporting since 2008 point to increased heroin availability in Wisconsin.

(U) WHWG assesses with high confidence Wisconsin heroin originates from Mexico or South America. Heroin is trafficked from the Southwest Border to Chicago, Illinois, primarily, and to a lesser extent Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Rockford, Illinois. Law enforcement agencies report street dealers from primary markets of Chicago and Rockford, Illinois, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin obtain heroin in those cities and distribute in secondary markets. Reporting shows the color and purity of heroin seized in Wisconsin is consistent with heroin manufactured in Mexico and South America, according to the DEA and Wisconsin High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)^a program.

^a (U) The High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program, created by Congress with the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988, provides assistance to Federal, state, local, and tribal law

(U) WHWG assesses with low confidence heroin is trafficked by multiple ethnicities and races and is primarily consumed by white males. Reporting indicates the predominant users of heroin statewide are white males between the ages of 21 and 35. African American and Hispanic gang members tend to dominate large-scale bulk heroin trafficking to urban areas and subsequently supply non-gang affiliated white traffickers who supply rural parts of the state.

(U) WHWG assesses with high confidence heroin trafficked in Wisconsin is more difficult to detect compared to other drugs because of the smaller quantities transported, stored, and sold. Investigations reveal the high potency of heroin, as compared to other illegal drugs, makes it easier for traffickers to conceal their contraband and to circumvent law enforcement detection during transportation and storage. Smaller quantities being trafficked allow heroin traffickers to utilize concealment methods considered unsuitable for other drugs.

(U) WHWG assesses with medium confidence the increase in property crime and theft in rural areas is likely associated with heroin use. Reporting shows heroin users are committing

enforcement agencies operating in the areas determined to be critical drug-trafficking regions of the United States.

property crimes and retail theft statewide in order to fund their addictions. In rural areas, an increase in property crime can be more conspicuous and is a leading indicator of a heroin use problem.

(U) WHWG assesses with medium confidence the legal or illegal use of prescription pills can lead to heroin use. Prescription pill abuse is a rising problem nationwide and many abused prescription pills are addictive opiate-based pills, chemically similar to heroin. It is common for prescription pill users to become abusers and then switch to heroin as a cheaper alternative. Many heroin users abuse heroin and prescription pills concurrently.

(U) WHWG assesses with low confidence the widespread use of Narcan® prevents heroin overdoses thus allowing for the continued use of heroin and increased overall heroin consumption in Wisconsin. There were over 9,000 reported instances of Narcan® deployment between 2011 and 2012 in Wisconsin; the likely result being the prevention of a variety of opiate-based overdoses to include heroin overdoses. Narcan® allows for the resuscitation of heroin users who overdose allowing them the possibility of continuing to use heroin, adding to the aggregate use of heroin statewide.

(U) WHWG assesses with high confidence the misuse of risk reduction/needle exchange programs (NEPs) lowers the logistical barriers to individual heroin use by supplying recipients a complete kit (a.k.a. rig) including needles, Narcan®, and other paraphernalia, needed to inject heroin. While the intent of risk reduction kits is to lower the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS or Hepatitis C, the kits also provide all the necessary tools to process heroin for intravenous use. There are currently four NEPs in 12 locations in Wisconsin. In 2012, the largest NEP alone distributed approximately two million rigs throughout Wisconsin.

Outlook

(U) WHWG assesses with medium confidence an increase in the abuse of opiate-based prescription pills in Wisconsin will mirror the national trend, and further drive an increase in the use of heroin in Wisconsin. The increasing abuse of prescription pills will likely lead more individuals to use heroin as a lower cost alternative for their addictions. The increasing use of heroin will lead to increased overdoses and an increased demand for law enforcement, emergency response, and treatment services.

(U) Annex

(U) What We Mean When We Say: An Explanation of Estimative Language

(U) We use phrases such as *we judge*, *we assess*, and *we estimate*—and probabilistic terms such as *probably* and *likely*—to convey analytical assessments and judgments. Such statements are not facts, proof, or knowledge. These assessments and judgments generally are based on collected information, which often is incomplete or fragmentary. Some assessments are built on previous judgments. In all cases, assessment and judgments are not intended to imply that we have “proof” that shows something to be a fact or that definitively links two items or issues.

(U) In addition to conveying judgments rather than certainly, our estimative language also often conveys 1) our assessed likelihood or probability of an event; and 2) the level of confidence we ascribe to the judgment.

(U) *Estimates of Likelihood.* Because analytical judgments are not certain, we use probabilistic language to reflect our estimates of the likelihood of developments or events. Terms such as *probably*, *likely*, *very likely*, or *almost certainly* indicate a greater than even chance. The terms *unlikely* and *remote* indicate a less than even chance that an event will occur; they do not imply that an event will not occur. Terms such as *might* or *may* reflect situations in which we are unable to assess the likelihood, generally because relevant information is unavailable, sketchy, or fragmented. Terms such as *we cannot dismiss*, *we cannot rule out*, or *we cannot discount* reflect an unlikely, improbably, or remote event whose consequences are such that it warrants mentioning. The chart provides a rough idea of the relationship of some of these terms to each other.

	Very		Even	Probably	Very	Almost
Remote	Unlikely	Unlikely	Chance	Likely	Likely	Certainly

(U) *Confidence in Assessments.* Our assessments and estimates are supported by information that varies in scope, quality and sourcing. Consequently, we ascribe *high*, *medium*, or *low* levels of confidence to our assessments, as follows:

- (U) **High Confidence** generally indicates that judgments are based on high-quality information from multiple sources or from a single highly reliable source, and/or that the nature of the issue makes it possible to render a solid judgment.
- (U) **Medium Confidence** generally means that the information is credibly sourced and plausible, but can be interpreted in various ways, or is not of sufficient quality or corroborated sufficiently to warrant a higher level of confidence.
- (U) **Low Confidence** generally means that the information’s credibility and/or plausibility is questionable, the information is too fragmented or poorly corroborated to make solid analytic inferences, or that author has significant concerns or problems with the sources.



(U) Acknowledgements

(U) The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation – Milwaukee Field Office (FBI), U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration – Milwaukee District Office (DEA), Wisconsin Statewide Information Center (WSIC), Southeast Wisconsin Threat Analysis Center (STAC), and Wisconsin High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) jointly produced the Wisconsin Heroin Assessment.

(U) The authors would like to thank the following agencies for their participation and contributions to this assessment.

Appleton Police Department	Oshkosh Police Department
Appleton Probation and Parole	Outagamie County District Attorney
Brown Deer Police Department	Price County Sheriff's Department
Calumet County District Attorney	Sauk County Sheriff's Department
Dane County Medical Examiner	Sauk Prairie Police Department
Dane County Sheriff's Department	Sheboygan Police Department
Douglas County Sheriff's Department	South Milwaukee Police Department
El Paso Intelligence Center	Sparta Police Department
Florence County Sheriff's Department	St. Croix Tribal Police Department
Fond du Lac Police Department	St. Francis Police Department
Franklin Police Department	Superior Police Department
Glendale Police Department	Trempealeau County Sheriff's Department
Greenfield Police Department	U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
Hales Corners Police Department	U.S. Customs and Border Patrol
Janesville Police Department	Waterford Police Department
Jefferson County Sheriff's Department	Watertown Police Department
La Crosse Police Department	Waukesha County District Attorney
Lake Winnebago Metropolitan Enforcement Group	Waushara County Sheriff's Department
Madison Police Department	Wauwatosa Fire Department
Middleton Police Department	Wisconsin Department of Corrections
Milwaukee County Sheriff's Department	Wisconsin Department of Justice
Milwaukee County Medical Examiner	Wisconsin Department of Justice - Division of Criminal Investigation
Milwaukee Department of Health	Wisconsin Poison Control Center
Milwaukee Police Department	Wisconsin State Crime Lab
Monroe County Sheriff's Department	

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