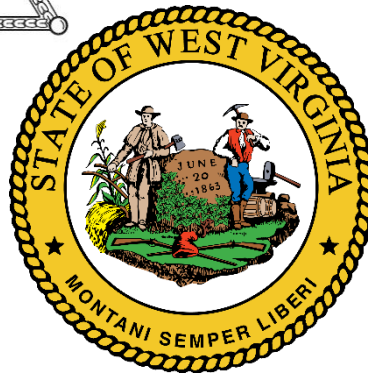


Technology Innovation for Public Safety Analytic Team: Tackling West Virginia's Drug Crisis through Information Sharing

Project Outline

Submission for 2020 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence
In Problem-Oriented Policing



Harrison County Sheriff's Office
420 Buckhannon Pike
Nutter Fort, West Virginia, 26301

National White Collar Crime Center
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Fairmont, West Virginia, 26554

May 30, 2020

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Project Summary

The Technology Innovation for Public Safety (TIPS) Analytic Team is a Bureau of Justice Assistance-funded project between the Harrison County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) and the National White Collar Crime Center (NW3C) in West Virginia. The team's initial tasking was to address the rampant nature of West Virginia's drug crisis and any analogous crimes by acting as a Justice Information Sharing Hub.ⁱ Moreover, the team worked to enhance regional justice information sharing by achieving four (4) key objectives.

1. Identify and promote technology solutions that target preventing, investigating, prosecuting, and responding to precipitous increases in specific crime(s).
2. Establish new and leverage existing partnerships to include other criminal justice entities, community organizations, and private/public providers to enhance the applicant's ability to respond to these specific crimes within their jurisdiction.
3. To develop policies and practices through technology to promote decision making with the intent to reduce the precipitous increase of the identified specific crime(s).
4. To implement the identified information-sharing solution(s) at all levels.

The team worked to collect, collate, and analyze the wide variety of crime, health, geographic, and other data related to the drug crisis, and use the findings from this analysis to create products and briefings that will be disseminated in a variety of forms to the various stakeholders. Through crime analysis and other types of data analysis, patterns of many types will become apparent that can assist law enforcement as well as the community organizations that are dealing with the problem. It is important to note the team has maintained 28 CFR Part 23 compliance in terms of information collection, dissemination, and retention.ⁱⁱ Moreover, none of the data collected for this program contains

Personal Identifiable Information (PII) and the program will leverage the work that has already been done in the Global Privacy Technology Framework, and other components of the Global Standards Package.

Since the project's commencement in February 2018, the team has completed and presented a number of training presentations and delivered at a variety of state and national conferences to show how the program can be replicated.

Project Description

The Analytic Team's efforts can be best described utilizing the following four-step SARA problem-solving model outline.

Scanning and Analysis

Many areas of the United States, both rural and urban, find that unemployment, poverty, and crime exist concurrently. In addition to poverty and unemployment, many rural communities note high levels of adult illiteracy, broken families, and public corruption. Such conditions create an inviting atmosphere for illegal drug activities and often cause a surge in drug usage; thus, a rise in overdoses.ⁱⁱⁱ Northern West Virginia's (NWV) Interstate 79 (I-79) Corridor, encompassing Harrison, Marion, and Monongalia counties, is no stranger to similar unemployment rates, poverty, drug abuse, and rise in violent crimes. With an overall population of 223,706 residents, this rural community has observed a 450% increase in violent crime from 1985-2014 (UCR).^{iv,v} Much of this overdose activity can be attributed to the persistence of the drug epidemic fueled by major interstates that quickly lead to cities with strong criminal enterprise ties such as Baltimore, Detroit, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Washington DC. WV is a prime target for drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) and gangs outside of the state, so much so that gangs in Detroit have divided the state into territories.^{vi} Gangs such as MS-13 have quickly realized these rural communities are

prime locations for drug distribution operations. DTOs have increased their flow of cocaine and methamphetamine, in addition to the abundance of opiates that continue to plague NWV.^{vii}

Drug abuse and trafficking is a critical threat to WV. WV consistently maintains an above average overdose rate nationally.^{viii} Since 2015, complete Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) national overdose data sets reinforce West Virginia's top-ranking overdose activity.^{ix} As of most complete data sets, Harrison County maintains some of the highest overdose rates in NWV.^x Between 2015 and 2018, West Virginia's overdose rate continually out-paced the national average due to the persistence of the drug crisis. Moreover, rates per 100,000 escalated from 41.5 in 2015, to 52.0 in 2016, 57.8 in 2017, and decreased to 51.5 in 2018.^{xixixixixiv} Moreover, Harrison County's most recent and complete data set regarding drug overdoses reflects a rate of 38.0 in 2016.^{xv}

While stereotypes of demographics most impacted by the drug crisis exist throughout the US, there is no singular stereotype to best benefit NWV. Most current data sets from the WV Health Statistics Center and WV Department of Health and Human Resources indicate comparisons between Harrison County and WV as a whole reveals all races, ages, and classes are impacted. Moreover, demographic data compounds the commensurate relationship between the drug crisis at the county level and statewide.^{xvi}

Between 2015 and 2017 there was a 122%^{xvii} increase in fentanyl related deaths throughout WV and the continues to boast the highest per capita overdose rates nationally.^{xviii,xix} Counties along the I-79 Corridor maintain some of the highest regional overdose rates per 100,000, with Harrison and Monongalia over 30 per 100,000 and Marion with 14 per 100,000.^{xx} Thus, with an increased flow of drugs into the community also comes an influx of crime. Violent and precipitous crimes often migrate along with escalations in overdoses. Not only is violent crime continuing to rise in

all I-79 Corridor counties, but also property crimes in Clarksburg, Harrison County's seat, escalated more than 25% from 1985-2014^{xxi}. More recently, Harrison County observed increases of larceny theft by 22% and motor vehicle theft by 58% between 2014 and 2017 (UCR).^{xxii,xxiii,xxiv,xxv}

As criminal enterprises continue targeting rural areas in WV, building their market, and maximizing their profit, law enforcement (LE) and public health agencies are struggling to keep up with the ever-increasing drug trade and violent crime that is associated with it. The Greater Harrison County Drug Task Force noted a surge in methamphetamine seizure data reflecting a 3,417.88% increase between 2016 and 2018.^{xxvi} Moreover, Harrison County Community Corrections data reflects similar methamphetamine escalations in their recorded data, a 110.37% increase between 2017 and 2018.^{xxvii} Regional county-based efforts were initiated to combat this symbiotic relationship between drugs, crime, and overall safety. As of 2018, regional agencies attempted to bring a multi-disciplinary team of LE, public health, public safety, and community outreach to combat overdoses, precipitous crimes, and provide additional tactical coverage of the drug epidemic in WV to facilitate large seizures from gangs such as MS-13, Crips, and others.^{xxviii} However, lack of cohesion between the three aforementioned counties and absence of dedicated crime and public health analysts taking a data-driven approach to mitigate the issue will only allow the regional drug crisis to persist. Therefore, determining drug *hot spot* areas, generating trend analyses, assisting in the direction patrols and policymakers, and providing tactical and strategic assessments will allow LE executives, healthcare practitioners, and decision makers to determine where best to employ their already scarce resources amidst the ongoing crisis.

Criminal enterprises come to the region, stay for a short time (usually three to five days) selling heroin, cocaine, and other illegal drugs. They return to their home state with their profits, repeating

this cycle several times a month. Once these gangs become comfortable in the area, they tend to bring other gang members to WV who establish their own drug business and customers.^{xxix} Moreover, DTOs will utilize lessons learned and successes from their WV businesses and adapt subsequent operations in other affiliated territories nationwide.^{xxx} Anecdotally, there is an approximate five-to-one profit margin on heroin brought from Pittsburgh to Harrison County; per noted trends, one stamp of heroin, a common drug unit, sells for \$4 on the street in Pittsburgh and sells for \$20 in Harrison County.^{xxxi} This is by and large due to the persistence of the opioid crisis impacting the greater I-79 region of NWV. With established transportation and illicit business infrastructure in NWV, criminal enterprises continue to exploit these rural communities' addictions to opioids and narcotics, perpetuating the drug crisis and analogous crimes within the region.

To address the precipitous increases in drug and analogous crimes throughout NWV the HCSO partnered with the NW3C to form the TIPS Analytic Team; a BJA funded initiative. The team's analytic and operational staff are supplied through HCSO while workspace and consultation were provided by NW3C. While the team's chief tasking was to address the impacts of the drug crisis in NWV issues concerning communication between various agencies, organizations, and stakeholders needed to be addressed. Information silos were formed and divided law enforcement and public safety, outreach and prevention, as well as treatment and recovery. Thus, the Analytic Team served as a Justice Information Sharing Hub, a conduit and repository for information to be imported from all sectors for a broad-based collaborative effort that would address all facets of the drug crisis.

To best encompass and reflect the broad-based approach in the team's various forms of analyses the team worked to compile a number of data sources to best facilitate policing operations

throughout NWV. Initially, the team began collecting raw call data from regional 911 centers based on calls most closely associated with drug crimes (i.e. Narcotics, Overdose, Domestic, Breaking and Entering, as well as Disturbance). These data sets allowed the team to generate heat maps that assisted LE executives in officer and overall resource allocation. In the same period, the team gathered Naloxone utilization reports from local EMS services as well as local urinalysis reports from court-mandated drug testing facilities to best articulate the threat environment of what sorts of substances were being found and the overall responses by EMS services. From there the team began focusing on data sets and information sources that would assist in mitigating threats and analogous impacts of the drug crisis by supporting crime trend analysis, open source and social media collection, and seizure reports from local LE and state task force agencies.

Response and Assessment

The Analytic Team's parameters and functionality operates as a Justice Information Sharing Hub for NWV emphasizing partnership and collaboration. Per the verbiage of BJA's program narrative, the Analytic Team works to achieve the following four (4) objectives with corresponding deliverables.

- 1. Identify and promote technology solutions that target preventing, investigating, prosecuting, and responding to analogous and precipitous increases in specific crime(s).*

Deliverable – Utilize data visualization and other types of software that will uncover patterns, trends, and movement of the opioid abuse problem within the state allowing for a proactive response to the associated crimes. These solutions will be documented in terms of problem mitigation, as well as cost effectiveness.

2. *Establish new and leverage existing partnerships to include other criminal justice entities, community organizations, and private/public providers to enhance the applicant's ability to respond to these specific crimes within their jurisdiction.*

Deliverable – Facilitate collaboration among the variety of stakeholders affected by the opioid abuse problem, through meetings, trainings, and resource materials. This collaboration will at times include all stakeholders and depending on the results and findings from the data analysis, will sometimes include stakeholders from specific groups such as law enforcement, health organizations, or education, requiring differing types of training and /or resource materials.

3. *To develop policies and practices through technology to promote decision making with the intent to reduce the precipitous increases in specific crime(s).*

Deliverable – Develop and document policies and practices based on the use and best practices of the technology solution proposed. As those policies and practices are “fine-tuned” they will become standard operating policies for the method of dealing with the opioid abuse problem. These documented policies and best practices will be made available for law enforcement agencies within West Virginia and nationally.

4. *To implement the identified information-sharing solution(s) at all levels.*

Deliverable – Identify and document practical ways to sustain the implemented technology solution and the collaborative information sharing after the program period of funding has expired. To achieve all of the goals and established deliverables the team worked to build a stakeholder database that incorporated the aforementioned sectors that would contribute data and act on the project's information and analysis. Currently, the Analytic Team maintains over 110 individual stakeholders representing nearly 90 local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies individuals from substance recovery and outreach organizations. This list includes, but is not limited to:

- Harrison County LE jurisdictions
- Monongalia County LE jurisdictions
- West Virginia State Police
- West Virginia Intelligence/Fusion Center
- WV drug task forces (i.e. those designated by High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas)
- US Attorney's Office
- Community Corrections and Drug Courts
- Healthy Harrison Project
- Family Resource Network

With such a diverse crew of stakeholders and little communication and information sharing between them, the team was given the tacit task of diminishing information silos. Members from HCSO and NW3C formulated a number of reporting mechanisms and cost-effective research and analysis techniques to address the lack of information analysis and sharing between the above stakeholders based on the breadth and depth of experience between team members. To best inform this diverse stakeholder base the team developed a number of products to assist the alleviation of the drug crisis and related crimes. Such products include, but are not limited to:

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Biweekly bulletins | • Routine updates to regional LE executives |
| • Analysis of illicit substances sold via open source media | • Geographic analysis of chronically impacted "hot spots" |
| • Threat assessments to risks to public safety | • Requests for information (RFI) |

To ensure the information provided was utilized in a capacity to best inform the broad audience the team developed an understandable in-house report classification system. Not all stakeholders would be familiar with or fit the traditional LE classification system. However, the advent of COVID-19 diminished community outreach due to social distancing guidelines and galvanized the Analytic Team's LE partnerships in supporting missions during the pandemic. Therefore, the team adopted traditional LE report classification system. Despite this, the team continues to support outreach and prevention efforts with low sensitivity reports and/or white sheets.

Implementation of the team's efforts experienced little, if any, resistance or impediment. The lack of information sharing within NWV allowed for the team to seamlessly mobilize products, presentations, and briefings to best address the prescribed issue. The efforts of the team have been noted and praised by various stakeholders due the heightened presence of information that they are able to act upon and implement themselves into their daily workflow. Some of the team's efforts have been utilized in the apprehension of local traffickers, outlining regional drug proliferation rings, assisting executives with resource allocation, and provided heightened awareness for the public to ensure overall safety.

All performance measure data is reported to BJA. Performance measure data is collected on a regular basis throughout the program period. Baseline levels of collaboration in the governance of the program will be collected, reported and compared to the number of organizations participating during the course of the project period. Types of organizations involved in the collaborative process will also be collected and reported. The number of formal and informal agreements between various law enforcement, community organizations and the applicant will be collected prior to the program implementation and compared to the number of collaborative agreements after the implementation and during the course of program period.

Information sharing between law enforcement agencies and other community organizations will be assessed and reported during the program period. The number of community meetings involving the organizations associated with the program is tracked and reported.

During the course of the program, information was collected and reported showing the number of stakeholder organizations that added new policies or practices based on the results of the implementation of the program.

Educational and resource materials disseminated by the program are evaluated through survey instruments developed by NW3C researchers to determine value of the materials to the recipients.

Agency and Officer Information

Key Project Members

Harrison County Sheriff's Office

Robert Matheny, Sheriff
Randall Stickle, Supervising Intelligence/Data Analyst
Jim Eschenmann, Data Specialist

National White Collar Crime Center

Jim Foley, Vice President of Curriculum Development and Training
Jeff Lybarger, Associate Vice President of Curriculum Development and Training
Holly Abel, Curriculum Developer and Training Instructor

Project Contact Person

Randall Stickle, 3CI
Supervising Intelligence/Data Analyst
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(C) 304-612-6476
HCSO – rstickle@harrisoncountywv.gov
NW3C – rstickle@nw3c.org

Appendices

Number and age-adjusted rates of drug overdose deaths by state, US 2018

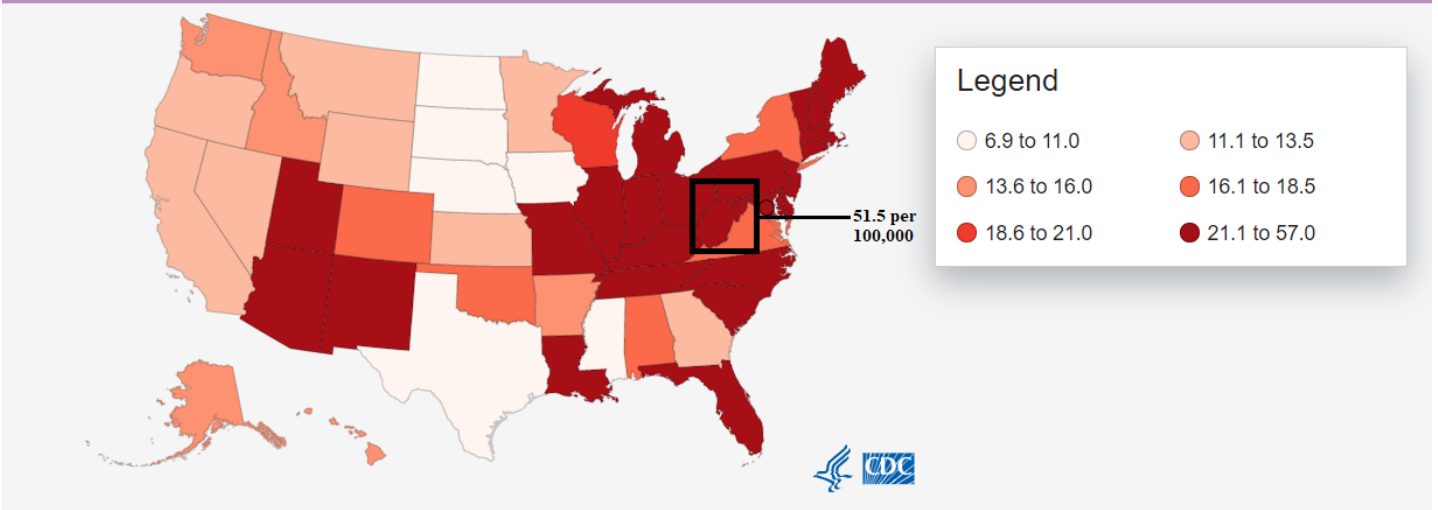
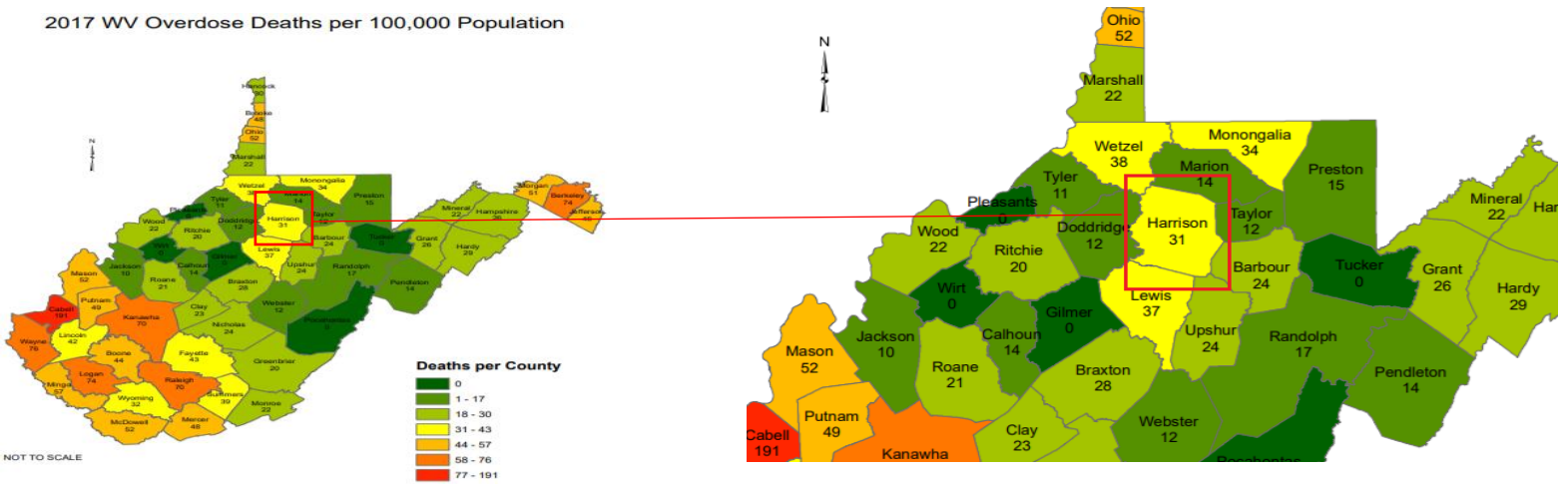


Figure 1^{xxxii}

2017 WV Overdose Deaths per 100,000 Population



Figures 2 and 3^{xxxiii}

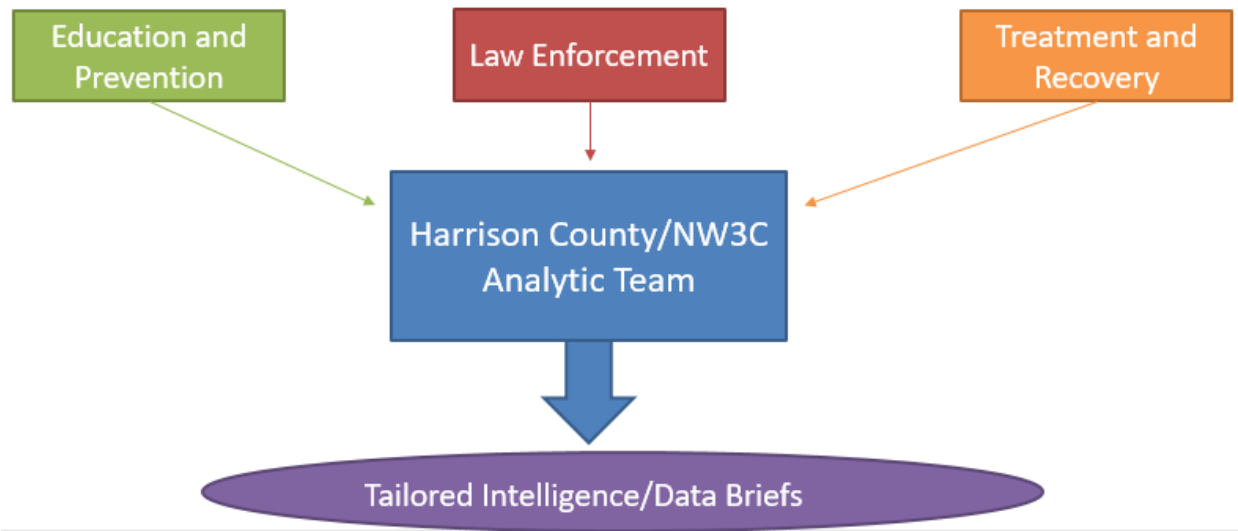


Figure 4^{xxxiv}

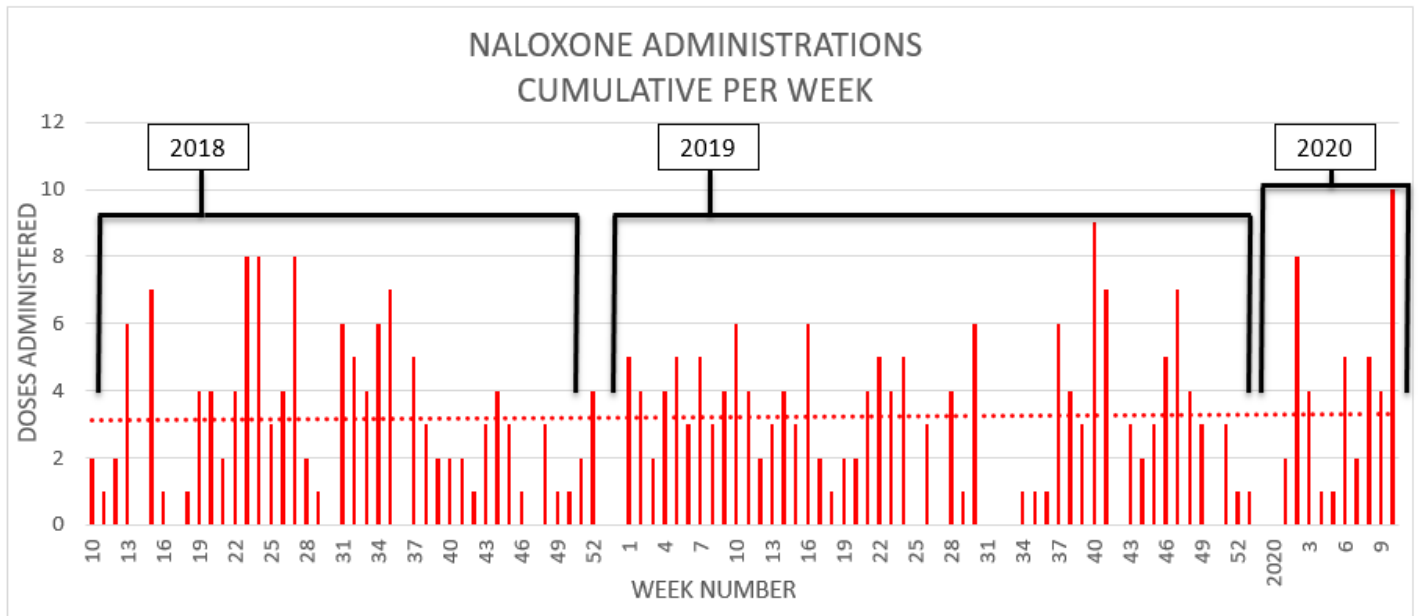


Figure 5^{xxxv}

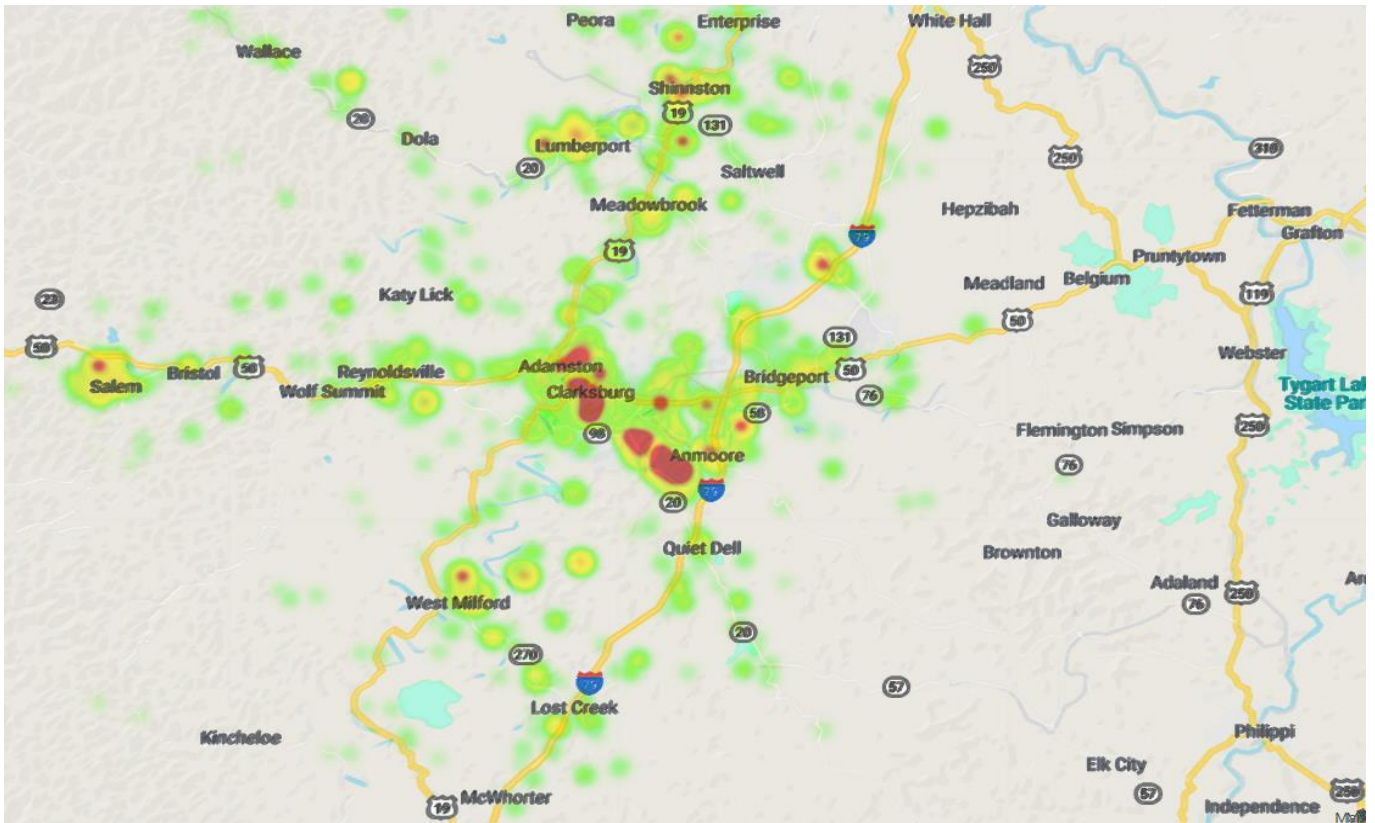


Figure 6^{xxxvi}



Sheriff Matheny,

I am writing you on behalf of Monongalia County, WV Prosecuting Attorney Perri DeChristopher and I regarding the outstanding intelligence analysis reports Randall Stickley, II provided us this year, which provided local law enforcement with valuable intelligence on multiple targets in multiple West Virginia counties. Throughout the entire intelligence gathering process, which included multiple meetings, Mr. Stickley demonstrated professionalism, knowledge, and a desire to help the people of West Virginia, and therefore should be commended for his excellent service and dedication to the State of West Virginia.

Sincerely,

Craig Corkrean, MS
 Chief of Police
 Granville Police Department
 1245 Main St.
 Granville, WV 26534
 304-598-0035- Office
 304-692-9981- Cell
 304-599-2233- Fax

Figure 7^{xxxvii}



BRIDGEPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT

515 West Main Street, Bridgeport, WV 26330
304-842-8260 Fax: 304-842-8267

April 17, 2019

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
Bureau of Justice Assistance

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of The Harrison County Sheriff's Office Analytical Team's effort to acquire funding that will enable the team to provide continuing support to Harrison County and surrounding Law Enforcement Agencies in the fight against drugs and related crimes within our jurisdictions.

West Virginia and specifically Harrison County has gained the unwanted reputation of having one of the worse drug trafficking and addiction problems in the country. This analytical team has provided us valuable information and data making our officers on the front line successful in our continued fight against the opioid problem that exist in North Central West Virginia. Without the assistance of this program, I fear our ongoing efforts to get ahead of the opioid epidemic may be stifled.

We sincerely appreciate your efforts to continue helping us bring this problem under control.

Sincerely,

Figure 8^{xxviii}



****Stonewood Police Department****

8052 Southern Avenue, Stonewood, WV 26301

Michael A. Secreto

Chief of Police

April 17 2019

James E. Eschenmann
Data Specialist
Harrison County Sheriff's Office
420 Buckhannon Pike
Nutter Fort, WV 26301

The Harrison County Sheriff's Office Analytical Team is my number one source of data for the Stonewood Police Department. This information is paramount for scheduling patrol routes, officer's shifts and gives us incite for conveying information to the Greater Harrison County Narcotics Task Force. Mr. Eschenmann, thank you so much for your endless work!

Sincerely;

Chief Michael A. Secreto

Figure 9^{xxxix}



GREATER HARRISON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

PO BOX 874
BRIDGEPORT WV 26330

1/10/2019

To: James E. Eschenmann
Data Specialist
Harrison County Sheriff Office
420 Buckhannon Pike
Nutter Fort, WV 26301

The Greater Harrison County Drug Task Force would like to thank and acknowledge the Analytic Team in providing actionable intelligence in the apprehension of targets per cross-agency collaboration.

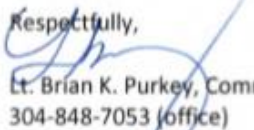
Respectfully,

Lt. Brian K. Purkey, Commander
304-848-7053 (office)

Figure 10^{xl}

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- ⁱ Bureau of Justice Assistance, Technology Innovation for Public Safety (TIPS) Addressing Precipitous Increases in Crime FY 2017 Competitive Grant Announcement. Retrieved May 29, 2020, from web. <https://bja.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh186/files/media/document/BJA-2017-11547.PDF>
- ⁱⁱ Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs. 28 CFR Part 23 Criminal Intelligence Systems Operating Policies, Executive Order 12291. Retrieved May 29, 2020, from https://it.ojp.gov/documents/28cfr_part_23.pdf
- ⁱⁱⁱ Narconon, West Virginia Drug Addiction. Retrieved, May 26, 2020 from <https://www.narconon.org/drug-information/west-virginia-drug-addiction.html>
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[pieces/Table 10 Offenses Known to Law Enforcement West Virginia by Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Counties 2014.xls](#)

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^{xxvi} Greater Harrison County Drug Task Force, Drug Seizure Data 2016-2018.

^{xxvii} Harrison County Community Corrections, Amphetamine/Methamphetamine Findings 2016-2019.

^{xxviii} Connect Bridgeport, Clarksburg Police Department, Harrison County Sheriff's Department, Announces Formation of Community Action Team. Retrieved May 26, 2020, from <http://connect-bridgeport.com/connect.cfm?func=view§ion=News&item=Clarksburg-Police-Department-Harrison-County-Sheriffs-Department-Announces-Formation-of-Community-Action-Team31288>

^{xxix} Connect Bridgeport, Drug Trends, including Presence of Crips Locally, Arrests and Other Items Addressed by County's SCAD Unit. Retrieved May 26, 2020, from <http://www.connect-bridgeport.com/connect.cfm?func=view§ion=News&item=Drug-Trends-including-Presence-of-Crips-Locally-Arrests-and-Other-Items-Addressed-by-Countys-SCAD-Unit6770>

^{xxx} DEA, The West Virginia Drug Situation. Retrieved May 26, 2020, from <https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2018-07/DEA-WAS-DIR-024-17%20West%20Virginia%20Drug%20Situation%20UNCLASSIFIED.pdf>

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^{xxxii} Figure 1: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) produced graphic detailing West Virginia's status as the front-runner in national overdose rates; reflective of 2018 data. Upholding West Virginia's status as preeminent in terms of overdoses.

^{xxxiii} Figures 2 and 3: Data graphics from West Virginia Health Statistics Center reflecting the heightened overdose rate in Harrison County among others along the I-79 corridor. Reflective of 2017 state data sets.

^{xxxiv} Figure 4: Outlined information flow of the Analytic Team. To combat the crisis in West Virginia, organizations, teams, and institutions are placing great emphasis on communication. The sharing official data, anecdotal information, and personal testimonies is key to resolving the opioid crisis. Moreover, this model falls directly within the model established by the United States Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP); placing great emphasis on taking a multi-pronged approach through three key sectors, including, reducing supply of illicit drugs (law enforcement), treatment and recovery, as well as education and prevention.

^{xxxv} Figure 5: Cumulative Harrison County EMS Service Providers Naloxone Administrations – March 2018 to March 2020. Often utilized in conjunction with court-mandated urinalysis to corroborate burgeoning trends in regional drug usage.

^{xxxvi} Figure 6: Incident concentrations indicated by heat mapping based on Harrison County 911 data pertaining to the five (5) types of calls most closely associated with drug crimes (i.e. Narcotics, Overdose, Breaking and Entering, Domestic, and Disturbances).

^{xxxvii} Figure 7: Commendation letter for supportive services from Granville Police Department.

^{xxxviii} Figure 8: Commendation letter for supportive services from Bridgeport Police Department.

^{xxxix} Figure 9: Commendation letter for supportive services from Stonewood Police Department

^{xl} Figure 10: Commendation letter for supportive services from Greater Harrison County Drug Task Force