

2021

Louisiana State Police



HIDTA Drug

Threat Assessment

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II. SCOPE

Louisiana State Analytical & Fusion Exchange (LA-SAFE) utilized several methods to collect factual information and statistics for the 2021 Gulf Coast High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (GC HIDTA) Drug Threat Assessment.

LA-SAFE employed the 2021 Gulf Coast High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (GC HIDTA) Drug Survey to collect information from numerous law enforcement agencies throughout the state and requested their participation in the drug survey located on the GC HIDTA website. The survey results provided data related to the drug threats in Louisiana and provided valuable information on threat characteristics in Louisiana (i.e., rural areas, suburban areas).

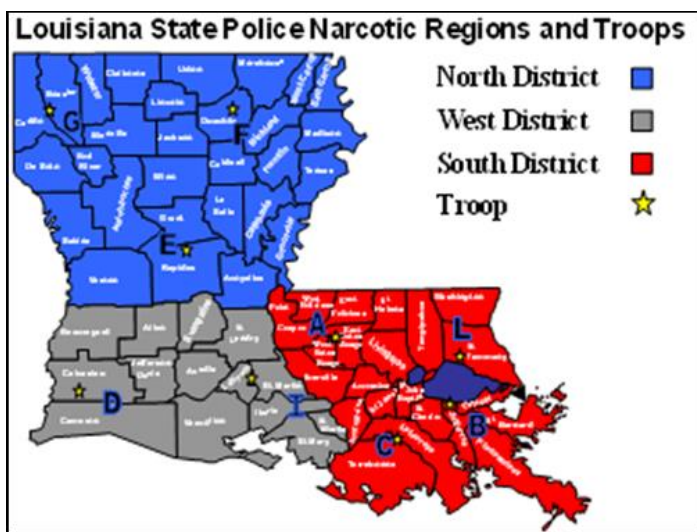
LA-SAFE personnel obtained drug-related statistical information as well as significant drug-related incidents from agencies such as the Louisiana State Police (LSP), the Gulf Coast HIDTA Watch Center, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC).

III. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Illicit drug distribution continues to pose a serious threat to Louisiana while drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) utilize air, land, and sea routes to transport and distribute narcotics. Poly-drug DTOs employ established infrastructures to assist in their endeavors to smuggle drugs into and through the state. Methamphetamine is reported to be the greatest drug threat in Louisiana due to its availability, low cost, and long-lasting effects. Heroin abuse remains the second greatest drug threat and continues to spread through the state. Fentanyl continues to be seen in combination with heroin around the state. Various forms of marijuana are seized and abused in Louisiana. Cocaine availability and demand reportedly remains the same throughout the state. Controlled prescriptions remain available throughout the state.

IV. THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

The Northern Region of Louisiana encompasses all parishes from southern Arkansas, northeastern Texas and northwestern Mississippi borders and ends in central Louisiana with Vernon, Rapides and Avoyelles Parishes. The Western Region of Louisiana encompasses all parishes from the southeastern Texas border eastward to St. Landry, St. Martin, Iberia, Assumption, St. James and Lafourche Parishes. The Southern Region of Louisiana commences beyond the parishes listed above and ends at the Mississippi border. The Southern Region is the Criminal Investigative Division Region I. The Western Region is the Criminal Investigative Division Region II. The Northern Region is the Criminal Investigative Region III.



The GC HIDTA program is a federal grant funded operation that is designed to reduce drug availability and the harmful effects in the Gulf Coast region. The Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) has designated the following parishes in Louisiana as GC HIDTA: Orleans, Jefferson, East Baton Rouge, Caddo, Bossier, Lafayette, Calcasieu, and Ouachita. LSP operates the Metro New Orleans Mobile Deployment Team (MDT) initiative, which operates in targeted communities with local police agencies and focuses on criminal organizations and their supply source.

A. Criminal Investigative Division Region I

Heroin and fentanyl are the primary drug threats in the Region I area. According to the data collected from the 2021 GC HIDTA Drug Survey, the availability of heroin is high in the region. The demand for heroin, fentanyl, and methamphetamine continues to increase across south Louisiana. The availability of new psychoactive drugs remained the same in this area. Local, independent dealers produce most of the locally grown marijuana and are involved in the retail street distribution. Drugs are imported into Region I from source states, which include Colorado, Mississippi, Oregon, and Texas.¹

B. Criminal Investigative Division Region II

Methamphetamine is reported as the primary drug threat in Region II and most violent crime is associated with it. Fentanyl demand is increasing making it the second greatest drug threat in the region. Cocaine and cocaine HCl, controlled prescription drugs, marijuana, and methamphetamine availability remain the same in this division. Alprazolam (Xanax), hydrocodone (Vicodin), oxycodone (Percocet), and codeine syrup are highly diverted pharmaceutical drugs in this division.²

C. Criminal Investigative Division Region III

Methamphetamine is reported as the primary drug threat and is the cause of most violent and property crime in Region III. Heroin and fentanyl demand and availability remained the same. The availability of controlled prescription drugs reportedly remained the same. Marijuana remains highly available in this region.³

D. Criminal Patrols Unit

The Criminal Patrol Unit (CPU) complements and enhances the overall mission of the LSP through its criminal interdiction. The troopers assigned to this unit cover the Louisiana roadways and selected high crime areas. During 2019, the CPU seized 1,604.94 pounds of marijuana, 253.08 pounds of cocaine, 94.62 pounds of heroin, 38.41 pounds of methamphetamine, 38,068.59 dosage units of MDMA, 29,939 dosage units of various narcotics, and approximately \$556,596 in US currency.⁴

¹ 2021 GC HIDTA Drug Threat Survey

² 2021 GC HIDTA Drug Threat Survey

³ 2021 GC HIDTA Drug Threat Survey

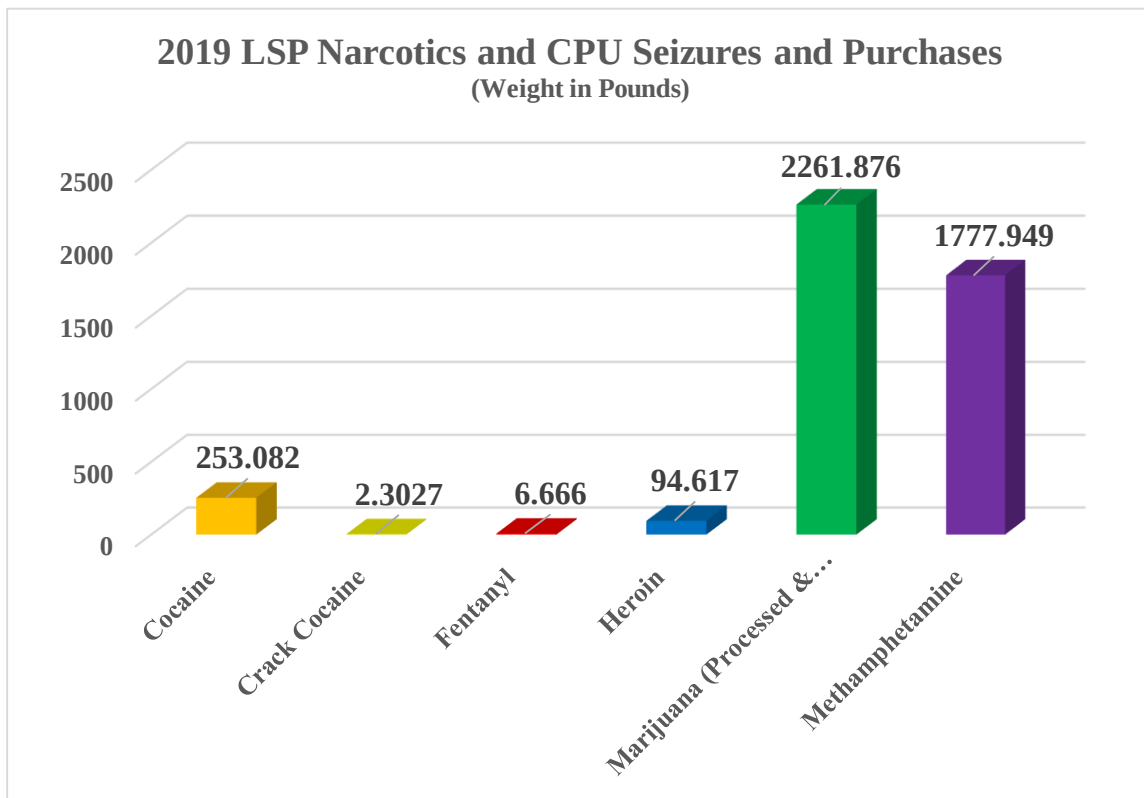
⁴⁴ LSP CPU 2019 Statistics

V. DRUG THREATS

A. OVERVIEW

Forty-seven percent of the 2021 GC HIDTA Drug Survey participants identified methamphetamine as the greatest drug threat in their jurisdiction, followed by the abuse of heroin and then fentanyl. Marijuana continues to be sold and abused across the state. Cocaine and crack cocaine remains available and controlled prescription drugs are abused to varying degrees throughout the state.⁵

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B. Methamphetamine

1. Assessment of the Threat

Methamphetamine is typically transported into Louisiana from Mexico via Texas as well as produced via illicit methamphetamine labs. The two forms of methamphetamine found in Louisiana are powdered methamphetamine and ice methamphetamine. Ice methamphetamine is a pure, highly addictive form of the drug that resembles shards of ice. Caucasians are the primary retail distributors of powder and ice methamphetamine in Louisiana. According to the LSP, prices for methamphetamine are \$125 per gram. Some areas in northern Louisiana reported the price has dropped to \$50 per gram.

2. Availability

The use of the one pot methamphetamine production method remained the same. Sixty-seven percent of the 2021 GC HIDTA Drug Threat Survey participants

⁵ 2021 GC HIDTA Drug Survey

⁶ 2019 LSP BOI CID and CPU 2019 Statistics

reported the availability of methamphetamine in their area increased and 31 percent reported methamphetamine availability remained the same in their area.

3. Use

According to the 2021 GC HIDTA Treatment Survey respondents, 32 percent indicated methamphetamine abuse as the greatest threat in the state and 53 percent indicated its abuse as high in 2019. Admissions for methamphetamine abuse increased in 2019.

4. Transportation

The GC HIDTA Drug Survey respondents report Caucasian American criminal groups/DTOs as the predominant transporters of methamphetamine. Independent Caucasian dealers and Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMGs) transport small quantities of methamphetamine from southwestern states and California, primarily using private vehicles.

5. Distribution

According to 2021 GC HIDTA Drug Survey respondents and law enforcement sources, Caucasian Americans continue to be the primary wholesalers and distributors of methamphetamine. African Americans are reported as becoming increasingly involved in the sale of methamphetamine.

C. Heroin and Fentanyl

1. Assessment of the Threat

Heroin use has remained consistent in the southeast area of Louisiana and New Orleans is considered by law enforcement to be a regional marketplace for the drug. Fentanyl and other opioids have increased throughout the state. According to the respondents of the 2021 GC HIDTA Treatment Survey, heroin has been seen in combination with fentanyl. The Louisiana Department of Health instituted limits on the quantities of opioids which could be prescribed.

2. Availability

Heroin use has remained consistent in the southeast Louisiana and New Orleans is considered by law enforcement to be a regional marketplace for the drug. The majority of the 2021 GC HIDTA Drug Threat Survey respondents reported an increase in heroin availability and demand in their area of responsibility in 2019. The majority of respondents also reported an increase in fentanyl and other opioid availability in 2019.

3. Abuse

Heroin along with fentanyl and other opioids were reported as the greatest drug threat by 59 percent of the 2021 GC HIDTA Treatment Survey respondents. Fifty-three percent of the respondents reported the level of heroin and 62 percent of the respondents reported fentanyl and other opioid use as high in 2019. Fifty-one percent of the 2021 GC HIDTA Treatment Survey respondents indicated the number of inpatient admissions for both heroin abuse and fentanyl and other opioid

abuse increased. The fentanyl analogue, carfentanil, is approximately 10,000 times stronger than morphine. This level of potency contributes to the number of deaths related to opioids.⁷ According to the Louisiana Opioid Data and Surveillance System, there were 447 opioid poisoning deaths in 2018, which is the most current information available at this time. There were 220 synthetic opioid poisoning deaths reported in the same year.⁸

4. Transportation

Heroin is transported into Louisiana from the Southwest Border as well as through the direct connections made by African American DTOs in Texas. Mexican DTOs transport heroin into Louisiana primarily through private vehicles, commercial parcel delivery services, commercial air flights and commercial buses, in addition to vessels from the Southwest Border and Colombian ports.

5. Distribution

Availability and distribution have been reported in Baton Rouge, Hammond, Lafayette, and Prairieville in addition to the Greater New Orleans area. According to the 2021 GC HIDTA Drug Survey, African Americans were reported as the predominant street level distributors of heroin. According to LSP statistics, a total of 94.62 pounds of heroin and 6.67 pounds of fentanyl and opioids were seized across the state in 2019.

D. Marijuana

1. Assessment of the Threat

The 2021 GC HIDTA Drug Threat Survey respondents indicated high-grade hydroponic, medicinal, Mexican, and domestic marijuana have been encountered in their area. Law enforcement is reporting the appearance of the active ingredient in marijuana, delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) in wax form, in edibles, and in vapor form.⁹ Louisiana State University and Southern University are the only legal growers of medical marijuana for the state. Each university has contracted with an outside company to cultivate and produce medical marijuana. The first dispensaries opened in August 2019. Conditions eligible for treatment include, but are not limited to cancer, HIV, AIDS, seizure disorders, epilepsy, spasticity, Crohn's disease, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, and glaucoma, Parkinson's disease, and specific conditions related to autism.¹⁰

In December 2018, Congress passed the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 legalizing the production of industrial hemp and removing hemp from classification as a Schedule I substance. While derived from the same plant as marijuana, hemp has lower levels of THC than marijuana and legally cannot contain more than 0.3 percent THC. Louisiana received USDA approval for a state hemp regulation plan

⁷ The 2020 Gulf Coast High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Drug Threat Assessment

⁸ Louisiana Department of Health – Louisiana Opioid Data and Surveillance System <https://lodss.ldh.la.gov/>

⁹ 2021 GCHIDTA Drug Survey

¹⁰ <https://www.bizneworleans.com/baton-rouge-dispensary-first-in-the-state-to-open-its-doors-for-louisiana-medical-marijuana-patients/>

in December 2019. This presents obstacles for law enforcement as criminal actors attempt to transport marijuana across the US by disguising it as legal hemp. Furthermore, most test kits cannot differentiate between hemp and marijuana.

2. Abuse

Marijuana is abused by all age, social, and economic groups. Being readily available, marijuana leads users to experiment with other drugs. Eighty-three percent of the 2021 GC HIDTA Treatment Survey respondents indicated the abuse of marijuana as high. However, 57 percent of the treatment respondents reported the level of admissions remained the same for marijuana abuse.¹¹

3. Availability

Local growers use sophisticated means of production and concealment to grow marijuana. Outdoor grow sites are often found on public and privately owned land in an effort to avoid seizure of personal property. In 2019, the LSP ERAD Program seized 33 grow sites, 274 cultivated plants, 1114 pounds of bulk processed marijuana, 649 ounces of THC wax/oil, and 682 ounces of THC edibles.¹² The prices for marijuana range between \$100 to \$200 per ounce and \$450 to \$800 per pound.

4. Associated Crime and Violence

Marijuana remains the most commonly abused and trafficked drug in Louisiana although survey respondents did not identify marijuana as a major contributor to violent and property crime.

5. Production

Louisiana's temperate climate enables marijuana cultivators to grow their own cannabis during most of the year; however, the threat of asset or property loss is a deterrent to marijuana cultivators. Most locally grown cannabis is intended for in-state consumption. The primary cannabis cultivators in Louisiana are independent Caucasian cultivators. Cannabis is typically grown outdoors in small plots with five to ten plants scattered throughout an acre to avoid aerial detection. Indoor marijuana growing techniques, including hydroponics from California, Oklahoma, and Texas, are the preferred methods for growers seeking a high-potency, high quality product. Indoor grows range in size from small closets to large warehouses.

6. Transportation

According to 2021 GC HIDTA Drug Survey respondents, African Americans remain the primary transporters of marijuana in Louisiana. Statistics from highway interdictions and the Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program (DCE/SP) confirm that marijuana is the most commonly seized illicit drug in Louisiana. Respondents to the 2021 GC HIDTA Drug Survey also reported source

¹¹ 2021 GC HIDTA Treatment Survey

¹² LSP Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program

states for marijuana seized in Louisiana as California, Colorado, Oregon, Texas, and Washington.¹³

7. Distribution

The 2021 GC HIDTA Drug Survey respondents reported African Americans as the greatest portion of marijuana wholesale distributors. African Americans are the primary retail distributors of marijuana according to 71 percent of 2021 GC HIDTA Drug Survey respondents.¹⁴

E. Cocaine

1. Assessment of the Threat

Four percent of 2021 GC HIDTA Drug Survey respondents reported powder or crack cocaine as the greatest threat in their area.¹⁵ Cocaine, in both powder-form (hereafter referred to as cocaine HCl) and base-form (hereafter referred to as crack cocaine) remains a concern for law enforcement. Most of the crack cocaine available in Louisiana is converted locally from cocaine HCl.

2. Abuse

Treatment data indicates that cocaine is widely abused throughout Louisiana. According to 2021 GC HIDTA Treatment Survey respondents, 86 percent reported the level of cocaine HCl abuse was high or moderate. Sixty-three percent reported inpatient admissions for cocaine and crack cocaine as remaining the same in 2019.¹⁶

3. Availability

Crack cocaine and cocaine HCl are widely available. Crack cocaine is most commonly sold in the form of “rock” and “cookie” (one ounce) quantities. Cocaine pricing has remained fairly constant across the state. Prices for cocaine HCl range between \$500 and \$1,200 per ounce. Crack cocaine prices range from \$30 per rock and \$1,000 per ounce for cocaine.¹⁷ (Source: LSP Drug Pricing Schedule).

4. Associated Crime and Violence

Crime and violence associated with cocaine trafficking and abuse remained the same in Louisiana. Across the state, nine percent of survey respondents identified cocaine use as the main drug contributor to violent crime.¹⁸

5. Production

Coca is not cultivated nor is cocaine produced in Louisiana. Cocaine HCl is produced in South America. Generally African American criminal groups and retail distributors in the state convert cocaine HCl to crack within their distribution areas.

¹³ 2021 GCHIDTA Drug Survey

¹⁴ 2021 GCHIDTA Drug Survey

¹⁵ 2021 GC HIDTA Drug Survey

¹⁶ 2021 GC HIDTA Treatment Survey

¹⁷ LSP Drug Pricing Schedule

¹⁸ 2021 GC HIDTA Drug Survey

6. Transportation

Cocaine is transported into and through Louisiana via many modes, including private, rental, and commercial vehicles. Once transported into the state in HCl form, African American independent dealers convert it into crack locally. Most cocaine interdiction seizures continue to occur on Interstates 10 and 20.

7. Distribution

African American criminal groups are reported as the primary wholesale and retail distributors of cocaine HCl in Louisiana. African American, Asian, and Hispanic street gangs and local independent dealers convert most of the powdered cocaine to crack. Cocaine HCl availability at the retail level is limited in the state. Cocaine HCl is usually adulterated with common household ingredients such as cornstarch, flour, and talc.¹⁹

F. Controlled Prescription Drugs

1. Assessment of the Threat

The diversion of pharmaceutical drugs such as hydrocodone, Oxycontin, and Xanax remains a significant problem across the state. Drug abusers continue to travel to Texas and Arkansas for drugs and prescriptions due to the regulation of pain management clinics in Louisiana. Hydrocodone (Lortab), alprazolam (Xanax), and oxycodone (Soma) are the most commonly abused pharmaceuticals. Many patients visit different pain clinic locations on different days of the week, also known as “doctor shopping,” to receive multiple prescriptions for the same medication(s). These clinics pose a dangerous threat by illegally providing drugs to addicts with no underlying medical basis and tarnishing the reputations of legitimate pain management clinics.

2. Abuse

According to the 2021 GC HIDTA Treatment Survey respondents, controlled prescription drugs were highly abused in Louisiana in 2019. Respondents reported the abuse of alprazolam, diazepam, and hydrocodone as high. Ninety-two percent indicated inpatient admissions for the abuse of controlled prescription drugs increased and 66 percent remained the same in 2019.²⁰

3. Availability

Prescription drugs are obtained illicitly via many different methods including theft, forgery, fraud, internet pharmacies, and pain management clinics. Some patients will sell extra pills from their supply to support their habit. Fraudulent prescriptions written on stolen doctors’ prescription pads are also another method controlled drugs are obtained. Prices for controlled prescription drugs range from \$10 to \$80 per dosage unit.

¹⁹ 2021 GC HIDTA Drug Survey

²⁰ 2021 GC HIDTA Treatment Survey

4. Associated Crime and Violence

Pharmacy robberies, doctor shopping, forged prescriptions, and excessive issuance of prescriptions are commonly associated crimes and methods of diversion. Pharmacy diversion occurs when pharmacy employees steal products directly from the shelves. Local independent dealers and abusers burglarize pharmacies and homes of legitimate prescription holders to obtain the drugs.

5. Production

The majority of the abused pharmaceutical drugs abused are codeine, Dilaudid, hydrocodone, methadone, Percocet, oxycodone (OxyContin), Soma, Valium, Vicodin, and Xanax. Pharmaceutical drugs are commonly diverted but are not produced in Louisiana. Most of the drugs are obtained via the Internet, “doctor shopping,” and fraudulent prescriptions.

6. Transportation

Most pharmaceuticals are transported from Houston; however, some individuals continue to travel to Mexico to purchase these drugs from pharmacies not requiring a prescription. Most pharmaceuticals are transported into Louisiana by Caucasian criminal groups via privately owned and rental vehicles. Some abusers utilize Internet pharmacies to obtain their drugs using mail services.

7. Distribution

Illicit distribution of pharmaceutical drugs in Louisiana continues to increase. Individuals are forging prescriptions, purchasing drugs at Internet pharmacies, and “doctor shopping” to obtain these drugs. The enforcement of regulations is reducing the use of illegitimate “pain management clinics” and “urgent care centers.” The requirement to be examined by a pain specialist prior to the authorization of a refill forces some drug seekers to travel to other states to obtain prescriptions.

VI. Drug Trafficking Organization

Louisiana continues to rank among the states with the highest per capita number of murders, aggravated assaults, and armed robberies each year. Drug trafficking and the related criminal activity contribute significantly to Louisiana’s violent crime rate. Louisiana’s criminal organizations continue to rely on violence to deal with competitors, to intimidate citizens to be uncooperative with law enforcement, and to control distribution areas. The LSP, the Louisiana National Guard (LANG), and federal law enforcement agencies including the DEA, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and United States Marshals Service (USMS) actively work to combat violence across the state. LSP troopers continue to assist the New Orleans Police Department with increased patrols in an effort to reduce drug related violence and other criminal activity. Multiple law enforcement agencies in the Baton Rouge area are targeting specific zip codes in an effort to curb drug and related violent activity. Agencies in other metropolitan areas in Louisiana such as Lafayette and Shreveport are aggressively pursuing leads and gathering information regarding new traffickers and identifying DTOs.

PROFILES OF IDENTIFIED ORGANIZATIONS

1. South American Drug Trafficking Organizations

Organized crime groups operating in Colombia are the largest wholesale suppliers of cocaine in the United States. In the United States, the Colombians' bases of operations consist of multiple, independently operated cells located in major metropolitan areas which perform a specific function within the organization such as transportation, local distribution, or money movement. The Colombian DTOs recruit Dominicans, Hondurans, Mexicans, and African Americans criminal groups to distribute drugs in the GC HIDTA. Cocaine remains the predominant drug primarily trafficked from Colombia, with increased reports of heroin trafficking. Over the past decade the Colombia-based drug groups have allowed Mexico-based trafficking organizations to play an increasing role in the U.S. cocaine trade. Mexican DTOs are receiving cocaine shipment they smuggled for the Colombia-based groups in exchange for their services. As more of the cartel criminal leaders are jailed and/or extradited to the U.S., smaller organizations emerge in Colombia and continue to profit from the lucrative wholesale U.S. cocaine market; however, supply lines have been disrupted in certain regions.

2. Mexico-Based Poly-Drug Trafficking Organizations

Mexico-based organizations transport cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamine, and heroin into and through Louisiana usually via the Interstate Highway System, particularly I-10 and I-20. The high volume of commercial motor carrier and passenger traffic crossing the U.S. and Mexican border daily facilitates the smuggling of various drugs. Couriers arrested in Louisiana are often Hispanics who reside along the Southwest Border. The most common methods of transportation are via privately owned vehicles and tractor-trailers. Hidden compartments within vehicles conceal illegal drugs, currency, and weapons. Some individuals use commercial bus carriers to transport smaller quantities of drugs. An additional transportation method is the use of postal delivery services. The use of commercial trucks and railways are also exploited to haul illegal contraband. The high percentage of Mexican heroin and the increased percentage of unknown samples indicate that Mexican drug trafficking organizations have expanded their heroin distribution operations in the US. Investigative intelligence indicates that Mexican DTOs are involved increasingly in white heroin trafficking, which has led to their expanded heroin distribution east of the Mississippi, areas historically dominated by Dominicans and Colombians distributing South American heroin. Colombia remains a major source of supply. Intelligence units will continue to monitor the characteristics of heroin seized in Louisiana, as well as heroin trafficking patterns, to better understand the nature of the Louisiana heroin market.

3. African American Drug Trafficking Organizations

African American criminal organizations have established ties with Mexican DTOs in Texas who serve as cocaine and heroin sources. African American criminal organizations are primarily responsible for the retail distribution of crack cocaine in Louisiana. Most of these distributors convert powdered cocaine into crack cocaine and divide it into multi-ounce quantities which are sold by lower level street vendors in high crime areas. African American criminal organizations are the primary distributors of heroin in the Greater New Orleans metro area. The organizational leader is typically reported as a male with a history

of drug trafficking and violent crimes. The members are often relatives of the same extended family or from the same neighborhood. The use of females as couriers and distributors, especially of money, is common. In addition to being primarily responsible for crack cocaine trafficking in Louisiana, these African American DTOs are also responsible for the majority of drug related violent crimes in Louisiana. These groups are traditionally very difficult to penetrate with outside informants and can best be investigated by enlisting the cooperation of existing members of the group. These DTOs are extremely violent and vindictive toward such informants. Violence directed at informants or rival drug traffickers significantly contributes to the overall violent crime rate in Louisiana.

4. Vietnamese Drug Trafficking Organizations

MDMA traffickers are predominately of Vietnamese origin, although MDMA trafficking is not limited to this population specifically nor are the Vietnamese limited to only trafficking MDMA. Many of the Vietnamese traffickers are large scale poly-drug traffickers, trafficking marijuana and cocaine in addition to MDMA, but with their primary profit source being MDMA. The local business structures of the Vietnamese populations readily facilitate money laundering, with millions of dollars being moved all over the United States and other countries through these businesses. Businesses are usually small, service oriented, cash-intensive companies which allow for easy explanation of moderate sums of cash, such as, check cashing companies, delicatessens, gas stations, quick markets, nail salons and restaurants.

5. Louisiana Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMGs)

Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMGs) have a hierarchical structure. At the top will be the leader or President of the club, along with the Vice President (second in command), Enforcer (enforces clubs rules and penalties), Sergeant at Arms (similar to the enforcer but also keeps members in line), Secretary Treasurer (financial keeper of the club), Road Captain and Members. Upon joining a club, new members, called either a “prospect,” “probate” or “recruit”, will serve a probationary period prior to becoming a full patched member. OMGs range in size from single chapters to multiple chapters across the state and country. Members are often involved in the sale of methamphetamine and other narcotics. Individual members have personal relationships with various lower-to-mid level narcotics distributors. Members normally possess firearms and are suspected of involvement in weapons trafficking. Members are vetted to reduce the likelihood of infiltration by law enforcement. The 1% diamond patch is only allowed to be worn by legitimate OMG members of the dominant clubs which are the Bandidos and the Sons of Silence. It may be in the form of a patch, tattoo, ring, etc.

Bandidos Chapters have been documented in Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Houma, Lake Charles, New Orleans, and Shreveport. During 2019, the Bandidos continued to recruit new members. The Bandidos continue to be involved in narcotics distribution, intimidation, and turf conflicts. Methamphetamine is sold among the members as well as the members of its support clubs. Individual members have personal relationships with various mid-to-lower level narcotics distributors. Members normally possess firearms and are suspected of future involvement in weapons trafficking. Bandidos support clubs are Gray Ghosts, Los Solitarios, LA Riders, Iron Cross Riders, Hole-In-Da-Wall, and Bayou

Country Riders. There is a conflict between the Bandidos and the Brothers East motorcycle gang. The Brothers East (also known as B*EAST) motorcycle gang have been identified in the western part of Louisiana and southeast Texas. B*EAST members have been engaged in theft, guns, and narcotics.²¹

6. Street Gangs

Louisiana Street Gangs are primarily local, loose-knit, turf-oriented neighborhood groups concerned only with the “business” activity in their neighborhood; however, there are members of nationally affiliated gangs throughout the state. Most of Louisiana street gangs are hybrid gangs. Hybrid gangs usually commit a mixture of crimes listed in the gang and racketeering statutes. Most Louisiana gangs do not have an organized structure and tend to fluctuate based on economic activity. Gang members are known to switch affiliation based on which gang has the best connections to increase their personal gain through narcotics trade and financing. Adult gang members will attempt to recruit younger members to commit criminal activity, as many do not have criminal histories, therefore making it more difficult to identify them as possible suspects. In addition, juveniles typically receive less stringent sentences than adults do. They continue to use the recording industry and other small businesses as a front for criminal activity such as the sale of weapons and narcotics. Gang members are involved in armed robbery, drive-by shootings, narcotics violations, and weapons violations. The members openly display themselves and gang affiliation on social networking sites over the internet. These groups are usually prosecuted under Federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act statutes rather than Louisiana gang statutes, as it can be difficult to prove the criminal acts were done on behalf of the gang and not the individual.

VIII. MONEY LAUNDERING ORGANIZATIONS

Louisiana has an environment conducive for money laundering operations including:

- Large coastline and fishing industries
- Major ports
- Two major east/west interstates
- An international airport and numerous airstrips
- Gaming casinos

Highway interdiction stops amass the majority of currency seizures. Most drugs are transported eastbound through Louisiana and illicit proceeds are transported westbound. Currency interdiction seizures have occasionally occurred eastbound. Smugglers and money launderers utilize multiple methods for transporting drugs and money into and through Louisiana, including water, air, rail, and land. Louisiana’s large coastline makes it easily accessible by water or air which allows illicit entry and exit of goods to and from other countries. The Ports of New Orleans, Baton Rouge, St. Bernard, Plaquemines, and South Louisiana make up the world's largest continuous port district and are responsible for moving one fifth of all U.S. foreign waterborne commerce. The Port of New Orleans is most often utilized to facilitate smuggling and trafficking operations into and out of the

²¹ (U//LES) Identified Members of the Shreveport Chapter of the B*EAST Motorcycle Gang, As of September 2019

United States, posing a valid money laundering threat. An additional potential threat exists with the cruise lines which operate vessels out of New Orleans on regular trips to Mexico and multiple Caribbean islands.

Louisiana's extensive business ties to countries labeled as source or transit countries creates an avenue for illicit activity to be conducted while being concealed among legitimate business activities. U.S. and non-U.S. citizens work in or travel on business to Louisiana creating a plausible "cover" to conduct illegal operations. Establishing residency in Louisiana allows them to operate under the guise of a legitimate business and create an organizational cell for their illegal enterprises. Thus, the local organizational cell uses its ties in transit or source countries to facilitate the laundering of money from illegal activities.

The experiences of law enforcement and regulatory officials indicate the gambling environment attracts criminal elements involved in a variety of illicit activities such as money laundering, drug trafficking, and fraud. The fast-paced environment and cash-intensive nature makes casinos vulnerable to manipulation by money launderers and tax evaders. With legitimate customers gambling with large sums of currency, gaming creates a good "cover" for money launderers. Gaming has the potential of having the largest single impact upon laundering and trafficking patterns in Louisiana. The casinos have installed "cash in/ticket out" slot machines which makes it very easy for individuals to launder money through the casino by simply putting money into the slot machine and then "cashing out" by receiving a paper ticket for the money. Suspects/individuals then take the ticket to the cashier and receive the amount listed on the ticket and often they never actually play slot machines.

IV. OUTLOOK

Methamphetamine will likely continue to be sold in the rural areas of the state. Heroin and fentanyl will continue to be found in conjunction with other drugs. Marijuana abuse will likely increase due to the availability of medical marijuana in addition to marijuana that is shipped into and grown within the state. Cocaine and controlled prescription abuse will likely remain the same.

TRENDS

- Methamphetamine is being distributed by all races and very few labs are being observed. In addition to traditional methods, methamphetamine is being eaten.
- Heroin mixed with fentanyl will continue to increase around the state.
- Marijuana is being shipped into the state using commercial shipping companies and it is also being brought in via personal vehicles.
- THC is being used in vaping products by and young adults especially among teenagers.

FORECAST

- Due to the low cost, methamphetamine continue to be readily availability which will cause a continual increase in its abuse.
- Opioid-related overdoses and deaths will continue to be an increase.

- There will be an increase in the abuse of medicinal marijuana as more prescriptions are issued and more dispensaries are opened.
- The manufacture, distribution, and importation of new psychoactive drugs will continue to rise.

APPENDIX

1. METHODOLOGY

Louisiana State Analytical & Fusion Exchange (LA-SAFE) utilized several methods to collect factual information and statistics for the 2021 Gulf Coast High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (GC HIDTA) Drug Threat Assessment. LA-SAFE employed the 2021 Gulf Coast High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (GC HIDTA) Drug Survey to collect information from numerous law enforcement agencies throughout the state and requested their participation in the drug survey located on the GC HIDTA website. The survey results provided data related to the drug threats in Louisiana and provided valuable information on threat characteristics in Louisiana (i.e., rural areas, suburban areas). LA-SAFE personnel obtained drug-related statistical information as well as significant drug-related incidents from agencies such as the Louisiana State Police (LSP), the Gulf Coast HIDTA Watch Center, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC).

2. PARTICIPANTS

1st JDC Adult Drug Court
 24th Judicial District Court
 ADAPT
 Avoyelles Parish Sheriff's Office
 Barefoot Counseling, LLC
 Beacon Behavioral Hospital
 Bienville Parish Sheriff's Office
 Bossier City Police Department
 Bridge House Corporation
 CADA Prevention & Recovery Center
 Caddo Parish Sheriff's Office
 Caldwell Parish Sheriff Department
 Capital Area Human Services District
 Cenikor
 Clinical SocialWork
 Concordia Parish Sheriff's Office
 Covington Behavioral Health
 Daniel Ministries of LA
 DEA
 Department of Health
 Dept. of Corrections, Division of probation & parole
 Desoto Parish Sheriff's Office
 Diversity Health Services
 East Carroll Sheriff's Office
 East Feliciana Drug and Alcohol Awareness Council

East Jefferson General Hospital
Extraordinary Behavioral Services
Global Drug Consultants
Greater New Orleans Drug Demand Reduction Coalition
Greenwood Police Department
Haughton Police Department
Jackson Parish Sheriff's Office
JeffCare
Jefferson Parish Coroner
Jefferson Parish District Attorney
Jefferson Parish Human Services Authority
Jewish Family Service
LA. Dept. of Corrections
Louisiana Department of Health, Office of Behavioral Health (OBH)
Lincoln Parish Sheriff's Office
Louisiana Probation and Parole
Louisiana State Police
LSU Shreveport
Oak Grove Police Department
Oceans Healthcare
Odyssey House Louisiana
Owner Journey Home Services, LLC
Quad Youth Build
Rapides Parish District Attorney's Office
Rapides Parish Sheriff's Office
Red River Parish Sheriff's Office
Resources for Human Development (RHD Louisiana)
Responsibility House
Ruston Police Department
Shreveport Behavioral Health Clinic
Shreveport Police Department
Southeastern Louisiana University Community Counseling Center
State of Louisiana
The Grove Recovery Center
The Serenity Center of Louisiana
Union Parish Sheriff's Office
Vernon Parish Sheriff's Office
Woodworth Police Department