

## **Safe Communities**

(cont.)

## **Coalition Action Steps**

### **Support Law Enforcement**

By providing our police and sheriff's departments with the tools and support they need to effectively enforce our laws and improve public safety. Coordinate an ongoing public relations campaign supporting local law enforcement and the important work they are doing to keep our community safe.

- \* Provide grant support for law enforcement tools and technology
- \* Support the Fort Dodge Police Dept. K-9 program
- \* Crime Stoppers

### **Crime Prevention**

By organizing and coordinating projects and programs that can help reduce crime in the greater Fort Dodge area.

- \* Neighborhood Watch programs
- \* Promoting the use of security cameras for businesses and homes
- \* Public education on preventing crime and reducing drug use and addiction
- \* Education on preventing human trafficking

### **Youth Substance Abuse Prevention**

By using evidenced based programs, educate youth and parents about the dangers of illicit drugs and the destructive consequences that come with abusing drugs and alcohol. Teach and encourage youth on making healthy and positive choices.

- \* Partner with schools and youth organizations on prevention education

## **Youth and Family Safety**

By organizing and coordinating programs on:

- \* Internet safety for youth
- \* Fire safety at home
- \* Suicide prevention

## **Media – Communications**

Develop an effective communications program to increase awareness and understanding about public safety principles and to educate parents.

- \* Develop an information website for parents and the general public
- \* Use social media
- \* Partner with the Messenger and Alpha Media
- \* Coordinate ongoing public relations campaign

## **Together we can make Fort Dodge a safer community. Perspective**

### **Economic Development:**

Crime and violence are an economic development “killers.” Communities that suffer from high levels of crime and violence have a more difficult challenge in attracting new businesses and manufacturers to their communities. Current employers also experience greater difficulty in recruiting and retaining employees.

Communities with higher rates of drug addiction also have higher poverty rates. Drug and alcohol addiction is a destroyer of families which often leads to family poverty. Communities with higher-than-average levels of poverty also see higher levels of social ills that often accompany poverty including illicit drug use, criminal activity, domestic violence, child abuse, divorce, homelessness, and mental health issues. These social ills do not enhance the image of a community and can hinder a community’s prosperity and economic development efforts.

### **Crime and Drug Addiction:**

According to the National Crime Prevention Council, there is a close relationship between drug abuse and crime. National studies dealing with criminal behavior clearly show a direct relationship between the level of drug use and addiction and criminal activity. Drug abusers commit crimes to pay for their drugs. This inflicts damages upon communities because they turn to illegal activities such as drug dealing, theft, trafficking stolen property and prostitution. Moreover, many criminals are under the influence of drugs while committing burglary and violent crimes. The necessity for developing preventive strategies is needed today more than ever.



### **Gang Activity and Violence:**

Gangs are the primary distributors of illegal drugs on the streets in cities across the United States. Gangs smuggle drugs into the United States and produce and transport drugs within the country.

Gangs in large cities and even in small communities like Fort Dodge readily employ violence to control and expand their drug activities, targeting rival gangs and dealers who compete with them in selling drugs. Members also use violence to ensure that members adhere to the gang's code of conduct.

Authorities throughout the country report that gangs are responsible for most of the serious violent crime in the U.S. cities. Gangs engage in an array of criminal activities including assault, burglary, drive-by shootings, extortion, homicide, identification fraud, money laundering, prostitution, robbery, selling stolen property, and weapons trafficking.

In recent years, gangs have been recruiting younger youth to sell their drugs. Gangs have migrated into public schools at both the high school and middle school levels. According to a Department of Justice survey, 20 percent of students aged 12 through 18 reported that gangs had been present at their school during the previous 6 months. More than a quarter (28%) of students in urban schools reported a gang presence, and 18 percent of students in suburban schools and 13 percent in rural schools reported the presence of gangs in their schools.

## Benefits of a Safe Community Coalition

The core values of Safe Community coalitions are collaboration and effectively working together with critical stakeholders and sectors of a community to serve as a catalyst for change, to raise awareness and create solutions. For Safe Community coalitions, the goals include improving community safety and reducing crime, violence and substance abuse. Research shows that improving the safety of a community is much more effective when led and executed at the local level. Community coalitions can lead concerted, well planned and coordinated efforts in partnership with local law enforcement to make a real difference in improving public safety in communities of all sizes.



### Coalition Members

- \* Fort Dodge Community Foundation and United Way
- \* North Central Iowa Opioid Coalition
- \* Webster County Sheriff's Department
- \* Iowa State Patrol
- \* AFES
- \* Iowa Central Community College
- \* Webster County District Attorney's Office
- \* Webster County Health Department
- \* Local churches
- \* Crime Stoppers
- \* SOS
- \* FD Police Department
- \* FD Public School System
- \* St. Edmond Catholic School System
- \* United Point – Trinity Reg. Hospital
- \* Community and Family Resources
- \* Greater Fort Dodge Growth Alliance
- \* Parent groups

### Benefits of Strong Safe Community Coalition Include:

- \* Increased synergy by developing collaborative partnerships that can build trust, critical mass, credibility, community capacity and systemic change.
- \* A unified mission that is collaborative and focused on results, offering continuity of interventions and enhanced sustainability.
- \* An integrated and collaborative process for planning, problem-solving, and using best practices for community prevention strategies and initiatives.
- \* Greater unified support for local law enforcement and the critical work they do to fight crime and help make communities safer.
- \* Increased impact and reach through more effective messaging throughout the community with one shared message and many voices.
- \* Leveraging resources among the partners leading to greater efficiency and reduced duplication.
- \* Improvements in creating vibrant, safe neighborhoods, and public environments - ultimately, increasing the sense of enhanced safety and personal well-being.
- \* Serving as a central point of coordination - providing effective coordination of projects/programs that advance public safety for youth, families and people of all ages.

## Important Facts

### Drug Addiction Often Begins With Adolescent Drug Use

There is evidence across a range of substances—including marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, opioids and synthetic narcotics that the risk of addiction is significantly greater when the use of these substances begins during adolescence than for those who initiate use during adulthood. National research on drug use shows that the number of addicted adults who first began using marijuana at the ages of 12 to 16 were six times higher than addicted adults who first used marijuana at the age of 18 or older.

#### Iowa Department of Public Health Statistics for Webster County ages 12-25)

	12-17	18-25
Used Marijuana	13%	24%
Inappropriately used prescription drugs	5%	8%
Inappropriately used amphetamines (stimulants, uppers, speed)	2%	7%
Used Methamphetamine	0.4%	14%
Used alcohol – 5 or more drinks during a 2-hour period	16%	54%
Used tobacco – cigarettes or vaping	16%	18%

Note: In 2020, 99,000 (27%) Iowans ages 18- to 25 used illicit drugs (alcohol excluded)

### Today's Drugs Have Significantly Higher Potency and Are Much More Addictive

Drug	Potency and the Rise in Drug Use
Morphine	1X potency
Heroin	2X potency
Fentanyl	100X potency
Carfentanyl	10,000X potency
Note: Opioid Deaths	Iowa deaths 2005: 59    in 2020: 419 – a 700% increase
Methamphetamine	2005 – 35% purity    2018 – 97% purity
Marijuana smoked	1972 – 1% potency    2017 – 19.6% potency
Marijuana concentrated	2020 potency is 69%
Alcohol	Deaths in 2011 - 440    Deaths in 2018 - 616
Nicotine	Vaping increase use – 23% of 11 <sup>th</sup> graders and - 8% of 8 <sup>th</sup> graders vape

## **Methamphetamine Use**

The state of Iowa is struggling in its battle against illegal drug use and addiction, and the biggest challenge in this battle today is methamphetamine. The Iowa Department of Public Health reports that Iowa has experienced a 38% increase in methamphetamine treatment admissions over the past four years, and since 2011, methamphetamine-related deaths in Iowa have increased eight-fold.

Unfortunately, among Iowa youth, the perception of risk of methamphetamine use has been declining for the past several years.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, methamphetamine is a highly addictive stimulant and for some first-time users, they become immediately addicted after one experience. People addicted to methamphetamine often develop higher tolerance to its pleasurable effects so they often need to take higher doses of the drug, take it more frequently, or change how they take it in an effort to get the desired effect. Chronic meth abusers may develop difficulty feeling any pleasure other than that provided by the drug, fueling further abuse.

In addition to being addicted to methamphetamine, long term meth users often exhibit symptoms such as significant anxiety, confusion, insomnia, mood disturbances, and violent behavior. They also may display a number of psychotic features, including paranoia, visual and auditory hallucinations, and delusions (for example, the sensation of insects creeping under the skin). Psychotic symptoms can sometimes last for months or years after a person has quit using methamphetamine. Withdrawal from methamphetamine occurs when a chronic abuser stops taking the drug; symptoms of withdrawal include depression, anxiety, fatigue, and an intense craving for the drug.

Addicted meth users usually suffer physical effects as well, including weight loss, severe tooth decay and tooth loss, and skin sores. Skin sores are the result of picking and scratching the skin to get rid of insects imagined to be crawling under their skin.

### **Webster County**

Unfortunately, Webster County ranks in the top 20% for the per capita rate of methamphetamine use in Iowa. According to Sheriff Fleener, the use of methamphetamines has increased significantly in Fort Dodge and Webster County, mainly because it is 400 to 500 percent cheaper to buy today than just five years ago. Most of the methamphetamine in Iowa and Webster County is from Mexico and is transported to Iowa via the Interstate 35 corridor.

## Methamphetamine Treatment by Age for Webster County

Age 12-17	0.4%
Age 18-25	13.6%
Age 26-30	18%
Age 31-40	40%
Age 41-50	17%
Age 51-65	11%



## Impact of Fentanyl

According to the National Institute of Health (NIH), Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid that is similar to morphine but is 50 to 100 times more potent. It is a prescription drug that is also made and used illegally. Like morphine, it is a medicine that is typically used to treat patients with severe pain, especially after surgery. Synthetic opioids, including fentanyl, are now the most common drugs involved in drug overdose deaths in the United States. In 2017, 59.8 percent of opioid-related deaths involved fentanyl compared to 14.3 percent in 2010. In the past twelve months, fentanyl was the cause of over 70,000 drug overdose deaths of people in the United States mostly within the ages of 15 to 30.



The illegal use of fentanyl associated with recent overdoses is made in labs. This synthetic fentanyl is sold illegally as a powder, dropped onto blotter paper, put in eye droppers and nasal sprays, or made into pills that look like other prescription opioids. A tiny dose of fentanyl the size of a pinhead can be lethal for most people.

Some drug dealers are mixing fentanyl with other drugs, such as heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, marijuana and MDMA. This is because it takes very little to produce a high with fentanyl, making it a cheaper option. This is especially risky when people taking drugs don't realize they might contain fentanyl as a cheap but dangerous additive. They might be taking stronger opioids than their bodies are used to and can be more likely to overdose.

Most illegal synthetic fentanyl is made in China and transported to the cartels in Mexico and is then brought to the United States by the cartels' illegal distribution system. Law enforcement



agencies in Iowa, including Webster County, have seen a significant uptick in fentanyl, in particular, fentanyl that is laced into other drugs. The Iowa Crime Lab reports that fentanyl was implicated in 87% of Iowa's opioid overdose deaths in the first half of 2021. The Iowa Department of Public Health reports that fentanyl cases in Iowa have increased by over 1,000 percent since 2016.

Carfentanil is one of many fentanyl analogs, which are drugs manufactured to imitate the effects of other drugs. These drugs have a similar makeup as fentanyl but may not show up in drug tests. Carfentanil, in particular, is believed to be 10,000 times stronger than fentanyl. In fact, there was a 540% increase in deaths by fentanyl analogs between 2013 and 2016.

### **Is Marijuana a Gateway Drug?**

The debate about marijuana being a gateway drug continues to rage on. Data shows that the majority of people who use or have used marijuana do not move on to using other drugs. Yet, national drug use research also shows that most people who develop severe problems with drugs, such as cocaine, meth, heroin, and opioids had early experiences with marijuana before trying other drugs. A majority of drug addicts claim that after using marijuana for a period of time, their bodies craved for a more intense high which led them to using other illicit and more addictive drugs.

### **Marijuana Transportation into Iowa**

Data on the illegal transportation of marijuana to Iowa shows that the largest percentage of marijuana comes from Mexico followed by the state of Colorado. State law enforcement leaders anticipate that more marijuana will be coming into Iowa from Illinois, because it is a close neighboring state.

### **Impact of Legalizing Marijuana**

Data from states that have legalized recreational marijuana use shows that marijuana use harms more than just the person using the drug. Societal costs of marijuana use include paying for increased emergency room visits, medical care, and more addiction treatment for both the insured and uninsured; more drug impaired driving and more victims of drugged driving accidents; increased crime; increased population of homeless people; and increased exposure of marijuana to adolescents and even children as young as six-years old.

Studies by the Centennial Institute in Colorado on the social costs due to the legalization of marijuana in Colorado showed the following findings:

- \* For every dollar gained in tax revenue, Coloradans spent approximately \$4.50 to mitigate the effects of legalization.
- \* The number of homeless people has increased dramatically with some Colorado cities showing the homeless population more than doubling in size.
- \* A disturbing increase in the number of high school dropouts has occurred
- \* While people who attended college and used marijuana has grown since legalization, marijuana use remains more prevalent in the population with less education
- \* Adult marijuana users generally have lower educational attainment than non-users and for many long-term marijuana users, it has led to reduced cognitive abilities.



- \* Research shows a strong connection between increased marijuana use and the increased use of alcohol and illegal drugs.
- \* Calls to hospital emergency rooms related to marijuana increased dramatically since legalization of both medical marijuana and legalization of recreational marijuana
- \* The number of severely burned victims as a result of marijuana use dramatically increased.
- \* Since the legalization of marijuana, serious mental health challenges and suicide attempts, especially among adolescents and young adults, has dramatically increased
- \* People who use marijuana more frequently tend to be less physically active, and develop a sedentary lifestyle which has increased obesity rates among adults
- \* Marijuana has had a major impact on the safety of employees, and legalization has created new challenges for employers as work place accidents have increased significantly. Data shows that one third of employees report having observed marijuana use during work hours.
- \* States with legal recreational marijuana are reporting an increase in serious and fatal motor vehicle accidents involving drivers impaired by THC. Since marijuana was legalized in Colorado in 2013, traffic deaths where drivers tested positive for THC increased 138%.
- \* 69% of marijuana users say they have driven under the influence of marijuana at least once, and 27% admit to driving under the influence on a daily basis

### **Impact of Marijuana on Children**

Marijuana can also be taken orally and is often cooked into food. Commonly called edibles, this kind of marijuana is in the form of brownies or cookies. However, marijuana can be added to many types of food, just like an herb, and even appears in candy like gummies. States that have legalized marijuana have reported significant increases in marijuana ingestion by children as young as three years old. These incidents are usually accidental and end up in emergency room visits. Iowa law enforcement is seeing marijuana gummies coming into Iowa putting Iowa children at risk.

### **Impact of Marijuana on Adolescents**

There is a popular perception that marijuana isn't dangerous—but it is dangerous, both in the short term and the long term especially for adolescents (youth ages of 12-17). Unfortunately, the legalize cannabis industry puts out a lot of propaganda to youth that marijuana is not dangerous. Here is why marijuana is dangerous according to research by the American Academy of Pediatrics:



- \* Marijuana interferes with judgment, concentration, reaction time and coordination in ways that can make youth more likely to get into car crashes or other serious injuries.
- \* The ways that it interferes with brain functions such as memory, attention and problem-solving can impede learning and make it much harder for youth succeed in school.
- \* Marijuana can be addictive. Substance abuse treatment centers report that close to 50% of their adolescent clients are being treating for addiction to marijuana.
- \* Inhaling the marijuana smoke can cause lung problems.
- \* 50% of adolescents who are using e-cigarettes are vaping marijuana
- \* New research shows that marijuana use during adolescence, when the brain is going through many important changes, can lead to permanent problems with memory, learning and thinking.
- \* Youth who use marijuana regularly are less likely to finish high school and are more likely to use other more dangerous drugs.
- \* Youth who use marijuana regularly are more likely to develop mental health issues and many attempt suicide.

### **Vaping and Marijuana Use**

The practice of using vaping devices to consume marijuana is becoming increasingly widespread. Recent data shows that more than one-fifth of high school seniors have reported vaping marijuana in the past year. Cannabis vaping cartridges are easy to purchase on the Internet making access to marijuana for vaping easy and prevalent.

