



# THE OREGON HIDTA PROGRAM

**\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\***

Thursday, August 7, 2008

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## **OREGON'S HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREA (HIDTA) PROGRAM RELEASES ANNUAL DRUG THREAT ASSESSMENT AND COUNTER-DRUG STRATEGY**

*REPORT INDICATES OREGON DRUG USE EXCEEDS NATIONAL AVERAGE;  
ABUSE AND TRAFFICKING OF METHAMPHETAMINE AND MARIJUANA  
REMAINS EPIDEMIC*

(Portland, OR) – Chris Gibson, Director of the Oregon High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Program, today released the Program's annual Drug Threat Assessment and Counter-Drug Strategy during a press conference at the Portland Police Bureau's North East Precinct. The report indicates that illicit use of marijuana, methamphetamine and prescription pain relievers and stimulants in Oregon exceeds the national per capita average.

“The abuse and trafficking of methamphetamine and marijuana remains epidemic in Oregon today. Marijuana production is also widespread and increasing in scale,” said Director Gibson. “Fortunately, methamphetamine production is down substantially. From 2004 to 2007, the number of local methamphetamine labs reported by law enforcement declined by 96 percent due, in large part, to increased enforcement efforts by state, local and federal law enforcement agencies, strict pseudoephedrine control legislation enacted by the Oregon legislature and the enactment of the Federal Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act of 2005.”

Despite the declines in in-state production, the availability of crystal methamphetamine has not diminished as Mexican drug traffickers are importing the finished product from labs in Mexico and other locations outside Oregon, according to the report. While there is some evidence of a downward trend in amphetamine treatment admissions, serious methamphetamine-related crime continues to be a daily problem and is regarded by Oregon law enforcement agencies as the area's greatest drug threat. The sustained high-levels of drug abuse are reflected in the significant level of identity theft, abused and neglected children, and other serious person and property crimes.

Heroin, cocaine, and prescription drug abuse constitute the next tier of major drug threats to Oregon communities. “While heroin and cocaine indicators of abuse have fluctuated, the threat posed by pharmaceutical abuse has risen in recent years. According to a report published by Oregon Department of Human Services, treatment admissions in the state have increased 332 percent in the last 10 years – surpassing admissions for cocaine in 2005, “ said Director Gibson

Marijuana abuse, production and trafficking are also widespread and increasing in scale in Oregon, today's report noted. Large indoor and outdoor marijuana growing operations have been discovered on both public and private forest lands and Bureau of Land Management areas.

The discovered plants often number in the tens of thousands and the harvested product is distributed both locally and nationally. The Oregon HIDTA counties of Clackamas, Deschutes, Douglas, Jackson, Marion, Multnomah, Umatilla, and Washington host significant numbers of hydroponic indoor grows. These grows, which utilize hydroponic methods are capable of producing high-quality marijuana that is in demand and distributed locally, nationally, and internationally. A growing threat, previously found in California and spreading into Oregon, concerns sophisticated indoor marijuana grows located in upscale suburban neighborhoods and operated by Asian organized crime.

The Oregon Medical Marijuana Law, which allows for small quantities of marijuana to be grown for use by physician-approved patients for pain suppression, has been consistently violated and has become a major barrier to effective marijuana cultivation enforcement and prosecution efforts.

Mexican and Caucasian drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) control the majority of the transportation and distribution of illicit drugs into and out of the eight HIDTA counties in Oregon, as well as the state's other twenty-eight counties. These DTOs are also the primary traffickers of cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and methamphetamine abused in the HIDTA region. Mexican DTOs dominate the transportation and distribution of heroin and cocaine, while Caucasian DTOs control marijuana transportation and distribution. Methamphetamine trafficking is increasingly being dominated by Mexican DTOs. Other DTOs and criminal groups, such as Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMGs), street gangs, and Asian, Canadian, Honduran, Middle Eastern, and Russian DTOs, also transport and distribute drugs, but to a lesser extent. Ecstasy (MDMA), GHB, LSD, PCP, ketamine, psilocybin and pseudoephedrine are also smuggled into the Oregon HIDTA region.

Oregon HIDTA participating agencies have identified 140 DTOs and four money laundering organizations (MLOs) with foreign and domestic connections that are actively operating in the HIDTA counties and throughout Oregon.

“The Oregon HIDTA Program’s strategy to address the drug threat within the region is to collocate law enforcement personnel in order to foster enhanced information and resource sharing. Through collocation, interagency cooperation, and consolidation of strategic and tactical information, the Oregon HIDTA Program fosters a comprehensive response to illicit drug activity by bringing together all available law enforcement resources in a united front,” said Gibson.

The Oregon HIDTA Program law enforcement initiatives focus on DTOs, MLOs, domestic-drug movement, and the apprehension of fugitives with a criminal drug pedigree. The Oregon HIDTA Program law enforcement initiatives are directed through the respective lead agencies’ management policies and the challenges identified in the Oregon HIDTA Program Drug Threat Assessment. Law enforcement initiatives actively pursue the disruption and, or, dismantlement of DTOs and MLOs.

An overview of the Oregon HIDTA Program key strategy components can be summarized as follows:

1. Identify and target the most serious and prolific DTOs and MLOs operating in the Oregon HIDTA areas.

2. Create intelligence-driven drug task forces aimed at eliminating or reducing domestic drug trafficking of methamphetamine, heroin, cocaine, and marijuana.
3. Share criminal intelligence with law enforcement agencies along the I-5 corridor between Mexico and Canada, neighboring states, and nationwide as appropriate.
4. Focus task force efforts at the identified “High-Value” drug trafficking organizations.
5. Provide an Investigative Service Center (ISC) that serves as a “one-stop research shop” and “coordination umbrella” that provides accurate, detailed and timely tactical and strategic drug intelligence to HIDTA initiatives, HIDTA participating agencies, and other law enforcement agencies as appropriate both locally and nationally.
6. Provide an ISC that serves as a primary investigative resource for technical support and equipment, to include state-of-the-art Title III and Pen Register equipment, Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking equipment, crime analysis equipment, surveillance equipment, undercover equipment, video enhancement services, and computer forensic services.
7. Provide an electronic officer safety warning system through the ISC Watch Center that serves to de-conflict and coordinate tactical operations and investigations occurring in close proximity to each other on a twenty-four hour basis, seven days per week.
8. Conduct field operations and investigations, which dismantle drug trafficking organizations through systematic and thorough investigations that lead to successful criminal prosecutions and forfeiture of their illicit assets.
9. Leverage federal, state, and local law enforcement efforts by coordinating efforts to reduce the production, manufacturing, distribution, transportation, and use of illegal drugs, as well as the related money laundering of drug proceeds.
10. Provide quality training to law enforcement personnel to enhance their skills at investigating, prosecuting, and preventing drug trafficking and drug abuse at all levels and promote officer safety.

Following this release you can find additional information on the Office of National Drug Control Policy HIDTA Program and the Oregon HIDTA Program.

A copy of the Oregon HIDTA Program’s annual Drug Threat Assessment and Counter-Drug Strategy may be found on the following web sites:

Clackamas County Sheriff’s Office - [www.co.clackamas.or.us/sheriff](http://www.co.clackamas.or.us/sheriff)

Douglas County Sheriff’s Office – [www.dcsso.com](http://www.dcsso.com)

Jackson County Sheriff’s Office – [www.jacksoncounty.org/sheriff](http://www.jacksoncounty.org/sheriff)

Washington County Sheriff’s Office – [www.co.washington.or.us/cgi/sheriff/lec.pl](http://www.co.washington.or.us/cgi/sheriff/lec.pl)

Umatilla County Sheriff’s Office – [www.umatillacounty.net/sheriff.htm](http://www.umatillacounty.net/sheriff.htm)



## **The HIDTA Program**

The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 and the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) Reauthorization Act of 1998 authorized the Director of ONDCP to designate areas within the United States, which exhibit serious drug trafficking problems and harmfully impact other areas of the country, as High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA).

The HIDTA Program provides additional federal resources to those areas to help eliminate or reduce drug trafficking and its harmful consequences. Law enforcement organizations within HDTAs assess drug trafficking problems and design specific initiatives to reduce or eliminate the production, manufacture, transportation, distribution and chronic use of illegal drugs and money laundering.

The HIDTA Program helps improve the effectiveness and efficiency of drug control efforts by facilitating cooperation between drug control organizations through resource and information sharing, collocating and implementing joint initiatives. HIDTA funds help federal, state and local law enforcement organizations invest in infrastructure and joint initiatives to confront drug-trafficking organizations.

The overall mission of the national HIDTA program is to disrupt the market for illegal drugs in the region by assisting federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement entities to dismantle and disrupt drug trafficking organizations, with particular emphasis on drug trafficking regions that have harmful effects on other parts of the United States.

## **Priorities**

The key priorities of the Program are:

- Assess regional drug threats;
- Design strategies to focus efforts that combat drug trafficking threats;
- Develop and fund initiatives to implement strategies;
- Facilitate coordination between federal, state and local efforts to;
- Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of drug control efforts to reduce or eliminate the harmful impact of drug trafficking.

## **Program Oversight**

Each HIDTA is managed by a Director and governed by its own Executive Board comprised of no more than 20 members. These Boards facilitate interagency drug control efforts to eliminate or reduce drug threats. The Executive Boards ensure threat specific strategies and initiatives are developed, employed, supported and evaluated.

## **The Oregon HIDTA**

The Oregon HIDTA, one of 28 HDTAs and 5 partnerships in the nation, was established in 1999. The eight counties that comprise the Oregon HIDTA region are:

- Clackamas
- Deschutes
- Douglas
- Jackson
- Marion
- Multnomah
- Umatilla
- Washington

### **Mission Statement**

The **primary** mission of the Oregon HIDTA Program is to reduce drug availability by creating intelligence-driven, multi-agency, drug task forces aimed at eliminating or reducing domestic drug trafficking and its harmful consequences by enhancing and helping to coordinate drug trafficking control efforts among federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.

The **secondary** mission of the Oregon HIDTA Program is to reduce drug availability by creating intelligence driven, multi-agency, drug task forces aimed at reducing the local manufacturing and trafficking of methamphetamine and marijuana and by reducing the supply of illegal drugs brought into Oregon from other states and foreign countries

### **Initiatives**

The Oregon HIDTA Program provides funding and support to eleven multi-agency drug enforcement initiatives, one fugitive apprehension initiative, one investigative support center initiative, one training initiative and one management and coordination initiative in the eight Oregon HIDTA counties:

#### **Clackamas County**

- Clackamas County Interagency Narcotics Team

#### **Deschutes County**

- Central Oregon Drug Enforcement and Prosecution Task Force

#### **Douglas County**

- ·Douglas Interagency Narcotics Team

#### **Jackson County**

- ·Jackson County HIDTA Drug Enforcement and Prosecution Task Force
- ·Medford Area Drug and Gang Enforcement Team

#### **Marion County**

- ·Marion County DEA HIDTA Task Force
- ·Oregon HIDTA Investigative Support Center
- ·Oregon State Police Training Initiative
- ·Management and Coordination Initiative

#### **Multnomah County**

- ·HIDTA Interdiction Team

- ·Portland Area Gang Task Force
- ·Regional Organized Crime Narcotics Task Force
- ·United States Marshals Service HIDTA Fugitive Task Force

**Umatilla County**

- ·Blue Mountain Enforcement Narcotics Team

**Washington County**

- ·Westside Interagency Narcotics Team

**The Oregon HIDTA Program Executive Board**

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Larry Blanton  
**Sheriff - Deschutes County**

Craig Roberts  
**Sheriff - Clackamas County**

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