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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
MAINE DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCY



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

A STATEWIDE DRUG TASK FORCE

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INDEX

Executive Summary..... 3

Introduction 4

Task Forces..... 5

Funding 10

Maine’s Drug Threat 11

Accomplishments & Challenges 12

Outcomes..... 16

Organization..... 19

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

I. Executive Summary

All Maine communities are affected by the distribution of and use of drugs. The availability of illegal drugs, diverted prescription medications, related crime, medical and legal costs, and the lives they impact are evidence of this. The reality is that opiate addiction strikes across age, ethnic and economic groups and the community looks to the police for help in combating this issue.

An effective enforcement program that disrupts the drug market is required to undermine the ability of drug suppliers to meet, expand, and profit from drug demand. This effort strengthens the State's ability to support prevention efforts by making initiation to drug use more difficult and contributes to treatment efforts by eroding the ability of users to sustain their habits and to alternatively seek treatment.

It is the policy of the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency to provide for coordinated, collaborative drug enforcement effort throughout the State by establishing, maintaining, and operating regional investigative task force offices by experienced law enforcement officers selected from local, county and state law enforcement agencies to investigate crimes with a focus on drug sale and manufacturing offenses. The Maine Drug Enforcement Agency through its regional multi-jurisdictional task forces is the lead state agency confronting drug trafficking crime.

MAINE OPIOID RESPONSE STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

Strategy #13: Strengthen law enforcement efforts to intercept and reduce illicit
opioid supply

MAINE DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCY is the statewide
enforcement program to confront the health and safety posed by drug
trafficking to undermine drug suppliers' ability to meet, expand, and profit from
illicit drug demand.

Maine Drug Enforcement, as a cornerstone of the State's enforcement strategy to address drug trafficking, provides the administrative platform for the effective and efficient use of limited resources through partnerships with federal, state, tribal and local law enforcement agencies. It is through Maine Drug Enforcement that the skills, expertise, and experience of officers assigned to its task force groups are brought together as a statewide drug task force. Maine Drug Enforcement has applied its investigative resources to the ongoing heroin, fentanyl, other opiate, cocaine, and methamphetamine threat.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY BUREAU OF DRUG ENFORCEMENT

Highlights of 2021 activity, productivity, and cost-effectiveness by Maine Drug Enforcement District Task Forces include **coordinating information sharing** and **assisting numerous departments**, conducted **471 drug-related offense** investigations, the **participation of 42 law enforcement agencies** with **70 federal, state, and local public safety members** comprising the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency, participated in **awareness and prevention efforts**, removed **119 firearms** connected to illegal activity, made **275 drug offense arrests**, recovered over **\$987,712 in illegally gained cash and assets** from drug traffickers, and removed **illicit drugs with over \$1,511,883 in wholesale value** from the marketplace.

II. Introduction



Maine Drug Enforcement provides a central administrative structure for the establishment, coordination and oversight of specialized narcotics and narcotics-related investigative units within the State of Maine employing a multi-jurisdictional drug task force approach. Successful statewide criminal investigations are the products of partnerships with local, county, state and federal law enforcement officers sharing criminal intelligence, reporting and/or investigating drug and associated criminal offenses. Agents are assigned by the task force supervisors to initiate criminal investigations and to assist other law enforcement agencies with the technical aspects of narcotics investigations and to coordinate such investigations with drug prosecutors who provide overall guidance and case presentation in court.

Maine Drug Enforcement operates two field divisions with four task force groups in each division thereby providing drug law enforcement throughout all of Maine's sixteen counties. This framework addresses the upper and mid-level drug dealers that operate below the interest of the Federal law enforcement authorities that focus on international, interstate, and substantial violators, and the street level efforts that focus on the small dealers and those caught in possession.

Every Maine Drug Enforcement's District Task Force (DTF) office works closely with the Maine State Police, the sheriffs' offices, and area police departments. Geography, population, and caseload require that good working relationships, partnerships, communication, and information exchanges with all drug investigative entities working together to maximize the utilization of limited resources and personnel.

Specifically, the Maine Drug Enforcement applies its investigative resources to the ongoing heroin, fentanyl, other opiates, cocaine, and methamphetamine threat. Maine Drug Enforcement Task Force Supervisors engage in dynamic casework utilizing the most sophisticated investigative techniques to dismantle drug trafficking organizations throughout Maine. By prosecuting the drug traffickers who are seeking to profit from drug sales, we are helping to improve the quality of life in Maine. Fentanyl and other illicit drugs

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

that continues to cause significant harm in communities throughout Maine. In identifying and disrupting, the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency and our law enforcement partners can prevent traffickers from continuing to endanger public health and safety.

Maine Drug Enforcement employs a Records Management System (RMS) to report and manage its investigations. The statewide RMS permits the interconnectivity of all Maine Drug Enforcement case information among its eight (8) task force groups. Case and intelligence analysis are critical in the Agency's goal to strengthen heroin, other opiate and other drug-related intelligence and information sharing and ensure that there is adequate analytical support to meet policy and investigative requirements as we aggressively pursue drug reduction efforts.

Maine Drug Enforcement employs a toll-free telephone number, reporting form on its website and social media platforms, and a Smartphone application (both iOS and Android) for the receipt of drug tips by the public. All information is documented and forwarded to the task force supervisor having jurisdiction for review.

Maine Drug Enforcement has very detailed and encompassing policies and procedures serving to guide its investigations. Policy and procedures cover such topic areas including, but not limited to, source management, undercover buys, warrant service evidence management, surveillance, etc.

Maine Drug Enforcement drug seizures are documented internally and reported to the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC) National Seizure System (NSS). Representatives of Maine Drug Enforcement have also attended regional and national conferences and meetings to keep abreast of the current national and regional trends and to share observations of Maine's experiences.

III. Task Forces

Maine Drug Enforcement is one of nine bureaus of the Maine Department of Public Safety with a statutory charge of addressing the threat to the health and safety of Maine's residents resulting from the distribution and manufacture of drugs into, out of and within the State. The task force was created by the Intergovernmental Drug Enforcement Act of 1987 and was reaffirmed by the state legislature in 1992 – [Title 25, Chapter 353: MAINE DRUG ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 1992 \(mainelegislature.org\)](https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/1992/Title%2025/Chapter%20353/Chapter%20353.html). The Public Safety Commissioner is charged with establishing and operating within the MDEA such regional investigative task forces as the Commissioner determines, in consultation with the MDEA Advisory Board, are required for effective drug law enforcement throughout the State.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY BUREAU OF DRUG ENFORCEMENT

The investigative component of each task force is comprised of law enforcement officers drawn from municipal, county, tribal and state law enforcement agencies – all with statewide authority. Maine Drug Enforcement’s budget funds the salary and benefits of forty-nine officers from thirty-five law enforcement agencies. By statute their salary is established as that of a Maine State Police detective, sergeant or lieutenant depending upon their assignment within Maine Drug Enforcement. This full reimbursement allows the assigning agency to replace the officer assigned to the task force. Of the forty-nine positions, forty-three are funded through the State of Maine General Fund and six through the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance’s Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant program (Federal Aid #2018-DJ-BX-0186).

Maine Drug Enforcement’s partnership effort does not end there. This central approach to multi-jurisdictional drug law enforcement in Maine has resulted in three law enforcement agencies assigning a total of five officers full-time to a task force group to address the drug trafficking problem in their jurisdictional area with no reimbursement of the officers’ salary or fringe benefits. These departments include Hancock County Sheriff, Portland Police, and Washington County Sheriff. Another ten law enforcement agencies assign an officer through our Resident Agent Program to develop drug investigations in their jurisdiction while working closely with Maine Drug Enforcement staff and adhering to Maine Drug Enforcement’s operational policies and procedures. These departments include Augusta Police, Bangor Police, Bath Police, Brunswick Police, Maine State Police, Oakland Police, Norway Police, Portland Police, Westbrook Police and U.S. Homeland Security Investigations. Maine Drug Enforcement also enjoys the assignment of 3 full-time Federal agents to its Aroostook, Downeast and North Central District Task Forces that share an international border with Canada. Two agents are assigned by the U.S. Border Patrol and the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs has assigned a special agent with a focus of serving Maine’s tribes. Finally, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (USDEA) has a Post of Duty for the northern

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

Aroostook County Sheriff
Cumberland County Sheriff
Hancock County Sheriff
Kennebec County Sheriff
Knox County Sheriff
Lincoln County Sheriff
Oxford County Sheriff
Penobscot County Sheriff
Piscataquis County Sheriff
Sagadahoc County Sheriff
Somerset County Sheriff
Waldo County Sheriff
Washington County Sheriff
Auburn Police
Augusta Police
Bangor Police
Bar Harbor Police
Belfast Police
Biddeford Police
Brewer Police
Ellsworth Police
Fairfield Police
Gorham Police
Hampden Police
Houlton Police
Jay Police
Kennebunk Police
Lewiston Police
Portland Police
Sanford Police
Scarborough Police
Skowhegan Police
South Portland Police
Waterville Police
Westbrook Police
Bath Police
Brunswick Police
Norway Police
Oakland Police
Maine State Police
U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs
U.S. Border Patrol
U.S. Homeland Security Investigations

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

section of Maine housed within Maine Drug Enforcement's North Central District Task Force office with three special agents and two task force officers who work daily with Maine Drug Enforcement's special agents. Maine Drug Enforcement works collaboratively with the FBI's Safe Streets Task Force, U.S. DEA's Portland, ME Resident Office, and the New England High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area initiative (Southern Maine Task Force) that is led by U.S. DEA assigning agents on a case-by-case basis for joint operations.

Maine Drug Enforcement works closely with the Maine Attorney General's Office in the development and prosecution of targeted drug cases in nine of Maine's sixteen counties with the local District Attorney prosecuting Maine Drug Enforcement cases in the remaining counties.

Maine Drug Enforcement task force commanders, supervisors and agents are recognized throughout the Maine law enforcement community for their considerable expertise in the investigation of drug trafficking organizations and the fostering of federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement collaboration. Maine Drug Enforcement staff engage in community and professional outreach representing the Maine Drug Enforcement and their agency to increase awareness of the heroin, fentanyl, and other opioid challenge.

Mission Statement

The mission to the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency is to reduce the distribution, availability, and use of illicit drugs through a collaborative statewide enforcement effort.

Maine Drug Enforcement task force commanders and supervisors monitor case investigations to establish priorities and investigative focus aimed at producing qualitative and quantifiable results consistent with the mission, goals, and objectives of Agency.

Maine Drug Enforcement task force supervisors utilize the services provided by the Regional Information Sharing System for event deconfliction requests – RISS SAFE. All task force operation plans require that the operation be deconflicted against all other law enforcement reported events prior to approval by supervisory personnel. This operational requirement enhances information sharing and investigation coordination ensuring a higher level of officer safety.

Maine Drug Enforcement task force groups have frequent interaction with the Maine Information & Analysis Center and New England High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Heroin Response Strategy representatives for the sharing of intelligence information impacting Maine and New England.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY BUREAU OF DRUG ENFORCEMENT

Finally, Maine Drug Enforcement task force groups coordinate with the Maine State Police to identify and disrupt drug traffickers that utilize the interstate highways and secondary roads to smuggle drugs into and transport drugs throughout the state.

Administration: Maine Drug Enforcement provides a central administrative structure for the establishment, coordination and oversight of specialized narcotics and narcotics-related investigative units within the State of Maine through a multi-jurisdictional drug task force approach. The administrative office is located at 45 Commerce Drive, STE 1 in Augusta. The director, a law enforcement officer, serves as the administrator reporting directly to the Commissioner of Public Safety.

Maine Drug Enforcement operates two field divisions with four task force groups in each division thereby providing drug law enforcement throughout all of Maine's sixteen counties. Each division is led by a task force commander. Division 1 encompasses York, Cumberland, Western and Mid-Coast District Task Force led by a Portland Police Department lieutenant. Division 2 encompasses South Central, North Central, Downeast, and Aroostook District Task Force is led by an Aroostook County Sheriff's Office Lieutenant.

Maine Drug operates a central evidence facility serving both Divisions for the long-term care and custody of all evidence that is obtained. The Evidence Division is led by a Westbrook Police Department officer who tracks all evidence from the time they take custody until it is appropriate disposition.

Maine Drug Enforcement has two full-time Department of Public Safety non-sworn administrative associates to support its operations. These positions are funded by the state with one in Augusta and the other in Bangor. In addition, the National Guard Bureau's Counterdrug Program assigns six investigative case support analysts to the Aroostook, Cumberland, Downeast, Mid-Coast, South Central, Western, and York Task Force groups in support of Maine Drug Enforcement's task force operations.

York District Task Force

The task force, located in Kennebunk, is staffed by 6 full-time collocated members. Full-time members included: 1 Biddeford Police Department Sergeant, 2 Biddeford Police Department Officer, 1 Kennebunk Police Department Officers, ad 1 Sanford Police Department Officer. One task force investigative agent vacancy exists.

Cumberland District Task Force

The task force, located in Portland, is staffed by 8 full-time collocated members. Full-time members included: 1 Portland Police Department Lieutenant, 1 Gorham Police Department Officer, 1 Cumberland County Sheriff's Office Deputy, 2 Portland Police Department Officers, 1 Scarborough Police Department Officer, 1 South Portland Police Department Officer, and 1 Westbrook Police Department Officer. A Portland Police

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Department Officer and Westbrook Police Department Officer work on a case-by-case basis with this task force through the Resident Agent Program.

Western District Task Force

The task force, located in Lewiston, is staffed by 6 full-time collocated members. Full-time members included: 1 Lewiston Police Department Sergeant, 2 Auburn Police Department Officers, 1 Jay Police Department Officer, 1 Lewiston Police Department Officer, and 1 Oxford County Sheriff's Office Deputy. A Maine State Police Detective and Norway Police Department Officer work on a case-by-case basis with this task force through the Resident Agent Program.

Mid-Coast District Task Force

The task force, located in Thomaston, is staffed by 5 full-time collocated members. Full-time members included: 1 Lincoln County Sheriff's Office Deputy, 1 Belfast Police Department Officer, 1 Knox County Sheriff's Office Deputy, 1 Sagadahoc County Sheriff's Office Deputy, and 1 Waldo County Sheriff's Office Deputy. A Bath Police Department Officer and Brunswick Police Department Officer work on a case-by-case basis with this task force through the Resident Agent Program.

South Central District Task Force

The task force, located in Augusta, is staffed by 7 full-time collocated members. Full-time members included: 1 Kennebec County Sheriff's Office Sergeant, 1 Augusta Police Department Officer, 1 Fairfield Police Department Officer, 1 Piscataquis County Sheriff's Office Deputy, 1 Skowhegan Police Department Officer, 1 Somerset County Sheriff's Office Deputy, and 1 Waterville Police Department Officer. An Augusta Police Department Detective, Maine State Police Troop Detective, and Oakland Police Department Captain work on a case-by-case basis with this task force through the Resident Agent Program.

North Central District Task Force

The task force, located in Bangor, is staffed by 8 full-time collocated members. Full-time members included: 1 Bangor Police Department Sergeant, 1 Bangor Police Department Officers, 1 Brewer Police Department Officer, 1 Hampden Police Department Officer, 2 Penobscot County Sheriff's Office Deputies, 1 Piscataquis County Sheriff's Office Deputy, and 1 U.S. Department of Interior – Indian Affairs Special Agent. A Bangor Police Department Officer works on a case-by-case basis with this task force through the Resident Agent Program.

Downeast District Task Force

The task force office, located in Ellsworth, is staffed by 8 full-time collocated members. Full-time members included: 1 Hancock County Sheriff's Office Lieutenant, 1 Bar Harbor Police Department Officer, 2 Hancock County Sheriff's Office Deputies, 1 Ellsworth Police Department Officer, 1 U.S. Border Patrol Agent, and 2 Washington County Sheriff's Office

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY BUREAU OF DRUG ENFORCEMENT

Deputies. A U.S. Homeland Security Investigations Special Agent and Maine State Police Troop Detective work on a case-by-case basis with this task force through the Resident Agent Program.

Aroostook District Task Force

The task force office, located in Houlton, is staffed by 7 full-time collocated members. Full-time members included: 1 Aroostook County Sheriff's Office Sergeant, 2 Aroostook County Sheriff's Office Deputies, 1 Houlton Police Department Officer, 1 Presque Isle Police Department Officer, and 1 U.S. Border Patrol Agent.

IV. Funding

For 2021, Maine Drug Enforcement's funding sources were a General Fund allocation, Federal Fund – Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program and US Department of Justice Community Oriented Police Service's Anti-Heroin Task Force grant award – and Special Revenue Fund – equitable shared forfeited drug assets from its many drug trafficking investigations. The state and local assistance federal JAG program funds reimburse the local departments for an assigned officer's salary and benefits permitting the department to replace that officer at the local level, and in effect placing more officers in Maine communities – Grant Award 2018-DJ-BX-0186.

Initially Maine applied JAG funds in support of a statewide multi-jurisdictional task force agency and complementary prosecution support of the Maine Office of the Attorney General (AG) to overcome obstacles to full-local and tribal participation in the number of operating task forces to realize full statewide coverage. Over the years, that funding source has decreased so that in 2021 just six special agent positions are funded through this program from a high of 36 in 2000.

Maine Drug Enforcement develops investigations working closely with drug prosecution assistant attorney generals. This model achieves a high level of coordination and intelligence sharing within a Maine Drug Enforcement district drug task force area between the AG, District Attorney's Office, and law enforcement agencies. This coordinated effort results in high-quality felony drug cases.

In 2020, Maine Drug Enforcement was one of ten state agencies in the nation to be awarded a two-year U.S. Department of Justice Community Oriented Police Service's Anti-Heroin Task Force (AHTF) competitive grant. AHTF award (2020HPWX0006) of \$931,880 will further MDEA's goals of reducing the availability of drugs; strengthen the state drug law enforcement infrastructure; information and intelligence sharing; enhance collaboration and coordination with all law enforcement agencies; and protect communities by stemming the increase of these drugs in its heroin and other opioid drug reduction effort. The award funds eight TruNarc™ analyzers and training for the field identification of narcotics and dangerous drugs, a MX908 – a next-generation handheld high-pressure mass

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

spectrometry unit that provides trace drug analysis for field detection of drugs and pharmaceutical-based agents such as other opiates (fentanyl and fentanyl analogues), along with other high priority drugs-of-abuse such as heroin, and other investigative equipment.

V. Maine's Drug Threat



The overall drug threat to Maine continues to be of most significant concern. Illicit fentanyl is the number one drug threat across the entire New England region. In Maine, of the 515 opioid-related overdose deaths in 2020, 67% involved fentanyl. In 2018, most recent data available from National Institute of Health (NIH), Maine is in the top 10 nationwide of opioid-involved overdose deaths per 100,000 persons.

Of added concern is the increase in stimulants, including cocaine (both crack and powder form) and methamphetamine in Maine and across the New England region resulting in an increase in morbidity, often in polysubstance use. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration issued a public safety alert noting the increase in counterfeit pills/tablets disguised as prescription medication (Xanax, Percocet, Oxycodone and Adderall) but made with fentanyl and methamphetamine. These are often high-quality counterfeits, difficult to distinguish from the legitimate medication.

Heroin and fentanyl still pose the most significant threats to Maine and the New England region, with both being readily available at a low price. While heroin remains a public health threat, seizures of heroin have been decreasing – down 78% in Maine compared to 2019 seizures.

Counterfeit pills are marketed towards the growing pill abuser population in New England and the nation, often imitating commonly abused opioids such as oxycodone and hydrocodone, as well as other prescription drugs such as alprazolam. Counterfeit M-30 Percocet pills containing fentanyl are found in large quantities across the country, with Mexican drug trafficking organizations mass-producing these dangerous pills. The DEA has found that the colorings, markings, and shapes of counterfeit prescription drugs seized were consistent with authentic prescription medications.

Cocaine hydrochloride (HCl) and cocaine base remain a high drug threat throughout Maine and the New England region due to its high availability. For 2021, seizures of cocaine hydrochloride increased 413% over 2019 seizures and cocaine base reflected a 66% increase.

Since 2019, Maine has experienced a 215% increase in methamphetamine seizures in Maine, indicating that the drug is now moving into mainstream drug use. The reasons for this are

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY BUREAU OF DRUG ENFORCEMENT

many but, among them is the availability of inexpensive, high quality methamphetamine coming through traditional drug trafficking routes. In 2021, Maine experienced another reduction in lab incidents – a total of 2, down from an all-time high of 126 in 2016. Of the 2 lab-related incidents this year, both were active labs, one in Cumberland County and the other in Penobscot County.

The diversion of controlled prescription drugs (CPD) continues to be a significant issue in New England. The 2019 DEA National Drug Threat Assessment reports, “opioids continue to rank as five out of the seven most distributed CPDs, hydrocodone and oxycodone products were dispensed at twice the rate of other CPDs”. DEA reporting indicates that in 2018, 10.8 billion dosage units of opioid CPDs were manufactured and distributed, 79% of which were oxycodone and hydrocodone products.

A high profit margin is encouraging out-of-state drug distributors and their organizations to establish distribution networks in Maine. Previously, these organizations would travel to Maine with a modest amount of drug, rent a motel room and sell their product for a day or two then either leave the state to return another day or receive multi-ounce quantities of drugs every few days. That trend has been replaced with the distributors traveling to Maine with kilogram quantities. The distributors then supply local distributors who are often addicts themselves. These dealers collect their money and re-supply the local distributor. This activity decreases the risk to the out-of-state distributors of encountering law enforcement in undercover capacities. It also alleviates single location seizures of the drugs and cash in instances of law enforcement intervention. Absent the presence of out-of-state based and supplied traffickers in their communities, area drug dealers are still able to get in the car and drive to southern New England source cities to obtain drugs for transportation into Maine.

Drug-related violence continues. Debriefings of defendants and intelligence information continue to indicate the propensity for violence in drug trafficking networks. This is especially true in cases involving robbery of drugs and cash, and the collection of outstanding drug debts. The violent collection of drug debts through intimidation, weapons display, and severe beatings appears to be quite prevalent, especially relating to cocaine and crack distribution. The possession and use of firearms and sometimes their exchange for drugs is a reminder of the threat these groups pose to Maine.

VI. Accomplishments & Challenges

Operating in a task force environment readily yields accomplishments while also having distinct challenges. Personnel are constantly rotating in and out of the task force groups creating training challenges and impacting abilities to further long-term more complex investigations. Advances in technology and adaptations by the drug trafficking groups

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

present another set of distinct challenges. At the same time, equipment necessary to fulfill Maine Drug Enforcement's mission must be acquired and staff trained to further the Agency's mission.



Challenges include that posed by members of out-of-state drug trafficking organizations establishing themselves in Maine communities, who join forces with Mainers drug users and those who deal to support their substance use, to sell heroin, fentanyl cocaine powder and crack cocaine at significant profit margins, and the manufacture, importation and sale of high purity methamphetamine also at significant profit margins. The challenge with these out-of-state drug trafficking organizations establishing themselves in Maine is that the enforcement effort may disrupt the organization with the arrest of several within the group. However, a failure to arrest and successfully prosecute even one member leaves a foothold for the organization to continue operating in the community.

To address this threat requires maintaining a balance between creating disruption by enforcement action while focusing intently on the "group" traffickers to ensure the dismantling of the organization. Investigative successes resulting from a more focused "targeting" approach by the task force groups have led to significant cases and removal of drugs from Maine's communities.

The topic of 2021 challenges would not be complete without a discussion about the COVID-19 pandemic. Our Department issued operational memoranda to address policy and procedure on personal protection guidance while in a MDEA facility and when conducting Task Force operations/investigations. This provided guidance for staff when interacting with co-workers, witnesses, sources of information, suspects, and defendants. Officer have largely carried on their routine duties during the pandemic. The pandemic did impact the overall effectiveness of the task force effort resulting in lower outputs.

A challenge identified over the past year was the increased presence of fentanyl in other illegal drug types to include stimulants. Investigations have revealed instances where stimulants such as cocaine and crack cocaine that had been seized tested positive for containing fentanyl. Fentanyl is also increasingly being manufactured and distributed in the form of prescription oxycodone and Xanax pills. This trend has impacted the number of accidental overdoses throughout the state. Interviews and debriefings have revealed instances where non-users of depressant drugs have experienced opiate overdoses after consuming what they believed to be cocaine, crack cocaine and prescription pills. The increased presence of fentanyl in these types of drugs has caused an increase safety concern for agents during the field testing and handling of these unknown substances.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY BUREAU OF DRUG ENFORCEMENT

MDEA structure as a “Task Force” model requires task force offices to be staffed by local, county and state law enforcement agencies. These agencies have been experiencing challenges in their hiring processes. Throughout the state agencies are competing for a limited pool of qualified candidates which has drastically effected staffing, particularly in their patrol divisions. This challenge has and will continue to affect agents’ assignments for MDEA. Over the past year, assigned agents have been temporarily called back to their departments to fill minimum staffing positions. In some instances, MDEA agent positions have been left unfilled due to agencies being unable to assign officers due to staffing shortages.

In 2021, the MDEA documented 2,478 incidents of which were 471 drug offense investigations, 23 other criminal investigations, and 934 investigative assists to other law enforcement agencies. MDEA investigations resulted in charging 275 individuals with 264 of those charged were for drug offenses including possession (38) and sale/manufacturing (226).

A sampling of such successes includes:

- In early 2021, the Augusta-based task force office identified a group believed to be responsible for the distribution of significant quantities of fentanyl in Skowhegan and other areas throughout Somerset County. Agents identified an individual who was making trips out of state and returning with fentanyl in re-sale quantities. This information led to a vehicle stop and subsequent search a residence where agents seized nearly 2 pounds of fentanyl, \$18,000 cash, and 2 firearms. Four individuals were charged as the result of the investigation. As an aside, nearly \$60,000 in bail money posted by two of the individuals arrested were the suspected proceeds from illicit drug sales. Bail was revoked and the money is currently being held pending forfeiture action.
- York District Task Force group launched an investigation into the distribution of a significant source of supply of methamphetamine, fentanyl, and cocaine. Surveillances and undercover buys of methamphetamine were the basis for arrest and search warrants resulting in the arrest of two Sanford residents and seizure of 1,170-grams (3.8 pounds) of fentanyl, 188-grams of cocaine and cocaine base, 40-grams of methamphetamine, a handgun, and \$20,000 cash.
- A joint investigation by the Downeast and North Central District Task Force groups into the distribution of methamphetamine, fentanyl, and crack cocaine by individuals in the Ellsworth area. The investigation, which included the undercover purchase of all these drugs, resulted in the subsequent arrest of three men and a woman from Hancock County. Utilizing information learned from that operation, agents were able to infiltrate a Detroit, Michigan-based trafficking group operating out of the Bangor area. Agents were able to infiltrate a Detroit, Michigan-based trafficking group

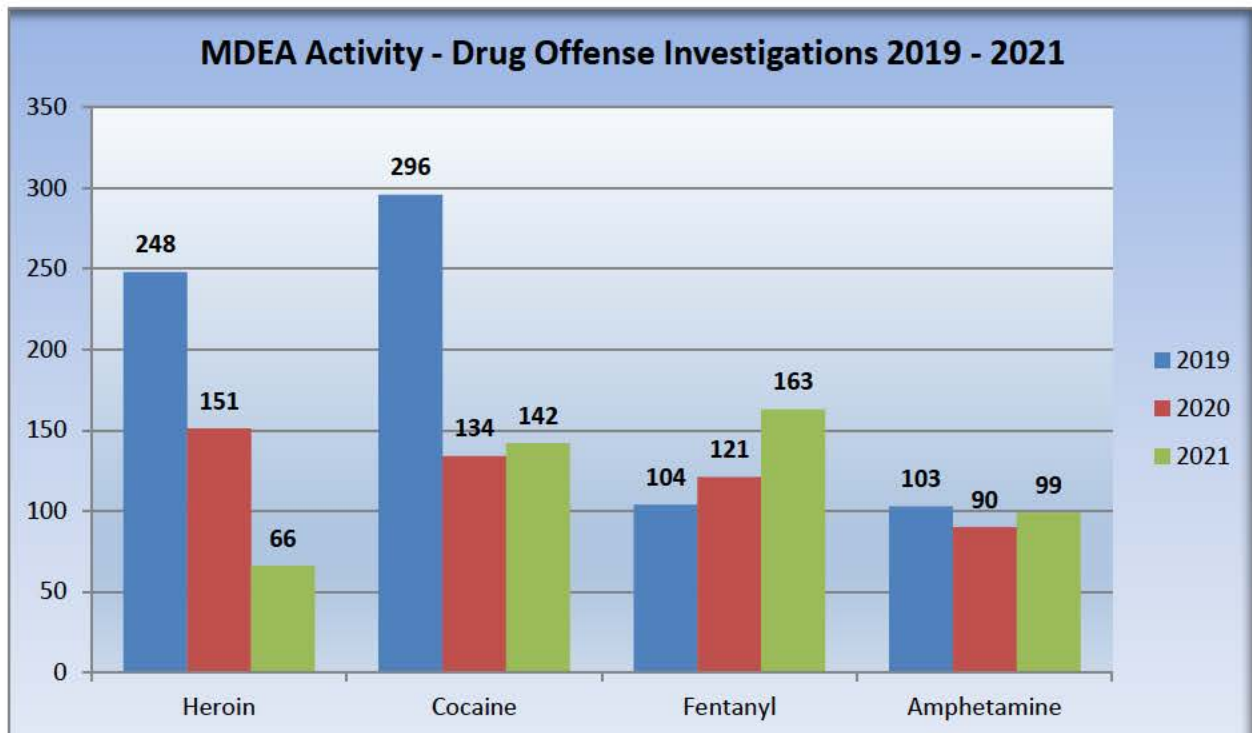
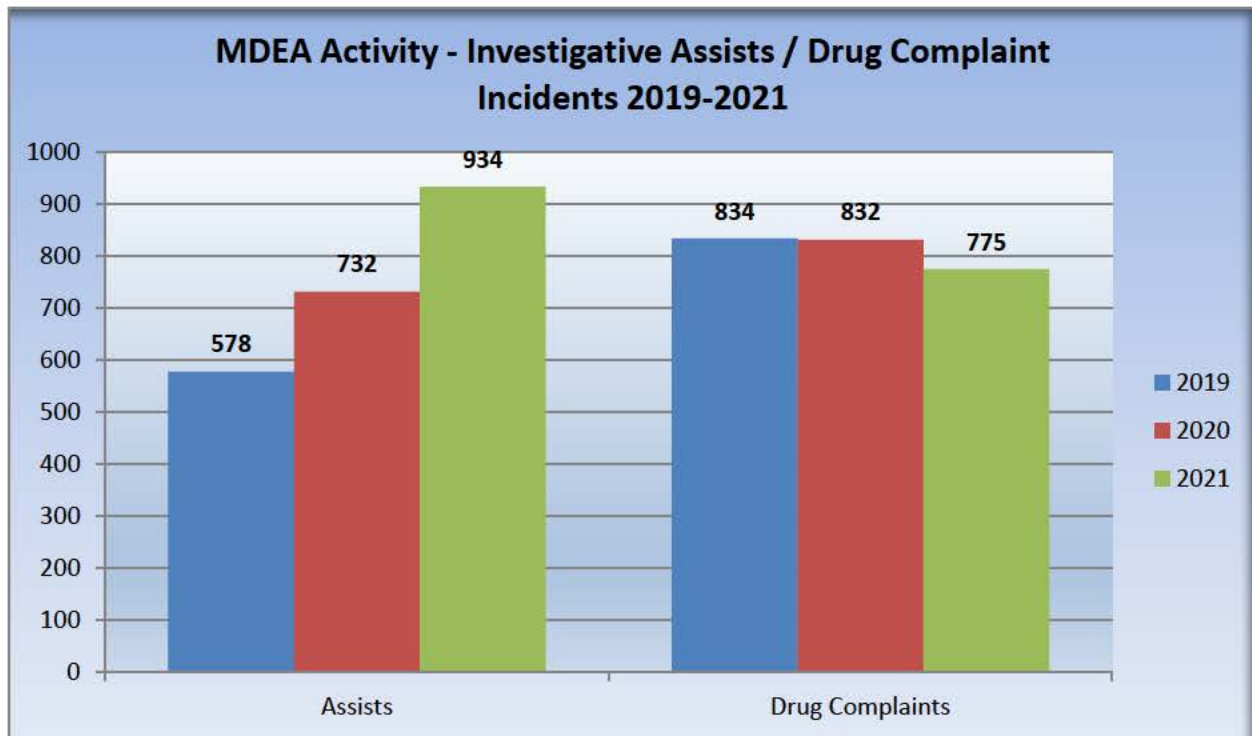
2021 ANNUAL REPORT

operating in the Bangor area. After completing a couple of undercover purchases of ounce quantities of methamphetamine from the group, agents executed a search warrant at a Hermon residence where nearly 4 pounds of suspected fentanyl, 0.75-pound of methamphetamine, 3 ounces of crack cocaine, an AK-47, \$19,000 cash, and a semi-automatic handgun were recovered.

- Cumberland District Task Force group investigated the distribution of fentanyl and cocaine by a New York City man who was renting an apartment in Portland where he weighed and packaged fentanyl and cocaine for distribution. Surveillances and undercover purchases led to the issuance of an arrest and search warrant with the seizure of over a three and one-half pounds of cocaine, one-half pound of fentanyl, six pounds of black-market marijuana, and \$89,000 cash was seized.
- In May of 2021, a significant source of methamphetamine in Aroostook County was disrupted. MDEA agents assigned to the Aroostook Task Force gathered evidence of the group's trafficking efforts through interviews, surveillance, and undercover methamphetamine purchases. A search warrant was executed at a Presque Isle residence where over 4 pounds of crystal methamphetamine was seized and 2 were arrested.
- A joint investigation by the Cumberland and Mid-Coast District Task Force groups into the distribution of cocaine and methamphetamine by a Massachusetts-based group dealing these drugs from motels along the I95 and Route 1 corridor. The group routinely rotated individuals who would distribute illegal drugs throughout Southern and Mid-Coast Maine communities then return to Massachusetts with proceeds as another distributor would arrive with more product to sell. Agents subsequently executed a search warrant at a South Portland motel room where a distributor was staying seizing 394-grams of methamphetamine, 81-grams of cocaine and \$3,000 cash.
- Western District Task Force group opened an investigation into the interstate transport and distribution of methamphetamine by a Porter, Maine resident who would routinely travel out of the State of Maine to purchase large amounts of methamphetamine and was then resold throughout the Western part of the state. After conducting surveillances of the suspect, agents arrested the resident seizing over one pound of methamphetamine and \$58,000 cash.

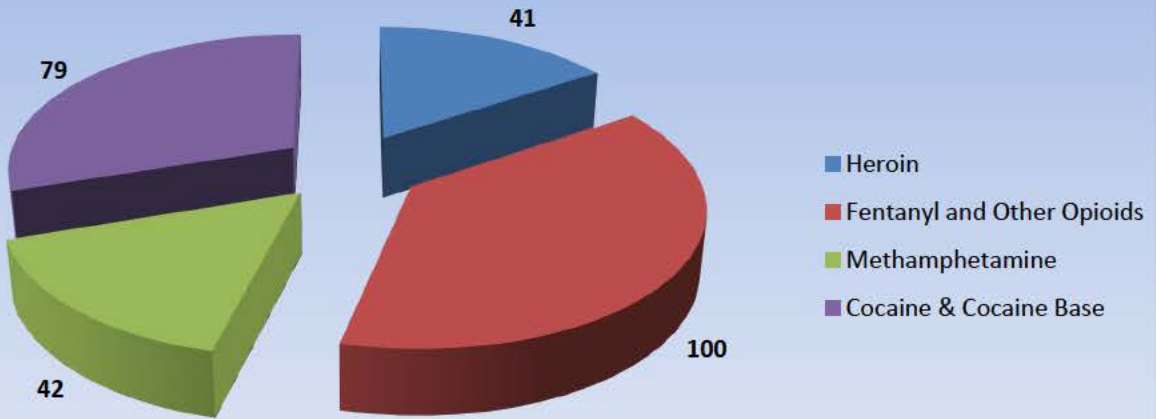
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY BUREAU OF DRUG ENFORCEMENT

VII. Outcomes



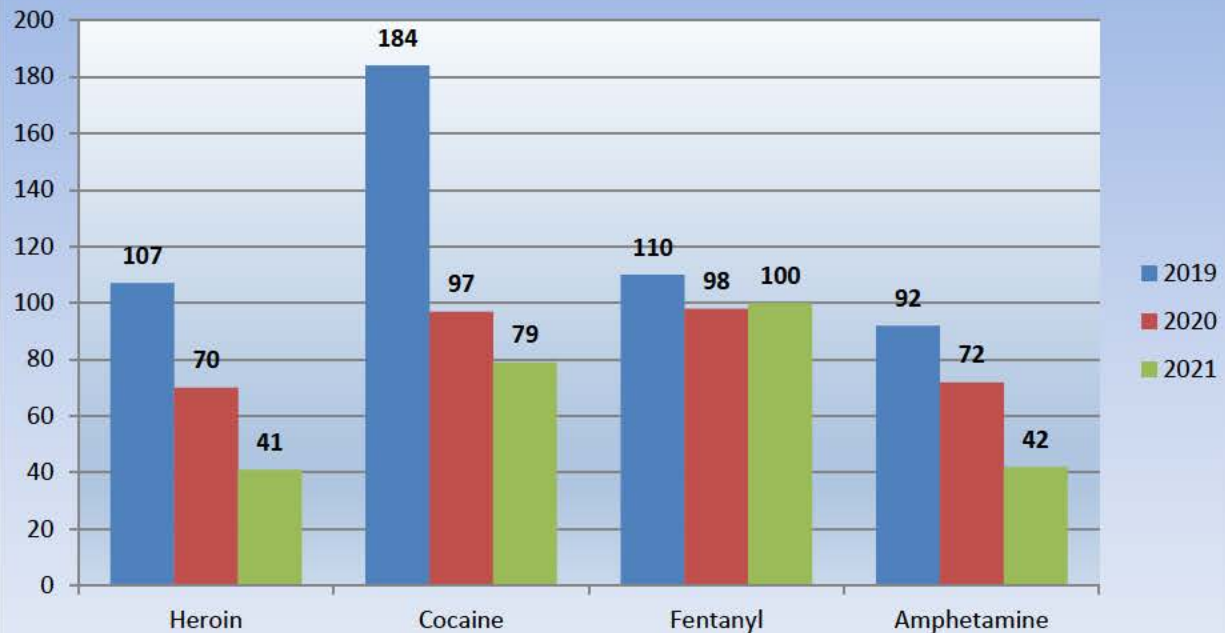
2021 ANNUAL REPORT

MDEA Drug Arrests by Substance, 2021

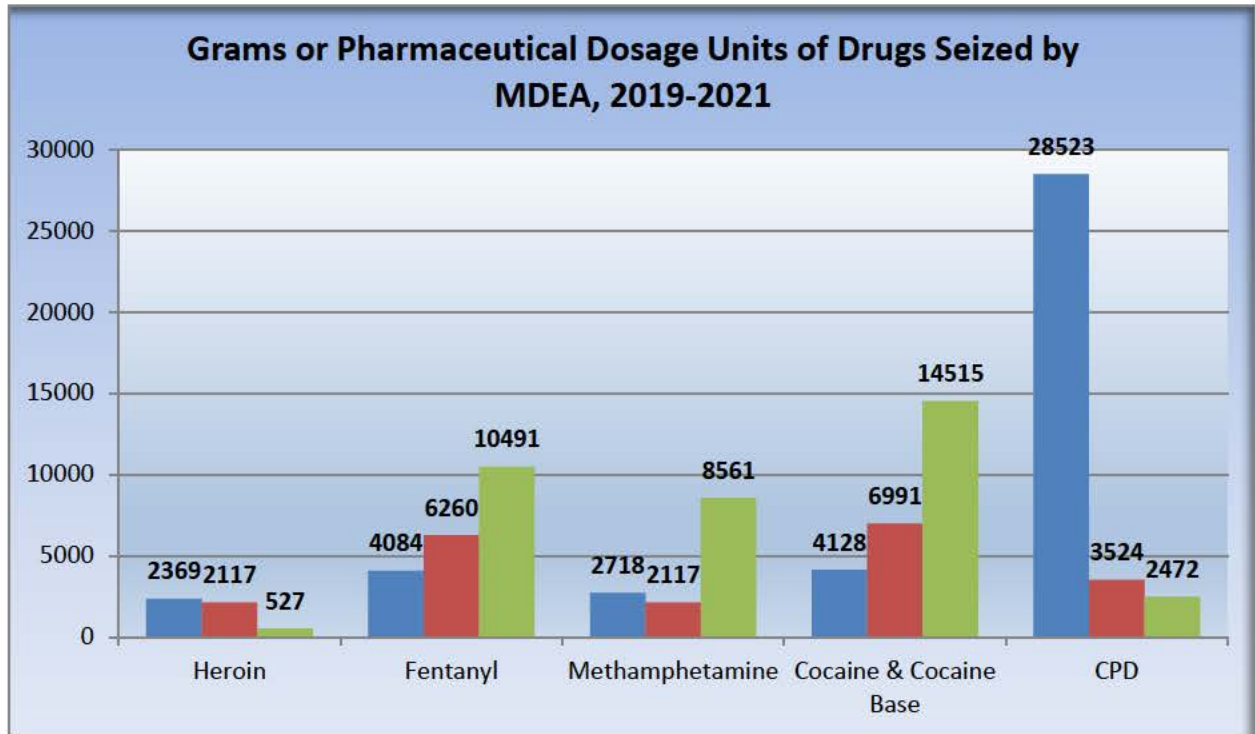


In 2021 there were 264 drug offense arrests. Heroin, fentanyl, and all other opioid drugs represent 54% of all drug offenses, followed by cocaine and cocaine base at 30%, and methamphetamine at 16%.

MDEA Drug Arrests by Substance 2019 - 2021



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY BUREAU OF DRUG ENFORCEMENT

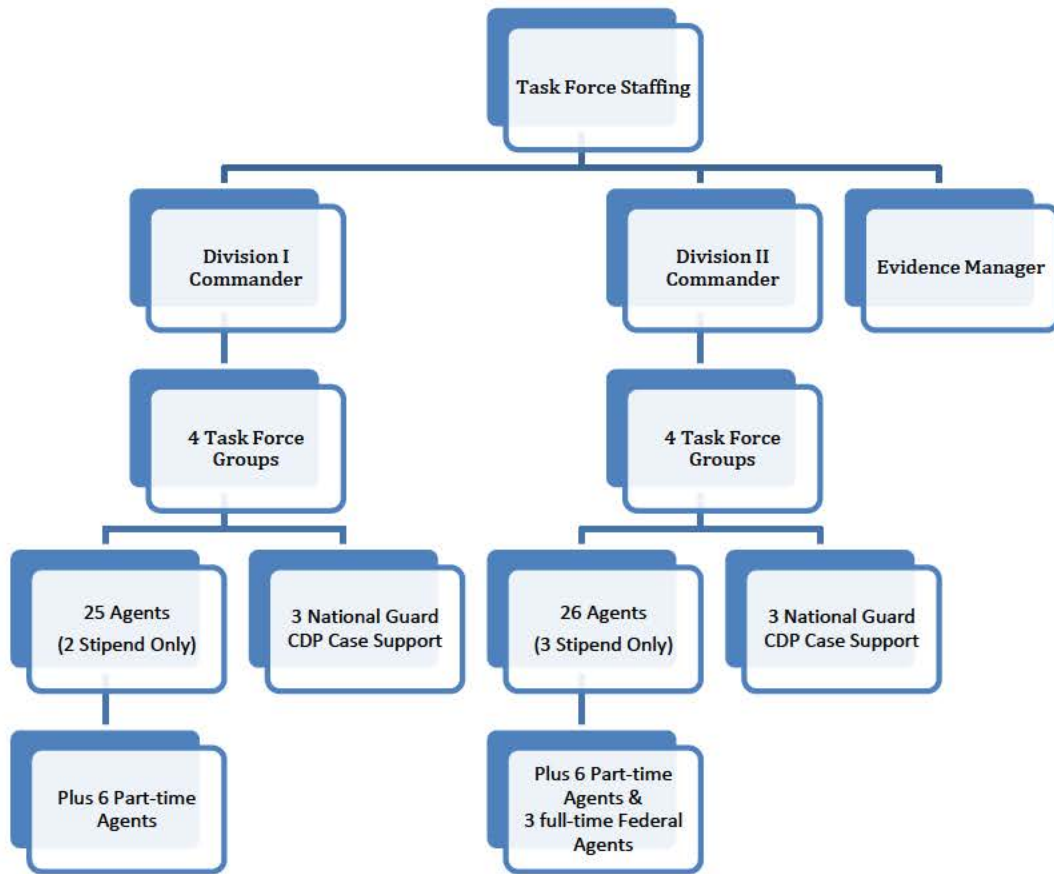


*Drug ID based upon presumptive analysis

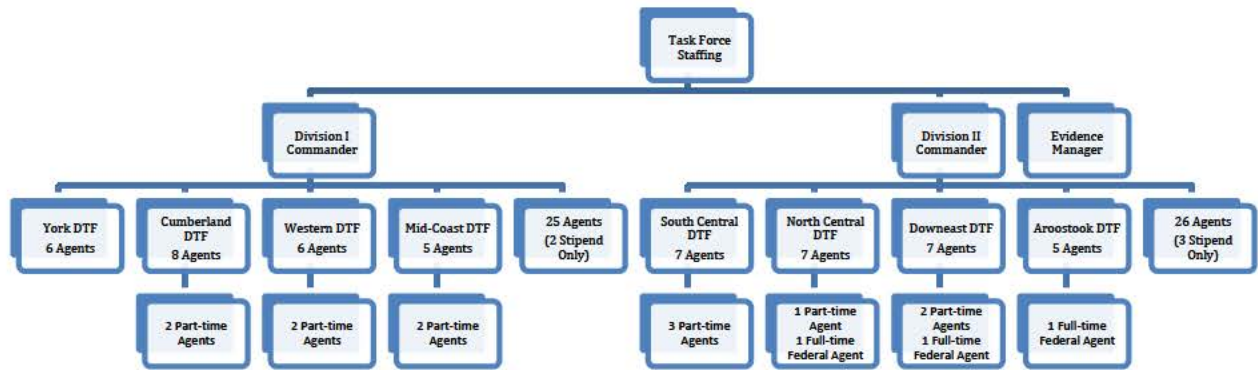
**CPD is Controlled Prescription Drugs where dosage unit measure is pill count.

***2018 CPD would be 4,841 whereas one seizure yielded 23,000+ of which 20,000+ were methadone.

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



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