



## First Responder Deflection:

# Making Positive Change During America's Heroin Epidemic

TASC's Center for Health & Justice  
June 23, 2022



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# Making Positive Change During America's Heroin Epidemic

Chief Jan K. Rader, RN  
City of Huntington Fire Department

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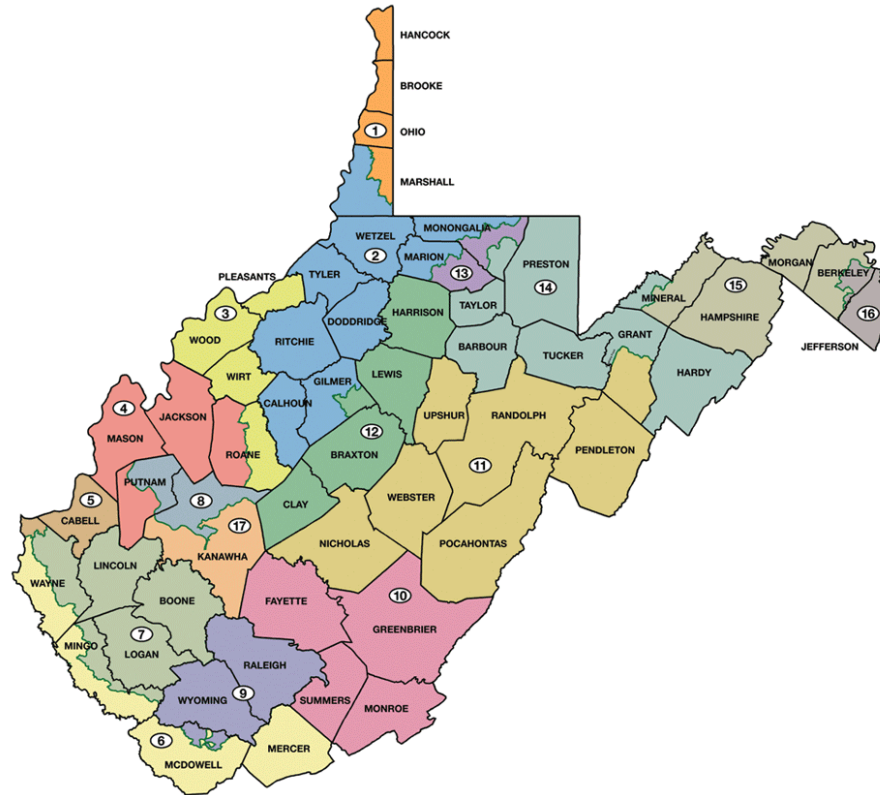


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# Huntington, West Virginia

- Located in the southwestern corner of the West Virginia— (WV, KY, OH)
- Second largest city in West Virginia (population of 49,000)
- County seat of Cabell County (population of 96,000)
- Home to Marshall University
- Two Level 2 Trauma Centers—Cabell Huntington Hospital, St. Mary's Medical Center

# Huntington, West Virginia



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# City of Huntington Fire Department

- 6 Fire Stations (6 Engines, 2 Aerials, 1 Heavy Rescue, Fire Boat)
- 95 sworn firefighters, minimum staffing of 23 daily (down from 106 and 28)
- All firefighters are training to the level of First Aid/CPR, firefighters hired after July 1st, 2012 are trained to the level of EMT-Basic
- Huntington Fire Department first responds on all life threatening medical emergencies for Cabell County Emergency Medical Services within the city limits



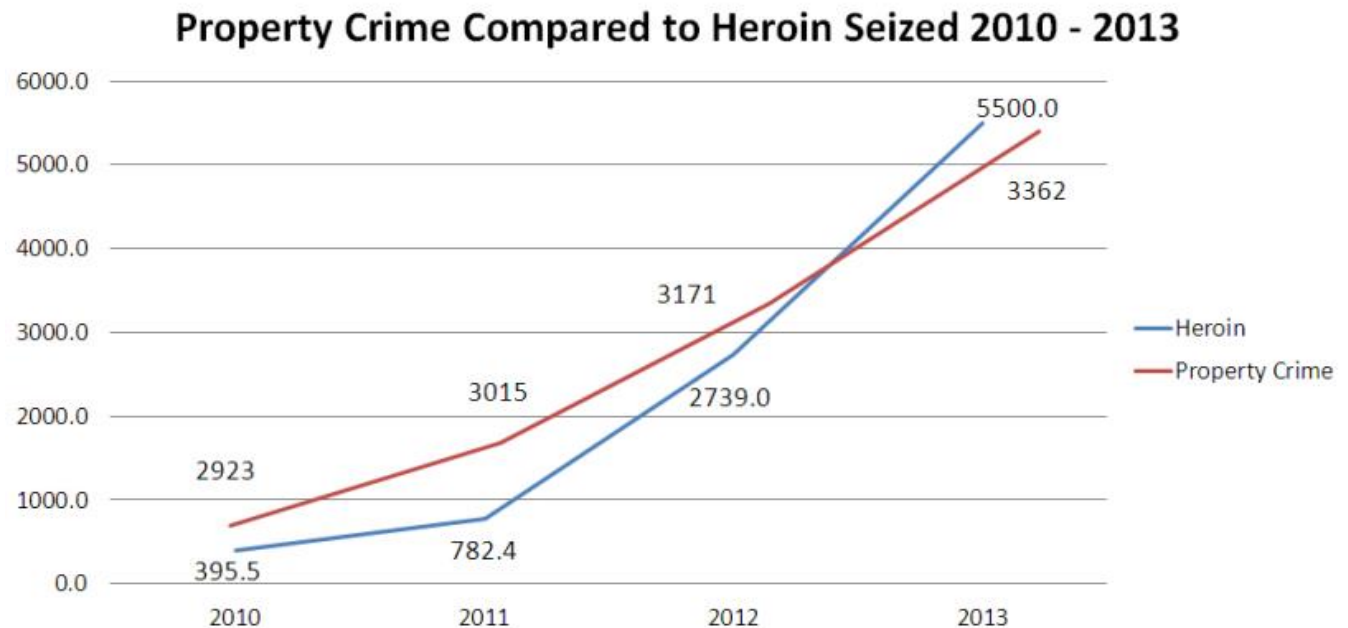
# History of Area Drug Use

- Late 1990's – Early 2000's—Prescription drug abuse became popular
  - New synthetic opiates marketed as non-addictive
  - Pain management explosion (PROFITS)
- 2010-2011 – Pill Mill crackdown
  - Law enforcement started targeting
  - 2011 Florida's Pill Mill Bill assisted (*American Pain*)
- Those suffering turned to heroin
  - Cheaper
  - More readily available



# Heroin = Crime Increase

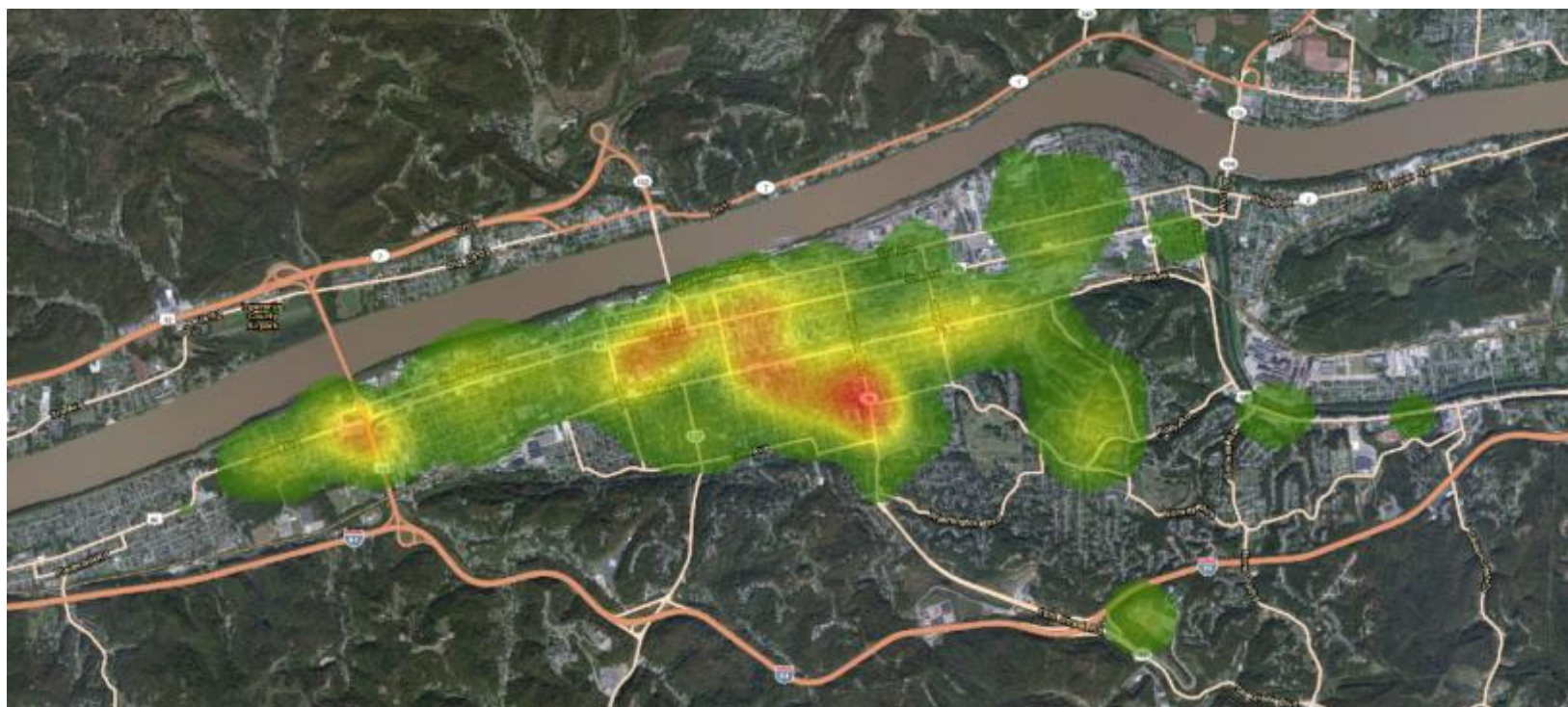
- Property crimes are up due to those suffering stealing to support their habit
- 2014—Operation River to Jail
- Drugs are bought and sold differently (*Dreamland*)



# Drug Crime in Huntington—2004



# Drug Crime in Huntington—2014



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# Mayor's Office of Drug Control Policy

- Formed by Mayor Steve Williams in the Fall of 2014
- Original members were first responders (retired police chief, crime analyst, fire captain)
- Involved individuals on the frontlines (first responders, emergency room staff, health department, etc.) to analyze the problem and develop strategies
- Started keeping real time data
- Began educating key stakeholders within the community





# Cabell County Overdoses 2015

**944 overdoses**

**Average age of an overdose 37**

**58% were male, 42% female**

**70 overdose deaths**

**Average age of an overdose death 38**

**69% male, 31% female**

**89% Caucasian, 11% black**

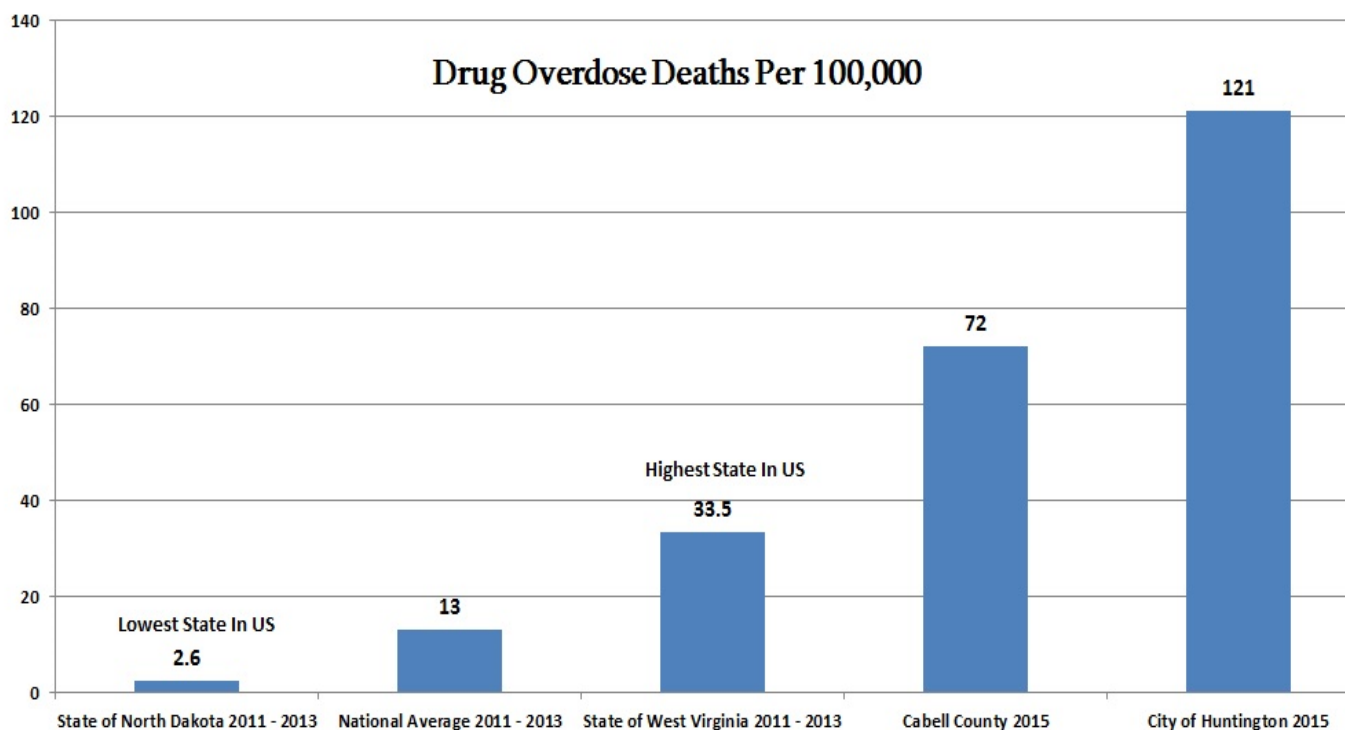
# Medical Complications of IV Drug Use (Heroin)

- Overdose (unknown what is in the product or the strength)
- Spread of blood borne pathogens such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV
- Simple and complex infections
- Endocarditis, Heart Valve Replacement
- Organ Transplants
- Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome

# Medical Complications of IV Drug Use (Heroin)

- West Virginia has the highest rate of new Hepatitis B cases in the country
- West Virginia has the second highest rate of new Hepatitis C cases in the country
- Infant mortality rates in Cabell County are some of the highest in the nation, with 8.3 deaths per 1,000 live births
- It is estimated that Cabell County spent over **\$100,000,000** on medical cost alone associated with IV drug use in 2015!!!

# Overdoses Per 100,000 people



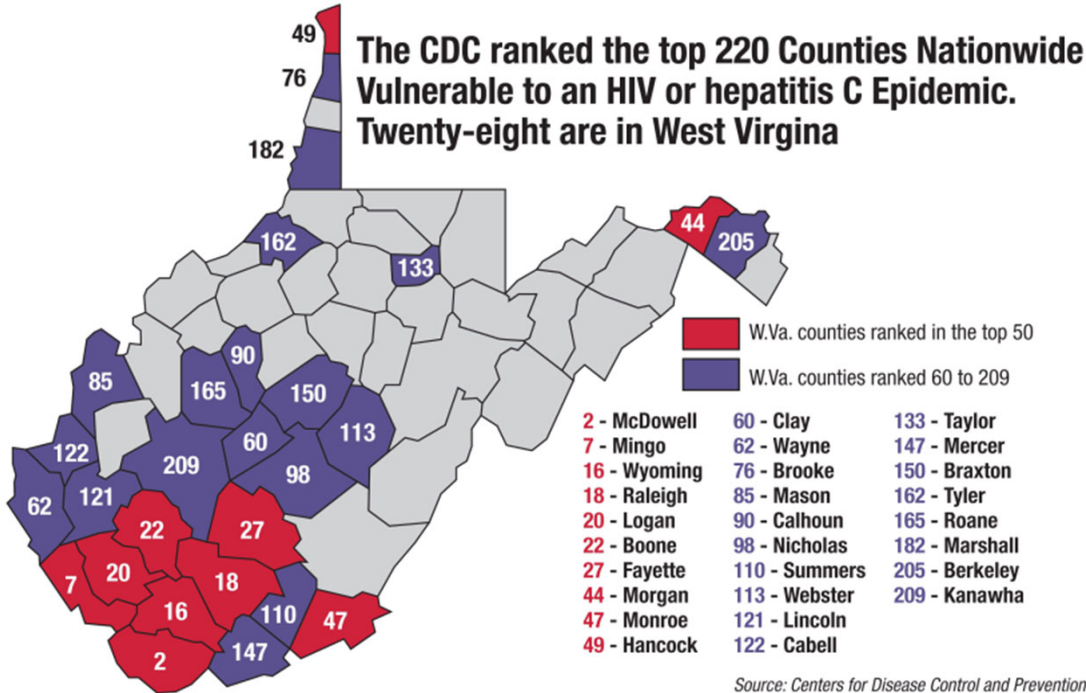
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# Not Just a Huntington/Cabell County Issue



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention





# Cabell County Overdoses 2016

**1476 overdoses**

**Average age of an overdose 35  
65% were male, 35% female**

**132 overdose deaths**

- First 7 months of the year, 26.9% of all overdose deaths involved some type of fentanyl
- In the last 5 months of the year, 79.7% of the overdose deaths involves some type of fentanyl

# What Does This Mean for First Responder Agencies

- Financial issues
  - Increase in medical insurance
  - EMS departments have increase in unpaid billing
  - Financial issues trickle down from local government
- Recruitment and retention issues
- Compassion fatigue and burnout

# Huntington Fire Run Comparison by Year

<i>YEAR</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>MEDICAL</i>	<i>FIRES</i>	<i>FALSE</i>
<i>2010</i>	3685	1238	343	906
<i>2011</i>	3527	1305	289	902
<i>2012</i>	3731	1206	440	975
<i>2013</i>	3392	1235	284	915
<i>2014</i>	3452	1235	320	892
<i>2015</i>	3605	1370	290	937
<i>2016</i>	<b>4522</b>	<b>2157</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>1108</b>
<i>2017</i>	<b>5024</b>	<b>2572 (1235)</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>1043</b>

# Compassion Fatigue with First Responders

- First Responders are the Calvary!!! This situation leaves them feeling frustrated and helpless
  - Same people overdose again and again
  - Do not see a positive outcome
  - **Number of deaths they see!!!**
- Post Traumatic Stress is REAL!!
  - Sick time usage
  - Behavioral issues
  - Recruitment/retention
- Stigma associated with mental health services



# What Can Leaders Do?

- Unite your community, we are all in this together
- Think outside the box AND your comfort zone
- Listen to your firefighters, the game has changed
- Provide mental health options
- Provide necessary and changing PPE (needle resistant gloves, N95 mask, hydrogen peroxide, etc.)
- Work to stop the stigma of substance use disorder (it is not a moral failure)
- Stay positive, compassionate and kind.....it's free



# Community Partnerships

(facilitated by MODCP)

- Other first responder agencies
- Hospitals, Medical Schools, Medical Facilities
- Faith Community
- Health Department
- Mental Health Facilities
- Recovery Centers
- Local Schools (prevention efforts)
- Local Business Leaders
- Community Groups

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# Community Partnerships Lead to.....

- Harm Reduction Programs
- Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (L.E.A.D.)
- Drug Court Expansion (W.E.A.R.)
- Treatment Facility expansions
- Reducing NAS Births
- Prevention—(Too Good for Drugs, On the Move, Give Me a Reason)
- Quick Response Team (QRT)
- PROACT
- Bloomberg Mayor’s Challenge Grant



# Cabell County Overdoses 2017—Plateau

**1831 overdoses**

**183 overdose deaths**

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# Cabell County Overdoses 2018

**1089 overdoses**

- 40.5% decline from 2017
- Significant decrease in overdose deaths (toxicology reports pending)
- 50% decrease in Narcan administration (EMS, First Responders, Friends & Family)

# Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion

- Offer treatment options with non-violent crimes associated with SUD instead of incarceration
- Embedded a mental health counselor with Police
  - goes out on drug raids
  - can be utilized with City Judge or with Police

# Harm Reduction

- Interactions with recovery coaches
- Recovery referrals (more than 600 in 2018)
- Testing services
- Medical referrals
- Education on blood borne pathogens and protection
- Naloxone take home program (2,000 documented saves)
- Syringe exchange
- Positive, non-judgmental environment



# Reducing NAS Births

- Average neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) birth cost \$55,000
- It is unknown what learning needs and health issues they will experience
  - Neonatal Therapeutic Unit (NTU) at CHH & Lily's Place
  - Project Hope for Women & Children
  - Maternal Opioid Medication Support (MOMS) at CHH
  - Healthy Connections
  - Handle with Care

# QRT – Quick Response Team

- Received 2 grants for over 1 million for 3-year program
- Began in December of 2017
- Cabell County EMS (Coordinator of program)
- Mental Health (Presteria, Huntington Treatment Center, Recovery Point)
- Huntington Police Department
- Faith Community Leaders
- Visit with individuals who have overdoses within 72 hours
- So far, 30% of patients contacted have accepted services



# PROACT

- Provider Response Organization For Addiction Care & Treatment
- 5 competitors working together to streamline help for those suffering from SUDs
- Individuals can be assessed and plugged into healthcare system within 2 hours.





# Bloomberg Mayor's Challenge Grant

- Huntington is one of 35 champion cities chosen
- Our team chose to focus on first responder compassion fatigue and burnout
- **“Self-care Model for First Responders”**
- Mindfulness training – “The practice of being aware of your body, mind, and feelings in the present moment.” (situational awareness)
- Embedded mental health professionals (Wellness Coordinators)
- Education surrounding mental health, break the stigma
- Program we develop will be replicated throughout the country



## Sent to First Responder, April, 2016

*...I'm sure you remember me from the other evening. I'm very ashamed of my actions. I'm glad I didn't succeed...I was in an uncomfortable place. I remember that so clearly. I also remember your voice...I credit your voice as much as any medicine. Thank you.*

## First Responder postscript, May, 2016

*Died OD...*

is there anything you can do to help us get Mike our son in The recovery Point. Didn't know if you knew anyone that might get him in soon anything you can do would be greatly appreciated

6:59 AM

We don't need help anymore. m y son passed away Sunday he is finally at peace

8:28 AM

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# Questions?



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## For more information and to request TTA

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Request TTA on the COSSAP Resources Website  
<https://www.cossapresources.org/Program/TTA>

TASC's Center for Health and Justice  
[www.centerforhealthandjustice.org](http://www.centerforhealthandjustice.org)