



Press Release

Lake County Sheriff's Office
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Sheriff

PRESS RELEASE

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Heroin Usage On The Rise

When most adults think of heroin they falsely believe it is a 1970's drug that has pretty much disappeared. Unfortunately nothing can be further from the truth. Heroin usage has seen a dramatic increase among people in their teens and twenties, and is hitting the suburbs hard.

The use and abuse of opiate prescription painkillers, such as Oxycontin and Vicodin, especially in the young, have become the gateway drugs to the use of heroin. People find that they like the euphoria effect of opiates, as well as the state of relaxation that they create. Such euphoria is created by the chemical interaction of the drugs with centers in the brain which block various responses such as the ability to feel pain.

The gateway happens as people become addicted to painkillers. Once addicted they find the cost far too great to continue their habit. As an example a single pill of Vicodin or Oxycontin can run anywhere between \$45 and \$75. This is where heroin then becomes the drug of choice. A bag of heroin often costs less than a six pack of beer, and a person gets the same effect, or greater, of the more expensive painkiller.

Poor education about the dangers of heroin is complicating the problem. Today's heroin is nothing like the heroin of the 1970's. It is as much as 15 times as potent. Heroin is one of the most dangerous and addictive drugs today. The number of deaths associated with heroin use has doubled in recent years.

In Ohio it is quickly spreading into the suburbs. Kids start with painkillers purchased from friends, become addicted, can no longer afford the painkillers, and turn to cheap heroin. Once addicted, teens often fail to seek help because they fear getting into trouble with their parents.

Drug dealers are keenly aware of this and are marketing heroin in the suburbs. Often they give it away free, then sell it to kids once they are hooked.

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Mexico has seen a huge increase in heroin production to keep up with the demand. In 2002 there was an estimated 7 metric tons produced. In 2012 it is estimated that it has increased to 50 metric tons.

Parents need to not only be aware of the problem, they need to speak directly and honestly with their children, whether they are in their teens or twenties. Read up on the facts and do your homework. The Lake County Sheriff's Office website on drug awareness, <http://www.lakecountyohio.gov/sheriffoffice/DrugAwareness.aspx>, offers an excellent link to a CBS news video of heroin addiction in the suburbs, as well provides excellent information on heroin and other drugs. Another website, <http://www.timberlineknolls.com/drug-addiction/heroin/signs-effects>, offers a good detailed listing of heroin addiction symptoms and effects.

We encourage everyone to be attentive to this growing problem, and to educate yourself and your families on this danger right here in our community.

Frank Leonbruno

Chief Deputy Frank Leonbruno
Lake County Sheriff's Office

