

Congressional Field Hearing
Opioid Epidemic in Pennsylvania

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Good afternoon. Thank you for allowing the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) to participate in this field hearing to address the ongoing opioid epidemic that the Commonwealth is experiencing. Opioid abuse and addiction occurs in every cross section of Pennsylvania; leaving no one unaffected or immune. The solution to this epidemic is complex and requires a multifaceted approach with community, government, and law enforcement working together to educate and treat.

The PSP began in 1905, with just 228 officers and was the first uniformed organization of its kind. Today, the PSP is the 10th largest police department in America, with an enlisted complement of 4,719 members (15 percent of all sworn officers in the Commonwealth) and a civilian complement of 1,791. The PSP is a full-service Police Agency whose duties include uniform patrol, crash investigation, criminal investigation, and response to all types of incidents.

The PSP is the primary police agency for 1,200 municipalities, or 62 percent of the Commonwealth. We patrol 100 percent of the interstate and Turnpike highways, 85 percent of the Commonwealth's land area, and 66 percent of the Commonwealth's highways. Additionally, the PSP oversees the State Crime Laboratories, Statewide Radio System, Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Commission, the Pennsylvania Access to Criminal History, the Pennsylvania Instant Check System, Liquor Control Enforcement, and Megan's Law to name just a few. Furthermore, the PSP provides specialized support to all law enforcement such as the PA Criminal Intelligence Center (PaCIC), drug law, computer crime, tactical teams, air support, K-9, polygraph, Amber Alerts, and Missing and Endangered Persons Advisories.

The PSP is comprised of 16 Troops that provide police service to their respective areas of responsibility and 12 Bureaus that support those troops and augment their capabilities. The Bureau of Criminal Investigation is just one example and contains the Intelligence Division and the Drug Law Enforcement Division (DLED), which are germane to this hearing.

Approximately 100 members are assigned to the DLED and focus solely on investigating and disrupting significant drug trafficking organizations. Efforts include both uniform and plain clothes interdictions, long-term undercover investigations, financial investigations, asset forfeitures, and clandestine laboratory response. When fully staffed, the DLED is comprised of members who perform Safe Highways Initiative through Effective Law Enforcement and Detection (SHIELD), clandestine laboratory response, undercover account administration, financial investigation, asset forfeiture, and interdiction and strike force functions. While those members are assigned to a particular function, they frequently assist other details within the DLED and Troops throughout the Commonwealth. The DLED takes full advantage of cutting-edge training, advanced surveillance and tracking tools, wiretaps, and grand juries.

While marijuana is an ever-present problem, and both cocaine and methamphetamine use is on the rise, opioids remain our greatest concern. There has been a substantial increase in the availability of fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances (FRS) over the last few years. Across the Commonwealth, forensic crime laboratories are reporting a major increase in fentanyl in drug samples submitted for analysis this year. Results from drug chemistry analysis that were conducted by state, local, and federal forensic laboratories reported an approximate 65 percent increase in fentanyl or fentanyl derivatives. In 2017, the PSP, comprising only 15 percent of the Commonwealth's law

enforcement, seized nearly 70 kilograms of heroin, over 65 kilograms of fentanyl/FRS, and made over 12,500 drug-related arrests (misdemeanor and felony combined).

The entire Commonwealth has been affected; some portions of the state more so than others. This scourge has affected areas beyond our boundaries as well, including most of the Appalachia area and many of the New England states.

These synthetic opioids are far more dangerous than other drugs. Fentanyl is 50 times more potent than heroin and carfentanil is estimated to be 10,000 times more potent. The manner in which these drugs can enter the body is of special concern to law enforcement and first responders. Beyond traditional ingestion and intravenous induction, it can be inhaled and absorbed dermally as well. That makes accidental exposure a real danger to narcotics officers, canines, first responders, and the public in general who may inadvertently encounter the substances. The PSP has responded to this officer safety issue by changing the way drugs are handled and by procuring personal protective equipment. We have also obtained high-tech drug field testing devices known as "TruNarc" and strategically deployed the units across the Commonwealth to reduce the likelihood of accidental exposure to these drugs by law enforcement officers.

The PSP Clandestine Laboratory Response Team (CLRT) has also seen a remarkable spike in fentanyl-related lab call outs. These responses range from decontaminating police officers who were exposed to suspected fentanyl, through actual fentanyl labs producing counterfeit pills. The CLRT responded to one such case in 2015 and one case in 2016. In 2017, they were activated on ten occasions; seven related to fentanyl and three for carfentanil.

All members have been trained and have carried the opioid overdose reversal drug naloxone since April of 2015. All marked Patrol Units are outfitted with naloxone (1,105 marked cars in fleet), and all members assigned to drug work are individually issued kits. Thus far in 2018, we have deployed naloxone 56 times resulting in nine lives lost and 47 lives being saved. This is a marked increase with year over year comparisons in 2017.

Fentanyl is also being turned into counterfeit pharmaceutical pills and sold to unwitting users. This is of special concern since Pennsylvania passed legislative measure Act 191, the Achieving Better Care by Monitoring All Prescriptions Program (ABC-MAP) in October of 2014. This Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) captures Schedule II-V prescribed substances, is searchable by prescribers and pharmacies, and requires prescribers to check the PDMP the first time they prescribe an opioid or if they suspect a patient is suffering from an opioid addiction. While this is a significant step in the right direction in our battle against opioid addiction, an unintended consequence is that "pill shoppers" now must obtain their pills in a more underground manner. It makes this group of addicted people especially vulnerable to counterfeit fentanyl pills.

Fentanyl can cause a much higher rate of overdose than heroin due to its potency; despite its lower usage rates. Drug overdoses resulting in death have been well publicized. In 2015, the state recorded 3,383 drug overdose deaths, that jumped to 4,642 drug-related overdose deaths in 2016 (a 37 percent increase), and in 2017, there were more than 5,000 deaths (data analysis is continuing). This number would make Pennsylvania the fourth highest ranked state in overdose deaths.

We realize that combatting drugs requires the efforts of many and work closely with the Governor's Office Unified Coordination Group (approximately 15 state agencies)

that was developed through Pennsylvania's Opioid Disaster Declaration in January of this year. Through joint effort, 65 prescription drug drop boxes were installed at stations throughout the Commonwealth. This provides the public with access to the boxes 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year; to properly dispose of legally prescribed medication. Thus far in 2018, over a half ton (1147 lbs.) were collected. The PSP Intelligence Division was the leading developer of the Overdose Information Network (ODIN), which is a database developed to collect data on fatal and non-fatal overdoses, naloxone administrations, and identifiable markings on drug packaging that is available to all law enforcement agencies and Emergency 911 Centers throughout the Commonwealth. The database provides law enforcement with real-time critical information needed from an enforcement perspective to aid in drug investigations. It also provides leadership in law enforcement, government officials, community leaders, and policymakers reliable information in order to make informed decisions when combating drug issues that could compromise public safety and health. While some of the information is law enforcement sensitive, it does provide some critical information to the Department of Health, county coroner, and other social service entities to assist them in fighting this epidemic as well.

PaCIC works with multiple federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies on many levels of narcotics related investigations to include biographical workups, case assistance with charting, mapping, toll analysis, etc. PaCIC, Drug Analysis Unit (DAU) is part of the Overdose Task Force that is comprised of law enforcement, medical professionals, coroners, PA Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP), the Department of Health, etc.

PaCIC, DAU provides presentations on drug trends to law enforcement and private sector agencies. The unit has created pamphlets/brochures on the dangers of one-pot methamphetamine labs and drug identification awareness for law enforcement and private sector agencies. PaCIC, Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources Unit disseminates the Monthly Drug Overdose and Identifiable Marking Analysis Report to public and private sector partners to share information regarding lethal drugs contributing to fatal and non-fatal overdoses in their counties. Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies provide data to be included in the report in addition to the mandatory reporting by the PA State Police.

PaCIC, DAU members are on the staff for Top Gun and SHIELD Programs. The details of the Top Gun Training were provided by Captain Raymond S. Singley. Associated to our Fusion Center, the DAU has a full-time analyst assigned by the PA National Guard/Counter Drug Program. Also associated to the Fusion Center are the DEA, FBI, ATF, DHS, State DOC, PA Office of Attorney General, and Harrisburg Bureau of Police, all who have a liaison assigned to PaCIC and have requested drug-related information or case assistance from PaCIC.

PaCIC has an Intelligence Liaison Officer program which consists of approximately 450 law enforcement partners that provide and receive information from PaCIC for investigations to include narcotics related investigations.

The PSP works closely with federal entities as well, with the Commissioner serving on the Executive Board of the Liberty Mid-Atlantic High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas, by providing guidance in budget and finance matters, overseeing internal initiative reviews, formulation of policies and procedures, and development of the intelligence

program. Similarly, we are engaged with Northeast Counterdrug Training Center at Fort Indiantown Gap. The board of directors is comprised of military and senior law enforcement officials within the region.

Through the board and partnerships with anti-drug organizations, associations, community coalitions, and emergency responders, training gaps are identified, curriculum is developed, and exceptional training made more accessible to reduce the availability and use of illicit drugs. An example of this is the highly touted "Top Gun" school which provides drug investigation/prosecution training to students made up of municipal officers, Troopers, and prosecutors.

The PSP works closely with federal law enforcement too. It is essential that we pool our knowledge across the agencies, engage in intelligence and resource sharing, and collaborate. Doing so provides seamless transitions of investigations to prosecutions, whether at the state or federal level. To that end, the PSP dedicates six Troopers full-time to the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force, and five Troopers full-time to the Drug Enforcement Administration Task Forces. We maintain great working relationships with Homeland Security Investigations and have sent deputized Troopers as far as Alaska to conduct joint investigations with them. As "dark web" and "crypto currency" investigations developed, they provided specialized training and equipment to specific Troopers and continue to mentor them. Earlier this year HSI traveled to our training academy and provided several days of crucial training on these areas to many investigators and their command staff. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection works closely with the PSP as well. Twelve Troopers have received Title 19 Code of Federal Regulation training and can act under its authority. They too provide support to us and liaison for further federal resources.

In conclusion, we believe opioids and these synthetic drugs will continue to pose a threat for the foreseeable future. Production levels appear to be consistent, new forms of fentanyl are emerging, and the distribution is becoming more diverse with the "dark web" market places and cryptocurrencies. Significant resources are being expended to combat the havoc that the abuse of these drugs has wreaked upon Pennsylvania. Any actions taken to assist in decreasing the volume and attractiveness of these substances, as well as remove people from society who deal this poison will help us in our efforts to protect all Pennsylvanians. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this very important matter.