

Northern New Mexico



Drug Interdiction Summit

Summit Final Report

- February 25, 2010
- Santa Claran Hotel and Casino
- Española

Conveners

City of Española
United States Attorney's Office

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Executive Summary

Officials in northern New Mexico want the region to become a model for aggressive investigations and prosecutions as well as evidence-based prevention and intervention programs. They want stronger multi-agency coordination in law enforcement, prosecution, and training. They see the need for stronger community involvement in preventing drug abuse and distribution, especially for young people.

These recommendations and others resulted from the *Northern New Mexico Drug Interdiction Summit* held February 25 at the Santa Claran Resort and Casino in Española, New Mexico. The event was attended by 50 people and brought together local, state, tribal, and federal policymakers and elected officials. Attendees also included law enforcement professionals, prosecutors, public and behavioral health administrators, government agency professionals, and technical specialists involved in drug interdiction activities. Participants came from Rio Arriba, Santa Fe, and Taos counties.

Participants received an issue brief on drug interdiction prior to the summit which is available in the appendix of this report.

During the summit, participants developed recommendations regarding the policies, priorities, and practices that will impact drug trafficking in northern New Mexico and will reform coordinated interdiction, intelligence, investigation, and prosecution efforts. The slate of nine recommendations is summarized below, with additional details provided in the full report.

Strategic Initiative

1. Develop a comprehensive strategy that coordinates programs for law enforcement, prevention, and training.

Coordination Initiatives

2. Formalize a multidisciplinary, collaborative approach to large-scale, pre-planned events related to narcotics violations.
3. Coordinate regular multi-agency initiatives to address identified community threats based primarily on crime data and overall expected community impact.
4. Establish a collaborative approach to training for leaders from federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement, district attorneys, and court clerks.

5. Expand the number of officers participating in the Region III task force.

Community Initiatives

6. Develop a community involvement campaign targeting established groups such as neighborhood associations, churches, and rural groups to work in partnership with law enforcement.
7. Identify, customize, and implement evidence-based, youth prevention programs in school districts and faith-based groups.

Legislative Initiatives

8. Draft legislation to revise New Mexico's forfeiture statute.
9. Petition the legislature for additional funding and explore other federal program funding streams.

Summit Conveners

The **City of Española** is located in northern New Mexico in the county of Rio Arriba. The city was honored to host this summit for the benefit of the region which includes the counties of Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe, and Taos and the tribal pueblos of Ohkay Owingeh, Pojoaque, Santa Clara, Taos, and Tesuque.

The Office of the United States Attorney for the District of New Mexico is one of 94 such offices in the United States. The office handles matters such as investigation of alleged criminal conduct, presentation of indictments, trial of civil and criminal cases, handling appeals to the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit, and affirmative civil actions to ensure compliance with federal law.

Summit Organizer

New Mexico First engages citizens in public policy. A nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, New Mexico First develops policy reports and brings people together for town hall meetings, forums, summits, and public hearings. Co-founded in 1986 by U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman and retired Senator Pete Domenici, the organization's honorary co-chairs are now Senator Bingaman and Senator Tom Udall. For more information, visit www.nmfirst.org.

Complete Report

Northern New Mexico Drug Interdiction Summit

Introduction

In February 2010, the **City of Española** and the **United States Attorney's Office** convened a summit that focused on developing concrete recommendations regarding the policies, priorities, and practices that will impact drug trafficking in northern New Mexico and will reform coordinated interdiction, intelligence, investigation, and prosecution efforts. Participants included: local, state, tribal, and federal policymakers and elected officials; law enforcement professionals; prosecutors; public and behavioral health administrators; government agency professionals; and technical specialists involved in drug interdiction activities. These committed citizens made it clear that the trafficking and abuse of illicit drugs in the region is an issue of critical importance.

This event used **New Mexico First's** unique consensus-building format. The deliberation called on participants to share their best ideas for strengthening law enforcement and prosecution practices, as well as public and behavioral health alliances, to help address the rising threat of trafficking illicit drugs and proceeds in the northern region of New Mexico. By the end of the day, participants had developed concrete, actionable recommendations for federal, tribal, state, and local law enforcement, prosecutorial agencies, and government leaders. Their deliberation was informed by an issue brief that participants reviewed in advance that summarized valuable information on the drug threat and the devastating consequences for communities in terms of health and social costs. The issue brief is included in the appendix of this report.

In addition, participants benefited from a keynote presentation by Gregory Fouratt, the United States Attorney for the District of New Mexico, who outlined the issue from a national perspective. Additional speakers included Gary King, New Mexico Attorney General and Martha Vázquez, Chief United States District Court Judge.

The summit was held February 25, 2010 at the Santa Claran Hotel and Casino in Española, New Mexico. Scholarships covered the registration and meal fee for those with financial need.

Common Themes

Participants developed their initial ideas in small groups, and after dialogue, came to consensus on nine recommendations. Common themes emerged including the following:

- Take a comprehensive, strategic approach to the law enforcement, prevention, intervention, and training needs of the region.
- Coordinate large-scale initiatives, impact operations, and training to better utilize intelligence, finances, and personnel resources, thus creating a greater impact on interdiction and conviction success.
- Involve members of the community in partnership with law enforcement to report drug-related crimes and prevent young people from abusing and distributing drugs.
- Petition the legislature to strengthen drug-related statutes and ensure adequate funding for drug interdiction, investigation, and prosecution.

The recommendations evolved from a series of small group discussions in which participants were asked to consider changes needed in statutory policy, law enforcement and prosecution practices, and drug programs to make the greatest impact on the drug interdiction situation in the region. Then they identified top priorities over the next five years. These solutions were informed by an opening discussion on key success measures that would demonstrate progress in addressing northern New Mexico's illegal drug situation. A consolidated list of the success indicators is provided in the appendix of this report.

Summit Recommendations

MAIN IDEA	RECOMMENDATION
Strategic Initiative	
<p>1) Develop strategy to coordinate law enforcement, prevention, and training.</p>	<p>So that drug abuse, distribution, and drug-related crimes prevalent in northern New Mexico are addressed, the Española City Manager should develop a comprehensive strategy that coordinates programs for law enforcement, prevention, and training including the following priorities.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Law enforcement: Establish multi-agency impact teams, multi-agency task forces, intelligence centers, and domestic highway enforcement programs. 2) Prevention/Intervention: Identify drug-free community coalitions, seek funding for prevention programs, develop partnerships, implement program meetings quarterly, and develop an evaluation process. 3) Training: Identify resources, leverage resources, conduct joint meetings, develop a needs assessment, market available training, and provide law enforcement accreditation.¹
Coordination Initiatives	
<p>2) Formalize multidisciplinary, collaborative participation.</p>	<p>So that stakeholders share a multidisciplinary, collaborative approach (i.e., one-stop shop) to large-scale, pre-planned narcotics violations events, representatives from the Administrative Office of the Courts, NM Children Youth and Families Department, NM Corrections Department Probation and Parole Division, District Attorney, Department of Health, law enforcement, and tribal entities should create a memo of understanding/memo of agreement that will ensure effective participation from all stakeholders.</p>
<p>3) Coordinate regular multi-agency initiatives.</p>	<p>So that intelligence-led, multi-jurisdictional impact operations that effectively target the command and control elements of criminal drug trafficking organizations result in overall reduction of violent crime and better identification of viable candidates for rehabilitation, all law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, probation/parole officers, etc. within northern New Mexico should coordinate regular multi-agency initiatives to address identified community threats based primarily on crime data and overall expected community impact.</p>

¹ The following action items are recommended to implement this recommendation: Law Enforcement: 1) establish intelligence sharing among law enforcement agencies immediately, 2) establish partnership agreements between state, local, and federal multi-agencies within six months, 3) integrate impact teams with task forces including follow-up investigative action within six months, 4) conduct domestic highway enforcement operations within three months. Prevention/Intervention: 1) submit grant applications to the U.S. Attorney's Office, HIDTA, and communities within one year, 2) establish partnership agreements within one year, 3) conduct quarterly meetings within three months, 4) evaluate results through community feedback within two years, 5) measure property crime, violent crime, and overdose rates within one year. Training: 1) identify training needs through surveys within three months, 2) leverage training resources within six months, 3) conduct joint meetings with training providers within six months, 4) market available training using correspondence, emails, and conferences within six months, 5) establish law enforcement agency accreditation process within six months.

MAIN IDEA	RECOMMENDATION
<p>4) Establish collaborative approach to training.</p>	<p>So that better cooperation between agencies can result in more interdiction and convictions to reduce the supply of drugs available, leaders from federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement, district attorneys, and court clerks should meet and train on a regular basis to do the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Learn each other's roles. 2) Learn best practice interdiction techniques. 3) Continue to establish best practices by critiquing and improving them. 4) Create standardized search warrant templates, arrest warrants, and written search warrant consent forms. 5) Establish a K-12 curriculum to be implemented by law enforcement officers in the schools. 6) Involve the Law Enforcement Academy to approve the accreditation of training hours.
<p>5) Contribute officers to the HIDTA Region III Task Force.</p>	<p>So that financial and personnel resources can be effectively consolidated and a greater commitment to the High Intensity Drug Traffic Area (HIDTA) Region III Task Force can result in more effective impact operations, heads of law enforcement and directors of local agencies should contribute one officer each to the established task force that has shown positive results.</p>
<p>Community Initiative</p>	
<p>6) Develop community involvement campaign.</p>	<p>So that the community effectively partners with law enforcement to address narcotic and criminal activity in northern New Mexico, stakeholders from local governments and businesses should develop a community involvement campaign targeting established organizations such as neighborhood associations, churches, and rural groups. The campaign should include the following actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Obtain and distribute information and tools to implement Crime Stopper programs, neighborhood watch projects, and other efforts that lead to community trust in crime reporting and follow up on any intelligence reported. 2) Have businesses host workshops on how to manage a neighborhood watch. 3) Continue neighborhood clean-ups and incorporate them into rural areas. 4) Establish neighborhood bike patrols so that law enforcement can learn neighborhood norms and citizens can learn about law enforcement. 5) Provide information about what law enforcement programs are currently doing in the community. 6) Encourage law enforcement officers to participate in community events as community members.

MAIN IDEA	RECOMMENDATION
<p>7) Implement evidence-based, youth prevention programs.</p>	<p>So that evidence-based, youth prevention programs for northern New Mexico can be identified, customized, and implemented, the Children Youth and Families Department, public safety officials, juvenile probation and parole officials, and the Public Education Department should convene and train all stakeholders including school districts and faith-based groups to reduce future demand and substance abuse.</p>
<p>Legislative Initiatives</p>	
<p>8) Revise state forfeiture statute.</p>	<p>So that the financial proceeds from drug trafficking is prevented from sustaining continuing criminal enterprises, representatives from the law enforcement agencies, attorney general's office, district attorney's office, New Mexico Sheriffs and Police Association, New Mexico Municipal League, and New Mexico Association of Counties should collaborate in drafting legislation to revise New Mexico's forfeiture statute.</p>
<p>9) Lobby for adequate funding.</p>	<p>So that adequate funding for additional personnel, equipment, and training for comprehensive federal level interdiction, investigation, and prosecution that targets drug trafficking and money laundering organizations is ensured, professional organizations such as the New Mexico Sheriffs and Police Association, the New Mexico Narcotics Officers Association, and other groups that lobby on behalf of law enforcement should petition the legislature for additional funding and explore other federal program funding streams.</p>

Appendix A

Success Measures

During the first small group discussion, participants were asked to identify key success measures that would indicate progress in addressing the illegal drug situation in northern New Mexico. Success measures that were voiced in both small groups, therefore indicating consensus, are listed below.

Community Indicators

Participants saw the possibility of breaking the pattern of multi-generational drug use and trafficking in the region. They wanted to become a model for other communities by having aggressive investigations and prosecutions as well evidenced-based prevention and intervention programs. Ways to know if such efforts are successful include:

1. Increased community communication and involvement with members of the community taking ownership and pride in reducing drug use and drug-related crime
2. Safe and graffiti-free neighborhoods
3. Changed ideology that incarcerated parents should be admired
4. Improved quality of life for citizens

Early Prevention/Intervention Indicators

Participants saw the possibility of giving children a correct start in life by showing them that they have alternatives to becoming addicts. Indications that these goals are being achieved include:

5. An increase in awareness and training programs for youth early in their lives (0-6)
6. An increase in prevention and intervention programs in the schools to break the multi-generational cycle
7. Decreased use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs or involvement with illegal drugs by youth
8. Reduced incarceration rates for youth
9. Increase in graduation rates

Health Indicators

Participants saw the possibility of raising the state's national standing in drug-related health statistics. One way to know if that goal is being achieved is:

10. Reduced death rate from drug overdose through prevention and intervention programs

Crime Indicators

Participants saw the possibility of dramatically reducing the ancillary crimes connected to illegal drug activities. Doing so would make people feel safe in their homes and public areas in the communities. Signs that these goals are being met include:

11. Reduced property crimes, burglaries, and larcenies
12. Reduced domestic violence rates
13. Reduced child and youth abuse rates
14. Reduced gang-related violent crime

Law Enforcement and Prosecution Indicators

Participants saw the possibility of a streamlined system from interdiction to treatment working as a well-oiled machine and eventually eliminating the drug problem in the region. Indications of success include:

15. Increased joint law enforcement operations
16. Improved jurisdictional cooperation in investigations
17. Reduced heroin availability
18. Increased minimum/maximum sentences and five-year sentences (not just probation) to act as a deterrent for youth.
19. Increase in successful prosecutions of repeat offenders
20. Reduced juvenile referrals to the district attorney's office
21. Reduced recidivism rate

As one participant stated, "In five years, I want to be standing in the Joseph Maestas Law Enforcement Hall of Fame celebrating the retirement of 15% of the drug sniffing dogs because there is no need for them. Eventually, I want to visit the Española Valley Museum where kids see the ancient artifact called "block of heroin." It can only be seen in museums, because it is no longer available."

Appendix B

Letter of Commendation



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY
Washington, D.C. 20503

February 24, 2010

The Honorable Joseph Maestas
Mayor
City of Espanola
405 Pasco de Oate
Espanola, New Mexico 87532

Dear Mayor Maestas:

I want to acknowledge and commend you for your efforts in convening the Northern New Mexico Drug Interdiction Summit.

On behalf of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), thank you for addressing the critical issue of drug interdiction in New Mexico by bringing together the City of Espanola's leaders, tribal leaders, and community members from around northern New Mexico.

The Obama Administration and ONDCP are committed to building partnerships with States and communities to face the challenges of drug abuse head on. This partnership is especially vital, in light of ONDCP's commitment to forging a more balanced approach to reducing drug use. The President's 2010 National Drug Control Strategy will strike an important balance between demand and supply reduction. In addition it will commit energy and resources where they are needed most in the areas of prevention, intervention, treatment, recovery, criminal justice innovations, and international partnerships.

I plan to visit the City of Espanola and Rio Arriba County in the coming months, and would like to hear from you on the results that come from this meeting. Again, I commend your efforts and look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Gil Kerlikowske".

R. Gil Kerlikowske
Director

Appendix C

Summit Speakers

Gregory Fouratt, United States Attorney, District of New Mexico

Gary King, Attorney General, State of New Mexico

Martha Vázquez, United States Chief District Court Judge, District of New Mexico

Summit Planning Committee

Veronica Albin, City Manager, City of Española

Julian Gonzales, Chief of Police, City of Española

Ron Lopez, Law Enforcement Coordinator, United States Attorney's Office

Joseph Maestas, Mayor, City of Española

Nancy Sanchez, J.D., Project Safe Neighborhoods Program Specialist Contractor, United States Attorney's Office

Summit Leadership Team

Lynne Canning
Philip Crump
Jessica Lawrence
Ray Terhorst

New Mexico First Staff

Heather Balas
President and Executive Director

Krista Koppinger
Director of Events & Administration

Charlotte Pollard
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Summit Participants

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Santa Fe

Ronald Binion
Los Alamos

Jim Burleson
New Mexico Sheriff's & Police Association
Albuquerque

Sonya Chavez
Federal Bureau of Investigation
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New Mexico State Police
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Larry Flynn
NMCD - Probation & Parole Division
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New Mexico State Police
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Las Cruces

Donald Gallegos
Eighth Judicial District Attorney
Taos

Robert Garcia
Santa Fe County Sheriff's Office
Santa Fe

Julian Gonzales
Española Police Department
Española

Melissa Herrera
Office of Substance Abuse Prevention
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David Jablonski
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Gary King
NM Attorney General's Office
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Edward Knoth
Drug Enforcement Administration
Albuquerque

Ralph Lopez
Santa Fe County Sheriff's Department
Santa Fe

Ronald Lopez
U.S. Attorney's Office
Albuquerque

Joseph Lovato
New Mexico State Police
Santa Fe

Kenneth Maes
San Juan Tribal Police Department
San Juan Pueblo

Joseph Maestas
City of Española
Española

David Maggio
Taos Police Department
Taos

Jennifer Manzanares
Office of Congressman Ben Lujan
Santa Fe

David Martinez
New Mexico State Police
Santa Fe

Juan Martinez
New Mexico State Police
Santa Fe

Joel Mascarenas
Rio Arriba County Sheriff's Department
Española

Rick Medina
Taos County Sheriff's Department
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Chris Novak
Department of Health
Santa Fe

Ernesto Ortiz
NM HIDTA
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Chris Valdez
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Paul Valdez
Rio Arriba County Sheriff's Department
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Martha Vasquez
Chief U.S. District Court Judge
Española

Virgil Vigil
Española

Scott Weaver
New Mexico State Police
Santa Fe

Aric Wheeler
Santa Fe Police Department
Santa Fe

Appendix D

Drug Summit Issue Brief

Problem Statement

Northern New Mexico has a long history of drug abuse that spans several generations. The trafficking and abuse of illicit drugs are a great burden on citizens, local government, public health systems, social service agencies, education institutions, and law enforcement. These burdens are manifested and measured in many ways; however, the most striking evidence of the impact is the disproportionately high number of drug-related deaths (overdoses, homicides, accidents, or other fatal incidents) that occur in each of our communities.

Like most jurisdictions coping with the crises of widespread addiction, the northern region of New Mexico is also experiencing an increase in drug trafficking, theft, and other crimes that come with increased demand for illegal drugs. Police officers and many officials in the state's criminal justice system believe that the high rates of crime, domestic abuse, and assault and battery are directly attributable to the widespread demand for and abuse of drugs.

This issue brief provides background for the *Northern New Mexico Drug Interdiction Summit* being convened in Espanola, New Mexico, February 2010. Statistics from Rio Arriba County are used as an illustration of the significance of the issues in the region.

Drug Interdiction Defined: The interception of illegal drugs being smuggled by air, sea, or land.²

In recent years, the state Department of Health has focused attention on drug abuse problems in northern New Mexico, primarily because the consequences of drug abuse in this area have been severe since the mid 1990s. However, the issue is significant throughout the state, as the following data indicates:

- New Mexico has the highest drug overdose death rate in the United States.
- Nine of the 10 leading causes of death in New Mexico are partially caused by alcohol, tobacco, or other drug abuse.
- Drug overdoses account for more than 80% of drug-related deaths.
- The most common drugs causing death are morphine, heroin, cocaine, alcohol, methadone, and oxycodone (the active ingredient in some prescription pain relievers).
- It is estimated that at least 90% of all criminal cases are directly related to drug dependency.³

Drug Threat Assessment

The largest drug threat in New Mexico is the movement of drugs and drug proceeds by Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations (MDTOs), which have established local, multiple-drug distribution organizations that are capable of distributing multiple kilogram quantities locally and regionally.⁴ The Region III Drug Task Force based in Santa Fe identifies powder cocaine, crack, marijuana, and heroin as highly available. Powder cocaine is the major threat in Santa Fe, while Rio Arriba County is inundated with heroin. Mexican-based groups operate throughout both counties, distributing marijuana as well.⁵

Heroin abuse is endemic in the upper Rio Grande and Espanola Valley areas of New Mexico encompassing portions of Bernalillo, Rio Arriba and Santa Fe Counties. In Rio Arriba County, multigenerational heroin abuse is common in the communities of Abiquiu, Alcalde, Chimayo, and Espanola. Children of those users often start abusing the drug as teenagers. Their parents and grandparents usually abuse and often distribute the drug.⁶

³ Espanola Westside Weed and Seed Proposal, 2008.

⁴ Drug Enforcement Administration, NM Factsheet, 2008.

⁵ Southwest Border HIDTA, New Mexico Region, Investigative Support Center. Annual Threat Assessment, 2008. A Regional Approach to Measuring the Threat.

⁶ National Drug Intelligence Center, US Department of Justice, Drug Market Analysis, 2009

² Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, US Department of Defense, 2005.

Rio Arriba County Drug Use 2005⁷

(Use by high school respondents, reported on 2005 Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey)

Heroin (past 12 months)	4%
Methamphetamine (past 12 months)	6%
Cocaine (past 30 days)	6%
Marijuana (past 30 days)	11%

A 2007 school survey in New Mexico reported that approximately 25% of students in grades 9 to 12 had used marijuana in the past month, compared with 20% nationwide. New Mexico students also reported higher use of cocaine, inhalants, heroin, methamphetamine, and Ecstasy (a hallucinogenic drug) than students nationwide.⁸

Drugs are a key factor in crime as many addicts need money to meet their addiction leading to robbery, prostitution, and scams. Often, those who are arrested are either intoxicated at the time of their arrest or are committing a crime to support their drug habit.⁹

New Mexico Select Offenses Arrests 2006¹⁰

Offense	Juvenile	Total
Larceny	1,102	4,039
Drug Abuse Violations	927	5,775
Liquor Laws	620	3,716
Robbery	334	2,290
Burglary	266	984

Rio Arriba Drug Arrests¹¹ (7/1/06 to 7/1/07)

Drug	Sale & Manufacturing	Possession	Juvenile	Total
Heroin	3	7	0	10
Methamphetamine	0	0	0	0
Cocaine	2	25	0	27
Marijuana	4	48	25	77
Prescription Drugs	2	5	4	11
Total Arrests	11	85	29	125

According to the New Mexico Drug Enforcement Advisory Committee, the statewide total arrests for most of 2007 were approximately 2,500 with 42% of these offenders having prior felony convictions.

⁷ Espanola Westside Weed and Seed Proposal, 2008, numbers rounded.

⁸ NMDOH, The State of Health in New Mexico, 2009.

⁹ U.S. Drug Trends, NM Drug Trends, www.usdrugtrends.com/new-mexico.htm.

¹⁰ Office of National Drug Control Policy, NM Profile of Drug Indicators, 2008.

¹¹ Espanola Westside Weed and Seed Proposal, 2008.

Gang Threat Assessment

In the last decade, gang violence has escalated throughout the state. The New Mexico correctional system is reported to be one of three states to have the highest percentage of inmates who are considered a security threat group (STG), a term used to denote a prison gang that most often is responsible for any drug handling inside correctional facilities. The New Mexico Children Youth and Families Department has documented gang members as young as age nine. It reports that violent gangs are migrating to New Mexico to expand their drug networks. New Mexico law enforcement personnel perceive gang activity to be a problem that is getting worse when compared to the previous year, five years ago, and 10 years ago.¹²

Most Frequent Gang Member Offenses¹³

Offense	% Ranking in the Top 3
Drug Sales	59%
Aggravated Assault	54%
Graffiti/Vandalism	54%
Drug Possession	35%
Burglary	32%

Violent Crime Assessment

New Mexico's population is about 2 million. Based on the FBI's Uniform Crime Report 2006 data, for violent crime, the state reported an incident rate of 643 per 100,000 people. New Mexico was the second most dangerous state in which to live in 2007, according to the Morgan Quinto Press, a publishing and research company that compiles crime statistics.

Crimes Handled by the City of Espanola Criminal Investigations Division 2006¹⁴

Crime	Number
Weapons	148
Aggravated Assault	140
Burglary	85
Drugs	26
Robbery	16
Homicide	0

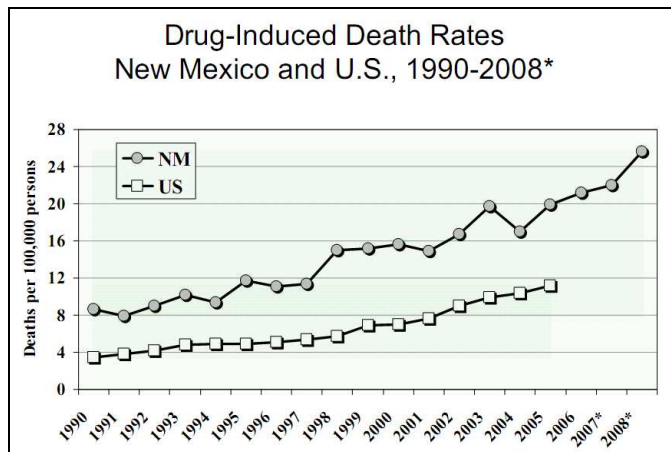
¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Health Threat Assessment

The physical and physiological health of someone who has a drug addiction is also compromised, leading to problems ranging from heart disease to memory loss that have long-term consequences.¹⁵ Drug-related deaths are also of concern in New Mexico. There has been a 250% increase in overdose deaths caused by the combination of illicit and prescription drugs since 2003.¹⁶ For many years New Mexico has ranked among the top three states for drug-induced deaths. Most are the result of unintentional drug poisoning or overdose.¹⁷



*US: CDC Wonder, NM Vital Records and Health Statistics, NMDOH, 2008.

Studies have shown that many Hispanic youth can be considered at high risk for substance abuse problems.¹⁸ Again, this is significant to New Mexicans because 44% of our population is Hispanic.¹⁹

New Mexico Drug Induced Deaths 2005-2007 ²⁰	
Race/Ethnicity	Rate per 100,000
Hispanic	25
White	20
African American	17
American Indian	10
Asian/Pacific Islanders	6

Rio Arriba County is one of three counties with the highest unintentional drug overdose death rates from 2005 to 2007.

Northern New Mexico Drug-Related Deaths 1999-2003 ²¹		
County	Deaths	Rate per 100,000
Los Alamos	10	11
Rio Arriba	90	44
Santa Fe	129	19
Taos	29	19

In 2005, New Mexico statistics show that an estimated 48,000 individuals had an illicit drug abuse, dependence, or addiction problem. Studies also show that 45,000 individuals were in need of drug addiction treatment, but did not receive it.²²

Economic Threat Assessment

The cost of substance abuse in the U.S. is estimated in the hundreds of billions of dollars per year, including the costs of medical care, treatment services, criminal justice, and lost productivity.²³ This economic burden falls particularly heavily on New Mexico, since it is one of the nation's poorest states with the third highest percentage of people living in poverty in 2005 (18.5%).²⁴

Federal and State Alliances

The Executive Office of the White House, **Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)** establishes policies, priorities, and goals for the nation's drug control program. ONDCP's National Drug Control Strategy directs the nation's anti-drug efforts and establishes a program, budget, and guidelines for cooperation among federal, state, and local entities. The overarching goal of the strategy is to reduce drug use through a balanced approach that focuses on:

- Stopping use before it starts through concerted community-based efforts aimed at creating an environment where drug use is not accepted
- Healing drug users by improving access to treatment and ensuring the quality of treatment services
- Disrupting the market for illegal drugs through a combination of law enforcement investigation, interdiction, diplomatic efforts, targeted economic sanction, financial programs and investigations, and institutional development initiatives²⁵

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ NMDOH, The State of Health in New Mexico, 2009.

¹⁷ US: CDC Wonder, NM Vital Records and Health Statistics, 2008.

¹⁸ NCADI, SAMHSA Health Information Network, ncadi.samhas.gov/govpubs/MS441.

¹⁹ Office of National Drug Control Policy, NM Profile of Drug Indicators, 2008.

²⁰ NMDOH, Drug Deaths, 2009, numbers rounded.

²¹ NMDOH, NM Epidemiology Profile, 2005, numbers rounded.

²² Stop Addiction, New Mexico Drug Rehab Report.

²³ Population Reference Bureau, U.S. Census Bureau 2000-2006.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Information provided by Ernie Ortiz, Regional Director, NM HIDTA.

New Mexico is one of five states that comprise the **Southwest Border High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)**. This area has been designated by the ONDCP as an area that exhibits serious drug trafficking problems and harmfully impacts other areas of the country. The HIDTA program improves the effectiveness and efficiency of drug control efforts among local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies through resource and information sharing, implementing joint initiatives, and providing agencies with infrastructure equipment and technology. These agencies 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.²⁶

The **Region III Drug Enforcement Task Force** is responsible for enforcing and investigating narcotic law violations within Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe, and Taos counties. The task force consists of law enforcement officers assigned from the New Mexico State Police, Santa Fe County Sheriff's Department, and the Santa Fe City Police Department. In 2009:

- 341 narcotic cases were investigated
- 154 arrests were made
- 58 kilograms of narcotics, plus 1094 drug-related plants, were seized, for an approximate street value of \$2,000,000.²⁷

Potential Solutions²⁸

Most professionals involved in drug interdiction activities agree that reducing the demand for illegal drugs and deterring crime requires a multi-dimensional strategy. This includes a wide range of interventions aimed at enhancing public safety and health, promoting economic development and growth, revitalizing neighborhoods, and strengthening and supporting functional families in order to improve the quality of life for adults and especially youth. Systematic community planning is critical for the long-term reduction of substance abuse and crime in the northern New Mexico region.

The following table presents strategies that might impact drug use and trafficking in northern New Mexico and elsewhere.

Potential Drug Interdiction Strategies

Law Enforcement

Increasing:

- Interdiction efforts by law enforcement on roadways leading to Santa Fe and Rio Arriba Counties
- Information sharing between Northern NM and Albuquerque Metro law enforcement agencies because of the connection between drug distribution networks²⁹
- Street-level narcotic enforcement
- Tactical operations targeting open-air drug markets and drug houses
- Capacity to identify and locate drug houses and nuisance properties
- Multi-agency drug enforcement operations
- Police presence
- Gang enforcement training
- Landlord participation in crime-free multi-housing programs
- Crime mapping and analysis capacity
- Intelligence sharing
- Program evaluation

Community-Oriented Policing

Improving:

- Relations between police and neighborhood residents
- Police presence in neighborhoods
- Community involvement in the adjudication process
- Information sharing
- Program evaluation

²⁶ Office of National Drug Control Policy, HIDTA Factsheet, 2008.

²⁷ Information provided by Ralph Lopez, Program Manager, Region III Drug Enforcement Task Force.

²⁸ Espanola Westside Weed and Seed Proposal, 2008.

²⁹ National Drug Intelligence Center, US Department of Justice. Drug Market Analysis, 2010 (in draft).

Potential Drug Interdiction Strategies (continued)

Neighborhood Revitalization

Improving:

- Capacity of residents to coordinate restoration strategies
- Economic development
- Job and skill development
- Program evaluation

Treatment

Improving:

- Linguistically and culturally sensitive prevention and treatment programming for drug abuse, gangs, and violence that address risk and protective factors
- Program evaluation

Conclusion

Government, law enforcement, criminal justice officials, health officials, and community members have a role to play in addressing drug interdiction issues. Ideally, the recommendations that result from this summit will lead to action plans that will keep the drug trafficking and abuse of illicit drugs from reaching epidemic proportions in northern New Mexico.



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