

# DRUG THREAT ASSESSMENT



March 2020



State of Mississippi  
Department of Public Safety  
Bureau of Narcotics  
Intelligence Division

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**MISSISSIPPI BUREAU OF NARCOTICS**

**DRUG THREAT ASSESSMENT**

**MARCH 2020**

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics (MBN) publishes a threat assessment each year to identify the most significant criminal drug activity and drug threats faced by law enforcement and the citizens of this state and to inform law enforcement agencies, legislators, and citizens of current and potential illicit concerns that exist in Mississippi. It also assists in the planning of enforcement strategies and effective utilization of available resources for future operations. Contributing factors include geographic location, types of industries, cultural and economic diversities. It is our hope that the information contained in this report is instrumental in the counterdrug initiatives that impact the communities, the state of Mississippi, and the United States of America. As a result of statistical data from drug case production, toxicology reports of overdose deaths, and treatment and prevention information, Mississippi continues to fight the seemingly never-ending war on drugs.

### DRUG THREATS IN MISSISSIPPI

<b>Methamphetamine (ICE)</b>	➔	<b>Primary drug threat</b>
<b>Diverted Pharmaceuticals</b>	➔	<b>Primary drug threat</b>
<b>Heroin</b>	➔	<b>Primary drug threat</b>
<b>Marijuana</b>	➔	<b>Gateway drug</b>
<b>Cocaine and Crack Cocaine</b>	➔	<b>Constant drug threat</b>
<b>New Psychoactive Substances</b>	➔	<b>Continues to increase</b>

**Methamphetamine** continues to be the greatest drug threat in Mississippi due to its extensive availability, the rapid growth of abuse, and the violent crime it generates. Mexican DTOs continue to increase the importation of Methamphetamine (ICE) into the United States and ICE is the most accessible form of meth in Mississippi. Clandestine methamphetamine labs are still almost non-existent, in part due to House Bill 512. The transportation and distribution in Mississippi are done mostly by Caucasian criminal groups while black American groups are becoming increasingly involved in the transportation, distribution and use of methamphetamine (ICE). Mexican groups are also becoming more involved in the wholesale distribution of methamphetamine (ICE).

**Diverted Pharmaceuticals** are still a primary drug threat in Mississippi. The most common way to obtain illegal prescription drugs is still through prescription forgeries and “doctor shopping” but drugs are also being obtained illegally through the internet and being transported from Mexico and southwest border towns. These pharmaceuticals can be counterfeit, contaminated, expired and unsafe. The threat is escalated by Drug Trafficking Organizations becoming involved, pharmacy burglaries and the corruption of medical/health professionals/providers supporting addicts and criminals. There has been a decrease in the number of overdoses, although approximately 90% of the reported overdoses in the state are related to or involve pharmaceutically manufactured controlled substances.

**Heroin** is a drug that continues to increase as a major threat in Mississippi affecting public safety and health. With the decrease in availability of prescription opiates and the Mexican Cartels flooding Mississippi with heroin and fentanyl, these two powerful drugs have been escalating in Mississippi. Overdose deaths related to heroin and heroin combined with fentanyl continue to rise with fentanyl deaths exceeding heroin deaths. This is a result of drug cartels cutting heroin with fentanyl to maximize their profits at the expense of the consumer.

**Marijuana** continues to be the most frequently abused and abundantly available drug in Mississippi. It is an unassuming threat due to relaxed public perception, the legalization in many states and the increase in marijuana potency. Intelligence indicates that marijuana is the gateway drug for teens and young adults who are beginning to experiment with drugs, especially with the availability of illegal THC edibles and vape oils. As THC potency increases, so does the demand.

**Cocaine** cases are up slightly from last year but cocaine seizures continue to decline, partially due to the resurgence of methamphetamine. Even with this decline, cocaine remains a constant drug threat in Mississippi due especially to its high addiction rate, associated violence and its affiliation with gangs and drug cartels. The majority of cocaine in Mississippi is transported by American and Mexican DTOs via Texas and the Southwest Border states and distributed by criminal groups, street gangs and independent dealers.

**New Psychoactive Substances** continue to be a growing concern in Mississippi. These “designer drugs” are just as addictive and devastating as pharmaceuticals and methamphetamine and are designed to mimic the effects of those and other illicit drugs. They are available on the internet, gas stations, adult stores and smoke shops and are typically marketed toward young adults. One of the most troubling aspects of these new psychoactive substances is the limited knowledge of the content and potency of the substance being consumed.

## II. ENVIRONMENTAL AND RELATED THREATS

### GEOGRAPHY

The transporting of illegal drugs into and through Mississippi has been a significant problem for law enforcement for a number of years. Mississippi is ideally suited with its interstate system, deep water and river ports, and air and rail systems as the “Crossroads of the South” to facilitate drug movement from the South Texas/Mexico area and Gulf ports to the entire Midwest and Eastern United States. The state is comprised of 82 counties, located within 47,233 square miles, the majority offering rural agricultural areas. Mississippi has 62 miles of coastline extending from Louisiana to Alabama. Mississippi lies within 500 miles of more than 115 million consumers and 136 major metropolitan areas. Mississippi has an elaborate system of interstate highways and major thoroughfares that make traveling to these metropolitan areas quick and easy. Just as every other state, Mississippi has commercial bus lines that service the state. Mississippi also has seven passenger airports and numerous small or private air strips located within the state. In Mississippi alone, primary rail carriers on the nearly 3,000 miles of train track include the Illinois Central Railroad, Kansas City Southern, Burlington Northern, Columbus & Greenville Railroad Company, and Norfolk Southern System. Amtrak passenger service to and from New Orleans, Louisiana to Chicago, Illinois transits the entire state with major stops in-state providing yet another conduit for transporting and distributing large quantities of all types of drugs.



### HIGHWAY INTERDICTION IN MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi's numerous highways provide easy avenues to circumvent primary weigh stations situated along the Interstate System. The majority of drugs transit the state eastbound and northbound, originating in source areas of the Southwest Border and the West Coast. Currency and other forms of proceeds normally move across the state in a westbound direction, destined for the drug source areas.

With the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) came additional considerations for detection of drug smuggling organizations. Trade and traffic with Mexico has increased significantly. The opportunities to smuggle drugs from Mexico have increased and will continue to increase drastically. According to Gulf Coast High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) there were 79 drug and 26 currency related incidents reported on Mississippi highways during 2019. All major highways in Mississippi were included in these incidents. Mississippi cross-designated officers made 32 seizures of marijuana totaling 1089 pounds; 6 seizures of cocaine totaling 108 pounds; 13 seizures of methamphetamine totaling 688 pounds; 2 seizures of heroin totaling 5 pounds; 26 currency seizures totaling \$1,429,326.00 in U.S. Currency. There were 79 drug seizures; 16 vehicle seizures; 11 weapons seizures and

120 arrests. There were 5 stops involving 29 aliens. As a result of these stops, many targets were identified and active investigations were conducted. Some of the investigations have already resulted in the identification and arrests of numerous members of known DTOs.

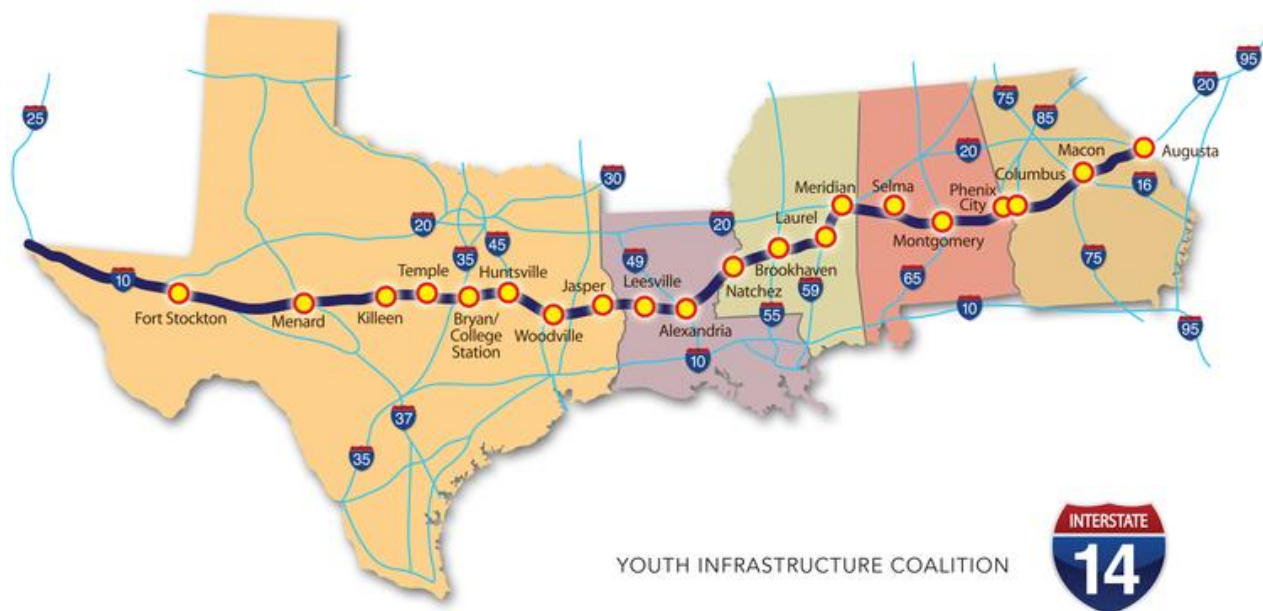
Most highway interdiction seizures made in Mississippi were transient loads of drugs passing through the state to other areas of the country. However, intelligence reveals that shipments of drugs destined for Mississippi are being interdicted in other states such as Louisiana and Texas. These out-of-state highway interdiction stops indicate that Mississippi-based trucking companies and out-of-state trucking companies are transporting drugs into Mississippi. Increased use of rental vehicles, freight companies, parcel services, and the United States Postal Service is an issue as well.

Drug trafficking patterns indicate the Interstate Highway System is the preferred method of transporting illegal drugs into and through Mississippi. The Interstate System provides unrestrained access for movement through the state. Mississippi has four major interstates and nine major highways. Law enforcement officials actively patrol these roadways. In addition, an increasing number of departments have personnel specifically assigned to intercept drug smugglers. Budgetary concerns and resource availability impair a full-scale effort to intercept drug shipments on Mississippi highways.

The four major interstates that connect Mississippi to major metropolitan areas in the U.S. are:

- I-55 stretches the entire length of the state offering a straight route from the Gulf Coast to Chicago and other northeastern cities with high demands for illegal drugs.
- I-20 runs the width of the state providing an easy route from the West Coast drug-producing cities to the East Coast.
- I-55 and I-20 intersect in Jackson providing many transportation possibilities to drug traffickers.
- I-59 joins I-20 in Meridian and intersects I-10 in Louisiana.
- I-10 follows the coastal area of Mississippi giving traffickers access to Birmingham, Mobile, New Orleans, Houston, Montgomery, Miami, Atlanta, and other major drug distribution areas in the southeast.
- Mississippi Highway 78 has changed to Interstate 22 which runs through North Mississippi from Memphis, Tennessee into Alabama and Hwy 67.
- I-69, also called the "NAFTA Superhighway, is proposed to run from Texas to Michigan to help trade with Mexico and Canada. A portion runs through Mississippi at the Tunica and De Soto County line along MS 713 near Tunica along a rural route to I-55 at the south end of I-239 near Hernando. The route runs concurrently with I-55 to Memphis.
- I-269 in Mississippi was completed in October 2018. It begins at an interchange with I-69 near Hernando and travels eastward towards Byhalia and has an interchange with I-22. It then turns northeasterly toward Tennessee to TN 385. I-269 serves as a bypass around Memphis, TN.
- I-14 is a proposed interstate that is to run from West Texas through Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama and ends in Georgia. It will help link military bases across these states and help economic growth in these areas. In Mississippi, it will run from Natchez to Laurel and Meridian.





Along with the convenience of interstates, Mississippi also has numerous state highways that provide drug traffickers with a variety of avenues of approach to their target areas. State highways 51, 61, 45 and 49 run north/south, and highways 6, 26, 72, 78, 80, 82, 84, 90 and 98 run east/west. These highways intersect the interstates and permit additional opportunities for drug traffickers to transport their drugs undetected.

Because the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) requires that all trucking company names are displayed on the door of the tractor, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) reports that some traffickers create trucking firms or companies for the purpose of appearing to comply with these regulations. In reality, only one or two shipments of drugs are made under the company name before it is discarded or replaced with another. This practice prevents any chance of name recognition by law enforcement. DOT estimates that only half of the tractor-trailers from which drug seizures are made are actually legitimate trucking companies. Common practices among traffickers are to alter or use someone else's DOT numbers and for drivers to use false documentation and identification. Mississippi is the home of several drug trafficking organizations that utilize trucking companies as independent drug transporters catering to key cities. Mississippi is also the home of a major international poultry industry and lumber industry that transports commodities via local independent commercial truck lines all over the United States. Intelligence reveals that numerous Mississippi trucking companies are the major transporters of assets for several DTOs in the state. These companies may or may not be independent from the drug trafficking organizations - essentially, hauling the drugs into the state and charging transportation fees. This practice attempts to shield the organization from the shipment of drugs, if discovered. Intelligence also indicates that the DTOs are paying "up-front" for the shipment of drugs, but do not necessarily own the entire load.

## ***DEMOGRAPHICS***

According to the United States Census Bureau, as of 2020, the population of Mississippi is estimated to be 2.99 million. The last nationwide U.S. Census figures represented a rise of 4.3% from the numbers declared at the Census in 2000; the population has grown only modestly since then. Mississippi currently has a population growth rate of 0.30%, which is fairly slow and ranks at 40th in the nation. If similar increases continue to occur, then the number of people living in Mississippi may soon surpass 3 million. The population of the state of Mississippi consists of about 51.5% of the population being female, while 48.5% were male. Likewise, 59.1% of the population is white and 37.8% of the population is black or African American. Overall, the Mexican population in Mississippi is steadily growing. The Hispanic or Latino population in Mississippi makes up 3.4%. Those that identify as American Indian, Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islanders, and those that identify as two or more races only make up about 3% of the population in Mississippi.

Jackson, the capital city, is the only one in the state with a population of over 100,000. Only two other cities currently have a population of at least 50,000: Hattiesburg and Gulfport. The most populated counties are Hinds (239,479 - but has been losing population since 2010), Harrison (205,027), and DeSoto (178,751) counties. Both Harrison and DeSoto counties have a substantial growth rate of over 9% in each county.

Situated in the southwest U.S., Mississippi is the 32nd largest state in the country with an area that covers 48,430 square miles. Population figures are consistent with its size, and it is the 31<sup>st</sup> most populous state; its population density ranks 32nd in the United States.

By the year 2025, the population will reach approximately 3.1 million people. The population growth expectations consistently show that the female population will be greater than the male population.

## ***ECONOMICS***

Mississippi is currently ranked 19<sup>th</sup> in the United States for its economic outlook. This is a forward-looking forecast based on the state's standing (equal-weighted average) in 15 important state policy variables. Data reflect state and local rates and revenues and any effect of federal deductibility.

Median household income in the United States rose to \$63,688 in January 2019, a 0.3% increase over the Sentier Research's estimate of \$63,517 for December 2018. According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, the unemployment rate for Mississippi as of January 2020 was 5.3% compared to a national rate of 4.0%, with Jefferson County being the highest at 16.7%.

Mississippi's fertile soil and temperate climate make it an ideal state for agriculture. Nurseries, greenhouses, farms producing sweet potatoes, watermelons and other vegetables, plus many other alternative farming operations contribute greatly to the revenue produced by Mississippi's agriculture industry.



The average size farm is composed of 263 acres. Agriculture makes a significant contribution to all 82 counties.

Agriculture is Mississippi's number one industry, employing approximately 29% of the state's workforce either directly or indirectly. Agriculture in Mississippi is a \$7.72 billion-dollar industry. There are approximately 34,700 farms in the state covering 10.4 million acres. The average size farm is composed of 299 acres. Agriculture makes a significant contribution to all 82 counties. The top five agricultural crops in Mississippi are poultry, forestry, soybeans, cotton and corn.

Mississippi ranks first in total U.S. catfish production contributing more than 55% of all catfish consumed in the nation. A full 94% of all U.S. Farm-Raised Catfish are raised here in Mississippi, as well as Alabama, Arkansas and Louisiana. In 1985, the U.S. Farm-Raised Catfish industry in these four states employed about 6,000 people and contributed roughly \$2.1 billion to the economies of each state. Today, the industry employs more than 13,000 people, and is responsible for more than \$4 billion.

Humphreys County has approximately 117 catfish farms with over 35,000 acres of U.S. farm-raised catfish, making it the top production county in the United States. This catfish acreage is more than any other single state in the U.S. Pure fresh water comes from underground wells. Ponds are stocked with 6,000 catfish to the acre. Mississippi farm-raised catfish are fed a “puffed” high-protein floating food pellet, a mixture of soybeans, corn, wheat, vitamins, minerals and fish meal produced by feed mills located in the Mississippi Delta. Catfish are harvested every week of the year. Sanderson Farms is the largest company headquartered in Mississippi based on Zippia database of 10 million resumes. It has 14,000 employees.

In the past 50 years, Mississippi has diversified its economy by concentrating more heavily on industrial activities, attracting a broader spectrum of business, industrial and technical operations. The space shuttles’ main engines are test-fired at the Stennis Space Center in Hancock County, and Peavey Electronics in Meridian leads the world in the manufacture of musical amplification. Other key businesses in Mississippi include Toyota and Nissan. Both facilities have created approximately 6,000 jobs, with more expected in the next five years. The Nissan plant is currently expanding its operation which will create several more jobs for the citizens of this state. Another major contributor to Mississippi’s job force, Continental Tire, employs 2,500 Mississippians, which opened on October 16, 2019.

According to the Mississippi Gaming Commission, there are currently 26 licensed casinos in Mississippi. Mississippi casino revenues rose in 2018, with patronage noticeably increasing beginning in August, after the state legalized sports betting. Statewide revenue rose 1.7 percent in 2018 to \$2.11 billion, up \$44 million from 2017, according to figures released (published January 18, 2019). Mississippi's gross gaming revenue for 2019 produced record-breaking numbers, bringing in more than \$2.2 billion in combined gross gaming revenue. Combined, Mississippi casinos took in \$74 million more in gross gaming revenue in 2019 than they did in 2018 (published January 27, 2020). These figures do not include the Silver Star Resort &

Casino and the Golden Moon Casino in Philadelphia, Mississippi, which are run by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and are not subject to state gaming regulations.

**MISSISSIPPI GAMING COMMISSION  
MONTHLY CASINO ADJUSTED GROSS GAMING REVENUE  
2019**

Month	Year	Central	Coastal	Northern	Totals
January	2019	\$23,374,350.87	\$107,500,689.37	\$44,336,984.66	\$175,212,024.90
February	2019	\$26,057,167.04	\$100,542,588.68	\$48,632,342.18	\$175,232,097.90
March	2019	\$33,106,248.13	\$123,821,362.27	\$54,881,174.94	\$211,808,785.34
April	2019	\$23,882,889.66	\$105,479,532.31	\$54,217,877.46	\$183,580,299.43
May	2019	\$25,930,277.69	\$109,414,859.33	\$48,425,390.65	\$183,770,527.67
June	2019	\$23,966,027.01	\$109,403,784.62	\$48,434,580.71	\$181,804,392.34
July	2019	\$24,156,758.36	\$117,427,012.35	\$42,452,912.39	\$184,036,683.10
August	2019	\$25,256,367.38	\$98,842,865.23	\$47,849,167.79	\$171,948,400.40
September	2019	\$23,496,590.14	\$114,954,047.64	\$46,311,957.98	\$184,762,595.76
October	2019	\$23,461,374.59	\$118,087,073.02	\$46,837,084.12	\$188,385,531.73
November	2019	\$24,741,720.44	\$94,484,979.42	\$46,534,345.03	\$165,761,044.89
December	2019	\$26,740,957.04	\$114,659,424.40	\$53,630,331.31	\$195,030,712.75
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$304,170,728.35</b>	<b>\$1,314,618,218.64</b>	<b>\$582,544,149.22</b>	<b>\$2,201,333,096.21</b>

**NOTE: ALL NUMBERS ARE SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT  
DUE TO ADJUSTMENTS MADE FOR PRIOR MONTHS**

The Alyce G. Clarke Mississippi Lottery Law was passed by the Mississippi State Legislature in August 2018 granting Mississippi the ability to hold a lottery. The first lottery tickets were sold on November 25, 2019 and surpassed \$2.5 million in sales. The first 6 days brought in over \$8.9 million with approximately \$1.9 million going towards the State's Highway Fund. The Mississippi Lottery was established to benefit statewide infrastructure and education. Net proceeds, up to \$80 million, will be used to support the State's Highway Fund until June 30, 2028 for repairing, renovating and maintaining state highways and bridges. Proceeds exceeding \$80 million in a fiscal year will be deposited into the Education Enhancement Fund for Early Childhood Learning Collaborative, the Classroom Supply Fund and other education purposes. According to [www.mslotteryhome.com](http://www.mslotteryhome.com), there are 1,699 locations where you can purchase lottery tickets in the state of Mississippi.

### ***III. MISSISSIPPI DRUG THREATS***

#### ***OVERALL SCOPE OF DRUG THREATS***

Methamphetamine is considered the most dominant threat in Mississippi because of the steadily increasing infiltration of “ICE” into this state and the country. Methamphetamine has become more prominent due to the increase in price and inaccessibility of cocaine. Prescription drugs are still a major threat, particularly with the opioid epidemic and the increase in overdose deaths due to prescription drugs. Heroin has gained more popularity and has become a major threat to Mississippi. Opioid addicts are turning to heroin because of the cheaper cost and availability. Marijuana continues to be widely abused in Mississippi and is seen as larger threat. Cocaine, particularly crack cocaine, is still considered to be a major drug threat facing the state of Mississippi. Abuse of synthetic drugs such as Spice and bath salts are a constant battle for law enforcement with new synthetic drugs being developed continually. There has also been an influx of synthetic cannabinoids due to “CBD oil” being sold in local vape shops. Vape cartridges, especially those purchased in the black market, have been found to sometimes be falsely labeled and contain dangerous additives and contaminants. In 2019, one overdose case in North Mississippi was contributed to vape cartridges containing Delta-8-THC, Delta-9-THC and Vitamin E. There have also been multiple EVALI (E-cigarette, or Vaping, product use Associated Lung Injury) cases reported by the Mississippi State Department of Health, with all victims between the ages of 18 and 34.

## ***METHAMPHETAMINE***

### ***ASSESSMENT OF THE THREAT***

The United States Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program funded a methamphetamine initiative in Mississippi until April 1, 2013. The initiative provided Mississippi with equipped and trained agents dedicated to dismantling methamphetamine organizations and improving law enforcement efforts. The focus of the initiative was to investigate illicit manufacturing and distribution of methamphetamine and provide First Responder Methamphetamine training to other state and local law enforcement agencies on procedures to follow if a methamphetamine lab is encountered. Currently, Mississippi is participating in the container program sponsored by DEA for cleanup and disposal of meth lab debris.

Normally, methamphetamine has the appearance of white, crystalline powder. Methamphetamine is usually manufactured using a combination of several household products and over-the-counter supplies. Although the manufacturing efficiency of methamphetamine has decreased, there has been an increase in the number of “ice” (Mexican methamphetamine described by its clear, crystalline appearance) related cases in Mississippi due to the infiltration of Mexican TCOs (Transnational Criminal Organizations). Law Enforcement has subsequently linked “ice” methamphetamine to “super labs” in Mexico after the arrests of cartel members throughout Mississippi in multiple meth investigations. Ice is generally about twice as potent as homemade meth and is about eighty percent in purity.



*13.27 grams of methamphetamine ice seized in Neshoba County in December 2019*

### ***ABUSE***

Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics issued a total of 842 methamphetamine cases in 2019. This is an increase from 2018, which had a total of 788 methamphetamine cases. Meth cases initiated during 2019 by MBN involved the seizure of over 263 combined pounds of solid methamphetamine, over 75 liters of liquid methamphetamine, and approximately 996 individual dosage units of methamphetamine. There were 504 arrests made by MBN for methamphetamine related charges including sale, possession, and manufacture during 2019.

The MS Department of Health reported 1,604 people were admitted for methamphetamine abuse as a primary substance in 2019. This is a decrease from 2018, in which 1,322 individuals were admitted for abuse of methamphetamine.

Due to the purity level of the Mexico-produced methamphetamine “ice,” the potential for long-term abuse has increased. Law enforcement has noted that methamphetamine demand and distribution has spread into White, African American, and Hispanic communities.

## AVAILABILITY



The Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics, supported by other law enforcement agencies, introduced legislation that was passed by the Mississippi House and Senate that classified products containing pseudoephedrine and ephedrine as a Schedule II controlled substance. Since the passing of House Bill 512 in 2010, Mississippi has seen a drastic decrease in the local manufacture of methamphetamine, active meth labs, meth dump sites, and chemical glassware seizures.

In 2019, two meth labs were seized in Mississippi, one in Itawamba County and one in Union County, while there were no meth labs seized in 2018. Despite this change, the number of methamphetamine related cases is still significant in Mississippi. According to the Justice Department's National Drug Assessment, Mexico remains a main source of supply for meth consumed in the United States.

## ASSOCIATED CRIME AND VIOLENCE

Investigating drug traffickers has become more dangerous because of the suspects' possible affiliations with drug cartels and gangs. Meth manufacturers, as well as abusers, display a level of agitation and paranoia with the use of methamphetamine. This leads to situations where violence is more likely to occur. National Drug Threat Assessment respondents also reported methamphetamine as one of the drugs that most contributes to both violent crime and property crime, with heroin contributing more to property crime. Law enforcement officers are required to wear protective clothing and breathing equipment when investigating illicit methamphetamine labs. Booby-traps and firearms are also a concern at meth lab sites. As part of MS Senate Bill 2575, enacted into law in July 2005, a sentencing enhancement was added for violators who possess firearms and/or booby traps on premises or property during an investigation or at the time of arrest. Methamphetamine labs contain combustible materials that often result in explosions and fires, which pose significant threats to the environment and law enforcement, as well as the general population.

Whether a methamphetamine laboratory is discovered as a result of a search warrant, undercover purchase, traffic stop, or complaint from a citizen, too often, children are present. Children present during the manufacturing process are exposed to dangerous chemicals. Children discovered in these environments are normally related to the laboratory owners and manufacturers.



## ***PRODUCTION***

Local clandestine methamphetamine laboratories create public safety and environmental hazards that demand a law enforcement response. The “Shake and Bake” or “One Pot” method were once the most common manufacturing method found in Mississippi but have declined dramatically over the past several year due to the increased popularity of Mexican produced methamphetamine “Ice” and the passing of Mississippi’s pseudoephedrine law. In an effort to increase or maximize methamphetamine production and minimize detection by law enforcement, violators used the “One Pot” method to reduce steps in manufacturing. The “One Pot” method is a variation of the Nazi method or Ammonia-Lithium reduction method. In this method, all of the ingredients are mixed together simultaneously, and anhydrous ammonia is substituted for ammonium nitrate.

Common manufacturing sites for local labs include the trunks of cars, truck beds, apartments or motel rooms, and remote outdoor locations. Meth manufacturing poses environmental and health concerns such as fire or explosion and public exposure to chemicals and hazardous waste from laboratory sites discarded on farms and rural or suburban areas.

From 2016 to present, Mexican TCOs have had a significant impact in southern Mississippi with Ice linked to “super labs” in Mexico. These super labs can meet the high demand for Ice faster than small-time local Meth manufacturing. Super labs can produce 10 pounds of ice every 24 hours compared to a home meth lab that can produce several ounces of meth, according to a U.S. Government Accountability Office report addressed to Congress. Ice is about twice as potent as homemade meth, taking a smaller quantity of Ice to get the “rush” the stimulant provides.

## ***TRANSPORTATION***

Traditionally, methamphetamine distributors have been outlaw motorcycle gangs and other independent trafficking groups. While these groups still produce meth, clandestine laboratories in Southwest Border states and Mexico are now the primary source of supply for methamphetamine available in Mississippi. Methamphetamine Ice manufactured in Mexico is transported into and through Mississippi via the West Coast and the Southwest Border and is controlled primarily by the same major organizations that produce/traffic other illicit drugs from Mexico to the U.S. The most common method of transporting methamphetamine is within concealed compartments in passenger, commercial, and rail vehicles. The United States Postal Service and next-day delivery services are also commonly utilized.

## ***DISTRIBUTION***

Generally, methamphetamine is distributed by local drug trafficking organizations across Mississippi and by independent dealers. Methamphetamine distribution now occurs everywhere and it not limited to just truck stops, clubs, low-to-medium income apartments, mobile home parks, hotels, restaurant parking lots, and rural areas, like in the past. Distribution has also changed to include all demographics.

## ***DIVERTED PHARMACEUTICALS***

### ***ASSESSMENT OF THE THREAT***

Pharmaceutical Diversion is when prescription medications are used by someone other than for whom they were intended or else used in a manner other than prescribed. The use and abuse of diverted pharmaceuticals is a serious problem that affects the health, social and economic welfare of all communities, not only in Mississippi but all over the country. Cases are brought against and arrests are made for the diversion and distribution of pharmaceuticals in Mississippi including, not just your typical “drug dealers” but also, lawyers, pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, doctors, nurses, businessmen, housewives and others. Pharmaceuticals are still a central drug threat in Mississippi.

### ***ABUSE***

The illicit diversion of pharmaceutical drugs, such as hydrocodone (brand names: Vicodin, Norco, etc.), oxycodone (Percocet, OxyContin, etc.), alprazolam (Xanax), oxymorphone (Opana), and methadone are of major concern to law enforcement in Mississippi. Although not as many prescriptions are being written by as many prescribers, the strength level and duration of the prescription has increased while most prescriptions are coming from a concentrated number of doctors. Also, MBN has seen that users have begun to crush pills, like Adderall and time-delayed release capsules, and snort them in an effort to expedite the high. In talking with addicts, MBN has found that most heroin users began by crushing and injecting oxycodone (typically a legitimate prescription) before graduating to heroin. MBN has established a Pharmaceutical Diversion Unit to investigate the increasing numbers of diverted pharmaceuticals and the increasing number of overdose related cases throughout the state. MBN has also partnered with DEA’s Tactical Diversion Unit based in Jackson, Mississippi.

MBN initiated 346 cases involving pharmaceuticals and arrested a total of 139 individuals for pharmaceutical related cases involving sale, possession, and prescription forgery in 2019.

According to MBN and as reported by Mississippi coroners, approximately 90% of the reported overdoses in the state are related to or involve pharmaceutically manufactured controlled substances and but not limited to pharmaceutical fentanyl or fentanyl analogues. This statewide increase in the abuse of opioids, and pharmaceutically manufactured controlled substances diverted from their legitimate use and introduced to the state’s black market, has forced law enforcement throughout the state to revise their training, policies and procedures in order to combat this dangerous situation of epidemic proportions.

### ***AVAILABILITY***

Some methods of obtaining pharmaceuticals include: 1) legitimately obtaining prescriptions then diverting a portion for abuse or financial gain, 2) being given by, bought from, or taken from a friend or relative, 3) stealing physician’s prescription pads, 4) producing counterfeit prescriptions, 5) purchasing from internet pharmacies, and 6) calling pharmacists impersonating

a physician. Some abusers go from doctor to doctor for the same problem, to obtain duplicate prescriptions, while some physicians willingly help individuals abuse prescription drugs by writing prescriptions when there is no medical need. MBN often identifies individuals who travel outside the state to Louisiana, Texas, and Florida to visit pain management clinics in order to obtain large quantities of pharmaceuticals to illegally distribute in Mississippi.

On February 10, 2020, the statewide numbers of evidence samples tested by the Mississippi Forensics Laboratory Drug Section for 2019 are as follow: there were 125 cases that contained fentanyl or an analog of fentanyl. Since the Mississippi Forensics Laboratory Drug Section is still working 2019 cases, this number will probably increase as results continue to appear.

### ***INTERNET PHARMACIES***

According to the FDA, purchasing pharmaceuticals from online pharmacies can have dangerous or deadly consequences. Some of the risks of purchasing from an online pharmacy are:

- Receiving counterfeit, contaminated, expired or unsafe pharmaceuticals
- Putting yourself at risk for adverse side-effects, especially with other medications being taken
- Jeopardizing the security of your personal and financial information
- Opening yourself up to an overwhelming amount of spam phone calls and emails

An easy way to determine if the online pharmacy is high risk is if they:

- Do not require a prescription
- Do not provide contact information such as an address or phone number
- Advertise extremely low prices
- Fail to participate in any insurance plan, instead, requiring payment up front by credit card or cash on delivery (C.O.D.)
- Offer a limited selection of medications for sale, mostly controlled substances
- Are willing to deliver drugs to a post office box or other location to avoid detection by authorities
- Deceptively and inaccurately advise about the law and why it is permissible to obtain controlled pharmaceutical substances from foreign countries via the internet

The MBN Statewide Pharmaceutical Diversion Unit (SPDU) is currently working in conjunction with DEA to combat the illegal distribution of pharmaceuticals in the state from sources nationally and internationally.

### ***ASSOCIATED CRIME AND VIOLENCE***

Local independent dealers and abusers, who are usually one and the same, burglarize pharmacies and the homes of legitimate prescription holders to obtain drugs. Pharmacy diversion occurs when pharmacy employees steal products directly from the shelves. Doctor shopping occurs when individuals who may or may not have a legitimate ailment visit

numerous physicians to obtain drugs in excess of what should be prescribed. Prescription forgery transpires when local independent dealers or abusers steal prescriptions from physicians or make “pen and ink” changes to prescriptions doctors have written. Unscrupulous physicians sometimes prescribe medications for individuals who do not have a medical need or sometimes for a fee or other favors. In 2019, there were a total of 32 pharmacy burglaries in Mississippi, up from 25 in 2018.

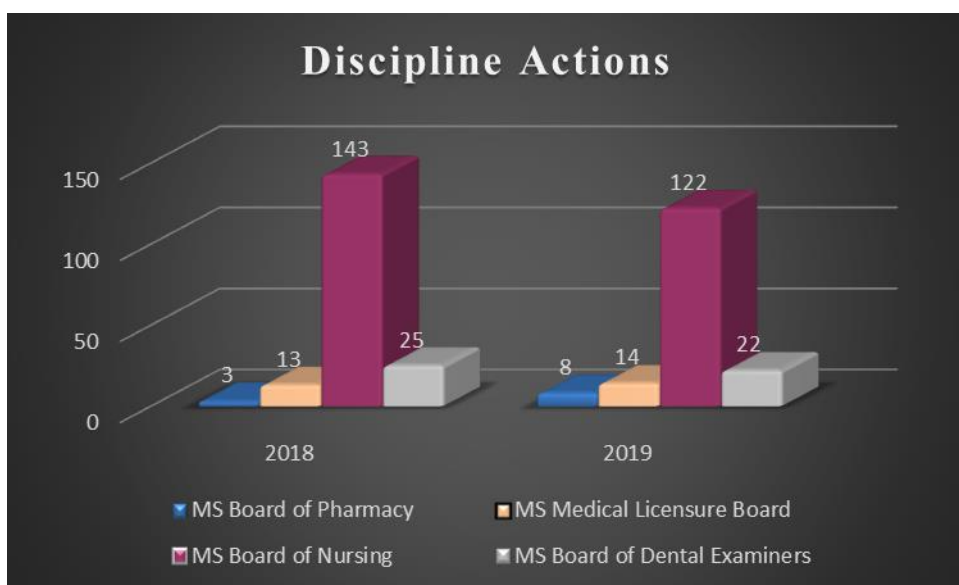
## TRANSPORTATION

Transportation of diverted pharmaceuticals is usually by privately owned vehicles and parcel service businesses. MBN executed and/or responded to 664 interdiction stops in 2019, of which 112 resulted in the seizure of diverted pharmaceuticals. MBN has also intercepted numerous packages and seized pharmaceuticals from the United States Postal Service, Federal Express, United Parcel Service and others.

## DISTRIBUTION

Most diverted pharmaceuticals in Mississippi are for individual use. Occasionally, violators will sell pharmaceuticals obtained through legitimate and diverted means as a way of supplementing their own habit. Users also obtain pharmaceuticals through pain clinics throughout the state. While MBN is seeing a decrease in the number of general practitioners’ issuing opioid prescriptions, the prescriptions written by doctors at pain management clinics has increased substantially. By following a person’s Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) history, it has become evident which prescribers are problematic. Often the PMP of an overdose victim will lead you straight to an over-prescriber. Some doctors are even prescribing controlled substances through the internet to patients who have never been examined.

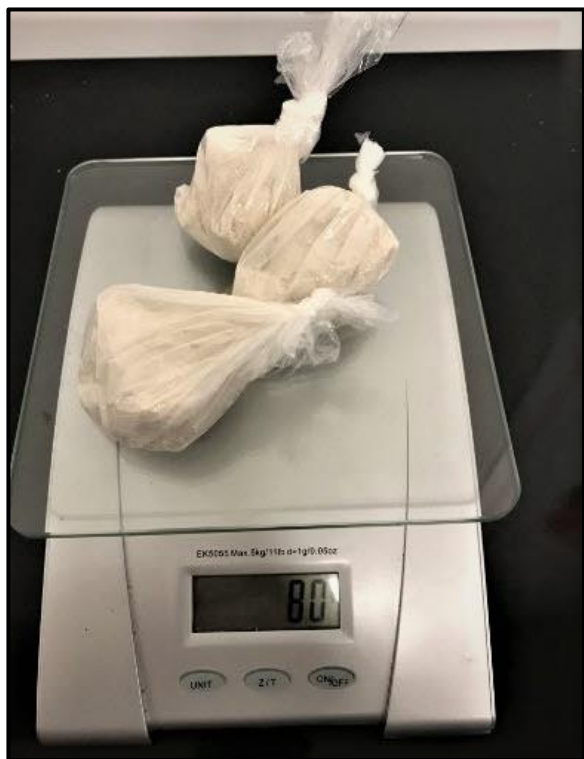
The MBN Statewide Pharmaceutical Diversion Unit (SPDU) works hand to hand with the state regulatory boards like the Mississippi Board of Pharmacy, Mississippi Board of Dental Examiners, Mississippi Medical Licensure Board, Mississippi Board of Nursing, etc. The following data shows a general number of disciplinary actions by some of the State Boards involving license holders or registrants that were based on pharmaceutical or drugs offenses. (Keeping in mind some of these actions might not be formal and /or disciplinary in nature)



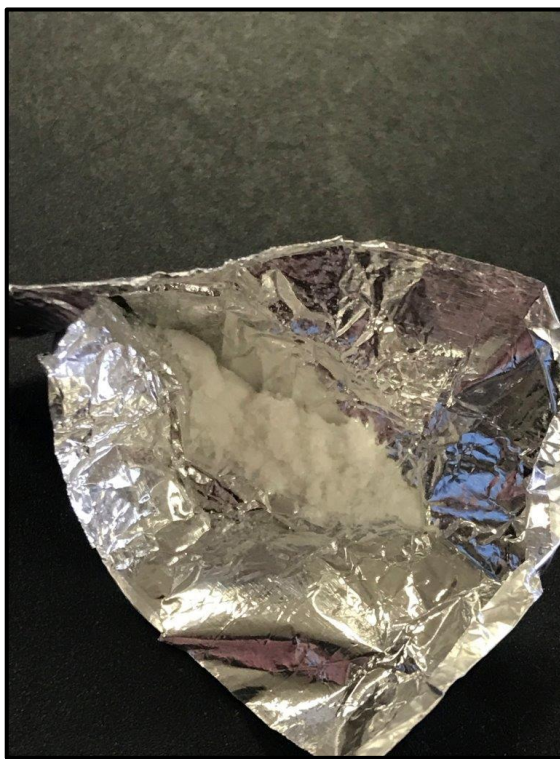
## HEROIN & FENTANYL

### ASSESSMENT OF THE THREAT

Ben Westhoff, author of the book *Fentanyl Inc.*, stated the opioid epidemic in the United States has taken place in three waves. The first wave was the mass distribution of prescription pills like “Oxycontin.” Once the prescriptions ran out, the addicts turned to heroin which transitioned into the second wave. Finally, fentanyl ushered in the third wave. Mississippi is continuing on an upward trajectory with heroin and fentanyl cases along with overdoses deaths. With the decrease in availability of prescription opiates such as dilaudid and the Mexican Cartels flooding MS with heroin and fentanyl, it has brought these two powerful opiates to the forefront in Mississippi. Mississippi per capita is one of the most over prescribed states for opiates. As a result, citizens are becoming addicted to opiates at a higher rate and inevitability transitioning to heroin and fentanyl. Since 2014 to present, the price per gram has decreased from \$400.00 to \$200.00 per gram while the average purity has increased. Combined with the fact fentanyl is so cheaply manufactured, cartels are using it to cut with heroin and other opioids to further their profits. Statista.com reports that a kilogram of fentanyl valued at \$80,000 can yield profits of 1.6 million for drug trafficking organizations. This makes fentanyl approximately 20 times more profitable than heroin.



80.0 grams of brown heroin purchased in Rankin County

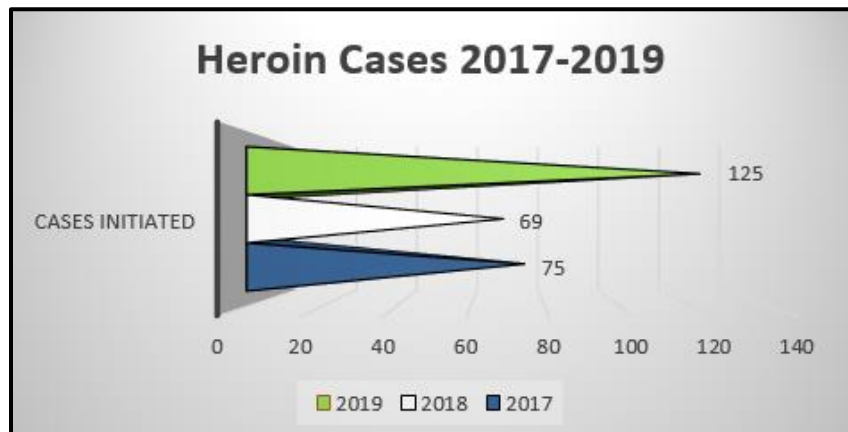


0.50 grams of fentanyl purchased in Coahoma County

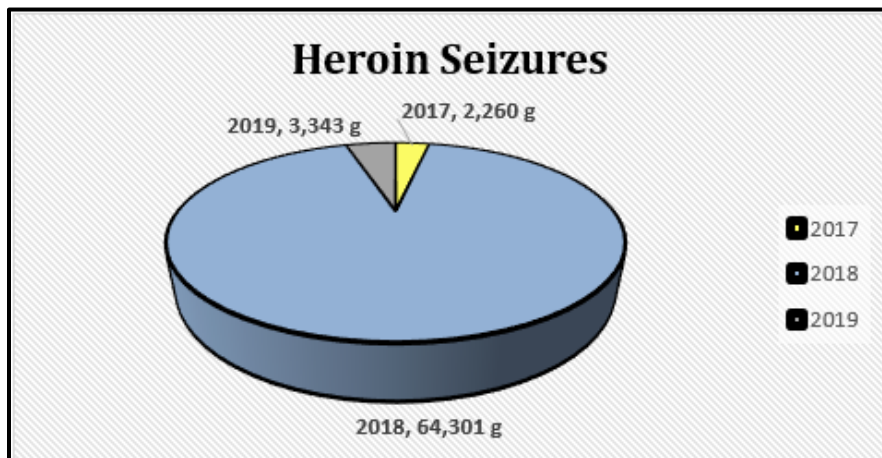
In 2019, MBN initiated 125 heroin cases, a 45% increase when compared to 2018 and a 40% increase from 2017. Although total heroin seizures are down a stunning 1,822% from the



previous year, this can be attributed to fewer highway interdictions of heroin. Thus setting aside 2018 as an outlier, heroin seizures are up 32% from 2017.



Most of the heroin seizures in 2019 resulted from search warrants and buys made across the state. MBN had 64 purchases in 2019, a 59% increase from 2018. Those purchases resulted in the seizure of approximately 694 grams of heroin. In 2018, 264 grams of heroin was purchased on 26 cases. In the past three years, brown heroin continues to be the predominant form of heroin available in Mississippi. In 2019, 3,049.36 grams of brown heroin, 265.90 grams of white heroin, and 30.04 grams of black tar heroin were seized with the average cost around \$200.00 per gram.

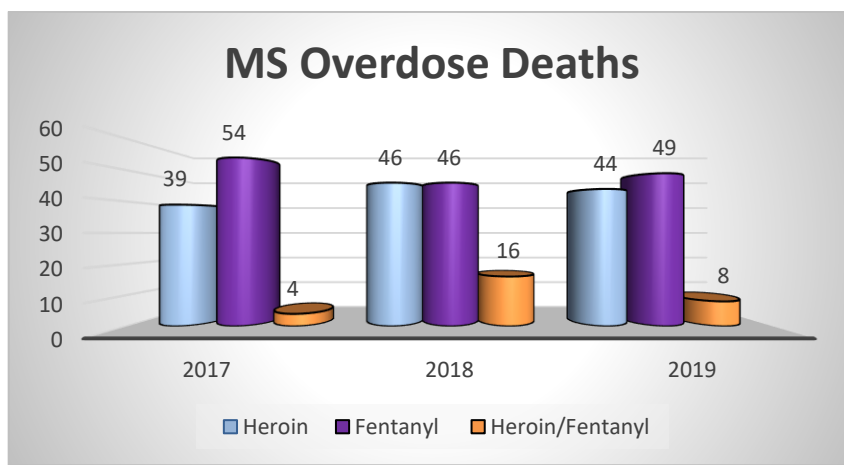


## ***FENTANYL***

In 2019, MBN had 8 cases where fentanyl was purchased, as compared to 10 cases in 2018, and 6 cases in 2017. Although the cases and seizures for fentanyl are lower than heroin, the overdose deaths actually exceed those of heroin. This is a result of the cartel cutting heroin with fentanyl to maximize their profits at the expense of the consumer.

## ABUSE

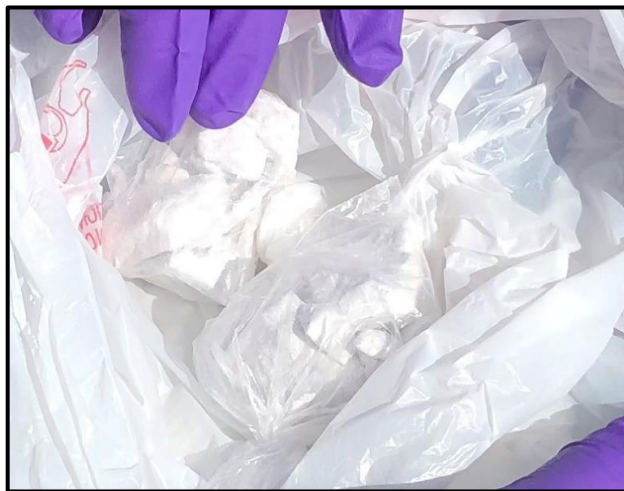
Over the past few years, Mississippi has seen a drastic rise in fentanyl and heroin use. Coupled with the fact cartels are cutting heroin with fentanyl and selling fentanyl as heroin overdose deaths have increased. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) published a study in 2018 that stated fentanyl overdoses deaths have skyrocketed increasing by 71% since 2013. However, in 2018 the CDC reported overdose deaths decreased for the first time since 1990. Although it is seen as a positive, the decreases in numbers are offset by the increase in fentanyl related overdose deaths.



Mississippi Department of Mental Health reported during the year 2019 there were 574 individuals treated for heroin as a primary substance. This is an increase from the 2018 admissions of 530. These numbers exemplify the steady increase of heroin usage in Mississippi.

## PRODUCTION

Opium is derived from the resin of poppy plant and refined to make morphine and heroin. Heroin generally comes in three different forms in the United States: powder, black tar and pills. Powder heroin comes in brown and white. White powder heroin is usually the most desirable and originates in Southeast and Southwest Asia. Brown powder originates from Mexico and is darker in color and is usually less powerful. Black tar heroin, which has a black sticky appearance, almost exclusively comes from Mexico and South America. The third, least common form of heroin is pill form. These



are often sold in gel capsules or made with pill presses and mixed with other powders like powdered lactose, quinine and baby laxative. Usually these pills mimic an opiate pill. Pills are usually the cheapest and lowest-quality form of the drug.

Fentanyl, a synthetic opioid is 50 times stronger than heroin and 80-100 times stronger than morphine. Originally developed by pharmaceutical companies to aid in pain management for cancer patients, China and Mexico have become the world's leading manufacturers and distributors of this deadly drug. According to [heritage.org](https://www.heritage.org), "U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has identified China as the primary source of illicit fentanyl and the painkiller's analogues that enter our country".

### ***TRANSPORTATION AND DISTRIBUTION***

The 2018 DEA Threat Assessment reported Mexico is the main source of heroin trafficked into the U.S. In 2015, Mexico replaced multiple South American countries as the largest exporter of heroin that is purchased in Eastern U.S. cities. The Guardian reported that Mexico had over 75,000 acres of opium poppy production in 2017. The majority of the heroin distributed in the United States comes across the southwest border and is controlled by Mexican Cartels. China and Mexico are the largest producers of fentanyl that makes its way into the United States via shipping containers, mail, or smuggled across the U.S./Mexico border. Heroin and fentanyl once in the U.S. is trafficked into and through Mississippi via three major routes; Interstate 10, 20 and 55.

### ***ASSOCIATED CRIME AND VIOLENCE***

Heroin and fentanyl related violence is minimal in Mississippi. However, gangs that are associated with selling small quantities of heroin and fentanyl, commit violent crimes including: assault, burglary, homicide and robbery, to further their drug activities and to protect their turf. Most of the violent crime that occurs in Mississippi is not directly attributed to heroin or fentanyl use and distribution.

## MARIJUANA

### ASSESSMENT OF THE THREAT

Marijuana, whether produced in Mexico or grown locally, continues to be the most commonly used and readily available illicit drug in Mississippi. The drug is considered a “gateway” to the world of illicit drug abuse. Relaxed public opinion, evolving legislation, the demand for increasingly potent marijuana and marijuana products have continued to entice drug traffickers to distribute the illegal drug. California remains the focal point for trafficking of illegal black-market marijuana in the United States.

Recreational use of marijuana has been legalized in eight states and the District of Columbia. Over 30 states have passed legislation approving the use of marijuana for medicinal purposes. Medical and recreational marijuana use has not been legalized in Mississippi; however, a group pushing for the legalization of medical marijuana recently gained enough signatures to get an initiative to permit the use of medical marijuana on the 2020 ballot.



The use of marijuana significantly impairs bodily and mental functions. In states where the use of marijuana is decriminalized, marijuana trafficking remains a source of violence, crime, and social disintegration. The cultivation of marijuana, trafficking, and use of marijuana have negative impacts on many aspects of our lives, from public health to national security transportation, the environment, and educational attainment.

During 2019, MBN seized approximately 834 pounds of processed marijuana, seized over 114 marijuana plants, and initiated 788 cases involving marijuana for the year. MBN arrested 241 individuals in 2018 and 287 in 2019 for marijuana violations. MBN seized approximately 3,619 pounds of marijuana and initiated 663 cases involving marijuana in 2018. When compared to previous years the availability of marijuana has increased in Mississippi. This increase is due in part to marijuana being diverted from other states where it's legal, and the increased number of states permitting the use of marijuana for medical purposes.

### ABUSE

Nationwide, the use of marijuana transcends all racial, social and economic boundaries. Marijuana use is especially widespread among young adults while adolescent acceptance and illicit use is increasing. This increase could be contributed to the growing number of adolescents who believe marijuana is not harmful, a trend that substance abuse professionals suggests stems from the drug's changing legal status in states such as Colorado and Washington. According to the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, 6.7% of students

used marijuana one or more times during the past 30 days in 2016. The percentage of students who tried marijuana for the first time before age 13 years was 4.4% in 2016; the national average was 7.5%.

Research also suggests that the use of vaping devices among adolescents has contributed to the rise of marijuana use. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, vaping among eighth, tenth and twelfth graders has grown rapidly for the second year in a row. The use of vaping devices has risen significantly in popularity over the past several years. This trend continued into 2019, but evolved into vaping of marijuana. The National Institute on Drug Abuse reported approximately 20.8% of high school seniors have vaped marijuana in the past year. From 2018 to 2019, the number of seniors vaping marijuana in the past month increased from 7.5% to 14%. According to the Mississippi Department of Education, more than 970 students were expelled or suspended from public schools for drug related offences during the 2017-2018 school year. This is a 5% increase from the previous school year.

### ***AVAILABILITY***

Eighty percent of the 2019 Gulf Coast HIDTA Threat Assessment Survey respondents indicated the availability of marijuana as high. Marijuana smuggled into the United States from Mexico and Latin American source areas accounts for most of the marijuana available in Mississippi. Marijuana produced in Mexico remains the most widely available. Some high-potency marijuana enters the U.S. drug market from Canada and other states which have legalized the medicinal use of marijuana; however, imports appear to be decreasing as producers shift operations to the U.S. side of the border. Recent U.S. drug law enforcement reports suggest an increase in the availability of domestically grown marijuana.

The legalization of medical marijuana has presented multiple challenges for law enforcement officials. At this time, Mississippi does not permit the use of marijuana for medical or recreational use. A group pushing for the legalization of medical marijuana in Mississippi turned in nearly 106,000 signatures of registered voters to get the issue on the statewide 2020 ballot. The initiative would allow doctors to prescribe medical marijuana for medical conditions such as cancer, epilepsy, Parkinson, and multiple sclerosis. If the initiative were passed, the Department of Health would be tasked with regulating the program.

The Mississippi State Board of Health, former Governor Phil Bryant and law enforcement officials strongly oppose the initiative. They point to the lack of scientific evidence supporting whether the benefits of marijuana treatment will outweigh the risks. Law enforcement and state officials also worry that the legalization of medical marijuana may also lead to recreational legislation. Ultimately, initiatives aimed at legalizing medical marijuana will likely contribute to an increase in availability and abuse.

Prices for marijuana vary based on the quality, potency, geographic region where it was produced and whether it in flower, wax or edible form. Commercial grade domestic marijuana ranges from approximately \$400 to \$900 per pound in the U.S. Southwest Boarder areas to between \$700 to \$1,000 per pound in the Midwest and Northeastern United States. Prices in Mississippi range from \$400 to \$900 per pound.



## ***ASSOCIATED CRIME AND VIOLENCE***

Violent crime is not associated with marijuana in Mississippi; however, some marijuana producers and distributors will submit to violent crimes in order to protect their product. Cannabis growers for example, will often resort to counter-surveillance, trip wires and explosives to protect their crop from theft or seizure. Marijuana retail distributors have been known to carry weapons to protect their merchandise and to guard against potential robberies during marijuana transactions. Mexican marijuana DTO's are reputed to be the most violent in the world.

## ***PRODUCTION***

Marijuana is grown utilizing different methods such as indoor, outdoor and hydroponic grow operations. Over the past few years, indoor grow operations were on the decline in Mississippi. These operations range in size from a small closet to entire residences. Indoor cannabis cultivation requires diligent oversight. In order to produce a healthy plant, growers must provide their crops with light, heat, humidity, and fertilizer. Indoor grow operations also employ sophisticated means of production and concealment. Organizations often purchase homes in neighborhoods with mid to high level income residents. Residential indoor operations are capable of producing marijuana crops four or more times in one year. Data from 2018 shows that seizures from these types of operations range from 50 to 100 marijuana plants totaling up to \$100,000 in value.



Mississippi's temperate climate make the state a prime location for outdoor grow operations. Unlike indoor grow operations, outdoor grows typically employ very basic cultivation techniques. Outdoor operations enable a grower to conceal their crop from law enforcement by intermixing it with other crops. Mexican DTOs continue to use sophisticated methods of cultivation. Workers are required to live on-site and tend to the crop on a daily basis. DTOs utilize elaborate irrigation systems, water pumps, hoses, portable sprayers, portable gas generators, and advanced chemical fertilizer applications.

In 2019, MBN's Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program (DCE/SP) seized approximately 626 marijuana plants. Approximately 30 marijuana plants were seized from an outdoor grow operation in Carroll County, MS. The Mississippi National Guard Raid Unit and Counter Drug Task Force continue to assist MBN in its marijuana eradication program by providing air support, surveillance, and thermal imaging. In 2018, MBN's DCE/SP seized approximately 69,504 marijuana plants spread across approximately 12 acres in Jefferson County, MS. MBN reports this was the largest outdoor grow found in the state's history. The estimated value of this grow equated to approximately \$70 million. Large outdoor grows such

as the one in Jefferson County continue to be a challenge for law enforcement to discover. Grows on public lands are rising in popularity. These grows are often in remote areas that are difficult to access.

## ***TRANSPORTATION***

Mexico-produced marijuana enters the country primarily in Arizona, California, and south Texas, while high-potency Canadian marijuana is usually smuggled through and between points of entry in Washington, Michigan, New York, and Vermont. Both forms of marijuana are distributed nationally. Similarly, domestically produced marijuana is transported from grow sites to markets nationwide.

Mississippi continues to be a major trans-shipment point for bulk marijuana from the Southwest Border. According to the 2020 Gulf Coast HIDTA Threat Assessment, marijuana is the most commonly seized drug. Intelligence and seizures from 2018 show marijuana in 50 to multi-thousand-pound quantities destined for markets along the East Coast is transported through Mississippi on a daily basis. The proceeds from this traffic are returned to Mexico through Mississippi via I-10, I-59, I-55 and I-20. Parcel delivery is also a popular avenue for drug traffickers to utilize for transporting drugs.



## ***DISTRIBUTION***

Mexico is the traditional source of supply for marijuana distributed in Mississippi. Marijuana is imported into Mississippi, usually via Texas from Mexico, by small organizations, in 10 to 20 kilogram quantities at a time. Private vehicle is the preferred method of transportation for these quantities. Larger loads of 100 to 1,000 kilogram quantities have been seized in the state usually transported in commercial vehicles. Marijuana is distributed by all socio-economic classes ranging from street level dealers to major distributors.

## ***TRENDS***

As more states legalize recreational marijuana, new consumption trends continue to emerge in Mississippi. MBN seized over 500 vape cartridges containing THC in 2019. Several seizures of THC edibles, waxes and oils were also conducted by MBN in 2019.



The popularity of THC extraction laboratories continues to rise. These labs produce marijuana concentrates such as hash that is often ingested through e-cigarettes, vape devices and edible products such as gummy candies and topical waxes. These edible products are easier to conceal and ingest than traditional leafy marijuana; thus, presenting a new challenge for law enforcement, educators and parents.

High school students and younger children continue to be drawn to edibles as they resemble candy. THC edibles are a potential health hazard to children as they are unaware of the amount



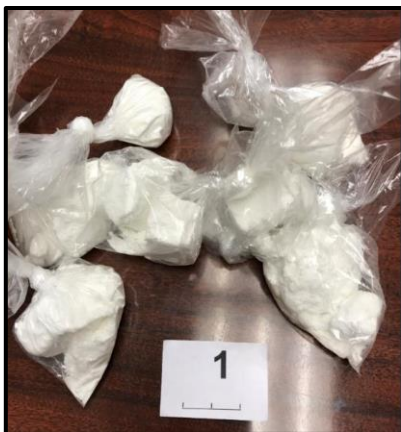
of THC in the candy. Edible products contain tetrahydrocannabinolic acid (THCA), containing up to 99 percent of THC. THCA is extracted from undried cannabis plants and when heated converts to THC. The substance can be dabbed or inhaled to achieve an intense high. A demand for high-grade more potent marijuana products is steadily growing. MBN predicts it will be a growing trend and Mississippi and will continue to see more of in the future.

## COCAINE AND CRACK COCAINE

### ASSESSMENT OF THE THREAT

Since 2007, cocaine numbers have drastically dropped in Mississippi due to drug organizations expanding their drug trafficking to include drugs like methamphetamine and heroin, although the decline has been less dramatic over the past couple of years. MBN initiated cocaine cases continued to decline in 2019, yet the amount of seizures, especially powder cocaine seizures, increased. In spite of the fact that MBN cocaine case numbers are low, national statistics are trending towards an increase in demand. In 2019 alone, DEA, working with domestic and international partners, seized 1.7+ million pounds of cocaine. Cocaine still remains a dangerous and problematic drug in communities and for law enforcement across the state. The use and/or sale of cocaine can be linked directly and indirectly to crimes, especially violent crimes.

### ABUSE



*187 Grams of powder cocaine seized  
in Itawamba County on 11/04/2019*

In Mississippi, cocaine is illicitly trafficked and abused by people from all racial and socioeconomic groups throughout the state's 82 counties. Crack cocaine remains the drug of choice among users and traffickers in the African American population in both urban and rural areas of Mississippi; however, the use and abuse of cocaine is not limited to any one geographic area or ethnic group.

In 2019, Mississippi saw an increase in the number of cocaine cases and cocaine abusers but saw a significant decrease in the amount of cocaine seizures. In 2019, approximately 10% of all MBN drug cases initiated were for cocaine. There were 234 MBN cases involving crack and powder cocaine in 2019 compared to 230 cases in 2018 and 295 cases in 2017. MBN agents purchased or seized approximately 12 pounds of cocaine during 2019. This is a considerable decrease compared to 142 pounds in 2018.

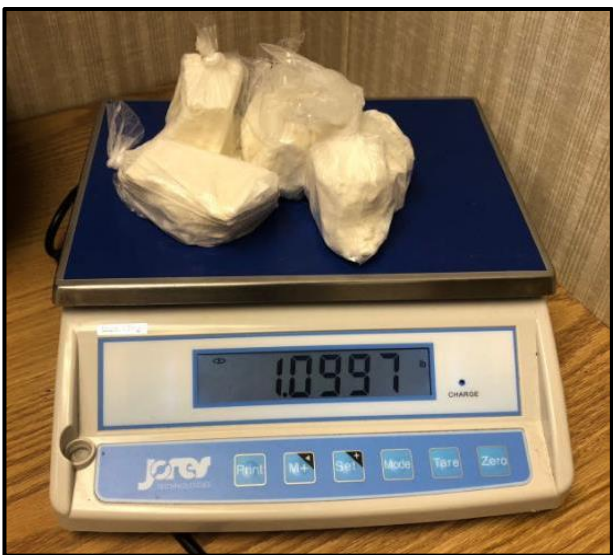
During 2019, MBN arrested a total of 169 individuals for sale and possession of cocaine. This was approximately 12% of all the drug related arrests by MBN in 2019. This was an increase compared to 120 arrests for cocaine in 2018 and a decrease for 204 arrests for cocaine in 2018.

In 2019, the Gulf Coast HIDTA Watch Center reported a total of 108 pounds of cocaine seized during 5 traffic stops, primarily from local agency traffic stops on Mississippi interstates and state highways. This also was a very significant decrease compared to the number of HIDTA seizures over the past several years.

Treatment data from the Mississippi Department of Mental Health shows that 637 people were admitted for cocaine abuse as a primary substance in 2019. This is a significant increase compared to 547 people admitted in 2018.



## AVAILABILITY



*1.01 pounds of crack cocaine seized in Hinds County on 7/29/2019*

Most of the high-level (wholesale) crack cocaine trade in Mississippi is controlled by African Americans, many of whom are members or affiliates of groups or gangs such as the “Vice Lords,” “Gangster Disciples,” “Wood Street Players,” the “Four Corner Hustlers,” and the “North End Boys.” Unique to the Mississippi Gulf Coast counties of Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson are the Vietnamese gangs involved in drug trafficking. These Vietnamese gangs, primarily operating in the Biloxi area, are heavily involved in the distribution of powder cocaine and the club drug ecstasy. The primary cocaine sources for these Vietnamese dealers are located in Texas, Canada, and California. Vietnamese dealers are known to supply some of the African

American dealers with powder cocaine, which is then converted into crack cocaine for local sale.

Mexican traffickers are loosely organized in Mississippi but are believed to be associated with large Mexican DTOs operating in Georgia, Tennessee, and Texas. Overall, the Mexican population in Mississippi is steadily growing, and the presence of Mexican DTOs is increasing in rural agricultural areas of the state.

## ASSOCIATED CRIME AND VIOLENCE

Crack and powder cocaine are significant problems for Mississippi’s residents and law enforcement. Cocaine has been responsible for some violence and criminal activity in Mississippi. Cocaine abusers commit thefts and robberies in order to fund their addictions. Cocaine retail distributors have been known to carry weapons to protect their merchandise and to guard against potential robberies during cocaine transactions. Mexican cocaine DTOs are reputed to be among the most violent in the world.

## PRODUCTION

Cocaine is produced almost exclusively in northern and western South America with Columbia as the main producer of illegal cocaine coming to the United States. Cocaine is not cultivated nor is it produced in Mississippi. Some crack cocaine is transported to Mississippi from neighboring states; however, most crack cocaine is converted locally prior to retail distribution.



## TRANSPORTATION



292 grams of powder cocaine seized in  
Leflore County on 4/26/2019

Mexican DTO's dominate cocaine transportation into the United States. The majority of cocaine entering the United States is transported across the Southwest Border via Mexico in kilogram quantities. Most of the cocaine found in Mississippi is primarily transported by Mexican or black American DTOs via Texas and the Southwest Border. Cocaine is transported primarily in powder form and is commonly transported from the main source cities of Houston and Dallas to local wholesale distributors in Mississippi, most often via personal vehicles or commercial trucks on I-10, I-55, I-59 and I-20. There are a variety of concealment methods such as false compartments inside the quarter-panels of the vehicles. Additionally, cocaine is often found inside electronically controlled false compartments in vehicles. Cocaine is transported into Mississippi by personal carry-on luggage via commercial and private buses, and also through parcel services. Mississippi distributors often travel to Texas to obtain cocaine or rely on the Mexican DTOs through "mules," to deliver cocaine to Mississippi. Los Angeles, Memphis, Chicago, Atlanta and Miami are secondary source cities for the cocaine found in Mississippi.

## DISTRIBUTION

Most of the local distribution in the state is controlled by miscellaneous independent drug trafficking organizations and is transported into the state in 2 to 10 kilogram quantities. Loads of 20 kilograms and greater have been seized in the state, largely bound for Chicago or Atlanta. There is also widespread use of commercial courier services, such as commercial truck lines, independent truckers, and parcel service businesses to transport drugs into the state and ship currency out. A bulk of Mississippi's cocaine supply comes in through Texas.

Mississippi distributors often travel to Texas to obtain cocaine or rely on the Mexican DTOs through "mules" to deliver cocaine to Mississippi. Los Angeles, Memphis, Chicago, Atlanta and Miami are secondary source cities for the Cocaine found in Mississippi.

Once cocaine is brought into Mississippi, local suppliers tend to mix or "cut" the cocaine with a variety of substances in order to increase the amount of the cocaine, which in turn increases their profit. Cocaine dealers then distribute the "cut" cocaine in weights ranging from grams to ounces. Local dealers often convert powder cocaine into crack cocaine to be distributed by street level dealers. Crack cocaine distributors are mostly African Americans, while powder cocaine distributors include Caucasian Americans and other ethnic groups.

## NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

### ASSESSMENT OF THE THREAT

New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS), research chemicals (RC), designer drugs or “herbal highs,” are terms that have all been used to describe drugs that have been created to mimic the effects of scheduled or controlled illicit drugs. Synthetic cannabinoids and synthetic cathinones are most commonly abused amongst all NPS. Despite the fact that these substances are referred to as “new,” it is not that they are newly created substances, but rather newly abused and encountered on the illicit market. Moreover, many NPS’ existences have been previously documented in scientific and regulatory communities. In addition to the wide availability of these substances online, they’re also readily available in gas stations, adult stores, and smoke shops. NPS include, but are not limited to: synthetic cannabinoids, synthetic cathinones, MDMA (Ecstasy), GHB, LSD, DMT, PCP, psilocybin mushrooms and anabolic steroids



### ABUSE

NPS are a variety of other dangerous drugs that are equally addictive and just as devastating to society despite the fact that opioids, methamphetamine, cocaine, and marijuana receive a great deal of attention through enforcement efforts and media outlets. Although they remain popular among all age groups, NPS are typically marketed toward young adults as well as the homeless population. While some are used regularly among a small group of users, new substances often appear quickly and disappear again. NPS may be particularly attractive to drug users that are subjected to drug screening, such as inmates, parolees, and probationers, as drug screens often do not have the ability to identify all NPS. One of the most troubling aspects of NPS is the lack of awareness of the content and potency of the substance being consumed.

## ***SYNTHETIC CANNABINOIDS (SPICE)***



Synthetic cannabinoids are a class of chemicals that bind to cannabinoid receptors in the body, but they are different from the natural cannabinoids in the cannabis plants. Synthetic cannabinoids can be used/consumed in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to, 1) being sprayed or otherwise soaked into a plant or other base material then typically smoked, 2) suspended in an oil form to be used in e-cigarettes or, 3) pressed into counterfeit prescription pills. The blend of material, oil, or

pill is sometimes misleadingly referred to as synthetic marijuana. MBN initiated 12 cases involving synthetic cannabinoids during 2019. These cases resulted in 11 arrests and the seizure of 67 containers, 8.9 kilograms, 30 ml and 9 dosage units of the substance. This is a notable decrease, mostly due to the large raid on local vape shops selling “CBD oil,” from 2018, when 31 cases were initiated, 9 arrests were made and approximately 189 bottles, 9,415 milliliters and 5.3 kilograms of the substance were seized.

## ***MDMA (ECSTASY)***

3,4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) is a psychoactive drug used recreationally. It is chemically similar to both stimulants and hallucinogens, producing feelings of increased energy, pleasure, emotional warmth, and distorted sensory and time perception. While it was initially popular in the nightclub scene and at “raves,” the drug now affects a broader range of people and is often referred to as Molly and Ecstasy. MBN initiated 86 cases in 2019 resulting in 96 arrests and seized approximately 4,998.5 dosage units and 280 grams of MDMA. This is a decrease from 2018 where 59 cases were opened and approximately 3,644.5 dosage units and 582.89 grams were seized or purchased.



## ***ANABOLIC STEROIDS***

Anabolic steroids are synthetic variations of the male sex hormone testosterone. Some common names for anabolic steroids are Gear, Juice, Roids, and Stackers. During 2019, MBN initiated 0 cases and made no arrests. This is a decrease from 2018 where MBN initiated 8 cases involving steroids. Those 8 cases resulted in 7 arrests and the seizure of more than 14 bottles, 1,200 dosage units, 1,051.5 grams and 255.5 milliliters of steroids.



## OTHER HALLUCINOGENS

MBN initiated 5 cases involving other hallucinogens in 2019, broken down as follows: 2 for LSD and 3 psilocybin mushrooms. This was only a slight decrease from 2018, where 8 cases had been initiated.

Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), also known as acid, is a psychedelic drug known for its psychological effects, which may include altered awareness of one's surroundings, perceptions, and feelings as well as sensations and images that seem real though they are not. Used mainly as a recreational drug, LSD is sold on the street in small tablets ("microdots"), capsules or gelatin squares ("window panes"). It is sometimes added to absorbent paper, which is then divided into small squares decorated with designs or cartoon characters ("loony toons"). LSD is typically either swallowed or held under the tongue but can also be injected. In 2019, 2 cases involving LSD were initiated resulting in 1 arrest and the seizure of 80 dosage units. That is only a slight difference from 2018, where 3 cases were made, 52 dosage units of LSD were seized or purchased, with 1 arrest being made.



Phencyclidine (PCP), also known as Angel Dust, is a recreational dissociative drug. Formerly used as an anesthetic agent. PCP exhibits hallucinogenic effects. As a recreational drug, PCP may be ingested, smoked, or inhaled. Agents initiated 2 cases, made 2 arrests and seized 7,436 milliliters of PCP in 2018. There were no PCP cases made in 2019.



Psilocybin mushrooms are one of a polyphyletic group of mushrooms that contain any of various psychedelic compounds including psilocybin, psilocin, and baeocystin. When consumed or brewed into a tea, mushrooms can produce a state of euphoria, altered thinking processes, closed and open-eye visuals, synesthesia, an altered sense of time, and spiritual experiences. MBN initiated 3 cases, making 2 arrests and seizing 541.5 grams and 2 dosage units of mushrooms in 2019, compared to 2 cases, 2 arrests and the seizure of 4 containers, 2 plants and 3.5 grams of mushrooms in 2018.

N, N-Dimethyltryptamine (DMT) is a tryptamine molecule which occurs in many plants and animals. It can be consumed as a psychedelic drug and has historically been prepared by various cultures for ritual purposes as an entheogen. DMT is illegal in most countries. Agents initiated 1 case, made 1 arrest and seized 510 grams in 2018, while no cases were initiated involving DMT in 2019.

## ***AVAILABILITY***

While the most common way to obtain NPS is through the internet, they are also readily available at college campuses, night clubs, and rave parties, especially MDMA and LSD. People continue to seek NPS out in gas stations/convenience stores, adult stores, smoke and drug paraphernalia shops. The danger in this lies in the fact that these substances are not regulated and because of the variations in contents, two seemingly identical products sold in stores may have two completely different cannabinoids, cathinones, etc. inside them or may be laced/contaminated with other substances like fentanyl.

## ***ASSOCIATED CRIME AND VIOLENCE***

The use of synthetic cathinones and synthetic cannabinoids has been linked to violence and overdose deaths across the country. Violence has also been linked to the use of other synthetic drugs such as bath salts, PCP, and steroids. GHB can cause memory lapse, confusion, or amnesia in victims which can lead to difficulty in prosecutions. As law enforcement and policy makers have begun to target stores selling synthetic cannabinoids, sales have moved more towards the streets.

## ***PRODUCTION***

NPS are all created substances, from chemicals requiring no plant material, and are made to mimic the effects of other illicit drugs. Due to a lack in standardization, people often don't really know what they're getting. For example, synthetic cannabinoids, which are often obtained from China, are sold in colorful packaging, designed to support the belief of synthetic cannabinoids being "safe" for use. While MDMA was initially developed by a German pharmaceutical company in 1912, presently its main source of production is more ambiguous. Manufacturing LSD requires laboratory equipment and experience in the field of organic chemistry. Already synthesized NPS are commonly available in China and other Asian and European countries and often shipped through mail carriers to be processed and packaged domestically.

## ***TRANSPORTATION***

Transportation of these various hallucinogens and synthetics is usually via privately owned vehicles and through the internet via parcel delivery services like the USPS, FedEx, and UPS.

## ***DISTRIBUTION***

Besides the wide availability via the internet, more and more NPS are being sold in gas stations and smoke shops. There has been an influx of synthetic cannabinoids being marketed as legal e-liquids or vape oils. As law enforcement targets these types of shops, the sales of these e-liquids are making their way towards street sales. MDMA and LSD distribution typically occur at private parties and close to high school and college campuses. Some street gang members in Mississippi also distribute these illicit substances.



## IV. DRUG OVERDOSES

In 2019, Mississippi Coroners reported 243 Drug Related Overdose deaths to MBN that occurred in 44 counties. Compliance with reporting overdose deaths continues to be haphazard in some areas. As a result, Senate Bill 2264 was passed in 2007 to require healthcare providers, coroners, and law enforcement officers to notify the Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics of all drug overdose deaths within 24 hours.

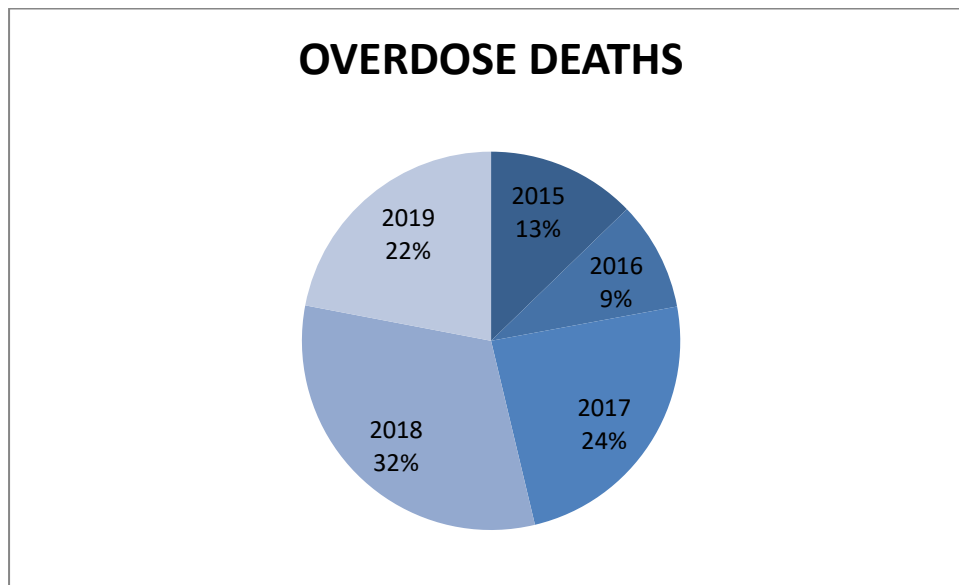
2019 - 238 cases reported involving 243 individuals experienced fatal overdoses.

2018 - 343 cases reported involving 344 individuals experienced fatal overdoses.

*(Analyst note: Although many coroners have begun reporting these deaths since the passage of this bill, there is no penalty for failure to report an overdose. Therefore, these figures may not be an accurate reflection of the actual number of overdose deaths in the state of Mississippi.)*

MBN speculates that the distribution of NARCAN® (naloxone HCl) to first responder resulted in a reduction of deaths secondary to drug (OPIATES) overdoses in our state. NARCAN® (naloxone HCl) Nasal Spray is used for the treatment of an opioid emergency or a possible opioid overdose with signs of breathing problems and severe sleepiness or not being able to respond. These statistics by no means represent the alarming numbers of non-fatal overdose cases not reported to MBN that, by speculation, could be in the thousands.

The misuse of and addiction to opioids—including prescription pain relievers, heroin, and synthetic opioids such as fentanyl is a serious national crisis that affects public health as well as social and economic welfare. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that the total "economic burden" of prescription opioid misuse alone in the United States is \$78.5 billion a year, including the costs of healthcare, lost productivity, addiction treatment, and criminal justice involvement.



\*Overdose deaths from 2015 to 2019 as reported to MBN

## **How did this happen?**

In the late 1990s, pharmaceutical companies reassured the medical community that patients would not become addicted to prescription opioid pain relievers, and healthcare providers began to prescribe them at greater rates. This subsequently led to widespread diversion and misuse of these medications before it became clear that these medications could indeed be highly addictive. Opioid overdose rates began to increase.



## V. *ILLICIT FINANCE*

In a recent 2018 publication by the National Strategy for Combating Terrorist and Other Illicit Financing, virtual currencies, particularly decentralized convertible virtual currencies, such as bitcoin, have emerged as an alternative to traditional payment systems, also called cryptocurrency. Virtual currency has been on the rise since 2014. In fiscal year 2014 Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) seized 151,459 in virtual currency, whereas fiscal year 2018 through the end of April HSI has seized 25,422,611 in virtual currency. Similarly, from fiscal year to the present, the U.S. Secret Services (USSS) has seized more than \$28 million in virtual currencies, primarily bitcoin, in the course of its criminal investigations. FinCEN analyst also estimates that at least \$4 billion in virtual currency has moved through darknet marketplaces since 2011.

The 2018 Money Laundering Risk Assessment publication identifies the most significant money laundering risk in the United States to include the misuse of cash, complicit merchants, professionals, and financial services employees and lax compliance at some financial institutions. The U. S. continues to estimate that domestic financial crime, excluding tax evasions, generates approximately \$300 billion of proceeds for potential laundering. Fraud being number one and drug trafficking being the second largest proceeds generating crime. The Treasury's Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence (TFI) launched a multinational Terrorist Financing Targeting Center in the Middle East to focus their efforts on disrupting the financial and support networks that enable terrorist. TFI along with FinCEN and various other agencies were created to protect the integrity of the American financial system and target illicit activity. Most terrorists use drugs as their main source of revenue. Billions of dollars are laundered each year thru drug traffickers operating in the United States. The U.S. anti-money laundering (AML), USA Patriot Act and law enforcement have made it more difficult to place drug proceeds in financial institutions.

Cash can be easily concealed and transported in large quantities. Illicit cash income is concealed through drugs, illegal gambling, human smuggling, kidnapping, prostitution, credit cards and human trafficking. However drug trafficking is one of the most significant sources of illicit cash. Methamphetamine, fentanyl, heroin, cocaine, Spice, marijuana, methamphetamine, prescription drugs and "other dangerous drugs" is still the most challenging problem facing drug law enforcement. The detection of revenue gained has proven to be a great trial for law enforcement within the state of MS. However, in several cases, law

enforcement has been able to identify bank accounts, businesses, property, and other assets owned and ill-gotten by DTOs.

### ***FINANCE/MONEY LAUNDERING***

There are three stages of money laundering. Banks are required to report large cash deposits/transactions and any other suspicious activities. The process of laundering money involves three steps:

- Placement puts the "dirty money" into the legitimate financial system.
- Layering conceals the source of the money through a series of transactions and bookkeeping tricks.
- In Integration the laundered money is withdrawn from the legitimate account to be used for whatever purposes.

There are many ways to launder money, from simple to very complex. In an article written by James Chen he stated that one of the most common techniques is to use a legitimate, cash based business owned by a criminal organization. For example, if the organization owns a restaurant, it might inflate the daily cash receipts to funnel illegal cash through the restaurant's bank account. After that the money can be withdrawn as needed. These types of business are referred to as "fronts." Not much has changed with money laundering techniques, almost every drug seizure and/or violation involves a financial violation, but law enforcement is committed to stopping the drug trafficking be foreign or domestic. Since most drugs originate outside the area, DTO's must find efficient and ingenious methods to pay their sources. There are some wire remitters that represent co-conspirators in money laundering while others turn a blind-eye to customers who fragment transmissions to multiple payees in order to circumvent currency reporting.

In addition to wire remitters, DTOs also transport bulk currency back through the organization. Some DTOs use this as their primary method while others use it as a stopgap method when their usual methods are disrupted. Bulk currency is often transported westbound via vehicle or container.

The state has a large fishing/seafood industry, shipping industry, tourism industry, and long-standing business relationships with source and transit countries, as well as a growing economy that has created an environment conducive to money laundering. In addition, the state has major interstates, highways, airports, and seaports used as drug trafficking routes and a coastline that provides easy access without detection.

Current investigations indicate that money laundering techniques uncovered in the region include outbound bulk shipments of cash; structuring of currency transactions at legitimate banking institutions known as "smurfing"; the use of commercial businesses such as check cashing establishments, pawn shops, and casinos; purchases of real estate such as automotive detail shops, liquor stores, record stores, restaurants and beauty salons; and the utilization of courier services most of which are cash businesses. Other means in which proceeds are laundered are through purchases of gift cards, green dot cards, certificates of deposits to

secure personal loans for use in acquiring assets, purchasing assets through legal counsel, and the use of nominees to purchase and/or make substantial improvements to real property. The purchase of real estate under an assumable mortgage where there is no qualification and no credit check is yet another laundering method. Violators often place real property in nominee names or corporations in order to hide their true owner and origin.

In 2019, MBN responded to 656 traffic stops conducted by the Mississippi Highway Patrol and various local and state agencies. Of those, 23 stops resulted in the seizure of illicit funds. MBN seized \$278,117. in U.S. currency from drug violators within the state. Agents assisted other agencies with the seizure of approximately \$570,382. According to Gulf Coast HIDTA, participating agencies seized approximately \$1,429,326 from drug violators in Mississippi for a combined total of \$2,277,825. These numbers are significantly lower than 2018.

Law enforcement utilizes the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FINCEN) to assist in identifying assets of drug dealers. The Suspicious Activity Report (SAR), Currency Transaction Report (CTR) and Currency Transaction Report for Casinos (CTR-C) are the most common utilized by law enforcement. Although FINCEN helps address the difficulties of tracking wired monies and/or monies moved via financial institution, the bulk movement of currency out of the United States and into the transit and source countries still remains a problem for law enforcement.



## VI. TREATMENT AND PREVENTION

PMP Aware is a prescription monitoring solution that provides state government agencies with accurate, real-time data, compliant with their regulations. The system has been re-modified to better serve physicians, dentists, pharmacists and law enforcement.

The Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) has been a very useful tool for the state of Mississippi. They are active in 54 states and U.S. territories. Every controlled substance prescribed state-wide, is entered into PMP Aware database in real time allowing for earlier identification and intervention. In 2017 the system was updated (or given a new interface), to make it more user friendly.

Mississippi has had a steady increase in deaths due to prescription drug use. A simple PMP can tell a doctor if a patient is doctor shopping, how many prescriptions that individual had filled within a year, doctor's name and what prescription drug was prescribed. In 2019 there were 3,558,937 requests from the PMP data base, over 23,850 registered users and over 500,000 prescriptions reported each month.

Thanks in part to grant funding by the Mississippi Department of Mental Health and the Mississippi Partnership Project, Mississippians have access to prescription drop boxes at 38 different law enforcement agencies and schools (listed below) throughout the state, to help dispose of their expired or unwanted prescriptions.

Bay St. Louis P D	JPD-Precinct 1	MHP-Batesville	MHP-Tupelo	Pearl P D
Biloxi P D	JPD-Precinct 2	MHP-Biloxi	Moss Point P D	Ridgeland P D
Brandon P D	JPD-Precinct 3	MHP-Brookhaven	MSU Campus P D	Smith County S O
Byram P D	JPD-Precinct 4	MHP-Hattiesburg	Natchez P D	Vicksburg P D
Columbus P D	Kemper County School	MHP-Jackson I-55	Ocean Springs P D	Waveland P D
D'Iverville P D	Long Beach P D	MHP-Meridian	Oxford P D	Woolmarket P D
Gulfport P D	Louisville P D	MHP-Pearl	Pascagoula P D	
JPD -Headquarters	McComb P D	MHP-Starkville	Pass Christian P D	

### TREATMENT

According Mississippi State Hospital (MSH) Substance Use Services they operate 50 inpatient adult substance use beds (25 male and 25 female). They are a person-centered recovery program which utilizes the integration of Dialectal Behavior Therapy and the 12 Step Recovery Model. Their goal is to actively engage patients in creating an individualized relapse prevention plan based on insights, coping skills, and social support gained through treatment. MSH provides a primary substance use program for adolescents who are engaging in harmful drug or alcohol use behaviors. The program employs evidence-based individual and group behavioral health interventions grounded in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Motivational Enhancement, as well as the 12 Step Recovery Model. In addition to targeting substance use behaviors, the program helps adolescents with presenting co-occurring

diagnoses, family/relational problems, and impactful traumatic experiences. The Child and Adolescent Service operate 26 beds for psychiatric treatment for children and adolescents, and substance use treatment for adolescents. There is no set number of beds reserved for substance use treatment in the unit. The beds are filled according to need.

Currently, Mississippi has 41 drug courts. These include 22 adult felony drug courts, 4 adult misdemeanor drug courts, 12 juvenile drug courts and 3 family drug courts. 852 Mississippi drug offenders graduated from various drug courts in 2019. July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019 drug courts had the following graduates:

- Adult felony - 625 graduates
- Adult misdemeanor–54 graduates
- Juvenile – 145 graduates
- Family drug court – 28 graduates

## VII. GANGS AND OUTLAW MOTORCYCLE GANGS

### STREET GANGS

Mississippi's legal definition of a "street gang", "gang", "organized gang" or "criminal street gang" is defined as any combination, confederation, alliance, network, conspiracy, understanding, or other similar conjoining, in law or in fact, of three or more persons with an established hierarchy that, through its membership or through the agency of any member, engages in felonious criminal activity. This sets the street gangs apart from any other type of group. Street gangs are turf oriented and will go to great lengths to protect their territory. Experts say teens joining young is all too common; gangs recruit children as young as eight years old. Social media and the use of apps continue to be primary means of communication, promotion, and conducting business. Gangs focused on integration and acceptance in the community.



The Federal Bureau of Investigation indicates there are now over 1.4 million gang members involved in the 33,000 active gangs inside the United States. The number of gang members in the U.S. has increased by 40% since 2009. The 10 most dangerous gangs in the United States are (1) Mara Salvatrucha (aka MS-13), (2) Latin Kings, (3) Crips, (4) 18<sup>th</sup> Street Gang, (5) Hells Angels, (6) Bloods, (7) Mongols, (8) Nuestra Familia, (9) Mexican Mafia, and (10) Aryan Brotherhood. Six of these

gangs have been identified in Mississippi which includes MS-13, Latin Kings, Crips, Bloods, Mexican Mafia and the Aryan Brotherhood.

According to Statistic Brain.com the percent of gangs involved in the following activities in the U.S. are: Drug trafficking 63%, Assault 44%, Threats/Intimidation 41%, Robbery 38%, Burglary 29%, Weapons Trafficking 27%, Larceny/Theft 25%, and Motor Vehicle

According to November 2018 source reporting, gang members utilized live social media streaming services to identify the real time location of individuals who were then targeted by the gang member for an assault or retaliation. Once an individual was targeted, the gang member monitored the targeted individual's social media pages for a live stream. Once a live stream was posted, the gang member determined where the individual was located, and then arrived at the location to conduct the assault. Various social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter offer free live streaming services.

Six of southern the most counties of Harrison, Hancock, Stone, Jackson, George and Greene counties are experiencing gangs operating in their counties. These gangs which are the Simon City Royals, Gangster Disciples, Latin Kings, Vice Lords and Subsets are known to commit property crimes, home invasions, assaults, drug operations, kidnappings and other violent crimes, including murders.

The Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics initiated 27 cases on defendants with gang affiliations in the year of 2019 compared to 42 cases on defendants with gang affiliations in the year of 2018. There was a slight decrease in the number of arrests of members from the Aryan Brotherhood with charges of possession of methamphetamine. Members of the Gangster Disciples had sale charges including heroin, powder cocaine, crack cocaine, methamphetamine and marijuana. One member of the Latin Kings was arrested for possession of methamphetamine and members of the Simon City Royals were arrested for possession of methamphetamine and possession with intent to deliver methamphetamine. Members of the Vice Lords were arrested for possession and sale of powder cocaine, possession and possession with intent to deliver methamphetamine, possession of heroin, possession and possession with intent to deliver marijuana.

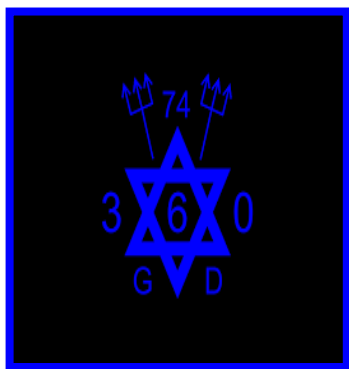
	# of Gangs	Total Cases	Total Subjects	Total Arrests	Total Charges
<b>2018 Totals</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>2019 Totals</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>55</b>

In Mississippi, gangs operate in rural towns to the larger municipal areas and use graffiti markings to identify their turf. Ages of identified gang members range from 13 years of age to 50 plus. In December 2019, MS Department of Corrections experienced a spike in gang activity than previous months.



The Gangster Disciples have a membership of approximately 40,000-55,000 members in the U.S. A recent trend by gang members is to join the military. Gang members receive combat training among other skills and bring these skills home with them to teach other members in their gang. They also have access to weapons and other tools of destruction which can be used by other members. Gangster Disciples have been documented in the U.S. military, found in both U.S. and overseas bases. Graffiti characteristic of the Gangster Disciples has been reportedly seen in U.S. military bases in Iraq and Afghanistan. Gang members have also begun to infiltrate police departments, using tactics and information they learn there to both outsmart and confront law enforcement and rival gangs.

Gang members are also using technology to monitor, target, and conduct counter-surveillance of law enforcement. Utilizing such tools as the internet, smartphones, drones, GPS devices, dual agent confidential informants, VoIP, PlayStation and Xbox, gang members can identify, locate, and disrupt law enforcement operations.



Gangster Disciples "represent" with the colors black and blue. Gang members are known to wear Georgetown Hoyas, Florida Gators or Duke Blue Devils clothing. Common clothing items include a shirt or a sweater with Lil Jo Jo quotes and pictures on it. Most common quotes are "3Hunnak and "Jo Jo's world". The predominant symbol this criminal gang makes use of is the six-pointed Star of David (☆). The symbol pays homage to founder David Barksdale.

Criminal activities include: Drugs trafficking, robbery, extortion, murder and prostitution.



Symbols common to the Vice Lords are a hat cocked to the left side, rabbit wearing a bow tie (The *Playboy* logo), martini glass, glove, top hat, cane and five-point star (the five points represent Love, Truth, Peace, Freedom and Justice), crescent moon, pitchfork pointing down, broken heart with wings (the heart with wings is a sign of disrespect), pyramid with an eye above it, and a six crown. They have approximately 30,000 – 35,000 members.

Vice Lords are using local juveniles and the music industry for recruitment as reported by Harrison County, Mississippi Sheriff's Office.

Criminal activities include: Drug trafficking, robbery, extortion, fraud, money laundering and murder.

One of the predominant gangs in Mississippi is known as the Simon City Royals, formally the Almighty Simon City Royal Nation, which are affiliated with a Chicago street gang instituted in the late 1950s known as Simon City, a greaser gang. Even today, it is widely noted by the media, and city, state and federal officials and was once the largest Caucasian gang with approximately 10,000 to 15,000 members.

The Simon City Royals are now an affiliate of the All Folk Nation.



Photograph from Royals in Tate County, MS

Since 2003, Royal recruits in Mississippi must be sponsored by a member, serve a six-month probationary period during which time they are referred to as "prospects", and ultimately declare a lifetime commitment to the gang. The Simon City Royals, in the past few years, have made a notable split creating a new set know as Sip City or Thirteen Dreams; a 501(c)(3) organization.



Photograph of the Mississippi SRC patch



Symbols common to the Simon City Royals are a shield with an R for Royal, 6-point stars, the cross, 3-point crowns and the royal knight. They changed their traditional colors of black and royal blue for the historic color scheme to black, white and blue.

Criminal activities include: dealing of illegal drugs and other contraband, particularly in prison where members are incarcerated. They are also involved in racketeering and loan sharking.

One gang that has law enforcement authorities the most concerned is the Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13). The gang, with about 10,000 members in the United States is notorious for its propensity for vicious violence. Initiation requires committing murder. And many gang members have been convicted of homicides, some using machetes to behead their victims. The majority of the gang is ethnically composed of Central Americans (mostly Salvadorans) and active in urban and suburban areas. Traditionally MS-13 gang members wore Chicago Bulls hats in the gang's official colors blue & white; members in Massachusetts began wearing Chicago Bulls hats in a variety of different colors in an attempt to avoid identification. MS-13 gang members commonly use the Chicago Bulls logo on other clothing to identify himself as MS-13.



Tattoos common to the MS-13 are "MS", "Salvatrucha", the "devil horns," the name of their clique, and other symbols. MS-13 utilize a system of hand signs for purposes of identification and communication. One of the most commonly displayed is the "devil's head" which forms a 'M' when displayed upside down. The hand sign is similar to the same symbol commonly seen displayed by heavy metal musicians and their fans. Founders of Mara Salvatrucha borrowed the hand sign after attending concerts of heavy metal bands.

Criminal activities include: drug trafficking, robbery, larceny, human trafficking, extortion, illegal immigration, murder, prostitution, racketeering, battery, kidnapping and arms trafficking.

Tattoos common to the Mexican Mafia are symbols which include images of a black hand. The gang's primary symbol, which is often used in tattoos by members, is the national symbol of Mexico (eagle and a snake) atop a flaming circle over crossed knives. The number 13 is used to show allegiance to the Mexican Mafia. M is the 13th letter of the alphabet. The Mexican Mafia did not originate in Mexico and is entirely a U.S. criminal prison organization. Even though homosexuals are barred from entry into the gang, they are engaged heavily in homosexual prostitution in the prison system. Criminal activities both inside and outside the prison system is extorting drug distributors outside prison and distributing various narcotics within and outside the prison system.



Criminal activities includes: murder, money laundering, arms trafficking, drug trafficking, kidnapping, pandering, racketeering, extortion, human trafficking, illegal immigration, fraud and illegal gambling.



A Sureno is a Latino gang member who belongs to a street gang that identifies with, and is subservient to, the Mexican Mafia. Surenos use the number 13 which represents the thirteenth letter of the alphabet, the letter M, in order to pay allegiance to the Mexican Mafia. They are soldiers for the Mexican Mafia, and further their organized criminal enterprises.

Symbols common to the Sureno are Sur, XIII, X3, 13, SUR 13, Uno Tres, Trece and 3-dots, Surenos use tattoos with the number 13, Sureno, Sur, South Sider, or Kanpol. Surenos identify with the colors blue and gray.

Criminal activity includes: human smuggling, murder, drug trafficking, extortion, assault, theft, robbery, fraud, and arms trafficking.



Symbols common to the Black P. (Prince) Nation or the Black P. Stones are a pyramid with 21 bricks, rising sun, eye, number 7, five-point star, and the crescent moon. The colors are red, black and green. They have approximately 30,000 – 42,000 nationwide. The Black P. Stones is also allied with the Almighty Latin Kings Nation, the most organized Hispanic street gang in the U.S., known for murder, drug trafficking, and robberies.

The BPSN finances itself through an array of criminal activities including drug trafficking, robbery, extortion, murder & domestic terrorism.

The Crips are one of the largest and most violent associations of street gangs in the United States with an estimated 30,000 to 35,000 members. The Crips are a primarily African-American gang.

Crips will misspell words in an attempt to avoid using certain letter combinations that are viewed as disrespectful to the vandalizing gang. For instance, the letters “C” and “K” together stand for “Crip Killer”; therefore, the Crips will avoid using this letter combination and instead spell words that would normally end in “-ck” with two “Cs” so that the word “luck” is spelled “lucc.”



Some of the symbols that are common to the Crips are the color blue; some sets may use purple. Crips refer to each other as Cuzz or Loc which itself is sometimes used as a moniker for Crip. “Crab” is the most disrespectful epithet to call a Crip and can warrant fatal retaliation. Numbers and symbols depend on set affiliation. Crips use the letter “c” in place of “b” in writing in disrespect for Bloods. Crips call themselves “Blood Killas” (BK) and wear British Knight (BK) tennis shoes.

Criminal Activities include: Drug trafficking, robbery, extortion, murder, burglary, prostitution, and theft.

The color red is the color for Bloods, although some sets may use green. Bloods refer to each other as Dawg, Damu, or Piru. Numbers and symbols depend on set affiliation. The word “Piru” refers to the original Blood gang. Bloods use a crossed out “C” in words as disrespect for Crips. The word MOB means “Money Over Bitches.” They have approximately 15,000 to 20,000 members.



Criminal Activities include: Drug trafficking, robbery, murder, burglary, prostitution, theft and extortion.



Colors for the Latin Kings are Black and Gold. This gang makes use of a 5 or 3-point “sacred crown”, writings of LK, ALK, ALKN, ALKQN; and drawings of the Lion and/or the King Master. January 6 is Kings Holy Day, the 1<sup>st</sup> week in March is known as Kings Week, and Puerto Rican Day parades held in June.

Criminal Activities include: battery, extortion, robbery, murder, arms trafficking and drug trafficking.

The Aryan Brotherhood (AB), also known as the Brand, is a white supremacist prison gang and organized crime syndicate in the United States with about 20,000 members. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the gang makes up less than one-tenth of a percent of the prison population, but it is responsible for as many as 20% of the murders in the federal prison system.



Mississippi AB patch

Throughout the state of Mississippi, there are approximately 400 known Aryan Brotherhood members consisting mostly of young white males.

The Mississippi Brotherhood calls itself “the Family” and is ruled by a three-man “Wheel” that divides the state into nine zones. The Wheel appoints a captain to oversee each zone and prison, with a network of sergeants-at-arms who enforce order and discipline, a treasurer to handle finances and numerous soldiers. Recruits are in prospect status” for six months before they can be assigned a “blood in mission.” The gang was disrupted in 2016 when 42 members and associates were convicted of racketeering conspiracy, murder, and conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute methamphetamine.



Symbols common to the Aryan Brotherhood are:

Designs commonly include the words “Aryan Brotherhood,” “AB,” 666, Nazi symbolism such as SS, sig runes, and swastikas, as well as shamrocks and Celtic iconography.

Criminal activities include: drug trafficking, extortion, inmate prostitution and murder-for-hire.



The Mississippi Gulf Coast has a population of Asian gangs in the Harrison, Hancock, and Jackson county area. Some of the Asian gangs known to authorities are: The Dragon Family/Royal Family, True Viet Boys (TVB), and the Viet Boyz (2202 VBZ). Junior members are called “Baby Gangsters” (aka “Boy Gangsters”; “Tiny Baby Gangsters”). The Dragon Family is a known rival of the Viet Boyz.

Symbol common to the Dragon Family is the dragon.

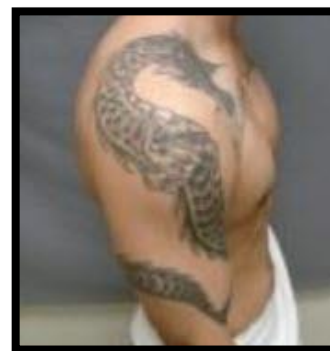
This is a predominantly Vietnamese gang. The revenue from organized crime comes mainly from the extortion of brothels, prostitution, money laundering, the distribution of narcotics, and counterfeiting merchandise. At street-level, the gang is involved in a wide range of crimes that included murder, robbery, and car theft.

Criminal activities include: extortion, counterfeiting, prostitution, money laundering, drug trafficking, racketeering, murder, assault, robbery, arms trafficking, auto theft, and burglary.

Symbol common to the Viet Boyz is also a dragon.

They are known as one of the most violent Asian gangs. They are typically known for their stubbornness and protecting their turf. They have approximately 1,300 to 2,000 members. This gang was created by Cambodians to protect their own people from getting attacked by Mexican gang members. The gang is allied with the Crips.

Criminal Activities include: Drug trafficking, robbery, assault, burglary, theft, homicide and gambling.





## OUTLAW MOTORCYCLE GANGS



**(U) 1% patch  
worn on the  
front or back of  
the colors**

At the present time, Mississippi has three international Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMG) which are the Sons of Silence, the Vagos and the Bandidos. The Bandidos and the Sons of Silence were the dominant OMG clubs in Mississippi and were two of the “Big Five OMGs” in the nation. The “Big Five” consists of the five most notorious and violent motorcycle gangs in the United States. The Bandidos have three chapters in the state located on the Gulf Coast, Jackson, and North Mississippi. According to the American Motorcycle Association, 99 percent of motorcycle riders are law abiding citizens; thus, only one percent of all motorcycles are affiliated with a gang.

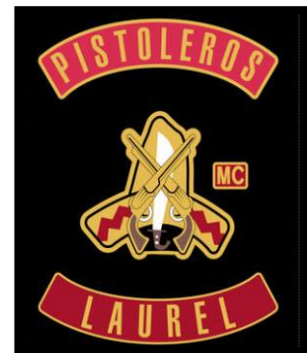
The FBI asserts that OMGs support themselves primarily through drug dealing, trafficking in stolen goods, and extortion. They typically fight over territory and the illegal drug trade and collect \$1 billion in illegal income annually.

Many jurisdictions have reported an increase in overall Motorcycle Club and Outlaw Motorcycle Gang activity in recent years. This activity has centered on increasing membership by patching smaller clubs into larger clubs. In some instances, support clubs have been used to increase the visual effect of a dominant club when it rides through an area. Clubs are also displaying colors and support stickers on motor vehicles.



The Pistoleros are a support gang for the Bandidos with five chapters in Mississippi located in Desoto, Lauderdale, Forest, Hinds and Harrison Counties. OMGs strive to initiate young members with no criminal history for the purpose of acquiring a gun permit or to purchase weapons.

The criminal activities are the same as most other OMGs which include drug distribution, stolen motorcycles, money laundering, other Racketeer Influenced Organizations, and Continuing Criminal Enterprise type violations.



The Sons of Silence OMG became a full charter chapter in Rankin County in October 2008. As with most other gangs, a chapter must have five members to receive full status as a chapter. MBN intelligence has identified three members of the Sons of Silence OMG in Rankin and Scott Counties. The Sons of Silence's logo is an American eagle superimposed over the letter "A" (similar to, and taken from, the



Anheuser-Busch logo) flying under an arch and their motto is "donec mors non separat ", Latin for "until death separates us."

The Galloping Goose motto is: "Often Tested, Always Faithful". Their colors are purple and gold and their patch consists of a set of legs running. The torso on top of the set of legs is a large hand with the index finger extended. In the background of the patch you can see an outhouse, this links back to an outhouse which used to be towed on a trailer in the club's early years when they went on runs. The patch is purple writing on a gold background. The Galloping Goose OMG is a one percent club and their rules of behavior sometimes include violent crimes.



The Vagos' (also known as the Green Nation) motto is: "We Give What We Get"

The Vagos arrived in Mississippi in 2011 and began wearing nomad cuts. They are an international one percent OMG and, as of late, have been involved in deadly confrontations with the Hells Angels. Vagos members were also confronted by members of the Sons of Silence (SOS) of Mississippi at a local bar and the SOS members took a set of Vagos' colors and assaulted a member.

The Vagos Motorcycle Club patch consists of the Norse god of Mischief, Loki. He is depicted riding a motorcycle. One of the Vagos Motorcycle Club abbreviations is 22, as the 22nd letter in the alphabet is the letter "V."

The Vagos Motorcycle Club colors are green, which links back to the Mexican heritage of the Vagos Motorcycle Club founder. Vagos also use the motto "VFFV", meaning "Vagos Forever Forever Vagos."

In 2013, the Iron Coffins initiated a local chapter in North Mississippi near Tupelo. The Iron Coffins originated out of Ohio in the 1960s and have chapters in several states in the Midwest, and now in Southern States.



The Iron Coffins use the acronym "ICFFIC" which stands for "Iron Coffins Forever Forever Iron Coffins". The patch consists of a skeleton riding a motorcycle with wings. A biker displaying a 13-Patch symbolizes that the biker either smokes Marijuana, deals in it, or has contact for Methamphetamine. 666 displayed on a Patch or tattoo, symbolizes the mark of Satan. 69 displayed on a Patch or tattoo symbolizes that the wearer has committed cunnilingus or fellatio with witnesses present, having been in prison.

The Sin City Deciples motto is: Death before Dishonor. The Club also uses the abbreviation of “DFFD”, which stands for “Deciples Forever Forever Deciples”.



Though most club members are black, the club is open to all men, regardless of race or color. The club is known for having a large number of over 4900 street gang members and having extensive contact network with these gangs as well as a high percentage of military veterans. Members ride Harley-Davidson motorcycles. Members pride themselves on the tight knit brotherhood they have developed over years of riding with each other from state to state. The term “1934 Express” is also used, relating to the 19th, 3rd and 4th letters of the alphabet (S, C, D) for Sin City Deciples.



Outcast MC is a black one percenter motorcycle club founded in Detroit, Michigan in 1969. They are all black one percenter motorcycle club. After starting their Mother Chapter in Detroit, Michigan, they have currently 30 chapters in cities throughout the USA. They do not have any chapters internationally.

The Outcast Motorcycle Club patch is made up of a laughing skull, which has teeth and possibly cornrows. Behind the skull is the iron cross.

The Outcast motto is “We Ride For Piece”, making note of the spelling of the word “Piece”, rather than “Peace”. Also used by the Outcast Motorcycle Club is the acronym of “OFFO”, which stands for Outcast Forever, Forever Outcast.

## VIII. OUTLOOK

The United States continues to be a place where a person can live and make their dreams come true. While being a land of wealth, opportunity, and prosperity, the U. S. happens to be the most addicted country in the world. The illicit drug market in the United States is one of the most profitable in the world. As such, it attracts the most ruthless, sophisticated, and aggressive drug traffickers. The State of Mississippi, which lies along the Gulf of Mexico with multiple interstates running through it, is experiencing what may be determined as a struggle that is unwinnable. The Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics (MBN) and other law enforcement agencies face an enormous challenge in protecting the citizens of Mississippi and its neighboring states. State and local law enforcement agree, and statistics confirm, that Mississippi has a significant drug problem. Methamphetamine (ICE) is a major problem in the state, while diverted pharmaceuticals are holding at a close second with a fast growing heroin ranking third. Marijuana, cocaine, and New Psychoactive Substances follow these. Even though methamphetamine manufacturing has declined in the state, there continues to be an increase in the transportation and distribution of Mexico-produced methamphetamine. Cocaine has taken a back seat to marijuana in Mississippi. Marijuana, as we all know, is the gateway/starter drug that is abused by a wide spectrum of the population. Mississippi is currently faced with the increasing push for marijuana legalization. Trends indicate that marijuana, which is grown and/or manufactured in-state, is not transported out-of-state, but is used locally in addition to the vast quantities imported from other areas like California, Colorado, and Washington. Likewise, the increased use and abuse of fentanyl has become an increasing issue that continues to be a growing concern in Mississippi. Over the past few years, fentanyl has claimed more lives in this state than in years prior. Vaping has become an increased concern for the youth in Mississippi. Law enforcement in Mississippi has seized numerous amounts of vaping cartridges containing THC and other synthetic substances. Drug Trafficking Organizations continue to establish distribution routes in Mississippi dealing in bulk shipments. Mississippi is experiencing a dramatic increase in the use of heroin.

### TRENDS

- Diverted pharmaceutical abuse remains constant.
- The importation, distribution and seizure of methamphetamine “ICE” from outside the state, continues to increase.
- Vaping has become popular among Mississippi’s youth.
- Dealers are using pesticides, fentanyl, and other additives to make their drugs more appealing for their customers.
- Heroin abuse and distribution remains a growing threat.
- Overdose deaths related to heroin and fentanyl-laced heroin continues to increase due to the cheaper cost and availability of the drug.
- Mississippi law enforcement continues to see heroin sold in both small and large quantities in Northwest, Delta area, Central, and Coastal Mississippi.

- The presence of higher grade marijuana has driven the price and popularity of marijuana higher than in previous years.
- The emergence of synthetic drugs used as an alternative means of getting high increased steadily.
- Activity on the Dark Web, where subjects avoid traceable transactions of currency and drugs, has hit Mississippi.
- Kratom and other “legal highs” continue to be a thorn to law enforcement efforts in Mississippi’s fight for public safety and public health.

### **DEVELOPMENTS**

- The Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) has made it easier to track illegally diverted pharmaceuticals.
- The Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics has formed a coalition with the Mississippi Board of Pharmacy, Mississippi State Department of Health, Mississippi Department of Mental Health, Mississippi Department of Public Safety, and the Mississippi Crime Lab to help combat the Opioid Epidemic in the state.
- The MBN is developing a training and education initiative to keep citizens and other law enforcement entities updated on drug trends seen across the state.
- MBN is continuing to work with the medical community to combat public health and safety issues such as heroin/fentanyl use and prescription drug abuse.

### **PREDICTIONS**

- Vaping will become the most popular way for Mississippi’s youth to consume drugs.
- Money laundering will increasingly become harder to discover due to the numerous methods of transferring funds digitally over the internet.
- More drug dealers/traffickers will use virtual currency in efforts to avoid cash seizures from law enforcement.
- Marijuana will soon become legal in Mississippi.
- The increased production of new chemicals and compositions for manufacturing synthetic fentanyl will increase.
- Marijuana cakes, candies, and snacks will continue to increase in popularity and abuse.
- Interstate transportation using private and public carriers and domestic aircraft will continue to be the primary method of trans-shipping narcotics across the state.
- Mississippi will see more of its youth enrolled in drug treatment programs.
- There will be an increase of counterfeit substances across the state as the demand

for pharmaceuticals increases.

- Abuse of synthetic drugs will continue to increase as people seek to obtain that legal high.
- Heroin will become increasingly popular in the state, thus causing a rise in heroin-related overdose deaths.
- More and more drugs will be abused utilizing vape pens.



## ***IX. METHODOLOGY***

The Mississippi Drug Threat Assessment is produced annually by MBN's Intelligence Division to identify and quantify the nature, extent, and scope of the threat of illegal drugs and related issues in Mississippi. This document includes information from previous MBN Drug Threat Assessments, surveys from local, state and federal law enforcement agencies, open source documents, law enforcement sensitive information from other investigative agencies, internet websites, and anecdotal information from other reliable sources.

In preparation of this report, MBN Intelligence Analysts collected and analyzed the information required to quantify the threat and identify trafficking trends. The specific drug categories presented in the Mississippi Drug Threat Assessment are diverted pharmaceuticals, cocaine, methamphetamine, marijuana, heroin, and New Psychoactive Substances. The identification of specific intelligence gaps and projections for the future by drug type are also included. In addition, the Drug Threat Assessment identifies problems posed by the threat, the actions being taken by participating agencies, and the anticipated impact on the state.

## **X. SOURCES:**

The following served as sources in the preparation of this document:

2018 Alabama Threat Assessment  
2018 DEA National Drug Threat Assessment  
2018 Money Laundering Risk Assessment  
2019 DEA National Drug Threat Assessment  
2019 ROCIC Gang Report  
2020 GC HIDTA Threat Assessment Survey  
2020 National Strategy for Combating Terrorist and Other Illicit Financing  
2020 Oregon-Idaho HIDTA Program Threat Assessment  
American Motorcycle Association  
Blue Lighting Operations Center (BLOC)  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program (DCE/SP)  
Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)  
Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI),  
Federal Drug Administration (FDA)  
Fentanyl Inc, by Ben Westhoff  
Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FINCEN)  
Gulf Coast High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)  
Harrison County Sheriff's Office  
Mississippi Department of Education  
Mississippi Department of Mental Health  
Mississippi Forensics Laboratory  
Mississippi Gaming Commission  
Mississippi State Department of Health  
Mississippi State Hospital (MSH) Substance Use Services  
National Institute on Drug Abuse  
Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP)  
U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics  
U.S. Census Bureau  
U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)  
U.S. Government Accountability Office  
World Population Review  
[www.Clarionledger.com](http://www.Clarionledger.com)  
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[www.Richstatespoorstates.org](http://www.Richstatespoorstates.org)

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[www.TheGuardian.com](http://www.TheGuardian.com)

[www.Treasury.gov](http://www.Treasury.gov)

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## ***XI. DRUG PRICES ACROSS MISSISSIPPI***

Drug Type	Weight	Jackson	Greenwood	Oxford	Tupelo	Starkville	Meridian	Hattiesburg	Gulfport	McComb
Powder Cocaine	Gram	\$60-\$100	\$80-100	\$60-120	\$100	\$80-100	\$100	\$100-120	\$100	\$50
	Eight-Ball	\$175	\$200-250	\$150-250	\$175-225	\$250	\$250	\$250-300	\$200	\$160
	Ounce	\$1,000-1,200	\$850	\$1000-1,200	\$900-1,100	\$1,000	\$800-1,000	\$1,000-1,200	\$700	\$1000
	¼ Kilo	\$5,000	\$6,000-10,000	\$6,000-9,000	\$4,800-6,500	\$6,200	\$6,500	\$7,000-10,000	N/A	N/A
	½ Kilo	\$9,000	\$14,000-19,000	\$15,000	\$9,000-12,000	\$14,000-15,000	\$9,000	\$15,000-19,000	N/A	N/A
	Kilogram	\$16,000	\$34,000-37,000	\$30,000-37,000	\$18,000-24,000	\$21,000	\$18,000-20,000	\$32,000-36,000	\$18,000-22,000	N/A
Crack Cocaine	Rock	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20	N/A	\$20
	Gram	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$80-100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$40
	Eight-Ball	\$200-225	\$200-250	\$150 – 175	\$175-250	\$150	\$250	\$200	\$200	\$140
	Ounce	\$1,000-1,200	\$750-1,000	\$1,000	\$900-1,100	\$800-1,000	\$1,000	\$1,400-1,800	\$700	\$750
	¼ Kilo	\$5,000-8,000	\$5,000-8,000	\$6,500	\$6,800-8,500	\$6,500	\$8,000	\$7,000-10,000	N/A	N/A
	Kilogram	\$30,000-34,000	\$25,000 - 30,000	\$28,000-36,000	\$28,000	\$27,000-30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000-34,000	N/A	N/A
Marijuana	Dime Bag	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$10	N/A	\$10
	20-Sack	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20	N/A	\$20
	¼ Ounce	\$35	\$35-40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$35-40	\$40	N/A	
	Ounce	\$100	\$60-120	\$100-150	\$80-140	\$80	\$80-100	\$50-100	\$100	\$400 high \$250 med \$60 low
	¼ Pound	\$400	\$125-450	\$350	\$180-200	\$250-350	\$250	\$200-300	N/A	N/A
	½ Pound	\$800	\$220-800	\$600-700	\$250-300	\$500-600	\$450	\$250-450	N/A	N/A
	Pound	\$1,200	\$600-800	\$1,000-1,200	\$800-1,200	\$800-1,200	\$800-1,000	\$500-700	\$600	N/A
BC BUD	Ounce	\$250	\$350-850	\$500-600	\$400	\$500	\$400- 600	\$150-200	N/A	N/A
	¼ Pound	\$700-1,200	\$700-2,500	\$1,000-2,000	\$1,500	\$1,500-1,600	\$1,500-1,600	\$1,000-1,200	N/A	N/A
	½ Pound	\$1,200-1,500	\$1,500-4,000	\$2,500-3,500	\$3,500	\$3,000-3,200	\$3,000-3,200	\$1,500-2,000	N/A	N/A
	Pound	\$3,000	\$5,000-5,500	\$5,000-7,000	\$5,000-7,000	\$5,100	\$4,500-5,000	\$3,000-3,500	N/A	N/A

*Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics*

Drug Type	Weight	Jackson	Greenwood	Oxford	Tupelo	Starkville	Meridian	Hattiesburg	Gulfport	McComb
LSD	Dosage Unit	N/A	\$10	\$10-15	\$12	\$10-12	\$10	\$5-10	N/A	N/A
MDMA	Dosage Unit	N/A	\$10-20	\$25-40	\$25-40	\$25-35	\$25	\$5-25	\$12-15	\$5-10
Meth	Gram	\$50	\$50-60	\$50-75	\$80-100	\$80-100	\$100	\$30-60	\$80	\$50
	Eight-Ball	\$150	\$100-200	\$150-200	\$150-200	\$150-250	\$250	\$75-150	\$150	\$160
	Ounce	\$425	\$325-500	\$400-700	\$700-1,100	\$1,100	\$1,000	\$250-550	\$600	\$1,000
	Pound	\$6,000	\$5,000-8,000	N/A	\$12,000-15,000	\$12,000-15,000	\$12,000-15,000	\$2,000-4,000	\$5,500	N/A
Heroin	Gram	\$250	\$120 - 200	\$200-250	\$222-250	\$250	N/A	\$100-200	\$200	\$200
	Ounce	\$4,000	N/A	\$1,750-3,000	\$3,000	\$1,750-\$2,000	N/A	\$1,400-2,200	\$2,400	N/A
	¼ Kilo	N/A	N/A	\$15,000-18,000	\$15,000-18,000	\$15,7500	N/A	\$12,000-16,000	N/A	N/A
	1 Kilo	\$120,000	N/A	\$70,000-75,000	\$30,000-50,000	\$63,000	N/A	\$45,000-65,000	N/A	N/A