



Utah

Drug Threat Assessment



National Drug Intelligence Center
U.S. Department of Justice

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Preface

This report is a strategic assessment that addresses the status and outlook of the drug threat to Utah. Analytical judgment determined the threat posed by each drug type or category, taking into account the most current quantitative and qualitative information on availability, demand, production or cultivation, transportation, and distribution, as well as the effects of a particular drug on abusers and society as a whole. While NDIC sought to incorporate the latest available information, a time lag often exists between collection and publication of data, particularly demand-related data sets. NDIC anticipates that this drug threat assessment will be useful to policymakers, law enforcement personnel, and treatment providers at the federal, state, and local levels because it draws upon a broad range of information sources to describe and analyze the drug threat to Utah.

Utah Drug Threat Assessment

Executive Summary

The production, distribution, and abuse of illicit drugs and the diversion and abuse of pharmaceuticals pose a serious threat to Utah. Methamphetamine, heroin, and cocaine are the most significant drug threats to the state—they are responsible for most drug treatment admissions, federal sentences, and drug-related violence. Drugs are commonly transported through Utah en route to other states due to its location between drug sources and destinations. Illicit drugs destined for northwestern states from Mexico, southwestern states, and California as well as those destined for the East Coast from California often are transported through Utah. Mexican criminal groups dominate the transportation and wholesale distribution of most illicit drugs throughout Utah. Street gangs distribute most illicit drugs at the retail level. Caucasian criminal groups, local independent dealers, and outlaw motorcycle gangs also are involved in transporting and distributing illicit drugs in the state.

The production, distribution, and abuse of **methamphetamine** pose a serious threat to residents of Utah. Abuse of the drug is increasing in the state, a trend that is fueled by the drug's ready availability. Violence associated with methamphetamine production, distribution, and abuse is a particular concern in the state. Methamphetamine produced in Mexico, Arizona, California and, to a lesser extent, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington is available throughout the state. Locally produced methamphetamine also is widely available throughout Utah. Mexican criminal groups dominate the transportation and wholesale distribution of methamphetamine produced outside the state. Caucasian independent dealers, many of whom have joined to form criminal groups, also are involved in the production, transportation, and wholesale distribution of the drug in Utah. At the retail level Mexican and Caucasian local independent dealers, outlaw motorcycle gangs, and street gangs distribute methamphetamine.

Heroin poses a threat to Utah. Mexican black tar heroin and brown powdered heroin are the predominant types available in the state; Southeast Asian heroin is available in very limited quantities. Mexican criminal groups, the primary transporters and wholesale distributors of heroin in Utah, transport the drug from transshipment points in California and Arizona and directly from Mexico. These groups typically transport the drug using private and rental vehicles and commercial trucks. In rural areas of the state, Mexican

criminal groups distribute heroin at the retail level, and in metropolitan areas street gangs are the primary retail distributors.

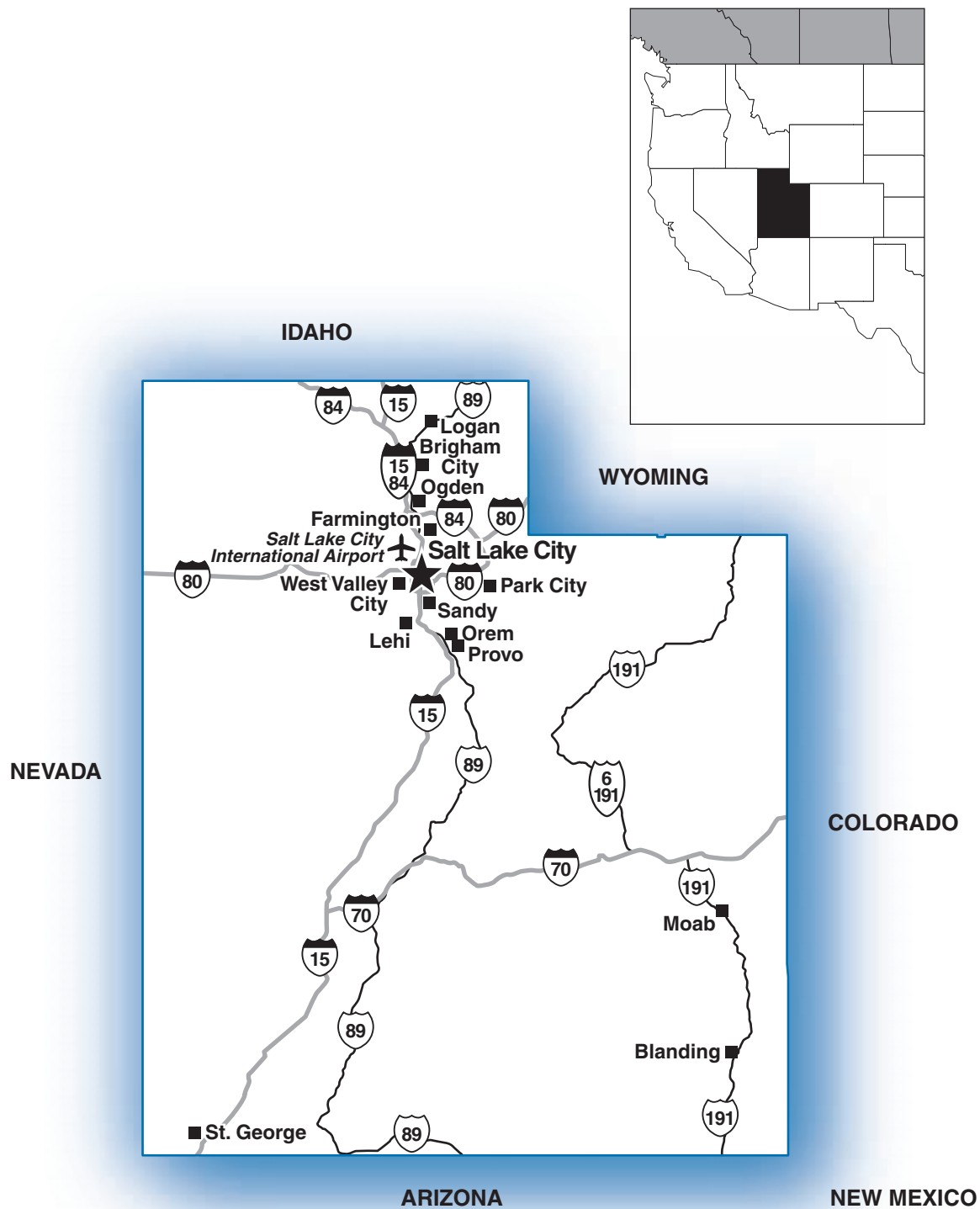
Cocaine poses a threat to Utah, particularly because of the violence associated with the distribution and abuse of the drug. Powdered cocaine is distributed in both wholesale and retail quantities and is available throughout the state. Crack cocaine is available only in retail quantities and only in metropolitan areas. Mexican criminal groups transport powdered cocaine into the state and serve as wholesale, midlevel, and retail distributors. At the retail level street gangs and Caucasian and Mexican local independent dealers distribute powdered cocaine. Some street gangs also convert powdered cocaine into crack and distribute the drug at the wholesale and retail levels.

Marijuana is the most widely available illicit drug in Utah, and there is evidence to suggest that abuse of the drug is increasing. Marijuana produced by Mexican criminal groups in Mexico and California is the most common type available in the state. However, marijuana produced in Utah also is available and typically commands a higher price because its potency exceeds that of Mexico- or California-produced marijuana. Caucasian criminal groups produce high potency marijuana in the state; they distribute the drug directly as well as supply local independent dealers. Mexican criminal groups dominate the transportation and wholesale and midlevel distribution of marijuana produced in Mexico or California. At the retail level street gangs, Mexican and Caucasian criminal groups, and local independent dealers distribute marijuana.

The category of **other dangerous drugs** includes the stimulant MDMA, the hallucinogen LSD, the depressant GHB and its analogs, and diverted pharmaceuticals such as benzodiazepines, hydrocodones, oxycodones, and Ritalin. MDMA poses the most significant threat in this category because it is increasingly available and abused in the state, particularly in the metropolitan areas of Ogden, Provo, and Salt Lake City. The diversion and abuse of pharmaceuticals represent a significant threat to Utah, and individuals of all ages, ethnicities, and socioeconomic status abuse these drugs.

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Utah.

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Utah

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Overview

Utah ranks thirty-fourth in population with more than 2.2 million people residing in its 29 counties. Nearly 75 percent of the population is concentrated in Davis, Salt Lake, Utah, and Weber Counties. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Utah is 89.2 percent Caucasian, 4.2 percent other, 2.1 percent two or more races, 1.7 percent Asian, 1.3 percent American Indian/Alaska Native, 0.8 percent African American, and 0.7 percent Pacific Islander. In addition, 9 percent of Utah residents identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino. With a median age of 26, Utah has the youngest population of any state in the nation and is the only state with a median age under 31.

The state has a well-developed transportation infrastructure, and its location makes Utah an important transit area for licit and illicit goods destined for areas throughout the United States. Private and rental vehicles and commercial trucks commonly are used to transport drugs into and through Utah. Package delivery services and couriers aboard commercial aircraft and buses are used to a lesser extent.

The highways in Utah are used to facilitate the transportation and distribution of illicit drugs. Interstates 15 and 84 converge in Ogden and connect California with Idaho, Montana, and Oregon through Utah. Interstate 80, an east-west

Fast Facts	
	Utah
Population (2000)	2,233,169
U.S. population ranking	34th
Median household income (2001)	\$47,342
Unemployment rate (2001)	4.2%
Land area	82,144 square miles
Capital	Salt Lake City
Other principal cities	Ogden, Provo, Sandy, St. George, West Valley City
Number of counties	29
Principal industries	Construction, manufacturing, public utilities, wholesale and retail trade, tourism, transportation

highway, connects Utah with California, Nevada, and Wyoming. In addition, I-70 begins at I-15 in southwest Utah and links the state to points east. U.S. Highways 89 and 191 are north-south highways that traverse Utah and connect it with Canada and Mexico through the states of Arizona, Idaho,

Montana, and Wyoming. Most illicit drugs are transported into and throughout Utah on interstate, state, and U.S. highways via private and rental vehicles, commercial trucks, and buses. Law enforcement officials in Utah frequently seize drugs on highways, often as part of Operation Pipeline initiatives.

Operation Pipeline

Operation Pipeline is a national highway interdiction program supported by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC). Drug seizures from private vehicles are reported to Operation Pipeline by federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies operating nationwide along the highways and interstates most frequently used to transport illegal drugs and drug proceeds.

One international airport—Salt Lake City International Airport—and many smaller airports service Utah. Salt Lake City International Airport is the twenty-fourth busiest airport in passenger traffic in the United States; over 300 flights depart daily. Numerous remote airstrips are scattered throughout the state. Operation Jetway data indicate that drugs have been transported into the state on aircraft from California, Kentucky, and Texas; however, drug seizures from aircraft are infrequent.

Operation Jetway

Operation Jetway is an EPIC-supported domestic interdiction program. Drug seizures are reported to Operation Jetway by federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies across the nation at airports, train stations, bus stations, package shipment facilities, U.S. Post Offices, and airport hotels and motels.

Mexican criminal groups dominate the transportation and wholesale distribution of methamphetamine, heroin, cocaine, and marijuana throughout Utah. Most of the illicit drugs transported into Utah by Mexican criminal groups are destined for other areas of the United States. However, Mexican criminal groups also distribute

wholesale quantities of illicit drugs throughout the state. According to law enforcement authorities in Utah, the Mexican criminal groups that transport and distribute drugs in Utah typically have a very structured hierarchy of members and usually are controlled by a single family. These Mexican criminal groups distribute illicit drugs almost exclusively to Mexican nationals and usually refuse to sell to Caucasians at the wholesale level.

Mexican criminal groups, local independent dealers, street gangs, and outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMGs) all distribute illicit drugs at the retail level in Utah. Mexican criminal groups distribute methamphetamine produced in Mexico, California, and southwestern states, powdered cocaine, heroin, and marijuana at the retail level. Caucasian local independent dealers distribute much of the methamphetamine and marijuana produced in the state. Street gangs are retail distributors of methamphetamine, heroin, powdered and crack cocaine, marijuana, and MDMA. While some street gangs in the state are composed of members of one race or ethnicity, many are multiracial or multiethnic. Gangs may be defined as African American, Asian, Hispanic, or Mexican even though they have a diverse membership. Sureños 13 and Tongan Crip Regulators are significant street gangs in Utah. OMGs distribute retail quantities of methamphetamine and, to a lesser extent, other illicit drugs. The most active OMGs in Utah are Sundowners and Barons.

Sundowners and Barons

Sundowners and Barons are the notable OMGs in Utah. Both are linked to the production and distribution of methamphetamine as well as the distribution of other drugs, but to a lesser extent. Law enforcement also has linked the OMGs to credit card fraud, gambling, vehicle theft, prostitution operations, and assault. A truce between the two gangs has been in effect for at least 4 years. Barons are closely affiliated with the Brothers Speed OMG in Idaho, and Sundowners are linked to Hells Angels.

Source: International Outlaw Motorcycle Gang Investigators Association.

Utah residents typically abuse illicit drugs at rates that are comparable to or lower than nationwide rates. According to the 1999 and 2000 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA), 5.0 percent of individuals surveyed in Utah reported having abused an illicit drug at least once in the month prior to the survey, compared with 6.3 percent nationwide. In many major drug categories, Utah high school students report lower incidences of abuse than high school students nationwide. According to the 2001 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), the percentage of students who reported having abused marijuana, cocaine, or methamphetamine at least once in their lifetime was lower than the percentage nationwide.

The percentage of federal sentences in Utah that are drug-related decreased over the past several years and is lower than the national percentage. According to data from the U.S. Sentencing Commission (USSC), the percentage of federal sentences that were drug-related in Utah decreased from 20.6 percent in fiscal year (FY) 1997 to 17.2 percent in FY2001. In FY2001 the percentage of federal sentences nationwide that were drug-related was 41.2 percent.

The total financial impact on Utah's government from substance abuse is significant. In 1998, the most recent year for which these data are available, Utah spent nearly \$500 million—approximately \$242 per resident—on substance abuse-related costs. This accounted for almost 12 percent of the state's total budget and was the fifteenth highest percentage in the nation.

**Table 1. Percentage of Drug-Related Federal Sentences and Percentage by Drug Type
Utah and United States, FY2001**

	Drug-Related*	Methamphetamine	Heroin	Powdered Cocaine	Crack Cocaine	Marijuana
Utah	17.2	64.7	1.2	9.4	4.7	18.8
United States	41.2	14.2	7.2	22.1	20.4	32.8

Source: USSC.

*Represents the percentage of federal sentences that are drug-related.

Methamphetamine

The production, distribution, and abuse of methamphetamine pose a serious threat to residents of Utah. Abuse of the drug is increasing in the state, a trend that is fueled by the drug's ready availability. Violence associated with methamphetamine production, distribution, and abuse is a particular concern in the state. Methamphetamine produced in Mexico, Arizona, California and, to a lesser extent, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington is available throughout the state. Locally produced methamphetamine also is

widely available throughout Utah. Mexican criminal groups dominate the transportation and wholesale distribution of methamphetamine produced outside the state. Caucasian independent dealers, many of whom have joined to form criminal groups, also are involved in the production, transportation, and wholesale distribution of the drug in Utah. At the retail level Mexican and Caucasian local independent dealers, OMGs, and street gangs distribute methamphetamine.

Abuse

Treatment admissions indicate that methamphetamine abuse is increasing in Utah. This increase is likely due to some cocaine abusers switching to methamphetamine. Data from the Utah Department of Human Services, Division of Substance Abuse indicate that methamphetamine-related treatment admissions to publicly funded

DAWN Mortality Data

DAWN mortality data for the Salt Lake City metropolitan area represent drug-related deaths in Davis and Salt Lake Counties. These two counties account for 85 percent of the metropolitan area population. Weber County, which accounts for the remaining 15 percent of the metropolitan area population, did not report mortality data to DAWN.

facilities increased from 1,992 in FY1997 to 3,785 in FY2001. In FY2001 the number of treatment admissions for methamphetamine abuse was higher than the number for any other illicit drug. In Davis County healthcare providers report

that there were more treatment admissions for methamphetamine abuse than for the abuse of alcohol or any other illicit drug in FY2001. Treatment providers and law enforcement personnel report that methamphetamine has replaced cocaine as the stimulant of choice because of its longer-lasting euphoric effects and widespread availability.

Methamphetamine abuse among young people is a cause for concern in Utah, although abuse among Utah high school students remains lower than among high school students nationwide. According to 2001 YRBS data, 5.3 percent of high school students surveyed in Utah reported having abused methamphetamine at least once in their lifetime, compared with 9.8 nationwide.

Methamphetamine abuse increasingly is a factor in drug-related deaths in the Salt Lake City metropolitan area. According to Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) mortality data, the number of methamphetamine-related deaths in the Salt Lake City metropolitan area increased from 7 in 1996 to 15 in 2000. (See Table 3 on page 5.)

Table 2. Substance Abuse-Related Treatment Admissions, Utah, FY1997–FY2001

	Methamphetamine	Heroin	Cocaine	Marijuana
FY1997	1,992	1,524	2,238	2,705
FY1998	2,702	1,298	1,657	2,624
FY1999	2,882	1,438	1,529	3,321
FY2000	3,448	1,758	1,783	3,750
FY2001	3,785	1,567	1,620	3,694

Source: Utah Division of Substance Abuse.

Table 3. Drug-Related Deaths, Salt Lake City Metropolitan Area, 1996–2000

	Methamphetamine	Heroin	Cocaine
1996	7	43	37
1997	11	67	44
1998	22	83	77
1999	24	90	76
2000	15	80	59

Source: DAWN.

Methamphetamine abusers often use the drug in combination with other drugs, thus increasing the risk of negative effects. Some abusers attempt to mitigate the effect of the methamphetamine crash by buffering it with an opiate, a practice referred to as speedballing. Speedballing traditionally referred to a method of administration that involved the injection of a mixture of cocaine and heroin. Recently, the term has been broadened and now refers more generally to the simultaneous use via injection, inhalation, or snorting of a stimulant such as cocaine or methamphetamine with a depressant such as heroin, oxycodone, or hydrocodone.

ADAM Program

The ADAM program—administered by the National Institute of Justice—tracks trends in the prevalence and types of drug use among booked arrestees in selected urban areas of the United States. The ADAM Program involves two components: a questionnaire administered by a trained interviewer to an arrestee in a booking facility and a urine sample collected from the arrestee within 48 hours of arrest. In 2000 data were collected for 39 metropolitan areas across the United States. ADAM data for Salt Lake City were collected from randomly selected arrestees at a facility in Salt Lake County.

Methamphetamine is one of the most commonly abused drugs among adult male arrestees in Salt Lake City. According to the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (ADAM) Program, 17.1 percent of adult male arrestees in Salt Lake City tested positive for methamphetamine in 2000. Among adult male arrestees in Salt Lake City, 24.2 percent of Caucasians, 11.6 percent of African Americans, and 6.8 percent of Hispanics tested positive for the drug.

Methamphetamine Abuse Among Women

Healthcare professionals warn that an increasing number of women in Utah are addicted to methamphetamine. The reasons that women give for abusing methamphetamine vary widely, but many say they began using the drug to provide an energy boost or as a means of losing weight—calling it the “Jenny Crank Program.” The highly addictive drug triggers rapid weight loss, and many women lose dangerous amounts of weight when using it as a diet supplement. According to the Utah Division of Substance Abuse, methamphetamine was the most abused illicit drug among women seeking treatment in Utah in FY2000 and FY2001.

Source: Utah Division of Substance Abuse.

Availability

Methamphetamine is readily available in wholesale quantities throughout Utah. In response to the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) National Drug Threat Survey 2001, 22 of the 24 law enforcement agencies surveyed in the state reported methamphetamine availability as high, and the other 2 agencies reported moderate availability. Methamphetamine produced by Mexican criminal groups in Mexico as well as California and Arizona is widely available across Utah. Methamphetamine produced locally by Caucasian independent dealers and criminal groups as well as OMGs also is widely available throughout the state. Some methamphetamine available in the state is produced by Mexican criminal groups and, to a lesser extent, Caucasian criminal groups in Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington.

Despite the ready availability of methamphetamine in Utah, federal law enforcement seizures of the drug have declined. According to Federal-wide Drug Seizure System (FDSS) data, methamphetamine seizures made by federal law enforcement officials in Utah decreased from 47 kilograms in 1998 to 6 kilograms in 2001. Law enforcement officials in Utah reported seizures totaling 45 kilograms of methamphetamine in 1999, 5 kilograms in 2000, and 9.5 kilograms in 2001 as part of Operation Pipeline and less than

1 kilogram of methamphetamine in both 2000 and 2001 as part of Operation Jetway.

According to the DEA Salt Lake City Resident Office, prices for methamphetamine ranged from \$16,000 to \$17,000 per pound and from \$1,000 to \$1,500 per ounce in the first quarter of FY2002. In 2001 state and local law enforcement authorities throughout Utah reported that methamphetamine prices ranged from \$600 to \$1,200 per ounce. Law enforcement authorities in the state reported retail prices of \$100 per gram.

The purity of methamphetamine varies significantly in the state. Lower purity methamphetamine produced by Mexican criminal groups is widely available in the state. The increased availability of high purity, locally produced methamphetamine accounts for some variance in reported purity levels and prices. In the second quarter of FY2001, DEA reported that the purity of methamphetamine sold at the wholesale level in Salt Lake City averaged 26.9 percent. Ounce quantities of methamphetamine produced in Utah were found to have purity levels between 76 and 92 percent. According to law enforcement respondents to the National Drug Threat Survey 2001, wholesale purity levels ranged from 25 to 90 percent, and retail purity levels ranged from 13 to 90 percent.

Table 4. Federal Drug Seizures in Kilograms, Utah, 1998–2001

	Methamphetamine	Heroin	Cocaine	Marijuana
1998	46.8	1.8	65.8	634.8
1999	42.4	1.7	74.5	216.1
2000	8.2	5.9	35.4	163.1
2001	6.2	0.4	21.5	13.1

Source: FDSS.

The number of methamphetamine-related federal sentences in Utah increased significantly from FY1997 through FY2001, and methamphetamine accounted for more drug-related federal sentences than any other drug in FY2001. According to USSC data, the number

of methamphetamine-related sentences increased from 25 in FY1997 to 55 in FY2001. Methamphetamine-related sentences accounted for 64.7 percent of drug-related federal sentences in Utah in FY2001, compared with 14.2 percent nationwide. (See Table 1 on page 3.)

Violence

Methamphetamine-related violence is a significant concern to law enforcement officials and public health professionals in Utah. Methamphetamine abusers frequently commit violent crimes and often assault police officers during the “tweaking” stage of abuse. Law enforcement officials in Utah also report that methamphetamine distributors often use violence in the course of conducting business and defending distribution territory.

Tweaking

During the tweaking stage, a methamphetamine user often has not slept for days and, consequently, is irritable. The tweaker also craves more methamphetamine, which results in frustration and contributes to anxiety and restlessness. In this stage the tweaker may become violent without provocation, and as abusers become increasingly paranoid, they often arm themselves against perceived threats. Case histories indicate that tweakers have reacted violently to the mere sight of a police uniform.

Methamphetamine abusers often are linked to violence in Utah, including an alarming number of domestic crimes ranging from child neglect and endangerment to physical and sexual assault. The paranoia that accompanies methamphetamine abuse has caused many abusers to assault and even kill family members, including children. ADAM Program data indicate that nearly one-fifth (17%) of adult males arrested for violent crimes in Salt Lake City in 2000 tested positive for methamphetamine. According to the Utah Department of Human Services, 65 percent of children placed in foster care in Salt Lake County

in 1999 had been removed from the custody of methamphetamine-addicted parents.

Territorial violence associated with methamphetamine distribution occurs throughout Utah, but primarily in the Salt Lake City area. Street gangs and local independent dealers who distribute methamphetamine commit violent crimes throughout the state. Law enforcement respondents to the NDIC National Gang Survey 2000 reported that the following gangs distribute methamphetamine and commit violent crimes in the state: Avenues, Baby Browns, Baby Regulators, Black Mafia Gangsters, Brown Society Gangsters, North Side Thug Family, QVO, Sureños 13, and Tongan Crip Regulators. Assault is the most common violent offense committed by gang members who distribute methamphetamine. Some gang members commit assaults and engage in drive-by shootings against police officers and others and commit homicides. During 2000 and 2001 the Wasatch Range Task Force, which covers most of north central Utah including Ogden, Provo, and Salt Lake City, and the Logan Police Department reported numerous violent acts committed by gang members in their jurisdictions.

Methamphetamine producers sometimes use violence to protect their operations. Law enforcement authorities throughout the state frequently seize firearms, explosives, and ammunition during methamphetamine laboratory seizures. The Salt Lake City Metro Task Force seized 17 rifles, assault rifles, and handguns during a single laboratory seizure during 2001. Methamphetamine producers in Utah also have booby-trapped their laboratories with weapons and explosives.

OMGs in Utah are linked to violence associated with methamphetamine production and distribution. The Sundowners and Barons OMGs often require rival methamphetamine producers

and distributors operating in their territory to pay them a portion of their profits. When producers or distributors fail to pay or intentionally underpay, OMGs resort to physical assault.

Production

Most of the methamphetamine available in Utah is produced by Mexican criminal groups in Mexico, Arizona, and California; however, significant quantities of methamphetamine are produced in Utah. The number of methamphetamine laboratories seized throughout Utah increased during the late 1990s. According to the EPIC

Clandestine Laboratory Database, the number of methamphetamine laboratory seizures increased from 152 in FY1998 to a peak of 228 in FY2000, then significantly decreased to 130 in FY2002. Of the 130 laboratories seized in Utah during FY2002, 93 were seized in Salt Lake County.

Methamphetamine Production Methods

Ephedrine/Pseudoephedrine Reduction:

- **Hydriodic acid/red phosphorus.** The principal chemicals are ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, hydriodic acid, and red phosphorus. This method can yield multipound quantities of high quality d-methamphetamine and often is associated with Mexican drug trafficking organizations and criminal groups.
- **Iodine/red phosphorus.** The principal chemicals are ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, iodine, and red phosphorus. The required hydriodic acid in this variation of the hydriodic acid/red phosphorus method is produced by the reaction of iodine in water with red phosphorus. This method yields high quality d-methamphetamine.
- **Iodine/hypophosphorous acid.** The principal chemicals are ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, iodine, and hypophosphorous acid. The required hydriodic acid in this variation of the hydriodic acid/red phosphorus method is produced by the reaction of iodine in water with hypophosphorous acid. Known as the hypo method, this method yields lower quality d-methamphetamine. Hypophosphorous acid is more prone than red phosphorus to cause a fire and can produce deadly phosphine gas.
- **Birch.** The principal chemicals are ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, anhydrous ammonia, and sodium or lithium metal. Also known as the Nazi method, this method typically yields ounce quantities of high quality d-methamphetamine and often is used by independent dealers and producers.

Phenyl-2-propanone:

- **P2P.** The principal chemicals are phenyl-2-propanone, aluminum, methylamine, and mercuric acid. This method yields lower quality dl-methamphetamine and traditionally has been associated with OMGs.

Most of the methamphetamine laboratories seized in the state are small operations in which limited quantities of the drug are produced for personal consumption. Quantities in excess of the

producer's needs typically are distributed at the retail level. In most of these laboratories an ephedrine/pseudoephedrine reduction method is used to produce methamphetamine. Caucasian local

independent dealers operate most of these small, sometimes portable laboratories in motel rooms,

produced by Mexican criminal groups operating outside the state.

Methamphetamine Producer Sentenced to 30 Years in Prison

In December 2001 a federal jury in Salt Lake City sentenced a local man to 30 years in federal prison for operating a methamphetamine laboratory and counterfeiting U.S. currency. Utah County law enforcement officials arrested the man after receiving an anonymous tip. During the search of his home, law enforcement authorities discovered a working methamphetamine laboratory, more than 8 ounces of the drug, and counterfeit U.S. bills.

Source: Utah County Major Crimes Task Force.

storage sheds, mobile homes, and single-family dwellings. Some operators transport laboratories in vehicles and occasionally are apprehended by local law enforcement officials during routine traffic stops. Demand for locally produced methamphetamine is high because some abusers consider it to be superior to the methamphetamine

Some Caucasian local independent dealers have formed criminal groups in Utah and surrounding states to produce, transport, and distribute methamphetamine. According to law enforcement authorities throughout the state, these Caucasian criminal groups often are compartmentalized. Individuals are assigned specific tasks such as obtaining precursor chemicals or producing or distributing the drug. They typically have no contact with one another except when conducting a transaction. According to the DEA Metro Narcotics Task Force, some Caucasian criminal groups in Utah produce as much as 20 pounds of methamphetamine per month.

OMGs, although no longer the predominant producers of methamphetamine in the state, continue to produce the drug in Utah. Sundowners and Barons OMGs members direct the production and distribution operations typically using associates of the OMGs to produce the drug. In January 1999 more than 70 Sundowners members and associates in Utah were arrested for operating five methamphetamine laboratories.

White Supremacist Groups Involved in Methamphetamine Production

White supremacist groups in the Salt Lake City area increasingly are becoming involved in methamphetamine production and distribution. The Box Elder Metro North Narcotics and Gang Strike Force, the Utah County Major Crimes Task Force, the Utah Department of Corrections, and the Weber/Morgan Drug Task Force report that members of the Soldiers of Aryan Culture (SAC) and Silent Aryan Warriors (SAW), the two largest white supremacist groups in Utah, have begun to produce and distribute methamphetamine in the state. According to officials from these law enforcement agencies, SAC and SAW members often set aside organizational dogma regarding racial prejudice and prohibitions against drug production, distribution, and use in order to capitalize on drug trafficking. Members of these groups often form alliances with Mexican criminals to obtain methamphetamine or the chemicals required to produce the drug. Moreover, the Box Elder Metro North Narcotics and Gang Strike Force reports that SAC and SAW members periodically trade methamphetamine to Mexican criminal groups in exchange for wholesale quantities of precursor chemicals that are smuggled into the state.

Source: Box Elder Metro North Narcotics and Gang Strike Force; Utah County Major Crimes Task Force; Utah Department of Corrections; Weber/Morgan Drug Task Force.

The sale of chemicals used in the production of methamphetamine is closely regulated in Utah. In 1992 state legislators implemented a precursor control law that monitored the sale of ephedrine and

pseudoephedrine. The law was amended in 1998 to include controls on iodine crystals and to limit the possession of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine to 12 grams. The availability of these chemicals in

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Utah has been reduced significantly due to the legislation; however, sales of over-the-counter pseudoephedrine tablets remain unregulated. In addition, some producers of methamphetamine in Sandy and West Valley City circumvent Utah's precursor control laws by substituting readily available hypophosphorous acid for closely regulated red phosphorus.

Methamphetamine producers have operated methamphetamine laboratories on public lands in Utah. From 1993 through 1999 the National Forest Service (NFS) seized a total of 15 methamphetamine laboratories and 21 dumpsites in Utah. However, in 2000 only one dumpsite and no laboratories were seized on NFS lands in the state.

Transportation

Mexican criminal groups using private vehicles dominate the transportation of methamphetamine into Utah from Mexico, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington. In addition, Caucasian criminal groups in Utah and other states transport multipound quantities of methamphetamine per month into the state from production and distribution centers in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, according to DEA. Furthermore, some Caucasian local independent dealers and OMGs transport small quantities of methamphetamine produced by Mexican criminal groups into Utah from Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, and Washington.

Methamphetamine typically is transported into and through Utah in private vehicles traveling on I-15, I-80, and I-70, although commercial buses and aircraft also are used. In an effort to counteract interdiction efforts, transporters often alter their methods of operation by changing routes, renting vehicles, and hiring couriers.

Methamphetamine may be transported into Utah by couriers aboard commercial aircraft; however, few methamphetamine seizures have been reported at airports in Utah. During 1999—the most recent year for which data are available—the Salt Lake City International Airport Interdiction Unit seized less than 10 pounds of methamphetamine.

Methamphetamine Transportation Methods

In November 2000 law enforcement authorities in Sparks, Nevada, seized more than 9 pounds of methamphetamine and arrested one individual who was traveling by private vehicle on I-80 from Nevada to Salt Lake City. The drug was concealed in the door of the vehicle.

Source: Operation Pipeline.

In July 2000 law enforcement authorities in Sacramento seized nearly 1 pound of methamphetamine and arrested a courier using a cash one-way bus ticket to travel from Los Angeles to Salt Lake City. The methamphetamine was concealed in the courier's luggage.

Source: Operation Jetway.

In May 2000 law enforcement authorities in Victorville, California, seized more than 1 pound of methamphetamine and arrested one individual who was traveling by private vehicle on I-15 from California to Ogden. The drug was concealed in the engine compartment of the vehicle.

Source: Operation Pipeline.

Much of the methamphetamine transported into and through Utah is destined for other areas of the United States. Federal, state, and local law enforcement authorities in Utah and surrounding

states report that methamphetamine is transported from Mexico, California, and southwestern states through Utah en route to Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming. The primary

transportation routes for methamphetamine that transits Utah include I-15, I-70, I-80, and I-84 as well as US 191. According to federal, state, and local law enforcement authorities, Sevier County, located near the intersection of I-15 and I-70, recorded the most highway seizures of methamphetamine in the state in 2001. In October 2000 the Utah Highway Patrol in Sevier County conducted a routine traffic stop on I-70, which resulted in the seizure of nearly 5 pounds of methamphetamine and the arrest of three individuals who were transporting the drug from Los Angeles to Colorado Springs. The methamphetamine was concealed in the air filter of the vehicle.

Methamphetamine transporters use a variety of packaging methods to conceal the drug from law enforcement personnel and drug-detection canines. Mexican and Caucasian criminal groups often package the drug in clear cellophane and duct tape and then coat the package with soap, axle grease, or detergents to mask the odor of the methamphetamine. In addition, the Box Elder Metro North Narcotics and Gang Strike Force in Brigham City has seized methamphetamine sealed in one-half-gallon and 1-gallon milk containers.

Distribution

In Utah Mexican criminal groups dominate the wholesale and midlevel distribution of methamphetamine produced in Mexico, California, and Arizona. According to law enforcement authorities in the state, at the wholesale level Mexican criminal groups distribute methamphetamine almost exclusively to Mexican nationals and often refuse to sell the drug to Caucasians. At the midlevel, however, Mexican criminal groups distribute methamphetamine to retail distributors regardless of ethnicity or nationality. Several Mexican criminal groups employ Mexican street gangs to distribute methamphetamine in Utah and other areas of the United States. Mexican criminal groups have expanded their control throughout Utah. In 2001 law enforcement authorities reported that the number of illegal Mexican

**Methamphetamine
Seized on US 191 and I-70**

In December 2001 the Utah Highway Patrol in Blanding seized more than 20 pounds of methamphetamine and arrested two individuals who were hired to transport the drug from Los Angeles to Wichita, Kansas. The individuals were traveling in a private vehicle on US 191. The methamphetamine was wrapped in cellophane and concealed behind the walls of the vehicle's speakers. The arrested individuals revealed to law enforcement that two companions were following them in another car. The Utah Highway Patrol subsequently apprehended the other individuals, two illegal Mexican nationals who were traveling east on I-70 near Moab, and seized approximately 1 ounce of methamphetamine concealed in the driver's shoe.

Source: Kansas Highway Patrol.

nationals in Utah suspected of methamphetamine distribution had increased.

Drug Distribution Group Dismantled

In December 2001 more than 50 individuals were charged with operating a criminal enterprise in what local authorities described as one of Utah's largest drug busts, which resulted in the seizure of more than 35 pounds of methamphetamine. The charges were the result of a 3-year investigation into a Mexican criminal group. The criminal group was responsible for transporting methamphetamine and cocaine from Mexico through Southern California and Arizona to the Salt Lake City and Ogden areas for distribution.

Source: DEA Metro Narcotics Task Force.

In addition, Caucasian criminal groups distribute wholesale and retail quantities of methamphetamine in Utah. Law enforcement authorities report that some Caucasian local independent dealers in Utah and surrounding states have formed loosely structured criminal groups in order to control the production, transportation, and distribution of methamphetamine. According to law enforcement authorities throughout the state, these Caucasian criminal groups distribute multipound quantities of methamphetamine per month and often operate in several states. While these criminal groups typically distribute methamphetamine at the wholesale level, some also distribute the drug at the retail level.

Caucasian Criminal Group Members Arrested

In February 2001 federal, state, and local authorities in West Valley City ended a 6-month investigation into a Caucasian criminal group that produced, transported, and distributed methamphetamine. Law enforcement officers raided three homes and two auto body shops and arrested more than 20 individuals. Law enforcement officials reported that the criminal group maintained chemicals necessary for methamphetamine production in one location, produced the drug in another, and sold the finished product from a third. Most of the individuals arrested were heavily armed, and several had more than 30 previous criminal convictions.

Source: DEA Metro Narcotics Task Force.

Mexican and Caucasian local independent dealers are the primary retail distributors of methamphetamine in the metropolitan areas of Utah. Most local independent dealers purchase small quantities of the drug from Mexican or Caucasian criminal groups in Utah and nearby states. Typically, Mexican independent dealers purchase methamphetamine from Mexican criminal groups. Some Caucasian local independent dealers produce personal use quantities—generally 1 ounce or less—and sell excess amounts to finance future production. These Mexican and Caucasian independent

dealers typically distribute methamphetamine in gram, quarter-ounce, or ounce quantities. Law enforcement officials report that most Caucasian local independent dealers distribute methamphetamine only to a select group of acquaintances.

OMGs also distribute retail quantities of methamphetamine throughout Utah. Members of the Sundowners OMG distribute multipound quantities of methamphetamine throughout the state every year. The Sundowners OMG maintains chapters in many parts of Utah, including Ogden and Salt Lake City, as well as in California, Colorado, and Nevada. The Barons OMG distributes methamphetamine at the retail level in several areas in Utah. OMGs in Utah have formed alliances with Mexican criminal groups and often distribute methamphetamine supplied by these groups. OMG and Mexican criminal group members who have served time in prison together often form the foundation for these alliances.

Street gangs, to a lesser extent, distribute retail quantities of methamphetamine throughout Utah, primarily in metropolitan areas. Street gangs purchase methamphetamine from Mexican and Caucasian criminal groups for retail distribution. Law enforcement respondents to the National Gang Survey 2000 report that the following gangs distribute methamphetamine in the state: 013 Ogden Trece, 18th Street, Avenues, Baby Browns, Baby Regulators, Black Mafia Gangsters, Brown Society Gangsters, Clearfield Loco Villains, Crips, East Side Crips, East Side Yo Mama, Inner City Piru, Kearns Town Bloods, Lay Low Crips, North Side Thug Family, Ogden Violent Gangsters, QVO, Sureños 13, Sureños Chiques, Varrio Loco Town, West Side Dope Boys, and West Side Piru. In 2000 the DEA Denver Division reported more than 4,300 street gang members and associates in the Wasatch Range Task Force area, which encompasses most of north central Utah including Ogden, Provo, and Salt Lake City. The largest street gangs in this area are Bloods and Crips gangs. Most of the Bloods and Crips gangs in Utah are not from California; instead, they are composed mostly of local youths influenced by the Southern California gang culture.

Methamphetamine distributors use a variety of packaging methods and sell the drug from a variety of locations. Wholesale quantities of methamphetamine often are packaged in clear cellophane and duct tape. Methamphetamine usually is packaged for retail distribution in resealable plastic bags or waxed paper in quantities of less than 1 ounce. Local producers in several Utah counties

color code their product, using dye to tint the methamphetamine. The tint is a means of branding the drug and may also be used to identify high purity methamphetamine. Local independent dealers, OMGs, and street gangs distribute methamphetamine on street corners and from homes and businesses including automotive repair and body shops, bars, nightclubs, and restaurants.

Heroin

Heroin poses a threat to Utah. Mexican black tar heroin and brown powdered heroin are the predominant types available in the state; Southeast Asian heroin is available in very limited quantities. Mexican criminal groups, the primary transporters and wholesale distributors of heroin in Utah, transport the drug from transshipment points in California and

Arizona and directly from Mexico. These groups typically transport the drug using private and rental vehicles and commercial trucks. In rural areas of the state, Mexican criminal groups distribute heroin at the retail level, and in metropolitan areas street gangs are the primary retail distributors.

Abuse

The number of heroin-related treatment admissions to publicly funded facilities has remained relatively stable in Utah, particularly in Salt Lake County. Data from the Utah Division of Substance Abuse indicate that heroin-related treatment admissions increased but only slightly from 1,524 in FY1997 to 1,567 in FY2001. (See Table 2 on page 4.) During that period nearly 80 percent of all admissions for the treatment of heroin abuse statewide were in Salt Lake County. In addition, healthcare providers in Salt Lake County report that heroin-related treatment admissions accounted for more than 10 percent of all drug- and alcohol-related admissions in FY2001; this represented the highest percentage of treatment admissions for heroin abuse in the state.

Heroin abuse among young people poses concerns for law enforcement and healthcare professionals in Utah. The percentage of Utah high school students who reported having abused heroin at least once in their lifetime is comparable to the

percentage nationwide. According to 2001 YRBS data, 2.7 percent of high school students surveyed in Utah reported lifetime heroin abuse, compared with 3.1 percent of high school students in the United States.

Heroin abuse increasingly is associated with drug-related deaths in the Salt Lake City metropolitan area. According to DAWN mortality data, the number of deaths in which heroin was a factor increased significantly from 43 in 1996 to 80 in 2000. (See Table 3 on page 5.) In 2000 heroin was a factor in more drug-related deaths in the Salt Lake City metropolitan area than any other illicit drug.

According to ADAM data, 6.6 percent of adult male arrestees in Salt Lake City tested positive for heroin in 2000. Among adult male arrestees in Salt Lake City, 11.5 percent of African Americans, 7.9 percent of Caucasians, and 5.0 percent of Hispanics tested positive for the drug.

Availability

Heroin is increasingly available in Utah in ounce and multiounce quantities, primarily in the metropolitan areas. In 2002 the Cache/Rich Drug Task Force, Central Utah Narcotics Strike Force, Davis County Metro Drug Task Force, Salt Lake County Metro Narcotics Task Force, Utah County Major Crimes Strike Force, and Weber/Morgan Drug Task Force reported significant increases in the availability of Mexican black tar heroin and brown powdered heroin in their jurisdictions. Mexican black tar heroin and brown powdered heroin are the types most commonly available in the state; Southeast Asian heroin is available in very limited quantities.

As the availability of heroin has increased, the prices have decreased. During the first quarter of FY2003, DEA reported that Mexican black tar heroin and brown powdered heroin sold for \$1,800 per ounce and \$50 to \$80 per gram in the Salt Lake City area—down from \$100 to \$150 per gram in the first quarter of FY2002. In 2001 the Davis County Metro Narcotics Task Force (which covers Davis County) and Wasatch Range Task Force (which covers most of north central Utah including Ogden, Provo, and Salt Lake City) reported that heroin sold for \$2,500 to \$2,700 per ounce in their jurisdictions. Also in 2001 state and local law enforcement authorities throughout

Utah reported prices of \$60 to \$400 per gram. According to the DEA Denver Division, wholesale distributors typically maintain supplies of up to 2 kilograms but generally do not sell quantities of more than 30 grams. In the first quarter of FY2002, the DEA Salt Lake City Resident Office reported that the retail purity of Mexican black tar heroin and brown powdered heroin was approximately 75 percent, and state and local law enforcement agencies in the state reported that retail purity ranged from 8 to 64 percent.

Despite the increasing availability of heroin in Utah, seizures remain relatively low. According to FDSS data, heroin seizures by federal law enforcement officials in Utah decreased from nearly 2 kilograms in 1998 to less than one-half kilogram in 2001. (See Table 4 on page 6.) Law enforcement officials in Utah did not report any heroin seizures to Operation Pipeline in 1999 and 2001; however, in 2000 they reported seizing approximately 5 kilograms of heroin.

USSC data show that in Utah there were 12 federal sentences for heroin-related offenses from FY1997 through FY2001. In FY2001 heroin accounted for 1.2 percent of all drug-related federal sentences in Utah, compared with 7.2 percent nationwide. (See Table 1 on page 3.)

Violence

Violence usually is not associated with the abuse or distribution of heroin in Utah. Nevertheless, some street gangs that distribute heroin in metropolitan areas of the state use violence in the course of conducting drug distribution activities and defending their territory. Several police departments in Utah report that these distributors commit assault against both civilians and law

enforcement officers, carjacking, drive-by shooting, and homicide. Heroin abusers are generally nonviolent, although some commit burglary or robbery to support their addiction.

According to ADAM data, 4.6 percent of adult males arrested for violent crimes in Salt Lake City in 2000 tested positive for heroin abuse.

Production

Opium is not cultivated nor is heroin produced in Utah. Heroin is produced primarily in four source regions: South America, Southeast Asia, Southwest Asia, and Mexico. Most of the heroin

available in Utah is Mexican black tar heroin or brown powdered heroin. Southeast Asian heroin is available in very limited quantities.

Transportation

Mexican criminal groups are the primary transporters of heroin into and through Utah. These criminal groups transport ounce and multi-ounce quantities of heroin from transshipment points in California and, to a lesser extent, Arizona as well as directly from Mexico. They typically transport heroin to Utah on I-15 and other roadways in private and rental vehicles and commercial trucks. Most of the heroin seized in Utah is transported from Southern California and is destined for other states.

Heroin Destined for St. Louis Seized in Utah

In October 2000 the Utah Highway Patrol seized 3.6 kilograms of Mexican brown powdered heroin from two individuals who were transporting the drug from Compton, California, to St. Louis on I-15 in a private vehicle. The heroin was concealed in the vehicle's spare tire. This was the largest heroin seizure reported to Operation Pipeline in Utah history.

In February 2000 the Utah Highway Patrol seized more than 1.5 kilograms of heroin and arrested an individual who was transporting the drug from Los Angeles to St. Louis on I-70 in a private vehicle. The heroin was concealed in the engine compartment near the windshield wiper housing.

Source: Operation Pipeline.

Distribution

Mexican criminal groups dominate the wholesale distribution of heroin in Utah. These criminal groups have adopted the same hierarchically structured, family-based system that is used by distributors of cocaine, marijuana, and methamphetamine. According to Utah law enforcement authorities, Mexican criminal groups sell heroin to midlevel distributors—typically family members, close friends, or associates who are members of other Mexican criminal groups. These groups also sell retail quantities of the drug to

individuals who are known heroin abusers. In order to prove that they are regular users of the drug, these individuals must show the distributor their “tracks”—black lines and dark scars on an abuser's arms or legs that are signs of continued intravenous abuse of heroin. In metropolitan areas of the state, Mexican criminal groups acting as midlevel distributors sell heroin to street gangs, and in rural areas of Utah these criminal groups sell the drug at the retail level.

Street gangs are the primary retail distributors of heroin in the metropolitan areas of Utah. Most street gangs in these areas purchase ounce or multiounce quantities of the drug from Mexican criminal groups who operate at the midlevel. Law enforcement respondents to the National Gang Survey 2000 reported that heroin is distributed at the retail level by numerous street gangs including Alley Boys, Armenian Mafia Gang, Sureños 13, and Sureños Chiques in the Salt Lake City area; Brown Society Gangsters in Davis County; and QVO and Alley Boys in West Valley City.

Heroin is distributed in a variety of ways in Utah. According to the DEA Denver Division, as

previously stated, most wholesale and midlevel distributors of the drug maintain supplies of less than 2 kilograms and sell quantities of 30 grams or less to retailers. In an effort to avoid law enforcement scrutiny, retail distributors often conduct sales indoors. In many metropolitan areas of the state, heroin is distributed at the retail level from automotive repair shops, bars, private residences, and some restaurants. Larger quantities—1 ounce or more—are packaged in small plastic bags or wrapped in aluminum foil. Personal use quantities (1 gram or less) often are bundled in packages of smaller units and wrapped in cellophane or put in a plastic bag.

Cocaine

Cocaine poses a threat to Utah, particularly because of the violence associated with the distribution and abuse of the drug. Powdered cocaine is distributed in both wholesale and retail quantities and is available throughout the state. Crack cocaine is available only in retail quantities and only in metropolitan areas. Mexican criminal

groups transport powdered cocaine into the state and serve as wholesale, midlevel, and retail distributors. At the retail level street gangs and Caucasian and Mexican local independent dealers distribute powdered cocaine. Some street gangs also convert powdered cocaine into crack and distribute the drug at the wholesale and retail levels.

Abuse

Cocaine abuse remains a concern in Utah. Data from the Utah Division of Substance Abuse indicate that the number of cocaine-related treatment admissions to publicly funded facilities decreased from 2,238 in FY1997 to 1,657 in FY1998, then remained relatively stable through FY2001 when 1,620 admissions were reported. (See Table 2 on page 4.) (Treatment data provided by the Division of Substance Abuse do not distinguish between powdered and crack cocaine.)

The rate of cocaine abuse in Utah is comparable to the national rate, and most cocaine abusers in Utah are young adults. According to the 1999 and 2000 NHSDA, the percentage of Utah residents (1.5%) who reported having abused cocaine at least once in the year prior to the survey was comparable to the percentage nationwide (1.6%).

Individuals 18 to 25 years of age in Utah reported the highest rate (3.4%) of past year cocaine abuse.

The percentage of Utah high school students who reported having abused cocaine at least once in their lifetime is lower than the national percentage. According to the 2001 YRBS, 4.1 percent of high school students surveyed in Utah reported lifetime cocaine abuse, compared with 9.4 percent nationwide. However, 2.7 percent of Utah high school students surveyed reported having abused cocaine at least once in the 30 days prior to the survey, statistically comparable to the national percentage of 4.2 percent.

Cocaine abuse increasingly is a factor in drug-related deaths in the Salt Lake City metropolitan area. According to DAWN mortality data, the number of deaths in which cocaine was a factor

increased from 37 in 1996 to 59 in 2000. (See Table 3 on page 5.)

Cocaine is frequently abused by adult male arrestees in Salt Lake City. According to ADAM data, 18.0 percent of adult male arrestees in Salt

Lake City in 2000 tested positive for cocaine. Among adult male arrestees, 29.0 percent of African Americans, 27.4 percent of Hispanics, and 15.4 percent of Caucasians tested positive for the drug.

Availability

Powdered cocaine is available in various quantities throughout Utah, and crack cocaine availability is limited to retail quantities in metropolitan areas of the state. Powdered cocaine is available in wholesale quantities in the Wasatch Range Task Force area, which encompasses most of north central Utah including Ogden, Provo, and Salt Lake City. Law enforcement authorities in Salt Lake City report that powdered cocaine is readily available in wholesale quantities in and around Salt Lake City. According to the Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), powdered cocaine also is available at numerous ski resorts in Utah. Crack cocaine is available in retail quantities in the Salt Lake City area.

The price of cocaine has remained relatively stable throughout Utah, with variances reported in some rural areas of the state. According to the DEA Salt Lake City Resident Office, powdered cocaine prices have fluctuated nominally, with some decreases from FY1999 to FY2001. According to DEA, during the second quarter of FY2001, powdered cocaine sold for \$16,000 to \$20,000 per kilogram, \$500 to \$1,000 per ounce, and \$75 to \$125 per gram throughout the state. Crack cocaine sold for \$20 to \$30 per rock throughout the state. Local law enforcement authorities report that wholesale powdered cocaine prices were as high as \$25,000

per kilogram in some rural areas of the state. State and local law enforcement agencies in the state reported wholesale purity levels of 50 to 96 percent and retail purity levels of 25 to 70 percent in 2001.

Despite the availability of cocaine in Utah, federal law enforcement seizures of the drug have declined. According to FDSS data, cocaine seizures by federal law enforcement officers in Utah decreased from 66 kilograms in 1998 to 22 kilograms in 2001. (See Table 4 on page 6.) Law enforcement officials in Utah reported cocaine seizures totaling 47 kilograms in 1999, 45 kilograms in 2000, and 17 kilograms in 2001 as part of Operation Pipeline, and they did not report any cocaine seizures in 2000 as part of Operation Jetway; however, in 2001 they reported seizing 15 kilograms of the drug.

Federal sentencing statistics for Utah indicate that the number of cocaine-related federal sentences decreased dramatically from 34 in FY1997 to 12 in FY2001. According to USSC data, 47.2 percent of drug-related federal sentences in Utah were for cocaine-related violations in FY1997. That percentage declined to 14.1 percent in FY2001—well below the national rate of 42.5 percent. (See Table 1 on page 3.)

Violence

Cocaine-related violence poses a significant threat to law enforcement authorities throughout Utah. Cocaine distributors often use violence to protect their territory and drug supply. Street gangs that distribute cocaine often commit violent

crimes in Utah, primarily in the Wasatch Range Task Force area, which encompasses most of north central Utah including Ogden, Provo, and Salt Lake City. Law enforcement respondents to the National Gang Survey 2000 reported that the

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following gangs distribute cocaine and commit violent crimes in the state: 013 Ogden Trece, 18th Street, 21st Street Gang, Alley Boys, Armenian Mafia Gang, Kearns Town Bloods, Ogden Violent Gangsters, Original Laotian Gang, QVO, Tongan Crip Gangsters, and Tongan Crip Regulators. According to law enforcement agencies throughout the state, assault is the most common violent crime committed by gangs that distribute cocaine. Some distributors also commit drive-by shooting, assault on law enforcement officers, and other violent crimes.

Law enforcement agencies in Utah report that individuals who abuse cocaine often commit violent crime. According to ADAM data, 15.3 percent of adult males arrested in Salt Lake City in 2000 for

violent crimes tested positive for cocaine. In addition, some cocaine abusers have attacked and killed law enforcement officers in the state.

Police Officer's Killer Used Cocaine

In August 2001 a Provo man who had snorted cocaine a short time before was stopped by a Lehi police officer who suspected that the man was driving under the influence. According to a passenger in the vehicle, the officer discovered the cocaine, placed the man under arrest, and cuffed one of his hands. The man forced himself away from the officer, drew a gun, and fired. The bullet struck the officer in the chest and killed him.

Source: Lehi Police Department.

Production

Coca is not cultivated nor is powdered cocaine produced in Utah. However, retail distributors in Salt Lake City and other metropolitan areas commonly convert powdered cocaine to crack. They convert small quantities on an as-needed basis to avoid federal drug sentences that are lengthier for

possessing crack than powdered cocaine. Street gangs such as 18th Street, Alley Boys, QVO, and Tongan Crip Gangsters convert powdered cocaine to crack in or near the business, private residence, or public area where it is distributed.

Transportation

Mexican criminal groups dominate the transportation of cocaine from Mexico. They typically transport cocaine from Mexico through Arizona, California, and New Mexico into Utah. Street gangs in Utah also transport cocaine into the state. Law enforcement respondents to the National Gang Survey 2000 from Farmington, Salt Lake City, and West Valley City reported that street gangs transport cocaine from Arizona and California into their jurisdictions.

Cocaine typically is transported into Utah in private or rental vehicles, although commercial aircraft, buses, trains, and package delivery services also are used. Operation Pipeline seizure statistics

indicate that in 1999 and 2000, I-15 and I-70 were the primary routes along which cocaine was seized in Utah.

Wholesale quantities of cocaine are transported through Utah en route to other areas of the United States. According to Operation Pipeline seizure statistics, cocaine is transported from California through Utah to Colorado, Idaho, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Washington. The primary transportation routes for cocaine that transits Utah are I-15, I-70, and I-80.

Couriers aboard commercial aircraft also transport cocaine into and through Utah. The Salt Lake City Air Interdiction Unit seized 13 kilograms of

Cocaine Transported to Utah

In March 2001 law enforcement authorities in San Bernardino seized nearly 25 kilograms of powdered cocaine being transported from Los Angeles to Salt Lake City. The drug was concealed in a compartment under the rear seat.

In April 2000 the Utah Highway Patrol seized 24 kilograms of powdered cocaine and arrested two men who were transporting the drug on I-15 from Santa Ana to Salt Lake City in a private vehicle. The drug was concealed in a false compartment between the trunk and the rear seat.

Source: Operation Pipeline.

Cocaine Transported Through Utah

In November 2001 law enforcement officials in Sevier County seized 3 kilograms of cocaine and arrested one individual who was transporting the drug from Los Angeles to Cleveland in a private vehicle traveling on I-70.

In October 2001 the Central Oklahoma Metro Interdiction Team seized 17 kilograms of cocaine and arrested one individual who was transporting the drug from Salt Lake City to Tulsa via I-35. The cocaine, in 25 packages wrapped with brown tape, was concealed in the vehicle's gas tank.

Source: Operation Pipeline; DEA Dallas Division.

cocaine and arrested two individuals who were transporting the drug on a commercial flight from California to Anchorage via Salt Lake City in

November 2001. The cocaine was concealed in a false compartment in a piece of luggage.

Distribution

Mexican criminal groups distribute most of the powdered cocaine that is available in Utah. These groups distribute the drug in wholesale, midlevel, and retail quantities throughout Utah. Many of these Mexican criminal groups have direct contacts to Mexican DTOs that operate in Mexico and southwestern states. In addition, these groups distribute multiple kilograms of cocaine per week exclusively to friends, family members, and others who distribute wholesale and midlevel quantities. In December 2001 federal, state, and local law enforcement authorities in Ogden and Salt Lake City arrested more than 50 members of a Mexican criminal group in one of Utah's largest drug investigations. The individuals were charged with offenses that included distributing drugs and operating a criminal enterprise. The arrests were the result of a 3-year investigation into the Mexican criminal group that transported and distributed cocaine and methamphetamine from Mexico through Southern California and Arizona into Utah. Members of the criminal group in Salt Lake

City and Ogden sold the drugs to, and often worked in cooperation with, street gangs and abusers.

Street gangs and local independent dealers based in Utah often obtain powdered cocaine from Mexican criminal groups and distribute the drug at the retail level. Law enforcement respondents to the NDIC National Gang Survey 2000 reported that the following street gangs distribute powdered cocaine in retail quantities throughout the state: 013 Ogden Trece, 18th Street, 21st Street Gang, Alley Boys, Armenian Mafia, Avenues Gang, Black Mafia Gangsters, Gangster Disciples, Ogden Violent Gangsters, Oriental Laotian Gangsters, QVO, La Raza, Silent Aryan Warriors, Sureños 13, Sureños Chiques, Tiny Oriental Posse, Tongan Crip Regulators, Varrios Mexicanos Locos, and Varrio Loco Town. Local independent dealers who distribute cocaine usually are Caucasian or Mexican and distribute other illicit drugs as well.

Crack cocaine is distributed in limited quantities in the metropolitan areas of Utah. Crack distribution in the state is limited to midlevel (ounce quantities).

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Street gangs are the primary midlevel and retail distributors of the drug in Utah. Street gangs such as 18th Street, Alley Boys, QVO, and Tongan Crip Gangsters convert powdered cocaine to crack and distribute midlevel and retail quantities of the drug to local independent dealers and directly to abusers.

Powdered cocaine and crack cocaine are distributed from private residences or businesses,

including bars, nightclubs, and restaurants in Utah. Wholesale quantities of powdered cocaine typically are wrapped in clear or colored cellophane or packaged in plastic bags and sealed with tape. One of the most common packaging methods involves placing gram or ounce quantities of powdered or crack cocaine in small, vacuum-sealed plastic bags.

Marijuana

Marijuana is the most widely available illicit drug in Utah, and there is evidence to suggest that abuse of the drug is increasing. Marijuana produced by Mexican criminal groups in Mexico and California is the most common type available in the state. However, marijuana produced in Utah also is available and typically commands a higher price because its potency exceeds that of Mexico- or California-produced marijuana. Caucasian

criminal groups produce high potency marijuana in the state; they distribute the drug directly as well as supply local independent dealers. Mexican criminal groups dominate the transportation and wholesale and midlevel distribution of marijuana produced in Mexico or California. At the retail level street gangs, Mexican and Caucasian criminal groups, and local independent dealers distribute marijuana.

Abuse

Treatment admissions data indicate that marijuana abuse has increased steadily in Utah. Data from the Utah Division of Substance Abuse indicate that marijuana/hashish-related treatment admissions to publicly funded facilities in Utah increased from 2,705 in FY1997 to 3,694 in FY2001. (See Table 2 on page 4.)

The rate of marijuana abuse in Utah is slightly lower than the national rate, and most marijuana abusers are young adults. According to the 1999 and 2000 NHSDA, 3.2 percent of Utah residents surveyed reported abusing marijuana at least once in the month prior to the survey, compared with 4.8 percent nationwide. Individuals 18 to 25 years of age in Utah reported the highest rate (7.4%) of past month marijuana abuse.

The percentage of high school students reporting marijuana abuse in Utah is lower than the national percentage. According to 2001 YRBS data, 19.7 percent of Utah high school students surveyed reported having abused marijuana at least once in their lifetime, compared with 42.4 percent nationwide. In addition, 9.7 percent of Utah high school students surveyed reported that they had abused marijuana in the 30 days prior to the survey, compared with 23.9 percent nationwide.

Marijuana is frequently detected among adult male arrestees in Salt Lake City. According to ADAM data, in Salt Lake City 33.5 percent of adult male arrestees tested positive for marijuana in 2000. Among adult male arrestees, 44.1 percent of African Americans, 38.1 percent of Caucasians, and 28.8 percent of Hispanics tested positive for the drug.

Availability

Marijuana is the most widely available illicit drug in Utah. Marijuana produced by Mexican criminal groups in Mexico and California is the most common type available in the state. Generally, marijuana produced in Mexico and California has a lower potency than locally produced marijuana and sells for a lower price at the wholesale level. DEA reported that marijuana sold for \$600 to \$1,000 per pound, \$80 to \$150 per ounce, and \$0.50 to \$5 per joint in Utah during the first quarter of FY2002. According to the DEA Salt Lake City Resident Office, high potency and locally produced marijuana sold for \$2,000 to \$5,000 per pound, more than \$100 per ounce, and \$1 to \$5 per joint in the first quarter of FY2002. Small amounts of BC Bud—high potency marijuana produced in Canada—are available. In 2001 BC Bud sold for more than \$3,000 per pound in Utah.

Marijuana is readily available in Utah; however, federal law enforcement seizures of the drug have

declined. According to FDSS data, marijuana seizures made by federal law enforcement officers in Utah decreased from 635 kilograms in 1998 to 13 kilograms in 2001. (See Table 4 on page 6.) Law enforcement officials in Utah reported marijuana seizures totaling 950 kilograms in 1999, 437 kilograms in 2000, and 490 kilograms in 2001 as part of Operation Pipeline, and they did not report any marijuana seizures in 2000 as part of Operation Jetway; however, in 2001 they reported seizing 14 kilograms of the drug.

The percentage of marijuana-related federal sentences in Utah has increased but was significantly lower than the national percentage in FY2001. According to USSC data, the percentage of federal sentences in Utah that were marijuana-related increased from 15.2 percent in FY1997 to 18.8 percent in FY2001—lower than the nationwide figure of 32.8. (See Table 1 on page 3.)

Violence

There is some violence associated with the production and distribution of marijuana in Utah. Operators of outdoor cannabis cultivation operations sometimes employ armed Mexican immigrants to protect their sites. According to the DEA Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program (DCE/SP) statistical report, 17 weapons

related to cannabis cultivation operations were seized in Utah in 1999. No weapons were seized from cultivation sites during 2000—the most recent year for which information is available. In addition, some street gangs and local independent dealers in the state use violence to protect their drug distribution territory and drug supplies.

Production

Although most of the marijuana available in Utah is produced in Mexico and California, cannabis is cultivated in the state, particularly in the northern areas. Outdoor cultivation is the more common method of producing marijuana in Utah, although significant quantities also are produced indoors. The Utah Department of Public Safety

reports that Weber County is the center of cannabis cultivation in the state. According to the Utah Criminal Investigations Bureau, in 1999 there were 8,537 cannabis plants eradicated from indoor and outdoor grow sites in Weber County, 661 in Salt Lake County, 456 in Iron County, 217 in San Juan County, 174 in Duchesne County, 112 in Cache

County, 34 in Utah County, 27 in Uintah County, 20 in Box Elder County, and 2 each in Davis and Sevier Counties. According to DCE/SP data, the number of outdoor operations eradicated fluctuated significantly from 1997 through 2000. Eight outdoor plots (1,321 plants) were eradicated in 1997, none in 1998, 15 plots (8,870 plants) in 1999, 10 plots (581 plants) in 2000, and 6 plots (113 plants) in 2001.

Indoor cannabis cultivation also is prevalent in Utah. According to DCE/SP data, approximately 42 percent of the cannabis plants eradicated in Utah during 2000 were cultivated indoors. These data reflect significant increases in the number of indoor operations with 1 indoor cultivation site (56 plants) seized in 1997, none in 1998, 43 sites (1,259 plants) in 1999, 108 sites (422 plants) in 2000, and 7 sites (1,736 plants) in 2001. The Box Elder County Sheriff's Office, Central Utah Narcotics Strike Force, Davis County Metro Narcotics Task Force, and Morgan County Sheriff's Office likewise reported increases in the number of indoor cultivation seizures in their jurisdictions.

Mexican criminal groups and, to a lesser extent, Caucasian local independent dealers increasingly are using public lands in Utah for cannabis cultivation. Cultivators select these areas for their remoteness, fertile soil, and low law enforcement presence. Mexican criminal groups commonly employ illegal Mexican aliens to cultivate cannabis in these remote areas. According to the NFS, these criminal groups are dangerous and have a propensity for violence. NFS law enforcement personnel are actively involved in eradicating and suppressing cannabis cultivation in Utah. However, severe fire seasons in 2000 and 2001 coupled with the vast area patrolled by NFS personnel made it difficult to monitor many areas of the state.

Caucasian criminal groups and local independent dealers dominate the production of high potency marijuana at indoor grow sites throughout Utah. Indoor grow sites are increasingly popular throughout the state as the demand for high potency marijuana continues to increase. These criminal groups and local independent dealers use hydroponic techniques in separate nursery, cloning, and maturation sites in order to produce high potency marijuana. Indoor grow sites often are vulnerable to detection by law enforcement because it is necessary to evacuate the air inside the facility. This creates a distinct skunk-like odor that may persist outside the facility for several hours. State and local law enforcement authorities in many areas of Utah report that some Caucasian local independent dealers use false identities to rent homes that they use solely for the purpose of growing cannabis. In addition, some indoor cannabis cultivators rent trucks to mobilize their operations in order to avoid detection by law enforcement.

Investigators Uncover Underground Marijuana Operation

In March 2001 the Duchesne County Sheriff's Office eradicated 510 cannabis plants, seized a cache of guns and dynamite, and arrested a Duchesne man who operated an underground hydroponic cannabis grow site. During a search of the man's property, law enforcement authorities discovered a trapdoor in a small shed that led to a 10-foot tunnel leading into a large, underground room filled with cannabis plants, timed heat lamps, a hydroponic system, and air vents.

Source: Duchesne County Sheriff's Office; Uintah Basin Narcotics Strike Force.

Transportation

Mexican criminal groups dominate the transportation of marijuana into Utah. These criminal groups transport marijuana primarily from Mexico. Some Caucasian and Mexican local independent dealers as well as street gangs also transport marijuana from transshipment points in California, Colorado, and Nevada into the state. Law enforcement officials report that Caucasian criminal groups and local independent dealers are the primary transporters of high potency marijuana into and throughout Utah from Colorado, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia, Canada.

Marijuana typically is transported into Utah in private or rental vehicles via I-15, I-70, I-80, US 89, and US 191. Commercial and private aircraft, buses, and package delivery services also are used. To avoid law enforcement interdiction, transporters often alter their methods of operation by changing routes, hiring couriers, renting vehicles, and using package delivery services.

Marijuana Destined for Utah

During October 2000 law enforcement officers in Flagstaff seized 548 pounds of marijuana that was being transported from El Paso to Salt Lake City in a private vehicle traveling on US 89.

Source: Operation Pipeline.

In July 2000 Operation Jetway Task Force agents in Las Vegas seized approximately 33 pounds of marijuana and arrested one individual who was transporting the drug from San Diego to Salt Lake City on a bus. The individual traveled on a cash one-way ticket and concealed the marijuana in luggage.

Source: Operation Jetway.

Most of the marijuana that is transported into Utah is in transit to other areas of the United States. According to federal, state, and local law enforcement authorities, wholesale quantities of marijuana are transported through the state to other regions of the country. Transportation routes for marijuana transiting Utah include I-15, I-70, and US 191.

Marijuana Transported Through Utah

In November 2001 officers with the Utah Highway Patrol operating in San Juan County seized more than 750 pounds of marijuana and arrested the driver of the pickup truck in which the drug was being transported. The driver was traveling from Tucson to Cincinnati on US 191. The marijuana was wrapped in contact paper and dryer sheets and concealed in the bed of the truck. The driver was to be paid \$20,000 for transporting the drug.

During May 2000 law enforcement officials in San Juan County seized nearly 300 pounds of marijuana that was being transported from Tucson to Somerset, Kentucky, on US 191 in a private vehicle. The drug was concealed in the trunk of the vehicle.

In January 2000 the Utah Highway Patrol in Price County seized approximately 618 pounds of marijuana and arrested a woman traveling eastbound on I-70 in a rental vehicle from North Hollywood, California, to Baltimore. The marijuana was located in the cargo area of the vehicle and was not concealed. Mustard and coffee grounds were used as masking agents.

Source: Operation Jetway; Operation Pipeline.

Distribution

In Utah Mexican criminal groups are the predominant wholesale and midlevel distributors of marijuana produced by Mexican criminal groups in Mexico and California. These criminal groups usually have direct ties to sources of supply. At the wholesale level Mexican criminal groups distribute the drug through familial or personal connections to midlevel distributors, minimizing exposure to informants, law enforcement officers, retail distributors, and abusers. Midlevel distributors subsequently sell the drug to various retail distributors who generally are unaffiliated with the criminal group. Midlevel distributors sell marijuana to various local independent dealers and street gangs throughout Utah. Some Mexican criminal groups also distribute marijuana at the retail level in the state.

Street gangs are the principal retail distributors of marijuana in Utah. Mexican criminal groups supply marijuana to most street gangs in the state, although some street gangs transport multipound quantities of the drug into the state for retail distribution. According to the DEA Salt Lake City Resident Office and law enforcement officials in Utah, numerous gangs distribute marijuana throughout Utah including 013 Ogden Trece, 18th Street, 21st Street Gang, Alley Boys, Armenian Mafia Gang, Baby Browns, Brown Society Gangsters, Deuce Crips, East Side Yo Mama, Gothics, North Ridge Boys, North Side Thug Family, Ogden Violent Gangsters, Original Laotian Posse, La Raza, Silent Aryan Warriors, Sixth Street Gang, Sureños 13, Sureños Chiques, Tongan Crip Gangsters, Tongan

Crip Regulators, Varrio Loco Town, Vice Lords, and West Side Piru.

Caucasian local independent dealers also distribute Mexico-produced marijuana at the retail level in Utah to a lesser extent. Some Caucasian local independent dealers purchase retail quantities of the drug from Mexican criminal groups in Utah and nearby states. These dealers typically retain a small amount of marijuana for personal use and distribute the remainder to local abusers.

Caucasian criminal groups and local independent dealers are the primary distributors of high potency marijuana in Utah. These criminal groups control nearly all aspects of the production of most locally produced high potency marijuana including seed purchases and cultivation, as well as the wholesale and retail distribution of the drug to local independent dealers and abusers. Local independent dealers typically distribute high potency marijuana purchased from Caucasian criminal groups. However, some local independent dealers also produce the drug for personal use and retail distribution.

At the wholesale level marijuana is distributed in multihundred-pound quantities from businesses such as storage facilities and warehouses. Wholesale quantities of marijuana in Utah typically are packaged in clear cellophane and duct tape. Retail distributors of marijuana sell the drug from businesses, homes, vehicles, and public areas. Retail quantities of marijuana usually are packaged and distributed in small, resealable plastic bags.

Other Dangerous Drugs

The category of other dangerous drugs includes the stimulant MDMA, the hallucinogen LSD, the depressant GHB and its analogs, and diverted pharmaceuticals such as benzodiazepines, hydrocodones, oxycodones, and Ritalin. MDMA poses the most significant threat to Utah in this

category, as it is increasingly available and abused in the state, particularly in the metropolitan areas of Ogden, Provo, and Salt Lake City. The diversion and abuse of pharmaceuticals represent a significant threat to Utah, and individuals of all ages, ethnicities, and socioeconomic status abuse these drugs.

Raves

Throughout the 1990s high energy, all-night dances known as raves, which feature techno-music and flashing laser lights, increased in popularity among teens and young adults. Raves occur in either permanent dance clubs or temporary “weekend event” sites set up in abandoned warehouses, open fields, empty buildings, or civic centers.

Utah has a unique rave culture with anomalies that are specific to the state. Utah law enforcement intelligence indicates that individuals are using limousines or other rental vehicles to travel to raves because of increased vehicle traffic and overcrowded parking. Another emerging trend in Utah is the use of club drugs—synthetic drugs such as MDMA, LSD, and GHB—at adult, rave-like events called trancemission parties. These parties are held in private residences, and cover charges, which include the first MDMA tablet, can exceed \$200 per attendee. The parties are theme-oriented and normally involve sexual activity. Hosts recruit teenage girls and young adults from dance clubs and other social gatherings. Trancemission parties often feature “sex rooms” equipped with video cameras to record the sexual exploits of the hosts and partygoers.

Source: Utah Substance Abuse and Anti-Violence Coordinating Council; Utah Club Drug Summit; Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office.

MDMA

The increasing availability and abuse of MDMA, particularly among teenagers and young adults, pose a significant and growing threat to Utah. MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine), also known as E, ecstasy, and X, was patented in 1914 in Germany where it was sometimes given to psychiatric patients to assist in psychotherapy, a practice never approved by the American Psychological Association or the Food and Drug Administration. Sometimes called the hug drug, MDMA reportedly helps users to become more “in touch” with others and “opens channels of communication.” However, abuse of the drug can cause psychological problems similar to those associated with methamphetamine and cocaine abuse including confusion, depression, sleeplessness, anxiety, and paranoia. The physical effects can include muscle tension, involuntary teeth clenching, blurred vision, and increased heart rate and blood pressure. MDMA abuse can also cause a marked increase in body temperature leading to muscle breakdown, kidney failure, cardiovascular system failure, stroke, or seizure as reported in some fatal cases. Researchers suggest that MDMA abuse may result in long-term and

sometimes permanent damage to parts of the brain that are critical to thought and memory.

MDMA is one of the most popular drugs at raves. Rave managers often sell water, pacifiers, and glow sticks at rave parties. “Ravers” require water to offset dehydration caused by MDMA, use pacifiers, Popsicle sticks, and large wads of gum to prevent the grinding of teeth—a common side effect of MDMA use—and wave glow sticks in front of their eyes because MDMA stimulates light perception. Other paraphernalia associated with club drug abuse at raves include vaporizing cold ointment, candies that are used to conceal the drugs (by absorbing the drugs or by intermingling drugs with candy), and testing kits (to determine whether the tablets that users purchase actually include MDMA). Some ravers apply vaporizing cold ointment directly to their nostrils to experience a “freeze,” a cold sensation enhanced by the effects of MDMA.

MDMA increasingly is abused and available in the metropolitan areas of Ogden, Provo, and Salt Lake City. Law enforcement officials in Salt Lake City report that MDMA is now considered

the drug of choice among abusers and has replaced marijuana as the first drug of abuse for many young people.

Most of the MDMA available in Utah is produced outside the United States, usually in the Netherlands and Belgium. No MDMA production is known to occur in Utah; however, in 1989 the State Bureau of Investigation and DEA seized an operational MDMA laboratory that was located at a research facility in Salt Lake City. According to the DEA Denver Division, the degree of MDMA production in the region may be greater than what has been observed or the number of seizures indicates. MDMA recipes can be easily obtained from the Internet and published books; laboratories producing MDMA and its analog, MDA (3,4-methylenedioxyamphetamine), have been encountered elsewhere in the United States.

Individual distributors, Caucasian criminal groups, and Israeli nationals are the dominant transporters of MDMA into the state. MDMA generally is transported into Utah from California, Colorado, Nevada, Washington, and Canada via package delivery services, couriers aboard commercial aircraft and, to a lesser extent, in private and rental vehicles. In 2001 federal law enforcement authorities in Provo seized 110,000 MDMA tablets that were transported from the Netherlands to Provo via a package delivery service. In July 2000 during a routine traffic stop on I-15, Utah Highway Patrol officers seized 1,360 MDMA tablets and arrested two individuals who transported the drug in a private vehicle from Seattle to Orem.

Caucasian and Israeli criminal groups and local independent dealers distribute wholesale quantities of MDMA in Utah. Wholesale distributors sell MDMA to Caucasian teenagers and college students who typically distribute retail quantities of the drug. In May 2001 law enforcement officers in Davis County seized 91 tablets of MDMA and arrested a local Caucasian man who attempted to sell the drug to an undercover federal agent. The arrest closed an 8-month investigation, during which DEA determined that the man was responsible for approximately 80 percent of the MDMA distributed in Utah. The

defendant pleaded guilty and was sentenced to more than 5 years in federal prison. According to DEA, in FY2002 MDMA sold for \$7,000 per 500 dosage units and \$150,000 per 25,000 dosage units. MDMA usually is distributed to individuals at raves, nightclubs, and other parties, where it sells for \$20 to \$30 per dose.

Operation Red Tide: International MDMA Syndicate Dismantled

An 18-month global investigation ending in November 2000 named Operation Red Tide and involving federal law enforcement authorities including the DEA, FBI, IRS, U.S. Customs Service, and state and local authorities resulted in the seizure of 3,127 pounds of MDMA and the arrests of 22 individuals in six U.S. cities and four European countries. The operation involved a multiethnic, transnational criminal organization that transported and distributed MDMA throughout the United States. The MDMA was transported via commercial aircraft from England, France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands to various cities including Salt Lake City, Anchorage, Phoenix, Los Angeles, Boston, and Las Vegas. In these cities MDMA was sold to retail distributors and abusers.

Source: DEA.

Sets

In Utah some distributors of club drugs, specifically MDMA, have created sets—loosely organized criminal groups. These sets usually consist of three levels. The third level sets typically are composed of affluent individuals who purchase 1,000 or more tablets per week for distribution and personal use. These sets retain significant quantities of the drug to host trancemission parties; however, they sell some of the drug to second level sets composed of individuals who participate in the club or rave scene. Most of the MDMA purchased by second level sets is distributed to first level sets, which include teenagers and college students; however, small quantities of the drug also are retained for personal use.

Source: Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office.

LSD

The distribution and abuse of LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) pose a minimal threat to Utah. LSD, also known as acid, boomers, and yellow sunshine, is a hallucinogen that induces abnormalities in sensory perceptions. The effects of LSD are unpredictable depending upon the amount taken, the environment in which it is abused, and the abuser's personality, mood, and expectations. Abusers may feel the effects for up to 12 hours. The physical effects include dilated pupils, elevated body temperature, increased heart rate and blood pressure, sweating, loss of appetite, nausea, numbness, weakness, insomnia, dry mouth, and tremors. Two long-term disorders associated with LSD use are persistent psychosis and hallucinogen persisting perception disorder (flashbacks). LSD typically is taken orally.

LSD is available in powder and liquid forms, in tablets or capsules, on pieces of blotter paper that absorb the drug, and on small candies. It is available primarily at raves, bars, and nightclubs in large cities and college towns in Utah. Most abusers are high school and college age individuals. Some abusers hide liquid LSD in breath mint vials or eyedrop bottles. Law enforcement agencies in several jurisdictions report that LSD also is applied to cookies, candies, and breakfast cereal. According to the DEA Denver Division, LSD blotters and tablets are the most common forms available. In Salt Lake City in FY2000, wholesale quantities of LSD sold for \$250 per

100 dosage units, and retail quantities sold for \$5 per dosage unit, according to DEA.

Most LSD distributed in Utah is produced in California and Oregon and typically is transported into the state via package delivery services as well as in private and rental vehicles. Caucasian criminal groups and local independent dealers and, to a lesser extent, college and high school age individuals are the primary distributors of LSD in Utah. Law enforcement respondents to the National Drug Threat Survey 2001 in Ogden, Orem, and Salt Lake City reported that Caucasian local independent dealers are the primary wholesale and retail distributors of LSD.

Dosing

During raves in the Rocky Mountain region, if ravers suspect that an individual is an undercover law enforcement officer, they may "dose" that individual—approach from behind and spray the person with water containing liquid drugs, primarily LSD, that are easily absorbed through the skin. Ravers will occasionally dose themselves and each other at the end of a rave as an ovation to the departing disc jockey. Retail distributors of LSD also use an eyedropper to place the drug directly on the tongue of the purchaser in the region.

Source: Colorado Regional Club Drug Seminar 2001.

GHB and Analogs

The threat to Utah from GHB (gamma-hydroxybutyrate) and its analogs is relatively low. GHB is a depressant that occurs naturally in the body and is necessary for full functioning of the brain and central nervous system. GHB analogs (GBL, BD, GHV, and GVL) are drugs that possess chemical structures that closely resemble GHB. GHB and its analogs are also known as liquid

MDMA, scoop, grievous bodily harm, and Georgia home boy. Overdoses can occur quickly; some signs include drowsiness, nausea, vomiting, loss of consciousness, impaired breathing and, ultimately, death. Abusers also can experience insomnia, anxiety, tremors, and sweating. Using the drug simultaneously with methamphetamine increases the risk of seizure. GHB and its analogs are eliminated from

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the body quickly, making it difficult for treatment providers to detect. The drug increasingly is involved in poisonings, overdoses, drug-facilitated sexual assaults, and fatalities nationwide.

GHB and its analogs are available in Utah primarily at colleges and universities, social venues such as bars, nightclubs, raves, strip clubs and, to a lesser extent, some private transmission parties. Young adults, usually Caucasian, are the principal producers, distributors, and abusers of the drug. Recipes and do-it-yourself kits for GHB production are available on several Internet sites. GHB is produced in Utah. A recent trend in GHB production involves producing the analog BD (1,4-butanediol), which metabolizes into GHB in

the body after ingestion. In FY2001 GHB sold for \$30 per dosage unit in the Salt Lake City area, according to DEA.

GHB-Facilitated Sexual Assault

In April 2000 a 23-year-old Orem man was sentenced to 40 days in jail after he pleaded guilty to sexually assaulting a 19-year-old woman who had ingested a drink containing GHB. According to local law enforcement officials, the woman was led to believe that consuming GHB would allow her to enjoy the effects of being drunk without consuming alcohol.

Source: Salt Lake City Police Department Narcotics Unit.

Diverted Pharmaceuticals

The abuse of diverted pharmaceuticals poses a significant and growing threat to Utah. The most commonly diverted pharmaceuticals in Utah are benzodiazepines, hydrocodones, oxycodones, and Ritalin. Diverted pharmaceuticals are widely abused throughout Utah. However, abuse of these drugs may be underreported due to their general social acceptance. The abuse of diverted pharmaceuticals does not appear to be limited to any particular ethnic, age, gender, or socioeconomic group in the state.

Forged and fraudulent prescriptions remain the most common diversion methods used throughout the state. Physicians and healthcare professionals directly divert prescription medications for themselves and for others by overprescribing or using other prescription scams. Pharmaceuticals are also frequently stolen from medical facilities, pharmacies, wholesalers, and warehouses, often by the employees of these establishments. According to the Iron/Garfield Counties Task Force, Ritalin (methylphenidate) is distributed by some of the parents of school age children who have a prescription for the drug. Diverted pharmaceuticals typically sell for \$15 or less per tablet. Benzodiazepines (Xanax, Librium,

OxyContin Abuse

The diversion and abuse of OxyContin, a brand name for the narcotic painkiller oxycodone, have emerged as a significant and growing drug threat to many rural communities in Utah. Law enforcement agencies in Carbon, Emery, and Kane Counties report that OxyContin abuse has emerged as a growing problem in those counties. OxyContin is formulated to be taken orally and to have controlled-release effects; however, some abusers chew the tablets to destroy the controlled-release coating; others crush them and snort the powder or dissolve the powder in water and inject the solution. According to the Utah Department of Occupational and Professional Licensing, in 2001 there were six OxyContin overdose deaths statewide. OxyContin is acquired by abusers via prescription fraud or through street distributors, but some addicted abusers in other areas of the country have resorted to robbing pharmacies, often at gunpoint, to procure it.

Valium) sell for \$2 to \$5 per tablet, hydrocodones (Lorcet, Lortab, Vicodin) for \$2 to \$15 per tablet, and oxycodones (OxyContin, Percocet, Percodan, Tylox) for \$2 to \$15 per tablet.

Outlook

Methamphetamine likely will remain the most serious drug threat to Utah. The abuse of the drug will continue to remain high throughout the state, increasingly nominally. Violence associated with distribution and abuse of methamphetamine will remain relatively high in Utah and will likely increase as rival distributors compete for turf. Local methamphetamine producers will continue to use violence to protect their laboratories. In addition, methamphetamine producers will continue to illegally procure essential and precursor chemicals despite stringent state and federal regulations and reporting requirements. Similarly, as availability of red phosphorus decreases, the use of hypophosphorous acid in the production of methamphetamine may increase throughout Utah. Mexican criminal groups will remain the dominant transporters and wholesale and midlevel distributors of the drug in the state, while Mexican and Caucasian local independent dealers continue to be the primary retail distributors of methamphetamine in Utah.

Heroin will continue to be a drug threat to Utah. Mexican black tar heroin and brown powdered heroin will remain the most prevalent types available throughout the state. Both types of heroin will be increasingly available in ounce and multiounce quantities in the metropolitan areas of the state, primarily Salt Lake City. Mexican criminal groups will remain the predominant transporters and midlevel distributors of the drug across the state, while street gangs will continue to dominate the retail distribution of the drug in the metropolitan areas of Utah.

Cocaine will remain a relatively significant drug threat to Utah. The abuse of cocaine likely will continue to decrease as abusers continue to switch to methamphetamine. Deaths in which

cocaine is a factor also may decrease with the reduced abuse of the drug. The drug will remain readily available in the metropolitan areas of Utah. Retail distributors, primarily street gangs, and local abusers will continue to commit violent crimes in Utah. Mexican criminal groups will continue to dominate the transportation and wholesale distribution of powdered cocaine in the state. Street gangs will remain the primary retail distributors of powdered and crack cocaine throughout the state, primarily in its metropolitan areas. Local independent dealers also will continue to distribute retail quantities of powdered cocaine in Utah.

Marijuana will remain a drug threat to Utah. Marijuana will continue to be the most widely abused and available illicit drug in the state. The availability of domestic and Canada-produced high potency marijuana will increase to meet demand for the drug in some areas of the state, primarily Salt Lake City, Ogden, and Provo. Similarly, indoor grows that produce high potency marijuana will increasingly be encountered and seized throughout Utah, generally in metropolitan areas. Caucasian criminal groups and local independent dealers will remain the primary producers, transporters, and distributors of high potency marijuana in Utah, while Mexican criminal groups will continue to dominate the transportation and distribution of marijuana produced in Mexico and California.

MDMA will become a more serious drug threat to Utah, as law enforcement authorities and healthcare providers indicate that it is becoming a “gateway” drug—a drug that may lead individuals to the abuse of other illicit drugs—among youth in the state. The drug will become increasingly “mainstreamed” (perceived as safe or innocuous).

The median age of Utah's population (26) coupled with the demographic of the typical MDMA abuser also may contribute to the increased abuse of the drug in the state. GHB and LSD will remain low drug threats to Utah due to the limited abuse of the drugs. The drugs' availability will continue to be limited to some colleges and universities, nightclubs, and raves. Some distributors of GHB may begin to produce the drug in the state in order to increase their revenues.

Diverted pharmaceuticals will remain a significant abuse problem in Utah. The ready availability of pharmaceuticals over the Internet will likely lead to increased availability in the state as abusers seek alternative methods of acquiring these drugs. Increased abuse of pharmaceuticals will likely lead to increased violence, including pharmacy robberies and home invasions, as abusers and distributors attempt to procure drugs.

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