



U.S. Department of Justice  
National Drug Intelligence Center



# North Texas High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area



## Drug Market Analysis 2011

## **Source Summary Statement**

The National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) has high confidence in this drug market analysis as it is based on multiple sources of information that have proved highly reliable in prior NDIC, law enforcement, and intelligence community reporting. Quantitative data, including seizure, eradication, and arrest statistics, were drawn from data sets maintained by federal, state, or local government agencies. Discussions of the prevalence and consequences of drug abuse are based on published reports from U.S. Government agencies and interviews with public health officials deemed reliable because of their expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of drug abuse. Trends and patterns related to drug production, trafficking, and abuse were identified through detailed analysis of coordinated counterdrug agency reporting and information. NDIC intelligence analysts and field intelligence officers obtained this information through numerous interviews with law enforcement and public health officials (federal, state, and local) in whom NDIC has a high level of confidence based on previous contact and reporting, their recognized expertise, and their professional standing and reputation within the U.S. counterdrug community. This report was reviewed and corroborated by law enforcement officials who have jurisdiction in the North Texas High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area and possess an expert knowledge of its drug situation.



**U.S. Department of Justice  
National Drug Intelligence Center**



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## **Drug Market Analysis 2011**

This assessment is an outgrowth of a partnership between the NDIC and HIDTA Program for preparation of annual assessments depicting drug trafficking trends and developments in HIDTA Program areas. The report has been coordinated with the HIDTA, is limited in scope to HIDTA jurisdictional boundaries, and draws upon a wide variety of sources within those boundaries.



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## Executive Summary

The most significant drug trafficking-related issues that confront law enforcement and public health officials in the North Texas High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) region remained relatively unchanged in 2010. Methamphetamine continues as the primary drug threat to the region due to its persistent availability and abuse. The abuse of controlled prescription drugs (CPDs), pervasive availability of marijuana, and criminal activities of Mexican drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) also pose considerable threats to the region. Despite the consistency of the region's drug threat, a number of drug-related trends emerged during the past year.

Key issues identified in the North Texas HIDTA region include the following:

- The impact of methamphetamine, a leading drug threat to the North Texas HIDTA region, is deepening and manifesting itself in a growing number of methamphetamine laboratory seizures and overdose deaths, particularly in Oklahoma.
- The ready availability of CPDs and the growing demand for these drugs in the North Texas HIDTA region are resulting in a rising number of overdose deaths attributed to their use.
- A growing demand for high-potency marijuana and the high prices the drug commands are fueling increased indoor grow operations by independent criminal groups.
- Mexican DTOs—the dominant organizational drug threat to the North Texas HIDTA region—are escalating their criminal activities, including weapons smuggling to Mexico, particularly in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

## Key Issues<sup>a</sup>

**The impact of methamphetamine, a leading drug threat to the North Texas HIDTA region, is deepening and manifesting itself in a growing number of methamphetamine laboratory seizures and overdose deaths, particularly in Oklahoma.**

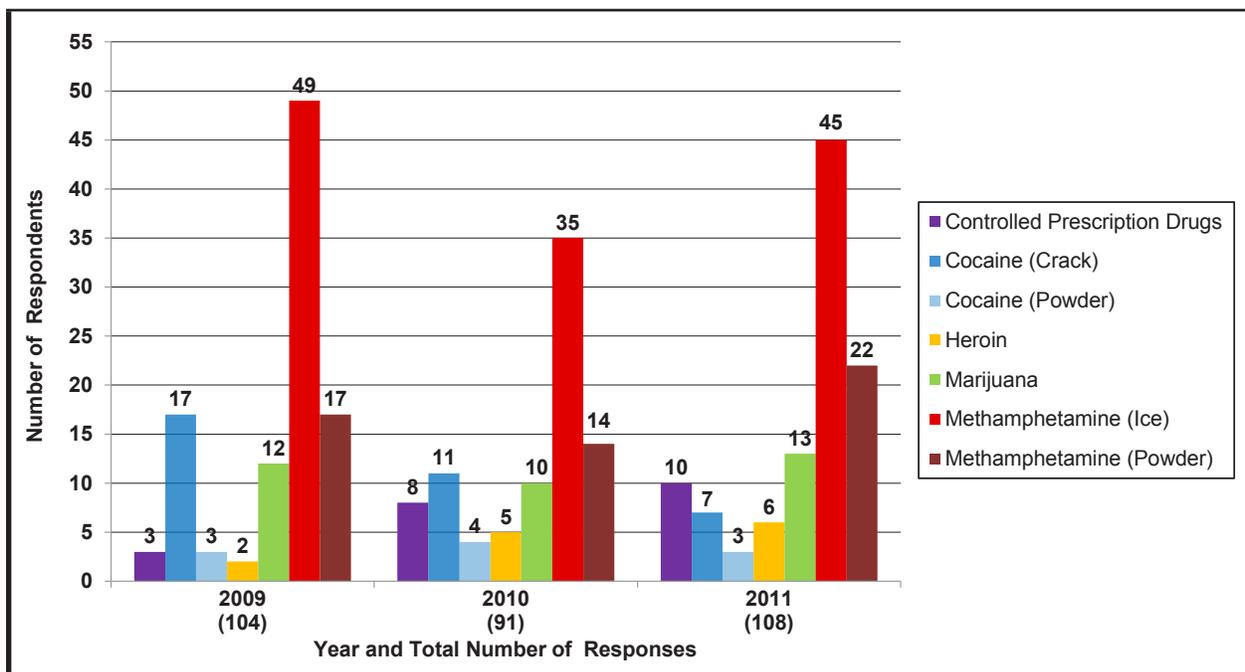
High and increasing levels of methamphetamine availability are a significant concern to law enforcement officials in the North Texas HIDTA region.<sup>1</sup> Mexican ice methamphetamine is the predominant form of the drug available in the region, but an increase in local methamphetamine production, mainly in northeastern Oklahoma, is intensifying the overall threat posed by the drug.<sup>2</sup>

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a. For a general overview of the drug threat in the North Texas HIDTA region, see [Appendix A](#).

According to National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) National Drug Threat Survey (NDTS)<sup>b</sup> 2011 data, 67 of the 108 law enforcement agency respondents in the North Texas HIDTA region identified methamphetamine as the greatest drug threat to the region. A greater number of these respondents (22) identified powder methamphetamine (typically from local production in the Oklahoma areas of the HIDTA) as their greatest drug threat than did those in each of the previous 2 years.<sup>3</sup> (See Figure 1.) The majority of the HIDTA region’s 108 respondents also report high or moderate levels of availability in their jurisdictions, not only for ice methamphetamine (93 respondents) but also for powder methamphetamine (73 respondents).<sup>4</sup> (See Figure 2 on page 3.) Methamphetamine price data generally support law enforcement assertions of high availability, with a general overall trend of stable wholesale prices in the HIDTA region since the end of 2008.<sup>5</sup> (See Table 1 on page 3.) As further evidence of high and stable methamphetamine availability, an October 2009 Project Coronado<sup>c</sup> takedown of methamphetamine cells associated with La Familia Michoacana (La Familia) in the North Texas HIDTA region had no long-term impact on the availability and wholesale pricing of methamphetamine in the HIDTA region.<sup>6</sup>

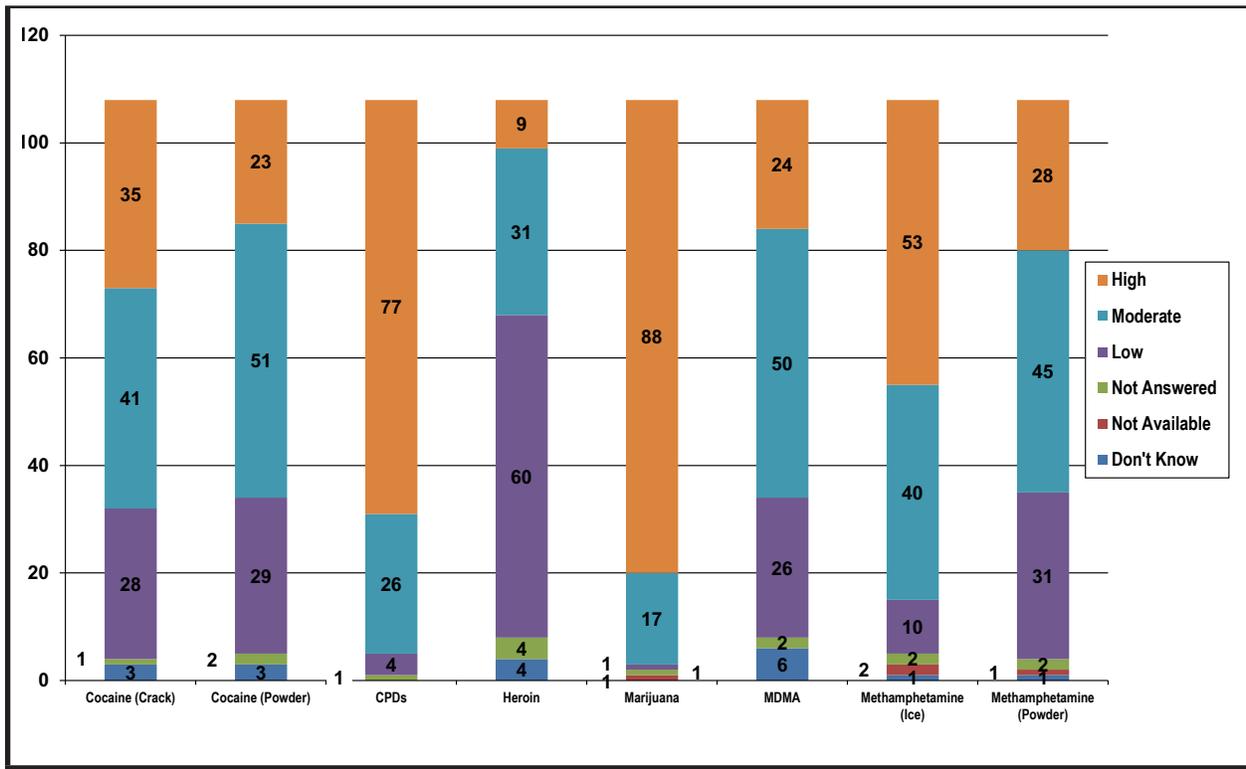
**Figure 1. Greatest Drug Threat in the North Texas HIDTA Region, by Number of NDTS Respondents, 2009–2011**



Source: National Drug Threat Surveys, 2009–2011.

- b. The NDTS is conducted annually by NDIC to solicit information from a representative sample of state and local law enforcement agencies. NDIC uses this information to produce national, regional, and state estimates of various aspects of drug trafficking activities. NDTS data reflect agencies’ perceptions based on their analysis of criminal activities that occurred within their jurisdictions during the past year. NDTS 2011 data cited in this report are raw, unweighted responses from federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies solicited through either NDIC or the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) HIDTA program as of February 24, 2011.
- c. In October 2009, a law enforcement effort led by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) resulted in the arrests of more than 300 individuals in 19 states as part of Project Coronado, a multijurisdictional investigation that targeted methamphetamine and cocaine trafficking cells associated with La Familia Michoacana (La Familia). Arrests in conjunction with Project Coronado in the North Texas HIDTA region occurred in the Dallas-Fort Worth (84) and Tulsa (8) areas.

**Figure 2. Drug Availability in the North Texas HIDTA Region, by Number of NDTs Respondents, 2011**



Source: National Drug Threat Survey, 2011.

**Table 1. Methamphetamine Wholesale Prices, Year-End 2008, Year-End 2009, and Midyear 2010**

State	City	Quantity	Methamphetamine Type	Wholesale Price in Dollars					
				Year-End 2008		Year-End 2009		Midyear 2010	
				Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Oklahoma	Oklahoma City	1 kilogram	Mexican Ice	16,000	20,000	-	-	-	-
		1 pound	Mexican Ice	9,000	12,000	9,000	12,000	9,000	12,000
		1 kilogram	Mexican Powder	-	-	16,000	22,000	16,000	22,000
	Tulsa	1 pound	Mexican Ice	8,500	9,000	8,500	9,000	8,500	11,000
Texas	Dallas	1 kilogram	Mexican Ice	40,000	50,000	32,000	36,000	32,000	36,000
		1 pound	Mexican Ice	11,000	27,000	16,500	19,000	16,000	19,000
		1 kilogram	Mexican Ice and Powder	-	-	32,000	38,000	33,000	35,000
		1 pound	Mexican Ice and Powder	-	-	16,000	19,000	22,000	-

Source: National Illicit Drug Prices, Year-End 2008; National Illicit Drug Prices, Year-End 2009 and Midyear 2010.

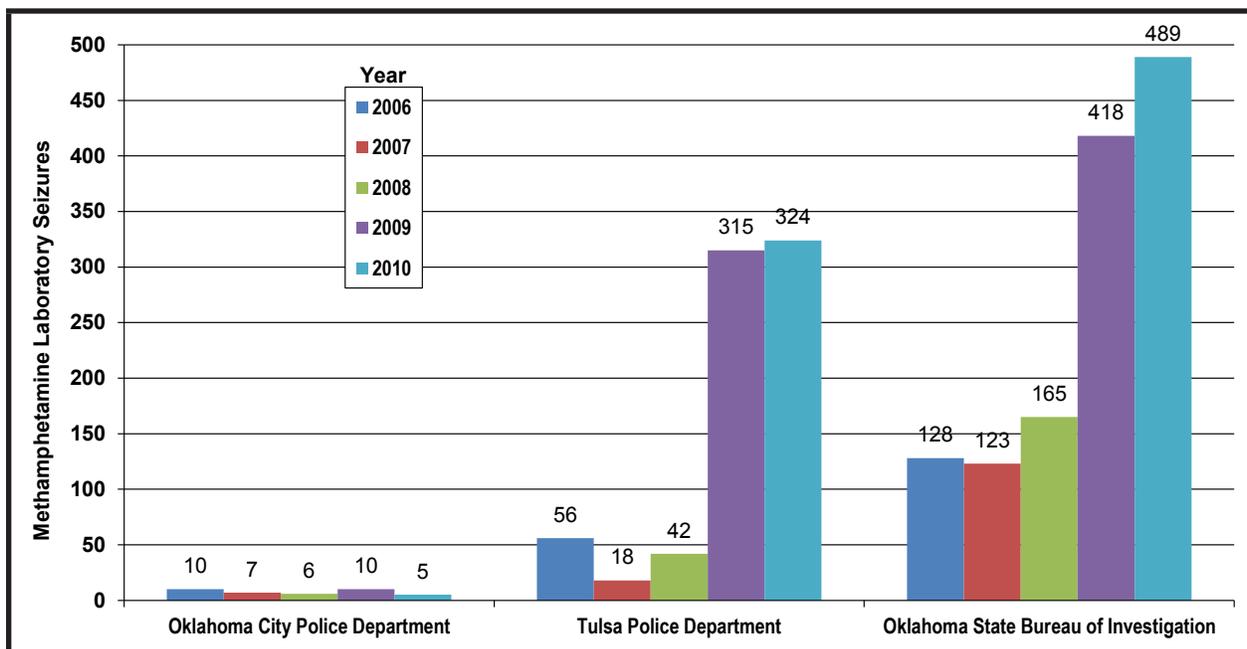
Note: A hyphen within a table cell indicates that pricing data were not provided.

=Decrease in Price from Previous Period

=Increase in Price from Previous Period

Increased local methamphetamine production in the North Texas HIDTA region is fueling an upward surge in methamphetamine laboratory seizures,<sup>d</sup> primarily in northeastern Oklahoma.<sup>7</sup> In 2010, law enforcement officers throughout Oklahoma seized 818 methamphetamine laboratories (see Figure 3)—a 453 percent increase over the 148 methamphetamine laboratories seized in 2007, the year with the lowest reported number of laboratory seizures since the enactment of the April 2004 state legislation that restricted sales of pseudoephedrine, a methamphetamine precursor.<sup>8</sup> (See text box on page 5.) Methamphetamine producers, mainly local Caucasian independent dealers, operate small-scale laboratories,<sup>9</sup> most often employing the simple but highly volatile “one-pot” or “shake-and-bake” production method.<sup>e</sup> In fact, of the 818 laboratories seized in Oklahoma in 2010, approximately 99 percent were one-pot laboratories.<sup>10</sup> These laboratories are hazardous, both for the chemicals that are used, which can prove harmful to persons coming in contact with them, and for the fires that can result from these operations.<sup>11</sup> In 2010, the Tulsa City Fire Department responded to an increasing number of methamphetamine-related fires (21) compared with the number of related fires in 2009 (16).<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 3. Methamphetamine Laboratory Seizures in Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Other Oklahoma Areas, by Agency, 2006–2010**



Source: Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics.

d. Methamphetamine laboratory seizures, as reported by the OBN, include all incidents of laboratory seizures, chemical/glassware/equipment seizures, and dumpsite seizures as related to the production of methamphetamine. The breakdown of these seizure incident types is not available.

e. A one-pot cook is a variation of the lithium ammonia method of production—also commonly referred to as the Nazi method. Instead of producing methamphetamine through a series of sequential steps—normally used in the Nazi method—the one-pot method is concluded in a single reaction vessel (typically a 2-liter plastic soda bottle), and all ingredients are mixed together at the outset. The mixture is left to react, naturally producing the necessary ammonia, which then reacts with the lithium metal to convert the pseudoephedrine into methamphetamine. Like all clandestine methamphetamine production operations, the one-pot method is dangerous because the reactions are volatile and difficult to control.

### **Producers Circumvent Oklahoma Methamphetamine Legislation, but Offender Registry Will Track Violators**

Oklahoma legislation enacted in April 2004 restricted the sale of and access to products containing pseudoephedrine and ephedrine and allowed judges to deny bond to chronic methamphetamine offenders, a measure aimed at protecting the public and law enforcement community.<sup>13</sup> As a result of this measure, local methamphetamine laboratory seizures decreased from 812 in 2004 to 148 in 2007. However, with the emergence of the one-pot method in 2008, producers were able to produce methamphetamine using minimal amounts of the restricted precursor chemical. Laboratory seizures, specifically in northeastern Oklahoma, began an upward surge, increasing from 213 seizures in 2008 to 818 seizures in 2010.<sup>14</sup>

To combat this rise in local methamphetamine production, Oklahoma House Bill 3380 created the nation's first Meth Offender Registry—a database of methamphetamine offenders that is tied directly to the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics (OBN) Pseudoephedrine Tracking System. Effective November 1, 2010, the law prohibits anyone with a methamphetamine conviction from purchasing or possessing pseudoephedrine tablets, the primary ingredient used to produce methamphetamine. Pharmacies and medical professionals can access the registry online through the OBN Prescription Monitoring Portal to determine whether a customer can lawfully obtain pseudoephedrine. In addition, any person who assists another individual who is subject to the registry in purchasing the restricted products is in violation of the law.<sup>15</sup> At this time, the overall impact and effectiveness of the Meth Offender Registry has yet to be determined.

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Source: Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics.

Along with the increase in methamphetamine production in Oklahoma, a growing number of methamphetamine-related deaths are occurring in the state.<sup>16</sup> OBN reports that at least 89 deaths in Oklahoma were attributed to methamphetamine overdoses in 2010—an almost 230 percent increase from the 27 methamphetamine-related deaths in 2008 and a 46 percent increase from the 61 such deaths in 2009.<sup>17</sup> Of the 89 methamphetamine overdose deaths in 2010, 47 were recorded in the six Oklahoma counties of the North Texas HIDTA, primarily in Oklahoma County (19 deaths) and Tulsa County (20 deaths).<sup>18</sup> Notably, the number of methamphetamine-related deaths in Oklahoma in 2010 surpassed the previous high number of deaths (84) attributed to methamphetamine overdoses in 2004.<sup>19</sup>

### **The ready availability of CPDs and the growing demand for these drugs in the North Texas HIDTA region are resulting in a rising number of overdose deaths attributed to their use.**

CPD abuse in the North Texas HIDTA region is a growing threat fueled by the ready availability of these drugs. According to NDTs 2011 data, 103 of 108 law enforcement agency respondents in the North Texas HIDTA region indicate that CPD availability is high (77 respondents) or moderate (26 respondents) in their jurisdictions.<sup>20</sup> (See Figure 2 on page 3.) Law enforcement reporting coincides with NDTs 2011 data regarding CPD availability and indicates that increasing amounts of CPDs are being sold at the street level, often in conjunction with illicit drug distribution.<sup>21</sup> For example, an OBN-initiated investigation in November 2010 targeted a large drug distribution network that had been supplying marijuana, powder and crack cocaine, MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine, also known as ecstasy), and CPDs to other distributors and abusers throughout the Oklahoma City area.<sup>22</sup> The investigation led to a February

2011 operation that resulted in the arrests of multiple defendants, including many who were gang members in Oklahoma City.<sup>23</sup> Typically, CPDs in the region are acquired by distributors and abusers through conventional diversion methods, such as doctor-shopping, prescription fraud, theft, unscrupulous physicians, and “script” rings.<sup>24</sup> (See text box.) Hydrocodone, alprazolam, and promethazine with codeine are the most commonly diverted CPDs in the Dallas area. Other CPDs such as carisoprodol, diazepam, Adderall, methadone, and oxycodone are also commonly diverted and abused.<sup>25</sup> In the Oklahoma counties of the North Texas HIDTA, oxycodone and hydrocodone products are the most abused CPDs and are associated with more overdose deaths than any other diverted or illicit drug.<sup>26</sup> Also in Oklahoma, gangs commonly divert prescription cough syrup that contains promethazine and codeine, which is often mixed with carbonated soda, juice, or sports drinks in a combination referred to as purple drank.<sup>27</sup>

### Script Rings Operate in the North Texas HIDTA Region

Law enforcement officers report that some independent criminal groups in the North Texas HIDTA region operate script rings. These rings have facilitators, or “runners,” who recruit teams of individuals, often from homeless shelters, to take illegally obtained prescriptions to area pharmacies to be filled.<sup>28</sup> In Dallas, the team members are generally given some food and paid \$40 to perform the task.<sup>29</sup> In southwestern Oklahoma, the runners travel to other Oklahoma locations or cities in northeastern Texas to fill the prescriptions and then are paid when the pills are delivered to the ring’s leadership.<sup>30</sup>

Source: Dallas Police Department, Narcotics Division; Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics, Diversion Unit.

Drug overdose deaths, including deaths related to CPDs, are increasing in the North Texas HIDTA region. The relative ease of users acquiring and abusing CPDs in the region has contributed significantly to this growing problem, particularly in Oklahoma.<sup>31</sup> In Oklahoma, drug-related overdose deaths involving either illicit drugs or CPDs increased by more than 91 percent over a 10-year period, from 344 deaths in 2001 to 659 deaths in 2010.<sup>f</sup> Of the 659 drug overdose deaths in 2010, 362 (or 55% of the statewide total) occurred in Oklahoma’s six North Texas HIDTA counties, with Oklahoma and Tulsa Counties reporting 292 of those overdose deaths.<sup>32</sup> (See Table 2 on page 7.) In 2010 in Oklahoma, 534 (or 81%) of drug overdose deaths involved CPDs,<sup>33</sup> and in the state’s six HIDTA counties, state medical examiner data reveal that CPDs were involved in more overdose deaths than were illicit drugs.<sup>34</sup> (See Table 3 on page 7.)

Abuse of CPDs has also contributed to a significant number of nonfatal overdoses. Beginning November 1, 2010, OBN began tracking nonfatal drug overdoses as reported in data for emergency room visits in hospitals throughout Oklahoma.<sup>35</sup> As of March 25, 2011, 1,239 nonfatal drug overdose incidents had been reported in the state, and of those incidents, 703 (or 57%) occurred in the six HIDTA counties.<sup>36</sup> In fact, three of the six HIDTA counties were the top-ranked counties in Oklahoma for nonfatal drug overdose incidents: Oklahoma (409), Tulsa (151), and Cleveland (102) Counties.<sup>37</sup>

f. OBN reports that, as a result of a backlog of medical examiner reports, the 2010 drug overdose deaths were incomplete as of April 1, 2011, and, therefore, may be underreported at this time.

**Table 2. Drug Overdose Deaths, Oklahoma North Texas HIDTA Counties and Statewide, 2009–2010**

Year	North Texas HIDTA County (Oklahoma)						Total for North Texas HIDTA Counties in Oklahoma	Percent of State Total	Oklahoma State Total
	Cleveland	Comanche	Muskogee	Oklahoma	Sequoyah	Tulsa			
2010	35	10	15	163	10	129	362	55%	659
2009	32	11	14	105	10	172	344	53%	644

Source: Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics.

**Table 3. Top Eight Abused Illicit and Controlled Prescription Drugs Involved in Drug Overdose Deaths in Oklahoma North Texas HIDTA Counties and Statewide, 2010\***

Drug Type	North Texas HIDTA County (Oklahoma)						Total for North Texas HIDTA Counties in Oklahoma	Percent of State Total	Oklahoma State Total
	Cleveland	Comanche	Muskogee	Oklahoma	Sequoyah	Tulsa			
<b>Illicit Drugs</b>									
Cocaine	2	2	0	18	0	10	32	76%	42
Methamphetamine	1	3	2	19	2	20	47	53%	89
<b>Controlled Prescription Drugs</b>									
Alprazolam	4	0	3	26	1	22	56	44%	128
Fentanyl	2	1	0	9	0	12	24	48%	50
Hydrocodone	13	0	4	27	1	29	74	51%	145
Methadone	4	1	1	20	2	14	42	47%	90
Morphine	3	1	1	17	2	19	43	57%	76
Oxycodone	10	2	4	30	4	34	84	65%	129

Source: Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics.

\*OBN notes that the majority of all drug overdose deaths are due to a combination “cocktail” of drugs rather than just one specific drug. This table reflects the total number of deaths each drug was involved in, even though another drug may have been the primary cause of death.

**A growing demand for high-potency marijuana and the high prices the drug commands are fueling increased indoor grow operations by independent criminal groups.**

Compared with the prolific availability and abuse of commercial-grade Mexican marijuana, high-potency marijuana poses a lower threat to the North Texas HIDTA region, but that threat is rising.<sup>38</sup> Law enforcement reporting from recent interviews indicates that the number of indoor hydroponic grow operations are increasing throughout the region.<sup>39</sup> Criminal groups involved in these indoor grow operations are often able to cultivate, produce, and distribute multihundred-pound quantities of high-potency marijuana.<sup>40</sup> Hydroponic indoor grow operators in the HIDTA region are most frequently Caucasian.<sup>41</sup>

High-potency marijuana is in high demand in the North Texas HIDTA region and, as a result, draws higher profits for producers and distributors than less potent commercial-grade marijuana.<sup>42</sup> In fact, the average price in 2010 for hydroponic marijuana from indoor grows in the HIDTA region was \$8,580 per kilogram compared with \$1,265 per kilogram for commercial-grade marijuana.<sup>43</sup> Most indoor grow operations in the HIDTA region are set up in single or multiple residences or apartments that are purchased or leased by traffickers with the primary intention of growing and harvesting hydroponic plants for distribution.<sup>44</sup> Law enforcement reporting from recent interviews indicates that the number of plants grown at indoor sites in the North Texas HIDTA region usually ranges from 80 to 200 plants,<sup>45</sup> but some grow operations in 2010 had significantly more plants.<sup>46</sup> For example, in December 2010, at White River Lake in Crosby County (TX) (which adjoins the eastern border of Lubbock County), police discovered an active indoor hydroponic grow operation with approximately 527 cannabis plants in various stages of cultivation.<sup>47</sup>

**Mexican DTOs—the dominant organizational drug threat to the North Texas HIDTA region—are escalating their criminal activities, including weapons smuggling to Mexico, particularly in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.<sup>48</sup>**

Mexican DTOs, which dominate drug trafficking throughout the North Texas HIDTA region, are exploiting the region, particularly the Dallas-Fort Worth area, to expand and further imbed their networks of drug trafficking cells and drug-related criminal operations.<sup>49</sup> These DTOs use the Dallas-Fort Worth area as a major command-and-control center and key drug distribution hub, situating family members and longtime associates in the area to blend into the growing Hispanic population base (particularly in Fort Worth and Tarrant County) and to facilitate drug trafficking operations.<sup>50</sup> Some of these DTOs have direct links to major drug cartels in Mexico.<sup>51</sup> (See text box on page 9.)

Mexican DTOs are increasing their presence in the North Texas HIDTA region.<sup>52</sup> Law enforcement reporting from recent interviews indicates that Mexican DTOs are setting up more drug trafficking cells in the Dallas area, often with multiple cells working for the same organization.<sup>53</sup> Evidence of this increase in drug trafficking cells are North Texas HIDTA data that identify a growing number of DTOs and money laundering organizations (MLOs) in the region. Over a 3-year period, the number of identified DTOs/MLOs increased from 70 in 2008 to 90 in 2010.<sup>54</sup> Thirty-five of the DTOs/MLOs identified in 2010 had an international scope of operations—an increase from the 30 international DTOs/MLOs identified in 2009.<sup>55</sup> (See Table 4 on page 9.)

### Leader of Mexican DTO Linked to La Familia Cartel Sentenced for Role in Trafficking Operation

In March 2011, the leader of one of the methamphetamine trafficking organizations targeted under Project Coronado (October 2009) in the Dallas area was sentenced to 20 years in federal prison. The organization was part of a network of methamphetamine distributors that routinely received large amounts of methamphetamine from and, in some instances, worked on behalf of the La Familia Cartel. This particular organization began receiving multikilogram shipments of methamphetamine from La Familia sources in Michoacán in 2006. The Dallas-based organization maintained custody and control of the drugs at stash locations throughout Dallas and delivered multipound quantities of the drug to numerous customers. Members of the organization collected the drug proceeds and then transported bulk cash in vehicle gas tanks or hidden compartments back to supply sources in Mexico.

Source: Drug Enforcement Administration.

**Table 4. Drug Trafficking and Money Laundering Organizations Operating in  
the North Texas HIDTA Region, 2010**

Scope of Organization	Number of Organizations			Ethnicity/ Nationality of Organizations	Size of Organizations	Drugs Trafficked	Counties/ Areas of Operation	Drug Source Areas	Drug Destinations
	Drug	Money Laundering	Total						
<b>International</b>	32	3	<b>35</b>	African American Albanian Caucasian Hispanic Mexican Mexican American Native American	5 to 30 members	Cocaine Heroin Marijuana MDMA Methamphetamine	<b>Oklahoma</b> Oklahoma Tulsa <b>Texas</b> Collin Dallas North Texas Tarrant	<b>Canada</b> <b>Colombia</b> <b>Mexico</b> (including Micho- acán de Ocampo) <b>United States</b> (Texas)	<b>Oklahoma</b> Tulsa <b>Texas</b> Dallas <b>Unknown</b> <b>destinations</b>
<b>Multistate</b>	19	3	<b>22</b>	African American Caucasian Hispanic Mexican American	5 to 30 members	Cocaine Crack Cocaine Marijuana MDMA Methamphetamine	<b>Oklahoma</b> Cleveland Oklahoma Tulsa <b>Texas</b> Dallas Denton Rusk Smith	<b>Mexico</b> (including Chihuahua) <b>United States</b> (California, Florida, Oklahoma, Texas, Washington)	<b>Oklahoma</b> Tulsa <b>Texas</b> Dallas <b>Unknown</b> <b>destinations</b>
<b>Local</b>	32	0	<b>32</b>	African American Caucasian Hispanic Mexican American Native American	5 to 30 members	Cocaine Codeine Crack Cocaine Heroin LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) Marijuana Methamphetamine	<b>Oklahoma</b> Cleveland Oklahoma <b>Texas</b> Dallas Denton Gregg Smith	<b>Mexico</b> (including Hidalgo) <b>United States</b> (Louisiana, Okla- homa, Texas)	<b>Texas</b> Dallas Gregg Smith <b>Unknown</b> <b>destinations</b>

Source: North Texas High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area.

Mexican DTOs in the North Texas HIDTA region are also expanding their operations by increasingly exploiting gangs to perform drug trafficking-related crimes, often involving violence. Some of these gangs are transnational in nature and have a number of foreign-born members who engage in criminal activity on both sides of the U.S.–Mexico border.<sup>56</sup> DTOs often exploit gang members with familial ties or intimidate other gang members to commit drug trafficking-related criminal activities.<sup>57</sup> Gangs in the North Texas HIDTA region with members known to have business relationships with Mexican DTOs include Hermanos Pistoleros Latinos,<sup>58</sup> Texas Mexican Mafia, and Texas Syndicate in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, and Eastside Vatos Sureños, Grande Barrio Central, and South Side Locos in the Oklahoma City area.<sup>59</sup> It is important to note that no one gang is affiliated with any particular Mexican DTO, but rather there are small cells within a variety of gangs associated through familial ties to Mexican DTOs.<sup>60</sup> It is not unusual for there to be multiple, unrelated cells within a gang associated with different Mexican DTOs or cartels because of their familial and/or close associate ties.<sup>61</sup>

Mexican DTOs operating in the North Texas HIDTA region also are involved in the illegal purchase of weapons and ammunition that they provide to drug cartels in Mexico.<sup>62</sup> Some of these DTOs and their associates coordinate straw purchases of weapons, often assault-type weapons such as AK-47s,<sup>63</sup> and then arrange for the transportation of the weapons to the Southwest Border area for eventual smuggling to cartel connections in Mexico.<sup>64</sup> In February 2011, a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent was killed by members of Los Zetas, a violent DTO in Mexico. Three firearms were recovered from the deadly assault, and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) traced one of the recovered firearms to an individual who had made a straw purchase of the weapon in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.<sup>65</sup> This individual was part of a small cell of individuals who had been making straw purchases of firearms to be transported from Dallas to Laredo for use by Los Zetas.<sup>66</sup> ATF has also traced recovered firearms to a weapons smuggling operation in the Oklahoma City area headed by a corrupt narcotics agent.<sup>67</sup>

## Outlook

NDIC assesses with high confidence<sup>g</sup> that methamphetamine production using the one-pot method will continue at high levels in the near term in northeastern Oklahoma. The newly enacted Meth Offender Registry may seriously impact producers and their ability to acquire pseudoephedrine for methamphetamine production. However, it is too early to determine whether this new legislation will result in decreasing the number of methamphetamine laboratories in the HIDTA region in the long term.

NDIC assesses with high confidence that CPD abuse throughout the North Texas HIDTA region will increase, triggering a growing number of fatal and nonfatal overdoses in the region. NDIC also assesses with medium confidence that demand for high-potency marijuana will increase in the HIDTA region in the near term, and as a result, prospective indoor grow operators will be drawn to

g. **High Confidence** generally indicates that the judgments are based on high-quality information or that the nature of the issue makes it possible to render a solid judgment. **Medium Confidence** generally means that the information is credibly sourced and plausible but can be interpreted in various ways, or is not of sufficient quality or corroborated sufficiently to warrant a higher level of confidence. **Low Confidence** generally means that the information is too fragmented or poorly corroborated to make a solid analytic inference, or that there are significant concerns or problems with the sources.

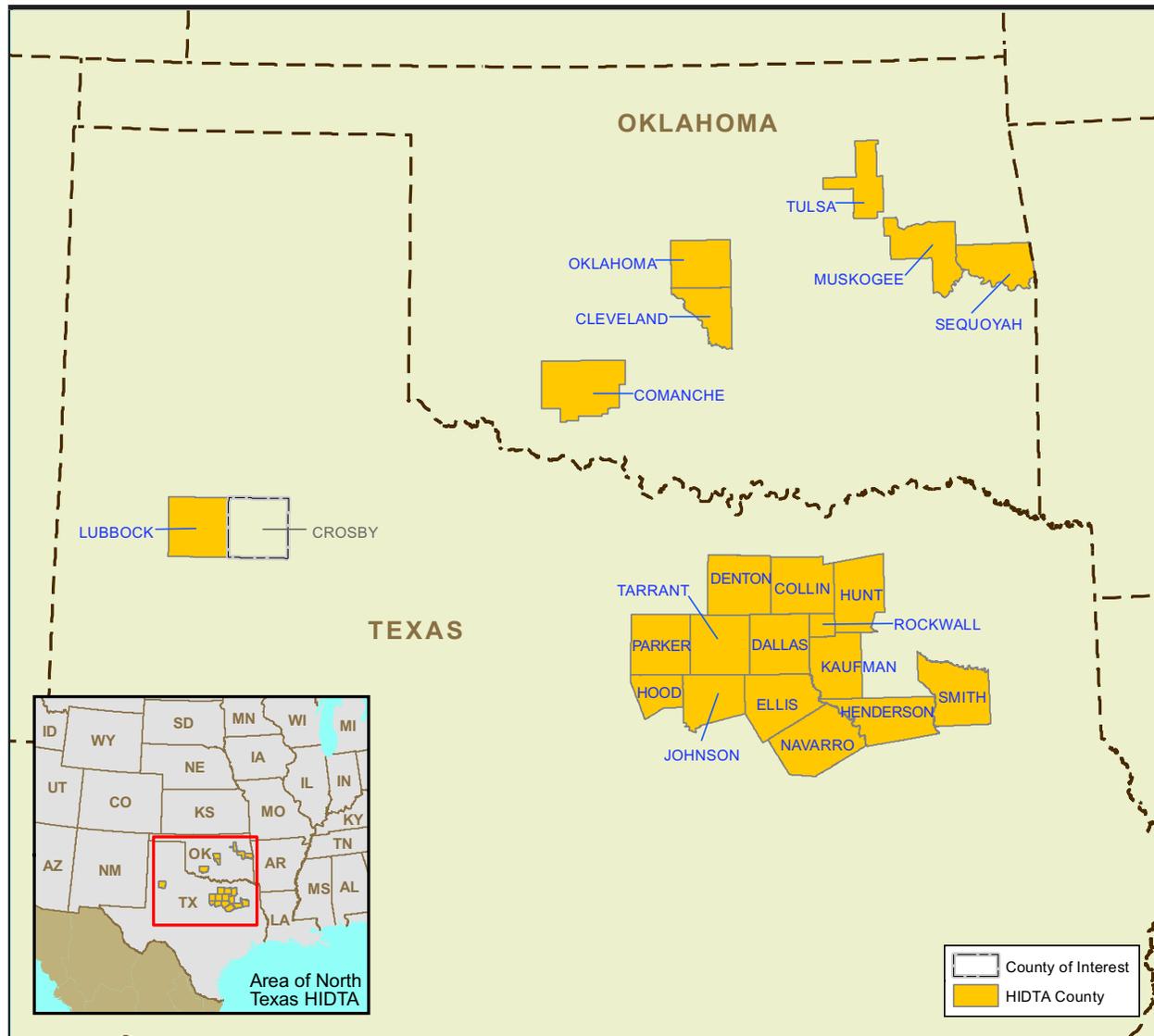
the area to set up operations and exploit the high profit potential associated with producing and distributing the drug.

NDIC assesses with high confidence that transnational drug trafficking organizations, primarily Mexican DTOs, will expand their network of operations in the North Texas HIDTA region, extending their influence and profit-making opportunities through familial or business-related operatives working on behalf of, or in association with, the DTOs. Mexican DTOs will use members of particular transnational gangs in the HIDTA region to further this expansion. Weapons smuggling operations in the HIDTA region will continue.



## Appendix A. North Texas HIDTA Overview

Map A1. North Texas High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area



The North Texas HIDTA region encompasses 15 northern Texas counties (most of which are located in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, the largest metropolitan area in size and population in Texas<sup>68</sup>) and 6 Oklahoma counties (including Oklahoma and Tulsa Counties, where the state's two largest cities by population<sup>69</sup> are located). (See Map A1.) Approximately 7 million residents, or 28 percent of the Texas population, reside in the Texas portion of the North Texas HIDTA region,<sup>70</sup> and more than 1.8 million residents, or 48 percent of the Oklahoma population, reside in the Oklahoma portion.<sup>71</sup> This large population base is ethnically diverse, particularly in the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area, where well over a million residents are foreign-born<sup>72</sup> and more than 27 percent of the population is Hispanic.<sup>73</sup> The diverse population of the North Texas HIDTA region enables members of ethnic-based DTOs, criminal groups, and gangs to easily assimilate within communities and divert attention from their drug trafficking activities. Dallas-Fort Worth and

Oklahoma City are the primary drug markets within the North Texas HIDTA and serve as distribution centers for other drug markets within the HIDTA region and in other U.S. locations.<sup>74</sup>

The North Texas HIDTA region's extensive transportation infrastructure and strategic proximity to Mexico contribute to making the region an attractive area for DTOs to conduct their criminal activities. Drug traffickers exploit the region's intricate network of highway systems<sup>75</sup> for the northbound flow of illicit drugs from the Southwest Border to U.S. drug markets and the southbound flow of bulk cash and monetary instruments<sup>h</sup> to drug source areas primarily in Mexico. Interstates 20, 30, 35, and 40 are primary corridors that intersect the HIDTA region and link its primary drug markets (Dallas-Fort Worth and Oklahoma City) to the Southwest Border and to major U.S. markets in the Midwest, Northeast, and Southeast. (See Map A2 in Appendix A.) Air transportation in the North Texas HIDTA region offers additional potential for exploitation by drug traffickers. The Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport is the third-busiest airport in the world in terms of aircraft movement and the eighth-busiest in the world and fourth-busiest in the United States in terms of passenger traffic.<sup>76</sup> The HIDTA region also has numerous private airports, buses, trains, and package delivery services that traffickers exploit to transport contraband. Although a significant portion of illicit drug shipments transported to the North Texas HIDTA region are intended for local distribution, many drug shipments are consolidated at stash houses in the area and transshipped to other U.S. drug markets, including those in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, Ohio, Tennessee, and Virginia.<sup>77</sup>

The distribution and abuse of methamphetamine, cocaine, marijuana, CPDs, and retail-level heroin are the principal drug threats to the North Texas HIDTA region.<sup>78</sup> (See Figure 1 on page 2.) However, according to NDTs 2011 data, methamphetamine is the drug most associated with property crime and violent crime in the HIDTA region. (See Figure B1 and Figure B2 in Appendix B.)

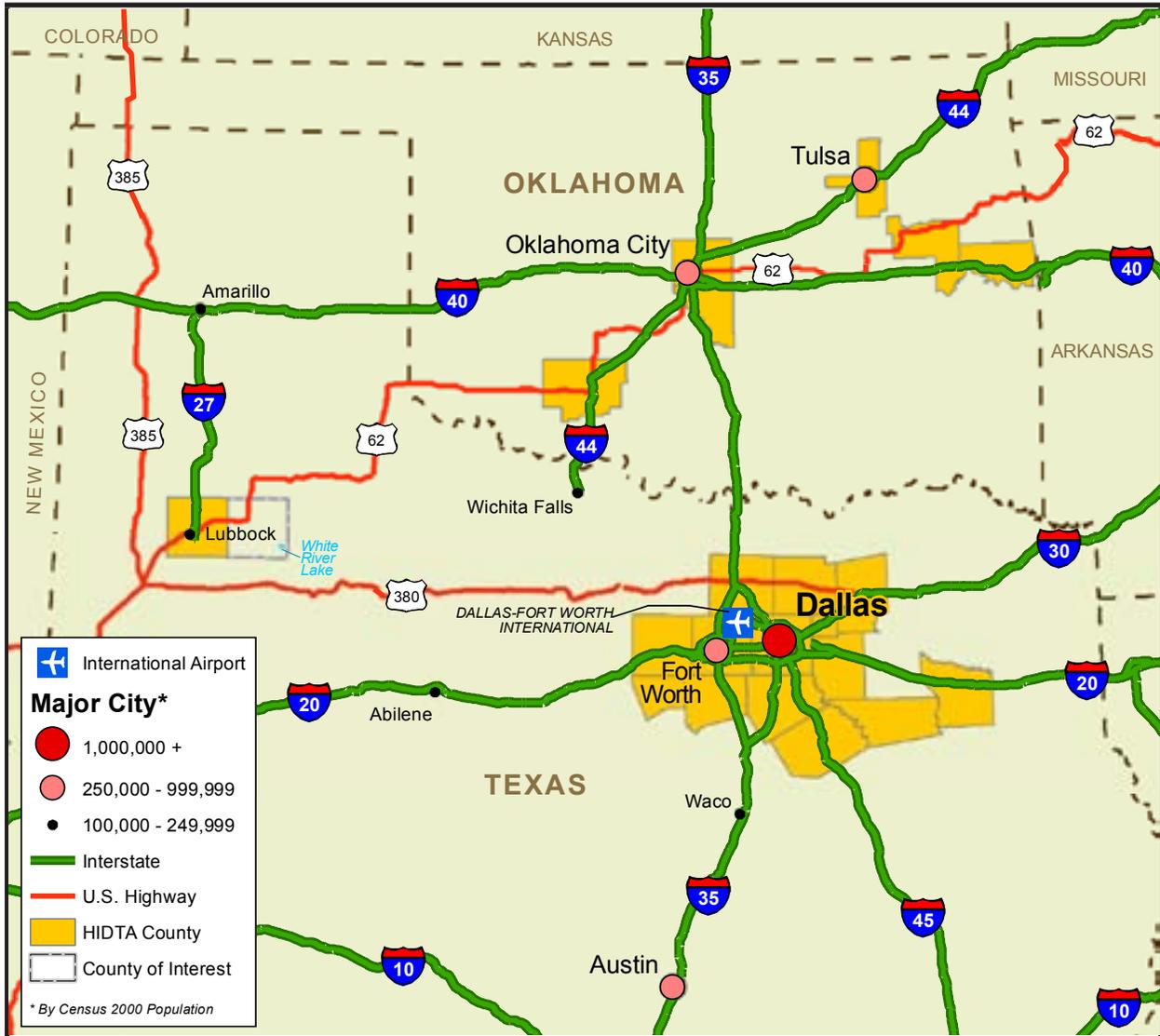
Mexican DTOs are the dominant drug transportation and distribution groups in the region. (See Table 4 on page 9.) They use the Dallas-Fort Worth area as a national-level transportation and distribution center for cocaine, marijuana, ice methamphetamine, and heroin in and outside the North Texas HIDTA region. Mexican DTOs control the transportation of wholesale quantities of these illicit drugs to the area for distribution. They further transport illicit drugs from the area to major domestic drug markets throughout the country for distribution.<sup>79</sup>

Oklahoma City is a significant regional-level transportation, transshipment, and distribution center for illicit drugs supplied to the North Texas HIDTA region and markets in neighboring states. Mexican DTOs control the transportation of wholesale quantities of most illicit drugs—including marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamine, and heroin—to the area for distribution. Mexican DTOs and associates working on their behalf often transship illicit drugs from Oklahoma City to other drug market areas located in and outside the state, primarily in neighboring states and the southeast, for distribution.<sup>80</sup> The majority of high-potency marijuana coming into the Oklahoma City area is from medical marijuana dispensaries in California and Colorado.<sup>81</sup>

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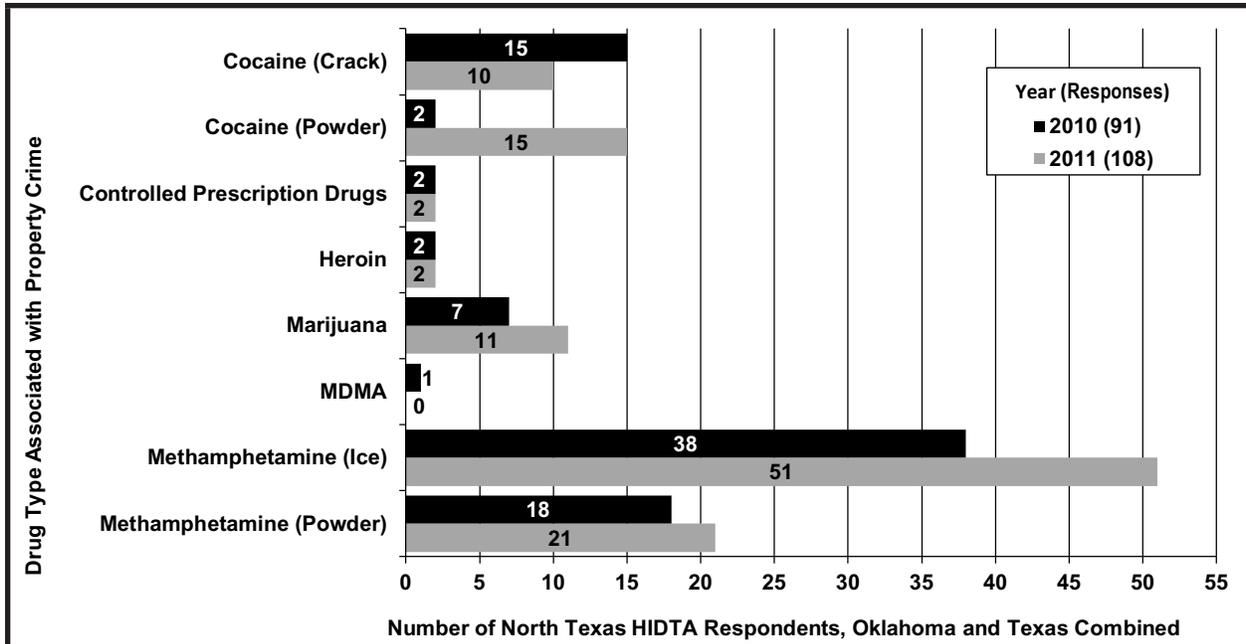
h. Monetary instruments include U.S. or foreign coins currently in circulation, currency, traveler's checks in any form, money orders, and negotiable instruments or investment securities in bearer form, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

**Map A2. North Texas High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area  
Transportation Infrastructure**



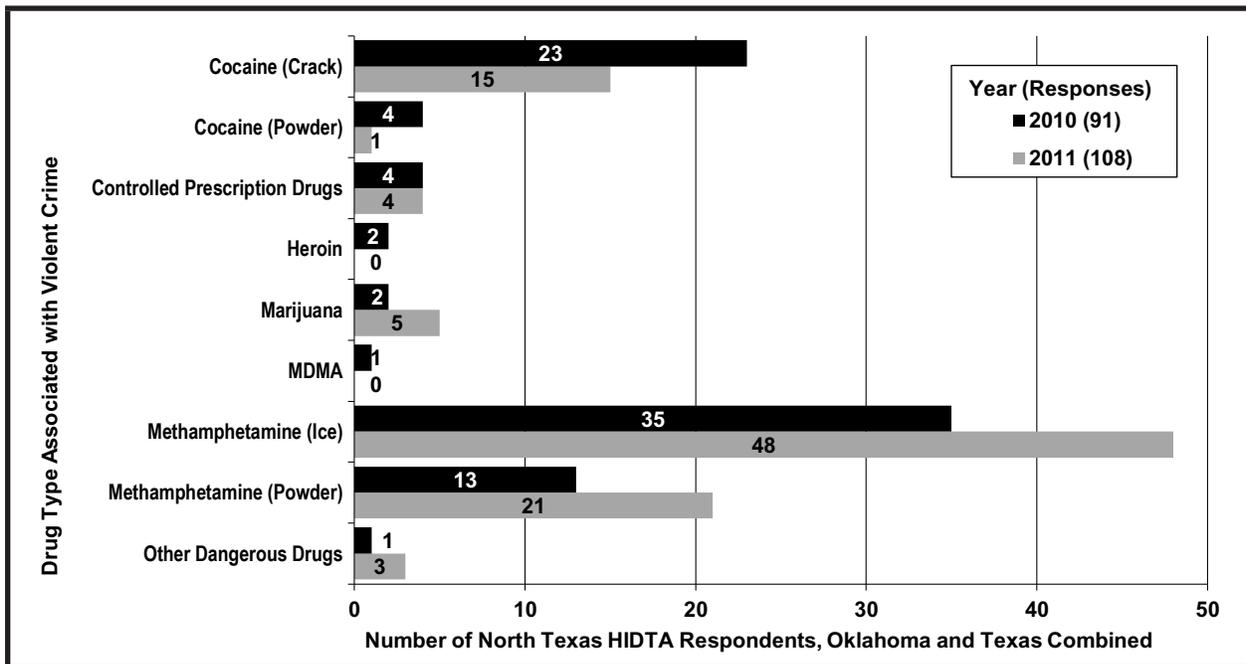
## Appendix B. Charts

**Figure B1. Drug Most Associated With Property Crime in the North Texas HIDTA Region, by Number of NDTs Respondents**



Source: National Drug Threat Surveys, 2010–2011.

**Figure B2. Drug Most Associated With Violent Crime in the North Texas HIDTA Region, by Number of NDTs Respondents**



Source: National Drug Threat Surveys, 2010–2011.

## Endnotes

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### Texas

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Texas Department of Public Safety  
    Intelligence & Counter-Terrorism Division  
    Post Seizure Analysis Team

## Federal

Executive Office of the President  
    Office of National Drug Control Policy  
        High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area  
            North Texas  
                Regional Intelligence Support Center  
U.S. Census Bureau  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
    U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
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Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force  
U.S. Attorneys Office  
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U.S. District Court  
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