



OPERATION ESTO PERPETUA

OBSERVATIONAL REPORT

Presented by

CITIZENS ACTION GROUP ON FENTANYL





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From the Group

Idaho faces a growing drug threat. Meth and fentanyl seizures have dramatically increased in Idaho and across the country, and parents need assurances their children will be safe. “Operation Esto Perpetua” is designed to bring new strategies that do more to protect our communities. “Operation Esto Perpetua” brings together law enforcement and communities in new ways, to turn the tide and protect our children.

As members of The Citizens Action Group, we were tasked to gather main concerns from the public about the growing fentanyl epidemic in Idaho. The group traveled across the state, hearing from members of law enforcement, public office, private business, and concerned members of the public. Below are our findings and observations and some of the proposed solutions solicited from communities across the state. There are concrete solutions to explore and we hold strong confidence in your Law Enforcement Panel to develop those concrete action items.

CITIZENS ACTION GROUP ON FENTANYL



Luke Malek
Chairman



Scott Bedke
Speaker of the
House



Kedrick Wills
Colonel
Idaho State Police



Brian Thomas
Chairman Shoshone-
Paiute Tribe



Dana Kirkham
Public Member



Jim Hammond
Mayor
Coeur D'Alene



Abby Lee
State Senator
District 9



Observation 1: Lack of Awareness & Education

The Fentanyl supply in Idaho is widespread and laced into other illegal drugs. Many people are unaware of its prevalence. Education is critical. People don't understand how lethal fentanyl is and that it's laced into nearly all illegal drugs.

1. Lack of education on the dangers of fentanyl is endemic. Many teachers, judges, and members of the public are unaware of the full danger that fentanyl possesses.
2. Overdoses are occurring in transitional housing, with users taking drugs that are now far more potent than when they went to jail and dying as a result.
3. Drugs illicitly purchased online by both minors and adults are often unknowingly laced with fentanyl.
4. Public information campaigns or education curriculum addressing these issues currently does not exist in Idaho.



Observation 2: State Border Issues

A recurrent problem, especially for the counties that border Oregon and Washington.

1. Loose drug laws in Oregon, Washington, and Canada are another point of difficulty, with people able to purchase drugs and cross into Idaho.
2. Restricted cooperation from Oregon law enforcement means that dealing with the problem along state-lines is difficult.
3. The southern border of the United States was frequently raised as a point of concern, with Mexico identified as the source country of the vast majority of fentanyl flowing into Idaho.
4. Many law enforcement agencies lack the needed manpower, funding, and training to adequately address the increased supply of fentanyl in their communities.
5. The designation of a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) has significantly helped those regions with manpower, funding, training, and prosecution support.
6. Funding options should continue to be explored through partnerships with the Department of Justice.



Observation 3: Cooperation & Information Sharing

The problems fentanyl and other illegal drugs are creating for law enforcement, health care systems, childcare systems, reservations, etc., are straining their available resources. The same is true for all communities in Idaho. Partnerships between law enforcement and other stakeholders are crucial to success in many small communities. Integrating information between Law enforcement, EMS, Tribes, Coroners, and healthcare providers could be crucial to tackling the problem coherently.

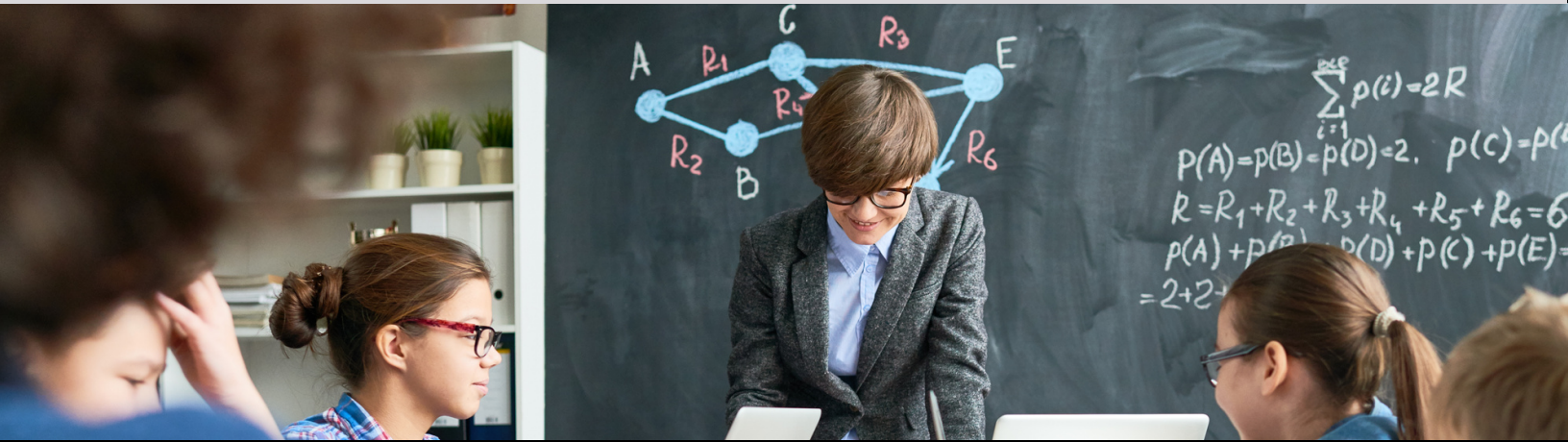
1. A publicly available overdose tracker (OD Tracker) can help assess the scale & geography of the problem.
2. Partnerships between law enforcement agencies are essential.
3. Sharing expensive resources, like K9 Units and test batching, with neighboring jurisdictions could help manage costs.
4. Partnerships with other key stakeholders:
 - How can the state improve the number of stakeholders?
 - Idaho may be able to have an expanded role in identifying resources available to law enforcement and communities.



Observation 4: Prevention

Communities and law enforcement need more awareness about what resources are available and more tools for people who need help to treat addiction. Many addicts have underlying mental health issues that need treatment. The proliferation of Narcan usage has saved lives but comes with limitations for preventing subsequent overdoses.

1. Harsher sentences for dealers were advocated for to better match the lethal effect of fentanyl.
2. Officers and local officials advocated for dealers to be prosecuted for overdoses.
3. There is difficulty determining the dangerous/lethal amount of fentanyl it takes to kill a person. It is different for each person, with one local officer pointing out it could be between 3 or 13 doses of fentanyl.
4. Overdoses have occurred in transitional accommodations, suggesting a failure to prevent a drug relapse upon release.
5. These overdoses also point to a lower tolerance of the more fentanyl-heavy drugs now being sold.
6. Those on probation should be tested for fentanyl.
7. Implementation of body scanners in jail, to prevent dealers from becoming incarcerated to deal drugs to the incarcerated population.
8. Concerns about expanded resource needs within jails.
9. Adequate supplies of Narcan for law enforcement, public health officials, and social services should be a minimum requirement.



Solution 1: Education

1. Teachers could undergo training on fentanyl to increase the awareness of the danger and encourage discussion in schools amongst young people.
 - Not all schools have a DARE program, but the ones that do, should include conversation about fentanyl. According to one of the members of law enforcement in Twin Falls - currently it is not included in the curriculum.
2. Statewide media campaign that graphically depicts the danger posed to users, or would-be users, particularly targeting young people.
3. Public Safety partnership campaigns are very beneficial to the public.
 - “One pill can kill” was proposed as a starting point for messaging.
4. Identify stakeholders and build a plan together:
 - Public health
 - Schools
 - Media
 - Healthcare



Solution 2: Source Issues

1. Law enforcement on the border counties must be prioritized: it is here the flow of drugs is the largest. Increasing resources will be needed.
2. Idaho's efforts should continue advocating for security at the nation's Southern border. Foreign Cartels remain a clear and present danger to Idaho's safety.
3. The I-90 Seattle/Spokane corridor continues to play a significant role in the movement of fentanyl into the panhandle region. More effort should be taken to push back against Washington state's policies and law enforcement failures.
4. Illegal online sales of Fentanyl should be considered an immediate threat and action should be taken to address this.



Solution 3: Cooperation & Information

1. Develop a Fentanyl strategy that incorporates all previously mentioned groups: law enforcement, tribes, coroners, EMS.
2. Statewide implementation of an overdose tracker and other mapping applications to provide real-time information
 - Resources can potentially be free to communities.
 - Resources need to be identified.
3. We need accurate data for overdose (OD) deaths statewide.
 - The OD Tracker is a good resource, but not widely used.



Solution 4: Interdiction

1. Stricter sentencing for high volume suppliers and dealers.
2. Increased resources to the border communities.
3. Consistent testing for fentanyl during probation.
4. Laws may need to be changed to address the risks fentanyl poses for individuals and communities specifically. Some participants suggested mandatory sentences.
5. Testing, including quick roadside field testing is a problem for law enforcement and prosecutors.
 - There is a need to differentiate between field and quantitative testing.
 - Identify what are the testing tools available, and what are the costs.
 - Determine a dosing standard.
 - Improve turnaround time and capacity for all forms of testing.