

# North Central HIDTA

2024 Threat Assessment

25 Year  
Anniversary



---

*Specially prepared for the ONDCP High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program Approved by  
the North Central HIDTA Executive Board on 3 May 2023*

---





# North Central HIDTA Threat Assessment

## Table of Contents

1. (U) Scope Note .....	2
2. (U) Executive Summary .....	2
3. (U) Key Findings.....	3
4. (U) The North Central HIDTA Region.....	5
5. (U) Drug Threats .....	11
5a. (U) Opioids.....	12
5b. (U) Methamphetamine .....	22
5c. (U) Cocaine .....	28
5d. (U) Marijuana and THC Products.....	33
6. (U) Drug Trafficking Organizations .....	39
6a. (U) International DTOs .....	39
6b. (U) Multi-state DTOs .....	44
6c. (U) Local DTOs.....	48
7. (U) Money Laundering Organizations.....	52
8. (U) Firearms.....	56
9. (U) Outlook .....	59
10. (U//FOUO) Appendices .....	60

## 1. (U) Scope Note

(U) The North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (NCH) program produced this document to report on current and prospective drug trafficking threats in Minnesota and Wisconsin. This document is presented to the North Central HIDTA (NCH) Executive Board to ensure the allocation of HIDTA grant funds addresses the most serious drug trafficking threats facing the region. This document also fulfills statutory and annual grant requirements issued by the Office of the National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). Underlying information for the assessments, summaries, and conclusions presented in this document were primarily derived from the North Central HIDTA Performance Management Process (PMP) system, the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC) National Seizure System (NSS), state crime laboratory reporting, and treatment and drug overdose data from national and state public health departments. Minnesota and Wisconsin law enforcement agency responses to North Central HIDTA annual Threat Assessment Survey, follow-up interviews, and reporting from Local, State, Tribal and Federal law enforcement partners were also sources of underlying information. Most supporting information was collected between 1 January 2023 and 10 May 2023. The cutoff date for information pertaining to statewide treatment admissions and overdose fatalities was 31 December 2022, while reporting from select counties was available through 31 March 2023. Additional, verified, or more current reporting could alter the assessments or confidence levels stated in this document. Additionally, this version integrates changes from 2023 as recommended by the HDC, Intelligence Committee, and Performance Management Process Committee.

## 2. (U) Executive Summary

(U//FOUO) The North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area is one of 33 HIDTAs under the ONDCP and is comprised of two states, including Minnesota and Wisconsin. The NCH program brings together state, federal, local, and tribal resources in order to reduce specific drug threats in the HIDTA designated region with a common purpose of targeting and dismantling Drug Trafficking Organizations and Money Laundering Organizations posing the greatest threat to the community.

(U//FOUO) The NCH encompasses 15 ONDCP-designated counties and ten Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies that make up the Native American Drug Gang Initiative (NADGI) and incorporate Wisconsin Tribal lands in an additional 19 counties. The following are the ONDCP designated counties: Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Olmsted, Ramsey, St. Louis, and Washington in Minnesota, and Brown, Dane, Eau Claire, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Racine, Rock, and Waukesha in Wisconsin. The NC HIDTA region comprises more than fifty (50) percent of the population in the two states. The NC HIDTA region has a wide variety of drug threats, violence, and associated criminal threats negatively impacting the health and safety of their communities.

(U//FOUO) The NC HIDTA will continue to see significant challenges, such as the increase in the volume of drugs distributed in Minnesota and Wisconsin, as well as the ever-increasing distribution of synthetic opioids such as fentanyl and fentanyl analogues in both states. Because of this, all communities in the NC HIDTA region (NCHR) are adversely affected by the flow of illegal drugs in their areas. Drug Trafficking

Organizations have also continued to evolve and become more complex as their technologies and distribution methods have become increasingly sophisticated, making trafficking operations even more effective. Drug task forces have had to change their investigative strategies, increasing the time and resources needed to identify and ultimately dismantle criminal operations, further exacerbating the problem.

(U//FOUO) The NCH Threat Assessment for Program Year 2024 was developed after a thorough collection of information from counter-drug investigators and analysts from Minnesota and Wisconsin, Local, State, Tribal, and Federal law enforcement databases, and other informational sources.

### 3. (U) Key Findings

(U//FOUO) The NCHR is acknowledged as a primary market for illicit drug activity and distribution within Minnesota and Wisconsin and is recognized as a transshipment point for drug markets in the Upper Midwest and Canada. The NCHR is directly connected to source suppliers through Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTO's) using source suppliers from Chicago, Illinois; the Southwest Border states of Arizona, California, and Texas; Colorado; the West Coast states of Oregon and Washington; the United States territory of Puerto Rico; and, internationally from Mexico, China, the Netherlands, Colombia, and Venezuela via countries in the Caribbean Border Corridor, such as the Dominican Republic. Mexican-based drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) are most linked to sourcing opioids (including heroin, fentanyl, and fentanyl-related substances [FRS]), methamphetamine, cocaine, and marijuana, which constitute the primary drug threats to NCHR communities. Mexican drug cartels, and additionally China, have been discovered using legitimate marijuana businesses in other source states who forego the use of banks to launder their illegal drug operation proceeds, and the NCHR identifies this as a potential threat if marijuana were to become legal in additional midwestern states.<sup>1</sup>

The following represent the key findings for this year's assessment:

- (U//FOUO) Opioids – more specifically fentanyl and FRS – represent the greatest threat to the NCHR region as indicated by NCH seizures and medical examiner reporting. Xylazine, not an opioid or opiate, nor is it a scheduled drug, meant for use as a veterinary sedative and analgesic, is an emerging and increasing threat. Toxicology reports indicate that xylazine is presenting in increasing numbers of suspected drug overdoses. The effects of xylazine on a user is similar to opioids and has been found mixed with substances that include fentanyl (FRS). Xylazine is resistant to Naloxone and multiple doses to an overdose victim might not be successful.
- (U//FOUO) Methamphetamine poses the next greatest threat to the NCH region due to the huge amounts being transported into the NCHR, Twin Cities area of Minnesota that remains the primary transshipment center in the upper Midwest for methamphetamine. The trafficking of methamphetamine is still linked to increasing overdoses in the NCHR and contributes to additional violent and property crimes throughout the NCHR.
- (U//FOUO) Cocaine continues to be a persistent threat throughout the NCHR. Although seizures of kilogram quantities have decreased, the number of individual seizure events have increased

illustrating cocaine's continued popularity. User level quantities of cocaine seized by NCHR law enforcement and medical examiner toxicology reports continue to show the presence of cocaine to be comingled with fentanyl and FRS, and cocaine continues to be present in overdose fatalities and to contribute to violent crime.

- (U//FOUO) A pervasive drug threat to the NCHR is marijuana and potent tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) products. With some midwestern states adjacent to the NCHR beginning to legalize marijuana, either for medical purposes and/or recreation, this change has altered the landscape for non-THC products. A plethora of synthetic alternatives including Delta-8, Delta-9, and Hexahydro cannabinol (HHC) among others have been shown to contain potency similar to the high marijuana plant material and other THC products. "Black market" traffickers can often sell their THC products for much less than it costs at registered dispensaries in neighboring states, creating safety risks for consumers and sellers.
- (U//FOUO) DTOs operating in the NCHR primarily source opioids, methamphetamine, and cocaine from the Chicago, Illinois area and Southwest Border states: primarily Arizona, southern California, and Texas. The Sinaloa Cartel has been identified by law enforcement sources as accounting for the majority illicit drugs supplied to the NCHR, and Sinaloa Cartel members have been identified operating in the NCHR, predominantly in MN. Much of the high-grade marijuana and THC product supply originates from northern California, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington growers and producers. Although recent legalizations for sale of recreational possession and use of THC products in Illinois might shift the source location moving forward.
- (U//FOUO) DTOs and other criminal operations continue to increasingly use different means of communications, such as encrypted web-based applications on smart phones and other devices, as opposed to traditional voice phone communication. This has had, and will continue to have, challenging implications for the ability of law enforcement to understand the content of communications transmitted among DTO leaders and members as well as between DTO members and their suppliers or customers.
- (U//FOUO) DTOs are increasingly using methods of financial transactions, such as bank transfers, mobile peer-to-peer (P2P) payment applications and converting US dollars and foreign currencies into cryptocurrencies. It has been reported that DTOs have used Bitcoin ATMs to help launder proceeds from illegal drug sales.

(U//FOUO) The subsequent sections in this document describe a more detailed accounting of these findings, including drug availability, use, price, and transportation; DTO affiliation, membership, activities, and methods – including illicit finance; and key intelligence questions (KIQs) that need to be addressed. The NCH and its Executive Board seek to tailor its enforcement strategies and deploy its resources based on the identifications of patterns and threats in this document to disrupt and dismantle DTOs, Money Laundering Organizations (MLOs) and Criminal Operations (COs) operating within the NCHR and improve safety to the communities within.

#### 4. (U) The North Central HIDTA Region

(U) The North Central HIDTA program is dedicated to supporting Local, State, Federal, and Tribal law enforcement organizations targeting DTOs, MLOs and COs in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The NCH holds its administrative headquarters in Milwaukee County, WI, and it includes 15 HIDTA-designated counties and tribal lands across the two states: Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Olmsted, Ramsey, St. Louis, and Washington Counties in Minnesota. Wisconsin supports two initiatives in Kenosha County, and singular initiatives in Brown, Dane, Eau Claire, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Racine, Rock, and Waukesha Counties. Of note is the Eau Claire County led multi-jurisdictional drug task force that includes 5 other adjacent counties in west central Wisconsin. Additionally, NCH support is provided to the Native American Drug Gang Initiative (NADGI).

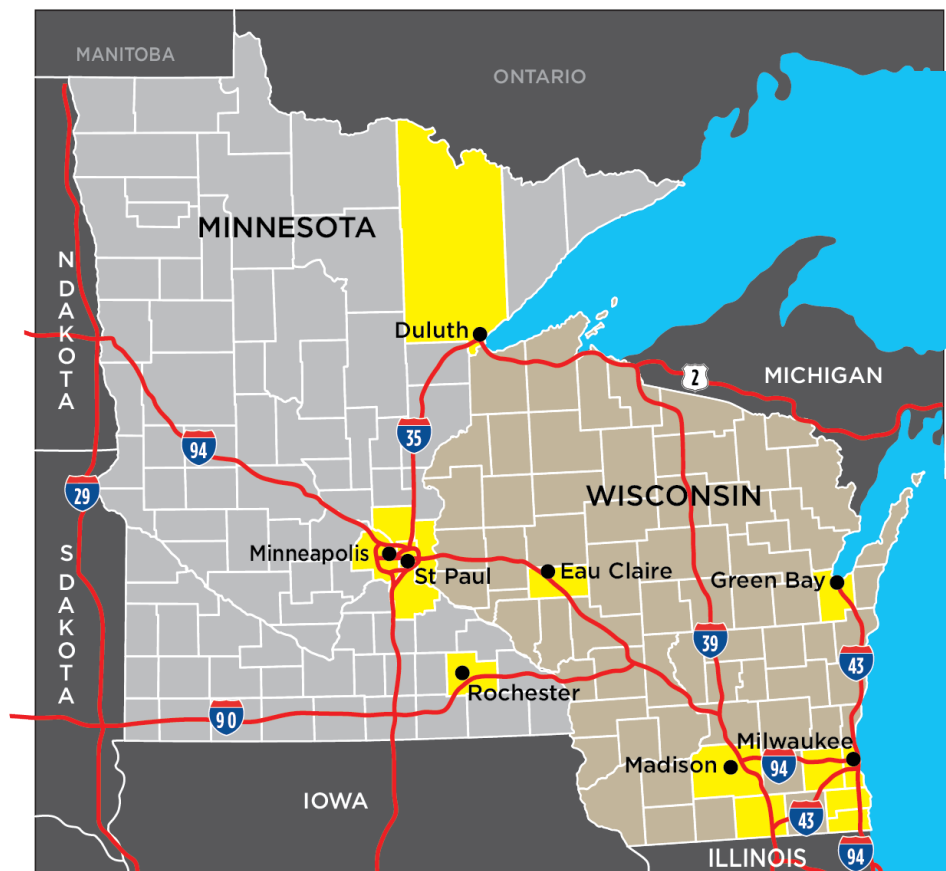


Figure 1 (U) Map of North Central HIDTA Counties and surrounding area

(U) The NCH funds 35 initiatives operating across the designated areas, including an Investigative Support Center (ISC) the intelligence and information sharing initiative and HIDTA-funded prevention initiatives in each state. Representatives from nearly 150 Local, State, Tribal, and Federal law enforcement agencies, State and Federal prosecution offices, collegiate organizations and the National Guard's Counter Drug Programs from each state participate in these initiatives in the NCH Program.



Figure 2 (U) Map of North Central HIDTA Counties in Minnesota



### Tribal nations sharing geography with Minnesota

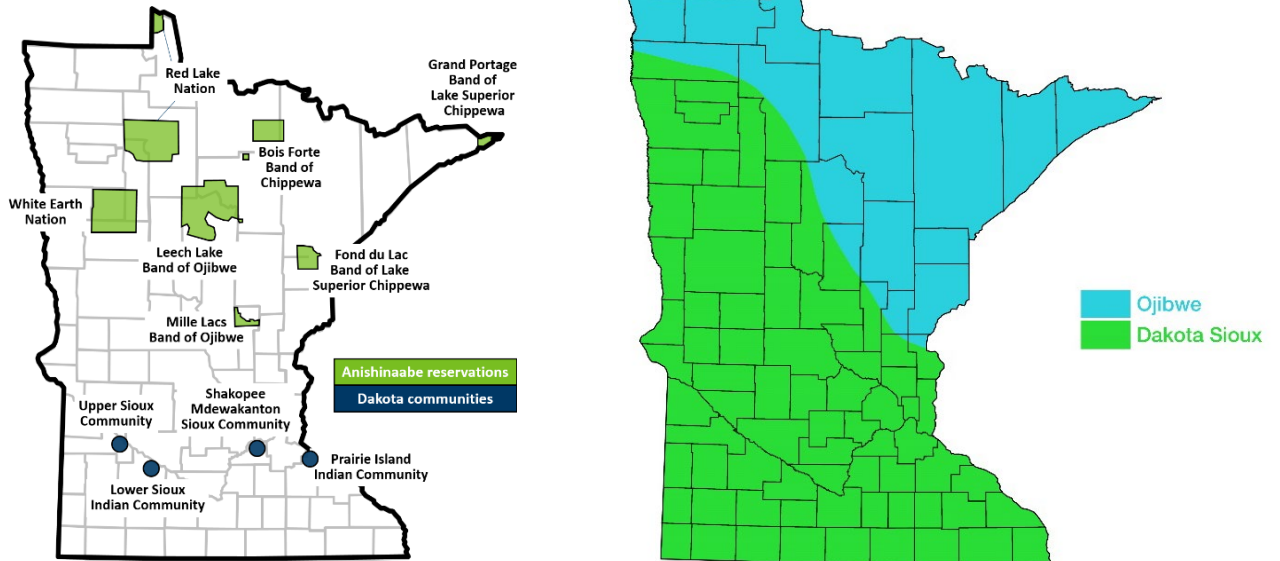


Figure 3 (U) Map of Minnesota First Nations and Current Tribal Lands<sup>2</sup>





Figure 4 (U) Map of North Central HIDTA Counties in Wisconsin



Figure 6 (U) Map of Wisconsin First Nations and Current Tribal Lands<sup>3</sup>



### (U) Interstate Highways

(U) The North Central HIDTA region (NCHR) is both an end-user market and major transshipment point for illicit drugs throughout the Upper Midwest and Canada. The region's transportation infrastructures contribute to the availability and distribution of drugs from international, national, and regional sources via private and commercial transportation modes.

(U) Interstate 35 (I35), a major drug pipeline, travels north/south through the region. It has a southern terminus in Laredo, Texas at the Southwest Border between the United States and Mexico and a northern terminus in Duluth, Minnesota, with highway connections to the Northern Border between the United States and Canada. This interstate corridor has numerous alternate routes available for potential law enforcement evasion, including highway 69 in Iowa and Missouri, highway 77 in Oklahoma and Texas, and highway 83 in Texas. Several major metropolitan areas are connected by this corridor: Dallas and Austin, Texas; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Kansas City, Missouri; and Des Moines, Iowa.

(U) Interstate 94 (I94) runs east/west through the region. It is the northernmost interstate, with its west terminus in Billings, Montana and its east terminus in Port Huron, Michigan. Interstates 394, 494, and 694 run throughout the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area in Minnesota, connecting the counties with the I94 corridor. This corridor also connects Dane, Eau Claire, Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha, and Waukesha Counties in Wisconsin, and further connects the region to several major metropolitan areas including Chicago, Illinois, and Detroit, Michigan. I94 is also a heavily traveled corridor from the Twin Cities to Fargo, North Dakota, and the oil boom region of Williston, North Dakota. This corridor also has numerous alternate routes available for the purposes of evading law enforcement along the interstate, including highway 10 in Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin; U.S. Routes 12, 18, and 51 in Wisconsin; and U.S. Route 45 in Wisconsin and Illinois.

(U) Interstate 90 (I90) travels east/west across the United States from its east terminus in Boston, Massachusetts to its west terminus in Seattle, Washington. I90 runs east/west across the region, intersecting I35 directly south of Minneapolis-St. Paul. I90 provides an interstate nexus between the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area; Rochester, Minnesota, in Olmsted County; cities in Wisconsin, to include Madison, Janesville, and Beloit; and further connects to Rockford and Chicago, Illinois. This corridor has several alternative routes, that include U.S. Route 20 across Illinois and Wisconsin, U.S. Routes 16, 51, 72, and 251 in Wisconsin; and U.S. Route 14 across Minnesota and Wisconsin.

(U) Interstate 43 (I43) and Interstate / U. S. Highway 41, travelling north/south through eastern Wisconsin, and Interstate 39 (I39), traveling north/south through central Wisconsin, provide additional corridors between HIDTA-designated counties, to the I90 and I94 corridors, and to the rest of the state.

(U) In addition to these major cross-national interstate corridors, US Highway 52 (north/south), US Highway 61 (north/south), Minnesota State Highway 3 (north/south), Minnesota State Highway 36 (east/west), U.S. Highway 10 (east/west, to connect Minnesota and Wisconsin), Wisconsin State Highway 29 (east/west to connect Green Bay to the I94 corridor near Eau Claire, Wisconsin, en route to Minnesota) and others provide thoroughfares for regional distribution. These numerous highways present opportunities for DTOs, COs, and MLOs to avoid law enforcement detection and interdiction.

### (U) Air Transportation

(U) Air transportation is widely recognized by law enforcement as a method of drug smuggling from known source cities. The Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) in Minnesota is a major transportation hub within the region and a known point of entry for illicit drugs trafficked from around the globe. MSP served 310,235 aircraft operations (landings and takeoffs) – including passenger and cargo flights – and 31,241,822 passengers in 2022.<sup>4</sup> This is nearly six million more passengers than what was reported in 2021 while operations only increased by seven thousand. Mitchell International Airport (MKE) in Milwaukee, WI, handled 144,356,528 pounds of air freight and mail and served 5,031,700 passengers in 2022 as of November 2022, which exceeds 2021 passenger levels by 10 percent.<sup>5</sup> The NCHR is also serviced by other public-use airports that support commercial, recreational, and agricultural aircraft. MKE airlines finally exceeded pre-COVID-19 levels of both passengers and freight in 2022 and is expected to level off as 2023 progresses.<sup>6</sup>

### (U) Rail Transportation

(U) The NCHR is serviced by more than 7,700 miles of passenger and freight rail lines and numerous railroad companies.<sup>7</sup> These railways serve as a nexus to major hubs across the United States and Canada. In 2019, 465.5 million tons of rail freight were shipped through the region and there were more than 1.1 million instances of boarding and alighting on Amtrak passenger rail.<sup>8</sup> Ridership decreased to 539,806 passengers in 2020 and 354,796 passengers in 2021.<sup>9</sup> This decrease in ridership has been associated with travel restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic from March of 2020 into 2022.<sup>10</sup> Regional and local DTOs are known to exploit gaps in passenger rail security to transport both illicit drugs, cash and firearms.

(U//FOUO) Since, January of 2019, Amtrak Police interdicted at least twenty (20) incidents of illicit drug trafficking originating within or destined for the NCHR. While these seizures are generally smaller than those observed in personally operated vehicles and parcel carriers, 21,500 fentanyl pills were seized from a train in the Minneapolis/St. Paul rail station which had originated from New Mexico, demonstrating that rail transportation is used by drug traffickers to convey large quantities of illicit drugs. In October 2021, Amtrak Police suspended proactive law enforcement interdiction efforts while the department reviewed interdiction best practices in the aftermath of a fatal officer involved shooting. This resulted in a lack of data for all of 2022. Rail, itself, presents unique challenges to law enforcement, as jurisdictional matters are more difficult to interpret than those in more conventional situations as drug traffickers will utilize these systems to cross state lines.<sup>11</sup>

### (U) Water Transportation

(U) The NCHR includes the Port of Duluth (Minnesota)-Superior (Wisconsin) in Lake Superior with access to the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway system. This port moves approximately 35 million tons of cargo annually: the greatest tonnage of any port on the Great Lakes.<sup>12</sup> There is also port access to Lake Michigan in Brown, Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee Counties in Wisconsin. These ports conduct international shipping with access to the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway. The Mississippi River, a major commerce

route in the United States, runs north/south through the NCHR, bisecting Minnesota and Wisconsin. The St. Croix River borders Washington County in Minnesota and St Croix County in Wisconsin that borders Eau Claire County to its west and feeds into the Mighty Mississippi. The headwaters of the Mississippi River is in northern MN with its terminus in the Gulf of Mexico, in New Orleans, LA.

### (U) Northern Border

(U) The border crossing activities between Canada and the United States in Northern MN has the potential to pose threats to the NCHR, however, initiatives report drug seizures coming to and leaving Minnesota and Wisconsin are relatively small and the true threats are largely unknown. Minnesota shares a 547-mile border with the Canadian provinces of Manitoba and Ontario. This stretch of the border includes eight vehicle-accessible border crossing points on the following highways: Minnesota 59, Minnesota 89, Minnesota 310, Minnesota 313, Minnesota 71, US 53, and Minnesota 61.<sup>13</sup> Nearly 451,000 personal vehicles, buses, and commercial trucks crossed through these ports of entry in 2022, a 68% increase from 2021. The largest, most heavily traveled border crossings are at the following Minnesota POEs: International Falls, Grand Portage, Warroad, and Baudette, which accounted for a combined 38,374 commercial motor vehicles in 2022.<sup>14</sup> In addition, trains cross the border at International Falls. In 2022, 4,011 passenger trains carrying 7,950 people were reported crossing the border through entry points. Reported drug trafficking activity at vehicle-accessible crossing points is limited, and the full extent of cross-border drug trafficking along the Northern Border is unknown at this time. Northern Border activity was significantly reduced by more than 76 percent in 2020 due to COVID-19 travel restrictions placed by the Canadian government.

### (U) Tribal Lands

(U) Each of the below reservations represents its own sovereign nation, often governed by an elected Tribal Council. There are 11 Federally Recognized Indian Tribes in Minnesota: seven Anishinaabe (Chippewa, Ojibwe) reservations and four Dakota (Sioux) communities.<sup>15</sup> The seven Ojibwe reservations in Minnesota are Bois Forte Band of Chippewa (Nett Lake), Fond du Lac Reservation, Grand Portage band of Chippewa Indians, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, White Earth Reservation, and Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians. The four Sioux communities include: Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux (Dakota) Community, Prairie Island Indian Community, Lower Sioux Indian Community, and Upper Sioux Community.<sup>16</sup> There are also 11 Federally Recognized Indian Tribes in Wisconsin.<sup>17</sup> The NCH NADGI includes law enforcement members from the following WI tribes: Bad River, Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (Ojibwe Nation), Ho Chunk, Lac Courte Oreilles, Lac Du Flambeau, Menominee, Oneida, Red Cliff, St. Croix, and Stockbridge-Munsee. Additionally, Wisconsin has three NADGI associate member sheriff's departments in the tribal community including Forest County, Menominee County and Shawano County.



## (U) Demographics and Crime Trends

(U) HIDTA-designated counties and Tribal lands make up a significant portion of most state HIDTA initiatives. The North Central HIDTA region has a diverse population that makes up more than 52 percent of the total estimated population of 11.61 million residents as of the most recently available U.S. Census Bureau data.<sup>18</sup> Each State's Departments of Administration estimates that the population of Minnesota has increased approximately 7.2 percent from 2010 to 2022, while the population of Wisconsin has increased approximately 3.4 percent over the same period.<sup>19</sup>

(U) According to the most recently available Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR), the eight-county NCHR in Wisconsin reported 182,034 incidents of Part 1 Serious Crime Offenses in 2021. These crimes include homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny theft, motor vehicle theft, arson, simple assault, and human trafficking. This is approximately 68 percent of the combined total of 269,763 Serious Crime Offenses in both Minnesota and Wisconsin. Overall, the rate of Serious Crimes within the NCHR increased approximately 0.4 percent between 2020 and 2021.<sup>20</sup>

## 5. (U) Drug Threats

(U//FOUO) Public safety has continued to be compromised in the wake of the opioid crisis with continued association with violent and property crime among other reasons. Overdoses have continued to rise, fentanyl seizures have nearly doubled in 2022 compared to recordings in 2021, and emerging threats related to opioids such as Xylazine and its resistance to NARCAN employment have altered the outlook of the NCHR. Based on the most recently available reporting by law enforcement and public health partners, the NCH law enforcement initiatives report opioids – specifically synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl and FRS – to be the most significant drug threat facing the region. Methamphetamine, Cocaine, and Marijuana, in order of severity, are the other drug threats facing the region and continue to contribute to property crime and violent crime throughout the region. Pricing for illegal drugs in the NCHR are affected by a variety of factors including availability, popularity among end users, transportation efficiency, source location, and risk to traffickers. Medical examiners in NCHR provide valuable analytical insight into severity of the threats in North Central HIDTA's area of operation. Opiate and opioid involved overdose fatalities have continued to increase throughout the NCHR, and xylazine has been identified and now individually tracked by the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's office.<sup>a</sup> Heroin-involved overdose fatalities have decreased to below levels seen in 2014, and during the same time psychostimulant involved overdose fatalities have reached all-time highs. It is unclear if these trends will increase or begin to stabilize in 2023.

---

<sup>a</sup> (U) The term "overdose" is defined as a death caused by a single drug or multiple drugs in combination. A heroin overdose indicates heroin was the cause of death. A heroin-involved overdose indicates heroin was found in the decedent's system but may not have been the sole cause of death.

## (U) Specific Source Considerations

(U//FOUO) Information specific to Drug Threats was sourced primarily from the NCH Performance Management Process (PMP) system, the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC) National Seizure System (NSS) State Nexus Reports, state crime laboratory reporting, and substance abuse treatment and drug overdose data from local, state, and national public health departments. Minnesota and Wisconsin law enforcement agency responses to the NCH Annual Threat Assessment Survey and reporting from Local, State, Tribal and Federal law enforcement partners were also sources of underlying information. The information from law enforcement reporting was most critical to the assessments of confidence levels stated in this section.

(U//FOUO) As the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions have become more relaxed in 2022, drug manufacturing, prices, trafficking methods, finances, and distribution have begun to stabilize and/or exceed in some cases the levels pre-pandemic. Initial restrictions that disrupted supplies have either been circumvented or eliminated, and law enforcement sources expect that this will continue to be the case throughout CY 2023 and beyond. Drug prices have re-stabilized as of 2022, but the potential for new or emerging trends can be expected to affect the drug market in undetermined ways<sup>21</sup>.

### 5a. (U) Opioids

(U) The difference between opioid and opiate is that opioid is a broad term used to describe any type of substance, either natural or man-made (synthetic) that binds to opioid receptors in the brain (these control pain, pleasure, and addictive behaviors). Opioids include natural substances, such as codeine, morphine, and heroin; synthetic substances such as fentanyl and methadone; and semi-synthetic substances such as hydrocodone (Vicodin) and oxycodone (oxycontin). The word opiate refers to natural substances that can be extracted from the flowering opium poppy plant, such as heroin, morphine, and codeine. All opiates are opioids but not all opioids are opiates. It is also important to note that just because opiates are natural, this does not mean they are less harmful. Opiates are also highly addictive and are frequently misused.<sup>22</sup>

(U//FOUO) Law Enforcement sources report opioids, including heroin, fentanyl (FRS) is expected to continue to be a significant threat to the region in 2023, with nearly 80% of survey respondents ranking opioids as the number one threat to their respective area of operations. This is a nearly 30% increase in the “number one threat” over PY2021. According to source information, opioids continue to present in toxicology reports of overdose fatalities, are increasing in availability, and are associated with property and violent crimes further exacerbating this threat. Initial reporting from Medical Examiner Offices in HIDTA-designated counties indicates opioid-involved overdose fatalities, especially those involving fentanyl and FRS, increased in 2022 and are expected to continue on this upward trajectory through CY2023 and beyond.

(U//FOUO) Reporting still has yet to be completed in Milwaukee County for overdose fatality statistics but preliminary data shows a level of fatal opioid overdoses will reach and exceed deaths from 2021. The Milwaukee County Medical Examiner’s office, in response to the growing threat of Xylazine discovered in

fentanyl, have begun tracking it in their analysis of overdose cases.

### (U) Key Observations

- (U//FOUO) DTOs trafficking opioids to and from the NCHR have risen drastically, continuing the increasing trend of danger to our communities. NCH Law enforcement initiatives report having identified 62 DTOs trafficking fentanyl, heroin, and other opiates in the NCHR. This is approximately 50% of all DTOs reported in 2022. Fifty-one of these DTOs were reported as polydrug organizations. DTOs selling multiple different kinds of drugs has been assessed as a core characteristic of opioid trafficking since the introduction of fentanyl.<sup>23</sup>
- (U//FOUO) In 2022, Heroin seizures and seizure events have continued to drop while fentanyl seizures and seizure events continue to increase. The North Central HIDTA assesses this to be due to the ability to mix fentanyl with other drugs, and those products popularity with end users. Heroin seizures have continued to decline by 40% to just over 14 kilograms, and pure fentanyl seizures have nearly tripled in combined quantity, not including dosage units (DU) and other FRS.  
(U//FOUO) Heroin seizures by NCH law enforcement initiatives decreased 44%, from 41 kilograms in 2021 to 23 kilograms in 2022. The seizure of powder fentanyl and FRS increased substantially from 8.1 to 60.3 kilograms, and the seizure of fentanyl and FRS DU increased 37%, from 46,008 DU in 2020 to 62,871 DU in 2021. Fentanyl DU are generally counterfeit pills containing fentanyl or FRS that resemble legitimate prescription pain medications and illicit drugs. Those that resemble legitimate medication are often found mimicking oxycodone, while those mimicking illicit drugs do so primarily as the popular party drug, MDMA also known as “Ecstasy”<sup>24</sup>
- (U//FOUO) Heroin prices were reported as being stable over the past year, with one (1) kilogram ranging between \$30,000 and \$50,000 depending on purity or availability. Fentanyl and FRS prices ranged from \$60 to \$100 per gram. Fentanyl is being sold to a varying degree depending on its mixture with other substances or directly to local suppliers.<sup>25</sup>
- (U//FOUO) Initial reporting from HIDTA-designated counties indicates opioid-involved overdoses, specifically those involving fentanyl and FRS, increased in 2022 compared to 2021. 2019 was the first year when an overdose was encountered with Xylazine and fentanyl according to reporting from medical examiners offices in the NCHR. In 2022, there were 46 fatal overdose cases involving this non-scheduled veterinary sedative.<sup>26</sup>

### (U) Availability

(U//FOUO) The accessibility and availability of illegal drugs varies based on a variety of factors. However, law enforcement sources state that all drugs are readily available to consumers. Seizures of fentanyl and FRS by NCH law enforcement initiatives, drug use treatment facility admission rates, and overdose fatalities all reflect the high availability of opioids in the NCHR specifically those of fentanyl and FRS. A continued reduction in heroin seizure events and quantities has been observed by law enforcement from 23 kilograms and 251 events in 2021 to just over 14 kilograms and 188 seizure events in 2022. The



presence of fentanyl (FRS) continues to increase in NCHR communities. NCH law enforcement initiatives reported a 290% increase of powder fentanyl (FRS) seized from 60.3 kilograms in 2021 to 176.1 kilograms in 2022, and the number of seizure events nearly doubled during the same period. NCH law enforcement initiatives reported a dramatic increase in seized DU as well, a nearly one thousand percent increase from 62,871 DU in 2021 to 627,384 DU in 2022. This does not include DU of codeine, oxycodone, hydrocodone, tramadol, and others that totaled 12,447 DU.<sup>27</sup>

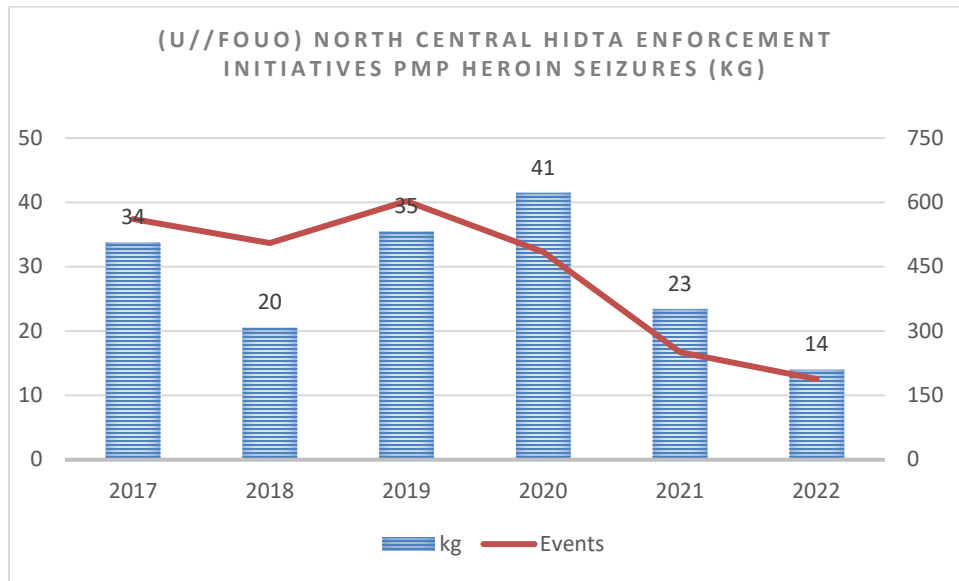


Figure 3 (U//FOUO) North Central HIDTA Law Enforcement Initiatives PMP Heroin Seizures (kg)<sup>28</sup>

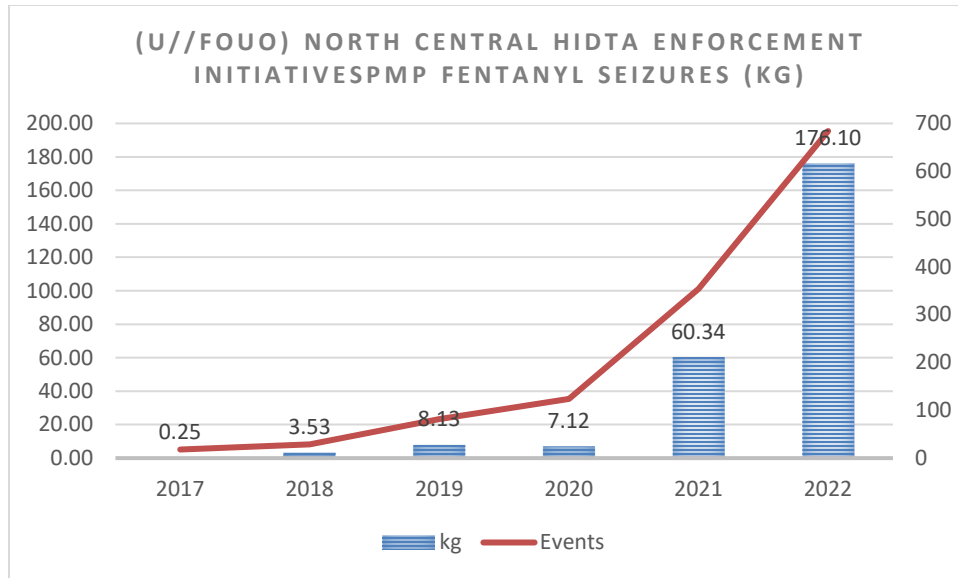


Figure 4 (U//FOUO) North Central HIDTA Law Enforcement Initiatives PMP Fentanyl Seizures (kg)<sup>29</sup>

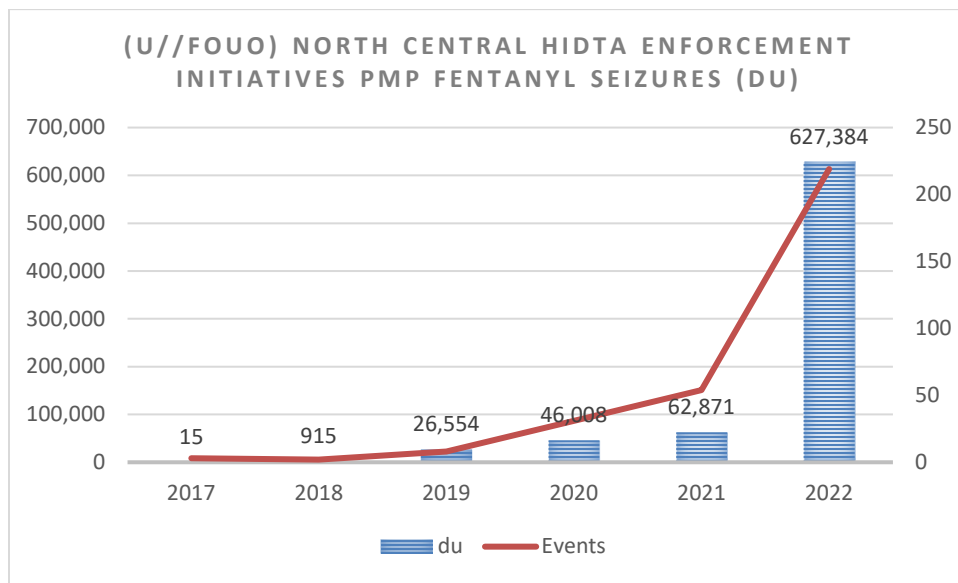


Figure 5 (U//FOUO) North Central HIDTA Law Enforcement Initiatives PMP Fentanyl Seizures (DU)<sup>30</sup>

(U) Use

(U) Treatment Episode Data Set's (TEDS) are a compilation of data from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). There have been alarming increases in total treatment admissions as well as an increase in treatment admissions for heroin and other opiates between 2020 and 2021. As detailed by the most recently available SAMHSA TEDS data from 2021, there were 15,373 treatment admissions, a 15% increase from the previous year. This is also 20% of the total 77,228 treatment admissions in 2021 and is consistent with the reporting from the previous year. The total treatment admissions are 20% greater than 2020, consistent with the increasing quantity of opioids that

law enforcement agencies have been observing.<sup>31</sup>

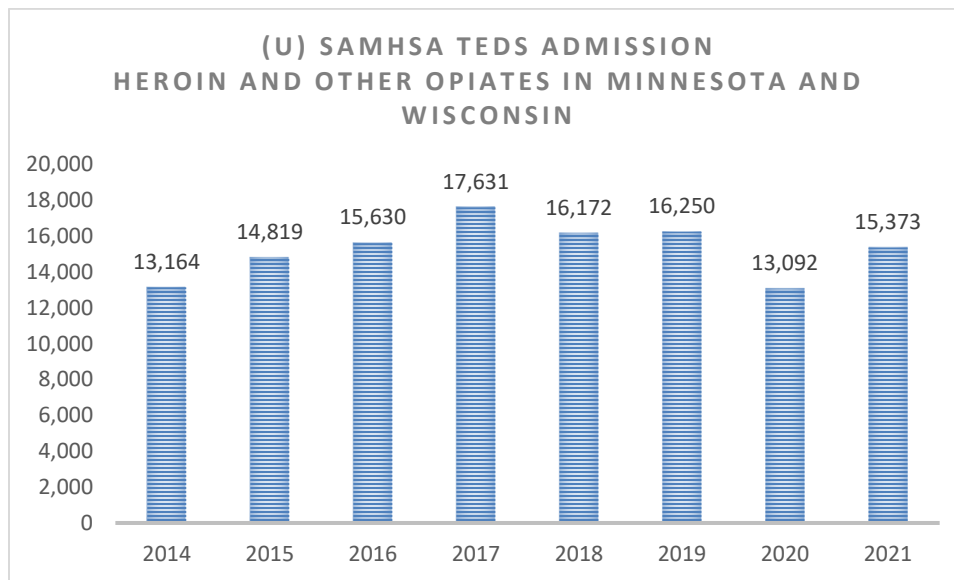


Figure 6 (U) SAMHSA TEDS Admissions Heroin and Other Opiates as Primary Substance in Minnesota and Wisconsin<sup>32</sup>

(U) The most recently complete data set available for statewide overdose reporting is CY 2021. Oftentimes county medical examiners take months to complete cases from a previous year due to high volume. The most recently available data for Minnesota and Wisconsin shows a 22% increase from 1,881 in 2020 to 2,403 in 2021. County medical examiners are a good source for more recent overdose data, and preliminary numbers show that this trend is increasing in 2022. While fentanyl related overdoses (fatal and non-fatal) are on the rise, heroin involved overdoses appear to be decreasing.<sup>33</sup>

(U) Naloxone, or commercially known as Narcan is an FDA approved compound that can temporarily stop or reverse the effects of opioid or opiate related overdoses. Milwaukee County Emergency Medical Services reports the use of Narcan and is a key indicator of the prevalence of opioids as it pertains to overdoses. In concordance with the other indicators of the prevalence of opioids in the NCHR, the use of NARCAN in Milwaukee County has continued to build on the increases seen in previous years. Since 2019, the number of NARCAN deployments has increased by 256% from 795 uses to 2,043 uses in 2022 and are expected to continue to increase through 2023 and into CY 2024. This drastic increase includes a 20% increase since 2021.<sup>34</sup>

(U//FOUO) The North Central HIDTA Threat Assessment for Program Year 2021 reported isotonitazene to be an emerging threat to the NCH's area of operation. In 2022, Isotonitazene was still being observed but had drastically reduced its presence. However, a new emerging threat is being encountered. Xylazine is a drug used in veterinary medicine as a sedative with analgesic and muscle relaxant properties, according to DEA Diversion sources.<sup>35</sup> Initial medical examiner reporting from Milwaukee County showed CY2019 was the first and only observed case of xylazine involved in a fentanyl overdose. In 2022, there were 46 fatal cases involving xylazine as a component identified by Milwaukee County Medical Examiner toxicology. While synthetic opioids are expected to continue to pose a major threat to the region, it is



expected that Xylazine will continue to be comingled with fentanyl (FRS) and contribute to a greater threat in 2024. This assessment is made with medium confidence<sup>b</sup> based on medical examiner office reporting, open-source research, intelligence reporting, and law enforcement reporting.<sup>36</sup> It is unclear how Xylazine is being procured and implemented in the drug supply. Some anecdotal reports from law enforcement sources suggest that Xylazine can be purchased from internet sources. It is unknown if there is a diversion from veterinary clinics or commercial drug suppliers to these businesses.

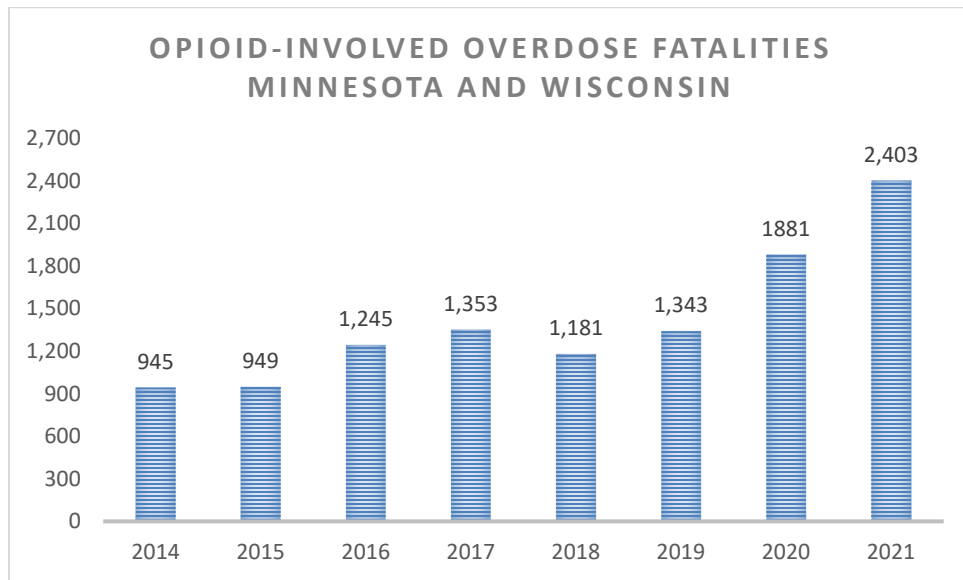


Figure 7 (U) Opioid-Involved Overdose Fatalities in Minnesota and Wisconsin<sup>37</sup>

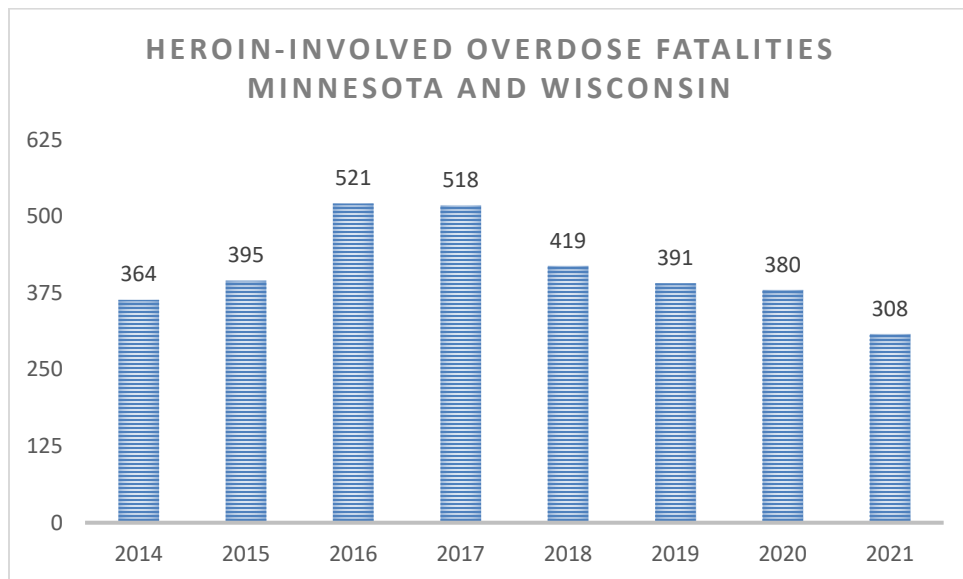


Figure 8 (U) Heroin-Involved Overdose Fatalities in Minnesota and Wisconsin<sup>38</sup>

<sup>b</sup> (U) Medium confidence generally means the information is credibly sourced and plausible but not of sufficient quality or corroborated sufficiently to warrant a higher level of confidence. Additional reporting or information sources have the potential to increase the confidence levels or substantively change analytical judgments.

(U//FOUO) Law enforcement sources report that counterfeit prescription pills have been introduced into the illicit drug market and continue to grow in popularity. Law enforcement sources observed an emerging trend of local DTOs obtaining their own pill presses and dies to produce their own pills, instead of relying on Transnational Criminal Operations (TCOs), such as drug cartels, to produce these pills outside of the United States and smuggle them into the country. Oftentimes these counterfeit pills include fentanyl (FRS) and other adulterants and fillers that contribute to the increasing rate of overdoses. These counterfeit pills are also being sourced internationally from China, India, and other Asian countries or directly from Mexico<sup>39</sup>. There are reports that China does provide precursor chemicals to Mexican drug cartels to produce fentanyl (FRS). Actual production of pills in China has all but stopped as of 2021. Most of these shipments are primarily transported through the Southwest Border states of Arizona or California prior to entering the NCHR. In rare cases, fentanyl is transported into the region where it is mixed with binding agents and other substances and pressed into pill form prior to distribution.<sup>40</sup> The interdiction of pill presses linked to some DTOs have occurred in an increasing frequency.

(U//FOUO) Counterfeit pills are often produced in certain colors and shapes and pressed with markings, to replicate legitimate prescription drugs. Counterfeit Oxycodone pills, often referred to as “M-Box” pills or “Mexican Oxy”, are common. These pills range from light to medium-blue and are pressed with a letter “M” within a square on one side and a “30” on the other.<sup>41</sup> A new trend has emerged in opiates with rainbow colored M-Box pills that contain fentanyl (FRS). TCOs have distributed these pills throughout the United States, and in late 2022 a Kenosha County, Wisconsin law enforcement initiative observed them for the first time in their Area of Responsibility (AOR). It is expected that law enforcement throughout the NCHR will encounter more of these pills. The prevalence of fentanyl dosage units is further demonstrated by a seizure of approximately 200,000 DU from the Minnesota St. Paul Airport (MSP) Interdiction Initiative. Law enforcement personnel and professionals working with overdose victims report victims as completely unaware of the presence of fentanyl in pills they obtain while others specifically seek these pills knowing the potent effects they contain.<sup>42</sup>



Figure 9 (U//FOUO) Close-up photo of “Rainbow M-Box” pills recovered in Kenosha, Wisconsin<sup>43</sup>

(U//FOUO) Violent crimes and property crimes continue to be a major factor in the trafficking of opioids. Shootings motivated by drug-related disputes create the highest risk to the community as many of these result in homicides and have increased in frequency in 2022. NCHR law enforcement investigators reported firearms are frequently recovered, some of them linked to other violent crimes in the NCHR. In 2022, NCH enforcement initiatives reported a total of over 1400 firearms recovered, many of them with modifications that made them fully automatic. Opioid users within the NCHR continue to commit property crimes to fund their addictions. These crimes include home burglaries, retail business thefts, and vehicle thefts. Stolen property, such as catalytic converters, machinery, tools, and yard equipment are then either pawned or used to barter directly with drug dealers.<sup>44</sup>

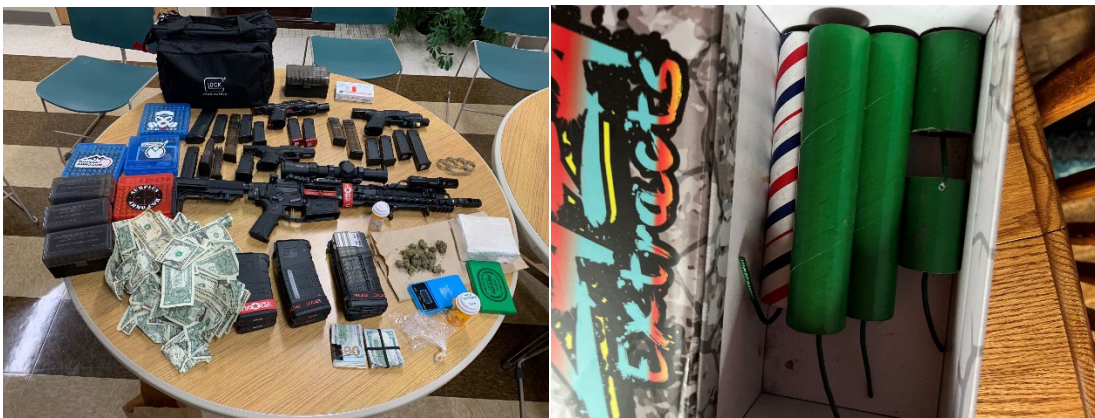


Figure 10 (U//FOUO) a firearm/explosive seizure by an initiative in Kenosha County, Wisconsin<sup>45</sup>

### (U) Price

(U//FOUO) Heroin prices in the NCHR remained relatively stable in the past year after a steady decline. NCH law enforcement initiatives report the price of a kilogram of heroin as ranging from \$30,000 to \$50,000, while gram-level prices ranged from \$50 to \$150. In general, prices were higher in southeastern Wisconsin around the Milwaukee County area drug market. This may be due to Milwaukee's status as an end-user market, rather than a redistribution hub. The gram-level price of fentanyl and FRS in the NCHR ranged from \$60 to \$100, while fentanyl tablets or DU ranged from \$10 to \$20 per unit.<sup>46</sup>

### (U) Transportation

(U//FOUO) The methods used to transport opioids to the NCHR remain relatively the same with a few notable outliers. It was reported by the Interdiction initiative in the North Central HIDTA that kilograms have been discovered in multiple plastic wrappings with motor oil or other types of petroleum based or synthetic lubricants embedded within the layers of wrappings. Law enforcement is uncertain whether this packaging method is to thwart detection by law enforcement K-9 units, or the detection equipment law

enforcement uses or both. Opioids are primarily trafficked by vehicles the U.S. interstate corridor systems via personal, rental, and commercial motor vehicles from source areas such as the Southwest Border states to the NCHR. NCHR law enforcement initiatives reported an increase in the frequency of opioid conveyance via parcels shipped through the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) and private express consignment companies' services, such as UPS, FedEx, DHL, due to the low cost and low risk to traffickers.<sup>47</sup>



Figure 11 (U//FOUO) 200,000 fentanyl DU seizure by an interdiction unit in Minnesota<sup>48</sup>

(U//FOUO) Drug traffickers and source suppliers are constantly looking for ways to maneuver around the law by developing new methods of concealing their shipments. Concealment attempts vary between the trafficker using methods to hide narcotics in plain sight, to others attempting to thwart law enforcement methods directly by concealing the smell. Reported examples include concealing drugs within food and beverage containers, nutritional supplements, aerosol spray cans, custom trap compartments, and natural voids within vehicles, as well as travelling with no concealment at all, other than placement in bags, boxes, and suitcases that are not hidden.

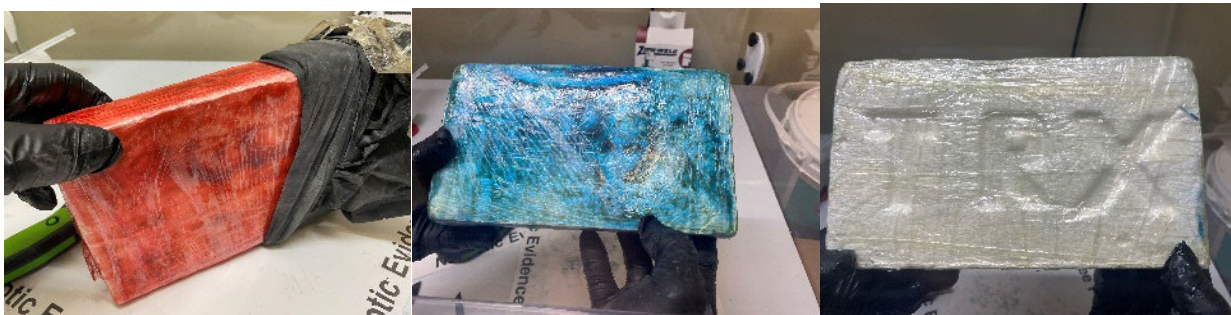


Figure 14 (U//FOUO) Close-up photo of grease concealment method via the HIDTA Interdiction TF.<sup>49</sup>



(U) Key Intelligence Questions

- (U//FOUO) To what extent are fentanyl and FRS mixed with other drugs (namely heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine) prior to consumption?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent are regional, local suppliers and dealers pressing their own pills for distribution in their area of operation?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent do drug dealers and end users have knowledge of fentanyl and FRS being mixed with the drugs they sell and purchase?
- (U//FOUO) How does the Russia-Ukraine war impact the shipment and trafficking of opioids into the United States?
- (U//FOUO) How will trade tensions between the U.S. and China impact drug pricing and availability?
- (U//FOUO) What methods are utilized to launder opioid trafficking cash flows?
- (U//FOUO) What other synthetic opioids, in addition to fentanyl (FRS) and adulterants such as isotonitazene and xylazine can be expected to enter drug markets?



## 5b. (U) Methamphetamine

(U//FOUO) Methamphetamine is defined as a synthetic drug with more rapid and lasting effects than amphetamine, used illegally as a stimulant. Law enforcement sources report methamphetamine to be a significant and growing drug threat to the NCHR in 2023 as 16% of survey respondents ranked it as their number one threat, while the remaining respondents from Minnesota and 50% of Wisconsin respondents ranked it as their number two threat. Violent crime and property crime are associated with those involved with the use and trafficking of methamphetamine throughout the NCHR. Methamphetamine is still commonly sourced from Mexico and Southwest Border states and trafficked to the Minneapolis/St. Paul area for further distribution throughout the entire NCHR and beyond. Law enforcement sources have reported an increase in the number of instances methamphetamine being trafficked directly to major metropolitan areas throughout the NCHR are becoming more common originating from the Twin Cities area of Minnesota. Additionally, interdiction efforts have resulted in seizures of what appears to be MDMA pills. Further testing has determined that these pills are a mixture of methamphetamine and fentanyl (FRS). Methamphetamine overdoses have remained stable since 2021 according to initial medical examiner reporting. Treatment admissions records have shown a slight increase from 2020 to 2021.<sup>50</sup>

### (U) Key Observations

- (U//FOUO) According to law enforcement sources, DTOs trafficking methamphetamine into and from the NCHR continue the increasing trend of methamphetamine embedding itself in our communities. Law enforcement reports identifying 63 DTOs trafficking methamphetamine and methamphetamine pills in the NCHR. This is approximately 52% of all DTOs reported by NCH enforcement initiatives in 2022. Law enforcement reported that slightly more than half, 32 of the 63 DTOs, were polydrug organizations.<sup>51</sup>
- (U//FOUO) Although methamphetamine seizure events have increased, the number of kilograms seized has decreased. Law enforcement reported that 1,834 kilograms were seized in 2021, and 836 kilograms were seized in 2022. Law enforcement believes that the continuing rise of substances containing fentanyl (FRS) is a reason for the reduction in methamphetamine seizures.<sup>52</sup>
- (U//FOUO) The price of methamphetamine varies significantly across the NCHR. As reported by NCH enforcement initiatives, one pound of methamphetamine costs between \$5,000 and \$9,000. Law enforcement in the West Central area near Eau Claire, WI and the Northeast area near Green Bay, WI, report prices in the middle to lower end of this range, while agencies in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area in Minnesota reported the lowest prices. Southeastern Wisconsin continues to report the highest prices due to dealers sourcing their methamphetamine from Minnesota.<sup>53</sup>
- (U//FOUO) The most common source location of methamphetamine supply entering the NCHR is Mexico via Southwest Border states. The drug is most commonly transported into the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area of Minnesota, filtering out to smaller hubs in places like Fargo, ND and St. Cloud, Minnesota. Methamphetamine is also being increasingly trafficked from

Chicago through Kenosha into Milwaukee and being redistributed to Northeastern Wisconsin cities such as Sheboygan and Green Bay.<sup>54</sup>

- (U//FOUO) Initial reporting from HIDTA-designated counties medical examiners offices indicates methamphetamine-involved overdose fatalities remained relatively stable with under 5% of total change in preliminary 2022 data compared to 2021. CY2022 reports are expected to be available after the drafting of this document.<sup>55</sup>

(U) Availability

(U//FOUO) Law enforcement reports that availability of methamphetamine to be high NCHR communities, although total kilogram seizures have decreased. In 2021, roughly 1,834 kilograms of methamphetamine were seized by law enforcement. In 2022, law enforcement reported a 55% decrease of methamphetamine seized, to 836 kilograms. Although the weight of seizures in kilograms dropped in 2022 from the previous year, the number of seizure events remained the same, and even increased to 930 in 2022.<sup>56</sup> Testing of methamphetamine samples has been resulted in being positive for fentanyl. NCH enforcement initiatives have reported seizures of dosage units containing methamphetamine in the form of pills. Epic NSS State Nexus reports show a seizure of 298 kilograms of methamphetamine that was intended for the NCHR in 2022.<sup>57</sup>

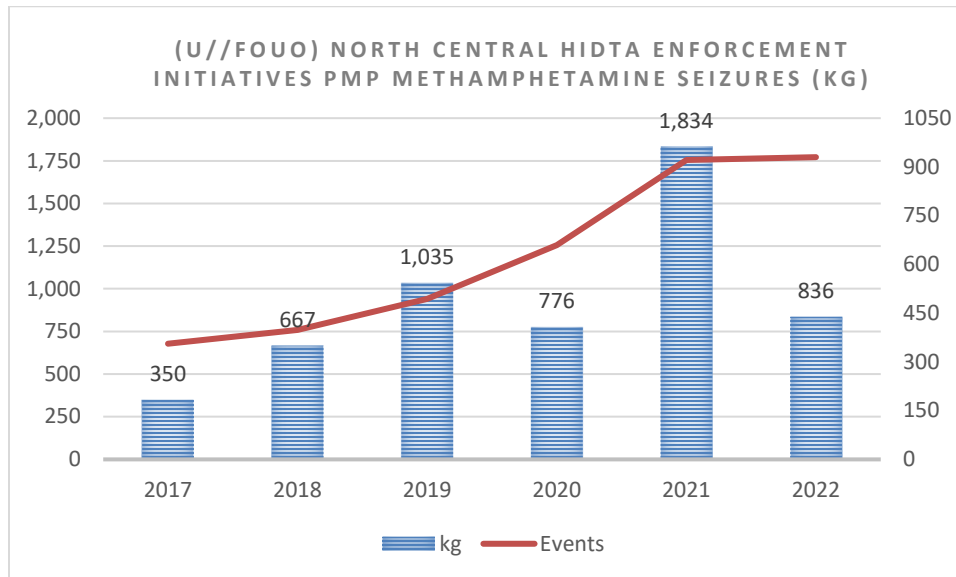


Figure 12 (U//FOUO) North Central HIDTA Law Enforcement Initiatives PMP Methamphetamine Seizures (kg)<sup>58</sup>

(U//FOUO) Clandestine labs pose a very low to non-existent threat to the NCHR, as there was no clandestine lab activity reported in 2022. Due to each state’s pseudoephedrine laws and reporting systems, it is difficult for potential “cooks” to obtain enough precursors to manufacture enough product suitable for distribution. DTOs must source methamphetamine from outside of the NCHR to adequately supply distribution to drug markets throughout the NCHR.<sup>59</sup>

**(U) Use**

(U) As detailed in the most recently available SAMHSA TEDS data, treatment admissions in Minnesota and Wisconsin in which amphetamines were listed as the primary substance of abuse admissions in 2021 continued to increase to 18,356 from 2020. This is an 18% increase from 2020 and close to the all-time high numbers observed in 2019. Minnesota has nine times more treatment admissions for amphetamines than Wisconsin, consistent with law enforcement reporting of greater methamphetamine seizures in that area.<sup>60</sup>

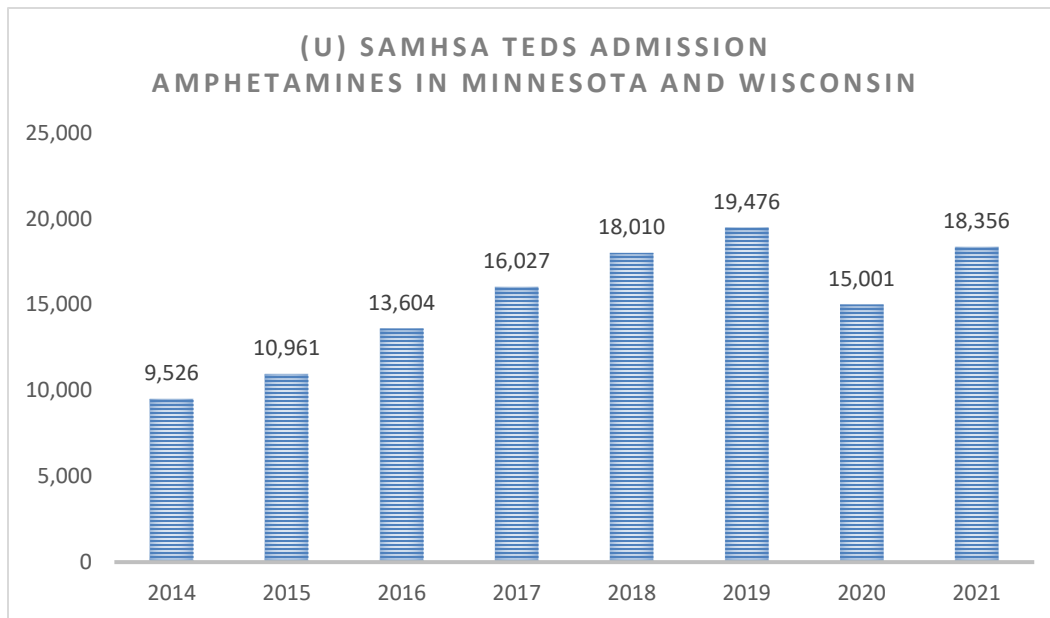


Figure 13 (U) SAMHSA TEDS Admissions Amphetamines as Primary Substance in Minnesota and Wisconsin<sup>61</sup>

(U//FOUO) Overdose fatalities and treatment admission data throughout the NCH region conclude that methamphetamine consumption is still very prevalent. It is reported by county medical examiners that fentanyl-methamphetamine mixtures may be contributing to the increase in overdose numbers involving psychostimulants. Fatal overdoses involving psychostimulants have risen nearly 30% from 595 in 2020 to 823 in 2021.<sup>62</sup> In most of these fatalities, methamphetamine was identified with one or more other substances: namely heroin, fentanyl and FRS, or opioid/opiate pharmaceuticals. Multiple instances of acute methamphetamine toxicity were also reported.<sup>63</sup>

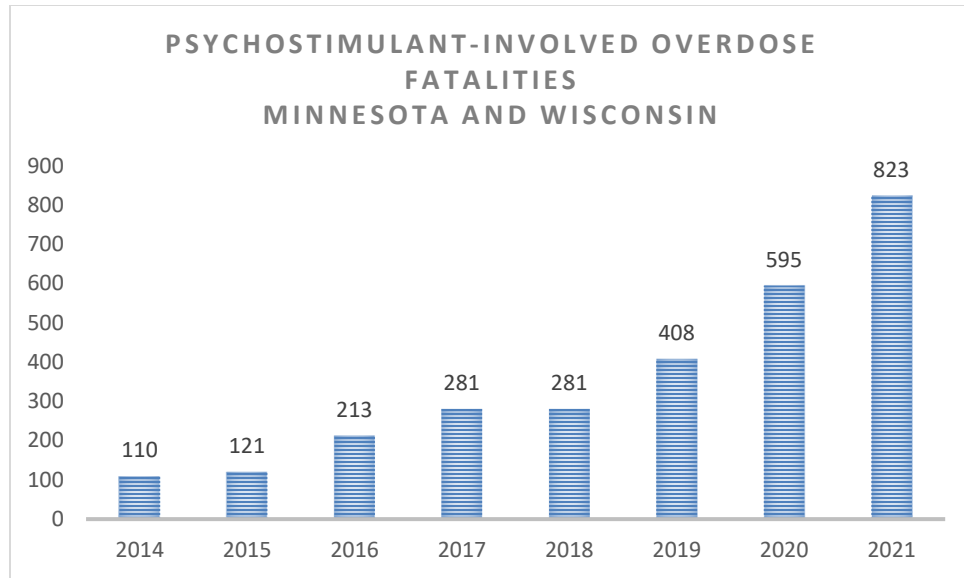


Figure 14 (U) Psychostimulant-Involved Overdose Fatalities in Minnesota and Wisconsin<sup>c64</sup>

(U//FOUO) Law enforcement reported that methamphetamine trafficking and use is a major factor in driving property crime and violent crime within the NCHR. It is reported by HIDTA enforcement initiatives that users will resort to property crimes such as thefts and burglary to fund their drug use. Law enforcement reported that some local drug dealers are opportunistic and commit crimes such as home burglaries, retail business thefts, catalytic converter thefts from vehicles, thefts of equipment and materials from construction sites, and raiding rented storage units to fund the activities of the members. Violent crimes are often associated to drug dealers, violent gangs, and users robbing each other during drug transactions, commonly referred to as a “rip.” Violence is commonly associated during these “rips”, and as retribution for previous violent acts and robberies. Violent retaliation among these types of criminals is common.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>c</sup> (U) Psychostimulants is an abbreviation for Psychostimulants with abuse potential (primarily methamphetamine), as determined by the T43.6 ICD-10 multiple cause-of-death code. This does not include cocaine-involved overdose fatalities, which are filed using the T40.5 ICD-10 multiple cause-of-death code.

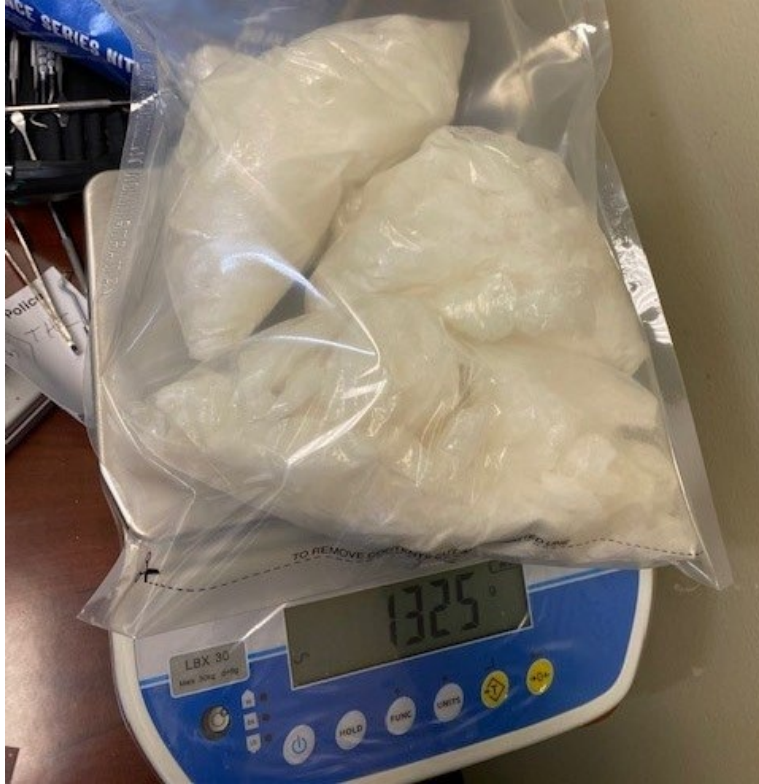


Figure 15 (U//FOUO) Large seizure of methamphetamine recovered in Milwaukee County, Wisconsin<sup>66</sup>

### (U) Price

(U//FOUO) Methamphetamine prices are among the lowest in the NCHR Twin Cities area due to it being the major transshipment hub to the rest of the NCHR and other Midwest states. Law enforcement considers the closer to a wholesale source of supply for drugs the lower the price. Average overall prices for methamphetamine have increased slightly, ranging from \$5,000 to \$9,000 per pound depending on the area of trafficking. Gram level user amounts and DU prices contribute to be popular throughout the NCHR.<sup>67</sup>

### (U) Transportation

(U//FOUO) The methamphetamine transported to the NCHR is primarily sourced from large scale production laboratories in Mexico smuggled into the U. S. Southwest Border states, and on to source supplier locations throughout the U.S.<sup>68</sup> According to law enforcement reporting methamphetamine is frequently conveyed via the interstate highway system in personal, rental, and commercial motor vehicles, including commercial car carriers. Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, is a distribution hub for much of the Upper Midwest, a region covering Minnesota, itself, along with Iowa, Michigan, North and South Dakota, and Wisconsin. Methamphetamine is also transported directly to other cities within the NCHR, such as Green Bay, Wisconsin, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, using these same types of vehicles. Law



enforcement reports shipments from Fresno, CA that has become a common transshipment point from sources in Mexico before reaching the NCHR. According to law enforcement reporting smaller quantity shipments are sent to cities throughout the NCHR via U.S. Postal Service and other express consignment companies, with Arizona and California being cited as the most common originating locations. NCH law enforcement initiatives in Wisconsin continue to report increasing instances in which methamphetamine is being trafficked into the NCHR from or through Chicago, Illinois. However, at quantities and incidents much less than Minnesota. NCH law enforcement initiatives in Minnesota continue to report Mexican drug cartels, especially the Sinaloa Cartel, packing additional cocaine shipments with larger methamphetamine shipments. It is believed this may be an effort to promote cocaine sales due to larger profit margins.<sup>69</sup>

(U//FOUO) NCH law enforcement continues to report a variety of attempted drug concealment methods by methamphetamine traffickers. Examples reported include methamphetamine concealed in food containers, commercial shipments of automotive parts, PVC pipes, and after-market custom trap compartments and natural voids within vehicles. One novel method seen is packaging bulk methamphetamine in multiple spools of steel sheeting for shipment. Attempts to conceal the odor with motor oil, coffee grounds, green tea, hot sauce, vacuum-sealed bags, and dryer sheets, were also reported.<sup>70</sup>

#### (U) Key Intelligence Questions

- (U//FOUO) What makes Minnesota appealing as a methamphetamine transshipment area?
- (U//FOUO) What is the full extent of methamphetamine distribution from the hub of Minneapolis-St. Paul Minnesota?
- (U//FOUO) Has the movement of methamphetamine from Chicago, through Wisconsin, impacted methamphetamine trafficking in Illinois? What impact has methamphetamine sourced from Chicagoland had on the NCHR?
- (U//FOUO) What are the biggest source supply states for methamphetamine in the United States?
- (U//FOUO) Can post-seizure data analysis from the NCHR assist in determining the location of production laboratories in Mexico and routes of transportation from Mexico into the United States?
- (U//FOUO) What are the full range of property crimes being utilized to fund methamphetamine addiction and trafficking?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent are DTOs involving Native Americans and Tribal lands for methamphetamine transportation from northern Minnesota to Canada?
- (U//FOUO) What law enforcement deficiencies are being exploited by methamphetamine traffickers to further their operations in the NCHR?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent are Mexican cartels using smuggling methods to ship

methamphetamine with quantities of cocaine?

### 5c. (U) Cocaine

(U//FOUO) Cocaine is defined as an addictive drug derived from coca or prepared synthetically. Roughly 50% of law enforcement survey respondents rank cocaine as the third greatest drug threat in the NCHR. With the continuously growing threat of opioids in our communities this has decreased the attention on cocaine as a threat to our communities. However, cocaine (powder and crack) is still a significant threat as reflected by overdose fatalities, seizures, and treatment episode data. Additionally, the association of violent crime and property crime with the trafficking of cocaine remains a consistent concern to law enforcement in the NCHR. Law enforcement reported that cocaine entering the NCHR is sourced from suppliers in Mexico through Southwest Border states into the U.S., transported through Chicago, Illinois, and from the Caribbean Border Corridor through the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico. Chicago has been reported as a source city for local NCHR suppliers and will frequently make trips using I-94 to obtain more product.<sup>71</sup>

### (U) Key Observations

- (U// FOUO) Reporting by NCHR initiatives show efforts of trafficking cocaine into the region have increased. NCH law enforcement initiatives report identifying 58 DTOs distributing cocaine powder and base (aka: crack cocaine) in the region which is approximately 47% of all DTOs reported in 2022. Forty-five of these DTOs were reported as polydrug organizations.<sup>72</sup>
- (U//FOUO) Although cocaine and crack cocaine seizures have decreased by 28% from 353 kgs to roughly 256 kilograms in 2022, total seizure quantities remain 246% greater than quantities seized in 2020. Seizure events have increased 10% from 943 in 2021, to 1,039 in 2022. Postal routes from Puerto Rico for cocaine conveyance is increasing, according to NCH reporting.<sup>73</sup>
- (U//FOUO) The reported price of a kilogram of cocaine in the NCHR remained consistent in 2022 between approximately \$26,000 and \$37,000.<sup>74</sup>
- (U//FOUO) Law enforcement reports the main source origins of cocaine entering the NCHR are from Mexico through the Southwest Border states of Arizona, California, and Texas. Cocaine is transported via personal, rental, and commercial vehicles on interstate highway systems, and often routes through the Chicago-area before entering the NCHR. Other transportation methods such as airline, railway, or passenger buses are occasionally seen.
- (U//FOUO) Reporting from NCHR indicates cocaine-only involved overdoses stabilized in 2022, however, reporting is still ongoing by medical examiners in early 2023 on 2022 incidents.<sup>75</sup>

(U) Availability

(U//FOUO) Cocaine availability in the NCHR is reflected by law enforcement reported seizures, involvement in overdose fatalities, and treatment admission rates. Cocaine seizures by kilogram have decreased 28% since 2021. However, quantities seized by law enforcement remain 246% above quantities seized in 2020 at 256 kilograms. Despite a slight decrease in kilograms seized, seizure events increased by 10% to over 1000 events in 2022. <sup>76</sup>

(U//FOUO) Similarly, EPIC NSS State Nexus Reports identified 85 kilograms of cocaine seized en route to the NCHR in 2022 and is similar to what was recovered in 2021 at 82.5 kilograms. <sup>77</sup> NCH law enforcement initiatives have reported seizing more than 28 kilograms of cocaine in the first quarter of 2023 which is more than 2022 had in the first quarter at 24 kilograms. <sup>78</sup> Crack cocaine appears to be more available in the highly populated HIDTA designated counties, than in less populous counties. <sup>79</sup>

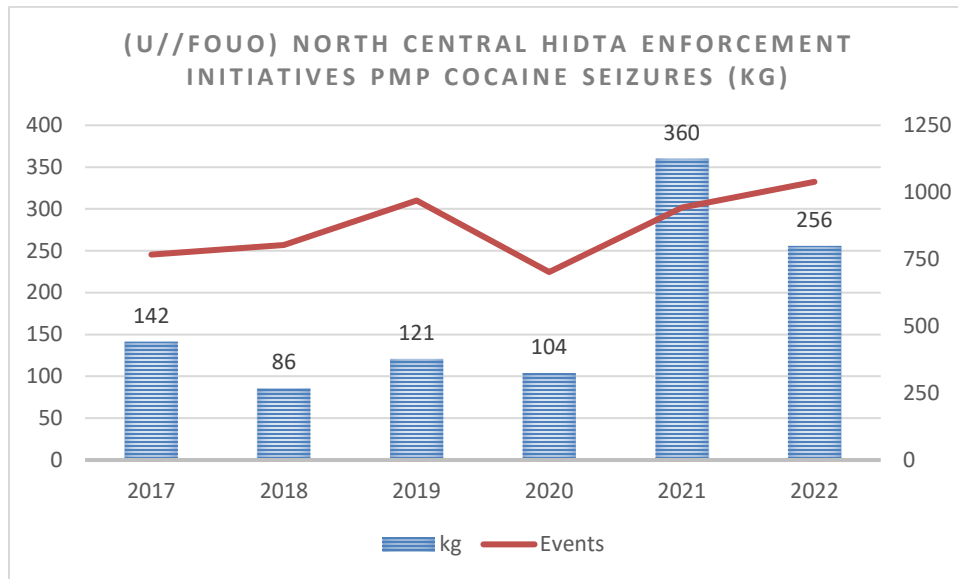


Figure 16 (U//FOUO) North Central HIDTA Law Enforcement Initiatives PMP Cocaine Seizures (kg)<sup>80</sup>

(U//FOUO) Powder cocaine is reported by NCHR law enforcement as more prevalent than crack cocaine. This is corroborated by the vast seizures of cocaine in its powder form, and investigators typically recover smaller level quantities of crack cocaine. Local crack cocaine suppliers typically source powder cocaine and produce crack cocaine themselves for distribution in their areas of operation, rather than relying on a wholesale producer.

**(U) Use**

(U) As detailed in the most recently available SAMHSA TEDS from 2021, there were 3,135 treatment admissions in the NCHR in which cocaine was listed as the primary substance of abuse. In 2020, the number of admissions was 2,857, which makes 2021 about a 9% increase over 2020. Out of the total 77,228 treatment episodes in 2021, cocaine-only, whether smoked or ingested via other routes, made up 4% of treatment admissions.<sup>81</sup>

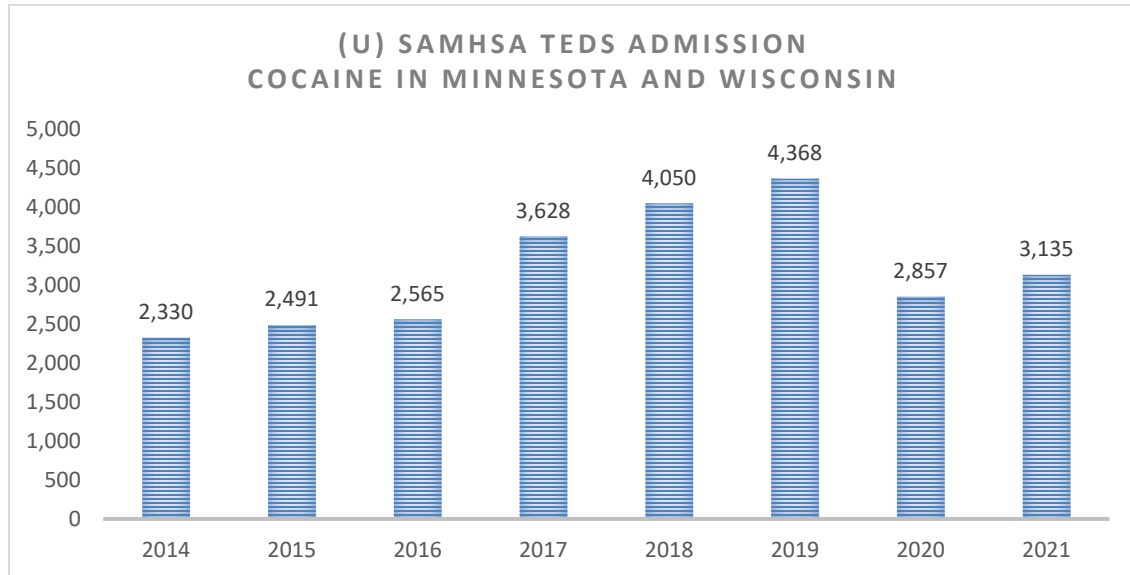


Figure 17 (U) SAMHSA TEDS Admissions Cocaine as Primary Substance in Minnesota and Wisconsin<sup>82</sup>

(U//FOUO) According to the most recently available overdose and treatment data from SAMSHA, there continues to be a trend for substance users consuming various drugs together, most notably cocaine and opioids. Whether users intend to seek out this combination or lacks awareness of fentanyl (FRS) remains unclear. There are anecdotal reports that some users consume both cocaine and opioids as a way to balance out their “high”. This asynchronous consumption is likely a major factor in overdoses throughout the NCHR in 2022 as corroborated by law enforcement interviews and debriefings of arrested users and confidential sources of information and cooperating witnesses.

(U//FOUO) Besides alcohol consumption, it is unclear what other factors are contributing to fatal cocaine overdoses in the NCHR, but the North Central HIDTA assesses that a major contributing factor is the consumption of mixtures of various substances containing fentanyl (FRS). Fatal overdoses involving cocaine as one of the primary substances rose 32% from 2020 to 2021. Initial county medical examiner data shows that this trend continued in 2022. The Milwaukee County Medical Examiner reported 322 fatalities with cocaine as one of the primary substances with many cases still pending.<sup>83</sup>

(U//FOUO) Cocaine trafficking and use continues to contribute to violent crime and property crime within the NCHR. Violent crimes are often associated to drug dealers and drug users robbing each other during drug transactions, commonly referred to as a “rip.” Or an opportunistic criminal becomes aware of a valuable quantity of drugs and/or assets being at a location and violently going after those. Violence, often involving shootings, occurs during these “rips” and as retribution for previous violent robberies. Catalytic converter thefts from vehicles and vehicle thefts were also reported as a means by which some cocaine users fund their addictions.<sup>84</sup>

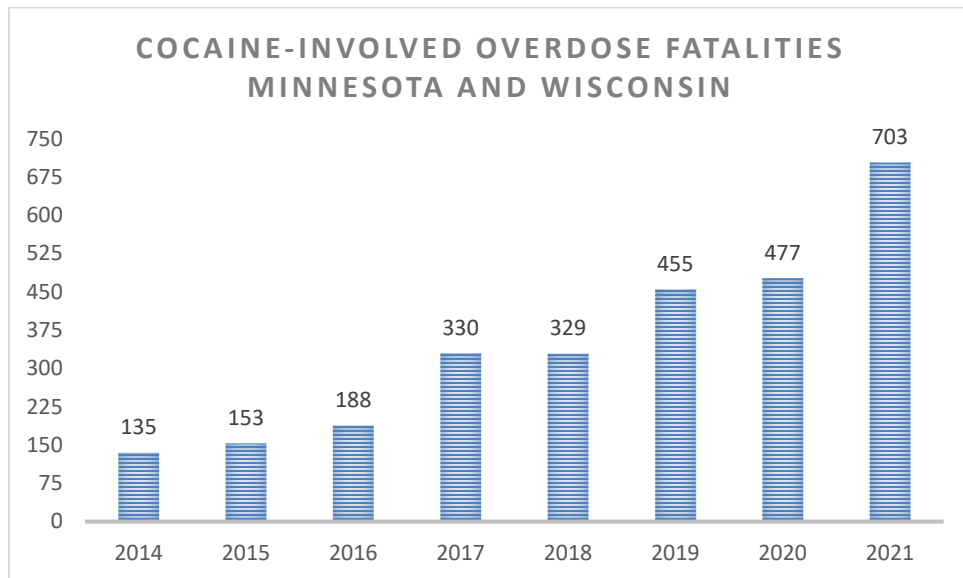


Figure 18 (U//FOUO) Cocaine-Involved Overdose Fatalities in Minnesota and Wisconsin<sup>85</sup>

### (U) Price

(U//FOUO) The price for cocaine varies depending on proximity to source suppliers and the “quality” of the product advertised, among other factors. Law enforcement reported the price of cocaine in the NCHR has remained stable throughout 2022, ranging from \$26,000 to \$37,000 per kilogram. The further away from major source cities, like Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, the greater the price at all quantities of distribution.<sup>86</sup>

### (U) Transportation

(U//FOUO) Cocaine transported to the NCHR primarily originates from Mexico and crosses into the United States through Southwest Border states: specifically, Arizona, California, and Texas. Most often, cocaine is conveyed via the interstate highway corridors in personal, rental, and commercial vehicles and is often routed through the Chicago-area drug market before entering the NCHR. Kilogram-level quantities of cocaine are increasingly transported into the NCHR using U.S. Postal Service and other express consignment companies’ services. These parcels are transported from source areas and increasingly, from the from the Caribbean Border Corridor through the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico to Eastern Wisconsin.



Cocaine is generally transported to and from the primary hubs of Chicago, Illinois, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, as well as Duluth, Minnesota; Green Bay, Wisconsin; Madison, Wisconsin; and Rochester, Minnesota, prior to further distribution throughout the NCHR and beyond. NCH law enforcement initiatives in Minnesota continue to report Mexican drug cartels include partnering cocaine quantities with larger methamphetamine quantities in the same shipments. It is believed this may be an effort to promote cocaine sales due to larger profit margins and the very well-established methamphetamine markets in the NCHR.<sup>87</sup>

(U//FOUO) NCH law enforcement continues to report a variety of attempted drug concealment methods by cocaine traffickers including various packaging materials, human body cavities, custom trap compartments and natural voids within vehicles. The novel method of concealment seen in 2021 was the use of a V6 engine that had been fabricated to look like a V8, with the dummy cylinders containing a hidden compartment that had been used to move cocaine. Since these incidents, similar concealment methods have not been encountered by law enforcement.

#### (U) Key Intelligence Questions Cocaine

- (U//FOUO) To what extent are fentanyl, FRS, and new unidentified substances being mixed with cocaine?
- (U//FOUO) From where and how do DTOs obtain the pill presses and form dies used in their illegal drug trafficking?
- (U//FOUO) At what point in the supply chain are fentanyl and FRS mixed with cocaine?
- (U//FOUO) What reasons are cocaine and methamphetamine quantities being shipped together? Is this unique about this in Minnesota, or are other regions encountering this?
- (U//FOUO) What percentage of total drug related packages go undetected by United States Postal Service agents and other parcel related services?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent are DTOs altering their concealment methods for long-term transportation to avoid detection by law enforcement agencies?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent are cryptocurrencies utilized to launder money for drug trafficking organizations?

## 5d. (U) Marijuana and THC Products

(U//FOUO) NCHR law enforcement ranks marijuana and THC products as the lowest threat to the region, although seizures quantities and the number of seizure events remain high. According to law enforcement sources marijuana is being laced with fentanyl and causing overdoses, unbeknownst to the users who are often unaware of the inclusion of the dangerous opioid.<sup>88</sup> Marijuana continues to show high availability, and its use is associated with all demographics throughout the NCHR. It has been assessed by the North Central HIDTA that fentanyl marijuana mixtures are an emerging threat and will continue to be observed increasing. With the legalization of marijuana in surrounding states, marijuana use is expected to remain high. THC products and marijuana continue to exhibit high potency of THC and historically has been considered by many as a gateway drug for before users begin to use cocaine, various opioids and other “hard drugs”. Violent and property crimes continue to be associated with the trafficking and use of marijuana and THC products. In addition to legally purchased products in other states, most marijuana and THC products entering the region originate from states in which marijuana has been legalized to some extent: primarily California, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington. Shipments via U.S. Postal Service and express consignment services to both distribution hubs and end destinations continue to be prevalent.<sup>89</sup>

### (U) Key Observations

- (U//FOUO) DTOs trafficking Marijuana to and from the NCHR remained stable. Law enforcement initiatives reporting to North Central HIDTA have identified 18 DTOs trafficking marijuana and marijuana edibles to the NCHR. This is approximately 47% of all DTOs reported in 2022. Only three of these DTOs have been identified as solely dealing in THC. Many traffickers in the NCHR dealing cocaine and opioids sell small quantities of marijuana in conjunction with their illegal activities.<sup>90</sup>
- (U//FOUO) Overall, THC products seized by NCH enforcement initiatives decreased 55% between 2021 and 2022, from 819 kilograms in 2021 to 372 in 2022. However, there was a 42% increase in the number of DU of these products from 4,817 in 2021 to 8223 in 2022.<sup>91</sup>
- (U//FOUO) Marijuana seizures by NCH enforcement initiatives increased approximately 26% during this same period, from 2,062 kilograms in 2021 to 2,805 kilograms in 2022. There were two significant NCH enforcement initiative seizures that totaled over 1000 kilograms, each.<sup>92</sup>
- (U//FOUO) Average marijuana prices remained steady to slightly decreasing in 2022, ranging from \$3,000 to \$4,800 per pound for high-grade in the NCHR. THC edible products continue to grow in popularity, and the prices range from \$20 to \$100 per unit depending on the composition of the product.<sup>93</sup>

(U) Availability

(U//FOUO) Marijuana availability continues to change due to legalization efforts throughout the United States and differing popularity levels of different types of THC products. An additional 800 kilograms of marijuana seizures in kilograms occurred in 2022, and this is roughly a 22 percent increase since 2017. The NCH assesses that marijuana legalization efforts have increased interest in its usage among differing demographics and age groups. Since 2017, NCH enforcement initiative seizures of THC products by DU have increased by more than 700% in 2022, including a 42% increase from 4,817 DU in 2021 to 8223 DU in 2022. This is consistent with law enforcement reporting a shift in user demand away from plant-based marijuana to THC products, especially among younger demographics under 25.<sup>94</sup> In Wisconsin, 50% of the population lives within 90 minutes of a legal dispensary in states such as Illinois and Michigan, where marijuana and THC products are legal to sell and possess. Users can often find lower prices with a local dealer selling black market marijuana and THC products. However, these black-market products pose a health and safety risk to the users and dealers due to potential fentanyl contamination and the personal violent crime that is often associated with these activities.<sup>95</sup>

(U//FOUO) EPIC NSS State Nexus Reports list an additional 2,195 kilograms of marijuana seized en route to the NCHR in 2022, which is nearly 500 kilograms than reported in 2021. It is unclear what the nature of this reduction in seizures comes from, but it is assessed that legalization efforts in midwestern states play a significant factor. Marijuana production in the NCHR is limited. Last year the NCHR reported over 300 kilograms of marijuana plants recovered, however this included a single seizure of 283.5 kilograms by a NCH enforcement initiative in Minnesota. Without this outlier, the 35 kilograms seized this year is relatively consistent with other years.<sup>96</sup>

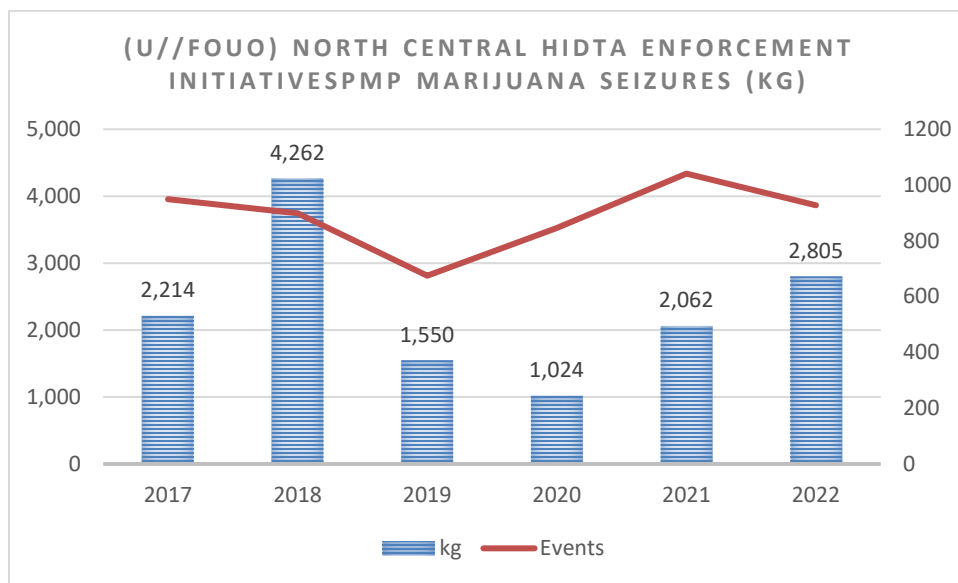


Figure 19 (U//FOUO) North Central HIDTA Law Enforcement Initiatives PMP Marijuana Seizures (kg)<sup>97</sup>

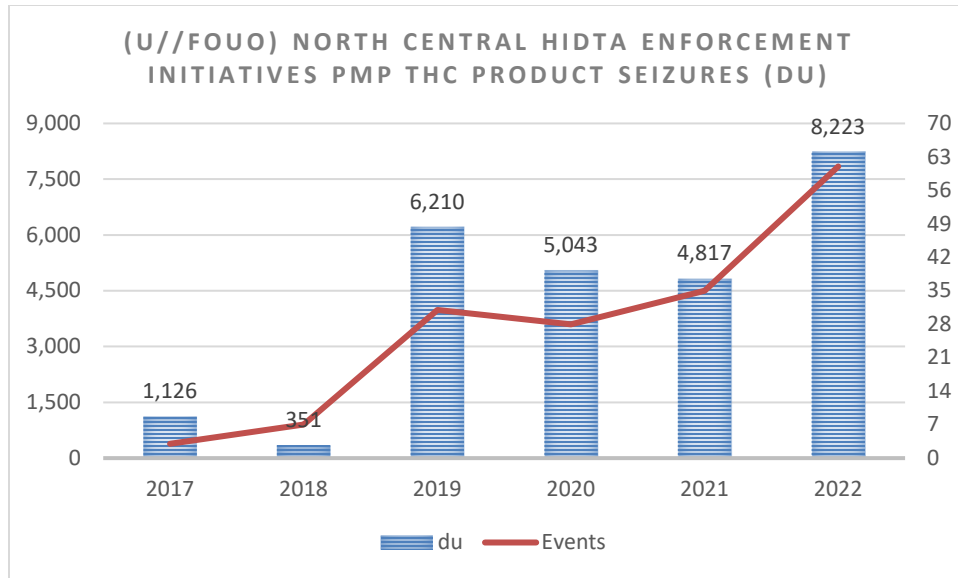


Figure 20 (U//FOUO) North Central HIDTA Law Enforcement Initiatives PMP THC Product Seizures (kg)<sup>98</sup>

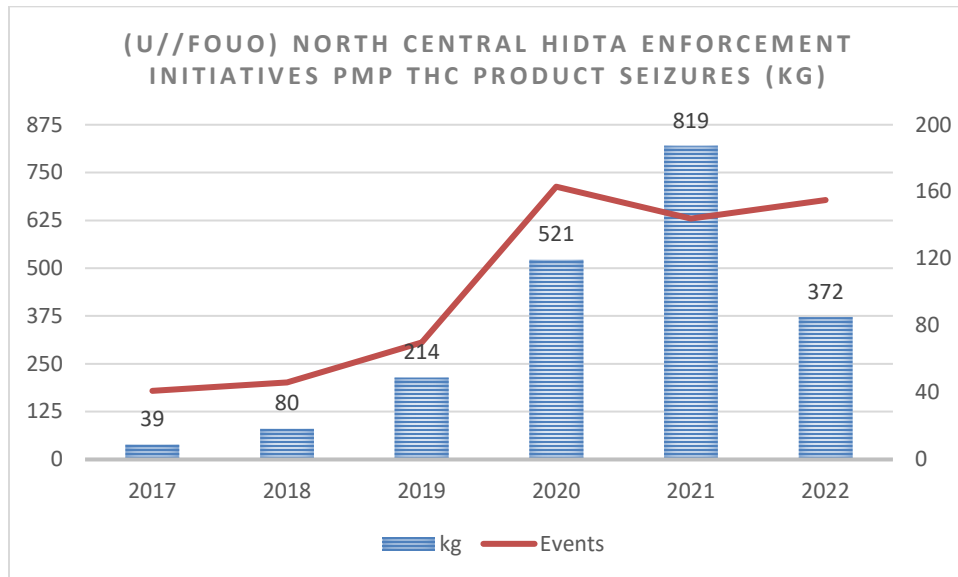


Figure 21 (U//FOUO) North Central HIDTA Law Enforcement Initiatives PMP THC Product Seizures (DU)<sup>99</sup>

(U) Use

(U) The most recently available SAMHSA TEDS data from 2021 details 6699 treatment episodes with marijuana listed as the primary substance of abuse. This number is roughly even with the level seen in 2020 treatment admission data. The North Central HIDTA speculates that the legalization of marijuana in neighboring midwestern states has increased availability to end users. These treatment episodes are 8% of the total 77,228 treatment admissions in 2021.<sup>100</sup>

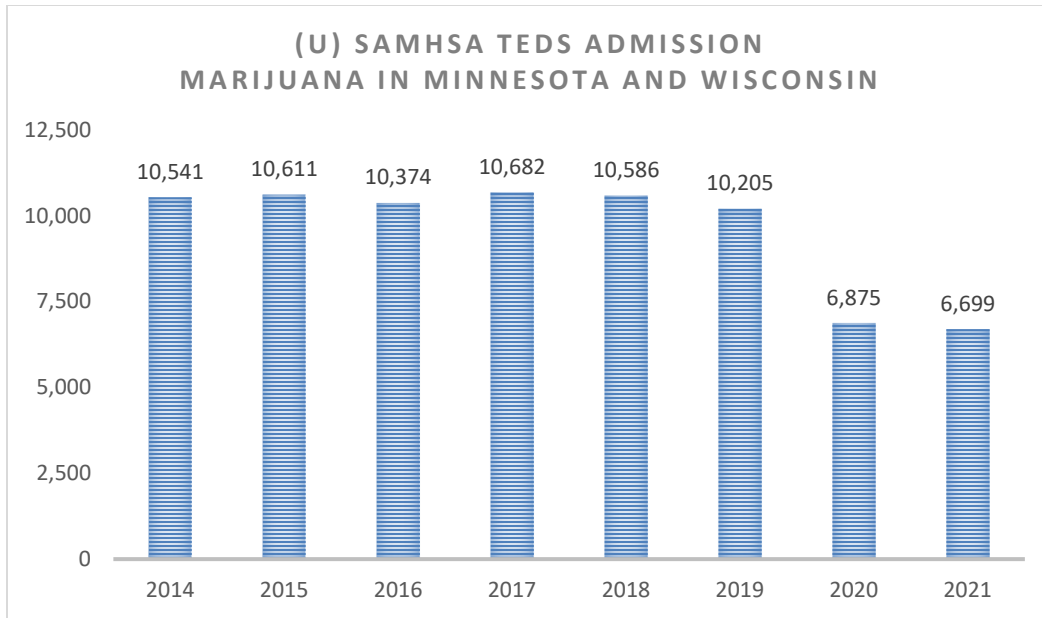


Figure 22 (U) SAMHSA TEDS Admissions Marijuana as Primary Substance in Minnesota and Wisconsin<sup>101</sup>

(U) A common product encountered by law enforcement during marijuana investigations are vape cartridges or vape sticks containing THC that heat a liquid material within the device and produce a vapor that is inhaled and exhaled by the user. Many byproducts and additives within the vape cartridges have been shown to cause various illnesses and health afflictions including but not limited to lung and cardiovascular disease. Depending on the manufacturer, some vaping technology and cartridges have been shown to include chemicals like acetaldehyde, acrolein, and formaldehyde especially those from manufacturers that are not FDA approved.<sup>102</sup>

(U) An emerging threat to marijuana users has been observed within 2022. The Racine, WI police department reported that fentanyl has been detected in samples of marijuana recovered during an investigation. It is unclear what purpose this may have during trafficking and production, as end users are often unaware of the inclusion of opioids prior to consumption. The North Central HIDTA assesses this risk to continue through 2023.<sup>103</sup>

(U) The legalization of marijuana in states neighboring the NCHR and the efforts to release products such as delta-8, delta-9, and CBD, CBG, and HHC among other alternatives that are not scheduled or controlled to circumvent statutes, continue to increase within the NCHR. These products contain no THC which makes the sale of these products throughout the NCHR legal. NCH enforcement initiatives believe that these products could potentially be gateway substances that lead to greater curiosity in trying other substances without the risk of legal sanctions.

(U//FOUO) NCH enforcement initiatives continue to report an association between marijuana and THC product trafficking and violent crime. Violent crimes are often associated with dealers and users being victims of robbery. These crimes are commonly referred to as a “rip” and when firearms are present, can escalate into assaults, shootings, and homicides. Additional violent acts, such as retribution for previous violent robberies, are common. These armed robberies target both drug customers for their money and



drug dealers for their product and cash. The full extent of the violence associated to marijuana and THC product trafficking remains unknown, as parties involved in crimes as victims, witnesses and perpetrators do not inform law enforcement of these transactions and cooperation is often limited.

### (U) Price

(U//FOUO) Marijuana prices depend on many variables. In major distribution hubs where drug products inventory and availability tend to be high, and numerous dealers competing with each other, prices tend to be lower than in other areas of the NCHR. Whether this is due to proximity to states where marijuana is legalized or not is unclear. Bulk marijuana prices remained relatively stable or lowered with reported prices ranging from \$3,000 to \$4,800 per pound. Prices for low-grade marijuana with less THC content were reported as low as \$500 per pound. Pricing for THC concentrate products, such as “honey oil” (so called for its color, also known as hash oil or cannabis oil) and marijuana wax, also decreased, ranging from \$250 to \$400 per ounce, while THC edible product prices ranged from \$20 to \$100 per item, with products that have a more potent THC concentration typically being more expensive.<sup>104</sup>

### (U) Transportation

(U//FOUO) Marijuana and THC products entering the NCHR primarily originate from states in which marijuana has been legalized primarily in California, Michigan, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington. Large shipments of marijuana containing up to several hundred pounds are frequently transported in personal, rental, and commercial motor vehicles along interstate corridors that include paralleling U.S., State, and County highways, to metropolitan distribution hubs. From those hubs, the products are further distributed throughout the region. Often, these large shipments are transported by unwitting third-party shipping companies. Smaller shipments continue to be prevalent, and they are often sent via U.S. Postal Service and express consignment companies’ services to distribution hubs and end destination points. NCH enforcement initiatives reported an increasing quantity and increasing variety of THC products, and an increase in parcel weight associated with the continued prevalence of THC products, such as THC vape cartridges, in the past year.

(U//FOUO) Traffickers continue to use a variety of concealment and no concealment methods when transporting marijuana and THC products. There were no new concealment methods or trends reported in 2022. However, concealment within custom vehicle traps, vehicle spare tires, natural voids within vehicles, a variety of packaging continues to be reported as common. Specific reported examples include heat-sealed packaging, factory-sealed coffee cans, spray foam canisters, carbon paper, and wood-lined cardboard boxes. Traffickers also attempt to conceal product odor by utilizing a variety of methods including dryer sheets, vacuum-sealed bags, scent-proof bags, and multiple layers of packaging materials.

(U) Key Intelligence Questions

- (U//FOUO) To what extent do opioid, methamphetamine, and other drug dealers also sell marijuana to their customers?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent are Mexican drug cartels involved in the supply of marijuana to the NCHR?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent are TCOs, DTOs and COs involved with marijuana grow operations laundering money while exploiting the banking weaknesses of legitimate THC operations?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent are the ongoing marijuana and THC products legalization efforts in the Midwest affecting the illegal sale of marijuana in the NCHR?
- (U//FOUO) What is the impact on the high-level THC marijuana and products businesses from the introduction of the unscheduled Delta-8-THC and Delta-9-THC products?
- How will the legalization of marijuana and THC products impact Delta-8-THC and Delta-9-THC production and sale?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent are grow operations developed on Tribal and public lands?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent is the consumer preference in different demographics shifting from marijuana plant material to THC products?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent do marijuana sales in the NCHR drive violent and property crime?
- (U//FOUO) How often does marijuana, CBD, Delta-8 and other THC related substances act as a gateway drug for adolescent users to using other drugs?

## 6. (U) Drug Trafficking Organizations

(U//FOUO) NCH law enforcement sources report international, multi-state, and local Mexican DTOs affiliated with Mexican Transnational Criminal Operations – specifically, the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), pose the most significant threats to the region. Multi-state Mexican DTOs are often polydrug trafficking organizations and move multi-kilogram quantities of methamphetamine, opioids, cocaine, and other illicit controlled substances from source suppliers in Mexico through southwest border states crossings and on to major metropolitan areas in the NCHR for distribution throughout the region.<sup>105</sup>

(U//FOUO) Local DTOs continue to pose significant threats to urban, suburban, and rural communities throughout the NCHR as they distribute large quantities of drugs throughout the region. Local DTOs and their members are often associated with smaller, local gangs, and are prone to engage in violent activities and property crimes.

### (U) Specific Source Considerations

(U) Information specific to DTOs was primarily sourced from NCH PMP reporting, law enforcement agency responses to NCH Annual Threat Assessment Survey, case reports, and anecdotal reporting from Local, State, Tribal, and Federal law enforcement in the NCHR. The information from NCH PMP reporting and case reports was most critical to the assessments and confidence levels stated in this section.

### 6a. (U) International DTOs

(U//FOUO) NCH law enforcement sources report that Mexican TCOs pose the greatest drug trafficking threat to the communities within the region. These DTOs are trafficking large quantities of methamphetamine, heroin, fentanyl and FRS, cocaine, and other illicit controlled substances into major cities in the NCHR for distribution throughout the region. While the Mexican TCOs generally maintain control of bulk shipments into the region, Multi-State and Local DTOs often distribute drugs further throughout the NCHR and other states in the Upper Midwest.

**(U) Key Observations**

- **(U//FOUO)** NCH law enforcement initiatives reported 13 International DTOs operating within the region, five of which are gang-related and nine of which were reported to be violent.<sup>106</sup>
- **(U//FOUO)** Nearly 85% of International DTOs identified, disrupted, or dismantled were associated to Mexican source areas. Other International DTOs were associated with Puerto Rico and source areas from India.<sup>107</sup>
- **(U//FOUO)** 69% of reported International DTOs in the NCHR are trafficking methamphetamine, and 46% of the reported International DTOs are operating as polydrug trafficking organizations.<sup>108</sup>
- **(U//FOUO)** The primary shipment modes used by International DTOs active in the NCHR are the use of personal, rental, and commercial motor vehicles via the interstate highway system, as well as commercial air travel.

<b>(U//FOUO) International DTOs Identified by North Central HIDTA in 2022</b>	
Characteristics	
Total International DTOs	13
Total Members (Leaders)	86
Average DTO Size	6.62
Multi-Ethnic	5
Gang-Related	5
Violent	9
Polydrug	6
Money Laundering Activities	2
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	1
CPOT	0
RPOT	1

Figure 23 (U//FOUO) International DTOs Reported by North Central HIDTA in 2022<sup>109</sup>

### (U) Affiliation and Membership

(U//FOUO) International DTOs that have operational cells and partner with various local street gangs in the NCHR are reported as having affiliations with the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG) and the Sinaloa Cartel.<sup>110</sup> The Sinaloa Cartel was the most cited cartel observed within the NCHR and was a source of fentanyl and methamphetamine throughout the region. The CJNG was observed but to a lesser degree.<sup>111</sup>

(U//FOUO) DTO leaders within the NCHR were reported as either U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents (LPRs), or foreign nationals from the DTOs source country of operations. Those who are U.S. citizens or LPRs often have familial or other connections to the DTO, such as being childhood friends or classmates with a ranking member.<sup>112</sup>

(U//FOUO) When DTO members are apprehended by law enforcement, DTO leadership quickly replaces them to maintain continuous operations within the NCHR. Foreign nationals have also been sent to the NCHR to support local leadership in maintaining and expanding operations within the region.<sup>113</sup>

(U//FOUO) When monetary compensation fails to motivate its members, DTO leadership commonly uses intimidation and threats of physical violence as a means of control and persuasion to cooperate. This includes threatening DTO members or their families, who often still live in Mexico, or their country of origin, or are in the NCHR.<sup>114</sup>

### (U) Activities and Methods

(U//FOUO) DTOs along the Southwest Border region, both within the United States and Mexico, transport multi-kilogram quantities of methamphetamine, opioids, and cocaine to local DTOs in the NCHR, where the drugs are further distributed throughout the NCHR and to other regions in the Midwest. NCH law enforcement reported personal, rental, and commercial motor vehicles using the interstate corridor highway systems as a primary method of transportation for wholesale drug shipments to the NCHR. This includes hiring unwitting third-party shipping companies to transport drugs concealed within vehicles transported by commercial car carriers, or items designed to hide drugs loaded on pallets for transport in a commercial motor vehicle by an unwitting or person cooperating with the DTO.

(U//FOUO) NCH law enforcement also reported parcels sent via USPS, UPS, FedEx, DHL, and other shipping companies as an increasingly common method of wholesale drug shipments to the NCHR. Air transportation of marijuana and THC products via commercial airlines has also been reported by NCH law enforcement. This includes sending “ghost bags” on commercial flights, where one party sends a suitcase via an airline and a second party picks up the bag at the airline’s destination, as well as transporting marijuana or THC on airlines from one legal state to another, then transporting the drugs into the NCHR via vehicle.<sup>115</sup>

(U//FOUO) Seizures reported to the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC) National Seizure System (NSS), State Nexus Reports show that 73% of vehicle interdiction events originating from the NCHR were mail or parcel related, while 25% were associated with a vehicle stop associated with traffic or highway enforcement.<sup>116</sup> Of the controlled substances seized during vehicle stops in 2022, 66% were transported in sedans or SUVs, with the most common vehicles being Toyota Camry, Nissan Altima, Ford Fusion, and Honda Accord.

License plates were most commonly from Minnesota, California, or Wisconsin.<sup>117</sup> Transportation via bus, commercial vehicle hauler, passenger van, tractor truck, and utility trailer were reported to a lesser extent.

(U//FOUO) NCH agencies noted an increase in controlled substances shipped via U.S. Postal Service and express consignment companies' services, particularly relating to cocaine, marijuana, THC products, methamphetamine, and counterfeit opioid pills. DTOs engage in various tactics to avoid law enforcement interdiction efforts, including but not limited to vacuum sealing packages and using odor masking agents, such as air fresheners, coffee, dryer sheets, and oils. Parcels are frequently delivered to Air BnBs, unsuspecting friends and family, and vacant houses.<sup>118</sup> At least two (2) International DTOs operating within the NCHR were reported as using parcel services for drug distribution throughout the country. One of the DTOs shipped opioids and the other shipped cocaine.<sup>119</sup>

(U//FOUO) According to U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP), nearly 50% of interdicted parcels containing illicit controlled substances and destined for the NCHR in 2022 originated in Asia, most frequently from China and India. These interdicted parcels predominantly contained psychostimulants, such as MDMA and amphetamines, opioids, such as tapentadol and tramadol, cocaine, marijuana, and psilocybin. Approximately 17% of interdicted parcels originated from Europe, most commonly from the Netherlands.<sup>120</sup> In 2022, a NCH law enforcement initiative coordinated with CBP to disrupt and dismantle an international DTO sourcing tramadol from India.<sup>121</sup>

(U//FOUO) Successful International DTOs typically use more disciplined and sophisticated tactics to conduct their operations. This includes compartmentalizing their operations to insulate other members and cells from exposure to law enforcement and other criminal organizations, giving members very specific roles, using multiple couriers, consistently changing phone numbers, and being more selective about the customers to whom they sell. These organizations also use brokers to coordinate business in other countries and hire unwitting, third-party shipping companies to transport drugs. Generally, these DTOs use higher technology, such as end-to-end encrypted application-based communications; electronic payment processors; tracking technology, such as GPS; and audio-visual recording equipment concealed within shipments. Some of the communication apps law enforcement encountered used by these DTOs include Apple FaceTime and iMessage, WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram, and Snapchat.

(U//FOUO) NCH law enforcement intelligence has reported International DTOs operating in the NCHR as using bulk cash smuggling, payment applications, money transmitters, cryptocurrency, local businesses, and third-party loans to launder drug proceeds. In some cases, DTO leadership in Mexico hired brokers to coordinate the collection of bulk cash drug proceeds and bank deposits within the NCHR. After deposit, funds are wired directly to accounts in Mexico or offshore accounts, where it is often converted to cryptocurrency; or transferred to other U.S. accounts where it is believed to be used in trade-based money laundering schemes. Transportation of bulk cash to source locations via parcel, personal, and rental vehicles, commercial freight, and by couriers on commercial flights continues to be reported.



(U) Key Intelligence Questions

- (U//FOUO) How much autonomy does cartel leadership based out of the United States have influence, exert authority, and direct operations over DTOs or other criminal operations operating within the NCHR?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent are international DTOs operating in the NCHR using encrypted communication services to disseminate shipment and payment information?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent is drug-related violence in the region directly related to Mexican TCOs, as compared to conflicts strictly related to local DTOs, gangs, or criminal operations?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent are international DTOs conducting money laundering activities within the NCHR?
- (U//FOUO) How many MLOs are operating within the NCHR, and which methods are they using most commonly to move and launder drug proceeds on behalf of DTOs and COs?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent are firearms and illicit drugs concurrently trafficked between the NCHR and Canada? How frequently do international DTOs engage in the cross-border drug trade between the NCHR and Canada?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent are international and local DTOs connected with human trafficking? How often are individuals who are trafficked by DTOs simultaneously used as drug mules?

6b. (U) Multi-State DTOs

(U//FOUO) Multi-State DTOs continue to pose a significant drug trafficking threat within the NCHR. NCH law enforcement sources report that these DTOs are trafficking large quantities of cocaine, fentanyl, methamphetamine, heroin, marijuana, and THC products into major urban areas in the NCHR, some of which get further distributed throughout the region.

(U) Key Observations

- (U//FOUO) NCH law enforcement initiatives reported 52 multi-state DTOs operating within the region, 13 of which are gang-related and 42 of which were reported to be violent.<sup>122</sup> 80% of multi-state DTOs were reported as violent in 2022, whereas 58% were reported as violent in 2021.<sup>123</sup>
- (U//FOUO) The majority of multi-state DTOs that were disrupted or dismantled were operating in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, and California. To a lesser extent, disruptions to DTOs operating in Arizona, Mexico, and Texas were also reported.<sup>124</sup>
- (U//FOUO) Over 61% of reported multi-state DTOs in the NCHR are operating as polydrug trafficking organizations.<sup>125</sup>

<b>(U//FOUO) Multi-State DTOs Identified by North Central HIDTA in 2022</b>	
Characteristics	
Total Multi-State DTOs	52
Total Members (Leaders)	459
Average DTO Size	8.83
Multi-Ethnic	16
Gang-Related	13
Violent	42
Polydrug	32
Money Laundering Activities	6
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	8
CPOT	0
RPOT	0

Figure 24 (U//FOUO) Multi-State DTOs Identified by North Central HIDTA in 2022<sup>126</sup>

### (U) Affiliation and Membership

(U//FOUO) Multi-state DTOs often obtain their drug supply from international DTOs and/or Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs). While multi-state DTOs can operate within the NCHR, itself, they often operate out of Southwest Border states, such as Arizona and Texas. These organizations also source directly from international sources, which are often affiliated with Mexican TCOs, such as the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG) and Sinaloa Cartel, as well as marijuana source states, such as California, Colorado, Illinois, and Washington. Marijuana source states are often characterized by their legalization of recreational marijuana, resulting in multi-states DTOs producing and distributing marijuana from these states to the NCHR.<sup>127</sup>

(U//FOUO) Approximately 25% of multi-state DTOs were reported as being gang related. Specific gangs cited include national gangs, such as Asian Crips (MN), Black P-Stones (MN), Latin Kings (MN), Sureños (MN), Vice Lords (WI); and regional or local gangs, such as Jackson Terrance (MN), Native Mob (MN), Orchestra Albany (WI), and The Movement (MN). Other national gangs reported as operating within the region include Gangster Disciples, Hells Angels Motorcycle Club (MN), and Outlaw Motorcycle Clubs (WI).<sup>128</sup>

(U//FOUO) Multi-State DTOs operating in the NCHR and more distant locations, such as California or Puerto Rico, are often comprised of immediate or extended familial connections, as well as neighborhood or other community connections maintained after some members relocate for economic opportunities.<sup>129</sup>

### (U) Activities and Methods

(U//FOUO) Multi-state DTOs distributing cocaine, opioids, methamphetamine, and marijuana throughout the region often have set up their operations in or near major distribution hubs. Methamphetamine trafficking organizations often have operations in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area of Minnesota, and in Wisconsin, Brown County to the northeast and Racine County to the southeast. Cocaine and/or heroin trafficking organizations often have source operations in the Chicago-area of Illinois, Southwest Border states, and Mexico, while more local distribution hubs are in south-central and southeastern Wisconsin, as well as the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area. Fentanyl DTOs are often sourced by African American and Hispanic sources in Illinois and Southwest border states, predominantly Arizona and California. The variation in source suppliers may occur due to differing wholesale capabilities, availability, and preexisting relationships. These organizations transport drugs via personal or rental vehicle along the interstate corridors of federal, state, and county highways within the major corridors of I35, I90 and I94 to supply the NCHR. NCH law enforcement reported transportation via air and bus travel was reported to a lesser extent.<sup>130</sup>

(U//FOUO) Multi-state DTOs are generally supplied by larger African American sources in Illinois, and larger Hispanic sources in Mexico and California. Direct supply from Mexican sources via southwest border states such as Arizona, California, and Texas were also reported.<sup>131</sup>

(U//FOUO) NCH law enforcement reported pill and brick press seizures operated by multi-state DTOs. The presses were used to produce methamphetamine pills and kilo bricks, as well as fentanyl kilo bricks.<sup>132</sup>

The use of pill presses domestically allows multi-state DTOs to purchase drugs, fillers, and adulterants in powder forms, produce their own mixtures of potency and increase profits. However, there is an increased risk that these pills are more or inconsistently potent or cross-contaminated with other substances. CBP previously identified China as a source of pill presses destined to individuals within the United States.<sup>133</sup>

(U//FOUO) Members of multi-state marijuana trafficking DTOs continue to establish marijuana grow operations and dispensaries primarily in northern California. This practice is common with Hmong and other Asian DTOs, as well as Caucasian DTOs. NCH law enforcement also reported an increase in marijuana and THC trafficking from states where recreational marijuana is legalized, especially Arizona, Colorado, Illinois and to a lesser extent, Michigan.<sup>134</sup> DTO members transport high-grade marijuana and THC products to the NCHR for local distribution via personal and rental vehicles, commercial airlines, commercial freight shipping, private aircrafts, and U.S. Postal Service and express consignment companies' services. Law enforcement reports there is an increasing level of methamphetamine trafficking associated with Hmong sources.<sup>135</sup>

(U//FOUO) Proceeds from marijuana and THC products sales within the NCHR are frequently returned to source suppliers in California as bulk cash or via wire transfer, and they are used to expand production, further increasing supply and distribution within the NCHR. DTO members continue to travel from the NCHR to California to provide additional labor on the grow sites during harvest season.

(U//FOUO) Members of international and multi-state DTOs with connections to Puerto Rico (PR) travel between the NCHR and Puerto Rico for both drug trafficking and recreational activities. DTO members engage in various DTO related activities, such as drug distribution, payment collection, and acts of violence, throughout the NCHR and the United States as a whole. These Puerto Rican DTOs mainly source cocaine through the Caribbean Corridor from countries such as the U.S. Virgin Islands, Dominican Republic, Columbia, and Peru. These activities include, but is not limited to, drug smuggling efforts into and through Puerto Rico. Law enforcement also reports information that some Mexican Drug Cartels work with PR DTOs and exchange opioids for cocaine that is transported from PR to Central American countries and into the United States lower 48 states via the Southwest Border region. To avoid United States Customs inspections, TCOs and DTOs from Puerto Rico use the U.S. Postal Service and express consignment companies' services to move drugs from the island to the U.S. mainland. The same shipping services are used to return drug proceeds in bulk cash shipments, due to Puerto Rico's status as a U.S. territory. These DTOs use disciplined, sophisticated tactics similar to those used by international DTOs: closely tracking shipments using U.S. Postal Service and express consignment companies' service systems; communicating via social media and end-to-end encrypted applications; compartmentalizing DTO activities; and using a variety of individuals and locations on a rotational schedule to receive incoming parcels and ship outgoing parcels.<sup>136</sup>

(U) Key Intelligence Questions

- (U//FOUO) How frequently are illicit drug trafficking proceeds laundered by the purchase of real property and/or other businesses?
- (U//FOUO) How do Hmong traffickers establish source relationships with Hispanic suppliers? How do these sources establish relationships with local distributors?
- (U//FOUO) How would the legalization of recreational marijuana in Minnesota or Wisconsin impact future multi-state DTO marijuana and THC trafficking in the NCHR? How would this marijuana legalization impact neighboring states?<sup>137</sup>
- (U//FOUO) To what extent do multi-state DTOs manufacture pills using pill presses versus directly acquiring premade pills from wholesale suppliers?

## 6c. (U) Local DTOs

(U//FOUO) Local DTOs continue to pose a significant threat to the NCHR. These DTOs are predominantly responsible for trafficking quantities of methamphetamine, opioids, counterfeit pills, cocaine, marijuana, and THC products throughout the region to the end user. They directly contribute to crime and violence throughout the NCHR.

### (U) Key Observations

- (U//FOUO) NCH law enforcement initiatives identified 58 local DTOs operating within the region, 27 of which were gang-related and 47 of which were reported to be violent. 81% of local DTOs were reported as violent in 2022, whereas 48% were reported as violent in 2021.<sup>138</sup>
- (U//FOUO) Just under 50% of local DTOs in the NCHR are reportedly operating as polydrug DTOs.<sup>139</sup>
- (U//FOUO) Local DTOs have a wide variety of sourcing methods that may include international DTOs, multi-state DTOs, and/or independent traffickers. These suppliers primarily operate in the NCHR, Arizona, California, Illinois, and Mexico.<sup>140</sup>

(U//FOUO) Local DTOs Identified by North Central HIDTA in 2022	
Characteristics	
Total Local DTOs	58
Total Members (Leaders)	405
Average DTO Size	6.98
Multi-Ethnic	10
Gang-Related	27
Violent	47
Polydrug	28
Money Laundering Activities	1
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	2
CPOT	1
RPOT	0

Figure 25 (U//FOUO) Local DTOs Identified by North Central HIDTA in 2022<sup>141</sup>



### (U) Affiliation and Membership

(U//FOUO) Many local DTOs operating in the NCHR have affiliations with street gangs. Specific gangs cited by law enforcement sources include Gangster Disciples, Latin Kings, Aryan Brotherhood (MN), Asian Bloods (MN), EBK & PBK (MN), Get Money Boys (MN), HAM Crazy (MN), No Days Sober (MN), Orchestra Albany (WI), Renzo Boys (WI), Selby Side Gang (MN), Simon City Royals (WI), Spanish Cobras (WI), Top Shotz (MN), Trey Six Mob (WI), True Asian Bloods (WI), and Vice Lords (WI).<sup>142</sup> Other regional or local gangs reported as operating in the region include Cut-Throat Nation [CTN] (WI), Just My Bros (MN), Menace (MN), Mo Mob (MN), Rolling 30's Bloods (MN), Trap City Boyz (MN), Vato Locos (MN), Young Money (WI), and YPN (WI). Regional or local Outlaw Motorcycle Groups (OMGs) and Motorcycle Clubs (MCs) reported as operating in the region include Aryan Cowboys MC (MN), Black Pistons MC (WI), DC Eagles MC (WI), Hells Outcasts MC (MN), Hells Lovers (WI), Sin City Riders MC (WI), Sons of Silence MC (MN), and Trogs MC (WI).

(U//FOUO) NCH law enforcement reported that some local street gang factions source drugs from gang affiliates in the Chicago-area drug market. Others are sourced through connections from Mexican TCOs, such as the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG) and Sinaloa Cartel; multi-state DTOs; or large independent traffickers.<sup>143</sup>

(U//FOUO) Loosely organized, neighborhood-based networks, often referred to as cliques, crews, or hybrid gangs and Criminal Operations (COs) continue working within the region. Some of these groups associate with more traditional national gangs, like the Gangster Disciples or Vice Lords. These associations and identifications seem to be in name alone. Members are typically opportunistic for financial gain and/or status and will join a gang if there is a benefit to the individual member. When the individual sees another better opportunity to benefit from another gang they will instantly jump and belong to the other gang. Members have engaged in criminal activities beyond drug dealing, such as human trafficking, illegal firearms trafficking, and armed robbery, and they have even cooperated with members of traditionally rival gangs to profit from drug trafficking. The de facto leaders of these groups are either the most violent member or the member with a drug source of supply.<sup>144</sup>

### (U) Activities and Methods

(U//FOUO) Local DTOs distributing methamphetamine, opioids, cocaine, marijuana, and THC products throughout the NCHR have a wide variety of sourcing methods, which may include international DTOs, multi-state DTOs, and/or independent traffickers. These suppliers primarily operate in the NCHR, Arizona, California, Illinois, or Mexico.<sup>145</sup>

(U//FOUO) Some Local DTOs use sophisticated tactics such as conducting countersurveillance of law enforcement, using end-to-end encrypted communication apps and virtual private networks (VPNs), and using funnel accounts to pay out-of-state sources. However, these tactics are much less common and less consistent with local DTOs than international DTOs.<sup>146</sup>

(U//FOUO) Local DTOs, especially younger members in the 18 to 25-year-old age range, continue to

engage in a variety of app-based communications and social media. Applications (or apps) are used for both voice and messaging communications among DTO members, between DTO members and customers, and between DTO members and suppliers. Specific apps include, but are not limited to, Apple FaceTime and iMessage, Dust, Facebook Messenger, GroupMe, Instagram Direct Messenger, Signal, Snapchat, Telegram, WeChat, WhatsApp, Whisper, and Wickr. Some of these platforms are end-to-end encrypted messaging apps, which creates challenges in law enforcement's access to those communications. Use of peer-to-peer (P2P) money transfer applications, such as Apple Pay, Cash App, Facebook Pay, Square, Venmo, PayPal, and Zelle were also reported as being used to transfer drug proceeds, with Cash App reported as the most common P2P applications. P2P applications allow for a user to transfer money from their either their bank account, credit card, or debit card to another individual's account through a third-party application.<sup>147</sup>

(U//FOUO) Burner phones or "dope phones" continue to be frequently used by some local DTOs for conducting drug sales, making them crucial to the operation and highly valuable because they contain the traffickers' customer bases and customer contact numbers. Competition over these phones and their related customers continues to pose a threat of violence between groups, however, it is currently unclear if this violence over dope phones is targeted or opportunistic. If a dope phone is seized or an individual member is apprehended by law enforcement, local DTO members have been known to swiftly port the phone number to a new device.

(U//FOUO) Just over 81% of local DTOs were reported as violent in 2022; this is a 52% increase from 2021. These associations are linked to homicides, shootings, firearms-related offenses, and the use of violent acts and intimidation to maintain control over the DTOs' or criminal operations' (CO) area of operations. Many DTO members are known to be armed, and firearms are frequently recovered from drug-related arrests, vehicle searches, and locations where search warrants are executed. NCH law enforcement initiatives seized 1,440 firearms in 2022 and reported an increase in encountering firearms associated with drug-related investigations.<sup>148</sup>

### (U) Key Intelligence Questions

- (U//FOUO) How frequently do local DTOs recruit and train new members? What methods do local DTOs use to incentivize new membership?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent are app-based communications used by local DTOs' and COs', and how can law enforcement intercept or acquire records of these communications, especially when they are encrypted or designed to be "warrant proof"?
- (U//FOUO) Which are the most popular apps used by DTO and COs? Why?
- (U//FOUO) What is the extent of local DTOs' and COs' use of peer-to-peer (P2P) money transfer applications, and by what means can law enforcement police these illicit transactions?
- (U//FOUO) What factors contribute to younger DTO and CO members' involvement in violent crime? Do these factors similarly contribute to the overall increase in violent local DTOs?

- (U//FOUO) How often do local gang members switch affiliations? Does this negatively impact drug trafficking operations? If so, in what ways? Does an individual changing gang affiliations cause contention or chaos with the gang as a whole?
- (U//FOUO) How often do competing local DTOs use the same source supplier and how does this vary by drug type? Does this lead to increased violence among local DTOs? Are there rivalries amongst different DTOs and COs like there used to be among more traditional street gangs?

## 7. (U) Money Laundering Organizations

(U//FOUO) One International Money Laundering Organization (MLO) was identified in the NCHR in 2022. According to NCH enforcement initiatives, most money laundering activities are done by members in the DTOs, criminal operations, and independent traffickers in the region.

### (U) Key Observations

- (U//FOUO) DTOs operating in the NCHR use a variety of methods to launder illicit proceeds.<sup>149</sup>
- (U//FOUO) Bulk cash transportation continues to be reported as the most prevalent method of money laundering.<sup>150</sup>

### (U) Activities and Methods

(U//FOUO) NCH law enforcement initiatives reported bulk cash as the predominant method of illicit financial activity used by local drug traffickers.<sup>151</sup> Of the approximately \$11.17MM in assets seized by NCH law enforcement initiatives in 2022, approximately \$9MM were cash seizures – a total of nearly 81% of the seized assets. Total asset seizures decreased 19% from 2021.<sup>152</sup>

(U//FOUO) Bulk cash is physically transported throughout the NCHR using the same routes and methods used to smuggle drugs into the region. These methods include parcel shipments, transportation by personal and rental vehicles, commercial freight, and by couriers and “ghost bags” on commercial flights. Transportation via common carrier buses and trains is suspected, but the full extent of transportation by these methods is unknown.<sup>153</sup>

(U//FOUO) Bulk cash is often deposited using structured activity of limited deposits to avoid reporting requirement thresholds at local branches of national banks and ATMs within the NCHR. Funds are then withdrawn from these accounts through branches or ATMs in source locations. In some international DTO cases, DTO leadership in Mexico has hired brokers to coordinate the collection of bulk cash drug proceeds and bank deposits within the NCHR. After deposit, these funds are wired directly to accounts in Mexico; to offshore accounts, where it is often converted to cryptocurrency; or to other U.S. accounts, where it is believed to be used in trade-based money laundering schemes.<sup>154</sup>



Figure 26 (U//FOUO) Money Seizure by North Central HIDTA in 2022<sup>155</sup>

(U//FOUO) Money service businesses such as MoneyGram, Ria, United States Postal Service, Wal-Mart, and Western Union continues to be reported as common sources related to illicit finance movement within the NCHR. This is prevalent with Hispanic traffickers sending wire transfers to parties in Mexico or Puerto Rico and is common with Somali traffickers in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota. Similarly with bank activity, traffickers structure money order purchases to avoid required reporting thresholds.<sup>156</sup>

(U//FOUO) Mobile application or app-based peer-to-peer (P2P) money transfer services, such as Apple Pay, Cash App, Facebook Pay, Square, Venmo, and Zelle to name a few, continue to be identified by NCH enforcement initiatives and are increasingly becoming commonplace, especially for smaller user-level transactions (<\$500). Of these app-based P2P money transfer services, NCH enforcement initiatives reported Cash App as the primary app used. NCH law enforcement also reported value reloadable cards being used to make payments and are increasingly recovered at arrests and search warrant locations. The full extent of the use and the value carried by these cards is unknown at this time. NCH enforcement initiatives reported value reloadable cards as the least frequently encountered source of monetary storage and transfer technologies.<sup>157</sup>

(U//FOUO) NCH enforcement initiatives reported the continued use of limited liability corporations (LLCs) to launder drug proceeds. These are often cash-intensive businesses, and reported examples include, but are not limited to: bars and restaurants; car washes, vehicle detailing services, used car dealerships, and commercial freight trucking; construction; convenience stores; elderly care; entertainment; landscaping; real estate; and shipping businesses. These businesses are frequently registered in the names of associates such as wives, girlfriends, and family members. Traffickers often list these associates or the LLC itself as the registered owner of the trafficker's assets – such as real estate and vehicles – to provide additional layers of anonymity.<sup>158</sup>

(U//FOUO) These LLC businesses may or may not conduct legitimate business operations; however, they serve as a “front” for DTOs to obscure illicit funds and make them appear legitimate. Bank accounts are established in the name of the LLC for the purpose of funneling money and laundering drug proceeds. NCH law enforcement continued to report these businesses being used to defraud insurance companies and government-sponsored funding programs such as Medicare, Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) fraud, COVID-19 economic relief programs.<sup>159</sup> NCH law enforcement has successfully used evidence of these financial crimes to advance drug trafficking investigations and halt the flow of fraudulently obtained funds.

(U//FOUO) NCH law enforcement initiatives reported continued use of the “Dark Web” and the use of cryptocurrencies, such as Bitcoin, to facilitate international drug purchases from countries such as Canada, China, Germany, India, and the Netherlands. Historically, cryptocurrency was predominantly used by younger, more tech-savvy, Caucasian males who operate independently, traffic in multiple illicit controlled substances, and to pay for U.S. Postal Services and express consignment services. NCH law enforcement reported an increased prevalence in the use of cryptocurrency by wholesale-level traffickers and reported a successful cryptocurrency seizure in 2022.<sup>160</sup> Cryptocurrency laundering accounts, or “tumblers,” continue to be an effective means of evading means of detecting those parties involved in

P2P transactions.

(U) *Department of Homeland Security Intelligence Enterprise (IE) Comment*

(U) *Scope Note: The DHS IE analytic comment below is limited to the portions of the product that reference money laundering techniques of Transnational Criminal Operations (TCOs).*

**(U//FOUO) DHS IE Comment: DHS assesses the growing availability of cryptocurrency kiosks (commonly referred to as Bitcoin ATMs) - in the United States and globally - probably will facilitate TCOs' cross-border money laundering activities.** Between 2020 and 2022, the number of cryptocurrency kiosks increased throughout the United States from about 4,000 to over 31,000, according to a June 2022 DHS assessment based in part on US trade publications.<sup>1</sup> The 636 percent increase in US-based cryptocurrency kiosks since 2020 provides TCOs the ability to exchange – through relatively anonymous means – illicit proceeds into virtual currencies, according to the same assessment.

(U) As of early March 2023, the state of Wisconsin houses nearly 600 Bitcoin ATMs or tellers, with over 100 located in the greater Milwaukee area, according to an open-source tracker of cryptocurrency exchange opportunities.<sup>2</sup>

(U//FOUO) TCOs are well-positioned to take advantage of the vulnerabilities in US Government regulations of cryptocurrency kiosks, which probably limits law enforcement efforts to trace money laundering transactions, according to the June 2022 DHS assessment.<sup>3</sup> There are no indicators to demonstrate that countries, including Mexico and Colombia, are implementing regulations over cryptocurrency kiosks, according to the same assessment.

(U) **Warning:** This document contains UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY (U//FOUO) information that may be exempt from public release under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552). It is to be controlled, stored, handled, transmitted, distributed, and disposed of in accordance with DHS policy relating to FOUO information and is not to be released to the public, the media, or other personnel who do not have a valid need to know without prior approval of an authorized DHS official. State and local homeland security officials may not share this document with critical infrastructure and key resource personnel or private sector security officials without further approval from DHS.

<sup>1</sup> (U//DSEN//SBU//LES) | DHS | DHS-IA-IF-2022-11749 | 6 June 2022 | (U//FOUO) Transnational Criminal Operations Likely to Increase Use of Cryptocurrency and Kiosks for Money Laundering | Overall classification is U//DSEN//SBU//LES | Extracted information is U//FOUO.

<sup>2</sup> (U) Open Source | Coin ATM Radar | (U) "Bitcoin ATMs in Wisconsin, United States. Total number of Bitcoin ATMs / Tellers in Wisconsin, WI: 598," | <https://coinatmradar.com/state/50/bitcoin-atm-wisconsin/> | Accessed 6 March 2023.

<sup>3</sup> (U//DSEN//SBU//LES) | DHS | DHS-IA-IF-2022-11749 | 6 June 2022 | (U//FOUO) Transnational Criminal Operations Likely to Increase Use of Cryptocurrency and Kiosks for Money Laundering | Overall classification is U//DSEN//SBU//LES | Extracted information is U//FOUO.



(U//FOUO) Drug traffickers are known to have used local Native American owned and operated casinos to exchange smaller bills for larger bills and to launder proceeds with minimal gaming activity. Traffickers are known to have established relationships with suppliers after meeting in casinos and to use casinos as locations for drug transactions. NADGI member law enforcement has established good working partnerships with Native casino's management and security to assist monitoring and reporting suspicious activities that include drug trafficking, money laundering and other criminal activities.<sup>161</sup>

(U//FOUO) Local traffickers continue to spend drug proceeds on real property; luxury items, such as expensive clothes and jewelry; customized vehicles; high-end electronics; and entertainment such as clubs, parties, vacations, and both legitimate and illicit high-stakes gambling. NCH law enforcement reported vehicles as the most common asset seized and jewelry to a lesser extent.<sup>162</sup> Local traffickers also use drug proceeds to pay for drug-related business costs, such as paying couriers, as well as for routine expenses, such as rent, mortgages, food, and travel expenses.<sup>163</sup>

(U//FOUO) Members of Hmong or Caucasian marijuana trafficking organizations continue to move from the NCHR to California or other states in which marijuana is legal, often resulting in establishing familial connections between the areas of operation. Once there, members invest drug proceeds into marijuana grow operations and/or marijuana dispensaries to expand the source of supply for NCHR-based counterparts.<sup>164</sup>

#### (U) Key Intelligence Questions

- (U//FOUO) What are the most popular means of laundering illicit drug trafficking cash flows to purchase real property and/or other businesses? What are the most easily policed methods?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent are reloadable value cards (RVCs) utilized by illicit drug traffickers and other criminal operations? To what extent are disguised RVCs; meaning reprogrammed cards like hotel room keys, gift cards, driver's licenses, and other magnetic stripe-based cards; used by these organizations?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent are app-based P2P money transfers used by illicit drug traffickers and other criminal operations? Do illicit drug traffickers simultaneously use multiple apps or primarily conduct their operation using only one app platform? What methods can be used to effectively police these apps to develop investigations?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent are illicit drug traffickers incentivized and disincentivized to utilize cryptocurrencies? What methods can be effectively used to track and disrupt cryptocurrency tumblers?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent are public locations, such as casinos, utilized by drug traffickers to launder proceeds and serve as a method to establish buyer-seller relationships? Do extensive surveillance capabilities at casinos deter drug traffickers from laundering funds via casinos compared to other money laundering methods?

- (U//FOUO) Are any patterns emerging regarding how bulk cash is concealed and trafficked outside of the NCHR?

## 8. (U) Firearms

(U//FOUO) NCH law enforcement reports that violent firearm related crimes continue to pose a threat to the NCHR, and violent crime is commonly associated with drug-related activities. Violent crime includes homicides, aggravated assaults, sexual assaults, robberies, and human trafficking offenses.<sup>165</sup> NCH Law enforcement also reports an increasing association between firearms and drug seizures.<sup>166</sup>

### (U) Key Observations

- (U//FOUO) Violent crime has increased nearly 8% in the NCHR from 2020 to 2021.<sup>167</sup>
- (U//FOUO) From 2020 to 2021, homicides increased 6.5% and aggravated assaults increased 11.4% in the NCHR.<sup>168</sup>
- (U//FOUO) Law enforcement has encountered increasing numbers of Privately Manufactured Firearms (PMFs) commonly call “ghost guns” by the media.
- (U//FOUO) Law enforcement reported encountering increasing numbers of auto sear “switch devices” that convert semi-automatic firearms to fully automatic.

### (U) Availability

(U//FOUO) In 2022, NCHR initiatives reported an increase in encountering firearms associated with drug-related investigations. Specifically, NCHR initiatives seized 1,440 firearms in 2022. Of the firearms seized by NCHR initiatives, the most frequently reported firearm makes include Glock (191), Smith & Wesson (92), Taurus (76), Ruger (75), and “Polymer80” PMFs (59).<sup>169</sup>

(U//FOUO) Privately Manufactured firearms have unserialized components and are parts are manufactured and/or assembled by someone other than a federally licensed manufacturer. PMFs are made using kits that contain incomplete parts to a firearm and therefore are not required to have a serial number under federal law. 3D-printers are a common source of parts production for PMFs. A federal license is not required to manufacture or distribute incomplete or unfinished firearm-related objects. These unfinished firearm-related objects, such as frames and receivers, are commonly referenced as “80% frames and receivers”. Individuals purchasing or selling component parts for PMFs are not required to undergo background checks, such as with federally mandated licensed firearm dealers. This lack of serialized firearms coupled with no background checks creates challenges for law enforcement to track these firearms and can create increased access to ineligible criminals.<sup>170</sup>

(U//FOUO) An example of this increased encounter of firearms is portrayed in Minnesota’s Hennepin County Violent Offender Task Force (VOTF) reporting a 56% percent increase in gun seizures with a criminal predicate from 2021 to 2022. One such significant seizure event occurred in April 2022, when

sixteen (16) PMFs, were seized along with nine (9) high-capacity magazines, one (1) silencer, one (1) machinegun conversion device (MCD), commonly called a “switch” or “auto-sear”, and one (1) brass-catcher to be installed on privately manufactured AR-platform rifles. Brass-catchers are used by criminals so that fired, empty casings do not fall to the ground leaving behind evidence. According to sources at ATF, in recent years, law enforcement has recovered increasing quantities of illegally produced or imported MCDs.



Figure 278 (U//FOUO) Firearms recovered in Waite Park, MN<sup>171</sup>

(U//FOUO) Violent crime and gun use has been long associated with trafficking of all major drug types within the NCHR. Of the major drug types, NCHR enforcement initiatives most frequently reported violent crime as associated with methamphetamine and opioids.<sup>172</sup> In November 2022, Hennepin County’s VOTF seized eight (8) illegally possessed firearms and approximately 10,000 fentanyl pills.



Figure 289 (U//FOUO) Firearms and fentanyl recovered in Minneapolis, MN<sup>173</sup>

(U//FOUO) Violent crimes where guns are involved are frequently associated with dealers and users robbing each other during drug transactions, commonly referred to as a “rip” for their money, drug products, and other assets. Additionally, some armed robberies have escalated into violent assaults, shootings, and homicides. Firearms are also used by criminals to settle disputes, arguments, and territorial control. NCH law enforcement initiatives reported increased violent crime associated when bulk cash is present during drug transactions, especially marijuana-related transactions. Violent crime was also associated with property crimes. Users often engage in property crimes to fund drug purchases, however, these property crimes, such as burglaries, vehicle thefts, vehicle tamperers, catalytic converter thefts or retail crimes, may escalate to a violent crime if a confrontation occurs.<sup>174</sup>

(U//FOUO) In 2022, NCHR law enforcement reported nearly 80% of all DTOs operating within the NCHR as violent. This number has increased by 100%, doubling from 2021 to 2022.<sup>175</sup> A key example of this is evident in the amount of gun seizures carried out by NCHR initiatives. For example, in 2022 alone, NCH initiatives in Southeast Wisconsin seized more than 350 firearms as part of drug-related investigations. Within Milwaukee County, Wisconsin in 2022, overall homicides increased 33% from 2021 to 2022, with 90% of those homicides being carried out by assailants utilizing firearms.

### (U) Key Intelligence Questions

- (U//FOUO) To what extent are firearms trafficked into the NCHR, especially with origins from the Southern Border?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent are firearms trafficked outside of the NCHR, especially with destinations across the Northern Border?
- (U//FOUO) Are any patterns emerging regarding how firearms concealed and trafficked outside of or into the NCHR? What modes of transportation are the most common for trafficking firearms?
- (U//FOUO) How often are “ghost gun” parts manufactured within the NCHR, such as through the use of 3D printers?
- (U//FOUO) Do DTOs and illicit drug traffickers operating within the NCHR primarily use one type of firearm, such as a handgun or assault rifle, or various types? What factors influence which types of firearms DTOs and illicit drug traffickers both use, manufacture, and distribute?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent are illicit drug traffickers incentivized and disincentivized to traffic firearms? How often are firearms and drugs comingled when trafficked?
- (U//FOUO) What factors contribute to DTOs engaging in violent crime? Do these factors and motivations differ among international, state, and local DTOs?

## 9. (U) Outlook

(U//FOUO) The following assessments are based upon the most recently available intelligence and information reporting and support a forecast informing the North Central HIDTA Executive Board of the most significant drug trafficking threats facing the region in CY2024. Additional, verified, or more current reporting could alter the assessments or confidence levels stated below.

- (U//FOUO) The NCH assesses with high confidence<sup>d</sup> that international DTOs affiliated with Mexican TCOs will continue to pose the most significant drug trafficking threat to the region, especially as it relates to the distribution of opioids and methamphetamine and related violence.
- (U//FOUO) The NCH assesses with high confidence that synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl and FRS, will continue to pose a significant and increasing threat to the region due to increasing availability, especially in counterfeit pill form; high levels of opioid-involved overdose fatalities; and contribution to violent and property crime.
- (U//FOUO) The NCH assesses with high confidence that methamphetamine will continue to pose an increasing threat to the region due to increasing availability; affordability/low stable pricing; increasing distribution and use, especially in Wisconsin; increasing comingling with fentanyl and FRS and the resulting increasing involvement in overdose fatalities; and contribution to violent and property crime throughout the region.
- (U//FOUO) The NCH assesses with medium confidence<sup>e</sup> that cocaine will pose a persistent threat to the region. Although cocaine availability was reported as slightly decreasing through most of 2022, it continues to be co-mingled with fentanyl and FRS, is increasingly involved in overdose fatalities, and continues to contribute to violent crime. Cocaine continues to be sent alongside methamphetamine and other drug shipments, further bolstering this assessment.
- (U//FOUO) The NCH assesses with high confidence that THC products, such as concentrates and vape cartridges, will pose an increasing threat to the region due to increasing popularity among users, particularly young and school-aged users; increasing availability; increasing potency; and the ongoing association between trafficking and violent crime.
- (U//FOUO) The NCH assesses with high confidence that U.S. Postal Service and express consignment companies' services will increasingly be utilized by DTOs and independent traffickers.
- (U//FOUO) The NCH assesses with high confidence that DTOs and higher-level suppliers will continue to use emerging and different technologies to evade law enforcement. The most significant of these is the use of encrypted web-based applications for communication among DTO

---

<sup>d</sup> (U) High Confidence generally indicates judgments are based on high quality information from multiple sources. High confidence in a judgment does not imply the assessment is a fact or a certainty; such judgments might be wrong. While additional reporting and information sources may change analytical judgments, such changes are most likely to be refinements and not substantial in nature. Well-corroborated and low probability of deception.

<sup>e</sup> (U) Medium Confidence generally indicates the information is credibly sourced and plausible but not of sufficient quality or corroborated sufficiently to warrant a higher level of confidence. Additional reporting or information sources have the potential to increase the confidence levels or substantively change analytical judgments.



members, between DTO members and suppliers, and between DTO members and customers, as well as the use of web-based applications to conduct drug sales and collect payments. There exist apps, such as the mobile messaging app Dust and Telegram, which feature not only end-to-end encryption, but also security features such as sender-designated message auto-deletion times, non-existent messaging records, and other rigorous privacy measures.

- (U//FOUO) The NCH assesses with high confidence that whole-sale level drug traffickers will continue to use bulk cash as a primary method for exchange related to illicit financial activities and money laundering.

## 10. (U//FOUO) Appendices

### (U) Methodology

(U) The 2024 NCH Threat Assessment document was prepared by the NCH Investigative Support Center (ISC). Intelligence analysts used both quantitative and qualitative research to collect information on drug trafficking trends in the region. The sources of this data collection were primarily reporting from Local, State, Tribal, and Federal law enforcement, and other government agencies such as in the public health community and medical examiner's offices in the NCHR and throughout the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin. The primary methods used to collect this data were surveys, interviews, and law enforcement case files. The ISC also sourced data from the NCH PMP system, EPIC NSS State Nexus Reports, and a variety of national, state, and local databases. The NCH ISC recognizes some of these information sources may be incomplete and some reporting is delayed. However, this year's threat assessment was prepared with the highest degree of confidence and accuracy based on the information available. Additional, verified, or more current reporting could alter the assessments or confidence levels stated in this document.

### (U) North Central HIDTA 2023 Threat Assessment Survey

(U) A copy of the North Central HIDTA 2023 Threat Assessment Survey may be made available upon request.



**(U) Common Communications: Messaging and Social Media Applications**

(U) 2nd Line, Apple FaceTime, Asana, Band, BlackBerry Messaging, BoostOne, Boss Revolution, Britix24, Brosix, Bunch, Burner, Buz, CallApp, Chatify for WhatsApp, Chat+, Chanty, Chirbit, Clapper, Clarity, Clubhouse, Conversations, Crew, Dingtone, Discord, DTMF, Duo Voice, Dust, Element, Facebook Messenger, Fleep, Flock, Fongo, Free Tone, Google Allo, Google Hangouts, Google Meet, Google Voice, Groundwire, GroupMe, iFake, IM+, iMessage, imo, InMessage, Insta Caller, Instagram Direct Messenger, IQC Video Calls & Chat Rooms, Jabber, Jostle, JusTalk, JusTalk Kids, KakaoTalk, Kik, LimeChat, Line, Lobby, Marco Polo, Mattermost, MeetMe, Messagenius, Messages by Google, Messenger Kids, Messenger VPN, Message+, MeWe, Microsoft Teams, Mint Messenger, Mombo, NetSfere, Nextplus, Numero eSIM, OmeTV, Parlor, Pronto, Pryvate, Pumble, Reddit, Rocket.Chat, Ryver, Second Texting Number, Securus Mobile, Signal, Silence, Silent Circle, Skype, Slack, Snapchat, Talkatone, TalkU, Tapatalk, Team Chat, TeamSpeak, Telegram, TeleMessage, TeleNow, Text App, TextFree, TextMe, TextNow, Text Vault, Text+, Threema, TikTok Direct Messages, Tor Browser, Torque Pro, Tracfone, Troop Messenger, Twist, Twitter Direct Messenger, TXT Me Now, Viber, Video Live App, Voxer, WeChat, WeTalk, WhatsApp Business, Webex, WhatsApp Messenger, WickrMe, WiFi: Phone Calls & SMS, Wink, Wire, Wizz, Whisper, Workvivo, Zalo, Zoho Cliq, Zoom, and Zulip.

(U//FOUO) Participating Initiative List		
Airport PD Interdiction	Anoka County Drug TF	Bloomington PD Interdiction
Brown County Drug TF	Building Public Awareness	Dakota County Drug TF
Dane County Drug TF	DEA Interdiction	Drug Gang Task Force
FBI Safe Streets	Fugitive Task Force	Hennepin County Drug TF
Interdiction	Investigative Support Center	Kenosha County Drug TF
Ken-Prairie Drug Gang Task Force	Lake Superior Drug TF	Major Crimes
MN/WI Investigative Support Center	Native American Drug & Gang Initiative	Olmsted County Drug TF
Opioid Task Force	Prosecution	Racine County Drug TF
Ramsey County Drug TF	Rochester PD Drug TF	Rock County Drug TF
Safe and Sound	St. Paul PD VCI	Washington Co. Drug TF
Waukesha County Drug TF	West Central Drug Task Force.	

(U//FOUO) Participating Agency List (Minnesota)	
Anoka County Sheriff's Office	Anoka Police Department
Apple Valley Police Department	Arrowhead Regional Corrections
Austin Police Department	Blaine Police Department
Bloomington Police Department	Brooklyn Center Police Department
Brooklyn Park Police Department	Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
Burnsville Police Department	Champlin Police Department
Columbia Heights Police Department	Coon Rapids Police Department
Dakota County Sheriff's Office	Drug Enforcement Administration
Duluth Police Department	Eagan Police Department
Eden Prairie Police Department	Edina Police Department
Farmington Police Department	Federal Bureau of Investigation
Fillmore County Sheriff's Office	Forest Lake Police Department
Fridley Police Department	Goodhue County Sheriff's Office
Hastings Police Department	Hennepin County Sheriff's Office
Hibbing Police Department	Hopkins Police Department
Houston County Sheriff's Office	Kasson Police Department
Lake City Police Department	Lakeville Police Department
Maple Grove Police Department	Maplewood Police Department
Medina Police Department	Metro Airport Commissions Police Department
Minneapolis Police Department	Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension
Minnesota National Guard	Minnesota State Patrol
Mnetonka Police Department	Minnetrsta Police Department
Mounds View Police Department	Mower County Sheriff's Office
New Brighton Police Department	Olmsted County District Attorney's Office
Olmsted County Sheriff's Office	Orono Police Department
Ramsey County District Attorney's Office	Ramsey County Sheriff's Office
Ramsey Police Department	Red Wing Police Department
Rochester Police Department	Rogers Police Department
Rosemount Police Department	Roseville Police Department
Savage Police Department	South St. Paul Police Department
St. Louis County Sheriff's Office	St. Louis Park Police Department
St. Paul Police Department	United States Postal Service
Virginia Police Department	Wabasha County Sheriff's Office
West Hennepin Public Safety Department	West St. Paul Police Department
White Bear Lake Police Department	Winona County Sheriff's Office
Winona Police Department	Woodbury Police Department.

(U//FOUO) Participating Agency List (Wisconsin)	
Appleton Police Department	Ashwaubenon Department of Public Safety
Bad River Tribal Police Department	Brookfield Police Department
Brown County Sheriff's Office	Buffalo County Sheriff's Department
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives	Chippewa County Sheriff's Department
Chippewa Falls Police Department	Clark County Sheriff's Department
Clinton Police Department	Cottage Grove Police Department
Dane County District Attorney's Office	Dane County Sheriff's Office
De Pere Police Department	Department of Homeland Security
Dodge County Sheriff's Office	Drug Enforcement Administration
Dunn County Sheriff's Department	Eau Claire County Sheriff's Department
Eau Claire Police Department	Edgerton Police Department
Evansville Police Department	Federal Bureau of Investigation
Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife	Green Bay Police Department
Greenfield Police Department	Ho Chunk Tribal Police Department
Kenosha County Sheriff's Office	Kenosha Police Department
Lac Courte Oreilles Tribal Police Department	Lac du Flambeau Tribal Police Department
Madison Police Department	Manitowoc County Sheriff's Office
Menomonee Falls Police Department	Menominee Tribal Police Department
Menomonie Police Department	Milton Police Department
Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office	Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office
Milwaukee Police Department	Mount Pleasant Police Department
Muskego Police Department	New Berlin Police Department
Oconomowoc Police Department	Oneida Tribal Police Department
Orfordville Police Department	Oshkosh Police Department
Outagamie County Sheriff's Office	Pleasant Prairie Police Department
Racine County Sheriff's Office	Racine Police Department
Red Cliff Tribal Police Department	Richfield Police Department
Rock County Sheriff's Office	Sheboygan Police Department
St. Croix Tribal Police Department	Stockbridge Munsee Tribal Police Department
Superior Police Department	Town of Beloit Police Department
Twin Lakes Police Department	U.S. Attorney's Office
U.S. Marshals Service	United States Postal Service
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee	UW Eau Claire Police Department
UW Stout Police Department	Village of Eagle Police Department
Village of Elm Grove Police Department	Village of Pewaukee Police Department
Village of Summit Police Department	Washington County Sheriff's Office
Waukesha County Sheriff's Office	Waukesha Police Department
Wauwatosa Police Department	West Allis Police Department
Wisconsin Department of Corrections	Wisconsin Department of Justice – DCI
Wisconsin National Guard	Wisconsin State Patrol.

(U) North Central HIDTA 2022 Drug Prices<sup>f</sup>

Drug Type	Quantity	Minneapolis-St. Paul Metro Minnesota	Milwaukee Metro Wisconsin
Heroin	1 gram	\$95	\$100
	1 ounce	\$1,080	\$1,600
	1 kilogram	N/A	\$40,000
Fentanyl <sup>g</sup>	1 gram	\$80	\$100
	1 tablet	\$12	\$20 <sup>h</sup>
	1 ounce	N/A	\$1,800
Methamphetamine	1 gram	\$75	\$110
	1 ounce	\$575	\$700
	1 pound	\$4,750	\$7,000
Cocaine <sup>i</sup>	1 gram	\$115	\$100
	1 ounce	\$1,400	\$1,250
	1 kilogram	\$32,625	\$30,000
High-Grade Marijuana	1 ounce	\$250	\$400
	1 pound	\$2,215	\$3,900

Figure 29 (U//FOUO) North Central HIDTA 2022 Drug Prices<sup>176</sup>

<sup>f</sup> (U//FOUO) Prices generally increase in outlying areas away from these metropolitan areas.

<sup>g</sup> (U//FOUO) Fentanyl and FRS are often comingled with other substances and sold as heroin. In these cases, fentanyl prices reflect heroin prices.

<sup>h</sup> (U//FOUO) Similar to oxycodone, counterfeit pills containing fentanyl are often priced \$1/mg.

<sup>i</sup> (U//FOUO) Average cocaine powder and base (crack) prices are comparable at the gram and ounce levels, with base being slightly more expensive. Cocaine base is generally not sold at the kilogram level.

## (U) Notes / Sources

- 
- <sup>1</sup> (U) <https://www.denverpost.com/2021/06/10/black-market-marijuana-money-laundering-indictment/#:~:text=Federal%20and%20local%20law%20enforcement,China%20through%20social%20media%20apps>. Published June 2021, Accessed March 2023.
- <sup>2</sup> (U) <https://wisconsin.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/great-states-minnesota-2.2/activity/>, retrieved 03/05/2023.  
(U) <https://dpi.wi.gov/amind/tribalnationswi/ho-chunk>  
(U) <https://wisconsinfirstnations.org/ho-chunk-nation>
- <sup>3</sup> (U) <https://wisconsinfirstnations.org/map/>, retrieved 03/01/2023.
- <sup>4</sup> (U) <https://www.mspairport.com/about-msp>, retrieved 02/15/2023.
- <sup>5</sup> (U) <https://www.mitchellairport.com/airport-information/facts-and-stats>, retrieved 2/15/2023.
- <sup>6</sup> (U) <https://www.mitchellairport.com/airport-information/facts-and-stats>, retrieved 02/15/2023;  
<https://www.mspairport.com/about-msp>, retrieved 02/15/2023.
- <sup>7</sup> (U) <https://www.dot.state.mn.us/aboutrail/>, retrieved 03/01/2023; <http://wisconsin.gov/Pages/doing-bus/freight/rail.aspx>, retrieved 03/01/2023.
- <sup>8</sup> (U) Amtrak, State Fact Sheets, <https://www.amtrak.com/about-amtrak/amtrak-facts/state-fact-sheets.html>, 2020, retrieved 03/01/2023; <https://gorail.org/state/minnesota>, retrieved 03/01/2023; <https://gorail.org/state/wisconsin>, retrieved 03/01/2023.
- <sup>9</sup> (U) <https://www.amtrak.com/about-amtrak/amtrak-facts/state-fact-sheets.html>, retrieved on 03/01/2023.
- <sup>10</sup> Amtrak's New Safety Procedures Amid Coronavirus (aarp.org), retrieved on 03/01/2023.
- <sup>11</sup> Amtrak's New Safety Procedures Amid Coronavirus (aarp.org), retrieved on 03/01/2023.
- <sup>12</sup> (U) <http://www.duluthport.com/>, retrieved 03/02/2023.
- <sup>13</sup> (U) United States Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Border Crossing/Entry Data, <https://www.bts.gov/browse-statistical-products-and-data/border-crossing-data/border-crossingentry-data>, retrieved 02/02/2023.
- <sup>14</sup> (U) United States Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Border Crossing/Entry Data, <https://www.bts.gov/browse-statistical-products-and-data/border-crossing-data/border-crossingentry-data>, retrieved 02/02/2023.
- <sup>15</sup> (U) <https://mn.gov/portal/government/tribal/mn-indian-tribes/>, retrieved 02/02/2023.
- <sup>16</sup> (U) <https://mn.gov/portal/government/tribal/mn-indian-tribes/>, retrieved 02/02/2023.
- <sup>17</sup> (U) <https://dpi.wi.gov/amind/tribalnationswi>, retrieved 02/02/2023.
- <sup>18</sup> (U) <https://mn.gov/admin/demography/data-by-topic/population-data/our-estimates/>, retrieved 02/02/2023;  
[https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LocalGovtsGrants/Population\\_Estimates.aspx](https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LocalGovtsGrants/Population_Estimates.aspx), retrieved 02/02/2023.
- <sup>19</sup> (U) <https://mn.gov/admin/demography/data-by-topic/population-data/our-estimates/>, retrieved 02/02/2023;  
[https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LocalGovtsGrants/Population\\_Estimates.aspx](https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LocalGovtsGrants/Population_Estimates.aspx), retrieved 02/02/2023.
- <sup>20</sup> (U) <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/dles/bjia/ucr-offense-data>, retrieved 02/02/2023; <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/bca/bca-divisions/mnjis/Pages/uniform-crime-reports.aspx>, retrieved 02/02/2023.
- <sup>21</sup> (U//FOUO) Brown County Drug Task Force, 2023; Hennepin County Sheriff's Office, 2023.
- <sup>22</sup> (U) Definition obtained from <http://www.drugs.com>.
- <sup>23</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 02/25/2023.
- <sup>24</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 02/25/2023.
- <sup>25</sup> (U//FOUO) National Emerging Threats Initiative HIDTA 2023 Drug Price Survey, North Central HIDTA Reporting.
- <sup>26</sup> (U) Hennepin County Medical Examiner's Office, 2022; Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office, 2022; Minnesota Department of Health, Injury and Violence Prevention Section, Drug Overdose Deaths Among Minnesota Residents, accessed 02/28/2023; Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Substance Use: Drug Overdose Deaths Dashboard, accessed 02/28/2023.
- <sup>27</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved

03/01/2023.

<sup>28</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023.

<sup>29</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023.

<sup>30</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023.

<sup>31</sup> (U) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Treatment Episode Data Set, <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/quick-statistics-results>, retrieved 02/07/2023.

<sup>32</sup> (U) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Treatment Episode Data Set, <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/quick-statistics-results>, retrieved 02/07/2023.

<sup>33</sup> (U) Minnesota Department of Health, Injury and Violence Prevention Section, Drug Overdose Deaths Among Minnesota Residents, accessed 02/27/2023; Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Substance Use: Drug Overdose Deaths Dashboard, accessed 02/27/2023.

<sup>34</sup> (U) Milwaukee County Office of Emergency Management, Emergency Medical Services, Narcan Administration, retrieved 02/01/2023.

<sup>35</sup> (U//FOUO) DEA Diversion 2022 statistic sheet.

<sup>36</sup> (U) Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office; Minnesota Department of Health, Injury and Violence Prevention Section, Drug Overdose Deaths Among Minnesota Residents, accessed 02/27/2023; Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Substance Use: Drug Overdose Deaths Dashboard, accessed 02/27/2023. <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2022/08/05/1114453468/animal-tranquilizer-street-drugs>, accessed 02/21/2023.

<sup>37</sup> (U) Drug Overdose Deaths among Minnesota Residents 2000-2023, Minnesota Department of Health Injury and Violence Prevention Section, retrieved 02/26/2023; Minnesota Department of Health, MIDAS Drug Overdose Deaths, <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/injury/midas/drugdeath.html>, accessed 02/27/2023; Wisconsin Department of Health Services, WISH Query: Drug Overdose Deaths, <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wish/opioid/mortality.htm>, retrieved 02/26/2023.

<sup>38</sup> (U) Drug Overdose Deaths among Minnesota Residents 2000-2023, Minnesota Department of Health Injury and Violence Prevention Section, retrieved 02/26/2023; Minnesota Department of Health, MIDAS Drug Overdose Deaths, <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/injury/midas/drugdeath.html>, accessed 02/27/2022; Wisconsin Department of Health Services, WISH Query: Drug Overdose Deaths, <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wish/opioid/mortality.htm>, retrieved 02/26/2023.

<sup>39</sup> (U) United States Drug Enforcement Administration, Counterfeit Pills Fact Sheet, <https://www.dea.gov/factsheets/counterfeitpills>, retrieved 02/27/2023; North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023; North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 02/28/2023.

<sup>40</sup> (U) United States Drug Enforcement Administration, Counterfeit Pills Fact Sheet, <https://www.dea.gov/factsheets/counterfeitpills>, retrieved 02/27/2023; North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023; North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 02/28/2023.

<sup>41</sup> (U) United States Drug Enforcement Administration, Counterfeit Pills Fact Sheet, <https://www.dea.gov/factsheets/counterfeitpills>, retrieved 02/27/2023; North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>42</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023; North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023; North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 02/28/2023.

<sup>43</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central HIDTA Reporting 2023.

<sup>44</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>45</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central HIDTA Reporting 2023.

<sup>46</sup> (U//FOUO) National Emerging Threats Initiative HIDTA 2023 Drug Price Survey, North Central HIDTA Reporting.



- <sup>47</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.
- <sup>48</sup> (U) Follow up interview w/ Minnesota Airport Interdiction 2/22/2023.
- <sup>49</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central HIDTA Reporting 2023.
- <sup>50</sup> (U) Drug Overdose Deaths among Minnesota Residents 2000-2023, Minnesota Department of Health Injury and Violence Prevention Section, retrieved 02/26/2023; Minnesota Department of Health, MIDAS Drug Overdose Deaths, <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/injury/midas/drugdeath.html>, accessed 02/27/2023; Wisconsin Department of Health Services, WISH Query: Drug Overdose Deaths, <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wish/opioid/mortality.htm>, retrieved 02/26/2023.
- <sup>51</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 02/25/2023.
- <sup>52</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 02/28/2023.
- <sup>53</sup> (U//FOUO) National Emerging Threats Initiative HIDTA 2023 Drug Price Survey, North Central HIDTA Reporting.
- <sup>54</sup> (U) Hennepin County Medical Examiner's Office, 2022; Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office, 2022; and Statewide Reporting; Minnesota Department of Health, Injury and Violence Prevention Section, Drug Overdose Deaths Among Minnesota Residents, accessed 02/28/2023; Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Substance Use: Drug Overdose Deaths Dashboard, accessed 02/28/2023.
- <sup>55</sup> (U) Hennepin County Medical Examiner's Office, 2022; Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office, 2022; and Statewide Reporting; Minnesota Department of Health, Injury and Violence Prevention Section, Drug Overdose Deaths Among Minnesota Residents, accessed 02/28/2023; Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Substance Use: Drug Overdose Deaths Dashboard, accessed 02/28/2023.
- <sup>56</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 02/28/2023.
- <sup>57</sup> (U) El Paso Epic NSS State Nexus Report (Minnesota/Wisconsin) 2022 retrieved 3/2/2023.
- <sup>58</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 02/28/2023.
- <sup>59</sup> (U//FOUO) Wisconsin Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigations retrieved 03/02/2023.
- <sup>60</sup> (U) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Treatment Episode Data Set, <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/quick-statistics-results>, retrieved 02/27/2023.
- <sup>61</sup> (U) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Treatment Episode Data Set, <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/quick-statistics-results>, retrieved 02/27/2023.
- <sup>62</sup> (U) Minnesota Department of Health, MIDAS Drug Overdose Deaths, <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/injury/midas/drugdeath.html>, accessed 02/28/2023; Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Substance Use: Drug Overdose Deaths Dashboard, <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/aoda/drug-overdose-deaths.htm>, accessed 02/28/2023.
- <sup>63</sup> (U) Minnesota Department of Health, MIDAS Drug Overdose Deaths, <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/injury/midas/drugdeath.html>, accessed 02/28/2023; Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Substance Use: Drug Overdose Deaths Dashboard, <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/aoda/drug-overdose-deaths.htm>, accessed 02/28/2023.
- <sup>64</sup> (U) Drug Overdose Deaths among Minnesota Residents 2000-2023, Minnesota Department of Health Injury and Violence Prevention Section, retrieved 02/16/2023; Minnesota Department of Health, MIDAS Drug Overdose Deaths, <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/injury/midas/drugdeath.html>, accessed 02/27/2023; Wisconsin Department of Health Services, WISH Query: Drug Overdose Deaths, <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wish/opioid/mortality.htm>, retrieved 02/16/2023.
- <sup>65</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.
- <sup>66</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central HIDTA Opioid TF, 2023.
- <sup>67</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Price Survey, 2023.
- <sup>68</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Gang Task Force, 2022

- <sup>69</sup> (U//FOUO) Hennepin County Sheriff's Office, 2022; North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Gang Task Force, 2022; North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.
- <sup>70</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central HIDTA Information Alert 2020-a6f499bb "PVC Packaged Methamphetamine", 02/12/2023; North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.
- <sup>71</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central HIDTA Reporting 2023.
- <sup>72</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 02/25/2023.
- <sup>73</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 02/22/2023.
- <sup>74</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Price Survey, 2023.
- <sup>75</sup> (U) Hennepin County Medical Examiner's Office, 2022; Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office, 2022; and Statewide Reporting; (U) Minnesota Department of Health, MIDAS Drug Overdose Deaths, <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/injury/midas/drugdeath.html>, accessed 02/28/2023; Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Substance Use: Drug Overdose Deaths Dashboard, <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/aoda/drug-overdose-deaths.htm>, accessed 02/28/2023.
- <sup>76</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 02/22/2023.
- <sup>77</sup> (U//FOUO) El Paso Intelligence Center State Nexus Report, Minnesota as Destination, retrieved 02/22/2023; El Paso Intelligence Center State Nexus Report, Wisconsin as Destination, retrieved 02/22/2023.
- <sup>78</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023.
- <sup>79</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023.
- <sup>80</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023.
- <sup>81</sup> (U) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Treatment Episode Data Set, <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/quick-statistics-results>, retrieved 02/28/2023.
- <sup>82</sup> (U) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Treatment Episode Data Set, <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/quick-statistics-results>, retrieved 02/28/2023.
- <sup>83</sup> (U) Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office, 2022; , Minnesota Department of Health Injury and Violence Prevention Section, retrieved 02/16/2023; Minnesota Department of Health, MIDAS Drug Overdose Deaths, <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/injury/midas/drugdeath.html>, accessed 02/16/2023; Wisconsin Department of Health Services, WISH Query: Drug Overdose Deaths, <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wish/opioid/mortality.htm>, retrieved 02/16/2023.
- <sup>84</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.
- <sup>85</sup> (U) Drug Overdose Deaths among Minnesota Residents 2000-2023, Minnesota Department of Health Injury and Violence Prevention Section, retrieved 02/16/2023; Minnesota Department of Health, MIDAS Drug Overdose Deaths, <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/injury/midas/drugdeath.html>, accessed 02/28/2023; Wisconsin Department of Health Services, WISH Query: Drug Overdose Deaths, <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wish/opioid/mortality.htm>, retrieved 02/28/2023.
- <sup>86</sup> (U//FOUO) National Emerging Threats Initiative HIDTA 2023 Drug Price Survey, North Central HIDTA Reporting.
- <sup>87</sup> (U//FOUO) Hennepin County Sheriff's Office, 2022; North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Gang Task Force, 2022; North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.
- <sup>88</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central HIDTA Reporting 2023.
- <sup>89</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 02/25/2023.
- <sup>90</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 02/25/2023.
- <sup>91</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved

02/28/2023.

<sup>92</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 02/28/2023.

<sup>93</sup> (U//FOUO) National Emerging Threats Initiative HIDTA 2023 Drug Price Survey, North Central HIDTA Reporting.

<sup>94</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023; North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 02/28/2023.

<sup>95</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023; North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 02/28/2023.

<sup>96</sup> (U//FOUO) El Paso Intelligence Center State Nexus Report, Minnesota as Destination, retrieved 03/02/2023; El Paso Intelligence Center State Nexus Report, Wisconsin as Destination, retrieved 03/02/2023; North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/02/2023.

<sup>97</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 02/28/2023.

<sup>98</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 02/28/2023.

<sup>99</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 02/28/2023.

<sup>100</sup> (U) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Treatment Episode Data Set, <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/quick-statistics-results>, retrieved 02/28/2023.

<sup>101</sup> (U) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Treatment Episode Data Set, <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/quick-statistics-results>, retrieved 02/28/2023.

<sup>102</sup> (U) American Lung Association "The Impact of E-Cigarettes on the Lung", <https://www.lung.org/quit-smoking/e-cigarettes-vaping/impact-of-e-cigarettes-on-lung>, retrieved 02/21/2023.

<sup>103</sup> AAP Journals Blog, "Emergency Department Visits for Cannabis Post-Legalization in Alberta, Canada," published September 28, 2022, <https://abc7chicago.com/illinois-marijuana-near-me-dispensary-weed/5831536/>, retrieved 03/7/2023; "Recreational Marijuana Legalization Tied to More Pediatric ED Visits", published January 12, 2022, <https://consumer.healthday.com/recreational-marijuana-legalization-tied-to-more-pediatric-er-visits-2656248443.html>, retrieved 05/10/2023; WISN 12, "CBD store raided; Waukesha County sheriff investigates after two kids overdose," updated April 3, 2022, [https://journaltimes.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/presence-of-fentanyl-in-marijuana-becoming-more-common-in-racine-area-police-say/article\\_57e189cc-ee93-11ec-add0-e3beb8f1107f.html](https://journaltimes.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/presence-of-fentanyl-in-marijuana-becoming-more-common-in-racine-area-police-say/article_57e189cc-ee93-11ec-add0-e3beb8f1107f.html), retrieved 02/28/2023 Published on June 17, 2022.

<sup>104</sup> (U//FOUO) National Emerging Threats Initiative HIDTA 2023 Drug Price Survey, North Central HIDTA Reporting.

<sup>105</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023. North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>106</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023.

<sup>107</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023.

<sup>108</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023.

<sup>109</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023.

<sup>110</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>111</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023. North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>112</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2022.

<sup>113</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2022.

<sup>114</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

- <sup>115</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.
- <sup>116</sup> (U//FOUO) El Paso Intelligence Center State Nexus Report, Minnesota as Destination, retrieved 03/02/2022; El Paso Intelligence Center State Nexus Report, Wisconsin as Destination, retrieved 03/02/2022.
- <sup>117</sup> (U//FOUO) El Paso Intelligence Center State Nexus Report, Minnesota as Destination, retrieved 03/02/2022; El Paso Intelligence Center State Nexus Report, Wisconsin as Destination, retrieved 03/02/2022.
- <sup>118</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.
- <sup>119</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 02/028/2022.
- <sup>120</sup> (U//FOUO) United States Customs and Border Protection Seizure Reporting for Interdicted Parcels with NCHR Destinations in 2022.
- <sup>121</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023.
- <sup>122</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 02/28/2022.
- <sup>123</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023.
- <sup>124</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023.
- <sup>125</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023.
- <sup>126</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023.
- <sup>127</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023.
- <sup>128</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023. North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.
- <sup>129</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.
- <sup>130</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023.
- <sup>131</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2022. North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.
- <sup>132</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.
- <sup>133</sup> (U//FOUO) Office of Intelligence and Analysis, "US-Based Drug Traffickers Very Likely Decentralizing Fentanyl Pill Production." Published 02/22/2023.
- <sup>134</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023. North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.
- <sup>135</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.
- <sup>136</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 02/28/2022; North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Gang Task Force, North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Opioid Task Force.
- <sup>137</sup> (U) <https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/talking-points-legalizing-recreational-cannabis-in-minnesota/>, retrieved on 03/09/2023. SHRM, "In Growing Trend, Minnesota Legalizes THC Edibles" released 07/15/2022, <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/legal-and-compliance/state-and-local-updates/pages/minnesota-cannabislaw.aspx>, retrieved 11/28/2022.
- <sup>138</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023.
- <sup>139</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023.
- <sup>140</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved

03/01/2023.

<sup>141</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023.

<sup>142</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023. North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>143</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023. North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>144</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023.

<sup>145</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023.

<sup>146</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2022. North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>147</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<https://www.discover.com/credit-cards/card-smarts/what-are-peer-to-peer-payments/>, retrieved on 03/30/2023.

<sup>148</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023. North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>149</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>150</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>151</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>152</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/02/2023.

<sup>153</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>154</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023; North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Opioid Task Force, 2022.

<sup>155</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central HIDTA Opioid TF reporting 2022.

<sup>156</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>157</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>158</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>159</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/01/2023. North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>160</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>161</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>162</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/02/2023.

<sup>163</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>164</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>165</sup> (U) <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/dles/bjia/ucr-offense-data>, retrieved 04/10/2023;

<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/bca/bca-divisions/mnjis/Pages/uniform-crime-reports.aspx>, retrieved 04/10/2023.

<sup>166</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>167</sup> (U) <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/dles/bjia/ucr-offense-data>, retrieved 04/10/2023;

<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/bca/bca-divisions/mnjis/Pages/uniform-crime-reports.aspx>, retrieved 04/10/2023.

<sup>168</sup> (U) <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/dles/bjia/ucr-offense-data>, retrieved 04/10/2023;

<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/bca/bca-divisions/mnjis/Pages/uniform-crime-reports.aspx>, retrieved 04/10/2023.

<sup>169</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/02/2023.

<sup>170</sup> <https://www.statesmanjournal.com/story/news/crime/2022/03/24/ghost-kit-gun-privately-homemade-untraceable->

[firearms-no-background-check/65346235007/](https://www.fbi.gov/firearms-no-background-check/65346235007/), retrieved on 04/17/2023.

<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11810#:~:text=Building%20a%20privately%20made%20firearm,with%20intent%20to%20sell%20it.>, retrieved on 04/17/2023.

<sup>171</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central HIDTA Hennepin County VOTF Reporting in 2022.

<sup>172</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>173</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central HIDTA Hennepin County VOTF Reporting in 2022.

<sup>174</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Drug Trafficking Trends Survey, 2023.

<sup>175</sup> (U//FOUO) North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Performance Management Process Database, retrieved 03/02/2023.

<sup>176</sup> (U//FOUO) National Emerging Threats Initiative HIDTA 2022 Drug Price Survey, North Central HIDTA Reporting.