



**MICHIGAN HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREA**

# **2023 DRUG THREAT ASSESSMENT**

**May 24, 2023**



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## SCOPE

(U//FOUO) The purpose of the 2023 Michigan HIDTA Drug Threat Assessment is to examine and highlight both the extent and nature of the drug threat in the State of Michigan, including Michigan HIDTA's designated areas. This document is designed not only to raise awareness of current or emerging drug trends and activities but to also provide a foundation for the strategy to disrupt and dismantle drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) in Michigan. The threat assessment fulfills statutory and grant requirements issued by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and has been approved by the Michigan HIDTA Executive Board. Additionally, law enforcement officials will be able to use this as a resource guide to aid in their efforts in combating the effects of drug trafficking and drug use in their communities.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

(U//FOUO) The Michigan HIDTA extends its thanks and appreciation to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Detroit & Southeast Michigan Information & Intelligence Center (DSEMIIC), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Michigan Intelligence Operations Center (MIOC), the Michigan State Police (MSP), The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), and numerous federal, state, local, and private and public health/public safety partners whose collective efforts and talents made this assessment possible.

## BYRNE JAG AGREEMENT

(U//FOUO) This project is supported by Byrne JAG State Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 # 15PBJA-21-GG-00248-MUMU, 15PBJA-22-GG-00642-MUMU, awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), and administered by the Michigan State Police (MSP). Points of view or opinions contained within this document do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the DOJ or the MSP.

## INFORMATION SOURCING

(U//FOUO) The primary sources of information utilized to produce the 2023 Michigan HIDTA Drug Threat Assessment include: the Michigan HIDTA's *2023 Drug Trends Survey*, data from the HIDTA's Performance Management Process (PMP) System, and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) drug-related death and substance use disorder treatment admission reporting. Michigan State Police (MSP) sources of information include the Calander Year (CY) 2022 Michigan Incident Crime Reporting (MICR) and miscellaneous MSP forensic laboratory reporting. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) sources of information include the *2023 DEA Detroit Field Division Intelligence Collection Plan Threat Assessment*, *DEA Detroit Field Division Drug Pricing FY 2023 First Quarter*, and *FY2022 Case Reporting*. General information and non-statistical data may not be specifically cited as it may have been obtained via interviews, survey responses, or documentation provided by participating agencies. The source citations for information contained in this document can be found in the endnotes sub-section starting on page 64.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(U//FOUO) The threat from the production, use, and trafficking of illegal drugs throughout the State of Michigan continues to be of great concern. In 2022, the demand and availability of some commonly used drugs increased while others slightly decreased compared to 2021. Also, several drugs showed an increase in use, while others showed a slight decrease throughout the state during the 2022 reporting period. According to drug teams' survey responses on the most significant threat in their area of responsibility (AOR), as well as contributing factors such as availability and seizures, the drug threat ranking has remained the same from the previous reporting period. The current threat ranking is as follows:

- Fentanyl/Heroin
- Crystal Methamphetamine/Methamphetamine
- Cocaine/Crack Cocaine
- Prescription Drugs
- Marijuana

(U//FOUO) Therefore, based on 2022 reporting, the Michigan HIDTA has identified the following key findings:

### Fentanyl/Heroin

- (U//FOUO) According to the drug teams surveyed, 55% indicated fentanyl is their most significant threat in 2022 compared to 53% in 2021. Additionally, 21% of drug teams surveyed reported heroin as their second most significant threat, which is a decrease from 44% in 2021.
- (U//FOUO) Fentanyl is identified as the most lethal threat within the State of Michigan.
- (U//FOUO) Michigan HIDTA task forces seized roughly 123 kilograms of fentanyl in 2022, compared to 211 kilograms in 2021, which is roughly a 42% decrease.
- (U//FOUO) Michigan State Police forensic laboratory data, identifying the predominant drug type in tested samples, showed roughly a 14% decrease in the presence of fentanyl from 2021 to 2022.

### Crystal Methamphetamine/Methamphetamine

- (U//FOUO) According to the drug teams surveyed, 39.5% indicated crystal methamphetamine, also known as ICE, is their most significant threat in 2022, with 97% reporting it is available within their AOR.
- (U//FOUO) Michigan HIDTA task forces seized 288 kilograms of methamphetamine powder/ICE in 2022, compared to 597 kilograms in 2021, which is a 51% decrease in seizures.
  - (U//FOUO) A reason for this decrease is due to two HIDTA initiative's investigative efforts, resulting in the seizure of 260 kilograms of crystal methamphetamine in 2021.
- (U//FOUO) According to the Michigan State Police Michigan Incident Crime Reporting (MICR), methamphetamine incidents were the highest among drug-related arrests in 2022 and accounted for roughly 34% of total narcotic arrests.
- (U//FOUO) Michigan State Police forensic laboratory data, identifying the predominant drug type in tested samples, showed roughly a 7% decrease in the presence of methamphetamine from 2021 to 2022.

### **Cocaine/Crack Cocaine**

- (U//FOUO) Michigan HIDTA task forces seized 5,727 kilograms of cocaine/crack in 2022, compared to 272 kilograms in 2021, which is a 2,005% increase.
  - (U//FOUO) A reason for this increase is due to one HIDTA initiative's investigative efforts, resulting in the seizure of 4,930 kilograms of cocaine in 2022.
- (U//FOUO) The availability of cocaine increased with 97% of drug teams reporting the drug is readily available compared to 91% in 2021.

### **Prescription Drugs**

- (U//FOUO) Michigan is a source state for diverted prescription drugs in Indiana, Kentucky, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and West Virginia.
- (U//FOUO) Michigan HIDTA task forces seized 559 kilograms of prescription drugs in 2022, compared to 117 kilograms in 2021, which is a 378% increase.
  - This increase is likely due to the spike in counterfeit pharmaceutical tablets in Michigan as there is no separate reporting category for counterfeit pills.

### **Marijuana**

- (U//FOUO) Michigan HIDTA task forces seized 3,878 kilograms of processed marijuana/plants in 2022, compared to 6,406 kilograms in 2021, which is a 65% decrease.
- (U//FOUO) Marijuana continues to be the most readily available drug in the State of Michigan due to the legalization of recreational and medical marijuana. However, black market marijuana is still being trafficked.
- (U) According to the Cannabis Regulatory Agency (CRA), Michigan's cannabis market has grown to a powerhouse status with nearly \$2.3 billion in sales for 2022.

### **Emerging Trends**

- (U//FOUO) According to Michigan State Police forensic laboratory data; aside from heroin and fentanyl, the most common drug mixture in 2022 was fentanyl and fluorofentanyl (215 identifications).
- (U//FOUO) According to drug teams surveyed, 76% reported counterfeit pills are available within their AOR compared to 62% in 2021.

### **Drug Trafficking Organizations**

- (U//FOUO) In 2022, Michigan HIDTA task forces investigated 264 Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) and Money Laundering Organizations (MLOs) compared to 270 DTOs/MLOs in 2021, which is a 2% decrease. Of the 264 investigated, 108 DTOs/MLOs were dismantled or disrupted, which is indicative of the strong DTO/MLO presence in the region and a strong, organized law enforcement response.
- (U//FOUO) The most notable sources of narcotics supply for Michigan are Mexican drug cartels, specifically the Sinaloa Cartel and Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG).

## THE MICHIGAN HIDTA REGION

### **Michigan HIDTA Description**

(U//FOUO) The mission of the Michigan HIDTA is to reduce the production and trafficking of illegal drugs, related violent crime, and money laundering in the region and throughout the United States. This will be accomplished through the coordination and sharing of intelligence, unified law enforcement efforts, and community cooperation which will improve the quality of life in the State of Michigan and the nation. All Michigan HIDTA initiatives focus on identifying, disrupting, and/or dismantling Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) and Money Laundering Organizations (MLOs). These DTOs/MLOs are complex organizations with a distinct structure and hierarchy that not only allow them to maintain strong leadership within the group but also adapt their procedures to thwart law enforcement and anti-drug initiatives. They are often highly organized and constantly evolve to stay profitable and competitive in their respective markets. Additionally, many are violent in nature and in some instances have gang affiliations.

(U//FOUO) Identifying, disrupting, or dismantling DTOs/MLOs improves the efficiency and effectiveness of all agencies involved in the initiatives. These initiatives also utilize the Michigan HIDTA Investigative Support and Deconfliction Center (ISDC) for case support and event deconfliction to enhance their investigations. In 2022, the Michigan HIDTA supported 33 initiatives which consist of 17 federal, 14 state, and two local initiatives. Of those 33 initiatives, 27 are classified as law enforcement initiatives, four as support initiatives, one as an intelligence initiative, and one as a management and coordination initiative. In 2022, the Michigan HIDTA had 118 participating agencies consisting of 17 federal, three state, and 98 local.

(U//FOUO) The Michigan HIDTA region is centrally located between the major drug markets of Chicago and New York City and shares an international border with Canada. It is located near several major interstates and international airports which facilitate the cross-border transshipment of illicit drugs. The severe drug threat in the region is impacted by the geographic connection to several drug networks. The Michigan HIDTA services the entire State of Michigan, which includes the following 12 designated counties: Allegan, Genesee, Kalamazoo, Kent, Macomb, Muskegon, Oakland, Saginaw, St. Clair, Washtenaw, Wayne, and Van Buren. Of the approximate 10 million people in the State of Michigan, 63% (roughly 6.3 million) live in a HIDTA-designated county.<sup>1</sup> All HIDTA-designated counties are located in Michigan's Lower Peninsula. Within these counties, there are eight major drug markets: Detroit, Flint, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Muskegon, Pontiac, Port Huron, and Saginaw. Detroit, Flint, Pontiac, and Saginaw share similar characteristics that contribute to violent crime, including high poverty rates, high unemployment rates, high narcotics usage, and reduction in local law enforcement staffing. According to the Detroit Police Department, there were 311 Detroit homicides in 2022, compared to 308 in 2021.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, there were 953 Detroit non-fatal shootings in 2022, compared to 1,057 in 2021.<sup>3</sup> Despite a decrease in shootings, other crimes such as carjackings increased.<sup>4</sup> Nationally, since the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States, there has been a rise in domestic violence, violent crime, homicides, and gun violence.<sup>5</sup> Other HIDTA-designated counties also reported an increase in violence. For example, Grand Rapids, which is located within Kent County, reported 23 homicides in 2022, making it the second deadliest year within the past five years.<sup>6</sup> Oakland County reported 26 homicides occurred within the first six months of 2022, doubling the tally for the same timeframe as the previous year.<sup>7</sup> Overall, Michigan HIDTA task forces reported a total of 3,567 arrests and 1,768 firearms seized in 2022.<sup>8</sup>

### Michigan HIDTA Map

(U//FOUO) The map below identifies the 12 Michigan HIDTA-designated counties, the most popular drug trafficking interstates and routes, four major international airport locations, and two ports of entry where Canada connects to Detroit and to Port Huron.



## DRUG THREATS

### Overview

(U//FOUO) Numerous illicit drugs are trafficked throughout Michigan. Drugs brought into the state are transported through both international and state borders and along heavily traveled interstate highway corridors. DTOs, criminal groups, and street gangs are primarily responsible for the large-scale drug activity in Michigan as these groups operate both within the state and beyond its borders, traveling into Canada, the eastern and western United States, and across the Southwest Border to facilitate drug transactions.

### Source Considerations

(U//FOUO) The Michigan HIDTA collected and analyzed several sources to aid in the production of the drug threat section of the *2023 Drug Threat Assessment*. The primary sources of information utilized include: the Michigan HIDTA's *2023 Drug Trends Survey*, the Michigan HIDTA's Performance Management Process (PMP) System, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) *2023 DEA Detroit Field Division Intelligence Collection Plan Threat Assessment*, the DEA *FY2023 Detroit Field Division Drug Pricing First Quarter*, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) drug-related death and substance use disorder treatment admission reporting, the Michigan State Police Incident Crime Reporting (MICR), and the Michigan State Police Forensic Laboratories' Drug Examination and Opioid Mixtures Report. Additional data collected and analyzed include reporting from the Wayne County Office of the Medical Examiner, Detroit & Southeast Michigan Information & Intelligence Center (DSEMIIC), Michigan Intelligence Operations Center (MIOC), Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA), Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC), U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC), the University of Michigan Injury Prevention Center, and miscellaneous reporting from open sources.

## FENTANYL/HEROIN

### Key Findings

- (U//FOUO) Michigan State Police forensic laboratory data, identifying the predominant drug type in tested samples, showed roughly a 14% decrease in the presence of fentanyl from 2021 to 2022.
- (U//FOUO) Fentanyl is the most lethal drug threat and is responsible for the majority of drug overdoses in the State of Michigan.
- (U//FOUO) Michigan HIDTA task forces reported a 42% decrease in fentanyl seizures and a 67% decrease in heroin seizures from 2021 to 2022.

### Availability

(U//FOUO) **Fentanyl** remains widely available with 89.5% of drugs teams reporting the drug is readily available, compared to 94% in 2021.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, while fentanyl may not be considered the most prevalent drug in some areas, it is considered the most lethal drug threat in the State of Michigan.<sup>10</sup> Fentanyl is a potent, synthetic, opioid analgesic used as a pain reliever and anesthetic. It is a Schedule II substance under the Controlled Substances Act (CSA). A lethal dose of fentanyl is suggested to be about two milligrams,<sup>11</sup> which is equivalent to a few grains of salt. According to the drug teams surveyed, 76% stated fentanyl is more available than last reporting period.<sup>12</sup>

(U//FOUO) **Fentanyl** is available in two categories: licit, which is illegally diverted from the pharmaceutical market, or illicit, which is illegally manufactured. Illicit fentanyl, likely manufactured in China and/or Mexico, is smuggled into the United States and is primarily responsible for the overdose epidemic in recent years.

(U//FOUO) **Licit Fentanyl** is diverted via pharmacy theft, fraudulent prescriptions, or illicit distribution by patients and registrants (physicians and pharmacists). **Illicit fentanyl**, which is more prevalent, is manufactured clandestinely in China and Mexico. Fentanyl in powder form shares a similar appearance with heroin or cocaine and can often be mistaken for these drugs. Recent reporting suggests in some regions, anything sold as heroin is actually fentanyl.<sup>13</sup> Throughout the State of Michigan, it is becoming increasingly rare to encounter heroin that does not test positive for the presence of fentanyl.<sup>14</sup> For example, a drug team located in mid-Michigan reported 95% of heroin seized and submitted to MSP labs from their AOR tested positive for fentanyl (or fentanyl analogs) with no heroin detected.<sup>15</sup> However, street purchases of heroin and other drugs adulterated with fentanyl is still a trend. In 2022, the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC) reported a total of 116 kilograms of fentanyl seized in Michigan compared to 122 kilograms in 2021.<sup>16</sup> Also in 2022, Michigan HIDTA task forces seized a total of 123 kilograms of fentanyl compared to 211 kilograms in 2021.<sup>17</sup> Although seizures appear to be trending downward, fentanyl continues to be the most lethal threat within the State of Michigan. This information does not account for all fentanyl seizures in Michigan as not all agencies report to EPIC or HIDTA. Additionally, there may be a possible overlap in seizures as some agencies report to both EPIC and HIDTA.

(U//FOUO) While **heroin** continues to decline with the rise in fentanyl, it is still a viable threat in Michigan. Twenty-six percent of drug teams surveyed reported a decrease in heroin seizures from 2021.<sup>18</sup> Eighty-seven percent of drug teams report heroin is readily available compared to 91% in 2021.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, 21% of drug teams report heroin is more prevalent, 58% report it is stable, and 21% reported it is less prevalent compared to 2021.<sup>20</sup> Mexican Brown (MEX/BP) is reported as the most predominant type of heroin within Michigan, followed by Mexican Black Tar (MEX/T).<sup>21</sup> A reason for some teams reporting heroin is less prevalent may be an indication that most heroin seized actually contains fentanyl and may be reported as fentanyl rather than heroin. For example, according to a drug team surveyed, most heroin is mixed with fentanyl.<sup>22</sup> In 2022, EPIC reported a total of 4.8 kilograms of heroin seized in Michigan compared to 30 kilograms in 2021.<sup>23</sup> Michigan HIDTA task forces seized a total of 15 kilograms of heroin in 2022 compared to 46 kilograms in 2021.<sup>24</sup> This information does not account for all heroin seizures in Michigan as not all agencies report to EPIC or HIDTA. Additionally, there may be a possible overlap in seizures as some agencies report to both EPIC and HIDTA.

## Use

(U//FOUO) **Fentanyl** consumption has increased over the past few years not only in Michigan, but also nationally. The majority of fentanyl is acquired by consumers at known drug houses or private residences, through street sales, and through parcel services/Internet purchases from origins such as China or Mexico.<sup>25</sup> According to drug teams surveyed, fentanyl has been mixed with or sold to appear as heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, or prescription drugs.<sup>26</sup> This is often done without users' awareness; however, some dealers may also market their product as mixed. For example, a drug team surveyed indicated some heroin users will not purchase heroin unless they know it contains fentanyl.<sup>27</sup>

(U//FOUO) Michigan experienced a 13% increase in overdose deaths from 2020 to 2021 (*most recently obtained data*).<sup>28</sup> However, current preliminary reporting suggests overdose deaths may be trending downward for the first time in several years.<sup>29</sup> For example, the Michigan HIDTA's Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program (ODMAP) reported a total of 33,021 suspected overdoses in 2022, which is an 11% decrease from 37,134 suspected overdoses in 2021.<sup>30</sup> Of the 33,021 suspected overdoses, 2,119 were reported as fatal and 14,657 overdose victims received naloxone.<sup>31</sup> This was a 6% decrease and 5% decrease from 2021 reporting, respectively.<sup>32</sup> However, this does not account for all Michigan overdoses or naloxone administrations, only those that have been reported to the Michigan HIDTA and/or the University of Michigan Injury Prevention Center System for Opioid Overdose Surveillance System (S.O.S). Please note, this is preliminary data and ODMAP data is subject to change. There is no additional reporting to support if this decrease in overdoses is an apparent trend or if it is skewed due to Michigan experiencing a surge in overdose deaths during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, it is difficult to measure the full impact overdoses have on the State of Michigan as there is no statewide mandate or uniform method of reporting fatal and non-fatal overdose data.

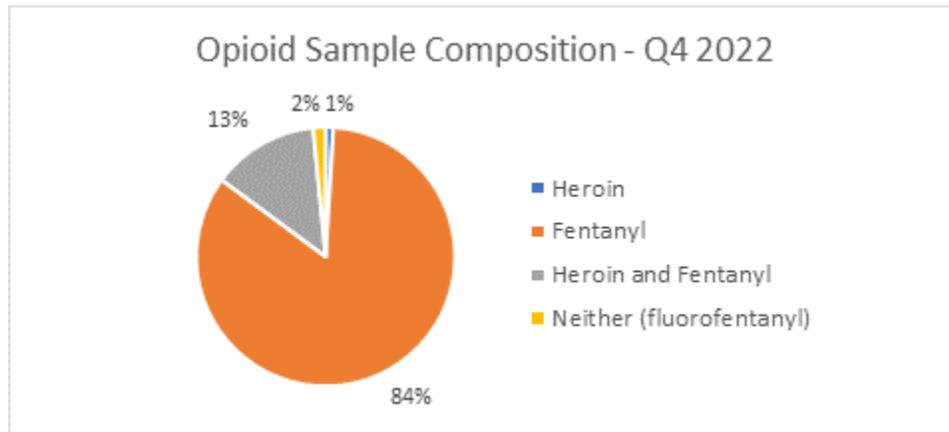
(U//FOUO) Michigan State Police (MSP) forensic laboratories reported 1,451 **fentanyl** identifications in 2022 compared to 1,697 in 2021, which is a 14% decrease.<sup>33</sup> According to drug teams surveyed, reporting indicates in some Michigan areas fentanyl is replacing heroin.<sup>34</sup> Fentanyl and other highly potent synthetic opioids, primarily sourced from China and Mexico, continue to be the most lethal category of illicit substances misused in Michigan.<sup>35</sup> Illicit fentanyl that is trafficked into the United States, in powder and pill form, is primarily responsible for fueling the ongoing opioid epidemic.<sup>36</sup>

(U//FOUO) **Heroin** use, in combination with opioid use, continues to have a detrimental impact on jurisdictions throughout Michigan. The majority of heroin is acquired by consumers at known drug houses or private residences and through street sales.<sup>37</sup> Due to the rise in fentanyl, heroin consumption is declining. According to drug teams surveyed, the majority of heroin sold on the streets is actually fentanyl. Additional reporting suggests users are resorting to fentanyl or crystal methamphetamine.<sup>38</sup> It is unknown at this time if crystal methamphetamine is a preferred drug over heroin, if it may be more available than heroin, or if users are switching from heroin to crystal methamphetamine due to fear of a heroin-related overdose. Michigan State Police (MSP) forensic laboratories reported 287 heroin identifications in 2022 compared to 561 in 2021, which is a 49% decrease.<sup>39</sup> It is likely heroin-only seizures will continue to trend downward due to most suspected heroin testing positive for the presence of fentanyl.

(U//FOUO) Heroin and fentanyl continue to be mixed with other drugs or cutting agents such as **xylazine**. Xylazine is a non-opiate sedative, analgesic, and muscle relaxant only authorized in the United States for veterinary use according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.<sup>40</sup> Nationally, the most common street names for xylazine include "tranq" or "tranq dope." The detection of xylazine in drug mixtures, particularly in combination with fentanyl, is increasing nationally.<sup>41</sup> A kilogram of xylazine powder can be purchased online from Chinese suppliers with common prices ranging from \$6 to \$20.<sup>42</sup> At this low price, its use as an adulterant may increase the profit for illicit drug traffickers, as its psychoactive effects allows them to reduce the amount of fentanyl or heroin in a mixture.<sup>43</sup> Additionally, some users intentionally seek out heroin or fentanyl mixed with xylazine, while others are completely unaware it is included as an adulterant.<sup>44</sup> Reporting suggests that xylazine may attract users who are looking for a longer high.<sup>45</sup> However, xylazine is not an opioid, therefore, it does not respond to opioid reversal agents such as naloxone.<sup>46</sup> If illicit opioids contain xylazine, naloxone might be less effective in fully reversing an overdose.<sup>47</sup>

(U//FOUO) Currently, MSP laboratories do not consistently track **xylazine**. However, during a pilot run, it appeared in opioid samples tested. For example, 1,338 opioid samples were analyzed from May to November 2022 and xylazine was present in 201 opioid samples tested.<sup>48</sup> All 201 opioid samples testing positive for the presence of xylazine contained fentanyl or fentanyl analogs, and some also contained heroin. It is important to note that most of the samples only had a trace amount of xylazine.<sup>49</sup>

(U//FOUO) Additionally, the below chart portrays a breakdown of 521 opioid samples tested from November 2022 to December 2022.<sup>50</sup> Of these, 87 (17%) contained xylazine. It is important to note that several of these samples contained a large amount of xylazine rather than trace amounts as mentioned previously.<sup>51</sup>

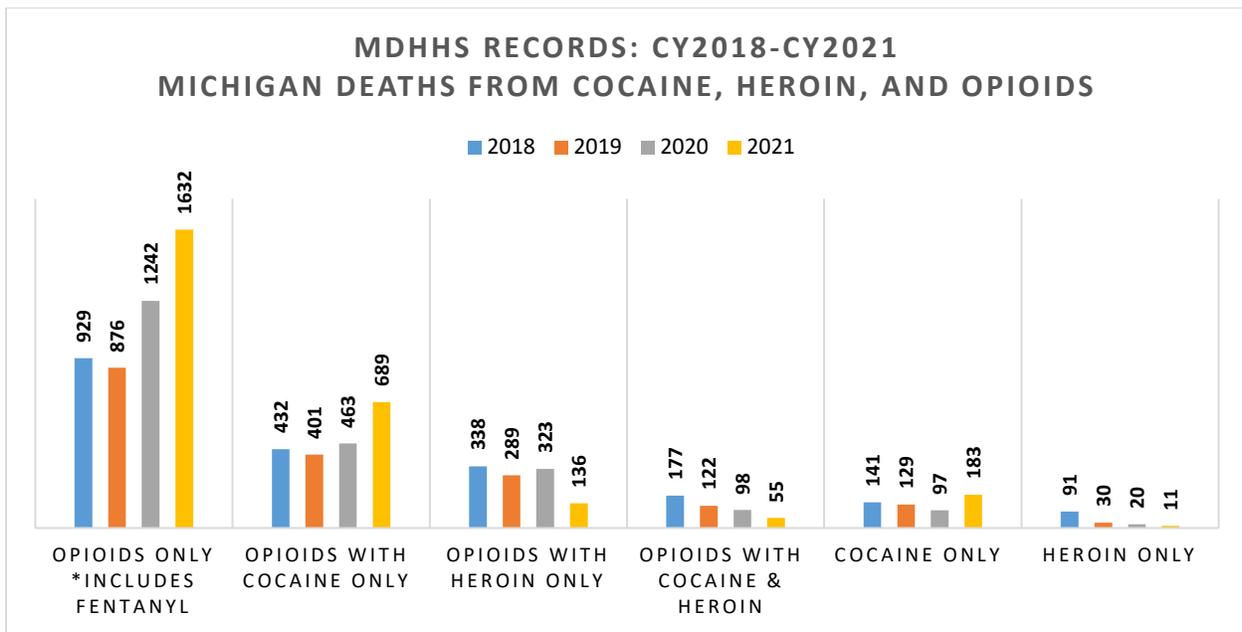


(U//FOUO) In 2021 (*most recently obtained data*), the Wayne County Office of the Medical Examiner provisionally reported xylazine was present in 11 overdose deaths which is consistent with 2020 reporting.<sup>52</sup> Additional drugs that appeared with xylazine include: fentanyl, cocaine, heroin, and para-fluorofentanyl.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, suspected drug-related death data is collected from an electronic death database, known as MDILog (Medicolegal Death Investigation Office Management Database System), which houses 44 of the 83 Michigan counties' medical examiner cases. In 2022, suspected drug-related death data collected from MDILog identified the presence of xylazine in 26 toxicology reports compared to six in 2021.<sup>54</sup>

(U//FOUO) The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) provided 2021 (*most recently obtained data*) primary cause of death information. There were 3,096 overdose deaths in 2021 compared to 2,738 overdose deaths in 2020, which is a 13% increase.<sup>55</sup> Of the 3,096 overdose deaths in 2021, 81% (2,524) were attributed to opioids.<sup>56</sup> Primary cause of death information was broken down by the following drug-related categories: heroin without cocaine or opioids, cocaine without heroin or opioids, cocaine and heroin without opioids, opioids including fentanyl without heroin or cocaine, opioids and heroin without cocaine, opioids and cocaine without heroin, and opioids with heroin and cocaine.

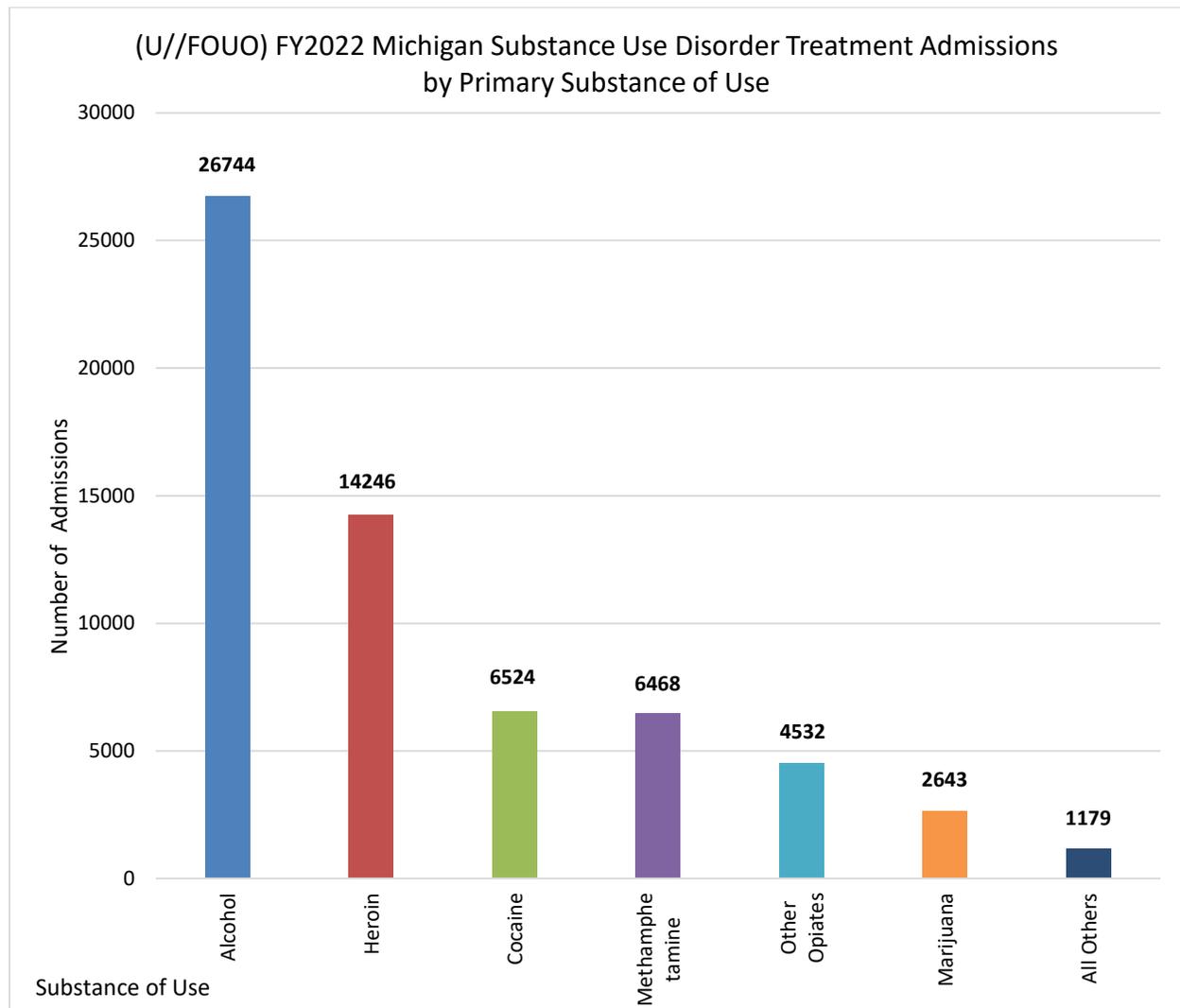
(U//FOUO) Opioids-only deaths, to include fentanyl, continue to account for the largest number of fatalities. Wayne County (424), followed by Macomb County (189), reported the highest number of deaths attributed to opioids, to include fentanyl, without heroin or cocaine.<sup>57</sup> For many counties, multiple deaths are attributed to several drug types, however, the following information is indicative of only the highest number of deaths caused by the respective drug type. More specifically, opioids-only deaths, to include fentanyl, attributed to 87% or 72 of Michigan’s 83 counties. Only 13% (11 of 83 counties) attributed to other categories. For example, Arenac and Gratiot Counties were attributed to opioids-only, to include fentanyl, and opioids with cocaine. Baraga County attributed to opioids with cocaine. Ontonagon County attributed to opioids-only, to include fentanyl, and heroin. Chippewa, Houghton, Iron, Keweenaw, Mackinac, Menominee, and Schoolcraft Counties either had no reported deaths or did not meet the respective drug type categories.

(U//FOUO) The chart below depicts deaths involving heroin, cocaine, and opioids from 2018 to 2021 (*most recently obtained data*). This information indicates more drug-related deaths are attributed to opioids, to include fentanyl (1,632 deaths), than solely cocaine (183 deaths) or heroin (11 deaths).



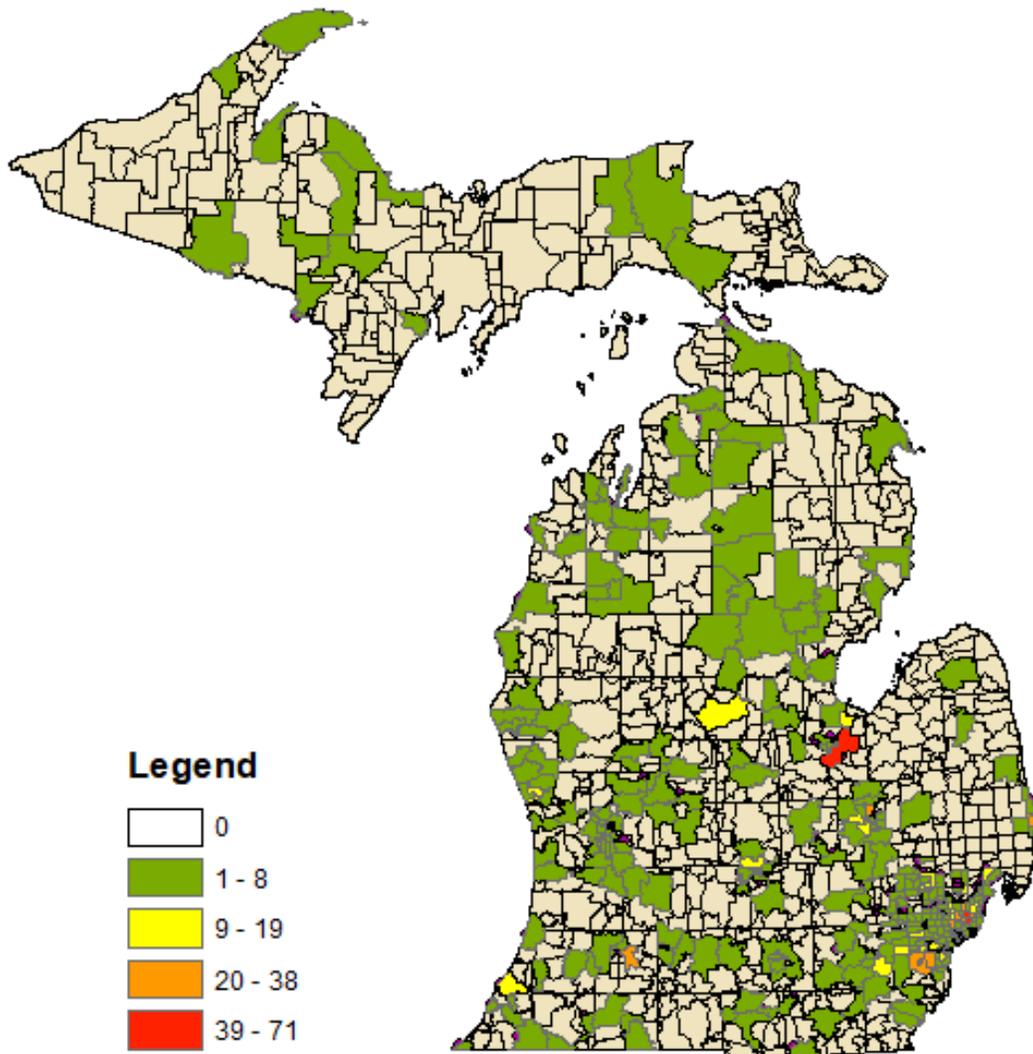
(U//FOUO) In 2021 (*most recently obtained data*), the Wayne County Office of the Medical Examiner reported fentanyl or fentanyl analogs were frequently listed as a cause of death in combination with other substances, which contributed to 99% of total drug-related deaths within Wayne County.<sup>58</sup> In 2021 (*most recently obtained data*), the Wayne County Office of the Medical Examiner provisionally reported fentanyl was present in 772 overdose deaths, compared to 643 in 2020.<sup>59</sup> The number of fentanyl-related deaths in Wayne County in 2021 was higher among Caucasian males than any other racial demographic, followed by African American males. The majority of Caucasian males ranged from 25 to 34 years old and 35 to 44 years old, while the majority of African American males ranged from 55 to 64 years old.<sup>60</sup> In 2022, suspected drug-related death data collected from MDILog identified the presence of fentanyl in 482 toxicology reports compared to 477 in 2021.<sup>61</sup> The predominant racial demographic was Caucasian males between 35 to 44 years old, followed by 25 to 34 years old.<sup>62</sup> The presence of heroin was tracked different from 2021 to 2022 and was non-comparable, therefore, there is not an accurate number to report. However, with the recent trend of heroin continuing to decline, it is likely that overdose deaths attributed to heroin are also declining.

(U//FOUO) Michigan substance use disorder treatment admission data reported 62,691 total publicly funded admissions in FY2022 compared to 63,243 in FY2021, which is less than a one percent decrease. The chart below shows **heroin**, second only to alcohol, as the primary substance reported at publicly funded substance use disorder treatment centers in the State of Michigan in 2022, which is consistent with the previous reporting year.<sup>63</sup> Heroin accounted for roughly 23% of all substance use treatment admissions and accounted for the largest percentage of substance use treatment admissions in 36 of Michigan’s 83 counties.<sup>64</sup> Manistee and Muskegon County heroin admissions surpassed alcohol admissions. The largest number of heroin drug treatment admissions occurred in Macomb (2,100), Wayne (1,672), Oakland (1,297), and Genesee (897) Counties.<sup>65</sup> Of those who sought treatment for heroin, 62% were males and 38% were females. The predominant racial demographic was Caucasian, and the predominant age range was 30 to 35 years old, followed by 36 to 44 years old.<sup>66</sup>



(U//FOUO) Michigan Incident Crime Reporting (MICR) data provides the number of narcotics arrests made by state and local law enforcement in Michigan. According to MICR data, a total of 11,371 narcotics arrests occurred during CY2022. This is an 8% decrease from CY2021 arrests (12,395). The map below depicts locations of **heroin** arrests as provided by MICR. The displayed colors depict the number of arrests per ZIP Code. MICR data shows 1,449 heroin arrests occurred during CY2022 throughout the state. This is a 21% decrease from CY2021 arrests (1,826). This decrease may be due to the emergence of synthetic opioids such as fentanyl and its analogs over the past few years or the increased availability and use of crystal methamphetamine.

**(U//FOUO) CY2022 Heroin Arrests**  
**(Possess, Sell/Manufacture, Smuggle, and Use)**



*(U//FOUO) MICR data obtained on 03/06/2023. Reporting period 01/01/2022-12/31/2022.  
CY2022 MICR data is subject to change.*

### Price

(U//FOUO) Pricing for **fentanyl** ranges depending on the geographic area. For example, the Detroit AOR reports fentanyl ranges from \$40 to \$85 per gram, the Grand Rapids AOR reports \$50 to \$250 per gram, and the Flint AOR reports \$45 to \$60 per gram.<sup>67</sup> Reporting suggests a kilogram of fentanyl ranges from \$25,000 to \$75,000 depending on geographic area.<sup>68</sup> Fentanyl in pill form can sell on average for approximately \$10 to \$50 each.<sup>69</sup> **Heroin** is primarily measured in grams or bindles (one-tenth of a gram) for individual sales and is often packaged in clear plastic baggies or folded lottery tickets. Unlike other states, stamps of commercial brand labels are not a common characteristic of retail heroin sales in Michigan. Like fentanyl pricing, heroin pricing also ranges depending on geographic area. For example, the Detroit AOR reports heroin ranges from \$40 to \$70 per gram, the Grand Rapids AOR reports \$40 to \$150 per gram, and the Flint AOR reports \$70 to \$130 per gram.<sup>70</sup> The DEA Detroit Division Office reports a kilogram of Mexican Brown (MEX/BP) heroin ranges from \$35,000 to \$60,000 and Mexican Black Tar (MEX/T) heroin ranges from \$17,000 to \$40,000.<sup>71</sup>

### Transportation

(U//FOUO) According to drug teams surveyed, 69% indicated **fentanyl** originates in Mexico followed by China (32%). Mexican drug cartels are the main source of supply and Mexican DTOs smuggle fentanyl from the Southwest Border.<sup>72</sup> Reporting suggests China is the primary source of precursor chemicals used in the illicit production of methamphetamine, heroin, and fentanyl in Mexico.<sup>73</sup> Precursors for fentanyl production are shipped into Mexico from China.<sup>74</sup> India is also mentioned as a significant source country for these precursors.<sup>75</sup> Fentanyl and fentanyl analogs are primarily smuggled into the United States through the Southwest Border. According to drug teams surveyed, illicit fentanyl destined for Michigan is most commonly concealed via parcels.<sup>76</sup> For example in 2022, the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) seized 48 packages categorized as synthetic opioids (fentanyl and other derivatives) destined for Michigan, compared to 27 packages in 2021.<sup>77</sup> Additionally, fentanyl still continues to be smuggled inside vehicles and commercial tractor-trailers.<sup>78</sup> Criminal organizations operating in Mexico are also responsible for the transportation and distribution of illicit fentanyl into the United States. In 2022, preliminary border seizure data indicated less than one kilogram of fentanyl was seized at Michigan ports of entry (*Detroit, Port Huron, and Sault Ste. Marie*) which is consistent with 2021 reporting.<sup>79</sup>

(U//FOUO) A significant amount of illegal drugs smuggled into, out of, and throughout Michigan travel along one of the several main highway corridors. According to drug teams surveyed, I-75 and I-94 are the most utilized corridors for the transportation of illicit drugs and drug proceeds, followed by I-69 and I-96.<sup>80</sup> Most drugs discovered along these corridors and ports of entry are found concealed in personal vehicles, rental vehicles, and commercial tractor-trailers. These vehicles often have hidden compartments specifically designed to conceal their contraband. A few drug teams surveyed reported an increase in the use of magnetic boxes or lock boxes, which are secured underneath the vehicle.<sup>81</sup> Additional methods of transportation include parcel delivery services such as FedEx, United Parcel Service (UPS), United States Postal Service (USPS), and the use of public transportation services such as Greyhound buses.<sup>82</sup> For example, in October 2022, interdiction at the Detroit Greyhound bus station resulted in the seizure of 90 oxycodone pills.<sup>83</sup> Of the 90 pills seized, 50 were determined to be counterfeit and tested positive for the presence of fentanyl.<sup>84</sup>

(U//FOUO) According to drug teams surveyed, African American street gangs and Mexican DTOs are dominant in the transportation, distribution, and sale of **fentanyl** and **heroin** in both wholesale and retail quantities.<sup>85</sup> Caucasian DTOs and Hispanic street gangs are also involved in retail distribution.<sup>86</sup> Most of the heroin found in Michigan is trafficked from the Southwest Border, traveling from Chicago through the I-96 and US-31 corridors throughout western Michigan and the I-94 corridor to the City of Detroit. Heroin departing Detroit destined for other cities in Michigan often travels via the I-75, I-94, and I-96 corridors to consumer cities.

### Intelligence Gaps

- (U//FOUO) Is fentanyl replacing heroin?
- (U//FOUO) Do users prefer fentanyl over heroin?
- (U//FOUO) What percentage of heroin contains fentanyl?
- (U//FOUO) With the recent increase of counterfeit tablets, will overdoses increase or decrease?
- (U//FOUO) How many fentanyl-related overdose victims were unaware they were consuming fentanyl?
- (U//FOUO) What percentage of illicit fentanyl arrives in Michigan via parcel delivery verses ground transportation?
- (U//FOUO) Is xylazine already mixed with heroin and/or fentanyl prior to arriving in Michigan, or are local dealers cutting their product with xylazine?

## CRYSTAL METHAMPHETAMINE/METHAMPHETAMINE

### Key Findings

- (U//FOUO) According to drug teams surveyed, 39% indicated crystal methamphetamine, also known as ICE, is their most significant threat which is relatively consistent with last year's reporting.
- (U//FOUO) Michigan HIDTA task forces seized 276 kilograms of crystal methamphetamine in 2022, compared to 596 kilograms in 2021, which is roughly a 54% decrease.
- (U//FOUO) Michigan HIDTA task forces dismantled two clandestine methamphetamine labs in 2022, which is a decrease from four labs dismantled in 2021.
  - (U//FOUO) Clandestine lab seizures remain low in Michigan, likely due to the influx of crystal methamphetamine availability.

### Availability

(U//FOUO) **Crystal methamphetamine**, a purer form of methamphetamine, is a significant threat in Michigan. The presence of Mexican crystal methamphetamine trafficked from the Southwest Border continues to be prevalent. Crystal methamphetamine, also known as "**ICE**," remains widely available with 97% of drug teams reporting the drug is readily available, which is consistent with last reporting period.<sup>87</sup> Additionally, 74% of drug teams reported an increase in availability, 24% reported stable availability, and 2% reported a decrease in availability.<sup>88</sup> Michigan HIDTA task forces seized a total of 276 kilograms of crystal methamphetamine in 2022, which is roughly a 54% decrease from 596 kilograms seized in 2021.<sup>89</sup> This decrease may be due to the surge of crystal methamphetamine availability in 2021 within Michigan. In 2021, reporting suggested Mexican drug cartels flooded the market with a low-cost, potentially lethal drug that is highly addictive and increasingly easy to obtain.<sup>90</sup> For example, in June 2021, southwest Michigan reported a record-breaking seizure of 50 kilograms of crystal methamphetamine with a street value of over \$1 million.<sup>91</sup> Significant seizures have continued into 2022 as well. For example, in February 2022, a car hauler was interdicted transporting narcotics from Chicago to Detroit and 25 kilograms of crystal methamphetamine was located in trapped compartments.<sup>92</sup>

(U//FOUO) Additionally, reporting indicates counterfeit tablets containing methamphetamine have increased from the last reporting period.<sup>93</sup> According to the DEA, counterfeit tablets are being falsely marketed as legitimate prescription pills such as oxycodone (OxyContin or Percocet), hydrocodone (Vicodin), alprazolam (Xanax), or stimulants like amphetamines (Adderall).<sup>94</sup> These counterfeit tablets often contain fentanyl or methamphetamine and can be deadly.<sup>95</sup> Nationally, the DEA seized more than 50 million fentanyl-laced, counterfeit prescription pills in 2022.<sup>96</sup> Also in 2022, the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC) reported a total of 346 kilograms of crystal methamphetamine seized in Michigan, a decrease from 699 kilograms seized in 2021.<sup>97</sup> This does not account for all crystal methamphetamine seizures in Michigan as not all agencies report to EPIC or HIDTA. Additionally, there may be a possible overlap in seizures as some agencies report to both EPIC and HIDTA.

(U//FOUO) **Crystal methamphetamine** is trafficked into the state primarily by Mexican DTOs. Thirty-nine percent of teams surveyed reported crystal methamphetamine as their most significant drug threat, which is relatively consistent with last year's reporting. Crystal methamphetamine has become more widespread. The influx in ICE has had a major impact on the methamphetamine powder drug market in Michigan and several drug teams reported a drop in "one-pot" methamphetamine labs.<sup>98</sup> Methamphetamine in Michigan was previously encountered in a granular, powder form, however, crystal methamphetamine is now more prevalent.<sup>99</sup>

(U//FOUO) **Methamphetamine powder** is moderately available throughout some areas of the state. According to drug teams surveyed, 26% reported it is readily available in their AOR compared to 35% in 2021.<sup>100</sup> Additionally, 47% of drug teams reported less availability, 50% reported stable availability, and 3% reported more availability of methamphetamine powder when compared to 2021.<sup>101</sup> Michigan HIDTA task forces seized a total of eight kilograms of methamphetamine powder in 2022, which is an increase from one kilogram seized in 2021.<sup>102</sup> However, this increase is likely correlated to counterfeit tablets containing methamphetamine being reported as methamphetamine powder seizures as there is no separate category for methamphetamine pills. For example, one drug team's investigation involved the seizure of two pill press or tableting machines, and roughly four kilograms of methamphetamine pills.<sup>103</sup> According to drug teams surveyed, 8% of teams indicated one-pot labs were identified in their AOR in 2022, which is consistent with last reporting period.<sup>104</sup> The influx of crystal methamphetamine in the State of Michigan has significantly decreased the use and demand for methamphetamine powder.

(U//FOUO) **Methamphetamine powder** is generally produced locally for personal consumption and/or small-scale retail sales by independent cooks using the "one-pot" method. While the majority of methamphetamine in Michigan is found in crystal and powder form, several teams reported the presence of counterfeit tablets containing methamphetamine.<sup>105</sup> For example, in August 2022, 75 counterfeit Adderall pills containing methamphetamine were seized during an investigation in a western Michigan county, indicating these counterfeit pills still have a presence in some areas.<sup>106</sup>

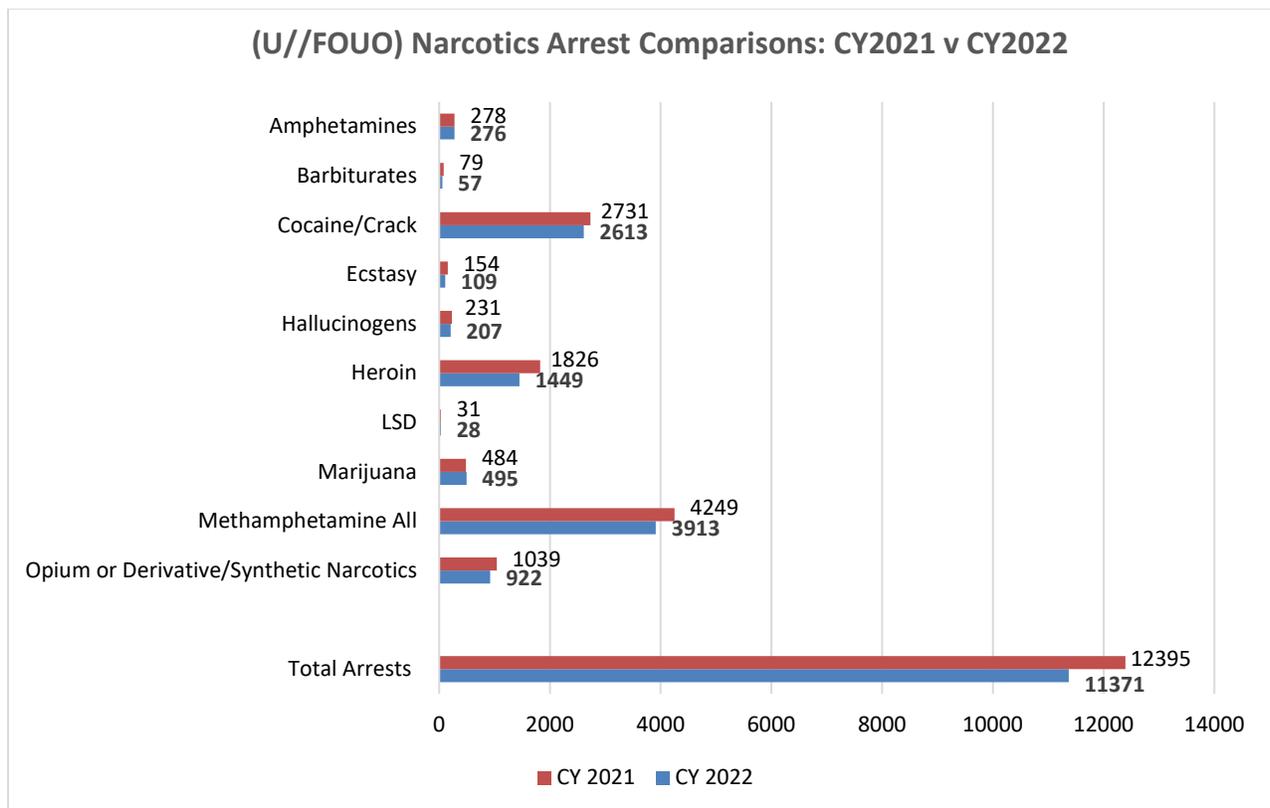
(U//FOUO) While many local independent cooks still exist in western and central Michigan, DTOs continue to account for large quantities imported into the state. **Methamphetamine in solution** is more easily smuggled, difficult to detect, and can be less expensive than powder or crystal forms. Once methamphetamine in solution is smuggled into the United States, it is converted to crystal methamphetamine. Although suspected, there has been minimal reporting of methamphetamine in solution seizures in Michigan.<sup>107</sup> While there are no confirmed incidents or conversion labs in Michigan involving methamphetamine in solution seizures, it is likely an encounter and/or seizure may occur in the state in the future.

**Use**

(U//FOUO) Users acquire **crystal methamphetamine** at known drug houses or private residences, through street sales, and via parcel services.<sup>108</sup> According to drug teams surveyed, some areas reported heroin users are resorting to crystal methamphetamine. It is unknown at this time if crystal methamphetamine is a preferred drug over heroin, if it is more available than heroin, or if users are switching from heroin to crystal methamphetamine due to fear of an opioid overdose. An initial assumption was that users may use whatever drug was more available given the COVID-19 pandemic impacts on the drug supply, however, recent reporting indicates crystal methamphetamine is an ever-increasing threat and the use and availability will continue to increase. Additional reporting also suggests that Mexican drug cartels are promoting crystal methamphetamine sales over cocaine sales as it is pervasive and cheap.<sup>109</sup>

(U//FOUO) **Methamphetamine powder** is typically manufactured in local Michigan labs and, if not consumed immediately, the drug is packaged in plastic baggies for local distribution. Additionally, users generally acquire methamphetamine powder at known drug houses or private residences.<sup>110</sup> Methamphetamine powder consumption is mainly concentrated in the central, southwest, and northern portions of the state in conjunction with the level of methamphetamine production which occurs in these areas.<sup>111</sup>

(U//FOUO) In 2022, **methamphetamine** incidents were the highest among drug-related arrests in the State of Michigan, followed by cocaine. Methamphetamine accounted for 34% of total narcotics arrests which is consistent with 2021 reporting.<sup>112</sup> Below is a chart comparing CY2021 and CY2022 Michigan State Police (MSP) MICR arrests broken down by drug type.

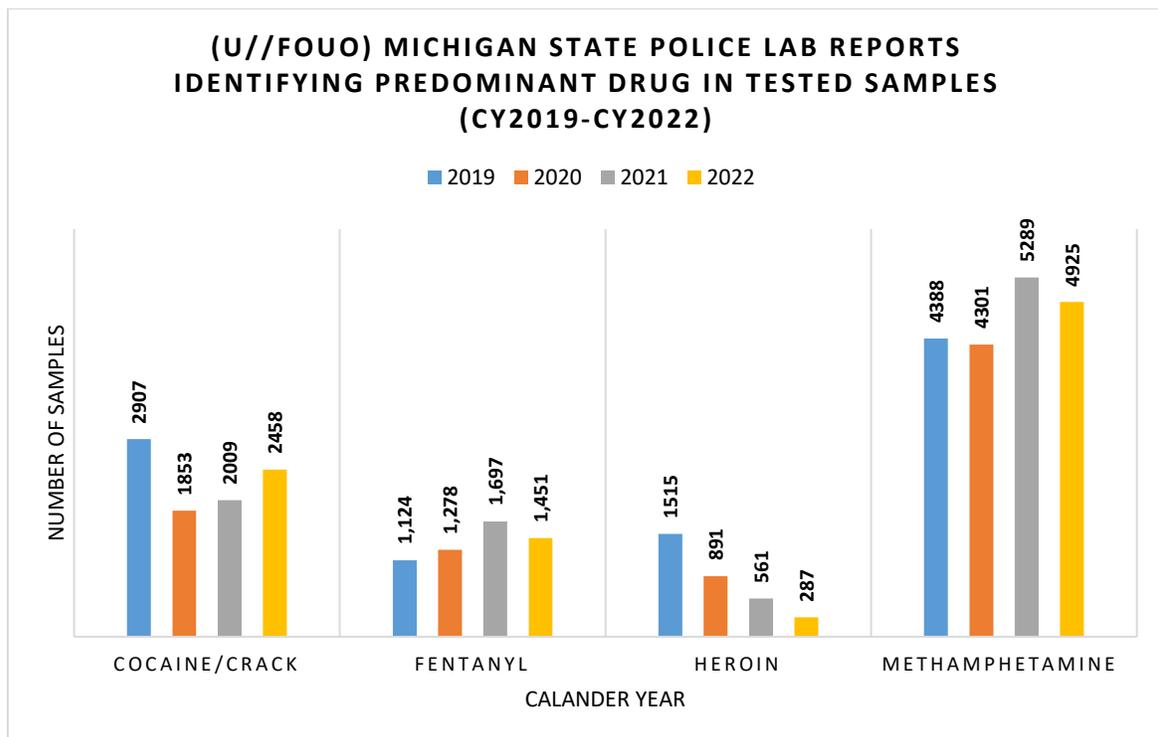


(U//FOUO) MICR data reporting period: 01/01/2022-12/31/2022. CY2022 MICR data is preliminary and subject to change. Reported on 03/04/2023.

(U//FOUO) In FY2022, MDHHS reported 6,468 **methamphetamine** admissions for substance use treatment, which is roughly an 8% increase from FY2021 (6,013).<sup>113</sup> Substance use treatment facility methamphetamine admissions constituted 10% of total drug treatment admissions.<sup>114</sup> Methamphetamine accounted for the largest percentage of substance use treatment admissions in 39 of Michigan’s 83 counties compared to 27 counties in 2021.<sup>115</sup> The largest amount of methamphetamine drug treatment admissions occurred in Genesee (415), Ingham (393), Jackson (306), Kalamazoo (259), and St. Clair (219) Counties.<sup>116</sup> Methamphetamine admissions surpassed alcohol admissions in five counties. Of those who sought treatment for methamphetamine, 57.5% were males and 42.5% were females. The predominant racial demographic was Caucasian, and the predominant age range was 36 to 44 years old, followed by 30 to 35 years old.<sup>117</sup>

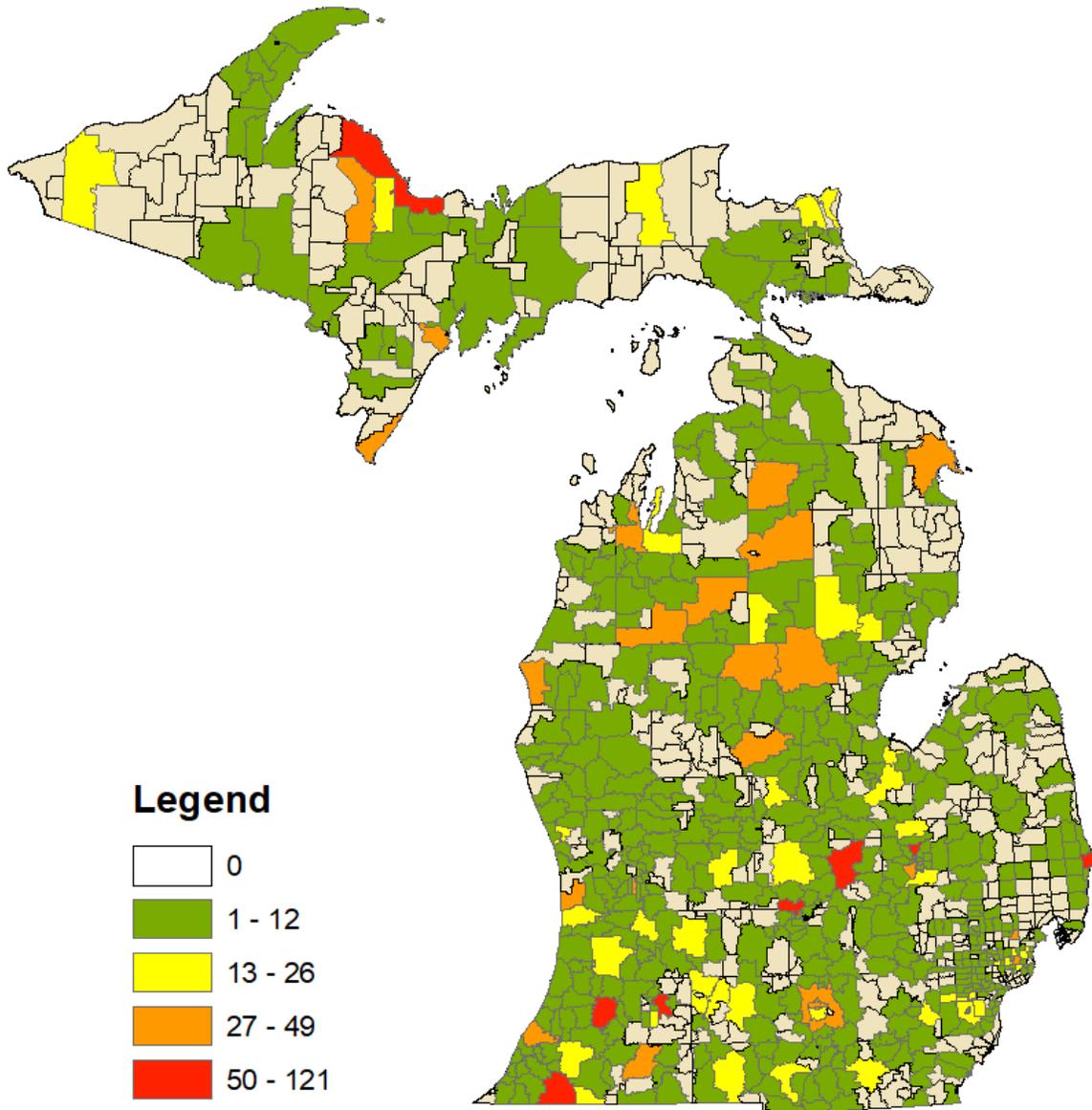
(U//FOUO) In 2021 (*most recently obtained data*), the Wayne County Office of the Medical Examiner provisionally reported **methamphetamine** was present in 49 overdose deaths, which is consistent with 2020 reporting.<sup>118</sup> Methamphetamine appeared with other substances such as fentanyl, acetyl fentanyl, cocaine, mitragynine (kratom), and xylazine.<sup>119</sup> The number of methamphetamine-related deaths in Wayne County in 2021 was higher among Caucasian males than any other racial demographic, followed by African American males. The majority of Caucasian males ranged from 35 to 44 years old, while the majority of African American males ranged from 25 to 34 years old.<sup>120</sup> Additionally in 2022, suspected drug-related death data collected from MDILog identified the presence of methamphetamine in 322 toxicology reports compared to 241 in 2021.<sup>121</sup>

(U//FOUO) Michigan State Police (MSP) forensic laboratories reported 4,925 **methamphetamine** identifications in 2022 compared to 5,289 in 2021, which is roughly a 7% decrease.<sup>122</sup> Additionally, MSP forensic laboratories reported more methamphetamine identifications when compared to cocaine, fentanyl, and heroin as depicted in the chart below.



(U//FOUO) The map below depicts locations of **methamphetamine** (includes crystal methamphetamine and methamphetamine powder) delivery, possession, and use arrests by state and local law enforcement in Michigan during CY2022. The displayed colors depict the number of methamphetamine arrests per ZIP Code. MICR data shows 3,881 methamphetamine arrests occurred during CY2022 throughout the state. This is an 8% decrease from CY2021 arrests (4,212). Despite the slight decrease in arrests, reporting suggests crystal methamphetamine availability is becoming more widespread and usage is increasing.

**(U//FOUO) CY2022 Methamphetamine Arrests  
(Delivery, Possession, and Use)**



*(U//FOUO) MICR data obtained on 03/06/2023. Reporting period of 01/01/2022 – 12/31/2022.  
CY2022 MICR data is subject to change.*

### Price

(U//FOUO) Pricing for **crystal methamphetamine** ranges depending on the geographic area. For example, the Detroit AOR reports crystal methamphetamine ranges from \$6 to \$10 per gram, the Grand Rapids AOR reports \$100 to \$120 per gram, and the Flint AOR reports \$25 to \$30 per gram.<sup>123</sup> A kilogram of crystal methamphetamine averages \$10,000, however, in some areas may be as low as \$4,000.<sup>124</sup> Mexican DTOs are the primary suppliers of crystal methamphetamine and the supply has continued to increase over the last several reporting periods.<sup>125</sup> According to drug teams surveyed, a gram of **methamphetamine powder** ranges from \$60 to \$100.<sup>126</sup> Methamphetamine powder is typically seized in smaller quantities, therefore, there is minimal information pertaining to kilogram pricing.

### Transportation

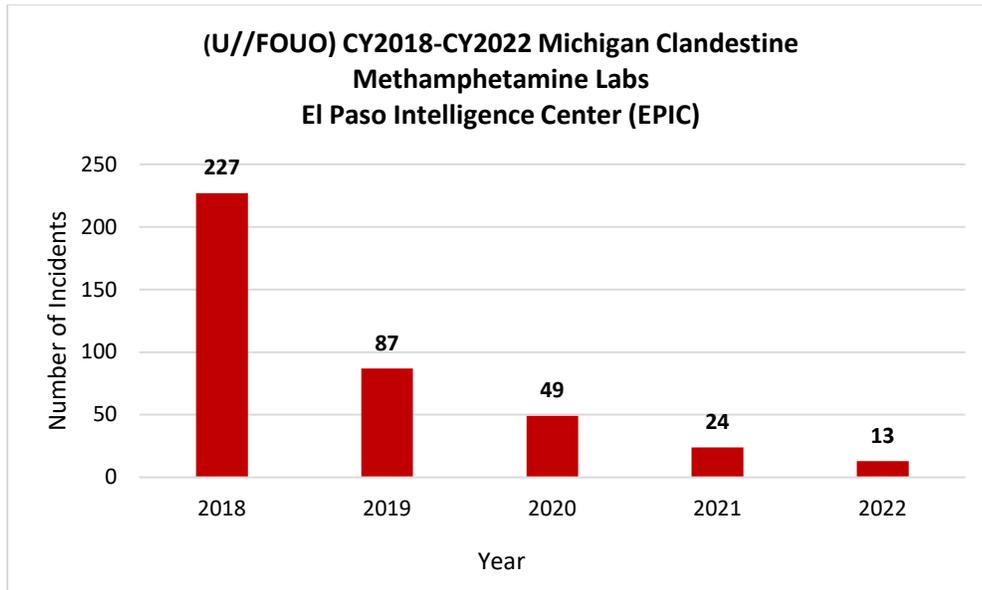
(U//FOUO) **Crystal methamphetamine** is primarily produced in Mexico and brought in through the United States/Mexico ports of entry. Increasing supplies of crystal methamphetamine, coupled with low prices and high purity levels, are driving the expansion of crystal methamphetamine into new regions of the United States. The most notable sources of narcotics supply for Michigan are the Mexican drug cartels, specifically the Sinaloa Cartel and Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG).<sup>127</sup>

(U//FOUO) According to drug teams surveyed, African American street gangs and Mexican DTOs are dominant in the transportation, distribution, and sale of **crystal methamphetamine** in both wholesale and retail quantities.<sup>128</sup> Caucasian DTOs, Hispanic street gangs, and Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMGs) are also involved in retail distribution.<sup>129</sup> Crystal methamphetamine is trafficked in personal vehicles and commercial tractor-trailers, which is transported along various interstate highways, or through parcel services.<sup>130</sup> For example in May 2022, nine kilograms of crystal methamphetamine was seized during a traffic stop on US-23 in eastern Livingston County.<sup>131</sup> The crystal methamphetamine was valued at roughly \$40,000.<sup>132</sup> Many drug teams reported an increase in DTOs utilizing parcel services to transport crystal methamphetamine.<sup>133</sup> In 2022, the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) seized 53 packages containing methamphetamine destined for Michigan compared to 60 packages in 2021.<sup>134</sup> California was the top sender state in which 33 Michigan-bound packages were seized. Of those 33 packages, the top destination city was Detroit (12 packages seized).<sup>135</sup> **Methamphetamine powder**, its precursor chemicals, and equipment have been concealed in personal vehicles, commercial tractor-trailers, parcel packages, and/or on the person.<sup>136</sup>

### Production

(U//FOUO) Although the source of large quantities of **methamphetamine powder** is the Southwest Border, local individuals in the state most commonly produce it in small quantities. Many different chemicals can be used as ingredients in the production of methamphetamine including, but not limited to, ephedrine, pseudoephedrine, ether, lithium, alcohol, sodium hydroxide, iodine, ammonia, salt, red phosphorus, toluene (brake fluid), and hydrochloric acid. Methamphetamine can be made using readily available household items like dishes, towels, coffee filters, funnels, blenders, and aluminum foil. Methamphetamine produced in smaller amounts creates significant health and safety concerns for the environment. The residual chemicals used in the production process create hazardous conditions for residents, neighbors, law enforcement, clean-up crews, and anyone who encounters or enters one of these labs. The majority of these small user-type labs are using the “one-pot,” anhydrous ammonia method which can be very volatile.

(U//FOUO) The chart below shows the total number of reported clandestine **methamphetamine** labs from 2018 to 2022 provided by EPIC. In 2022, Michigan reported 13 labs compared to 24 labs in 2021.<sup>137</sup> The majority of clandestine labs in 2022 (77%) were capable of producing less than two ounces of methamphetamine.<sup>138</sup> One was capable of producing two to nine pounds, one was capable of producing 10 to 19 pounds, and one was capable of producing 20+ pounds.<sup>139</sup> This information does not account for all clandestine labs in Michigan as not all agencies report to EPIC.



(U//FOUO) Because the labs identified in Michigan have been primarily operated by local individuals as opposed to large scale labs controlled by DTOs, the lab sizes and amounts of **methamphetamine** found are significantly less than in years prior. Michigan HIDTA task forces dismantled two clandestine labs in 2022, which is a decrease from four labs dismantled in 2021. Of the two clandestine labs dismantled in 2022, 100% (2) were capable of producing less than two ounces of methamphetamine.<sup>140</sup> Despite the overall decline in “one-pot” methamphetamine labs over the past few years, which is likely due to the increased presence of crystal methamphetamine imported from Mexico, methamphetamine manufacturing remains a viable threat.<sup>141</sup>

(U//FOUO) **Methamphetamine** produced in Mexico is made using the precursor phenyl-2-propanone (“P2P”) instead of pseudoephedrine. Mexican DTOs use the P2P method to mass produce crystal methamphetamine, which is then trafficked into the United States.<sup>142</sup> Mexican DTOs are able to produce methamphetamine that is highly pure, potent, and less expensive to produce, which has contributed to the decline of domestic production.<sup>143</sup>

(U) The accessibility of ingredients and tools is what makes methamphetamine production difficult to detect. While it is not feasible to ban or restrict access to every item used in the production of this drug, the focus has been placed on key ingredients of the most common method of production: ephedrine and pseudoephedrine.

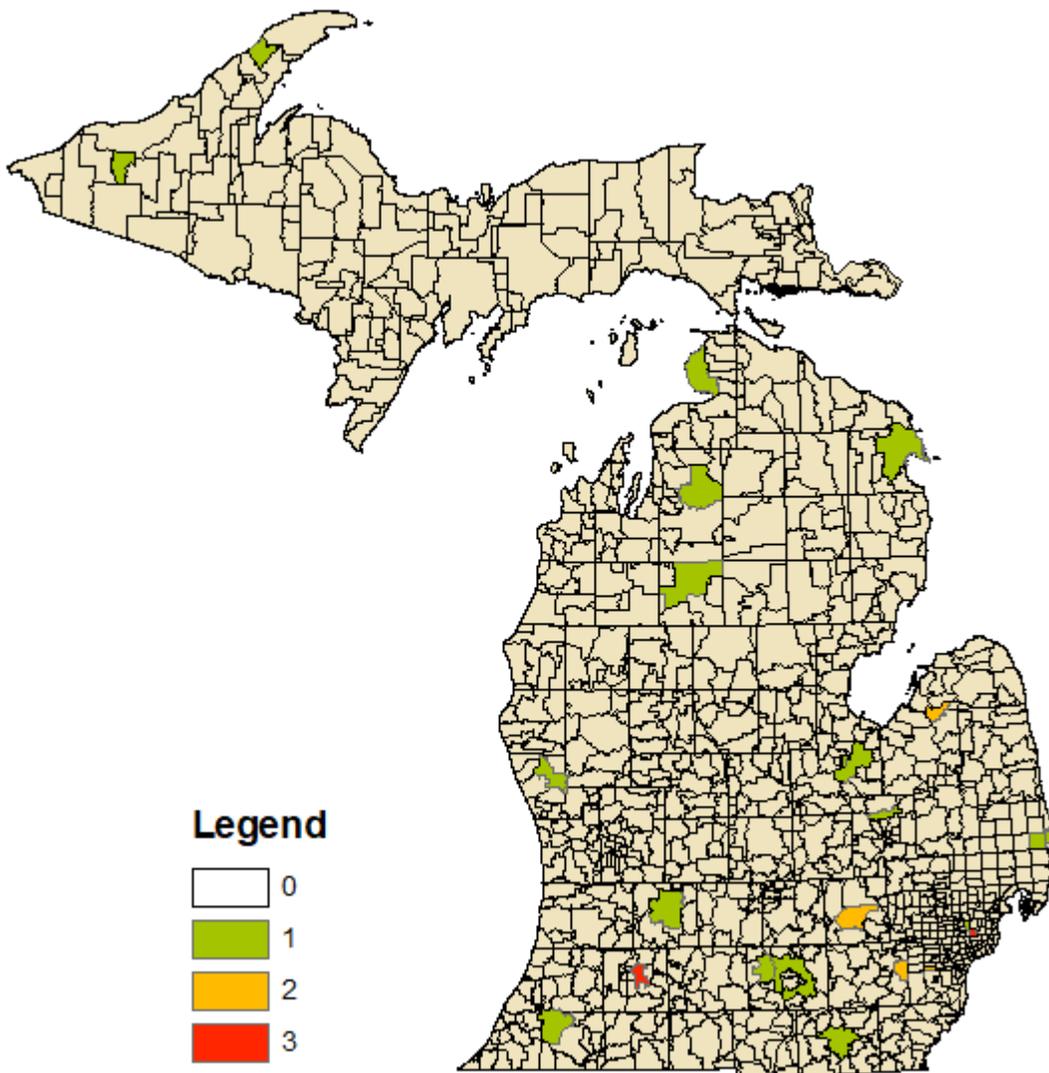
(U) Since 2005, Michigan has restricted the sale of over the counter (OTC) medications containing ephedrine or pseudoephedrine through the Federal Combat Meth Epidemic Act of 2005. This initiative mandates pharmacies secure such medication either behind the counter or in a locked case requiring customers to ask for assistance from pharmacy staff. In addition, anti-theft devices are placed inside packaging containing ephedrine or pseudoephedrine. Pharmacies are also required to keep a log of customers who purchase this type of medication, maintain it for a minimum of six months, and make it available to law enforcement upon request.

(U) Initially, this approach showed signs of success as local methamphetamine production dropped slightly through 2008. However, the success was short-lived as determined methamphetamine producers found workarounds by applying techniques such as “smurfing” rings and the “one-pot” method. The term “smurfing” refers to the method producers use to acquire enough pseudoephedrine, an ingredient found in some cold and allergy medicines, to make methamphetamine. Currently by law, residents may only purchase up to 3.6 grams of pseudoephedrine per day or nine grams total per month. To circumvent the current nine grams monthly limit, individuals purchase the medication from multiple stores over a short period of time, often using false identification in order to obtain more than the legal amount. They may also recruit others to assist them in buying OTC medications. Pseudoephedrine can either be sold or traded for methamphetamine. Requiring customers to present identification and sign a pharmacy logbook at the point of purchase are both ways to deter smurfing. However, this deterrent method has not been as effective in recent years as individuals continue to use false identification and work in larger groups to obtain excess amounts of OTC pseudoephedrine.

(U) In 2012, Michigan pharmacies and drug retailers were required to use a real-time electronic tracking system to track customers who purchase any OTC medication containing ephedrine or pseudoephedrine. These purchases are tracked using a web-based program called the National Precursor Log Exchange (NPLEx) overseen by the National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators. Each time a customer purchases ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, they are required to provide proper identification and their information is transmitted to, and saved in, a law enforcement database. By utilizing NPLEx, law enforcement can identify pseudoephedrine purchasers which may eventually lead to identifying methamphetamine manufacturers.

(U//FOUO) Statewide, law enforcement made 3,913 total **methamphetamine**-related arrests in 2022, which is an 8% decrease from last year's reporting (4,249). Of those 3,913 methamphetamine-related incidents, 3,881 (99%) were attributed to delivery, possession, and use arrests and 32 (1%) were attributed to lab and manufacturing arrests. Methamphetamine powder remains a threat to Michigan law enforcement and the community alike due to the unpredictability of the chemicals used in the production process and the damaging effects they cause to the environment. The map below depicts locations of methamphetamine lab and manufacturing arrests by state and local law enforcement in Michigan during CY2022. The displayed colors depict the number of arrests per ZIP Code. MICR data shows 32 methamphetamine lab and manufacturing arrests occurred during CY2022 throughout the state. This is a 13% decrease from CY2021 arrests (37).

**(U//FOUO) CY2022 Methamphetamine Arrests  
(Lab and Manufacturing)**



*(U//FOUO) MICR data obtained on 03/06/2023. Reporting period of 01/01/2022 – 12/31/2022.  
CY2022 MICR data is subject to change.*

**Intelligence Gaps**

- (U//FOUO) Is crystal methamphetamine preferred over fentanyl/heroin based on user preference, availability, or fear of a drug overdose?
- (U//FOUO) What percentage of crystal methamphetamine arrives in Michigan via parcel delivery?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent are pill presses being used to produce counterfeit pills that contain methamphetamine in Michigan?

**COCAINE/CRACK COCAINE****Key Findings**

- (U//FOUO) The availability of cocaine increased in some areas of the state with 97% of drug teams reporting the drug is readily available compared to 91% in 2021.
- (U//FOUO) Michigan State Police forensic laboratory data, identifying the predominant drug type in tested samples, showed a 22% increase in the presence of cocaine from 2021 to 2022.

**Availability**

(U//FOUO) **Cocaine** is a significant drug threat and is readily available across the State of Michigan. Cocaine availability in Michigan seems to have increased from last reporting period. Cocaine remains widely available with 97% of drug teams reporting the drug is readily available compared to 91% in 2021.<sup>144</sup> Additionally, 34% of drug teams surveyed reported an increase in availability, 63% reported stable availability, and 3% reported less availability from 2021.<sup>145</sup> Also, 34% of drug teams reported an increase in seizures from 2021.<sup>146</sup> According to drug teams surveyed, 50% indicate fentanyl is being mixed with cocaine compared to 41% in 2021.<sup>147</sup> In 2022, EPIC reported a total of 748 kilograms of cocaine seized in Michigan, which is an increase from 369 kilograms seized in 2021.<sup>148</sup> Michigan HIDTA task forces seized a total of 5,711 kilograms of cocaine in 2022, compared to 262 kilograms in 2021; however, the increase is due to one team's significant seizure of 4,930 kilograms of cocaine in one HIDTA initiative's investigative operation.<sup>149</sup> This does not account for all cocaine seizures in Michigan as not all agencies report to EPIC or HIDTA. Additionally, there may be a possible overlap in seizures as some agencies report to both EPIC and HIDTA. Colombia is the world's largest cocaine producer and has increased its cultivation of coca plants by 43%,<sup>150</sup> which may be impacting the recent increase in cocaine availability within Michigan.

(U//FOUO) **Crack Cocaine** in Michigan is a moderate drug threat and availability has remained relatively consistent with the last reporting period. According to the drug teams surveyed, 79% reported availability in their AOR compared to 76% in 2021.<sup>151</sup> Additionally, 8% reported more availability, 71% reported stable availability, and 21% reported less availability from 2021.<sup>152</sup> The Michigan HIDTA task forces seized a total of nine kilograms of crack cocaine in 2022, which is relatively consistent with 10 kilograms seized in 2021.<sup>153</sup> Most crack cocaine is converted from powder cocaine and consumed within the local urban areas.

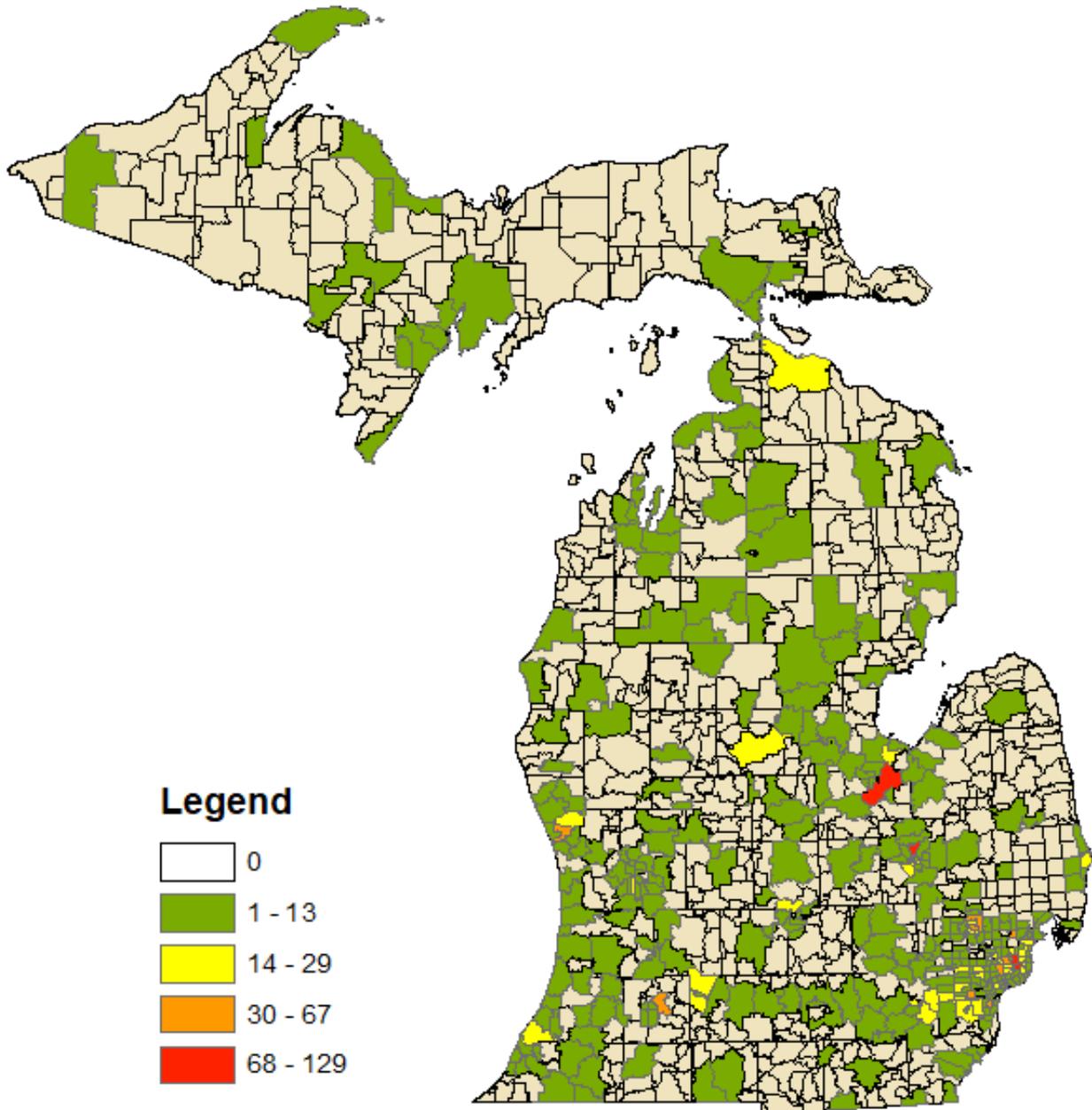
## Use

(U//FOUO) **Cocaine** consumption has increased since last reporting period, while **crack cocaine** consumption has remained stable. In 2022, cocaine incidents were the second highest among drug-related arrests in the State of Michigan. Cocaine accounted for 23% of total narcotic arrests in 2022 which is consistent with 2021 reporting.<sup>154</sup> Consumers typically acquire cocaine at known drug houses or private residences and through street sales.<sup>155</sup>

(U//FOUO) Michigan State Police (MSP) forensic laboratories reported 2,458 **cocaine** identifications in 2022 compared to 2,009 in 2021, which is a 22% increase.<sup>156</sup> In FY2022, MDHHS reported 6,524 cocaine/crack admissions for substance use treatment compared to 5,311 in 2021, which is roughly a 23% increase.<sup>157</sup> Admissions for cocaine/crack made up 10% of all admissions.<sup>158</sup> The largest number of cocaine drug treatment admissions occurred in Genesee (831), Wayne (717), Oakland (587), and Macomb (540) Counties.<sup>159</sup> Of those who sought treatment for cocaine/crack, roughly 63% were males and 37% were females. The predominant racial demographic was Caucasian and the predominant age range was 36 to 44 years old, followed by 45 to 54 years old.<sup>160</sup> In 2021 (*most recently obtained data*), the Wayne County Office of the Medical Examiner provisionally reported cocaine was present in 370 overdose deaths, compared to 314 in 2020.<sup>161</sup> The number of cocaine-related deaths in Wayne County in 2021 was higher among African American males than any other demographic, followed by Caucasian males. The majority of African American males ranged from 25 to 34 years old, followed by 55 to 64 years old, while the majority of Caucasian males ranged from 35 to 44 years old, followed by 25 to 34 years old.<sup>162</sup> In 2022, suspected drug-related death data collected from MDILog identified the presence of cocaine in 132 toxicology reports, compared to 146 in 2021.<sup>163</sup>

(U//FOUO) The map below depicts locations of **cocaine/crack** arrests by state and local law enforcement in Michigan during CY2022. The displayed colors depict the number of cocaine/crack arrests per ZIP Code. MICR data shows 2,613 cocaine/crack arrests occurred during CY2022 throughout the state, a decrease of 4% from CY2021 arrests (2,731).

**(U//FOUO) CY2022 Cocaine/Crack Arrests  
(Possess, Sell, Smuggle, Use, and Other)**



Source: (U//FOUO) MICR data obtained on 03/06/2023. Reporting period of 01/01/2022 – 12/31/2022.  
CY2022 MICR data is subject to change.

### Price

(U//FOUO) Pricing for **cocaine** varies depending on the geographic area. For example, the Detroit AOR reports cocaine ranges from \$50 to \$100 per gram, the Grand Rapids AOR reports \$50 to \$80 per gram, and the Flint AOR reports \$100 to \$125 per gram.<sup>164</sup> The majority of drug teams reported the average cost for a gram of cocaine is \$100.<sup>165</sup> Reporting suggests a kilogram of cocaine ranges from \$20,000 to \$38,000.<sup>166</sup> Cocaine is generally packaged in clear plastic baggies and corner ties.<sup>167</sup> The price of **crack cocaine** ranges from \$40 to \$125 per gram.<sup>168</sup> Crack cocaine is typically seized in smaller quantities, therefore, there is minimal kilogram pricing but is suggested to range from \$25,000 to \$30,000.<sup>169</sup> Crack cocaine is also generally packaged in clear plastic baggies or corner ties.<sup>170</sup> According to drug teams surveyed, crack is cooked locally from powdered cocaine.<sup>171</sup>

### Transportation

(U//FOUO) According to drug teams surveyed, African American street gangs and Mexican DTOs are dominant in the transportation, distribution, and sale of **cocaine** in both wholesale and retail quantities.<sup>172</sup> Caucasian DTOs, Hispanic street gangs, and Colombian DTOs are also involved in wholesale distribution.<sup>173</sup> Cocaine is primarily transported to Michigan via personal or rental vehicles, commercial tractor-trailers, public transportation, or through parcel package services.<sup>174</sup> In CY2022, the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) seized a total of 32 packages containing cocaine destined for Michigan, compared to 40 packages in 2021.<sup>175</sup> Of those 32 packages, the top sender state was California (13) and the top destination city was Detroit.<sup>176</sup> Smaller quantities of cocaine are typically transported in personal or rental vehicles, primarily concealed in hidden compartments, mainly using the I-75 and I-94 corridors.<sup>177</sup> For example, in July 2022, roughly 10 kilograms of cocaine was seized from a vehicle during a traffic encounter along I-94 in Calhoun County.<sup>178</sup> Larger quantities of cocaine are typically transported to Michigan in commercial tractor-trailers and often are concealed with legitimate cargo utilizing various interstate highways.<sup>179</sup> Reporting indicates DTOs are also utilizing commercial air transportation.<sup>180</sup> For example, three individuals traveling from California to Tennessee, with a connecting flight in Detroit, Michigan, were arrested for drug trafficking at the Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County (DTW) Airport in March 2022.<sup>181</sup> The suspects' luggage contained 65 pounds of methamphetamine and nearly three pounds of cocaine, a street value of approximately \$1 million.<sup>182</sup>

(U//FOUO) **Crack cocaine** is manufactured locally from cocaine powder imported from source areas such as Mexico.<sup>183</sup> According to drug teams surveyed, it is rare for crack cocaine to be imported to a consumer city/location.<sup>184</sup> African American street gangs are the primary transporters of **crack cocaine** and dominate both wholesale and retail sales, collaborating with local individuals for local retail sales.<sup>185</sup>

(U//FOUO) The U.S. Customs and Border Protection preliminary border seizure data reported a total of roughly 315 kilograms of **cocaine** seized at three Michigan ports of entry (*Detroit, Port Huron, and Sault Ste. Marie*) in 2022, compared to roughly 251 kilograms in 2021.<sup>186</sup>

### Intelligence Gaps

- (U//FOUO) What percentage of marketed cocaine contains fentanyl?
- (U//FOUO) How many cocaine users accidentally overdosed on a substance marketed as cocaine but contained fentanyl?
- (U//FOUO) What geographic demographics influence the pricing of cocaine in Michigan regions?

## **PRESCRIPTION DRUGS**

### **Key Findings**

- (U//FOUO) Michigan is a source state for diverted prescription drugs to Indiana, Kentucky, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and West Virginia.
- (U//FOUO) Michigan HIDTA task forces seized 559 kilograms of prescription drugs in 2022, compared to 117 kilograms in 2021, which is roughly a 378% increase.
- (U//FOUO) Michigan HIDTA task forces seized 84,051 dosage units of prescription drugs in 2022, compared to 144,110 prescription drugs in 2021, which is roughly a 42% decrease.
- (U//FOUO) Michigan HIDTA task forces seized roughly six liters of prescription drugs in 2022, compared to roughly 952 liters in 2021, which is a 99% decrease.
  - (U//FOUO) Of the prescription drugs seized in 2022, four kilograms, 14,977 dosage units, and five liters were categorized as *narcotics prescription drugs*, less than one kilogram, 2,942 dosage units, and less than one liter were categorized as *stimulant prescription drugs*, seven kilograms, 13,951 dosage units, and less than one liter were categorized as *central nervous system depressant prescription drugs*, and 548 kilograms, 52,181 dosage units, and less than one liter were categorized as *other prescription drugs*.

### **Availability**

(U//FOUO) **Prescription Drug Use and Diversion** remains a significant drug threat in Michigan. Consistent with last reporting period, these drugs are readily available and in high demand across all jurisdictions. According to drug teams surveyed, pharmaceutical drugs are easily obtained through multiple common methods, including the illegal purchase at known drug houses or private residences, diversion by doctor/pharmacist, street sales, “doctor shopping” (*the practice of visiting more than one doctor in a short time span in order to obtain multiple prescriptions of the same medication*), prescription forgeries, parcel services, and pharmacy theft.<sup>187</sup>

(U//FOUO) Reporting suggests a continued trend toward DTOs operating medical clinics and pharmacies. These clinics and pharmacies operate for the specific purpose of conducting illegal activities around the fraudulent writing and filling of controlled substances such as oxycodone and hydrocodone. Once prescriptions are filled, they are diverted to street level sales. These clinics hire “freelance” doctors and other medical professionals to write fraudulent controlled substance prescriptions for cash, which subsequently are sold on the streets of Detroit and other cities located in Indiana, Kentucky, North Dakota, Ohio, Tennessee, and West Virginia.<sup>188</sup>

(U//FOUO) Additionally, the diversion of illegitimate prescriptions is organized by large-scale self-described “recruiters” who recruit doctors and run medical clinics and/or pharmacies in furtherance of their criminal enterprise. “Recruiters” are members of DTOs that also recruit patients to be seen by affiliated doctors in order to receive illicit prescriptions for controlled substances. “Recruiters” are also often involved in selling controlled substances to distributors who then sell the drugs at the street or wholesale level. The pharmaceuticals obtained through the illegitimate prescriptions from these medical clinics are turned over to the large-scale “recruiters” for profit.<sup>189</sup> Recruiters typically collect several hundred pills before smuggling out-of-state.<sup>190</sup> For example in May 2022, law enforcement conducted a pill diversion investigation into a medical clinic within the Detroit AOR, which subsequently led to the arrest of six individuals involved in the operation and the seizure of large quantities of prescription medications.<sup>191</sup>

(U//FOUO) However, with the rapid increase in availability of **counterfeit pharmaceutical pills** from multiple sources, it is unknown if the demand for traditionally diverted pharmaceuticals will decrease. For example, if it is easier for local DTOs to import large quantities of counterfeit oxycodone pills containing fentanyl compared to working with doctors, pharmacies, or “recruiters,” the aforementioned trend may change.

### Use

(U//FOUO) Despite the recent increase in counterfeit pharmaceutical pills, traditional **pharmaceutical drug** consumption remains a threat in Michigan. Consistent with last reporting period, Vicodin/hydrocodone is the most commonly used prescription drug, with 50% of the drug teams surveyed reporting diversion of the drug.<sup>192</sup> Additionally, Suboxone consumption is also high with 47% of the drug teams reporting diversion of the drug compared to 29% in 2021.<sup>193</sup> Suboxone is a prescription medicine which contains the active ingredients buprenorphine and naloxone, used to treat adults who are dependent on opioids. Suboxone use is common among incarcerated inmates. For example, the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) reported 216 incidents of Suboxone smuggled into correctional facilities in 2022.<sup>194</sup> Due to the large number of people who use licit controlled prescription drugs, other drugs such as fentanyl or heroin are being disguised and sold as controlled prescription pills. Some of the most common counterfeit pills are made to resemble prescription opioids such as oxycodone (Oxycontin/Percocet), hydrocodone (Vicodin), and alprazolam (Xanax); or stimulants like amphetamines (Adderall).<sup>195</sup> Some controlled prescription users, when unable to obtain or afford controlled prescription drugs, may use illicit narcotics.

(U//FOUO) In FY2022, substance use treatment facility **prescription drug** admissions constituted 7% of total drug treatment admissions in Michigan.<sup>196</sup> Prescription drugs accounted for the largest percentage of substance use treatment admissions in five of 83 counties statewide, which is a decrease from 18 counties in 2021.<sup>197</sup> Of those who sought treatment for prescription drugs, 57% were males and 43% were females. The predominant racial demographic was Caucasian and the predominant age range was 36 to 44 years old, followed by 30 to 35 years old.<sup>198</sup>

(U) Michigan Automated Prescription System (MAPS) is an electronic prescription monitoring system for Schedule II to Schedule V drugs. MAPS is a tool used by prescribers and dispensers to assess patient risk and to prevent drug use and diversion at the prescriber, pharmacy, and patient levels. In 2021 (*most recently obtained data*), MAPS ranked the following prescription opioids, in various drug strengths, according to the number of scripts obtained. For example, hydrocodone products remained the most prescribed Schedule II controlled drug in the state with very minimal change from 2021.<sup>199</sup>

Opioid Type	2020 Scripts Obtained	2021 Scripts Obtained	% Change
Hydrocodone	3,053,843	3,000,098	-1.76%
Tramadol	1,136,588	1,073,235	-5.57%
Oxycodone	892,946	950,389	+6.43%
Codeine	535,038	489,551	-8.50%
Morphine(s)	364,013	344,841	-5.53%
Naloxone	293,022	305,431	+4.23%
Suboxone	231,175	241,618	-4.52%
Fentanyl	123,076	109,879	-10.72%
Methadone	91,325	80,929	-11.38%
OxyContin	44,793	39,523	-11.77%

(U) The total number of scripts obtained for most **prescription opioids** decreased in 2021 (*most recently obtained data*), however, the potential for misuse remains a threat in the State of Michigan. A reason for this decrease could be due to the implementation of laws in Michigan targeted to reduce the prescription strength or dosage. The recommended guideline for prescribing opioids suggests when opioids are needed for conditions such as acute pain, clinicians should prescribe them at the lowest effective dose and for no longer than the expected duration of pain severe enough to warrant opioids.<sup>200</sup>

(U) Obtaining and diverting **pharmaceuticals** from doctors and pharmacies is a common practice throughout the State of Michigan. For example, a Michigan doctor was sentenced in January 2023 for his role in a health care fraud scheme that resulted in over \$250 million in false and fraudulent claims being submitted to Medicare, Medicaid, and other health insurance programs.<sup>201</sup> Additionally, the Michigan doctor exploited patients suffering from addiction and illegally distributed over 6.6 million doses of medically unnecessary opioids and engaged in money laundering.<sup>202</sup>

### Price

(U//FOUO) Street prices of diverted **pharmaceutical drugs** vary depending on type and strength and range from \$5 to \$30 per pill in Michigan. Michigan has traditionally been labeled a source state for diverted pharmaceutical drugs to other states for resale.<sup>203</sup> It is suggested these drugs often sell for double or triple their Michigan street value. These drug prices have remained relatively stable from the previous reporting period. Due to the varying strengths of prescription pills, street sale prices fluctuate widely. It is suggested that pills such as hydrocodone and oxycodone sell for \$1 per milligram.<sup>204</sup>

(U//FOUO) The table below portrays pricing for commonly diverted pharmaceutical drugs. The pricing information is comprised from the following reports: *FY2023 DEA Detroit Field Division Drug Pricing First Quarter and 2023 HIDTA Drug Trends Survey*.

Type of Drug	2022 Michigan Pricing
Adderall ( <i>Amphetamine sulfate</i> )	\$5
Hydrocodone/Vicodin	\$8 to \$40
Oxycodone	\$10 to \$60
OxyContin	\$20 to \$50
Suboxone ( <i>per pill or strip</i> )	\$5 to \$20
Xanax ( <i>Alprazolam</i> )	\$7.50

### Transportation

(U//FOUO) Michigan-based DTOs still play a central role in the diversion of **prescription-controlled substances**. Drug trafficking organizations distribute controlled prescription drugs locally and smuggle large quantities of opioid pills to surrounding states.<sup>205</sup> According to drug teams surveyed, African American street gangs, Caucasian DTOs, and Arab/Chaldean DTOs are the primary transporters of prescription drugs and dominate both in wholesale and retail sales, collaborating with local individuals for retail sales.<sup>206</sup> Drug traffickers most commonly transport diverted pharmaceuticals from Michigan by utilizing the interstate highway system in personal or rental vehicles followed by the use of parcel packages.<sup>207</sup> Illegally obtained pharmaceutical drugs from Michigan are subsequently sold on the streets of Detroit and to other cities located in Indiana, Kentucky, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and West Virginia.<sup>208, 209</sup>

### Diversions

(U//FOUO) **Prescription drugs** continue to be in high demand in Michigan. Reports show a number of narcotics continue to be diverted in and around the state, with many of the drugs being prescription pain-killers. Hydrocodone/Vicodin, oxycodone, and Suboxone continue to rank as some of the most commonly diverted prescription drugs.<sup>210</sup> According to the Michigan Automated Prescription System (MAPS), the greatest number of Schedule II through V controlled substances prescribed in Michigan in 2021 (*most recently obtained data*) was for hydrocodone products in varying drug strengths.

(U//FOUO) The use of **prescription cough syrup** (promethazine with codeine) remains a trend in Michigan and reporting shows an increase in diversion from last reporting period.<sup>211</sup> The primary ingredients in prescription cough syrup are promethazine with codeine and users who consume this concoction report feelings of euphoria and relaxation. The effects of this drug trend vary depending on what the cough syrup is mixed with, but it can depress the central nervous and respiratory systems causing an impairment of motor skills. Nausea, dizziness, hallucinations, memory loss, and seizures are additional effects of these mixtures. The diversion of prescription cough syrup is common due to the trend of mixing liquid cough suppressant syrup with carbonated soda drinks, juices, candies, and/or alcohol to make the popular drink branded as *Lean*, *Purple Drank*, or *Sizzurp*. Social media and popular culture have glamorized this drug trend over the last few years. Promethazine with codeine continues to be popular but the overdose threat is low. Pharmacy theft remains a threat and is anticipated to increase as medications such as cough syrup and prescription drugs remain in high demand. Additionally, prescription fraud is a viable threat. For example, a pharmacist in Michigan was charged with wire fraud, money laundering, and illegally dispensing prescription cough syrup worth millions of dollars.<sup>212</sup> In 2022, Michigan State Police forensic laboratories reported 26 codeine identifications, which is consistent with 2021 reporting.<sup>213</sup> Reporting suggests a 16-ounce prescription bottle of promethazine with codeine can range as high as \$2,000 to

\$2,800.<sup>214</sup> Depending on the color of the bottle, the price can also vary. Previous reporting suggested the “red bottle” is the highest quality.<sup>215</sup>

(U//FOUO) The most commonly diverted depressant is Xanax, while Adderall is the most readily available stimulant.<sup>216</sup>

### **Intelligence Gaps**

- (U//FOUO) Will traditionally diverted pharmaceuticals be replaced with counterfeit prescription pills through street-level sales?
- (U//FOUO) What percentage of diverted pharmaceuticals are transported from Michigan to other states?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent are drug trafficking organizations operating under the guise of medical clinics and pharmacies to distribute pharmaceutical pills throughout Michigan and in other states?

## **MARIJUANA**

### **Key Findings**

- (U//FOUO) Marijuana is the most commonly used drug in the State of Michigan.
- (U//FOUO) Since the legalization of recreational marijuana in November 2018, availability and use have increased; however, seizures have decreased.
- (U//FOUO) Michigan HIDTA task forces seized 3,878 kilograms of processed marijuana/plants in 2022, compared to 6,406 kilograms in 2021, which is a 65% decrease.
  - (U//FOUO) Despite Michigan’s legalization of recreational marijuana, black market marijuana is still being trafficked and remains a threat.

### **Availability**

(U//FOUO) **Marijuana** is the most readily available drug in the State of Michigan. According to drug teams surveyed, 97% reported it is readily available with 67% reporting more availability than in 2021.<sup>217</sup> Although widely available, it is no longer considered a top threat. Many drug teams avoid marijuana investigations due to medical and recreational marijuana legalization in Michigan.<sup>218</sup>

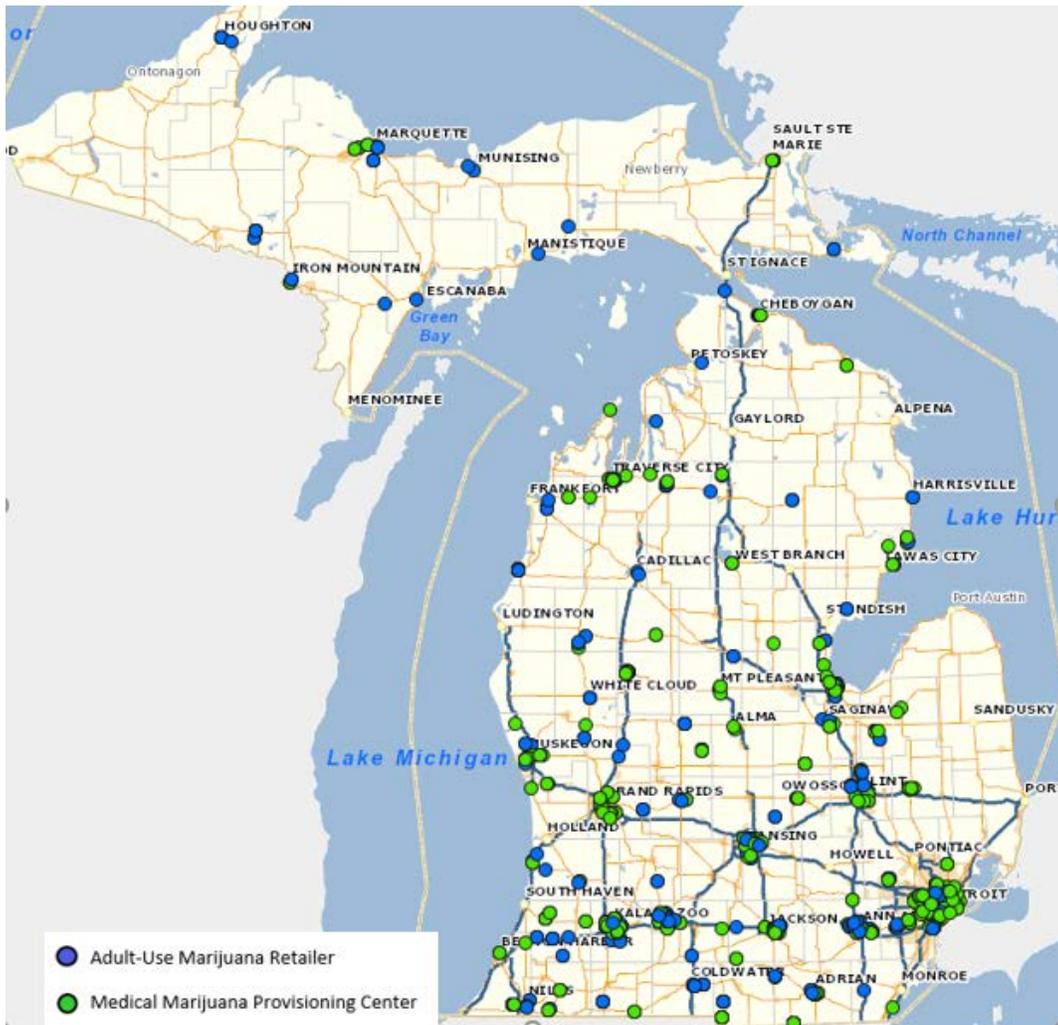
(U) The Michigan Regulation and Taxation of Marihuana Act was passed by the voters of the State of Michigan on November 6, 2018. Effective December 6, 2018, marijuana is legal under state law for anyone over 21 years of age to grow, consume, and possess.<sup>219</sup> Under this law, a person may carry up to 2.5 ounces and store up to 10 ounces or grow up to 12 plants in their residence.<sup>220</sup> Additionally, recreational marijuana sales in the state began December 1, 2019, which allow anyone over the age of 21 to purchase marijuana from licensed dispensaries. It is likely that marijuana and other marijuana extracts such as edibles will continue to increase in availability.

(U//FOUO) Michigan HIDTA task forces seized a total of 3,878 kilograms of **marijuana** (including plants) in 2022, compared to 6,406 kilograms in 2021.<sup>221</sup> Seventy-six percent of drug teams surveyed reported an overall decrease in seizures since marijuana legalization.<sup>222</sup> Despite Michigan’s legalization of recreational and medical marijuana, black market marijuana is still being trafficked and remains a threat. For example, between November and December 2022, roughly 57 kilograms of black market marijuana was seized during three separate investigations in Berrien County.<sup>223</sup> Local marijuana production has steadily increased in demand and availability. The increased emphasis on home-grown cultivation has resulted in

a greater availability of Michigan-produced, high-quality marijuana throughout the state. Marijuana produced in Michigan is also distributed to other states and the trend is only anticipated to increase due to the legalization of recreational marijuana. According to drug teams surveyed, roughly 90% reported marijuana is grown locally; however, some teams report illicit marijuana is also received from California, Canada, Colorado, and Mexico.<sup>224</sup> Additionally, the most available types of marijuana include domestic, edibles, hydroponic, butane hash oil (BHO), Mexican, and BC Bud.<sup>225</sup>

**Use**

(U//FOUO) **Marijuana** users primarily acquire the drug at dispensaries, known drug houses or private residences, through street sales, or parcel services.<sup>226</sup> User amounts of marijuana are typically packaged in clear plastic bags and slightly larger amounts can be found in clear mason jars. Since the legalization of recreational marijuana, availability and use have increased. Per the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA), there are 601 medical marijuana provisioning center licenses and 701 recreational or “adult-use” marijuana retailer provisioning center licenses (see below map for provisioning center licensing locations).<sup>227</sup>



(U//FOUO) Provisioning centers are most commonly known as dispensaries, which are legal in the State of Michigan. Some drug teams surveyed indicated there are hundreds of dispensaries within their AOR, however, not all are legally operating. Black market marijuana and black market dispensaries (not licensed through LARA) remain a threat within the State of Michigan. The increase of marijuana dispensaries (whether legally or illegally operating) attracts crime. With record high sales, the Michigan Cannabis Regulatory Agency (CRA) has warned there has been an increasing number of robberies.<sup>228</sup> For example, the CRA confirmed at least 13 reports where cannabis drivers were robbed while delivering products to customers in 2022.<sup>229</sup> More specifically, these robberies are occurring at the residence where the delivery is being made, and, in some cases, the robberies were armed, resulting in the theft of the delivery driver's vehicle.<sup>230</sup> Additionally, the Michigan Attorney General issued warrants for 12 individuals responsible for over 20 marijuana dispensary break-ins that occurred within Michigan in May 2022.<sup>231</sup>

(U//FOUO) Dispensaries sell domestic, high-quality marijuana, as well as wax, oils, vape cartridges, and edibles. Michigan HIDTA task forces seized a total of 29 kilograms of edibles in 2022 compared to 221 kilograms of edibles in 2021.<sup>232</sup> Despite Michigan's legalization of recreational marijuana in November 2018, black market marijuana, including edibles, may still be illegally obtained.

(U//FOUO) As of December 2017, LARA established rules for the purpose of implementing the Medical Marijuana Facilities License Act (MMFLA). The Act provides a state regulatory structure to license and regulate medical marijuana growers, processors, provisioning centers, secure transporters, and safety compliance facilities that interact with the statewide monitoring system for commercial medical marijuana transactions. In regards to provisioning centers, daily purchasing limits for a registered qualifying patient are in place. An amount of medical marijuana product cannot exceed 2.5 ounces per day. The same applies for a registered primary caregiver, the amount of medical marijuana product cannot exceed 2.5 ounces per day for each registered qualifying patient. In regards to marijuana-infused products, otherwise known as edibles, a processor must prepackage and properly label all products before sale or transfer. Proper labeling includes listing the medical marijuana facility, the name of the product, the ingredients, and the net weight. A dispensary (provisioning center) operating within these MMFLA regulations is considered legal under Michigan state law. However, registered caregivers involved in criminal activity continue to take advantage of the Michigan Medical Marijuana Act (MMMA) and use it to disguise their profits and sell to unregistered consumers. Both qualifying patients and primary caregivers often exceed the legal limit of usable marijuana.

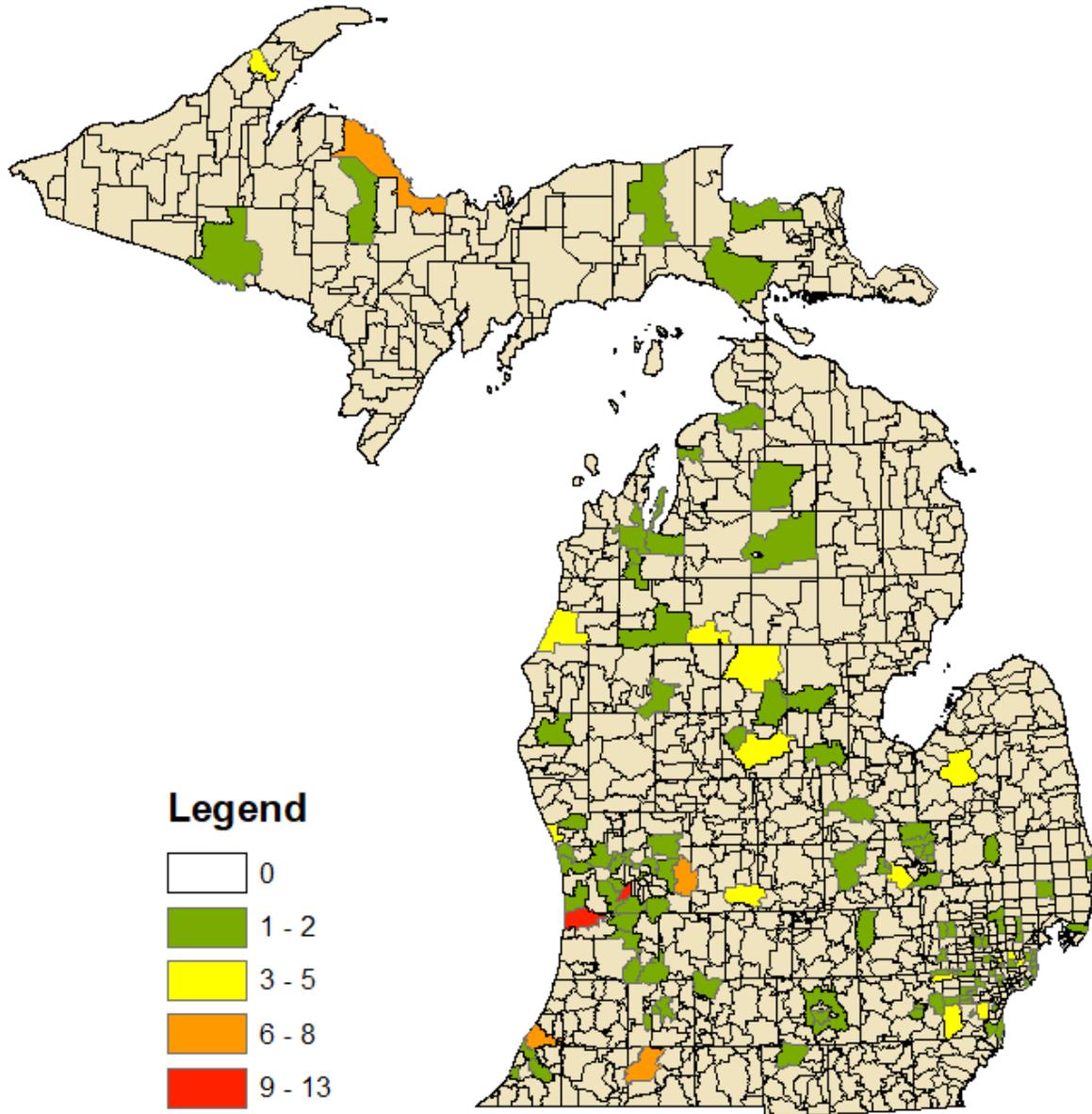
(U//FOUO) According to Michigan's Statewide Marijuana Impact Report, the prevalence of marijuana use, especially among young adults (18 to 25 years old), is increasing and remains higher in Michigan than the Midwest region and the U.S. as a whole.<sup>233</sup> Legalization of recreational marijuana in Michigan could pose a serious threat to the health and welfare of the residents of this state as it appears to be the case in other states. Michigan could face an increase in marijuana-related impaired driving, traffic accidents, violence, youth marijuana usage, and emergency room visits and hospitalizations.

(U//FOUO) In 2021, there were 179,863 registered patients and 19,053 registered caregivers in Michigan. The total approved registrants in Michigan (198,916) decreased 24% from the previous reporting period (237,741).<sup>234</sup> In 2022, 231 physicians provided written certifications for qualifying medical marijuana patients, which is a decrease from 337 physicians in 2021.<sup>235</sup> Registered patients and caregivers, as well as physicians providing written certifications for qualifying medical marijuana patients, will likely continue to decrease due to recreational marijuana legalization. Additionally, individuals may not choose to continue to renew their medical marijuana license. The top Michigan counties for approved qualifying patients and primary care physicians are Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb.<sup>236</sup> Individuals must have a debilitating medical condition to qualify for medical marijuana. In 2022, roughly 65% of patients recommended for medical marijuana qualified based on solely chronic pain diagnoses, followed by severe and chronic pain (36%), and arthritis (19%).<sup>237</sup>

(U//FOUO) In FY2022, MDHHS reported 2,643 marijuana admissions for substance use treatment, which is roughly a 22% decrease from FY2021 (3,373).<sup>238</sup> The legalization of medical and recreational marijuana in Michigan may impact those seeking treatment and admissions will likely continue to decrease. Of those who sought treatment for marijuana, 69% were males and 31% were females. The predominant racial demographic was Caucasian and the predominant age range was 36 to 44 years old, followed by 30 to 35 years old.<sup>239</sup>

(U//FOUO) The map below depicts locations of **marijuana** possession and use arrests by state and local law enforcement in Michigan during CY2022. The displayed colors depict the number of arrests per ZIP Code. MICR data shows 243 marijuana possession and use arrests occurred during CY2022 throughout the state, which is a 7% decrease from CY2021 arrests (261). This decrease does not imply marijuana is less available or less of a threat, but arrests are expected to trend downward due to the passing of legal medical and recreational marijuana use laws and minimal prosecution efforts.

**(U//FOUO) CY2022 Marijuana Arrests  
(Possession and Use)**



Source: (U//FOUO) MICR data obtained on 03/06/2023. Reporting period of 01/01/2022 – 12/31/2022.  
CY2022 MICR data is subject to change.

**Price**

(U//FOUO) Reporting suggests **marijuana** ranges from \$10 to \$30 per gram and from \$1,600 to \$3,500 per kilogram.<sup>240</sup> However, minimal street value marijuana pricing was reported, possibly as a result of the legalization of marijuana in Michigan.

(U) According to the Cannabis Regulatory Agency (CRA), Michigan's cannabis market has grown to a powerhouse status with nearly \$2.3 billion in sales for 2022.<sup>241</sup>

**Transportation**

(U//FOUO) According to drug teams surveyed, African American street gangs, Caucasian DTOs, and Arab/Chaldean DTOs are the primary transporters of **marijuana** and dominate both in wholesale and retail sales, collaborating with local individuals for retail sales. Drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) continue to use the major interstate corridors, primarily I-75 and I-94, and utilize personal or rental vehicles and commercial tractor-trailers to conceal marijuana. Multi-pound quantities of marijuana have been shipped via parcel delivery services within the United States. Trafficking groups operating from the Southwest Border primarily transport marijuana into Detroit on commercial tractor-trailers. Marijuana is concealed in hidden compartments, voids, luggage, and duffle bags in personal or rental vehicles or even just placed out of eyesight but not concealed. In commercial tractor-trailers, marijuana is typically commingled with legitimate loads.<sup>242</sup>

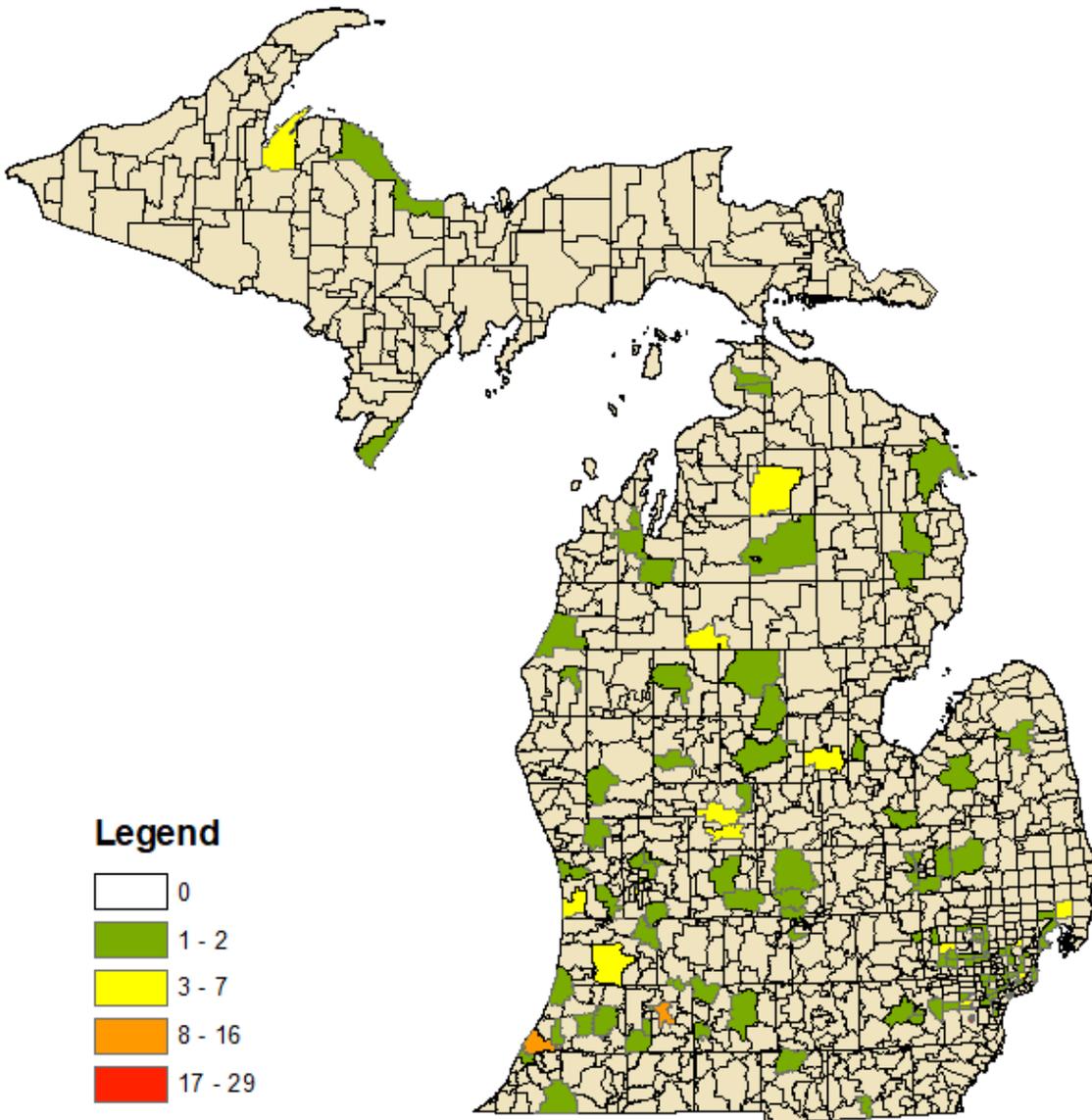
(U//FOUO) The majority of high-quality **marijuana** is grown by individuals and DTOs within Michigan's own borders. According to drug teams surveyed, 89% reported marijuana originates within Michigan.<sup>243</sup> However, marijuana is also trafficked into Michigan from other states such as California, Colorado, and Oregon, as well as from Canada.<sup>244</sup> For example, in CY2022, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) indicated Michigan was the destination state for 407 seized packages containing illicit drugs and 227 of those packages contained marijuana.<sup>245</sup> The top three destination cities were Detroit (49 packages), followed by Grand Rapids (10 packages), and Kalamazoo (8 packages). Of the 227 packages destined for Michigan, 112 originated from California, 24 from within Michigan, 14 from Colorado, 13 from Oregon, and 12 from Oklahoma.<sup>246</sup> Additionally, USPIS indicated Michigan was the sender state for 546 seized packages containing marijuana.<sup>247</sup> The top destination state was Florida (105) followed by Texas (40).<sup>248</sup> Domestically-grown marijuana has displaced much of the Canadian marijuana market, however, reporting does suggest Michigan still receives bulk shipments of illicit marijuana from Canada.<sup>249</sup> For example, in May 2022, an inbound tractor-trailer was stopped for a physical inspection at the Detroit Cargo Facility.<sup>250</sup> A total of 447 kilograms of marijuana concealed within boxes manifested as foam pool toys was seized.<sup>251</sup> Additionally, more marijuana was seized inbound (5,494 kilograms) via Michigan ports of entry compared to outbound (78 kilograms).<sup>252</sup> In 2022, a total of 5,572 kilograms of marijuana was seized at Michigan ports of entry (*Detroit, Port Huron, and Sault Ste. Marie*) compared to 3,833 kilograms in 2021.<sup>253</sup>

**Production**

(U//FOUO) There has been a significant presence of domestic and hydroponic **marijuana** production in the state. Locally grown high-quality marijuana continues to increase in availability. Michigan has continued to see an increasing number of marijuana dispensary businesses thriving throughout the state. There are infinite brand names for marijuana sold in Michigan that are readily available in provisioning centers, more commonly known as dispensaries, rapidly appearing all over the state.

(U//FOUO) The map below depicts locations of production, sales, smuggling, and other **marijuana**-related arrests by state and local law enforcement in Michigan during CY2022. The displayed colors depict the number of arrests per ZIP Code. MICR data shows 252 production, sales, smuggling, and other marijuana-related arrests occurred during CY2022 throughout the state. This is a 13% increase from CY2021 arrests (223). Although recreational and medical marijuana are legal within Michigan, black market marijuana is still being produced and trafficked and remains a threat.

**(U//FOUO) CY2022 Marijuana Arrests  
(Produce, Sell, Smuggle, and Other)**



*(U//FOUO) MICR data obtained on 03/06/2023. Reporting period of 01/01/2022 – 12/31/2022.  
CY2022 MICR data is subject to change.*

(U//FOUO) **Butane Hash Oil (BHO)** encounters, such as explosions and labs, remain a problem throughout the state and are primarily caused by local marijuana DTOs. Encounters occur within dispensaries as well as residences. According to drug teams surveyed, roughly 45% of teams report BHO is available within their AOR.<sup>254</sup> Hash oil is the final product of extracted compounds of marijuana. This is often done using the “butane hash/honey oil” extraction process and commonly referred to as BHO. The result is a sticky, thick substance resembling honey, butter, or wax. The process for producing hash oil is readily available on the Internet and uses any portion of the cannabis plant so no part of the plant is wasted. Butane hash oil production has been linked to accidental explosions due to the dangers of having bulk amounts of butane in poorly ventilated makeshift labs. Due to the rising trend in BHO lab “cooks,” an increase in injuries/deaths to civilians and first responders may also occur. Common brand names for BHO include wax, shatter, honey oil, and dabs. Several drug teams surveyed reported known encounters or explosions within 2022.<sup>255</sup> For example, in October 2022, a butane explosion from a homemade lab used to manufacture concentrated marijuana likely caused a home explosion.<sup>256</sup> The explosion caused damage to the residence and the individual responsible for the homemade lab suffered burns to his arm after it caught fire.<sup>257</sup> Law enforcement discovered two large cannisters of butane and seized items from the residence indicative of a butane hash oil lab.<sup>258</sup>

#### **Intelligence Gaps**

- (U//FOUO) To what extent is the sale and trafficking of black market marijuana driving violence?
- (U//FOUO) What percentage of marijuana is being obtained legally vs. illegally (black market)?
- (U//FOUO) How many youth emergency room visits are attributed to marijuana or marijuana edibles?

## **SYNTHETIC DRUGS**

### **Key Findings**

- (U//FOUO) Liquid drugs, such as K2 and THC, are popular within prisons as these drugs are soaked in mailed documents. Due to the increased encounters over the recent years, MDOC changed their mail policy to include making copies, so inmates no longer receive original mail.

### **Availability**

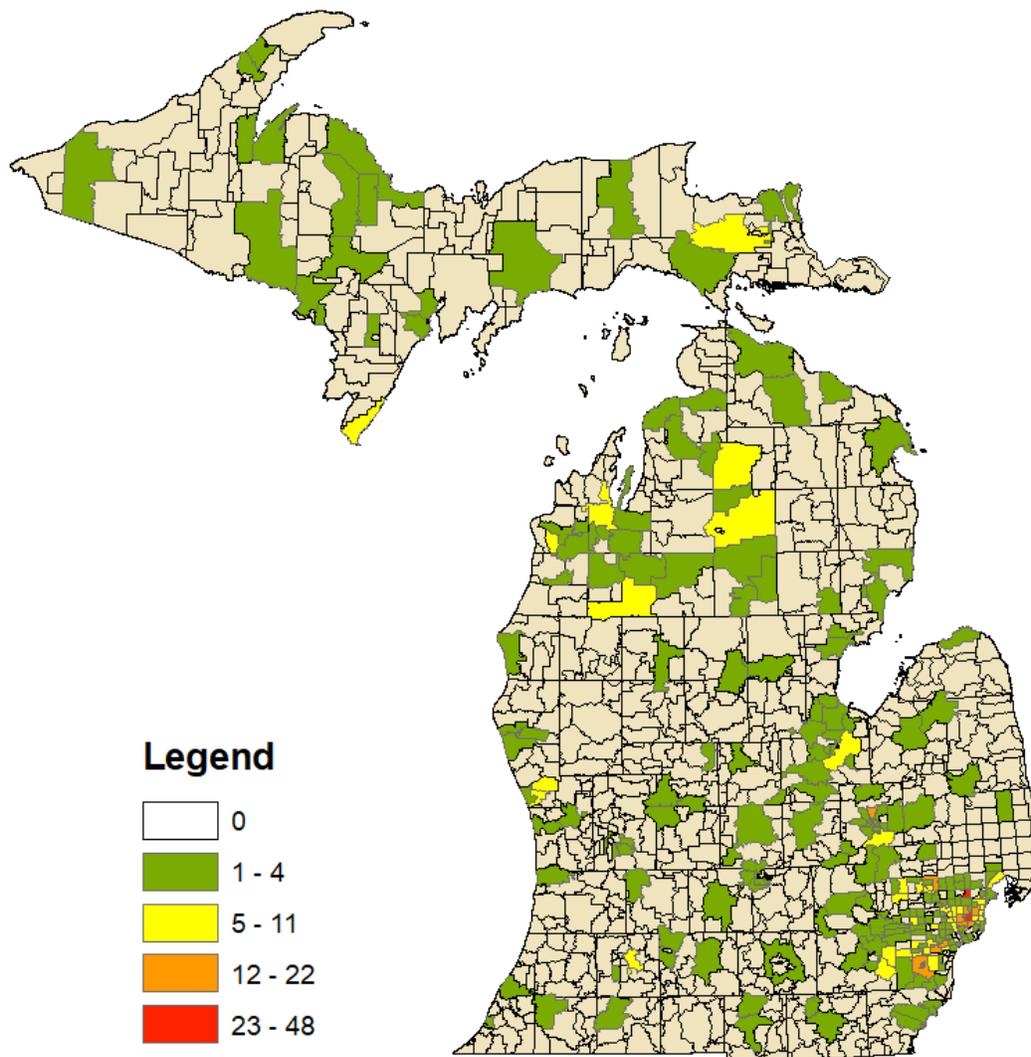
(U//FOUO) **Synthetic drugs**, to include K2, spice/herbal products, and bath salts, continue to be seen in the state. For example, the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) reported 123 incidents of synthetic cannabinoids being smuggled into correctional facilities in 2022.<sup>259</sup> In the previous reporting year, the use of liquid drugs being sent to facilities via paper mail increased and became such a problem that facilities copied regular mail and stopped providing inmates with originals to help prevent this issue.<sup>260</sup> According to drug teams surveyed, 39.5% of teams indicated synthetic drugs are readily available in their AOR compared to 35% in 2021.<sup>261</sup> More specifically, 66% of drug teams reported stable availability, 32% reported less availability, and 2% reported more availability.<sup>262</sup>

### **Use**

(U//FOUO) **Synthetic cathinones**, more popularly known as bath salts, are marketed as cheap substitutes for other stimulants such as methamphetamine and cocaine.<sup>263</sup> Individuals typically swallow, snort, smoke, or inject synthetic cathinones.<sup>264</sup> Users acquire synthetic drugs, specifically synthetic cannabinoids and synthetic cathinones (bath salts), from local retail shops such as gas stations or smoke shops, night clubs, and via the Internet.<sup>265</sup> Distribution of synthetic drugs, along with other “club drugs,” occur in night clubs, raves, and at college parties. According to drug teams surveyed, most cases involving K2 originate through MDOC/prisons via soaked documents.<sup>266</sup>

(U//FOUO) The map below depicts locations of opium or derivative/**synthetic narcotics** arrests by state and local law enforcement in Michigan during CY2022. MICR arrest data for opioids are included in the combined categories of opium or derivative/synthetic narcotics. The ambiguous nature of the MICR arrest codes permits Michigan law enforcement to enter opioid arrests in either opium or derivative/synthetic narcotics categories or dangerous drug categories. As such, this data does not include fentanyl and its analogs because there is no clear arrest code for fentanyl or its mixture in other drugs. For example, a subject may be arrested for suspected heroin or cocaine but if the drug is later confirmed as fentanyl, the arrest remains under the original arrest code. The displayed colors depict the number of arrests per ZIP Code. MICR data shows 992 opium or derivative/synthetic narcotics arrests occurred during CY2022 throughout the state. This is an 11% decrease from CY2021 arrests (1,039).

**(U//FOUO) CY2022 Synthetic Narcotics, Opium, or Derivative Arrests  
(Possess, Sell, Manufacture, Smuggle, and Use)**



Source: (U//FOUO) MICR data obtained on 03/04/2023. Reporting period of 01/01/2022 – 12/31/2022.  
CY2022 MICR data is subject to change.

**Price**

(U//FOUO) The Michigan State Police (MSP) Marijuana and Tobacco Investigation (MTI) teams continue to identify and seize **synthetic drugs** for sale in local gas stations, convenience stores, and smoke shops across the state. The characteristics of synthetic drugs are similar in nature. They are manufactured in attractive and colorful packaging with unique brand names. These brands may be labeled “not for human consumption” to avoid legal scrutiny. Additionally, stimulant drugs are sold in packages labeled “bath salts” or “plant food” so they are easier to sell undetected. Synthetic cathinones may range from \$25 to \$50 for a 50-milligram packet.<sup>267</sup>

**Transportation**

(U//FOUO) The transportation, wholesale distribution, and retail distribution are not tied to any specific DTO but instead are attributed to local individuals or store owners. The majority of drug teams reported **synthetic drugs** originate from overseas and arrive to Michigan via parcel services.<sup>268</sup> Additionally, the in-state production level of these drugs is none to low, as reported by most drug teams.

**Intelligence Gaps**

- (U//FOUO) How often do users substitute synthetic drugs for other stimulants such as cocaine or methamphetamine?
- (U//FOUO) What percentage of retail shops are involved in the sale of synthetic drugs in Michigan?
- (U//FOUO) Will there be a new concealment method attempt to bypass MDOC’s new mailing policy?

**OTHER DRUGS****Key Findings**

- (U//FOUO) According to drug teams surveyed, 26% reported counterfeit tablets encountered were marketed as Ecstasy/MDMA.
- (U//FOUO) Michigan State Police forensic laboratory reported 87% of counterfeit MDMA tablets tested, contained methamphetamine.

**MDMA****Availability**

(U//FOUO) **MDMA**, most commonly referred to as **Ecstasy**, is reported to be in moderate supply in Michigan. According to drug teams surveyed, 53% indicated MDMA is readily available in their AOR, which is a decrease from 65% in 2021.<sup>269</sup> Additionally, 66% of teams indicated stable availability, 26% indicated less availability, and 8% indicated it is more available compared to 2021.<sup>270</sup> **Molly**, a perceived purer form of MDMA, is also in moderate supply in Michigan. According to drug teams surveyed, 37% indicated Molly is readily available in their AOR in 2022 compared to 44% in 2021.<sup>271</sup> More specifically, 68% of teams reported stable availability and 32% indicated less availability.<sup>272</sup>

## Use

(U//FOUO) Users generally acquire **MDMA** at known drug houses or private residences, through street sales, or from the Internet and shipped through parcel services.<sup>273</sup> According to drug teams surveyed, 26% reported counterfeit tablets encountered were marketed as Ecstasy/MDMA.<sup>274</sup> Additionally, Michigan State Police forensic laboratories reported the presence of methamphetamine in 159 of 182 marketed ecstasy tablets tested.<sup>275</sup> Of the 182 marketed ecstasy tablets tested, only 1% contained MDMA.<sup>276</sup> MDMA is popular at college and university campuses as well as at night clubs and music festivals in Michigan such as Electric Forest Festival and Movement Electronic Music Festival. The brand names advertising MDMA pills are intended to attract college-aged adults. MDMA and Molly are not known to be produced locally. **Molly** continues to preserve its status in pop culture as a rave or club drug. The component chemicals that make up Molly are difficult to identify as it can contain any combination of synthetics, compounds, derivatives, or adulterants which combines several unsafe chemicals.

## Price

(U//FOUO) The current pricing for **MDMA** is unknown, however, the previous years' reporting suggests MDMA is valued at \$15 per pill.<sup>277</sup> Additionally, previous years' reporting suggests MDMA powder ranges from \$100 to \$150 per gram<sup>278</sup> and \$9,000 per kilogram.<sup>279</sup> It is unknown if the pricing for Molly differs from MDMA. The production level of these drugs is at a much higher rate overseas and in Canada.

## Transportation

(U//FOUO) **MDMA**, either in tablet or powder form, typically originates from China and Canada.<sup>280</sup> In 2022 at Michigan ports of entry (*Detroit, Port Huron, Sault Ste. Marie*), less than one kilogram of MDMA was seized which is consistent with 2021 reporting.<sup>281</sup> According to drug teams surveyed, wholesale distribution of MDMA is primarily supplied by African American street gangs, Caucasian DTOs, or local individuals.<sup>282</sup> Retail distributors are comprised of local individuals, Caucasian DTOs, African American street gangs, and Asian DTOs.<sup>283</sup> Transportation mainly involves local individuals as well as Caucasian and Canadian DTOs.<sup>284</sup> The level of production is low to none as it is primarily trafficked into Michigan from Canada through the international border ports of entry or through parcel services.

## LSD/Psilocybin

### Availability

(U//FOUO) **Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD)** and **psilocybin** (also known as "magic mushrooms") are other notable drugs seen in Michigan. Consistent with last reporting period, LSD and psilocybin remain readily available with little corroborated information known about the origins of these hallucinogens. According to drug teams surveyed, 37% reported LSD is readily available compared to 38% in 2021.<sup>285</sup> Additionally, 26% reported psilocybin is readily available compared to 47% in 2021.<sup>286</sup> In 2022, Michigan HIDTA task forces seized a total of 2,254 dosage units of LSD, compared to 9,708 dosage units in 2021.<sup>287</sup> Additionally in 2022, Michigan HIDTA task forces seized a total of 26 kilograms and 700 dosage units of psilocybin, compared to seven kilograms and one dosage unit in 2021.<sup>288</sup>

**Use**

(U//FOUO) Users acquire **LSD** and **psilocybin** at drug houses or private residences, through street sales, or from the Internet and shipped through parcel services.<sup>289</sup> Consumers of these drugs tend to be college-aged adults and consumption is heavily associated with clubs, raves, and music festivals.

**Price**

(U//FOUO) In Michigan, the pricing for **LSD** is suggested to range between \$10 and \$21 per dosage unit.<sup>290</sup> There is no reported Michigan pricing for **psilocybin**.

**Transportation**

(U//FOUO) The origin of these hallucinogens is unknown. Many teams report the drugs arrive via parcel services. For example, in October 2022, 700 individual psilocybin chocolate bars were interdicted via parcel originating from California, destined for Michigan.<sup>291</sup> Additionally, a few drug teams surveyed indicated psilocybin mushrooms are grown locally.<sup>292</sup>

**Intelligence Gaps**

- (U//FOUO) Of the marketed ecstasy tablets, how much will contain MDMA vs. how much will contain other illicit narcotics such as fentanyl or methamphetamine?
- (U//FOUO) Will there be an increase in the use of psilocybin (“magic mushrooms”) due to the recent decriminalization of personal use, possession, and growth of psychoactive substances within Michigan?
- (U//FOUO) How much of the MDMA arriving through Michigan ports of entry from Canada is destined to Michigan vs. other states?

**EMERGING THREATS****Key Findings**

- (U//FOUO) According to drug teams surveyed, 76% reported counterfeit pills are available within their AOR in 2022 compared to 62% in 2021. Additionally, 47% of teams indicated they are more available than last reporting period.
- (U//FOUO) According to Michigan State Police forensic laboratory data; the most common drug mixture in 2022, aside from fentanyl and heroin (303 identifications), was fentanyl and fluorofentanyl (203 identifications).

(U//FOUO) The following drugs were identified as emerging threats by Michigan drug task forces throughout the state as well as Michigan State Police (MSP) laboratories. As a result of their proliferation, these drugs are being monitored by public health agencies. It is evident there is an abundance of drugs of concern due to multiple variants of chemical compounds found in synthetic and adulterated drugs.

(U//FOUO) The emerging trend of illicit narcotics being pressed into **counterfeit pills** has increased and is posing a threat in the State of Michigan. According to drug teams surveyed, 76% reported counterfeit pills are available within their AOR in 2022 compared to 62% in 2021.<sup>293</sup> Additionally, 47% of teams indicated they are more available than last reporting period.<sup>294</sup> Counterfeit pills are being disguised as legitimate pharmaceuticals, potentially endangering those who come into contact unwittingly. According to drug teams surveyed, counterfeit pills are being marketed as oxycodone,

Adderall, Xanax, Percocet, and Ecstasy/MDMA.<sup>295</sup> Fentanyl, followed by methamphetamine, are the top drugs identified in counterfeit pills.<sup>296</sup>

(U//FOUO) **Counterfeit pills** can be found in an array of colors but counterfeit oxycodone pills, often referred to as “blues” or “M30s,” are the most common.<sup>297</sup> For example, in April 2022, law enforcement seized 2,281 grams of counterfeit M30 pills containing fentanyl within the metropolitan Detroit area during a traffic stop.<sup>298</sup> According to drug teams surveyed, 50% reported counterfeit oxycodone pills are readily available within their AOR, compared to 37% in 2021.<sup>299</sup> Nationally, the DEA found that, of the fentanyl-laced counterfeit tablets analyzed in 2022, six out of 10 now contain a potentially lethal dose of fentanyl compared to the analysis in 2021 reporting four out of 10.<sup>300</sup> Also according to the DEA, it is believed most counterfeit pills originate in Mexico, though some are sourced from the Dark Web and are easily available on social media.<sup>301</sup> Additional reporting suggests, if not already arriving in pill form, pill press machines are being utilized to manufacture pills within the United States.<sup>302</sup> For example, there have been investigations involving local DTOs obtaining pill presses or tableting machines and pressing fentanyl into counterfeit pharmaceutical pills within Michigan.<sup>303</sup> In 2022, MSP forensic laboratories tested 385 counterfeit tablets. Of these, counterfeit alprazolam (183) typically contained one or more designer benzodiazepines (175), counterfeit amphetamine (51) typically contained methamphetamine (48), and counterfeit oxycodone (143) typically contained fentanyl or fluorofentanyl (131).<sup>304</sup> Drug teams reported counterfeit pills containing fentanyl range from \$10 to \$30 per pill.<sup>305</sup> Nationally, the DEA seized more than double the number (50 million) of fentanyl-laced, counterfeit prescription pills in 2022 than the previous year.<sup>306</sup> Reporting suggests fentanyl in pill form is a deliberate attempt by Mexican drug cartels to make illicit drug use more appealing to Americans.<sup>307</sup> More specifically, DEA seized 10 million counterfeit pills in roughly a four month timeframe in Michigan and Ohio.<sup>308</sup> Of the pills seized, four million (40%) contained a lethal dose.<sup>309</sup> Although there is minimal Michigan reporting, a national trend suggests drug cartels are producing “rainbow fentanyl,” described as fentanyl pills and/or powder that come in a variety of bright colors, shapes, and sizes, in a deliberate effort by drug traffickers to drive addiction amongst young Americans.<sup>310</sup>

(U//FOUO) Narcotics encountered in Michigan may contain numerous types of chemicals, of which exposure alone can cause an overdose. Multiple types of opioids and other Schedule I narcotics form extremely potent substances. The mixed narcotics samples submitted to MSP laboratories range in color and texture, as well as between liquid and solid material. For example, of 114 colored powder items analyzed in 2022, with an increase in the second half of the year, the top reported colors were purple (40%), pink (27%), blue (22%), and green (7%).<sup>311</sup> It is unknown at this time if these colors have any significance. It is also unknown if these colors are distinct by region, specifically if they are arriving in Michigan already colored or if local dealers are adding coloring to brand their product.

(U//FOUO) The below chart lists some examples of the top opioid drug mixtures in 2022 identified by MSP laboratories.<sup>312</sup>

Opioid Drug Mixtures	2021 Identifications	2022 Identifications
Fentanyl and Heroin	479	303
Fentanyl and Fluorofentanyl	203	215
Heroin, Fentanyl, and Fluorofentanyl	83	115
Fentanyl and Tramadol	122	103
Fentanyl and Cocaine	47	65
Fentanyl and Methamphetamine	50	53
Fentanyl, Tramadol, and Fluorofentanyl	42	46
Fentanyl and Acetyl Fentanyl	136	18

(U//FOUO) Although a variety of **fentanyl analogs** were not as predominant in 2022, they still pose a significant threat to Michigan. According to drug teams surveyed, the most common fentanyl analog reported is **acetyl fentanyl**, with roughly 26% of teams indicating it has been identified in their AOR.<sup>313</sup> Acetyl fentanyl is reported to be less potent than fentanyl and is a Schedule I substance under the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) as of June 2017. Law enforcement reports indicate acetyl fentanyl is available on the illicit market in powder or tablet form and mimics pharmaceutical opiate/opioid products. In powder form, the presence of the substance may go unknown to the user as it may be marketed as heroin or mixed with heroin.<sup>314</sup> It is primarily purchased over the Internet.<sup>315</sup>

(U//FOUO) Michigan State Police (MSP) forensic laboratories reported 18 acetyl fentanyl and fentanyl mixture identifications in 2022 compared to 136 in 2021, which is roughly an 87% decrease.<sup>316</sup> Aside from fentanyl, drugs that have appeared with acetyl fentanyl include: heroin, fluorofentanyl, and tramadol.<sup>317</sup>

(U//FOUO) In 2021 (*most recently obtained data*), the Wayne County Office of the Medical Examiner provisionally reported **acetyl fentanyl** was present in 40 overdoses, compared to 92 in 2020.<sup>318</sup> The number of acetyl fentanyl-related deaths in Wayne County in 2021 was relatively equal among Caucasian males and African American males.<sup>319</sup> According to suspected drug-related 2022 death data collected from MDILog, acetyl fentanyl did not appear in any toxicology reports, compared to 30 in 2021.<sup>320</sup>

(U//FOUO) The second most common fentanyl analog reported by drug teams is **fluorofentanyl (also referred to as para-fluorofentanyl or pFF)**, with roughly 23% of drug teams indicating it has been identified in their AOR.<sup>321</sup> Fluorofentanyl is a synthetic opioid with similar potency to fentanyl and is a Schedule I controlled substance. Synthetic opioids are believed to be synthesized abroad and then imported into the United States.<sup>322</sup> Clandestinely-produced synthetic opioids are typically encountered in powder form and used as alternatives to heroin and other opioids.<sup>323</sup> These drugs are also increasingly encountered as tablets, mimicking the appearance of pharmaceutical opioid products.<sup>324</sup> Michigan State Police (MSP) forensic laboratories reported 215 fluorofentanyl and fentanyl mixture identifications in 2022 compared to 203 in 2021.<sup>325</sup> Additionally, aside from fentanyl and heroin mixtures, fentanyl and fluorofentanyl was the top opioid drug mixture in 2022.<sup>326</sup> The Swift Toxicology of Overdose-Related Mortalities (STORM) program reported an increase in deaths testing positive for fluorofentanyl.<sup>327</sup> More specifically, STORM data detected 284 fluorofentanyl positive deaths, with 72% occurring between November 2021 and October 2022.<sup>328</sup> In 2021 (*most recent obtained data*), the Wayne County Office of the Medical Examiner provisionally reported fluorofentanyl was present in 37 overdose deaths.<sup>329</sup> The demographic was relatively equal amongst African American and Caucasian males and females.<sup>330</sup>

**Intelligence Gaps**

- (U//FOUO) To what extent are counterfeit prescription pills arriving to Michigan already containing fentanyl?
- (U//FOUO) To what extent are pill presses being used in Michigan to manufacture counterfeit prescription pills?
- (U//FOUO) Is colored fentanyl arriving in Michigan already colored or are local dealers adding the color to brand their product?

## DRUG TRAFFICKING AND MONEY LAUNDERING ORGANIZATIONS

**Key Findings**

- (U//FOUO) In 2022, Michigan HIDTA task forces investigated 264 Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) and Money Laundering Organizations (MLOs). Of the 264 investigated, 108 DTOs/MLOs were dismantled or disrupted, which is indicative of the strong DTO/MLO presence in the region and a strong, organized law enforcement response.
- (U//FOUO) Mexican DTOs are the primary source of supply for cocaine, crystal methamphetamine, fentanyl, and heroin for Michigan.
- (U//FOUO) The most notable sources of narcotics supply for Michigan are Mexican drug cartels, specifically the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG).

**Overview**

(U//FOUO) In 2022, Michigan HIDTA task forces investigated 264 **Drug Trafficking Organizations** (DTOs) and **Money Laundering Organizations** (MLOs), which is slight decrease from 270 DTOs/MLOs in 2021. These groups are fluid and operate not only at the local level, but traffic between states and international borders. HIDTA Performance Management Process (PMP) data for 2022 showed 44% of the organizations under investigation had a local operational scope, 39% were multi-state in nature, and 17% operated internationally, indicating DTOs/MLOs continue to maintain strong ties to facilitate the demands for illicit drugs in Michigan. In 2022, Michigan HIDTA task forces dismantled or disrupted 108 DTOs/MLOs, which is indicative of the strong DTO/MLO presence in the region and a strong, organized law enforcement response.<sup>331</sup>

(U//FOUO) A significant amount of illegal drugs smuggled into, out of, and throughout Michigan travel along one of the several main highway corridors, such as I-75 and I-94, and originate from source states. Most drugs discovered along these corridors or ports of entry are found concealed in personal or rental vehicles and commercial tractor-trailers. These vehicles often have hidden compartments specifically designed to conceal their contraband or are concealed with legitimate cargo loads. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of parcel services increased to transport illicit narcotics and drug proceeds.<sup>332</sup> This trend has remained stable even after COVID-19 pandemic restrictions were lifted. Current reporting suggests the use of “ghost” luggage at airports, which involve individuals checking in luggage containing drugs or drug proceeds but not boarding the plane themselves.<sup>333</sup> The recipient will then pick the luggage up on the baggage carousel at the destination.<sup>334</sup>

(U//FOUO) African American, Caucasian, and Mexican/Hispanic DTOs conduct the majority of drug trafficking activity with a nexus to Michigan. These three groups are heavily involved in the transportation, wholesale distribution, and retail distribution of cocaine, crystal methamphetamine, fentanyl, and heroin. Mexican DTOs maintain strong ties with drug cartels at the Southwest Border and

in Mexico. They work congruently with African American DTOs to facilitate the transport of these drugs in and out of the state. Nationally, Mexican transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) are a top drug trafficking threat to the United States as they control most of the United States drug market, establish transportation routes, establish labs to synthesize fentanyl, and have strong affiliations with criminal groups, United States based gangs, DTOs, and MLOs.<sup>335</sup>

(U//FOUO) The majority of Michigan's heroin supply comes directly from the Southwest Border to Detroit or is transported from Chicago, Illinois or New York. Most heroin in the state is manufactured in Mexico. Mexican Brown (MEX/BP) continues to be the most predominant type of heroin.<sup>336</sup> Mexican and African American DTOs are the primary wholesalers in the Detroit area. Drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) typically transport heroin from the Southwest Border to Detroit inside personal or rental vehicles and commercial tractor-trailers.<sup>337</sup> Drug trafficking organizations often lace heroin with fentanyl. Recent reporting indicates it is rare to seize heroin that does not contain fentanyl and fentanyl is on track to replace heroin. Drug trafficking organizations are also pressing fentanyl into counterfeit pharmaceutical tablets.<sup>338</sup> Heroin is quickly displacing opioid pharmaceuticals in rural communities and illicit fentanyl is on pace to displace heroin in metropolitan areas.<sup>339</sup>

(U//FOUO) Mexican and African American DTOs are primarily responsible for transporting cocaine into Michigan from Chicago, Illinois and the Southwest Border. Drug traffickers transport cocaine into the area mainly along the I-75 and I-94 corridors or through parcel services.<sup>340</sup> Crack cocaine is controlled by African American DTOs and African American street gangs who travel throughout the state and across state lines to facilitate wholesale and retail distribution. Typical concealment methods include factory voids or hidden compartments within vehicles, magnetic boxes, hidden in legitimate commercial cargo, and concealed via parcel services.<sup>341</sup>

(U//FOUO) The legalization of recreational marijuana in Michigan may continue to impact marijuana based DTOs. For example, only 15% of DTOs/MLO's trafficked marijuana in 2022.<sup>342</sup> However, black market marijuana remains a threat and continues to be trafficked in the State of Michigan. In-state methamphetamine cooks who use the "one-pot" method to produce the drug for personal use and local distribution are prevalent but have decreased over the past few years due to large shipments of crystal methamphetamine trafficked into Michigan by Mexican DTOs.

### **Source Considerations**

(U//FOUO) The Michigan HIDTA collected and analyzed several sources to aid in the production of the drug trafficking and money laundering organizations section for the 2023 Drug Threat Assessment. The primary sources of information utilized include the Michigan HIDTA's *2023 Drug Trends Survey* and the Michigan HIDTA's Performance Management Process (PMP) System. Additional data collected and analyzed include reporting from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

### **International DTOs/MLOs**

#### **Overview**

(U//FOUO) International-based DTOs/MLOs pose a significant threat to Michigan and are primarily responsible for trafficking kilogram quantities of cocaine, crystal methamphetamine, fentanyl, and heroin into the area. These DTOs/MLOs work congruently with other criminal organizations in the region for further distribution throughout Michigan. In 2022, there were a total of 46 international DTOs/MLOs

investigated by Michigan HIDTA initiatives, which is consistent with 2021. Of those 46 investigated, 21 were disrupted or dismantled, which is a slight decrease from 27 in 2021. A chart depicting an overview of the international DTO/MLO characteristics on the next page.

International DTOs/MLOs Identified by the Michigan HIDTA	
Characteristics	
<b>Total International DTOs/MLOs</b>	<b>46</b>
African American	21
Mexican/Hispanic	21
Caucasian	18
Other (or unknown)	8
<b>Total Members</b>	<b>249</b>
<b>Total Leaders</b>	<b>61</b>
Average DTO Size	5.4
Multi-ethnic	15
Gang Related	4
Violent	20
Poly-drug	20
Money Laundering Activities	1
<b>Total Disrupted/Dismantled</b>	<b>21</b>
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	7
CPOT	1
RPOT	0
PTO	7

*(U//FOUO) Michigan HIDTA PMP Data. Exported 03/01/2023.*

*(U//FOUO) Some DTOs/MLOs fall under multiple demographic categories due to having multi-ethnic membership.*

*(U//FOUO) For Federal Case Designations definitions, see endnotes.<sup>343</sup>*

### **Affiliations and Memberships**

(U//FOUO) The majority of international-based DTOs/MLOs' primary source location for narcotics is Mexico. They have strong ties to Mexican drug cartels, primarily the Sinaloa Cartel and Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG). The predominant racial demographic for international-based DTOs/MLOs is African American and Mexican/Hispanic, followed by Caucasian. Thirty-three percent identified as multi-ethnic. Forty-three percent were classified as violent in nature and roughly 9% had gang affiliations. Of the 46 international DTOs/MLOs investigated, 45 were categorized as drug trafficking organizations and one was categorized as a money laundering organization.

### **Activities and Methods**

(U//FOUO) International-based DTOs/MLOs continue to have a large presence in the state as they profit from the production, transportation, sale, and distribution of illegal drugs. They are typically responsible for the wholesale trafficking of drugs into Michigan. Methods of transportation involve personal and rental vehicles as well as commercial tractor-trailers traveling along main corridors such as I-75 and I-94.

Narcotics are typically concealed in hidden compartments, natural voids, or commingled with legitimate goods.

(U//FOUO) Forty-three percent of the international-based DTOs/MLOs identified were classified as poly-drug organizations (*defined as DTOs/MLOs trafficking more than one drug*). The drug types trafficked by international-based DTOs/MLOs are described below. Some of these DTOs/MLOs are included in the totals more than once due to their status as poly-drug traffickers:

- 69% of DTOs/MLOs (32) trafficked cocaine/crack cocaine
- 43% of DTOs/MLOs (20) trafficked heroin
- 30% of DTOs/MLOs (14) trafficked fentanyl
- 15% of DTOs/MLOs (7) trafficked crystal methamphetamine/methamphetamine powder
- 11% of DTOs/MLOs (5) trafficked marijuana
- 9% of DTOs/MLOS (4) trafficked prescription drugs
- 4% of DTOs/MLOs (2) trafficked MDMA/Molly

### **Multi-State/Regional DTOs/MLOs**

#### **Overview**

(U//FOUO) Multi-state/regional-based DTOs/MLOs pose a significant drug trafficking threat to Michigan and are primarily responsible for distributing gram to kilogram quantities of cocaine, crystal methamphetamine, fentanyl, heroin, and marijuana as well as prescription drugs throughout the area and to other states. These DTOs/MLOs work congruently with other criminal organizations, travel to source locations, and facilitate the transportation of narcotics to Michigan. In 2022, there were a total of 102 multi-state/regional DTOs/MLOs investigated by Michigan HIDTA initiatives compared to 122 in 2021, which is a 16% decrease. Of those 102 investigated, 33 were disrupted or dismantled, compared to 57 in 2021. A chart depicting an overview of the multi-state/regional DTO/MLO characteristics is on the next page.

Multi-State/Regional DTOs/MLOs Identified by the Michigan HIDTA	
Characteristics	
<b>Total Multi-State/Regional DTOs/MLOs</b>	<b>102</b>
African American	81
Caucasian	30
Mexican/Hispanic	13
Other (or unknown)	13
<b>Total Members</b>	<b>804</b>
<b>Total Leaders</b>	<b>138</b>
Average DTO Size	7.9
Multi-ethnic	30
Gang Related	21
Violent	46
Poly-drug	39
Money Laundering Activities	1
<b>Total Disrupted/Dismantled</b>	<b>33</b>
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	14
CPOT	1
RPOT	0
PTO	7

(U//FOUO) Michigan HIDTA PMP Data. Exported 03/01/2023.

(U//FOUO) Some DTOs/MLOs fall under multiple demographic categories due to having multi-ethnic membership.

### Affiliations and Memberships

(U//FOUO) Outside of Michigan, the top source location for multi-state/regional DTOs/MLOs is California, followed by Arizona, Illinois, and Texas. The predominant racial demographic for multi-state/regional-based DTOs/MLOs is African American, followed by Caucasian. Twenty-nine percent identify as multi-ethnic. Thirty-nine percent of multi-state/regional-based DTOs/MLOs were classified as violent in nature and 20% had gang affiliations. Of the 102 multi-state/regional DTOs/MLOs investigated, 101 were categorized as drug trafficking organizations and one was categorized as a money laundering organization.

### Activities and Methods

(U//FOUO) Multi-state/regional DTOs/MLOs continue to have a large presence in the state as they profit from the production, transportation, sale, and distribution of illegal drugs. They are typically responsible for the wholesale trafficking of drugs into Michigan as well as retail distribution. African American DTOs and street gangs play the most significant role in transporting and distributing these drugs to the local retail market. Multi-state/regional DTOs/MLOs are also responsible for trafficking narcotics to surrounding states, primarily to Indiana, Kentucky, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

Methods of transportation involve personal or rental vehicles, parcel services, and regional bus services. Narcotics are concealed in hidden compartments or natural voids of vehicles as well as on person or in duffel bags/backpacks.

(U//FOUO) Forty-five percent of multi-state/regional DTOs/MLOs were classified as poly-drug organizations. The drug types trafficked by multi-state/regional DTOs/MLOs are described below. Note some of these DTOs/MLOs are included in the totals more than once due to their status as poly-drug traffickers:

- 54% of DTOs/MLOs (55) trafficked heroin
- 53% of DTOs/MLOs (54) trafficked cocaine/crack cocaine
- 24% of DTOs/MLOs (25) trafficked fentanyl
- 23% of DTOs/MLOs (24) trafficked crystal methamphetamine/methamphetamine powder
- 17% of DTOs/MLOs (17) trafficked prescription drugs
- 17% of DTOs/MLOs (17) trafficked marijuana
- 4% of DTOs/MLOs (4) trafficked MDMA/Molly

### Local DTOs/MLOs

#### Overview

(U//FOUO) Local-based DTOs/MLOs pose a significant threat to Michigan and are primarily responsible for distributing gram to kilogram quantities of cocaine, crystal methamphetamine, heroin, fentanyl, and marijuana, as well as prescription drugs throughout the area. These DTOs/MLOs work congruently with other criminal organizations to facilitate the distribution of narcotics throughout Michigan. In 2022, there were a total of 116 local DTOs/MLOs investigated by Michigan HIDTA initiatives, compared to 102 in 2021. Of the 116 investigated, 54 were disrupted or dismantled, which is an increase from 48 disrupted or dismantled in 2021. A chart depicting an overview of the local DTO/MLO characteristics is below.

Local DTOs/MLOs Identified by the Michigan HIDTA	
Characteristics	
<b>Total Local DTOs/MLOs</b>	<b>116</b>
African American	97
Caucasian	39
Mexican/Hispanic	9
Other (or Unknown)	7
<b>Total Members</b>	<b>602</b>
<b>Total Leaders</b>	<b>158</b>
Average DTO Size	5.2
Multi-ethnic	33
Gang Related	28
Violent	64
Poly-drug	39
Money Laundering Activities	0
<b>Total Disrupted/Dismantled</b>	<b>54</b>
Federal Case Designations	
OCDTF	8
CPOT	0

RPOT	0
PTO	4

(U//FOUO) Michigan HIDTA PMP Data. Exported 03/01/2023.

(U//FOUO) Some DTOs/MLOs fall under multiple demographic categories due to having multi-ethnic membership.

### Affiliations and Memberships

(U//FOUO) The predominant racial demographic for local-based DTOs/MLOs is African American, followed by Caucasian. Twenty-eight percent identify as multi-ethnic. Fifty-five percent of local-based DTOs/MLOs were classified as violent in nature and 24% had gang affiliations. Of the 116 local-based DTOs/MLOs investigated, all were categorized as drug trafficking organizations. There were no DTOs/MLOs categorized as a money laundering organization at the local scope.

### Activities and Methods

(U//FOUO) Local-based DTOs continue to have a large presence in the state as they profit from the production, sale, and distribution of illegal drugs. African American DTOs and street gangs play the most significant role in transporting and distributing these drugs to the local retail market. Thirty-four percent of local-based DTOs were classified as poly-drug organizations.

(U//FOUO) The drug types trafficked by local-based DTOs/MLOs are described below. Note some of these DTOs/MLOs are included in the totals more than once due to their status as poly-drug traffickers:

- 59% of DTOs/MLOs (69) trafficked cocaine/crack cocaine
- 45% of DTOs/MLOs (52) trafficked heroin
- 31% of DTOs/MLOs (36) trafficked crystal methamphetamine/methamphetamine powder
- 27% of DTOs/MLOs (32) trafficked fentanyl
- 16% of DTOs/MLOs (19) trafficked marijuana
- 9% of DTOs/MLOs (10) trafficked prescription drugs
- 2% of DTOs/MLOs (2) trafficked MDMA/Molly

(U//FOUO) **Money Laundering Organizations** (MLOs) often emerge from illegal activities of DTOs. The Michigan HIDTA categorizes DTOs and MLOs together due to very few MLOs being reported. Accordingly, of the 264 DTOs/MLOs under investigation in 2022, only two were categorized as MLOs. Money Laundering Organizations (MLOs) operate both independently and with DTOs. Eighty-one percent of drug teams surveyed indicated MLOs also deal drugs for profit compared to 60% in 2021.<sup>344</sup> While African American and Mexican DTOs are the most common demographic involved in money laundering activities, Arab, Asian, Caucasian, and Colombian DTOs also play a role.<sup>345</sup> MLOs typically conceal illicit finances in personal belongings, luggage/duffle bags, or hidden compartments.<sup>346</sup> For example, in October 2022 at the Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County (DTW) Airport, law enforcement officials seized over \$40,000 in U.S. currency concealed in clothing items inside a carry on duffle bag.<sup>347</sup> The large proceeds from drug trafficking require concealment from law enforcement if DTO/MLO members want to avoid disruption of their operations and interdiction of their profits. Typically, lower-level drug traffickers do not become involved with established MLOs or the laundering process. They tend to utilize drug proceeds for immediate cash purchases of expensive vehicles, clothing, and consumer goods. Since banks are required to file suspicious activity reports whenever an account holder moves a large sum of money and cannot account for the origin or destination of the funds, keeping the money completely out of the banking system helps members evade law enforcement. Illicit finances are also sent via parcel services. For example, in May 2022, law enforcement seized \$12,000 in US currency from a parcel, which was concealed inside the pages of a book.<sup>348</sup>

(U//FOUO) The most common industries/businesses and methods used to launder illegal gains are casinos followed by bulk currency, virtual currency (i.e. Bitcoin), and banking systems.<sup>349</sup> Several teams report Cash App, a mobile financial transactions application, is a recent trend to launder illegal gains.<sup>350</sup> Casinos are a convenient method for laundering in-state funds as Michigan has accessibility to multiple casinos, particularly in Detroit. At a casino, bulk cash is put through casino slot machines or used to “buy in” to a casino game. The money is minimally played or not played at all, then cashed out as if it was money won at the casino. Individuals may also keep casino gaming chips to use as currency on the streets.

(U//FOUO) Criminal actors in Michigan funded operations and laundered drug proceeds through a variety of financial crimes. These included advertising on social media for credit repairs, mortgage eliminations, student loan removal, ATM hacking services, and credit funding schemes in exchange for Cash App payments to further illicit activities.<sup>351</sup> Criminal actors recruited family members and other associates without criminal records to engage in money laundering activities, likely through small transactions which were harder to detect by law enforcement.<sup>352</sup> Criminal actors also targeted migrant camps to move money and drugs.<sup>353</sup>

(U//FOUO) Criminal actors likely started legitimate businesses or conducted real estate transactions to transport, transfer, and/or distribute the proceeds of criminal activities.<sup>354</sup> Reporting indicated the laundering of drug proceeds into real estate is a common occurrence especially in the real estate market in Detroit. Once criminal actors receive drug profits, they will oftentimes purchase cheap real estate directly from the City of Detroit. They then renovate the houses just enough for rent or use as “stash” houses for drug operations. Criminal actors also use straw buyers to purchase these properties to keep their names from being associated with them.<sup>355</sup>

(U//FOUO) Street level gang members involved in the distribution of narcotics mainly use the proceeds they receive to purchase items such as jewelry, vehicles, electronics, etc.<sup>356</sup> Some criminal groups involved with illegal drug businesses purchase a large amount of gold jewelry to make it seem as though they inherited the jewelry and as a result, are able to hide their illegal drug proceeds.<sup>357</sup>

(U//FOUO) According to drug teams surveyed, it is more common for money launderers to operate a legitimate business, however, it is also common to launder money through “front” businesses.<sup>358</sup> More specifically, 45% of drug teams indicated money launderers tend to operate legitimate businesses.<sup>359</sup> Money launderers primarily operate businesses which produce high cash volume and sales receipts. Money proceeds from drug transactions are commingled with legitimate business sales receipts, giving the appearance of lawful business activity. These businesses may be within the auto industry (car washes or car sales), convenience stores, or restaurants.<sup>360</sup> Previous reporting suggested marijuana dispensaries.<sup>361</sup>

(U//FOUO) DTO/MLOs rely primarily on smuggling bulk currency by a number of methods in order to transport, distribute, and manage funds received from criminal activities. An analysis of the trends associated with bulk cash smuggling in Michigan was provided by the El Paso Intelligence Center's (EPIC) Bulk Currency Unit (BCU) and, unless otherwise noted, information in this section was obtained from that single source. The information does not account for all currency seized by Michigan HIDTA task forces or law enforcement agencies in Michigan, as these are not always reported to EPIC or HIDTA. Additionally, there may be a possible overlap in seizures as some agencies report to both EPIC and HIDTA.

(U//FOUO) According to EPIC submissions in 2022, Michigan was ranked as the 12<sup>th</sup> highest state in terms of the amount of bulk currency seized in U.S. dollar amounts (USD). The ranking is down from 2021 in which Michigan ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the country. Furthermore, Michigan also ranked 14<sup>th</sup> in the nation in terms of the number of bulk cash incidents, down from 10<sup>th</sup> in 2021. In 2022, bulk cash seizures reported to EPIC for the state totaled \$10 million. This is a decrease from 2021 reporting of \$34 million. A total of 148 seizures were reported, compared to 267 seizures in 2021.<sup>362</sup> Consistent with previous drug trafficking transportation methods over the years, interstate highways I-75 and I-94 are the typical routes upon which the majority of Michigan's bulk cash seizures occur.<sup>363</sup> Interstate 94 (I-94), which connects Michigan to Chicago, is a major intersection hub for illicit drugs and drug proceeds traveling north from the Southwest Border. Reporting also suggested bulk cash seizures occur via parcel services.<sup>364</sup> According to Michigan HIDTA PMP data, \$23 million in cash assets were seized during investigations.<sup>365</sup> As a note of explanation, finalizing a figure that accurately represents the sum total of bulk cash seizures for 2022 in Michigan is difficult, as not all Michigan agencies report to EPIC and HIDTA. Additionally, there may be a possible overlap in seizures as some agencies report to both EPIC and HIDTA.

(U//FOUO) **Gang** information, provided by Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Detroit Division, is summarized in the below section.

(U//FOUO) FBI Detroit assesses the most significant violent gang threat in the Detroit Field Office's area of responsibility (AOR) almost certainly stems from Neighborhood-based Gangs (NBGs). In many of Michigan's urban centers, inter-gang conflict drives violent crime, most of which involves firearms.<sup>366</sup> Neighborhood-based gangs (NBGs) are involved in financial fraud schemes, including defrauding the US Government of CARES Act funds and elaborate, multi-state check washing schemes.<sup>367, 368, 369</sup> However, NBGs also continue to profit from crimes more traditionally associated with street gangs, such as narcotics trafficking, firearms trafficking, and vehicle theft.<sup>370</sup> Many Detroit-based NBG members travel out-of-state to traffic narcotics and firearms, notably in Tennessee and West Virginia.<sup>371, 372, 373</sup> A trend in firearms trafficking has been the proliferation of so-called "Glock switches." These devices, popular with NBGs, convert semi-automatic pistols to fully automatic.<sup>374, 375</sup> Another emerging trend of note is gangs being composed mainly or entirely of juveniles, some of which appear to specialize in personal automobile theft.<sup>376, 377</sup> Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMGs) in the AOR are heavily involved in human trafficking, prostitution, and narcotics trafficking.<sup>378, 379, 380</sup> Neighborhood-based gangs and OMGs commit a variety of other crimes in Michigan, including fatal and non-fatal shootings, carjackings, smash-and-grab robberies, and commercial vehicle theft.<sup>381, 382, 383, 384</sup> Prison gangs and some national-level gangs also operate in the AOR.<sup>385, 386</sup>

### Intelligence Gaps

- (U//FOUO) What are the most common methods of communication for drug trafficking operations?
- (U//FOUO) What percentage of DTOs/MLOs operate a legitimate business to hide illegitimate funds?
- (U//FOUO) What percentage of DTOs/MLOs are using virtual currency such as Bitcoin?
- (U//FOUO) What percentage of DTOs/MLOs have a direct connection to the Mexican drug cartels, specifically the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG)?

## OUTLOOK

The Michigan HIDTA Executive Board, having herein presented the threat status in this region, provides its assessment of what is expected to occur within the next year. Solid judgments can be formed given the availability of high-quality enforcement and intelligence information, and the nature and history of drug use in this region. The Michigan HIDTA assesses the following:

- ◆ (U//FOUO) We assess with high confidence<sup>387</sup> that increased fentanyl availability will result in higher rates of consumption and overdose deaths, along with an increase in reported drug mixtures involving fentanyl being pressed into counterfeit pills. Fentanyl will become more of a significant threat and is on track to displace heroin in some areas. China and Mexico will continue to remain the main international sources of supply.
- ◆ (U//FOUO) We assess with high confidence<sup>388</sup> that heroin containing fentanyl will continue to increase as most heroin seized in Michigan also tests positive for the presence of fentanyl. Heroin will remain a significant threat as Mexican DTOs continue to dominate the transportation and distribution of larger scale amounts of the drug into Michigan. African American street gangs will continue to dominate the retail sales trade.
- ◆ (U//FOUO) We assess with high confidence<sup>389</sup> that crystal methamphetamine brought in from the Southwest Border by DTOs will continue to increase, resulting in higher rates of consumption and more widespread availability. In some areas, crystal methamphetamine consumption will surpass heroin consumption and former heroin and cocaine street-level dealers will sell crystal methamphetamine. Local methamphetamine production will continue to be comprised of “one-pot” labs; however, Michigan’s methamphetamine production will continue to decrease due to the influx of crystal methamphetamine supplied by Mexican drug cartels.
- ◆ (U//FOUO) We assess with high confidence<sup>390</sup> that increased availability of cocaine will result in higher rates of consumption, overdose deaths, laboratory identifications, and treatment admissions in Michigan, along with an increase in reported overdoses involving mixtures of cocaine and fentanyl.
- ◆ (U//FOUO) We assess with high confidence<sup>391</sup> that pharmaceutical drug diversion will remain a significant threat to the state and Michigan will continue to be a source area for prescription drugs diverted to other states for higher profit. However, it is likely that counterfeit pills containing fentanyl may start to displace traditionally diverted pharmaceuticals.
- ◆ (U//FOUO) We assess with high confidence<sup>392</sup> that marijuana legalization in Michigan will continue to result in a decrease in marijuana arrests. Homegrown cultivation of high-grade marijuana will continue to increase. This increase will result in greater availability and distribution within the state and to surrounding states as the demand increases for higher quality marijuana. Black market marijuana will also remain a threat and likely contribute to an increase in local violence.
- ◆ (U//FOUO) We assess with high confidence<sup>393</sup> that DTOs/MLOs will continue to have a strong presence in the State of Michigan. Common methods of transportation will remain stable, however, there will be a continued increase in the use of parcel packages.

## APPENDICES

### METHODOLOGY

(U//FOUO) The 2023 Michigan HIDTA Drug Threat Assessment was created with the help of various agencies at the federal, state, local, and public health/public safety level. To determine the types of drugs that are consumed, trafficked, and seized within the State of Michigan, the Michigan HIDTA conducted a survey that requested information about the availability of various drugs, transportation methods, delivery, concealment, acquisition, drug pricing, and organizations most responsible for wholesale and retail distribution of these drugs. Additional information was acquired via the Michigan HIDTA Performance Management Process (PMP) Reports, which include 2021-2022 statistical data from the HIDTA region, the *2023 DEA Detroit Field Division Intelligence Collection Plan Threat Assessment*, *DEA Detroit Field Division Drug Pricing FY2023 First Quarter*, and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) reports on FY2022 publicly funded admissions and CY2021 overdose death information. The Detroit & Southeast Michigan Information & Intelligence Center (DSEMIIC) and the Michigan Intelligence Operations Center (MIOC) collaborated with the Michigan HIDTA as they played a central role by extracting available data, developing charts and spreadsheets, and producing maps to display the information efficiently in this assessment. Additional information about drug use and statistics from open-source websites was also used during the development of this document.

### HIDTA INITIATIVES

(U) The mission of all Michigan HIDTA initiatives is to identify, disrupt, and/or dismantle Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) and Money Laundering Organizations (MLOs), to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of all agencies involved in the initiatives, and to utilize the Michigan HIDTA Investigation Support and Deconfliction Center (ISDC) for intelligence support and deconfliction.

(U) Overall, the Michigan HIDTA supports 33 initiatives which consist of 17 federal, 14 state, and two local initiatives. Of those 33 initiatives, 27 are classified as law enforcement initiatives, four as support initiatives, one as an intelligence initiative, and one as a management and coordination initiative. Please see the below 2022 HIDTA Initiative list:

HIDTA Initiatives	
MSP Bay Area Narcotics Enforcement Team (BAYANET)	ATF Firearms Interdiction Team (FIT)
FBI Combined Hotel Interdiction Enforcement Team (CHIEF)	MSP Flint Area Narcotics Group (FANG)
MSP County of Macomb Enforcement Team (COMET)	Forensic Enhancement
DEA Group 2	Grand Rapids Fugitive Apprehension Team
DEA Group 5	HSI Border Enforcement Security Team (BEST)
DEA Group 6	HSI Dark Web
DEA Group 7 (Transportation Interdiction Unit)	HIDTA Investigation Support and Deconfliction Center (ISDC) & HIDTA Management and Coordination

DEA Group 8	MSP Livingston and Washtenaw Narcotics Enforcement Team (LAWNET)
DEA Group 9 (Financial Investigation Group)	Methamphetamine Training
DEA Group 10	MSP Metropolitan Enforcement Team (MET)
DEA Group 15 (Tactical Diversion Squad)	MSP Metro Narcotics Enforcement Team (MNET)
DEA Flint	Michigan HIDTA Training
DEA Grand Rapids	Oakland County Narcotic Enforcement Team (NET)
Detroit Fugitive Apprehension Team (DFAT)	MSP Southwest Enforcement Team (SWET)
MSP Domestic Highway Enforcement (DHE)	Wayne County Prosecution Initiative
FBI Detroit Safe Streets Task Force (DSSTF)	MSP West Michigan Enforcement Team (WEMET)

## PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

(U//FOUO) The Michigan HIDTA would like to thank the following agencies and initiatives for their contributions of time, intelligence, and statistics to the 2023 Drug Threat Assessment:

Participating Agencies	
Detroit & Southeast Michigan Information & Intelligence Center (DSEMIIC)	MSP Metro Narcotics Enforcement Team (MNET)
Detroit Police Department (DPD)	MSP Mid-Michigan Area Group Narcotics Enforcement Team (MAGNET)
El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC)	MSP Mid-Michigan Investigative Narcotics Team (MINT)
FBI Combined Hotel Interdiction Enforcement Team (CHIEF)	MSP Monroe Area Narcotics Team & Investigative Services (MANTIS)
FBI Detroit Safe Streets Task Force (DSSTF)	MSP Region of Irish Hills Narcotics Office (RHINO)
FBI Violent Gang Task Force (VGTF)	MSP Southwest Enforcement Team (SWET)
HSI Detroit and Port Huron	MSP State, Sheriffs, Chiefs Narcotics Enforcement Team (SSCENT)
Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC)	MSP Straits Area Narcotics Enforcement (SANE)
Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS)	MSP Strike Team Investigative Narcotics Group (STING)
Michigan Department of Licensing & Regulatory Affairs (LARA)	MSP Thumb Narcotics Unit (TNU)
Michigan Intelligence Operations Center (MIOC)	MSP Traverse Narcotics Team (TNT)
Michigan State Police (MSP)	MSP Tri-County Metro Narcotics (TCM)
MSP Bay Area Narcotics Enforcement Team (BAYANET)	Oakland County Narcotic Enforcement Team (NET)
MSP Central Michigan Enforcement Team (CMET)	MSP Upper Peninsula Substance Enforcement Team (UPSET)
MSP County of Macomb Enforcement Team (COMET)	MSP West Michigan Enforcement Team (WEMET)
MSP Domestic Highway Enforcement (DHE)	U.S. Border Patrol (BP)
MSP Flint Area Narcotics Group (FANG)	U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, & Firearms (ATF), Firearms Investigation Team (FIT)
MSP Huron Undercover Narcotics Team (HUNT)	U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

MSP Jackson Narcotics Enforcement Team (JNET)	U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)
MSP Livingston and Washtenaw Narcotics Enforcement Team (LAWNET)	U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
MSP Metropolitan Enforcement Team (MET)	U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS)
University of Michigan Injury Prevention Center	

## ENDNOTES

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  - **Consolidated Priority Organization Target (CPOT)**: A CPOT DTO/MLO is an organization known to have a hierarchical chain-of-command relationship with a major international DTO/MLO.
  - **Regional Priority Organization Target (RPOT)**: A RPOT DTO/MLO is an organization known to be linked to or affiliated with a major regional/national DTO/MLO.
  - **Priority Target Organization (PTO)**: PTOs are drug trafficking organizations with an identified hierarchy engaged in the highest levels of drug trafficking and/or money laundering operations, having a significant international, national, regional, or local impact upon drug availability.
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- <sup>366</sup> (U) News article | “Rise in violent crime plagues some Michigan metros this summer” | 15 August 2022 | [bridgemi.com/urban-affairs/rise-violent-crime-plagues-some-michigan-metros-summer](https://bridgemi.com/urban-affairs/rise-violent-crime-plagues-some-michigan-metros-summer) | accessed on 7 March 2023.
- <sup>367</sup> (U) News article | Click on Detroit | “How feds took down a Detroit gang linked to COVID pandemic relief fraud” | 3 November 2022 | [clickondetroit.com/news/investigations/2022/22/03/how-feds-took-down-a-detroit-gang-linked-to-covid-pandemic-relief-fraud/](https://clickondetroit.com/news/investigations/2022/22/03/how-feds-took-down-a-detroit-gang-linked-to-covid-pandemic-relief-fraud/) | accessed on 7 March 2023.
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- <sup>371</sup> (U//FOUO) FBI | <<Case Information | 13 February 2023 | 10 January 2023 | "(U//FOUO) Regional Standing Gang Meeting" | UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY | UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY.
- <sup>372</sup> (U) News article | Tennessee News | “Knoxville ATF investigation leads to arrest of Detroit gang member” | 26 April 2022 | [darik.news/Tennessee/Knoxville—atf-investigation-leads-to-arrest-of-detroit-gang-member/580411.html](https://darik.news/Tennessee/Knoxville—atf-investigation-leads-to-arrest-of-detroit-gang-member/580411.html) | accessed on 7 March 2023.
- <sup>373</sup> (U) FBI | Case Information | 13 January 2023 | 10 January 2023 | "(U) Drug Activity and Arrest of [Name withheld]" | UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY | UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY.

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- <sup>378</sup> (U) FBI | Case Information | 14 September 2022 | 8 September 2022 | UNCLASSIFIED | UNCLASSIFIED.
- <sup>379</sup> (U) FBI | Case Information | 6 October 2022 | 6 October 2022 | UNCLASSIFIED | UNCLASSIFIED.
- <sup>380</sup> (U) FBI | Case Information | 22 March 2022 | 18 March 2022 | UNCLASSIFIED | UNCLASSIFIED.
- <sup>381</sup> (U) FBI | Case Information | 17 January 2023 | 17 January 2023 | "(U) I 2 Chart on Retaliatory Shooting Between Rival Gangs [Name withheld] and [Name withheld]" | UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY | UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY.
- <sup>382</sup> (U) FBI | Case Information | 10 November 2022 | 28 October 2022 | UNCLASSIFIED | UNCLASSIFIED.
- <sup>383</sup> (U) FBI | Case Information | 1 December 2022 | 22 November 2022 | UNCLASSIFIED | UNCLASSIFIED.
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- <sup>385</sup> (U) FBI | Case Information | 15 February 2022 | 20 January 2022 | "(U) Contact with local law enforcement agency" | UNCLASSIFIED | UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE.
- <sup>386</sup> (U) FBI | Case Information | 13 February 2023 | 18 November 2022 | "(U//FOUO) Regional Standing Gang Meeting" | UNCLASSIFIED | UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY.
- <sup>387</sup> (U) **High confidence** generally indicates the judgments are based on high-quality information or the nature of the issues makes it possible to render a solid judgment.
- <sup>388</sup> (U) **High confidence** generally indicates the judgments are based on high-quality information or the nature of the issues makes it possible to render a solid judgment.
- <sup>389</sup> (U) **High confidence** generally indicates the judgments are based on high-quality information or the nature of the issues makes it possible to render a solid judgment.

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<sup>392</sup> (U) **High confidence** generally indicates the judgments are based on high-quality information or the nature of the issues makes it possible to render a solid judgment.

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