



Oregon

High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area

Drug Market Analysis 2009



NATIONAL DRUG INTELLIGENCE CENTER
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE





Oregon

High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area

Drug Market Analysis 2009

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



**NATIONAL DRUG INTELLIGENCE CENTER
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**



This page intentionally left blank.

Table of Contents

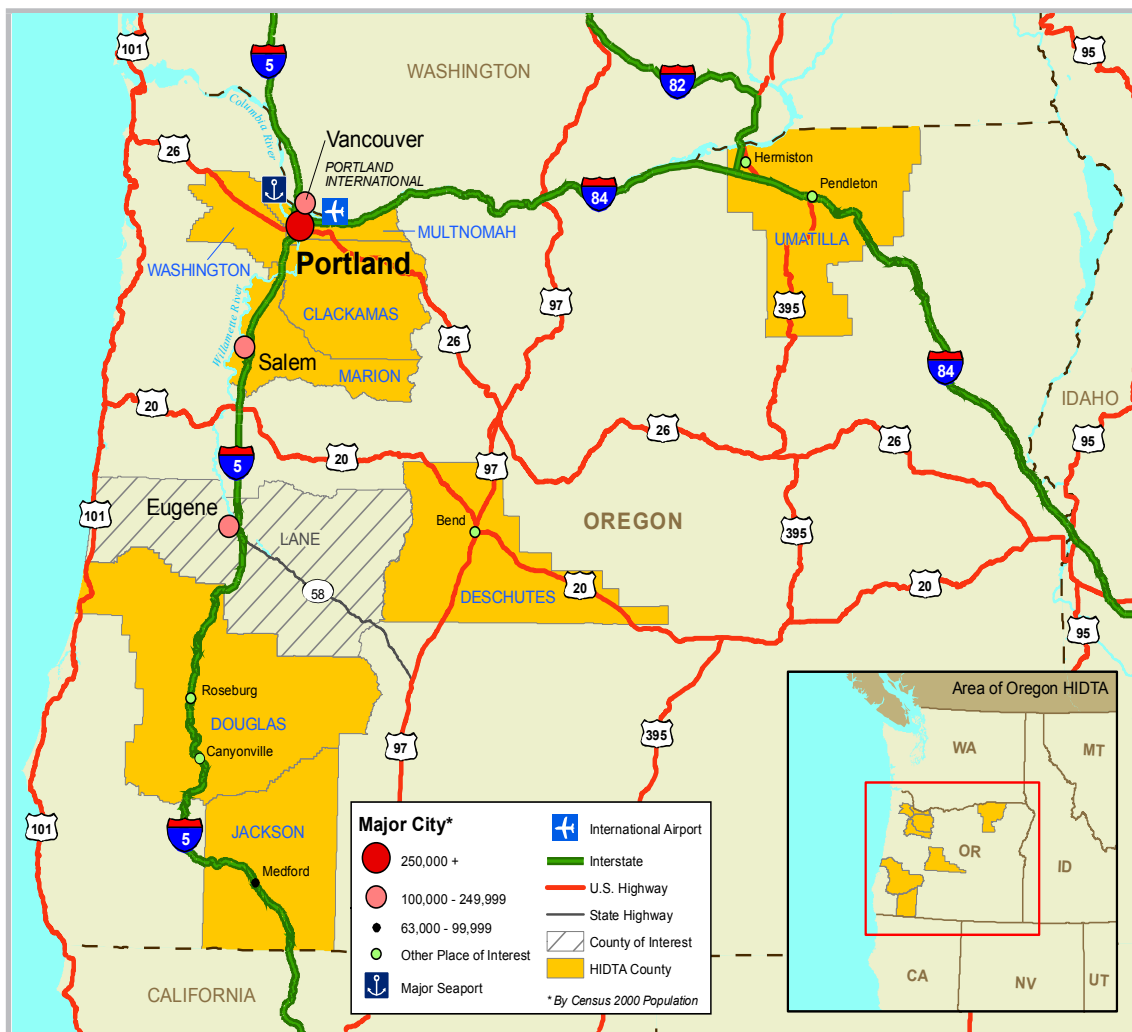
Preface.....	1
Strategic Drug Threat Developments.....	2
HIDTA Overview	2
Drug Threat Overview	2
Drug Trafficking Organizations	5
Production.....	6
Transportation	9
Distribution	11
Drug-Related Crime.....	12
Abuse	13
Illicit Finance	16
Outlook	16
Sources.....	17

This page intentionally left blank.

Preface

This assessment provides a strategic overview of the illicit drug situation in the Oregon High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), highlighting significant trends and law enforcement concerns related to the trafficking and abuse of illicit drugs. The report was prepared through detailed analysis of recent law enforcement reporting, information obtained through interviews with law enforcement and public health officials, and available statistical data. The report is designed to provide policymakers, resource planners, and law enforcement officials with a focused discussion of key drug issues and developments facing the Oregon HIDTA.

Figure 1. Oregon High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area



Strategic Drug Threat Developments

- Since the second quarter of 2008,¹ Mexican drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) have increased the supply of ice methamphetamine from production areas in Mexico and, to a lesser extent, the Central Valley of California to the Oregon region.
- Outdoor cannabis plant seizures in the Oregon HIDTA counties decreased 90 percent in 2008. Law enforcement authorities attribute the decrease to cultivators' use of smaller, multiple grow sites to limit detection, budget cuts that have limited law enforcement resources, and inclement weather conditions.
- The abuse of controlled prescription drugs (CPDs)² is rising in the Oregon HIDTA region, particularly among teenagers and young adults. The leading illicit methods used to obtain CPDs in the HIDTA region are doctor-shopping, theft, and the use of Internet pharmacies.

HIDTA Overview

The Oregon HIDTA region encompasses eight Oregon counties—Clackamas, Deschutes, Douglas, Jackson, Marion, Multnomah, Umatilla, and Washington. Major transportation routes that facilitate the distribution of licit and illicit goods from domestic and foreign source areas transit each of these counties. Interstate 5 offers a

direct north-south route from Canada to Mexico and traverses six of the eight HIDTA counties (Clackamas, Douglas, Jackson, Marion, Multnomah, and Washington). Interstate 84 crosses the state in an east-west direction, connecting the HIDTA counties of Multnomah and Umatilla to drug markets in other states, particularly Idaho. U.S. Highway 97, a north-south route from the U.S.–Canada border to northern California, crosses the state in Deschutes County and is a favored alternative route for drug traffickers attempting to avoid law enforcement scrutiny on I-5. (See Figure 1 on page 1.) In addition to these roadways, drug traffickers use the state's airways, railways, seaports, and waterways to transport drugs to and through the HIDTA region.

Drug Threat Overview

Widespread trafficking and abuse of methamphetamine are the greatest threats to the Oregon HIDTA region, straining local law enforcement, public health, and social services resources, particularly in rural areas. Although local methamphetamine production has declined significantly in most areas of the region, an abundant supply of Mexican ice methamphetamine throughout the HIDTA region has fueled rising methamphetamine abuse since the second quarter of 2008. According to the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) National Drug Threat Survey (NDTS) 2009, 24 of the 26 state and local law enforcement agency respondents in the Oregon HIDTA region identify methamphetamine as the drug that poses the greatest threat to their jurisdictions.³ Additionally, 24 respondents report that methamphetamine is the drug that most contributes to violent crime

1. The second quarter of 2008 is composed of April, May, and June.

2. Not all prescription drugs are controlled prescription drugs (CPDs) under the Controlled Substances Act (CSA). However, many prescription drugs are listed in Schedules I through V of the CSA because of their high potential for abuse or addiction. Schedule I through V prescription drugs are primarily narcotic pain relievers and central nervous system depressants and stimulants. A complete list of controlled prescription drugs, by schedule, is available on the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Office of Diversion Control web site: <http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/schedules/schedules.htm>.

3. National Drug Threat Survey (NDTS) data for 2009 cited in this report are as of February 12, 2009. NDTS data cited are raw, unweighted responses from federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies solicited through either the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) or the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program. Data cited may include responses from agencies that are part of the NDTS 2009 national sample and/or agencies that are part of HIDTA solicitation lists.

in their areas, and 25 respondents report the same for property crime.

Mexican DTOs are the primary producers, transporters, and wholesale distributors of ice methamphetamine acquired from laboratories in Mexico and, to a lesser extent, the Central Valley of California. They have generally supplied sufficient quantities of the drug to meet demand, even in the face of decreased local methamphetamine production. Local production decreased after legislation was passed in August 2005 requiring a prescription to purchase medications containing ephedrine or pseudoephedrine—the precursor chemicals used in the production of methamphetamine.⁴ As local methamphetamine production declined, Mexican DTOs expanded local networks to distribute ice methamphetamine produced in Mexico. However, in 2007 and early 2008, the availability and purity of Mexican methamphetamine temporarily decreased in some areas of the HIDTA region, particularly at the midlevel and retail level. Law enforcement officials believe that these decreases were due to restrictions enacted by the Mexican Government on the importation and legitimate distribution of precursor chemicals. These restrictions temporarily curtailed methamphetamine production in Mexico, leading to decreased availability of the drug in the HIDTA region throughout 2007 and early 2008. By the second quarter of 2008, law enforcement officials reported that methamphetamine availability in the Oregon HIDTA region had returned to previously high levels.

Officials attribute the rebound in availability to increased ice methamphetamine production in Mexico and, to a lesser degree, increased production in the Central Valley of California. Mexican DTOs are circumventing precursor chemical sales and import restrictions and are smuggling precursor chemicals into Mexico to produce ice methamphetamine. Moreover, pseudoephedrine

4. Oregon is the only state that requires a prescription to purchase ephedrine or pseudoephedrine products.

smurfing⁵ activity in the Central Valley has led to increased methamphetamine production in California; some of this methamphetamine is transported to the Oregon HIDTA region.

Marijuana is the most widely available and frequently abused drug in the HIDTA region; 25 of the 26 state and local law enforcement agency respondents to the NDTS 2009 report that the drug is highly available in their jurisdictions. Mexican DTOs and criminal groups are the primary distributors of commercial-grade Mexican marijuana. In addition, Mexican DTOs and criminal groups operate most of the large outdoor cannabis grow operations in the HIDTA region; these operations are typically located in counties that have extensive remote locations, such as public lands and rural areas. Furthermore, Asian criminal groups have increased their indoor cannabis grow operations in the HIDTA region, particularly since 2004. Caucasian independent growers and criminal groups also cultivate cannabis at indoor locations, sometimes using the Oregon Medical Marijuana Plan (OMMP) as a pretext for conducting illegal grow operations.

Cocaine is readily available in the HIDTA counties, and in some areas availability is increasing. According to law enforcement agencies in the Willamette Valley and Portland areas, the availability of powder cocaine is increasing. In Portland, the Regional Organized Crime Narcotics (ROCN) Task Force attributes the higher level of cocaine availability to Mexican DTOs that meet the increased demand by supplying more cocaine to the region. According to the NDTS 2009, 19 of the 26 state and local law enforcement agency respondents in the region report that powder

5. Ephedrine and pseudoephedrine smurfing is a method used by some methamphetamine traffickers to acquire large quantities of precursor chemicals. Methamphetamine producers purchase the chemicals in quantities at or below legal thresholds from multiple retail locations. Methamphetamine producers often enlist the assistance of several friends or associates in smurfing operations to increase the speed of the operation and the quantity of chemicals acquired.

cocaine availability is moderate to high in their jurisdictions; 7 respondents report the same for crack cocaine availability. Crack cocaine is available, distributed, and abused primarily in urban areas of the HIDTA region, such as Portland.

Heroin trafficking and abuse pose significant drug threats in urban areas such as Portland and Salem; however, according to the NDTs 2009, none of the law enforcement agency respondents in the HIDTA region identify heroin as their greatest drug threat. According to the Oregon Department of Human Services, Office of Addictions and Mental Health Division (AMH), the total number of treatment admissions for heroin abuse in the three counties that compose Portland exceeds the number of admissions for abuse of any other drug.⁶ (See Table 7 on page 14.) Multnomah County, which encompasses most of the Portland metropolitan area, recorded the highest number of heroin-related deaths in the state (71) in 2008. (See Table 8 on page 15.) Heroin abuse is the third leading cause of treatment admissions in Marion County, where Salem is located. Heroin is transported into these cities in shipments ranging from less than a kilogram to multiple kilograms; such shipments are typically transported in private vehicles.

The abuse of other dangerous drugs (ODDs) is a growing concern to law enforcement in the HIDTA region. MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine, also known as ecstasy), GHB (gamma-hydroxybutyrate), LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide), and ketamine are generally abused by teenagers and young adults in the HIDTA region. These drugs are abused primarily at social venues such as at raves, bars, nightclubs, and private parties in urban areas and on college campuses. According to the Oregon HIDTA, the abuse of MDMA is spreading throughout the region. Most of the MDMA

available in the region is smuggled from Canada. According to the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), Canada-based DTOs are increasingly producing adulterated MDMA tablets, and in some cases, these tablets do not contain any MDMA. Instead, they are a combination of substances, some of which can be fatal to the abuser. For example, the Portland Metropolitan Forensic Laboratory received numerous tablets believed to be MDMA in 2008, but through testing, the tablets were determined to be mixtures of BZP (N-benzylpiperazine)⁷ and TFMPP (1-(3-trifluoromethylphenyl)piperazine), two of the most common substances substituted for MDMA. According to the CBSA, Canada-based DTOs are increasingly producing adulterated MDMA tablets. Another drug, Foxy methoxy, is sometimes available and sold with MDMA, LSD, and psilocybin (hallucinogenic mushrooms);⁸ Foxy is sometimes abused with other drugs, such as cocaine, heroin, marijuana, or methamphetamine.

The abuse of diverted CPDs is occurring at relatively high levels in the Oregon HIDTA region. In fact, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Oregon ranks fourth among all states in the rate of abuse for controlled prescription pain relievers by teenagers. This high level of CPD abuse among youth is also prevalent in HIDTA counties. The leading illicit methods used to obtain CPDs in the HIDTA region are doctor-shopping, theft, and purchases from Internet pharmacies.

6. Portland was incorporated in 1851 and is the county seat of Multnomah County. The city extends slightly into Washington County to the west and Clackamas County to the south.

7. BZP is a common name for the synthetic stimulant N-benzylpiperazine. BZP tablets, especially those that also contain the hallucinogen TFMPP (1-(3-trifluoromethylphenyl)piperazine), are often sold as MDMA or promoted as an alternative to MDMA.

8. Foxy and Foxy methoxy are common names for a synthetic drug with the chemical name 5-methoxy-N,N-diisopropyltryptamine (5-MeO-DIPT). It is typically available as a powder, capsule, or tablet. Abused for the hallucinogenic effects it produces, foxy belongs to a class of chemical compounds known as tryptamines. (Other hallucinogenic tryptamines include psilocybin and psilocyn.)

Drug Trafficking Organizations

Mexican DTOs and criminal groups are the dominant illicit drug producers, transporters, and wholesale distributors in the HIDTA region. Their influence in the area is unrivaled and presents law enforcement with numerous challenges. Members of Mexican DTOs and criminal groups, which tend to be insular and family-based, easily blend with the region’s sizable Hispanic population. Mexican traffickers in the HIDTA region generally obtain illicit drugs from Mexican DTOs operating in Mexico, California, and southwestern states; they supply these drugs to distributors throughout the region. Additionally, law enforcement officials report that some members of Mexican DTOs and criminal groups in the region also exploit Native American reservations to establish cannabis cultivation sites and drug distribution networks.

Since 2004, the presence of Asian DTOs in the HIDTA region has increased. They have expanded their criminal activities to include large indoor cannabis grow operations conducted primarily by Vietnamese criminal groups. This expanded local indoor cannabis cultivation enables Asian DTOs to reduce the amount of Canadian high-potency marijuana that they smuggle into the HIDTA region, thus avoiding law enforcement interdiction at the U.S.–Canada border and reducing transportation costs. Asian DTOs are also the primary wholesale distributors of MDMA produced in Canada and smuggled to the HIDTA counties.

Hispanic and African American street gangs are active in most urban areas of the Oregon HIDTA region. For example, the Portland Metro Gang Task Force reports that an estimated 80 to 100 gang sets with a total membership of over 3,000 operate in the city. (See Figure 3 on page 12.) Outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMGs), such as Gypsy Joker, are also active in the region. Street gangs typically are involved in midlevel and retail-level drug distribution. (See Table 1.)

Drug Trafficking Organizations, Criminal Groups, and Gangs

Drug trafficking organizations are complex organizations with highly defined command-and-control structures that produce, transport, and/or distribute large quantities of one or more illicit drugs.

Criminal groups operating in the United States are numerous and range from small to moderately sized, loosely knit groups that distribute one or more drugs at the retail level and midlevel.

Gangs are defined by the National Alliance of Gang Investigators’ Associations as groups or associations of three or more persons with a common identifying sign, symbol, or name, the members of which individually or collectively engage in criminal activity that creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation.

Table 1. Retail Distributors, by Drug, Oregon HIDTA Region, 2009

Drug	Distributors	Market
Methamphetamine	Hispanic street gangs, Caucasian local independent dealers	All markets
Crack cocaine	African American street gangs, independent dealers	All markets
Marijuana	Hispanic street gangs, Asian criminal groups, African American street gangs, Caucasian local independent dealers	All markets
Heroin	Hispanic street gangs, local independent dealers, Caucasian local independent dealers	Portland, Salem
MDMA	Asian criminal groups, local independent dealers	All markets

Production

Methamphetamine production in the Oregon HIDTA region has declined steadily over the past several years as a result of sustained law enforcement interdiction efforts, enhanced precursor chemical controls, increased public awareness campaigns, and the rising availability of Mexican ice methamphetamine. However, local production persists; some laboratory operators—usually Caucasian independent producers—continue to operate small-capacity methamphetamine laboratories in rural areas, producing ounce quantities of the drug. These producers typically use anhydrous ammonia (a common crop fertilizer) to produce methamphetamine; the chemical is widely available throughout the region, as it is commonly used for legitimate agricultural purposes. National Seizure System (NSS) data reveal that although laboratory seizures in the region have decreased significantly, HIDTA counties accounted for more than half of overall state totals, and more than one-third of the laboratories seized statewide were located in Umatilla County in 2008. (See Table 2.) In a study conducted by Oregon State University from 1998 through 2007 using multiple sources of data to identify counties in Oregon with high numbers of methamphetamine-related problems per capita,⁹ researchers found that methamphetamine laboratories or dumpsites were 11.5 times more likely to be located in Umatilla County than in any other part of the state. Methamphetamine-related spills, leaks, or other hazardous substance releases were 8.3 times more likely to be located in Umatilla County than in any other part of the state.

9. Daniel Sudakin and Laura E. Power, "Regional and temporal variation in methamphetamine-related incidents: applications of spatial and temporal scan statistics," *Clinical Toxicology*. The study gathered countywide data on 2,570 methamphetamine-related incidents documented by the Oregon Poison Control Center, the Oregon Narcotics Enforcement Association, the Oregon State Police Medical Examiner Division, and the Oregon Public Health Division Hazardous Substances Emergency Events Surveillance System. The statistics ran from 1998 through 2007, although each group of data did not span this entire period.

Table 2. Methamphetamine Laboratory Seizures, by Oregon HIDTA County and the State of Oregon, 2005–2008

County	2005	2006	2007	2008
Clackamas	10	1	1	0
Deschutes	0	0	0	0
Douglas	9	1	0	1
Jackson	5	3	0	1
Marion	9	1	0	0
Multnomah	24	6	1	0
Umatilla	27	3	4	5
Washington	7	3	0	1
HIDTA Total	91	18	6	8
State Total	136	39	14	14

Source: National Seizure System, run date February 9, 2009.

The eradication of outdoor cannabis statewide and in the Oregon HIDTA region in 2008 yielded fewer plants than in previous years. (See Table 3 on page 7.) Outdoor cannabis plant seizures declined 69 percent in Oregon in 2008 (76,896 plants) compared with 2007 (245,559). Likewise, outdoor cannabis plant seizures in the Oregon HIDTA counties decreased 90 percent in 2008. Law enforcement authorities eradicated 11,038 cannabis plants from outdoor grows in 2008 compared with 109,151 cannabis plants in 2007. Data from the Oregon Department of Justice indicate that the counties with the highest outdoor eradication levels were Jefferson, Douglas, Morrow, Hood River, and Yamhill,¹⁰ accounting for 70 percent of all outdoor cannabis plants eradicated in Oregon in 2008. (See Figure 2 on page 8.)

The Oregon HIDTA reports that numerous factors contributed to decreased cannabis eradication from 2007 through 2008, including cultivators' use of smaller, multiple grow sites to limit detection, budget cuts that have limited

10. Jefferson, Morrow, Hood River, and Yamhill Counties are not located in the Oregon HIDTA region. In 2008, 20,865 cannabis plants were eradicated in Jefferson County from outdoor grows, 9,226 plants were eradicated in Morrow County, 7,098 in Hood River County, and 6,662 in Yamhill County.

law enforcement resources, and inclement weather conditions. For instance, the Oregon HIDTA reports that in past years, cannabis tenders lived adjacent to or just within the grow site; however, campsites were found farther away from grow sites in 2008 than they had been in the past, making detection of cannabis grow sites based on proximity of campsites less likely. In addition, grow sites were located in more isolated areas. Law enforcement officers have difficulty locating cannabis grows in remote locations because of the limited number of airborne reconnaissance operations conducted in Oregon. Furthermore, cultivators planted cannabis later in 2008 than usual because of late season snows in April and May.

Some Mexican DTOs operating in Washington County are planting cannabis seeds that mature more quickly, enabling growers to plant and harvest marijuana crops every 90 days. (By comparison, it takes 5 to 6 months for ordinary cannabis plants to grow outdoors.) The Oregon HIDTA reports that the switch to faster-growing seeds is an attempt by cultivators to gain additional harvests each year and thus increase their profits.

Table 3. Cannabis Plants Eradicated From Outdoor Grow Sites, by Oregon HIDTA County and the State of Oregon, 2005–2008

County	2005	2006	2007	2008
Clackamas	82	178	494	2
Deschutes	21	0	0	0
Douglas	3,885	4,670	18,877	9,885
Jackson	25,096	43,656	54,362	293
Marion	98	97	2,983	65
Multnomah	0	444	251	189
Umatilla	7	5,938	29,047	1
Washington	102	241	3,137	603
HIDTA Total	29,291	55,224	109,151	11,038
State Total	40,015	147,694	245,559	76,896

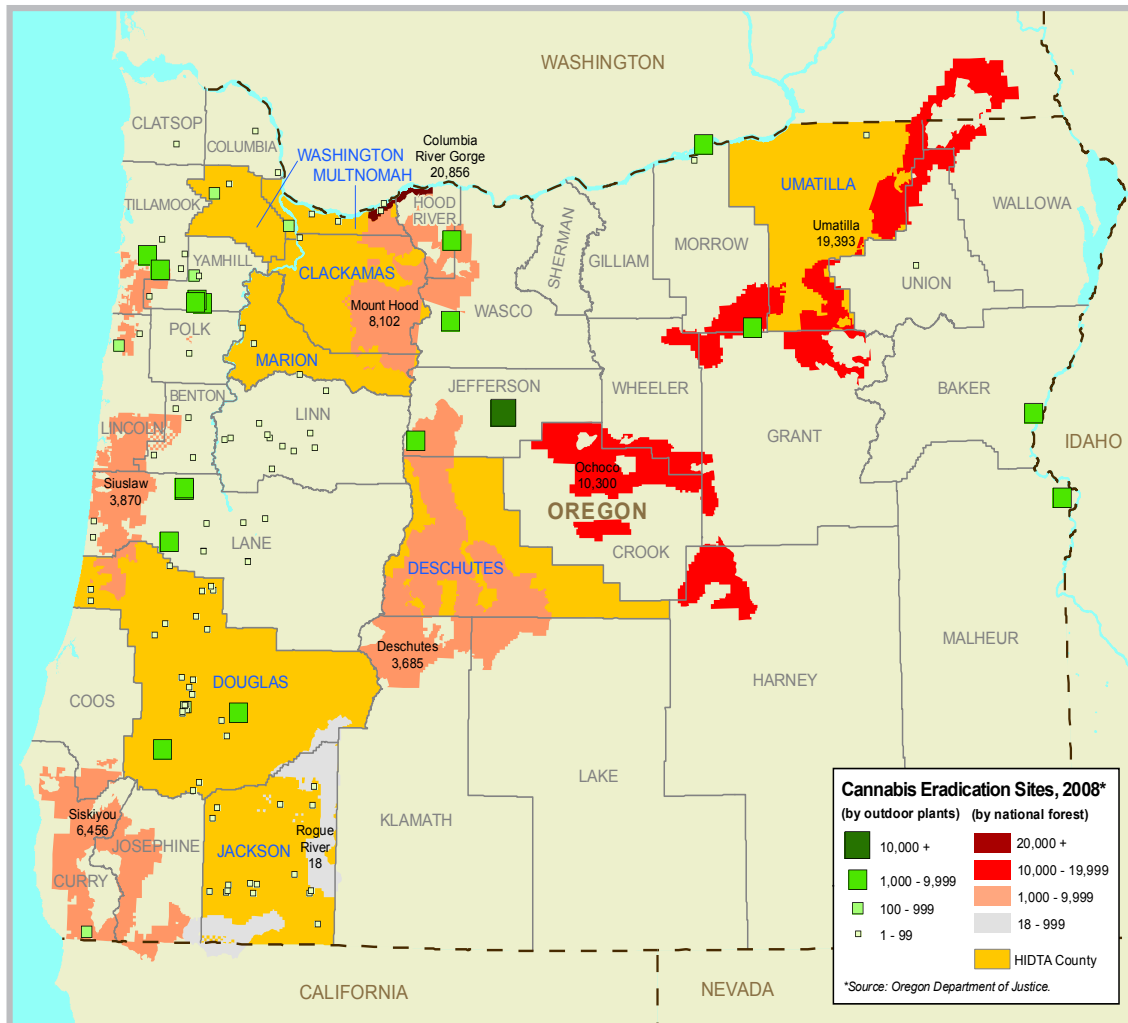
Source: Oregon High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, run date January 23, 2009.

Outdoor cannabis cultivation is prominent in remote, rural locations, especially on timber company lands, according to the Oregon HIDTA. These outdoor grow sites are usually controlled by Mexican DTOs and local independent criminal groups. Additionally, some Mexican DTOs plant cannabis on tribal lands, such as the Umatilla Indian Reservation in Umatilla County, sometimes working with Native Americans.

Cannabis grow sites in the Roseburg area are typically located on timber company lands, while cannabis grow sites in Jackson County are typically located on Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service lands. Grow site operators in these remote locations often contaminate and alter watersheds; divert natural water courses; eliminate native vegetation; poach protected wildlife; create wildfire hazards; and discard garbage, nonbiodegradable materials, and human waste. Moreover, the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) reports that while preparing land for cannabis cultivation, growers commonly clear the forest understory; this kind of clearing allows nonnative plants to supplant native ones, adversely affecting the ecosystem. They also terrace the land, especially in mountainous areas; this terracing often results in rapid erosion. The cost of restoring land damaged by such outdoor cultivation is significant; the National Park Service estimates that for every acre of forest planted with cannabis, 10 acres are damaged. Further, the cost to repair and restore an outdoor cultivation site is approximately \$11,000 per acre.

The number of cannabis plants eradicated from indoor grow sites has also decreased statewide and in the Oregon HIDTA region. Indoor cannabis plant eradication in Oregon decreased 46 percent in 2008 (8,805 plants) compared with 2007 (16,454 plants). Indoor cannabis eradication in HIDTA counties decreased 55 percent during the same period (5,499 cannabis plants were eradicated in 2008, compared with 12,239 plants

Figure 2. Outdoor Cannabis Eradication in Oregon, 2008



in 2007). However, the number of eradicated plants remains above 2006 levels both state-wide and in the HIDTA region. (See Table 4 on page 9.) Indoor cannabis eradication levels were highest in Multnomah, Deschutes, Douglas, and Clackamas Counties, accounting for approximately 56 percent (4,943 of 8,805 plants) of all indoor cannabis plants eradicated in Oregon in 2008. (See Table 4 on page 9.)

Since 2004, Asian (particularly Vietnamese) DTOs and criminal groups that typically operated smaller indoor grow sites have increasingly been establishing larger indoor cannabis cultivation operations to produce high-potency marijuana in

Portland. Indoor cannabis cultivators typically establish grow sites in multiple residences, often using hydroponic technology. Indoor growers prefer this controlled environment because they believe they can avoid law enforcement detection while achieving higher profits through year-round cultivation, which allows a new crop of higher-potency marijuana to be planted and harvested every 90 days. These operations sometimes bypass electric meters to eliminate high energy-use readings, large electric bills, and subsequent possible law enforcement scrutiny. Caucasian criminal groups and independent dealers typically operate smaller indoor grows than those operated by Vietnamese groups.

Table 4. Cannabis Plants Eradicated From Indoor Grow Sites, by Oregon HIDTA County and the State of Oregon, 2005–2008

County	2005	2006	2007	2008
Clackamas	322	23	1,013	689
Deschutes	662	95	1,155	943
Douglas	452	530	457	696
Jackson	1,453	204	120	227
Marion	424	444	268	303
Multnomah	2,135	1,858	8,527	2,615
Umatilla	2	29	17	21
Washington	3	131	682	5
HIDTA Total	5,453	3,314	12,239	5,499
State Total	7,590	6,679	16,454	8,805

Source: Oregon High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, run date January 23, 2009.

Indoor cannabis grow sites pose considerable safety and health concerns for law enforcement officers, first responders, and unwitting citizens. According to law enforcement officials, buildings used for indoor grow sites are 40 times more likely to catch fire than buildings not used as grow sites. This is due to the highly flammable chemicals, fertilizers, high-intensity lighting, electrical equipment, and reconfigured electrical systems often present in structures used as grow sites. High levels of carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide may also be present at indoor grow sites because of damaged exhaust systems. Moreover, the prolonged high humidity at indoor grow sites can ruin the buildings that contain them because of the growth of toxic molds. Cleanup of indoor grow operations can often be cost-prohibitive for small law enforcement departments. The cleanup requires specialized equipment such as basic air monitoring equipment, respirators, protective coveralls with attached hoods, and ultraviolet protection with the use of sunglasses, rubber gloves, and disposable boot covers.

Some illegal cannabis cultivators use the OMMP as a pretext for conducting indoor grow operations in which high-potency marijuana is produced as a remedy for specific medical conditions. Some of these individuals, who are able to obtain a medical marijuana registry identification card, are operating beyond the limits established by OMMP, which tends to complicate law enforcement investigations of indoor grow sites. According to law enforcement officials, the OMMP allows individuals with specific medical conditions to possess up to six mature cannabis plants and 24 ounces of usable marijuana.¹¹ Many of these cultivators grow cannabis in numbers that far exceed the legal state limit. Furthermore, under OMMP the designated caregiver status allows cultivators to grow enough cannabis for multiple patients simultaneously—a status that results in cannabis grows that exceed the individual growing limits.

Crack cocaine conversion is a significant concern, especially in the urban areas of the Oregon HIDTA region, where the drug is associated with high levels of abuse, violence, and property crime. Retail-level crack cocaine distributors, primarily African Americans, convert powder cocaine to crack for distribution, typically in neighborhoods where the drug is sold.

Transportation

Mexican DTOs are the primary transporters of illicit drugs to the Portland area. Powder cocaine, marijuana, ice methamphetamine, and heroin are transported to the area from Mexico and California along the I-5 corridor. In addition, Asian DTOs transport high-potency marijuana and MDMA from Canada to and through

11. For the purpose of the Oregon Medical Marijuana Plan (OMMP), mature cannabis plants are defined as “12 inches or more wide, or 12 inches or more tall, or flowering.” Immature plants are defined as “less than 12 inches wide, or less than 12 inches tall, or not flowering.” Usable marijuana is defined as “dried leaves or buds” and does not include the root ball, stems, or branches.

Portland using Canadian Highway 99 and then I-5. Portland has direct north-to-south access (to Canada and Mexico, respectively) via I-5 and west-to-east access via I-84. These organizations typically transport the drugs in private vehicles or tractor-trailers. Various illicit drugs are smuggled through the Portland International Airport, the Port of Portland, and numerous small ports and docks along the Columbia and Willamette Rivers, but on a much smaller scale.

Mexican DTOs control most drug transportation to and from Salem. These DTOs transport heroin, ice methamphetamine, marijuana, and powder cocaine to the city from source areas in Mexico and California along I-5. Salem is a transshipment and regional distribution point for heroin and ice methamphetamine. Methamphetamine is transported through Salem to other market areas throughout the Oregon HIDTA region, and owing to high demand for the drug, it typically is not warehoused but distributed as soon as it reaches the city. In the last few years, large quantities of heroin have been warehoused in the Salem area prior to being transported to and distributed in Portland, Eugene, and Seattle, Washington. Powder cocaine is transported through Salem destined for the Portland market.

Oregon State Police Seize 143 Pounds of MDMA on I-5

On November 11, 2008, the largest known MDMA seizure in Oregon took place as the result of a traffic stop on I-5 south of Wilsonville (Clackamas County). Oregon State Police stopped a 1996 Ford Thunderbird with Washington plates for a traffic violation. A search of the vehicle, using a drug-detection canine, led to the discovery of an estimated 250,000 MDMA tablets concealed in the vehicle's interior; the tablets had an estimated value of \$2 million.

Source: Washington State Patrol.

Drugs are transported to Roseburg and Medford on I-5 from Mexico through California and to Pendleton on I-84. Vietnamese DTOs transport high-potency Canadian marijuana and MDMA into these areas. Drug distributors in Pendleton, who have Canadian sources of supply, obtain their drugs from transporters en route to Boise, Idaho, on I-84 or from midlevel distributors in the Tri-Cities area (Richland, Pasco, and Kennewick) of Washington.

Mexican DTOs also transport drugs through the Oregon HIDTA region for delivery in Washington and Canada. From January 2008 through February 2009, the Oregon State Police (OSP) made five major cocaine seizures totaling more than 97 kilograms with an estimated value of \$2,915,000 from vehicles traveling north along I-5. The most recent seizure took place on February 20, 2009, when OSP seized 14 kilograms of cocaine from a Washington-registered sport-utility vehicle (SUV) on I-5 south of Canyonville. The cocaine had an estimated value of \$450,000.

Some DTOs and criminal groups operating in the HIDTA region also use maritime and air cargo to transport illicit drugs to the region, according to law enforcement reporting. However, the extent to which such conveyances are used by traffickers is relatively unknown because of the inherent difficulty that law enforcement officials experience in inspecting the large volume of maritime and air cargo that passes through seaports and airports in Oregon. For instance, the Port of Portland alone handled approximately 14,415,537 short tons of cargo and approximately 245,459 containers¹² during 2008, while roughly 234,668 short tons of freight passed through the Portland International Airport; more than 14 million passengers also transited the airport in 2008.

12. Containers are measured in twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs), which are often used to describe the capacity of container ships and container terminals. Capacity is based on the volume of a 20-foot-long shipping container, a standard-size metal box that can be easily transferred between different modes of transportation, such as ships, trains, and trucks.

Distribution

Mexican DTOs and criminal groups dominate wholesale drug distribution in the Oregon HIDTA region. They supply wholesale quantities of powder cocaine, commercial-grade Mexican marijuana, Mexican black tar heroin, and ice methamphetamine to various distributors, such as other Mexican criminal groups, independent dealers, and street gangs, for midlevel and retail-level distribution.

Asian traffickers, primarily Vietnamese DTOs and criminal groups, are the primary wholesale distributors of Canadian high-potency marijuana and MDMA in the region. These traffickers supply drugs to local Asian criminal groups and street gangs for retail distribution, primarily within the Portland area. Canada-based Vietnamese DTOs and criminal groups also use the region as a key transshipment center for large quantities of Canadian marijuana and MDMA destined for drug markets throughout the United States.

Drug traffickers often employ advanced communication technology and techniques to coordinate their illicit drug trafficking activities in the Oregon HIDTA region. Law enforcement reporting indicates that several Mexican DTOs use Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), satellite technology (broadband satellite instant messaging), encrypted messaging, cell phone technology, two-way radios, scanner devices, and text messaging to communicate with DTO members. In some cases they use high-frequency radios with encryption and rolling codes to communicate during operations.

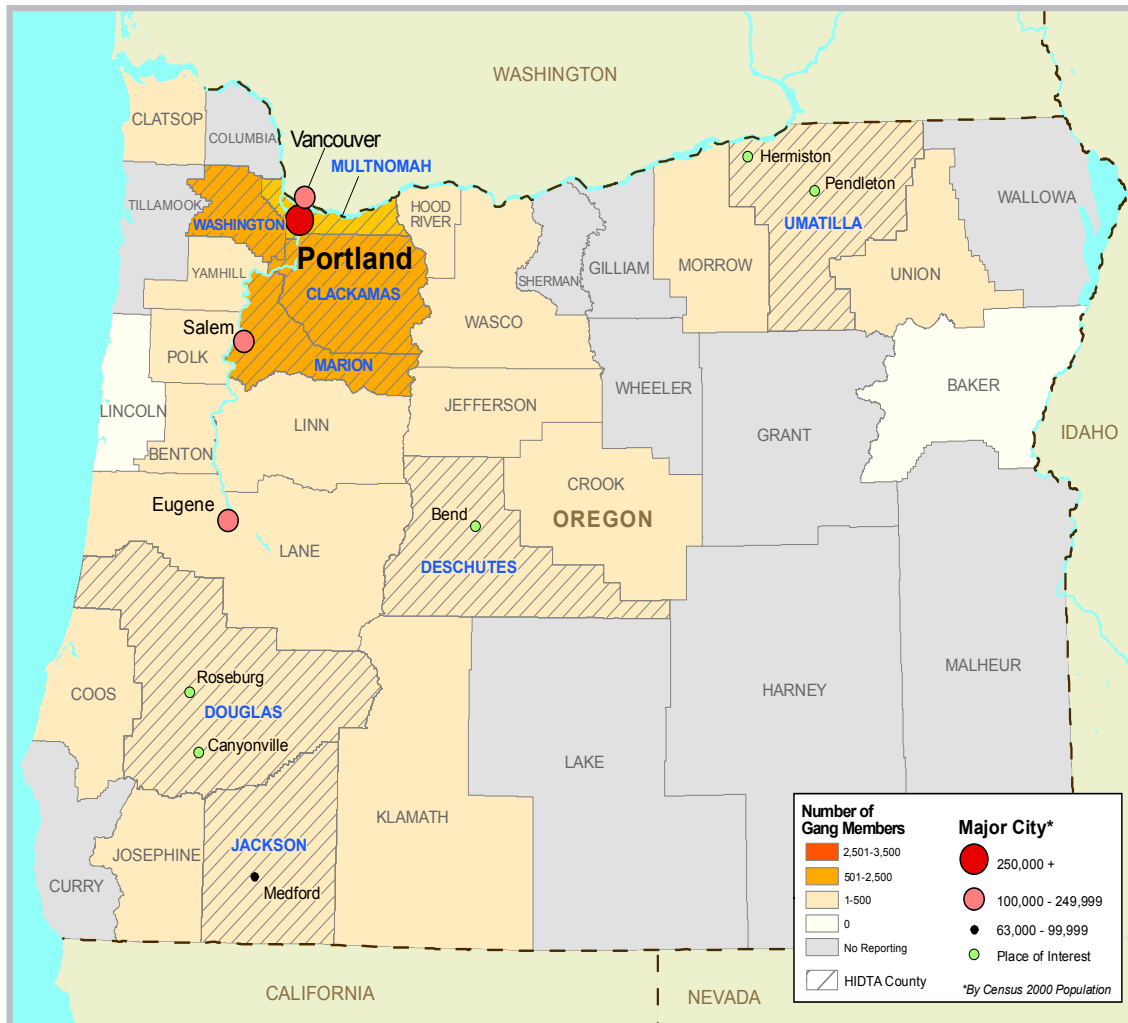
Retail-level distributors use cell phones to facilitate drug distribution and pagers to negotiate transactions and prearrange meetings with customers in the HIDTA region. Traffickers prefer to conduct business conversations on phones with point-to-point capabilities, believing that these communications are difficult for law enforcement to intercept. Distributors also use text messaging to communicate and arrange meetings. They typically

use a cell phone for a limited time before switching to a different phone with a new number to further reduce the possibility of having calls monitored.

Street gangs dominate retail-level drug distribution throughout the Oregon HIDTA region and have a large presence in Portland. (See Figure 3 on page 12.) African American gangs such as Rolling 60s and Rolling 90s, Hispanic street gangs such as Sureños 13 gang sets,¹³ and Asian street gangs such as Asian Boyz Crips control much of the retail-level drug distribution that takes place in Portland. Most drugs are distributed at open-air drug markets in the city, although some distribution is arranged by cell phone. Primary open-air markets in the city include the Transit Mall, Old Town, and various areas near the MAX Light Rail Line. Methamphetamine, heroin, powder cocaine, and marijuana are available at each of these locations; however, crack cocaine availability is generally limited to the Old Town area in the city of Portland. In the Salem area, retail drug distribution occurs in a variety of locations, including private residences, bars, and parking lots. For example, in February 2008, the Salem Police Department arrested five individuals after observing a drug deal in a North Salem parking lot in which a juvenile male delivered methamphetamine to two buyers. Law enforcement officers seized 23 grams of methamphetamine valued at \$1,200 and a scale coated with methamphetamine residue. Further investigation at the juvenile's residence revealed 26 ounces of methamphetamine valued at \$39,000, 4.5 ounces of cocaine valued at \$6,600, and 1 ounce of heroin valued at \$2,000. In the Pendleton area of Umatilla County, Hispanic street gangs such as Florencia 13, South Side Angelitos, Tiny Winos, and North Side Hustlaz engage in retail drug distribution. Caucasian criminal groups and OMGs also distribute marijuana at the midlevel and retail level throughout the HIDTA region.

13. Sureños gang sets active in the Portland area include Blue Devils, Brown Crowd Raza, Compton Varrio La Cinco 155, Compton Varrio Segundo, East Side Locos, Family Kings, Vatos Locos, West Side Thug Family, and Pine Street Click.

Figure 3. Number of Gang Members in Oregon, by County, 2008



Source: National Drug Threat Survey 2008; interviews with federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies.

Drug-Related Crime

A large percentage of the violent crime and property crime that occurs within the region is associated with the trafficking and abuse of drugs, particularly methamphetamine. (See Table 5.) According to data from the NDTs 2009, 24 of the 26 state and local law enforcement agency respondents report that methamphetamine is the drug that most contributes to violent crime in their areas, and 23 respondents report the same for property crime. For example, the Oregon HIDTA reports that methamphetamine addicts in Portland and

Table 5. Law Enforcement Responses to the NDTs 2009, Oregon HIDTA Region*

Drug	Most Contributes to Violent Crime	Most Contributes to Property Crime
Methamphetamine	24	23
Crack cocaine	1	0
Marijuana	1	0

*Total respondents: 26.

Salem often commit thefts, such as stealing and selling copper pipes, to fund their drug habit, a situation that may worsen as the overall economic situation in the HIDTA region continues to decline.

Street gangs are also responsible for many of the violent crimes perpetrated in the HIDTA region. The Portland Metro Gang Task Force reports that street gangs that distribute drugs at the retail level, such as Rolling 60s, Hoovers, and 18th Street, are involved in most of the assaults, robberies, drive-by shootings, home invasion robberies, and homicides that occur in the Portland area. Portland has the largest gang problem in the Oregon HIDTA region.

Violence associated with cannabis cultivation is an underreported and growing problem in the region. According to the Oregon HIDTA, an increasing number of individuals at outdoor and indoor cannabis cultivation sites are armed in an effort to protect their crops from law enforcement and rival growers. Weapons recovered from outdoor grow sites include assault rifles, shotguns, pistols, and booby traps. Weapons recovered from indoor grows include shotguns and handguns. Because cannabis crop tenders are often armed, these cultivation operations represent a threat to the safety of law enforcement officers and unwitting visitors, hunters, and hikers.

Violent crime is also associated with cannabis cultivated under the OMMP in Oregon and the HIDTA region. The Westside Interagency Narcotics Team (WIN) in Washington County reports armed robberies, serious assaults, child neglect, and weapons offenses connected to OMMP grow sites. For example, with marijuana selling for approximately \$3,500 per pound in the HIDTA region, armed robberies are a growing problem at grow sites operated by OMMP-designated caregivers, who sometimes operate large indoor grows to supply multiple patients. Law enforcement officials in the HIDTA region have arrested numerous OMMP participants for possessing large amounts

of marijuana beyond their permitted limits of dried marijuana and live cannabis plants. Many of these suspects have been convicted of selling marijuana, which is not allowed under OMMP. While these crimes occur in the HIDTA region and throughout the state, the public is unlikely to know about this trend because the Oregon Medical Marijuana Act (ORS 475.300-ORS 475.346) prevents law enforcement from releasing information about OMMP participants. With the large number of individuals registered with the OMMP program throughout the state and illegal cultivators' attempts to claim protection under this law, these types of crimes often go unreported. As of January 2009, 20,842 patients and 10,424 caregivers¹⁴ held medical marijuana registry identification cards in Oregon; more than half of those patients reside in HIDTA counties.

Abuse

Drug-related treatment admissions to publicly funded facilities in the region are at relatively high levels, despite some decreases in 2008, the latest year for which such data are available. According to data from the Oregon Department of Human Services, AMH, the number of methamphetamine-related treatment admissions decreased from 7,754 admissions in 2007 to 6,958 admissions in 2008, possibly the result of methamphetamine shortages experienced in the HIDTA region in early 2008. (See Tables 6 and 7 on page 14.) By the second quarter of 2008, law enforcement officials reported that methamphetamine availability had returned to previously high levels. Multnomah County recorded the highest number of methamphetamine-related deaths in the state (27) in 2008. (See Table 8 on page 15.)

Marijuana is the most widely abused drug in the state, and the increasing potency of marijuana in the HIDTA region may account for the high number of

14. Caregivers are defined as individuals who are licensed to grow cannabis but who do not have a medical condition themselves.

Table 6. Drug-Related Treatment Admissions to Publicly Funded Facilities in the Oregon HIDTA Region, 2005–2008*

Drug	2005	2006	2007	2008
Amphetamine/methamphetamine	9,610	8,750	7,754	6,958
Marijuana/hashish	6,340	6,055	6,290	6,949
Cocaine	1,528	1,432	1,454	1,459
Heroin	6,436	5,924	5,734	5,786

Source: Oregon Department of Human Services, Addictions and Mental Health Division.

*Most treatment admissions for amphetamine/methamphetamine were for methamphetamine, and most treatment admissions for marijuana/hashish were for marijuana.

Table 7. Drug-Related Treatment Admissions to Publicly Funded Facilities by Oregon HIDTA County and the State of Oregon, 2008*

HIDTA County	Amphetamine/methamphetamine	Marijuana/hashish	Cocaine	Heroin
Clackamas	365	395	37	217
Deschutes	346	417	27	23
Douglas	297	538	5	16
Jackson	732	893	38	254
Marion	1,308	1,070	64	395
Multnomah	2,416	2,241	1,144	4,510
Umatilla	469	386	17	46
Washington	1,025	1,009	127	325
HIDTA Total	6,958	6,949	1,459	5,786
State Total	11,265	11,593	1,676	6,740

Source: Oregon Department of Human Services, Addictions and Mental Health Division.

*Most treatment admissions for amphetamine/methamphetamine were for methamphetamine, and most treatment admissions for marijuana/hashish were for marijuana.

treatment admissions. Marijuana-related admissions are second only to methamphetamine-related admissions. The number of marijuana-related treatment admissions to publicly funded facilities increased from 6,290 admissions in 2007 to 6,949 admissions in 2008, as reported by AMH. (See Table 6.)

Cocaine-related treatment admissions increased slightly, from 1,454 in 2007 to 1,459 in 2008. (See Table 6.) According to law enforcement officials, cocaine abuse in the region increased in the first quarter of 2008 as some methamphetamine abusers, faced with diminished supplies of the drug,

substituted cocaine. Multnomah County recorded the most cocaine-related deaths (42) in 2008. (See Table 8 on page 15.)

Heroin abuse is prevalent in urban areas of the HIDTA region, such as Portland. The number of heroin-related treatment admissions to publicly funded facilities increased slightly from 5,734 admissions in 2007 to 5,786 admissions in 2008. (See Table 6.) Heroin accounted for the most drug-related deaths in Oregon during 2008 (119 deaths). A majority of these deaths occurred in Multnomah County, including Portland, which recorded 71 of the 119 deaths in 2008. (See Table 8 on page 15.)

Table 8. Drug-Related Deaths in Oregon, by County and Drug, 2008

County	Heroin	Cocaine	Methamphetamine	Combination
Benton	0	0	1	0
Clackamas	3	3	5	2
Clatsop	2	1	1	1
Columbia	1	0	1	1
Coos	0	0	3	0
Crook	0	0	1	0
Curry	0	0	2	0
Deschutes	1	1	4	0
Douglas	0	0	5	0
Harney	1	0	0	0
Jackson	4	0	3	0
Jefferson	0	0	2	0
Josephine	2	0	5	0
Klamath	1	0	2	0
Lane	12	3	10	4
Lincoln	1	0	3	1
Linn	1	0	3	0
Malheur	0	0	1	0
Marion	12	0	13	3
Multnomah	71	42	27	33
Polk	0	0	1	0
Tillamook	1	0	1	0
Umatilla	0	0	4	0
Union	0	0	1	0
Washington	6	1	6	1
Yamhill	0	0	1	0
Total Deaths	119	51	106	46

Source: Oregon State Medical Examiner.

ODDs, including MDMA, LSD, psilocybin mushrooms, ketamine, and GHB, are commonly distributed and abused within the region. CPDs, particularly prescription narcotics, are also commonly abused throughout the region by a diverse user group. Law enforcement reporting from Roseburg indicates that the threat posed by

CPDs, such as OxyContin (oxycodone), Vicodin (hydrocodone), and methadone, has increased significantly. Oregon ranks fourth among all states in the rate of abuse for controlled prescription pain relievers by teenagers. Abusers and distributors acquire CPDs through a variety of means, such as doctor-shopping, drug theft, prescription fraud, and Internet purchase.

Illicit Finance

Traffickers launder and move illicit drug proceeds generated in the HIDTA region through various methods. Mexican DTOs and criminal groups generally transport cash in bulk to southwestern states, where the funds are typically aggregated and eventually smuggled to Mexico. Once in Mexico, bulk cash is often deposited into a Mexican bank or a *casa de cambio* (exchange house) and subsequently repatriated to the United States. Asian DTOs and criminal groups also use bulk cash smuggling to move their illicit proceeds from the region; they typically transport illicit proceeds to Canada in private vehicles through ports of entry (POEs) along the U.S.–Canada border.

Mexican and Asian traffickers also launder drug proceeds through money transmittal businesses located in their own ethnic communities. They own businesses such as import/export operations that function as money remitters either legally or illegally. Traffickers also launder drug proceeds through the purchase of property such as real estate, cars, electronics, and livestock.

Outlook

Ice methamphetamine trafficking and abuse will remain the primary drug threats to the Oregon HIDTA region. Demand for the drug is high, and Mexican DTOs are positioned to meet this demand after resolving precursor chemical supply problems in 2007 and early 2008. Further, high levels of ice methamphetamine abuse in the area will quite likely contribute to an increase in drug-related crime. Strict legislation placed on retail pseudoephedrine sales will continue to prompt local methamphetamine producers to increase smurfing activities or search for alternative means of obtaining sufficient precursor chemicals.

Major trafficking organizations involved in illicit cannabis grow operations will continue to expand operations by increasing the number and size of indoor grow sites to meet the rising demand for high-potency marijuana and to capitalize on the high profit margins associated with higher-potency marijuana. Cannabis grown by illegal cultivators claiming protection under the OMMP will also complicate law enforcement eradication efforts.

Treatment admissions for ODDS, primarily MDMA, may increase in the near term. Treatment admissions for ODDs may rise as the distribution of MDMA tablets adulterated with mixtures of BZP and TFMPP increases. The proximity of Oregon to sources of supply in Canada will increase the availability and abuse of these drugs.

Sources

Local, State, and Regional

Beaverton Police Department
 Blue Mountain Enforcement Narcotics Team
 Central Oregon Drug Enforcement Team
 Clackamas County Sheriff's Office
 Cornelius Police Department
 Deschutes County Sheriff's Office
 Douglas Interagency Narcotics Team
 Forest Grove Police Department
 Gresham Police Department
 Hillsboro Police Department
 Jackson County Sheriff's Office
 Narcotics
 Jefferson County Sheriff's Office
 Narcotics
 Keizer Police Department
 Lincoln Interagency Narcotics Team
 Medford City Police Department
 Milton-Freewater Police Department
 Milwaukie Police Department
 Multnomah County Sheriff's Office
 Oregon Department of Human Services
 Office of Addictions and Mental Health Division
 Oregon Department of Justice
 Criminal Justice Division
 Oregon Department of State Police
 Drug Enforcement Section
 Oregon State Medical Examiner Division
 Portland Metro Gang Task Force
 Portland Police Bureau
 Redmond Police Department
 Regional Organized Crime Narcotics Agency
 Salem Police Department
 Stayton Police Department
 Tualatin Police Department
 Washington County Sheriff's Office
 Washington State Patrol
 Westside Interagency Narcotics Team

Federal

Executive Office of the President
 Office of National Drug Control Policy
 High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area
 Oregon
 Regional Organized Crime Narcotics Task Force
 U.S. Department of Commerce
 U.S. Census Bureau
 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
 Office of Applied Studies
 Drug Abuse Warning Network
 Treatment Episode Data Set
 U.S. Department of the Interior
 National Park Service
 U.S. Department of Justice
 Drug Enforcement Administration
 U.S. Attorneys Office
 District of Oregon

Other

Canada Border Services Agency
 National Parks Conservation Association
 Oregon State University

This page intentionally left blank.

This page intentionally left blank.

This page intentionally left blank.

**Questions and comments may be directed to
Pacific/West Central Unit, Regional Threat Analysis Branch.**

National Drug Intelligence Center

319 Washington Street 5th Floor, Johnstown, PA 15901-1622 • (814) 532-4601

NDIC publications are available on the following web sites:

INTERNET www.usdoj.gov/ndic ADNET <http://ndicosa.adnet.sgov.gov> RISS ndic.riss.net
LEO <https://www.leo.gov/http://leowcs.leopriv.gov/lesig/ndic/index.htm>