

OPIOID INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
FINAL RECOMMENDATION PRESENTED TO THE
COLORADO COMMISSION ON CRIMINAL AND JUVENILE JUSTICE
July 10, 2020

**FY20-OP #01. Establish a Statewide Entity to Coordinate Strategy Regarding Dangerous Drugs
[Statutory; Budgetary]**

RECOMMENDATION FY20-OP #01

Establish a narcotics enforcement entity, the Dangerous Drugs Coordination Council (“the Council”), that facilitates and coordinates the sharing of information among law enforcement agencies across the state. The Council, to be housed in the Colorado Department of Public Safety, will provide a structure for collaboration, information sharing, and efforts to support local law enforcement agencies.

The Council:

- will coordinate strategic responses to emerging illicit drug trends, regardless of the drug type involved
- will orchestrate the implementation of an emergency medical service tracking and reporting system, the Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program (ODMAP)
- requires one full time employee (FTE) to coordinate the meetings and meet the analytical needs of the entity. The position will be housed in the Colorado Department of Public Safety where it can benefit from the work of the Colorado Information Analysis Center (CIAC)
- shall include at a minimum, representatives from the following:
 - 1 Police Chief, rural district
 - 1 Police Chief, urban district
 - 1 Sheriff, rural district
 - 1 Sheriff, urban district
 - Colorado District Attorneys’ Council
 - Colorado Attorney General’s Office
 - Colorado Coroners Association
 - Colorado Drug Investigators Association
 - Colorado Dept. of Health Care Policy & Financing
 - Colorado Dept. of Public Health & Environment
 - Colorado Dept. of Public Safety
 - Colorado Bureau of Investigation
 - Colorado Information Analysis Center
- to facilitate coordination and collaboration, shall invite important Federal partners and stakeholders that include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - U.S. Attorney’s Office
 - U.S. Homeland Security Investigations
 - U.S. Postal Inspection Service
 - U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
 - Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area
 - Federal Bureau of Investigation
 - Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

Proposed Statutory Language

No specific statute placement or language has been prepared for this statutory provision.

[Note: This “Council” would be modeled generally on the design of the Colorado Fire Commission (Website: colorado.gov/dfpc/fire-commission; See also, S.B. 2019-040)].

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DISCUSSION

The Council is necessary to coordinate statewide strategic responses to emerging illicit drug trends, regardless of the drug type involved. Drug cartels are typically poly-drug organizations; the focus on a single drug type (for example, only opioids) impedes the necessary flexibility required by law enforcement agencies to combat drug problems in Colorado. Drug trends change quickly, vary by region, and are highly likely to involve multiple drug types in combination.¹

A survey of law enforcement agencies, conducted by the Subcommittee on behalf of the Commission, found that agencies perceive a significant need for additional resources; 63% of respondents reported insufficient resources to address the drug problems in their jurisdictions. The need to focus on poly-drug operations is highlighted by the fact that, in Colorado between 2013 and 2018, the simple count of overdose deaths increased across a variety of drugs: 230% increase due to methamphetamine, 94% increase due to heroin, and 133% increase due to cocaine.² Additionally, methamphetamine seizures by law enforcement increased 156% between 2013 and 2018.³

In order to expand assistance to law enforcement agencies, the Dangerous Drugs Coordination Council (“Council”) will meet quarterly to share data and case intelligence that promotes proactive and collaborative responses to dangerous drug issues. Enhanced information sharing and collaboration is necessary as it increases the capacity of law enforcement agencies for strategic planning, situational awareness, and safety.

An invaluable tool to assist with this collaborative effort is the Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program (ODMAP; odmap.org). ODMAP is managed by the Washington/Baltimore High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) organization and is free to government agencies. ODMAP has been developed to provide real time information about fatal and non-fatal drug overdoses with the purpose of assisting drug investigations. ODMAP serves to bridge a data gap in overdose reporting that hampers timely responses by law enforcement and public health professionals. While ODMAP is free, its implementation will need the organization and guidance that the Council can provide.

¹ Drug Overdose Dashboard (Opioid Overdose Prevention Program, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment). (See, colorado.gov/cdphe/opioid-prevention; “Drug Overdose Dashboard”; accessed 03/2020.)

² See Footnote 1.

³ *Exploring the Increase in District Court Filings in Colorado, 2013-2018* (October 2019). Office of Research and Statistics, Colorado Division of Criminal Justice. (See, colorado.gov/dcj-ors/ors-reports; accessed 3/2020.)