



U.S. Department of Justice
National Drug Intelligence Center



Central Florida High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area



Drug Market Analysis 2011

Source Summary Statement

The National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) has high confidence in this drug market analysis as it is based on multiple sources of information that have proved highly reliable in prior NDIC, law enforcement, and intelligence community reporting. Quantitative data, including seizure, eradication, and arrest statistics, were drawn from data sets maintained by federal, state, or local government agencies. Discussions of the prevalence and consequences of drug abuse are based on published reports from U.S. Government agencies and interviews with public health officials deemed reliable because of their expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of drug abuse. Trends and patterns related to drug production, trafficking, and abuse were identified through detailed analysis of coordinated counterdrug agency reporting and information. NDIC intelligence analysts and field intelligence officers obtained this information through numerous interviews with law enforcement and public health officials (federal, state, and local) in whom NDIC has a high level of confidence based on previous contact and reporting, their recognized expertise, and their professional standing and reputation within the U.S. counterdrug community. This report was reviewed and corroborated by law enforcement officials who have jurisdiction in the Central Florida High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area and possess an expert knowledge of its drug situation.



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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.

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Executive Summary

The overall drug threat to the Central Florida High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) region changed significantly in 2010—controlled prescription drugs (CPDs) emerged as the greatest drug threat, surpassing cocaine. This shift, reported consistently by law enforcement officials throughout the HIDTA region during numerous interviews in early 2011, is also reflected in National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) National Drug Threat Survey (NDTS) 2011 data.^{a, 1} The growing threat posed by CPDs is compounded by the ease with which abusers can acquire these drugs and the far-reaching negative societal effects associated with them. Cocaine remains a significant law enforcement concern despite lower levels of abuse.

Key issues identified in the Central Florida HIDTA region include the following:

- CPD trafficking and abuse, particularly of opioid pain relievers, have emerged as the greatest drug threat to the Central Florida HIDTA region.²
- CPD distributors and abusers are acquiring prescription drugs with relative ease through numerous rogue pain management clinics (commonly referred to as pill mills) operating in Central Florida. This contributes to widespread availability of these drugs throughout the region and in much of the eastern United States.³
- Despite declining levels of abuse in some areas, cocaine remains a significant concern to the Central Florida HIDTA region—cocaine availability has remained relatively stable throughout most of the region since 2009.
- Marijuana is widely available in the Central Florida HIDTA region, fueled by indoor cannabis cultivation operations run by drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) that are increasingly employing strategies to make detection of grow operations more difficult for law enforcement.
- Mexican DTOs have solidified their standing in the Central Florida HIDTA region as the primary wholesale suppliers of most cocaine, Mexican ice methamphetamine, and Mexican marijuana available in the region.

a. The NDTS is conducted annually by NDIC to solicit information from a representative sample of state and local law enforcement agencies. NDIC uses this information to produce national, regional, and state estimates of various aspects of drug trafficking activities. NDTS data reflect agencies' perceptions based on their analysis of criminal activities that occurred within their jurisdictions during the past year. NDTS 2011 data cited in this report are raw, unweighted responses from federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies solicited through either NDIC or the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) HIDTA program as of February 25, 2011.

Key Issues^b

CPD trafficking and abuse, particularly of opioid pain relievers, have emerged as the greatest drug threat to the Central Florida HIDTA region.⁴

Widespread CPD trafficking and abuse in the region have become so pervasive that many law enforcement officials now identify CPDs as the greatest drug threat to the Central Florida HIDTA region, exceeding cocaine—the greatest reported drug threat for the last several years.⁵ NDTs 2011 data reveal that 16 of the 30 law enforcement agency respondents in the Central Florida HIDTA region identify CPDs as the drug that poses the greatest threat to their jurisdictions, while 11 respondents report the same for cocaine (powder and crack).⁶ Furthermore, during numerous interviews in early 2011, law enforcement officials in the region repeatedly raised concern over CPD trafficking and abuse.⁷ (See text box on page 3.) For example, the Orlando Metropolitan Bureau of Investigation (MBI) reported that the number of CPD-related investigations in Orlando increased from 10 percent of all drug-related investigations in 2009 to 70 percent in 2011.⁸

The negative societal effects of CPD trafficking and abuse in the region are evident from survey data, drug mortality information, and treatment data.⁹ NDTs 2011 data reveal that 12 of the 30 law enforcement respondents in the Central Florida HIDTA region identify CPDs as the drug that most contributes to property crime in their jurisdictions.¹⁰ To illustrate, the Volusia County Sheriff's Department reports that robberies of pharmacies, pharmaceutical company vehicles, and pharmacy delivery couriers, along with home invasions for the purpose of CPD theft, have become common in Daytona Beach; however, the exact number of these events was not available for inclusion in this report.¹¹ CPDs are the leading cause of drug-related overdose deaths in Central Florida.¹² Florida medical examiner data indicate that the number of deaths in Central Florida associated with prescription benzodiazepines and opioids, used alone or with other drugs, increased from 2008 (2,985 deaths) through 2009 (3,041 deaths). These drugs were present or found to be a causal factor in deaths more often than cocaine (522 deaths) or heroin (43 deaths) in 2009 (the latest full year for which such data are available).¹³ (See Table 1 on page 3.) Moreover, the number of treatment admissions to publicly funded facilities in Florida for “other opiates” increased dramatically from 2008 (8,696) through 2009 (12,348) and accounted for more admissions than any other illicit drug except marijuana in 2009 (the most recent data available), according to Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS) data.^{c, 14} (See Table B1 in Appendix B.) The most commonly diverted and abused CPDs include opioid pain relievers such as Darvon (propoxyphene), hydrocodone combinations (Vicodin, Lortab, and Lorcet), methadone, morphine (MS Contin), oxycodone (OxyContin), and benzodiazepines such as diazepam (Valium) and alprazolam (Xanax).¹⁵

b. For a general overview of the drug threat in the Central Florida HIDTA region, see Appendix A.

c. TEDs data report that the “other opiates” category includes admissions for nonprescription use of methadone, codeine, morphine, oxycodone, hydromorphone, meperidine, opium, and other drugs with morphine-like effects.

Table 1. Drug Mentions in Deceased Persons in the Central Florida HIDTA Region,* 2005–2009

Drug	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Prescription Benzodiazepines and Opioids	1,202	1,464	1,887	2,985	3,041
Cocaine	676	710	838	664	522
Heroin	80	25	49	30	43

Source: Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

*Includes District 6 (Pasco and Pinellas Counties), District 7 (Volusia County), District 9 (Orange and Osceola Counties), District 10 (Hardee, Highlands, and Polk Counties), District 13 (Hillsborough County), District 18 (Brevard County), and District 24 (Seminole County).

Operation Pain Killer II Targets Central Florida Prescription Drug Traffickers

On March 7, 2011, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) announced the arrest of 76 individuals and the seizure of more than 28,000 dosage units of prescription medication, such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, and alprazolam, in Operation Pain Killer II, a 2-month multiagency investigation targeting Central Florida prescription drug traffickers. The FDLE reported that the initiative was a cooperative effort by Central Florida law enforcement agencies, including the Central Florida HIDTA, to combat the epidemic of prescription narcotic abuse and the danger it poses to citizens throughout Florida.

The investigation focused on retail-level distributors in Orange, Lake, Seminole, and Osceola Counties who sold prescription medications (such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, and alprazolam) that they obtained illegally by visiting pain management clinics throughout Florida. However, two Orange County pain management clinics were closed by the Florida Department of Health during the investigation because of license violations.¹⁶ The majority of the individuals were charged with trafficking Schedule II drugs.* During the investigation, law enforcement officials seized large quantities of oxycodone, hydrocodone, and alprazolam.¹⁷

Source: Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

*Schedule II drugs include several prescription drugs, such as Duragesic (fentanyl), methadone, morphine, OxyContin (oxycodone), and Percocet (oxycodone in combination with acetaminophen). Schedule III drugs include several prescription drugs such as Vicodin (hydrocodone in combination with acetaminophen). Schedule IV drugs include several prescription drugs such as Ambien (zolpidem), Ativan (lorazepam), Darvon (propoxyphene), Valium (diazepam), and Xanax (alprazolam).

CPD distributors and abusers are acquiring prescription drugs with relative ease through numerous rogue pain management clinics (commonly referred to as pill mills) operating in Central Florida. This contributes to widespread availability of these drugs throughout the region and much of the eastern United States.¹⁸

Rogue pain management clinics (pill mills) located in the Central Florida HIDTA region are a significant source for CPDs available to abusers in the eastern United States.¹⁹ Central Florida HIDTA investigations indicate that pill mill operations exhibit several unique characteristics, such as nearly exclusive associations with specific pharmacies and physicians, cash-based payment methods, and rapid, casual examinations.²⁰ Owners of pill mills have established many cash-only operations in Central Florida from which distributors and abusers within the region and from other areas of the eastern United States frequently obtain CPDs.²¹ Distributors and

abusers frequently travel to Central Florida, particularly Tampa, from states such as Kentucky and West Virginia, where Controlled Substance Monitoring Programs (CSMPs) have made acquiring CPDs more difficult.²² In fact, the Orlando MBI reports that CPD-related highway interdiction referrals often involve vehicles from the Appalachia HIDTA region.²³ Moreover, many of the out-of-state distributors and abusers work in teams, traveling along the coastal perimeter of Florida for pill mill appointments scheduled solely to divert CPDs.²⁴ These individuals or teams frequently follow a route that traverses the eastern, southern, and western regions of Florida before returning north.²⁵

State and local officials in Florida have attempted to control CPD diversion from pill mills in the state; however, these drugs remain available at high levels in the region.^{4, 26} NDTs 2011 data reveal that all 30 law enforcement agency respondents to the NDTs in the Central Florida HIDTA region report that CPDs are available at moderate or high levels in their jurisdictions.²⁷ These data are supported by recent law enforcement interviews that describe widespread CPD availability throughout the region.²⁸

Pill mill operators continually devise methods to subvert regulations and investigations while attracting patients.²⁹ For example, some pill mills have begun to establish onsite or nearby pharmacies in an attempt to allow patients to circumvent prescription quantity restrictions.³⁰ Some pill mill operators also attempt to counter law enforcement surveillance of repeat patients through vehicle license plate surveillance.³¹ For example, some clinics offer free shuttle service and advise patients to meet at pick-up locations, such as local hotels, for further transportation to the clinic. At the pick-up locations, the patients are met by individuals driving large passenger vehicles or even rental cargo trucks and are subsequently driven to the clinic. Additionally, some pill mills in the Tampa area offer patients free visits for referring new patients to the clinic.³²

Despite declining levels of abuse in some areas, cocaine remains a significant concern to the Central Florida HIDTA region—cocaine availability has remained relatively stable throughout most of the region since 2009.

Cocaine remains a significant concern in the region despite indicators that suggest declining abuse in some parts of Florida. To illustrate, the total number of cocaine-related treatment admissions to publicly funded facilities in Florida decreased from 2008 (14,917) through 2009 (11,384), according to TEDS data.³³ (See Table B1 in Appendix B.) In addition, Florida medical examiner data indicate that the number of deaths in the Central Florida HIDTA region associated with cocaine, used alone or with other drugs, decreased 21 percent from 2008 (664) through 2009 (522)—the latest full year for which data are available.³⁴ (See Table 1 on page 3.) Nonetheless, NDTs 2011 data reveal that 11 of the 30 law enforcement respondents in the Central Florida HIDTA region report that cocaine (powder and crack) is the greatest drug threat in their jurisdictions.³⁵ Moreover, cocaine is associated with violent and property crime in the region. Twenty-two of the 30 law enforcement agency respondents in the region identify cocaine as the

d. Florida House Bill 2272, enacted on October 1, 2010, banned people convicted of drug felonies from owning clinics and prohibited pain clinic physicians from dispensing more than 72 hours' worth of prescription pain medication to patients who pay for the medicine by cash, check, or credit card. The law also requires specialized training for pain clinic doctors, forces the previously unregulated medical offices to submit to annual inspections, and authorizes the health department to fine clinics for violating standards.

drug that most contributes to violent crime in their jurisdictions, while 14 report the same for property crime.³⁶

Cocaine availability is relatively stable throughout the region, with occasional fluctuations in some areas. Central Florida HIDTA officials report that cocaine is available in sufficient quantities to meet market demand and that availability has remained relatively stable since 2009.³⁷ Even so, the Tampa Police Department reports that cocaine availability often fluctuates in its jurisdiction as a result of international and domestic interdiction efforts. Such interdiction efforts have also resulted in higher cocaine prices.³⁸ For example, wholesale-level cocaine prices in Tampa have increased steadily from 2009 (\$24,000 to \$27,000 per kg) into early 2011 (\$30,000 to \$36,000 per kg).³⁹ Ounce prices for cocaine in Tampa also increased from 2009 (\$550 to \$900) into early 2011 (\$800 to \$1,200).⁴⁰ Retail prices in Tampa, however, remained steady at \$50 to \$100 per gram during the same period.⁴¹ Nonetheless, survey data indicate that cocaine is readily available throughout the region. For example, NDTs 2011 data reveal that 27 of the 30 law enforcement respondents in the Central Florida HIDTA region report that powder cocaine is available at moderate or high levels, and 29 of 30 report the same for crack.⁴² Moreover, cocaine is routinely seized in the region. Central Florida HIDTA initiatives seized 199 kilograms of powder and crack cocaine in 2010.⁴³ (See Table 2.) While the amount of cocaine seized by HIDTA initiatives in 2010 was less than the amount seized in 2009, law enforcement officers suggest that the lower cocaine seizure totals in 2010 were due in part to other investigative priorities—specifically, CPD investigations—and did not necessarily reflect lower cocaine availability in the region.⁴⁴

Table 2. Central Florida HIDTA Initiative Seizures, by Drug, in Kilograms, 2006–2010

Drug	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Powder and Crack Cocaine	720	463	248	256	199
Powder and Ice Methamphetamine	30	14	18	26	30
Marijuana (packaged)	3,070	3,931	9,780	10,831	6,311
Marijuana (indoor plants)*	1,205 (estimated 6,762 plants)	6,011 (estimated 8,658 plants)	4,153 (estimated 21,541 plants)	5,093 (estimated 23,856 plants)	2,415 (estimated 13,900 plants)
Heroin	10	9	5	6	6

Source: Central Florida High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, as of March 22, 2011.

*The Central Florida HIDTA considers that each seized marijuana plant weighs 0.454 kilograms.

Marijuana is widely available in the Central Florida HIDTA region, fueled by indoor cannabis cultivation operations run by DTOs that are increasingly employing strategies to make detection of grow operations more difficult for law enforcement.

Several varieties of marijuana are readily available in the HIDTA region, including commercial-grade Mexican marijuana, low-quality locally produced marijuana, and high-potency marijuana produced locally and in California.⁴⁵ In fact, 28 of the 30 agencies that responded to the NDTs 2011 report high marijuana availability, and 2 report moderate availability in their jurisdictions.⁴⁶

Although several varieties of marijuana are available, high-potency marijuana (produced locally or in California) is most popular among abusers and commands a much higher price.⁴⁷ For instance, in Tampa at midyear 2010, wholesale prices for high-potency marijuana (\$3,000 to \$4,000 per pound) were much higher than for commercial-grade marijuana (\$500 to \$1,000 per pound).⁴⁸

Cuban DTOs are the primary producers of high-potency marijuana; however, Dominican, Jamaican, and Puerto Rican DTOs also produce high-potency marijuana at indoor grow sites throughout the region.⁴⁹ During numerous interviews in early 2011, law enforcement officials in the region reported continued high levels of indoor cannabis cultivation in the region. NDTs 2011 data reveal that 26 of 30 law enforcement respondents in the Central Florida HIDTA region indicate that cannabis is grown indoors in their jurisdictions. However, the number of cannabis plants eradicated from indoor grow sites in the region decreased overall from 2009 (16,151 plants) through 2010 (10,513 plants).⁵⁰ (See Table B2 in Appendix B.) Law enforcement officials report that this decrease is most likely related to the difficulty of detecting indoor grow operations—not to a decrease in indoor cannabis cultivation in the region.⁵¹ For example, DTOs in the region employ strategies that make indoor grow operations difficult for law enforcement officers to detect. Some DTOs are establishing grow operations that encompass entire neighborhoods by renting or buying numerous homes in the same neighborhood.⁵² This makes detection difficult because there are no neighbors to report construction or strange activity at the sites, and law enforcement officers cannot execute effective surveillance of the sites without being detected by the operators.⁵³ Some DTOs have even gone so far as to have the homes professionally remodeled after grow operations are discontinued in order to avoid law enforcement scrutiny following subsequent property rental or sales.⁵⁴ Moreover, law enforcement officers report that some DTOs collaborate and share details of court proceedings in an effort to increase or maintain successful grow operations and avoid law enforcement scrutiny.⁵⁵ The Polk County Sheriff's Department reports that some DTOs review court proceedings in order to note the latest law enforcement investigative and evidence collection tactics used when indoor grow operations are targeted.⁵⁶ These organizations then communicate their observations to other DTOs.⁵⁷

Mexican DTOs have solidified their standing in the Central Florida HIDTA region as the primary wholesale suppliers of most cocaine, Mexican ice methamphetamine, and Mexican marijuana available in the region.⁵⁸

Mexican DTOs supply most of the cocaine, Mexican ice methamphetamine, and Mexican marijuana available in Central Florida.⁵⁹ They are well organized, extensively networked to other Mexican DTOs in Atlanta (GA) or along the Southwest Border, and have become entrenched in the region.⁶⁰ Consequently, Mexican DTOs pose the greatest organizational drug threat to the region. Major Mexican drug cartels, including La Familia Michoacana (LFM),⁶¹ supply independent and cartel-affiliated distribution cells in the Central Florida HIDTA region with large quantities of illicit drugs. In fact, Central Florida HIDTA officials report that members of LFM supply large quantities of ice methamphetamine to the region from Atlanta.⁶² To illustrate, the Central Florida HIDTA Methamphetamine Task Force began an investigation in January 2009 that targeted members of LFM operating in the region. LFM members used passenger vehicles to transport 100 pounds of ice methamphetamine—obtained from other LFM members in Atlanta—every month from Atlanta to Central Florida. The investigation concluded with the arrest of 10

alleged LFM members and the seizure of almost 30 pounds of ice methamphetamine, \$145,000 in U.S. currency, two passenger vehicles, and one semiautomatic .45-caliber weapon.⁶³

The strength of Mexican drug trafficking networks in Central Florida is evidenced by the ease with which they are able to adapt to law enforcement efforts intended to disrupt and dismantle their operations. Mexican DTOs have altered transportation methods and routes for drugs and bulk cash in response to recent coordinated Domestic Highway Enforcement interdiction efforts designed to curtail the flow of drugs to Central Florida.⁶⁴ Since 2009, Mexican DTOs have transitioned to transporting smaller quantities of illicit drugs, particularly cocaine (tens of kilograms instead of hundreds of kilograms), and bulk cash on interstates and highways leading into and from the Central Florida HIDTA region to reduce potential losses from law enforcement operations.⁶⁵ Mexican DTOs are also using maritime transportation methods to avoid highway interdiction efforts. For example, some Mexican DTOs transport multihundred-pound quantities of drugs aboard unmanned maritime vessels controlled by global positioning system (GPS) technology.⁶⁶ The vessels, typically personal watercraft between 24 and 36 feet in length, are operated in the Gulf of Mexico.⁶⁷ They are programmed through GPS either to travel directly from Mexico to locations near Tampa or to rendezvous with DTO members aboard larger vessels originating from Mexico that are prepositioned near Florida shorelines.⁶⁸ Law enforcement officials suspect that this method is being used in an attempt to avoid land-based interdiction operations while limiting the chances of DTO members' arrest in the event of successful maritime interdiction.⁶⁹

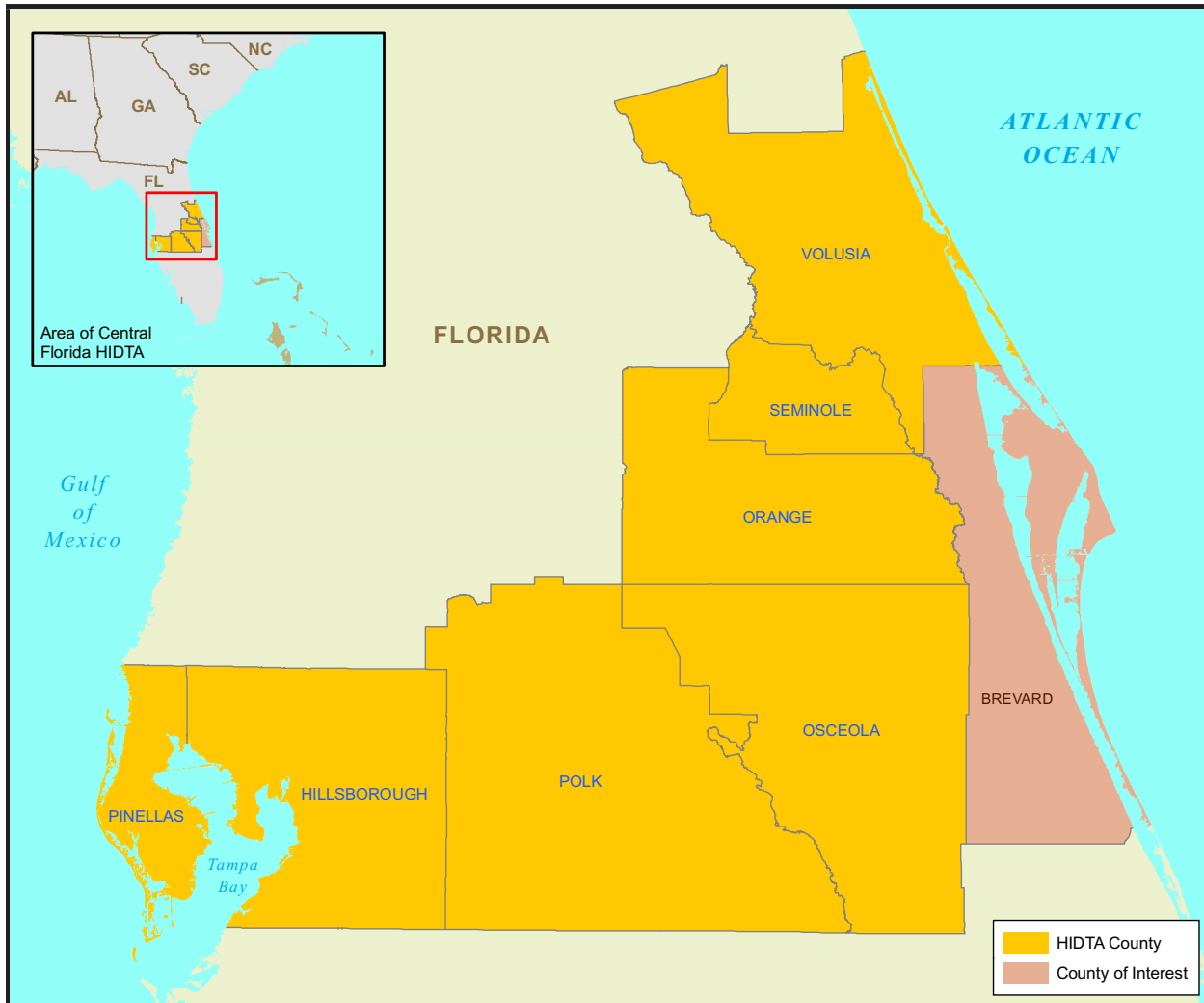
Outlook

NDIC assesses with high confidence^e that CPD diversion, trafficking, and abuse will remain the primary drug threat to the region in the near term. The Central Florida HIDTA region will be a significant source area for CPDs abused throughout the eastern United States until legislation aimed at curbing diversion, particularly through the many pill mills in the state, is successfully implemented. Mexican DTOs will increase their dominance over cocaine and Mexican ice methamphetamine and marijuana distribution in the Central Florida HIDTA region. No other trafficking group appears to have the sources of supply or organizational structure to challenge them.

e. **High Confidence** generally indicates that the judgments are based on high-quality information or that the nature of the issue makes it possible to render a solid judgment. **Medium Confidence** generally means that the information is credibly sourced and plausible but can be interpreted in various ways, or is not of sufficient quality or corroborated sufficiently to warrant a higher level of confidence. **Low Confidence** generally means that the information is too fragmented or poorly corroborated to make a solid analytic inference, or that there are significant concerns or problems with the sources.

Appendix A. Central Florida HIDTA Overview

Map A1. Central Florida High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area



The Central Florida HIDTA region encompasses Hillsborough, Orange, Osceola, Pinellas, Polk, Seminole, and Volusia Counties.⁷⁰ (See Map A1.) HIDTA officials report that Brevard County is directly impacted by the Central Florida HIDTA region and, therefore, have requested that related data be included in this report. Daytona Beach, Orlando, and Tampa/St. Petersburg are the primary drug markets in the Central Florida HIDTA region. In fact, Orlando MBI officers report that Orlando has become a common transshipment area for drugs and a cash consolidation area in the Central Florida HIDTA region.⁷¹ For example, Mexican DTOs working with Puerto Rican DTOs continue to transport—via the U.S. Postal Service—large quantities of Mexican marijuana from Mexico to Puerto Rico using Orlando as a transshipment area.⁷² Moreover, drug trafficking activities in these metropolitan areas have considerable influence on smaller drug markets in Central Florida, such as Largo, Sanford, and Winter Haven.

The Central Florida HIDTA region has an increasing population that is racially/ethnically diverse. The population in the region increased slightly from an estimated 5,421,034 in 2008 to an estimated 5,453,526 in 2009.⁷³ Many foreign nationals and immigrants have relocated to the region from drug source or transit countries such as Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Mexico, allowing drug traffickers to blend into local communities and use them as cover to mask their illegal activities.

The Central Florida HIDTA region has a highly developed transportation infrastructure composed of seaports, airports, and roadways (such as Interstates 4, 75, 95, and 275)⁷⁴ that link the area to drug source and transit areas as well as other domestic drug markets. The Port of Tampa is an international trade seaport in west central Florida, the largest deep-water seaport in Florida and the closest full-service seaport to the Panama Canal. The port accepts direct shipments from numerous domestic ports, including those in Texas, as well as from international ports in Colombia and Mexico. In fiscal year 2010, the Port of Tampa's public marine terminals handled more than 37 million tons of bulk and general cargo. The Port of Tampa also offers maritime repair facilities, large fishery facilities, and nontraditional and traditional retail and entertainment uses; it is also a major cruise ship terminal.⁷⁵

CPDs are widely available and abused throughout the region and constitute the greatest drug threat.⁷⁶ Owners of rogue pain management clinics (commonly referred to as pill mills) are operating their cash-only businesses throughout Florida, including Central Florida, and thereby have become a significant source for CPDs available in the region as well as the eastern United States.⁷⁷ Abusers are enticed in part by the ease with which they can obtain CPDs from pill mills and unscrupulous physicians as well as through doctor-shopping, from retail-level distributors, and over the Internet.⁷⁸ Cocaine remains a significant concern to the Central Florida HIDTA despite indicators of declining abuse.⁷⁹

Methamphetamine poses a lower threat to the region than CPDs and cocaine—availability, demand, and production are at low levels throughout most of the region.⁸⁰ For example, NDTs 2011 data reveal that 26 of the 30 law enforcement respondents in the Central Florida HIDTA region report that powder methamphetamine is available at low or moderate levels, and 22 of 30 report the same for ice methamphetamine.⁸¹ Even so, methamphetamine is a significant threat to rural areas of Polk County. For example, NDTs 2011 data reveal that all three law enforcement respondents in Polk County report that methamphetamine (powder and ice) is the greatest drug threat in their jurisdictions.⁸² Methamphetamine production is a low threat to most of the Central Florida HIDTA region.⁸³ Methamphetamine is typically produced at small-capacity laboratories located primarily in rural areas of the region, particularly Polk County.⁸⁴ In fact, 61 percent of all methamphetamine laboratories seized in the Central Florida HIDTA region in 2010 were seized in Polk County. (See Table B3 in Appendix B.) Most of the laboratories seized in the region in 2010 were small-capacity laboratories (yielding less than 2 ounces of methamphetamine per production cycle) that used the iodine/red phosphorus production method. (See Table B4 in Appendix B.) In addition, Mexican DTOs supply ice methamphetamine to the region.⁸⁵

Cannabis cultivation and the resulting marijuana production, distribution, and abuse pose serious concerns to law enforcement officers.⁸⁶ Cannabis is grown at outdoor and indoor cultivation sites in the region.⁸⁷ The number of cannabis plants eradicated from outdoor grow sites decreased from 2009 (3,463 plants) through 2010 (1,037 plants).⁸⁸ (See Table B5 in Appendix B.) Most outdoor cultivation sites are operated by Caucasian local independent producers. The number of cannabis plants eradicated from indoor grow sites in the region also decreased overall from 2009 (16,151 plants) through 2010 (10,513 plants).⁸⁹ (See Table B2 in Appendix B.) Indoor grow sites are operated by various DTOs, and most indoor grow sites are established in privately owned homes or rental properties located throughout the region. Because of the demand for high-potency marijuana, which is typically cultivated at indoor grow sites, law enforcement officers report that indoor cannabis cultivation continues in residential neighborhoods.⁹⁰ Drug traffickers transport additional quantities of high-potency marijuana into the region from California using package delivery services.⁹¹ Mexican traffickers also supply large quantities of commercial-grade marijuana to the region.⁹² Marijuana abuse is widespread, encompassing members of all racial/ethnic and social groups.

Other dangerous drugs (ODDs) and heroin pose a lower threat than CPDs, cocaine, methamphetamine, and marijuana. ODDs such as MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine, also referred to as ecstasy),⁹³ synthetic cathinone products (bath salts),^f and synthetic cannabinoids^g.⁹⁴ are available and abused in the Central Florida HIDTA region. Availability and abuse of heroin are stable at low or moderate levels.⁹⁵ The Seminole County Sheriff's Department reports that the demand for heroin has declined as many former heroin abusers now abuse CPDs, particularly opioid pain relievers.⁹⁶

f. Synthetic cathinone products, typically marketed as “bath salts” and “plant food” under various names (such as Ivory Wave and Blizzard), are sold in retail establishments such as adult stores, independently owned convenience stores, gas stations, head shops, and skateboard shops in most areas of the United States. The products, as well as their raw chemical components, also are sold on many Internet sites, including popular Internet auction sites and global marketing sites. Abusers typically ingest, inhale, inject, smoke, or snort (insufflate) the drugs to experience stimulant effects similar to those induced by amphetamine.

g. Synthetic cannabinoid products—initially marketed by manufacturers as “legal alternatives to marijuana”—emerged in the U.S. designer drug market in 2009, and abuse increased dramatically during 2010. On March 1, 2011, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) issued its final order to temporarily place five synthetic cannabinoids (JWH-018; JWH-073; JWH-200; CP-47,497; and cannabicyclohexanol) as Schedule I controlled substances. Except as authorized by law, the action will make possessing and selling these five chemicals or the products that contain them (typically adulterated plant material sold as herbal incense) illegal in the United States for at least 1 year while the DEA and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services further study whether these chemicals and products should be permanently controlled under Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act.

Appendix B. Tables

Table B1. Substance Abuse Treatment Admissions, Florida, 2005–2009

Drug	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Cocaine (Other Route)	3,655	4,122	4,105	5,197	3,776
Cocaine (Smoked)	7,762	7,963	7,658	9,720	7,608
Heroin	1,537	1,865	1,413	2,005	1,680
Marijuana	13,922	14,291	15,245	24,770	24,623
Amphetamines (Including Methamphetamine)	1,194	1,142	981	1,222	1,297
Other Opiates*	2,580	3,704	4,400	8,696	12,348

Source: Treatment Episode Data Set, data run date March 30, 2011.

*TEDs data report that the Other Opiates category includes admissions for nonprescription use of methadone, codeine, morphine, oxycodone, hydromorphone, meperidine, opium, and other drugs with morphine-like effects.

Table B2. Indoor Cannabis Cultivation Sites Seized and Plants Eradicated in Central Florida HIDTA Counties, 2006–2010

County	Sites					Plants				
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Brevard	0	13	38	28	33	0	876	4,386	3,118	1,545
Hillsborough	5	5	55	42	21	348	493	5,298	2,257	1,463
Orange	3	4	10	7	12	55	268	296	893	214
Osceola	0	1	0	19	12	0	8	0	1,294	720
Pinellas	14	14	47	47	54	519	479	2,636	2,577	2,191
Polk	7	38	36	35	26	768	4,213	2,259	1,792	1,725
Seminole	5	5	5	9	10	342	1,067	494	624	435
Volusia	1	20	16	47	19	16	1,594	1,240	3,596	2,220
Total	35	100	207	234	187	2,048	8,998	16,609	16,151	10,513

Source: Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Office of Agricultural Law Enforcement.

Table B3. Methamphetamine Laboratories Seized in Central Florida HIDTA Counties, 2006–2010

County	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Brevard	20	13	3	5	5
Hillsborough	1	1	0	9	12
Orange	2	8	7	8	5
Osceola	4	1	8	11	6
Pinellas	1	0	0	0	0
Polk	0	2	3	28	54
Seminole	1	1	0	0	0
Volusia	7	5	2	15	7
Total in HIDTA Region	36	31	23	76	89

Source: National Seizure System, data run date March 25, 2011.

Table B4. Methamphetamine Laboratories By Production Capacity Seized in Central Florida HIDTA Counties, 2006–2010

Capacity	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Under 2 ounces	35	31	20	62	78
2–8 ounces	1	0	3	10	9
9 ounces–1 pound	0	0	0	4	2
Total in HIDTA Region	36	31	23	76	89

Source: National Seizure System, data run date March 25, 2011.

Table B5. Outdoor Cannabis Cultivation Sites Seized and Plants Eradicated in Central Florida HIDTA Counties, 2006–2010

County	Sites					Plants				
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Brevard	2	1	1	5	2	206	110	5	74	19
Hillsborough	3	6	5	3	0	269	611	183	20	0
Orange	1	0	2	13	41	3	0	222	1,173	356
Osceola	0	1	0	3	0	0	57	0	1,335	0
Pinellas	7	13	9	14	6	24	28	128	148	42
Polk	5	1	14	7	4	119	0	214	258	69
Seminole	5	0	0	1	6	90	0	0	13	84
Volusia	5	10	9	15	9	33	231	200	442	467
Total	28	32	40	61	68	744	1,037	952	3,463	1,037

Source: Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Office of Agricultural Law Enforcement.

Endnotes

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Bartow Police Department
Brevard County Sheriff's Department
City of Tampa Police Department
Clearwater Police Department
Daytona Beach Police Department
 Volusia Bureau of Investigation
Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office
Holly Hill Police Department
Kissimmee Police Department
 Osceola County Investigative Bureau
Lake Alfred Police Department
Lakeland Police Department
Largo Police Department
Longwood Police Department
Mulberry Police Department
New Smyrna Beach Police Department
 Volusia Bureau of Investigation
Orange County Sheriff's Office
Orlando Metropolitan Bureau of Investigation
Orlando Police Department
Ormond Beach Police Department
Osceola County Sheriff's Office
 Osceola County Investigative Bureau
Pinellas County Sheriff's Office
 HIDTA Task Force
Polk County Sheriff's Office
Port Orange City Police Department
Sanford Police Department
Satellite Beach Police Department
Seminole County Sheriff's Office
 City-County Investigative Bureau
State of Florida
 Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
 Office of Agricultural Law Enforcement
 Florida Department of Law Enforcement
 Domestic Marijuana Eradication Indoor Grow Program
 Medical Examiner's Commission
St. Petersburg Police Department
Tampa Police Department
 Volusia Bureau of Investigation
Volusia County Sheriff's Office
Winter Park Police Department

Federal

Executive Office of the President
 Office of National Drug Control Policy
 High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area
 Central Florida
 Methamphetamine Task Force
U.S. Department of Commerce
 U.S. Census Bureau
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
 National Institutes of Health
 National Institute on Drug Abuse
 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
 Treatment Episode Data Set
U.S. Department of Justice
 Drug Enforcement Administration
 Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program
 National Forensic Laboratory Information System
 El Paso Intelligence Center
 National Seizure System
U.S. Postal Service

Other

American Association of Poison Control Centers
 National Poison Data System
European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction
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