

CURRENT PROGRAMS IN PLACE BY THE LORAIN COUNTY, OHIO SHERIFF'S OFFICE DRUG TASK FORCE:

Lorain County has a population of 305,000 and has large cities, smaller villages and much rural area. We are part of America's northern border with 22 miles of Lake Erie coastline with Canada to the north.

We have 15 municipal police departments, a Sheriff's office, a Metro Parks law enforcement agency, a local Ohio State Patrol Post and a Coast Guard station in our jurisdiction. In addition, the DEA and ICE have agents assigned to our office. We recently became a member of the Ohio HIDTA.

We early on saw the need to offer prescription drop off days and we believe we were the first county in Ohio to offer this service county-wide. We have had these events for the last 8 years. In addition, we have 14 24 / 7 collection drop boxes at police stations around the county. We collected over two tons of medication at the April 2017 turn in.

In the earlier part of the century we averaged 20+ opioid overdose deaths per year in the county. In 2012 that number jumped to 60. We got Ohio law changed so law enforcement officers in Lorain County could carry and use Narcan to reverse an opioid overdose. We were the first county in Ohio to have this program. Every one of our departments agreed to train every officer. Since the law went into effect in October of 2013, law enforcement in Lorain County has "saved" over 350 lives by administering Narcan.

County wide our overdose death number remained in the low 60's until 2016 when it jumped to 131. Our county coroner estimates that number will increase again in 2017.

We are presently participating with the Cleveland DEA office in an OCDEF funded heroin initiative. We have a total of 36 officers trained or sworn in from 11 area law enforcement agencies. The officer's overtime is paid through this program and officers are assigned to conduct follow investigations on overdoses where the user either died or recovered.

Information found during these investigations is forwarded to the Lorain County Sheriff's Office Drug Task Force where an analyst supplied by the Ohio National Guard downloads the information to the DEA. This combined effort has resulted in identifying heroin suppliers with the purpose being to develop sufficient evidence to arrest, prosecute, convict and put in prison these traffickers in either state or Federal courts on involuntary manslaughter or corrupting another with drug charges.

We are one of a just few drug task forces in Ohio that have at least one full time pharmaceutical diversion officer to investigate drug crimes in our 6 hospitals, 22 nursing homes, 14 adult care homes and 52 retail pharmacies. At any given time we have at least one active investigation involving a doctor or nurse or other health care worker involved in pharmaceutical diversion which always involves opioids.

We routinely offer training in diversion crimes to other law enforcement agencies and lecture at the University of Toledo College of Pharmacy.

In 2016 we gave 33 presentations on the opioid crisis to schools, churches, social organizations and other interested parties in Lorain County. We joined with the Elyria City Schools to produce an excellent video on heroin. Called "Heroin, Your First Time May be Your Last" it is available on YouTube and has had over 6,000 views.

We were the focus of a documentary on heroin in Middle America that was produced by the BBC in 2016.

We are in the midst of formulating a rapid response team that will visit opioid overdose survivors and offer information on recovery programs. Again, we have had a buy-in by every police department in the county.

We were one of the first counties in Ohio to offer prescription drop boxes 24 /7 at participating police departments. We also hold collection days in the spring and fall at 16 locations. The public reaction has been spectacular as evidenced by the fact we collected over two tons of outdated or unused medication at our last turn in day.