

ANNEX – 4

FOCUS AREA – LAW ENFORCEMENT
SOUTH CAROLINA OPIOID EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

COORDINATING AGENCY: S.C. Law Enforcement Division

PRIMARY AGENCIES: S.C. Department of Public Safety; S.C. Office of the Attorney General; S.C. Department of Corrections; City of Columbia Police Department; Lexington County Sheriff’s Department; Myrtle Beach Police Department; S.C. Commission of Prosecution Coordination; S.C. Coroner’s Association; S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control

SUPPORTING AGENCIES: S.C. Law Enforcement Officers Association; U.S. Postal Inspection Service; U.S. DEA/HIDTA Atlanta and Carolinas; S.C. Sheriff’s Association; S.C. Pharmacy Association; S.C. Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services; S.C. Department of Juvenile Justice; S.C. Department of Social Services; S.C. Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services; Homeland Security Investigations

I. INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE

Focus Area 4 – Law Enforcement emphasizes five broad goals, all aimed at improving the effectiveness of law enforcement strategies for combatting the opioid crisis for the citizens of South Carolina.

- A. Focus Area 4 will help support and expand drug take-back programs to reduce the number of unused medications that are susceptible to misuse or diversion. Focus Area 4 will promote the DEA’s Take-Back Days through websites and social media and provide information on websites about environmentally friendly methods of disposal of controlled substances. Focus Area 4 will also help promote take-back sites that are available in communities year-round and will encourage the establishment of new sites at law enforcement facilities throughout the state.
- B. Focus Area 4 will work to increase resources to combat illicit opioid supply chains. This will be accomplished by improved intelligence and law enforcement focus in concentrated areas of high overdose and high use. Resources will be allocated to increase interdiction on major interstates, commercial parcel carriers, and other transportation methods.
- C. Focus Area 4 will endeavor to reduce the number of fatal opioid overdoses through education, training, and funding. Law enforcement agencies will be encouraged to take advantage of the Law Enforcement Officer Narcan (LEON) program. Collaboration with DAODAS is needed to seek continued funding for programs

when grants end. Training for community providers is needed on the use of naloxone or other opioid antidotes.

- D. Focus Area 4 will work to increase treatment options for individuals with opioid use disorder and help facilitate access to care instead of incarceration. Recommendations and support for programs such as drug courts will be encouraged.
- E. Focus Area 4 will work to improve Driving Under the Influence of Drug Detection (DUID) and reporting of statistics from DUID cases throughout the state.
- F. Finally, Focus Area 4 will enhance and expand current data sharing and will encourage the exchange of relevant data to assist with intelligence for officers and public health coordinators. This will assist with identifying hot spots for opioid use and trends throughout the state and will assist with data-driven decisions for areas of focused enforcement. Identifying these trends can also assist with focused resources for community education and prevention measures.

II. ASSESSMENT

The SLED Forensic Services Laboratory continues to see an increase in synthetic, illicit drugs such as Methamphetamine and Fentanyl. These drugs are on the rise while there is an overall decline in seizures of the naturally derived compounds Cocaine and Heroin that have historically dominated the SC drug scene. These increases are observed each year in controlled substance seizures and in drug related toxicology cases involving driving under the influence, traffic fatalities and other drug related deaths.

From 2020 to 2021, Methamphetamine increased from 25% of total exhibits reported to 28% in the Drug Analysis department. Similarly, Fentanyl increased from 5.3% of total exhibits reported in 2020 to 9.3% in 2021. In the toxicology, Fentanyl and Fentanyl analog related cases continue to be one of the fastest growing categories. DUI cases involving Fentanyl rose 92% from 149 in 2020 to 286 in 2021. Also, postmortem death investigation cases involving Fentanyl rose 32% from 342 cases in 2020 to 451 cases in 2021. Fentanyl and Fentanyl Analogue trafficking laws were once again introduced in the South Carolina legislature through both Senate and House bills however both stalled and were not passed. There are plans to reintroduce this legislation in the 2023-24 session.

III. GOALS AND UPDATE

- A. **Expand Take Back Programs-** Since the inaugural Law Enforcement Take Back Program was initiated in February 2019, a total of 21,769 lbs. of pills have been taken from drop boxes and incinerated. The program continues to expand and now involves 97 law enforcement agencies from 41 counties.

- B. **Expand Interdiction teams to interrupt drug networks-** SLED has partnered with the USPS and HIS to collaborate on incoming opioid packages. Three SLED interdiction agents with canines will regularly work with HSI as designated task force officers to intercept packages and assist in the investigation of drug trafficking organizations. This will greatly increase our capabilities when it comes to profiling international packages where most of the fentanyl coming into SC originates. SLED has also designated an agent to the USPS, who will have full access to their data system. This system can reveal source, destination, cost, method of payment and prior seizures. This includes packages that are paid for with Bitcoin and the Dark web. With the use of this system, SLED Agents have been able to conduct address history checks, while assisting other law enforcement agencies throughout the state. This allows for alerts to be placed on incoming parcels at specific addresses in furtherance of their many other databases that allow law enforcement to capture cell phone numbers and IP addresses of drug parcels that are being tracked. As a result of this collaboration, SLED and its partners at HIS, DEA, HIS and USPS have been able to increase the numbers of Fentanyl and Heroin seizures.

In June of 2021, SLED applied for a COPS grant that would add two regional agents to be used for the interdiction of illicit opioids in the Low Country and Upstate area of the state. This grant would also allow the hiring of a pill diversion agent who would investigate the origin of seized opioids, including those that have contributed to deaths on our state. The grant was awarded to SLED in June of 2021. The award gives SLED \$781,732.00 for the implementation of an Anti-Heroin/Opioid program as described. All agents previously described were hired in August of 2022.

From July 2021-June 2022, the SLED Narcotics/Interdiction Team and other investigators have worked together with state law enforcement agencies and USPS to seize **16 lbs. of Fentanyl, 48 lbs. of Heroin and 309 opioid pills.**

In 2021, SCHP Interdiction activity has resulted in the seizure of 414 grams of heroin, 357 grams of Fentanyl and 41 opiate pills. These seizures were the result of 64 cases initiated.

From June of 2020- June 2021, SLED has collaborated with local and federal law enforcement to dismantle 30 heroin/Fentanyl, opiate supply chains.

- C. **Increase availability of opioid antidote (Narcan) to officers throughout the state.** Presently, **14,857** police officers representing 275 law enforcement agencies have been trained and supplied with Narcan. Law enforcement First responders have made **3,521** administrations this year and 4,985 since the beginning of program.
- D. **Explore alternatives to incarceration by developing a broad-reaching deflection program for persons with opioid use disorder.** In discussion with Solicitors and the S.C. Commission on Prosecution Coordination, there is a need for a reoccurring funding stream.

- E. **Enhance law enforcement ability to detect and prosecute Driving Under the Influence of Drugs (DUID)** – Currently the SC Criminal Justice Academy has 115 certified officers trained to detect drivers under the influence of drugs working throughout the state. Turn-over, retirement and re-assignment has kept the number consistent over the past 5 years. The SCCJA will emphasize the need for more LEO certification statewide.

- F. **Develop data sharing that assists communities and partners in prevention, treatment and resource delivery.**

Update on the status of DHEC, DAODAS and SLED have worked to develop a rapid response protocol for reporting opioid hot spots throughout the state. This group has met weekly since April of 2020, to exchange regional intel and statistical data.

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Goal 1: Expand Prescription Drug Take-Back Programming

Table A

(Near-term [30—120 days], mid-term [6-12 months], long-term [12 months and beyond])

Agency	Objectives	Timelines	Measure of Success	Progress
SLED	Work with local incineration company to assist local law enforcement with destruction of bulk unused medications from permanent take-back containers.	Pickups: From Feb 2019- July 2021	16,699 pounds seized since Feb 2019 for law enforcement take back DEA has seized 126877 pounds since 2010	Ongoing
S.C. Sheriff’s Association, S.C. Police Chiefs’ Association	Expand drug take-back programs to additional counties and municipalities. Recommendations would be to have at least one drop-off site in each county.	near-term mid-term	Drop-off locations in each county	Underway
SLED	Educate on drug take-back program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During education opportunities, incorporate information on ways to remove excess drugs from circulation • Educate on safe storage measures and how to locate drop box locations for turning over unused medication 	December 31, 2018	# Of presentations where take-back options and education on programs are incorporated	Ongoing

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Goal 2: Expand interdiction teams to interrupt illicit opioid supply chains

Table B

(Near-term [30—120 days], mid-term [6-12 months], long-term [12 months and beyond])

Agency	Objectives	Timelines	Measure of Success	Progress
DPS	To increase interdiction activity across the state	October 1, 2018	In 2021 SCHP interdiction seized 357 grams of Fentanyl, 414 grams of heroin and 41 opioid pills. These seizures resulted from 64 cases initiated.	18 Agents, 9 canines assigned and qualified to interdict
SLED	Increase the number of agents assigned to interdiction.	SLED 2021-2022 budget	Additional FTE agent positions assigned to interdiction in the SLED Narcotics Section	7 Agents are working weekly interdiction assignments in four regions of the state. This is an increase of three agents from 2021.
Federal, State & Local Law Enforcement	Reduce, disrupt, and dismantle trafficking supply chains.	Ongoing	From July 2021- June 2022 2019- SLED, locals and Federal LEO dismantled 30 heroin and Fentanyl supply chains.	Ongoing
Law Enforcement Associations	Work with the S.C. Legislature to enhance penalties for trafficking of illicit opioids to include fentanyl and fentanyl analogues.	2023-24 Legislative Session	Fentanyl Trafficking bill with minimum/maximum language will be pre-filed in December of 2022 by SC House.	Pending

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GOAL 3: Increase availability of opioid antidote to officers throughout the state

Table C

(Near-term [30—120 days], mid-term [6-12 months], long-term [12 months and beyond])

Agency	Objectives	Timelines	Measure of Success	Progress
DHEC, DAODAS, Law Enforcement	Work with partner agencies to develop and implement agency policies for naloxone administration.	Ongoing	14,857 police officers representing 275 agencies have been trained.	Underway
Law Enforcement Training Council	Incorporate LEON program into Law Enforcement Officer Certification Program.	Ongoing	Since September 2019 Narcan is part of SCCJA basic training	Underway
DPS, DHEC	Expand training on and distribution of naloxone across DPS divisions.	Mid-term Long-term	All DPS LEO's are trained and carry Narcan.	Complete
SLED, DHEC	Maintain training and distribution of naloxone to agents.	Completed June 1, 2021	Availability of an opioid antidote to SLED employees in the Narcotics Section, tracking unit the Crime Scene Unit, the Evidence Control Unit, and the Forensic Services laboratory who may be exposed to opioids	Completed/ Replenished and Updated New Agents
DAODAS, DHEC, Local Law Enforcement	Monitor current funding and explore options to maintain naloxone programing statewide.	Ongoing	Funding secured for sustainability	Complete

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GOAL 4: Explore alternatives to incarceration to develop a broad-reaching deflection program for persons with opioid use disorder (OUD)

Table D

(Near-term [30—120 days], mid-term [6-12 months], long-term [12 months and beyond])

Agency	Objectives	Timelines	Measure of Success	Progress
S.C. Commission on Prosecution Coordination	Develop guidelines in alignment with – or endorse – National Association for Drug Court Professionals guidelines for drug courts throughout the state to establish consistency.	Mid-term Long-term	Established guidelines or full endorsement	Pending
S.C. Commission on Prosecution Coordination	Establish funding sources – or establish specific guidance – for making drug courts locally financially sustainable.	Mid-term Long-term	Funding sources established or guidance released	Pending SC CPC – Meeting regularly with legislative contacts for ongoing funding

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GOAL 5: Enhance law enforcement ability to detect and prosecute Driving Under the Influence of Drugs (DUID)

Table E

(Near-term [30—120 days], mid-term [6-12 months], long-term [12 months and beyond])

Agency	Objectives	Timelines	Measure of Success	Progress
DPS, Law Enforcement Training Council, Law Enforcement Associations	Enhance law enforcement capabilities to detect and deter DUID through expansion of the Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) program.	Mid-term Long-term	Presently 115 certified officers trained statewide.	Ongoing effort to increase the number of certified LEOs
SLED	Develop uniform measures to report statistics from drug-related driving incidents, both from DUID and traffic fatalities.	August 1, 2018,	10 years starting in 2011	Ongoing Now have data for Fentanyl & Heroin 2011-2021

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GOAL 6: Develop data sharing that assists communities and partners in prevention, treatment, and resource delivery

Table F

(Near-term [30—120 days], mid-term [6-12 months], long-term [12 months and beyond])

Agency	Objectives	Timelines	Measure of Success	Progress
DHEC, Law Enforcement Associations	Implement OD Map to help identify opioid “hot spots” throughout the state through first responder activity.	Mid-term Long-term	Solicit participation by 100% of those that are capable. 40 agencies presently participating	Underway
SLED	Provide timely law enforcement sensitive information on new drugs encountered in the state, to include location and educational information through S.C. Information Intelligence Center (SCIIC): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify focus groups that would benefit from OERT-related communications • Target communications specifically for the OERT 	Ongoing	Successful transfer of intelligence Opioid Rapid Response Team weekly meetings	Underway
SLED	Work with DHEC to provide data for Overdose Data to Action, statistics from opioid fatalities throughout S.C. and apply for grant opportunities to increase data sharing. Opportunity will enhance reporting for South Carolina on Opioid related deaths.	Ongoing	Successful transfer of data Application for grant	Underway SLED awarded COPS grant in the amount of \$781,732.00
All Organizations	Work with OERT Data Team to maintain timely data – SCIBRS.	Ongoing	Successful access and use of data	Underway
SLED, Sheriff’s Association	Develop a protocol for officer response to opioid overdose. Protocols will assist with gathering information for reporting and preparing a case.	Mid-term	Implementation of protocol	Pending
S.C. Coroner’s Association	Develop a protocol for coroner response to overdose to help with standardization of testing and reporting.	Mid-term Long-term	Implementation of protocol	Pending

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IV. CONCEPT OF THE OPERATION

State and federal agencies, associations, and private partners are operationalizing the objectives above to help combat the opioid crisis statewide and in local communities.

V. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Each agency in reaching out to community partners

1. Outreach
2. Tracking of progress
3. Updating annex as needed
4. Attending quarterly meetings

VI. RESOURCES *(To be added at a later date)*