



Dauphin County Criminal Investigation Division

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**STATEMENT OF JOHN F. GOSHERT
CHIEF COUNTY DETECTIVE, DAUPHIN COUNTY
NOVEMBER 21, 2013
HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE TO HEROIN USE AND AVAILABILITY**

Chairman Marsico and Committee Members:

INTRODUCTION

My name is John F. Goshert and I am currently the Chief County Detective for the Dauphin County District Attorney's Office. I began my law enforcement career in 1975 as a Police Officer in the Harrisburg Bureau of Police. In 1980 I was recruited for a temporary assignment to the Organized Crime and Vice Control Unit which is the drug enforcement component of the Harrisburg Police. I remained there temporarily until my retirement 24 years later on May 9, 2004. On May 12, 2004, I was appointed to my current position and one area of responsibility is supervision and coordination of the Dauphin County Drug Task Force which is comprised of personnel from various local, state and federal law enforcement agencies who cooperatively work to control the drug problem here in Dauphin County.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM IN DAUPHIN COUNTY

Drug abuse has historically been a problem in Dauphin County as it has in Pennsylvania and the entire nation. The consequences of drug abuse and addiction are felt at every level of society. Local government plays an important role in dealing with this problem at the prevention, criminal justice and treatment level.

THE PAST

When I began my law enforcement career over 38 years ago heroin was a drug that was primarily used and sold in the City of Harrisburg which is the urban center of the County. The primary user base was the poorer members of the community with the age of addiction being approximately 18 years of age and above. The trafficking areas were centered in the lower economic areas of the City of Harrisburg. The primary source area for Dauphin County heroin was New York City, with the drug often times brought back to Dauphin County prepackaged. The primary route of administration was injection, the price for a dosage unit was \$20.00 a bag or \$150.00 to \$180 for a 10 bag bundle and the purity of the heroin was between 5 to 10 percent. This price and availability of heroin in our area remained fairly constant for approximately twenty or more years in Dauphin County and overdose deaths were controlled with various emergency medical techniques. The other primary drugs of abuse were cocaine, marijuana, LSD and other common street drugs. The primary investigative techniques utilized were undercover investigations that would target these trafficking areas through undercover buys, search warrants and other conventional enforcement initiatives.

THE PRESENT

Within the past ten years I have seen a disturbing trend developing. Heroin is still sold and used in the City of Harrisburg, but a rising user base is persons from more suburban and affluent areas. These same persons are often required to involve themselves in heroin trafficking and sales in an attempt to support their addiction, so sales areas have also been displaced to these same suburban areas. The age of the addicts has also decreased with more teenaged violators being encountered. The route of administration for the users has also changed with more subjects snorting and smoking heroin than in the past; these alternative routes of administration are possible because the purity of heroin was dramatically increased to 40 percent and above. The price of a dosage unit of heroin today in Dauphin County is \$10.00 a bag or \$65.00 to \$80.00 for a ten bag bundle. The primary source area for heroin in Dauphin County is now a combination of the Philadelphia area and/or New York City, with more and more traffickers transporting bulk heroin to Dauphin County and packaging it in our area to increase profit. Heroin related deaths have also been increasing at alarming rates even though emergency medical techniques continue to evolve. The other primary drugs of abuse continue to be the common street drugs but there has been an alarming rise in abuse and sales of prescription medication especially the narcotic prescription type medications. Investigative techniques have become more complex because of the increasing use of technology and mobility utilized by traffickers.

WHY

The reasons for this increase in heroin use and availability are varied but a major contributing factor has been the increase use and abuse of narcotic prescription type medications. These medications are heavily prescribed by medical practitioners, often times for legitimate medical conditions but are quickly finding their way into the illegal market. When the supply of these prescription medications becomes limited for the user population they are turning to heroin to maintain their addiction. Investigation into prescription medication diversion is a somewhat new frontier for law enforcement. The investigations are more records based with examination of medical professionals and their operations. To attempt to combat this ever increasing problem Dauphin County law enforcement and prosecution officials have partnered with treatment and prevention agencies to examine this prescription drug problem. Earlier in 2013 this partnership resulted in a Round Table Discussion held on this topic at the Central Dauphin East High School where this problem was discussed with members of the Dauphin County community. Various techniques and initiatives were discussed and are being implemented to address this problem, such as placement of Prescription Drug Drop Boxes to allow citizens to safely dispose of unwanted and/or unused prescription medications so that it does not find its way into the illicit market. However the consequence of increased awareness and curtailment of prescription drug abuse and availability will result in a continued rise in heroin use and its problems.

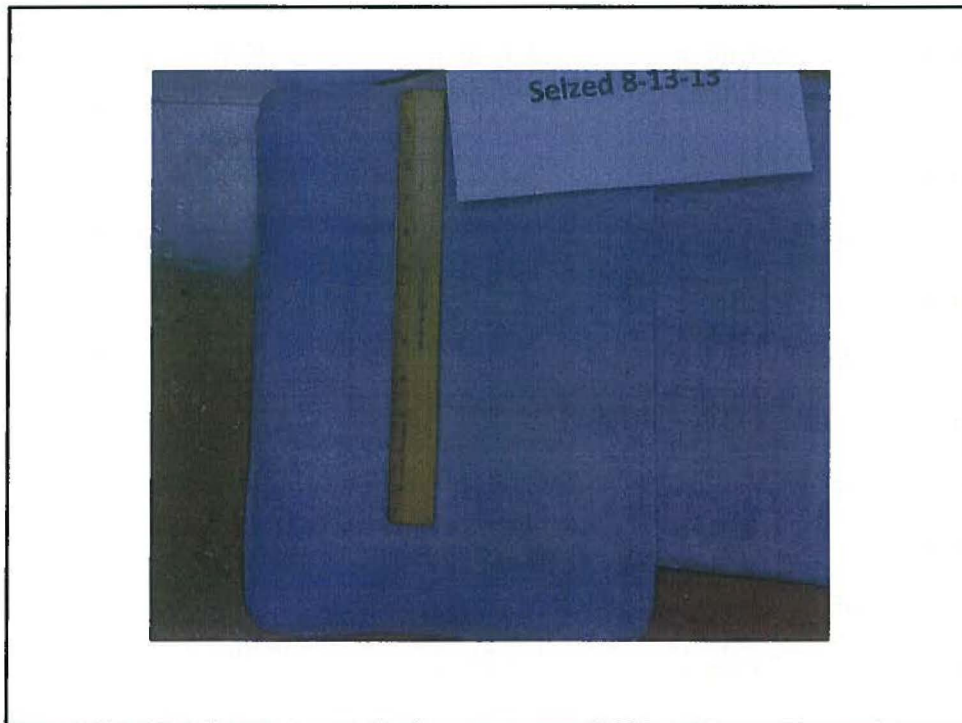
POSSIBLE LEGISLATIVE SOLUTIONS TO ASSIST LAW ENFORCEMENT

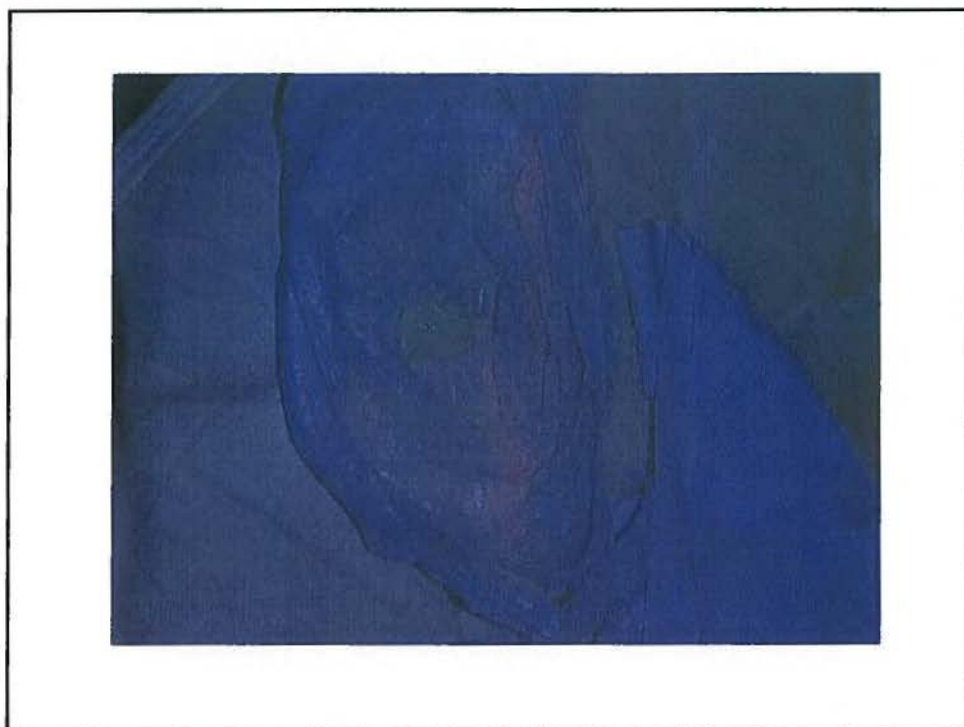
- Requiring mandatory prescription drug abuse training for law enforcement and public school personnel
- Expanding the database for Schedule II controlled substances to include all scheduled substances
- Expanding the access to this database to include all law enforcement agencies
- Mandating the use of this database to all medical personnel to limit “doctor shopping”
- Increased administrative licensing requirements for medical professionals
- Increase funding for the Drug Task Force Program currently funded through the PA-OAG
- Provide funding for mandatory drug prevention programs in public schools
- Provide increased funding so that more drug treatment is available-we’ll never arrest the problem away

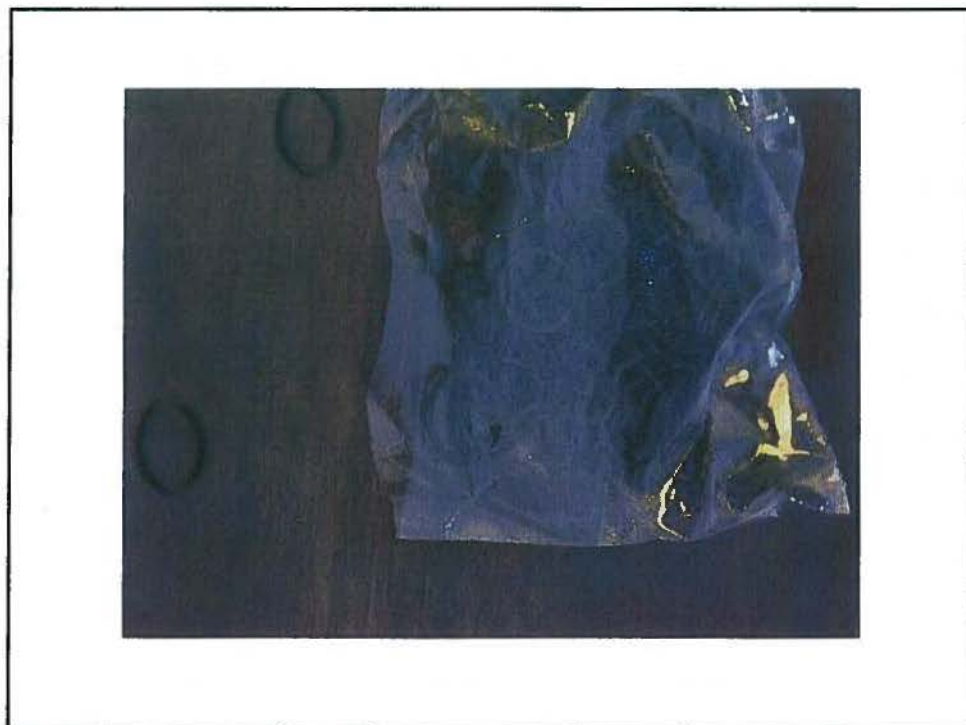
Heroin seized in recent drug investigations in Dauphin County

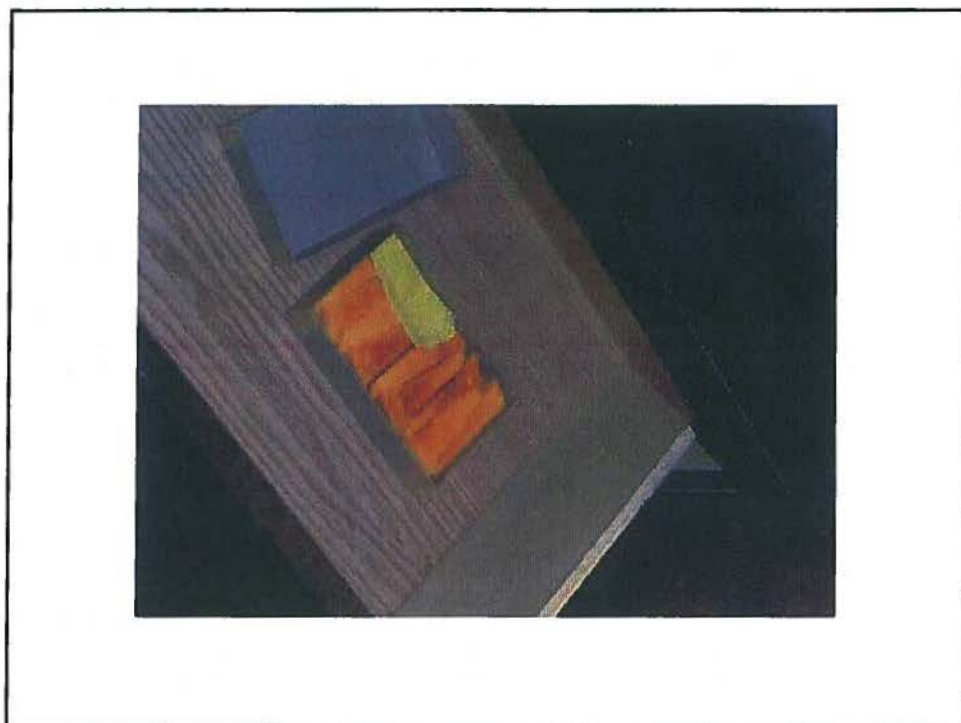
2013 Pennsylvania House Judiciary Committee











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