



U.S. Department of Justice
National Drug Intelligence Center



Chicago 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 Chicago High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area and possess an expert knowledge of its drug situation.



**U.S. Department of Justice
National Drug Intelligence Center**



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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 in the Chicago High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) has increased over the past year. Heroin availability and abuse are rising, and law enforcement officials in some areas report that the demand for heroin is surpassing the demand for cocaine. Cocaine is readily available, albeit at lower levels than in previous years, and accounts for much of the drug-related crime and violence that occurs in the Chicago HIDTA region. The persistent and destructive effects of heroin and cocaine trafficking are significant challenges for law enforcement and public health officials. Those challenges were expressed consistently by officials from agencies throughout the HIDTA region during recent interviews and were reflected in National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) National Drug Threat Survey (NDTS)^a 2011 data. A strong demand for high-potency marijuana in the Chicago HIDTA region is present and being met by rising availability made possible through increased flow of the drug into the region from western states and Canada and increased local indoor cannabis cultivation.

Key issues identified in the Chicago HIDTA region include the following:

- Heroin availability has increased sharply over the past few years because of greater control by Mexican drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) over wholesale heroin trafficking within the HIDTA region.¹ Increased heroin availability is supporting a growing heroin user population, resulting in a high number of heroin-related overdoses.
- Cocaine availability, abuse, and treatment have decreased significantly; however, the drug is readily available and still represents a great threat to the Chicago HIDTA region.
- The availability of high-potency marijuana is increasing in the HIDTA region, although commercial-grade marijuana is still the most prevalent type. High-potency marijuana is increasing largely because of an increased supply of the drug from western states and Canada into the region and because of rising local cannabis cultivation.
- Street gangs control most retail drug distribution in the region and are increasingly exploiting relationships with other gangs or DTOs and use of technology to advance their criminal activities.

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 22, 2011.

Key Issues^b

Heroin availability has increased sharply over the past few years because of greater control by Mexican DTOs over wholesale heroin trafficking within the HIDTA region.² Increased heroin availability is supporting a growing heroin user population, resulting in a significant number of heroin-related overdoses.

Heroin availability has increased sharply in the Chicago HIDTA region over the past several years,³ significantly increasing the threat associated with the drug. The increase in heroin availability is evidenced by high-purity heroin being distributed in the area, along with rising heroin seizures.⁴ According to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Chicago Division, the average purity of wholesale heroin exhibits during the second half of 2010 was 63.9 percent at the wholesale level and 34.9 percent at the retail level.⁵ DEA Chicago Division heroin seizures increased significantly from 2005 (35.5 kg) to 2010 (125.0 kg).⁶ Heroin seizures reported by the Cook County Sheriff's Office also increased from 2006 (7.9 kg) to 2010 (28.7 kg).⁷ (See [Table B1 in Appendix B.](#)) Increased heroin availability has supported rising demand for the drug, leading to increased treatment for heroin in the HIDTA region.⁸ In fact, demand for heroin has surpassed the demand for cocaine in some areas.⁹ The number of heroin-related treatment admissions to publicly funded facilities in Illinois increased more than 53 percent overall from 2005 (12,524) through 2009 (19,219)—the latest year for which such data are available.¹⁰ (See [Figure B2 in Appendix B.](#))

High levels of heroin demand and abuse are evidenced by continued high heroin prices and heroin-related overdoses.¹¹ Despite increased heroin availability, wholesale heroin prices in 2010 were very high and had increased sharply over the previous 4 years from June 2006 (\$30,000 to \$90,000 per kg) to June 2010 (\$55,000 to \$155,000 per kg) because of high demand for the drug.¹² In addition, the rate of heroin-related emergency department visits (heroin-related overdoses) in Chicago in 2009 was very high (216 visits per 100,000 persons) compared with the national rate (69 visits per 100,000 persons).¹³ (See [Figure B5 in Appendix B.](#)) Moreover, heroin-related deaths reported by county coroner/medical examiners' offices in some counties within the region have increased over the past several years.¹⁴ (See [Table B2 in Appendix B.](#)) For example, the number of heroin-related overdose deaths increased in Will County from 15 in 2007 to 26 in 2010 and in Lake County overdose deaths increased from 7 to 24 during the same period.¹⁵ The number of heroin-related deaths would likely be even higher without the successful first-response treatment of naloxone (Narcan) administered to overdose victims by experienced emergency medical services (EMS) and fire department personnel. (See [text box on page 3.](#))

With the increase in heroin availability and abuse, a high number of law enforcement agencies in the Chicago HIDTA region report that heroin is the greatest drug threat in 2011.¹⁶ Twenty-seven of 94 respondents identify heroin as the greatest drug threat in their areas—a number that is exceeded only by that for cocaine (40).¹⁷ Additionally, high or moderate availability of heroin was reported by 67 of 94 NDTs respondents in the region, and more respondents (43 of 94) identify heroin as the drug most associated with property crime.¹⁸

b. For a general overview of the drug threat in the Chicago HIDTA region, see [Appendix A.](#)

Emergency Heroin Treatment Law Enacted

In January 2010, Illinois Public Act 096-0361 was enacted, enabling trained lay people and healthcare professionals to administer naloxone in emergency response without fear of medical practice violations or criminal prosecution. Naloxone is a federally approved, generic prescription drug that reverses the effects of opiates. It is low-cost and has the same level of regulation as prescription ibuprofen.

Source: Illinois General Assembly.

Cocaine availability, abuse, and treatment have decreased significantly; however, the drug is readily available and still represents a great threat to the Chicago HIDTA region.

Law enforcement reporting and drug availability data indicate that the amount of cocaine available in the HIDTA region is significantly lower than in previous years. According to the Cook County Sheriff's Office, cocaine seizures decreased from 914.5 kilograms in 2006 to 114.2 kilograms in 2010.¹⁹ (See Table B1 in Appendix B.) The Chicago HIDTA region is a primary distribution center within the DEA Chicago Division, which comprises the Northern and Central U.S. Attorneys Districts of Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin. The DEA Chicago Division also reports that the amount of cocaine seized^c in fiscal year (FY) 2010 (473 kg)^d has declined significantly since such seizures peaked in FY2004 (3,563.1 kg),^e and was the lowest amount reported since FY1993.^f ²⁰ (See Figure B1 in Appendix B.) Law enforcement officials further report that interdicted cocaine shipments are typically smaller than in previous years.²¹ Despite smaller cocaine shipments into the region, law enforcement officials advise that cocaine still is readily available, albeit at higher prices and lower purity.²² From June 2009 to June 2010, wholesale cocaine prices increased in Chicago from \$22,000 to \$26,000 per kilogram to \$24,000 to \$33,000 per kilogram.²³ Additionally, law enforcement officials report that cocaine is being reroaked,^g often two or three times, indicating that traffickers are cutting cocaine in order to stretch supplies or increase profits.²⁴ According to the DEA Chicago Division, wholesale^h cocaine purity decreased overall from an average of 80.3 percent during the second half of 2006 to 67.6 percent during the second half of 2010.²⁵ Likewise, the average purity of retailⁱ cocaine exhibits decreased from 74.4 percent to 51.8 percent during the same time frame.²⁶ NDTs 2011 data support law enforcement contentions that cocaine remains readily available in the region—63 of 94 law enforcement agencies in the Chicago HIDTA region reported high availability of either powder or crack cocaine in their jurisdictions.²⁷

Despite lower availability and abuse than in previous years, cocaine remains a significant threat to the region.²⁸ For example, the number of cocaine-related treatment admissions to publicly funded

c. DEA Chicago Division cocaine seizures include combined analyzed (net weight) and information-only (gross weight) figures.

d. DEA Chicago Division total cocaine seizures for 2010 do not include 230 kilograms seized in December 2010.

e. The amount of cocaine seized in the Chicago Division was 3,563.1 kilograms in 2004, the peak year for such seizures during this decade (2000–2010).

f. The federal fiscal year begins October 1 and concludes September 30.

g. Reroaking is the process of diluting kilograms of powder cocaine and reforming the drug into kilogram bricks with a hydraulic press to make it appear authentic and uncut.

h. Wholesale exhibits range in size from 1 kilogram to 10 kilograms.

i. Retail exhibits range in size from 1 gram to 10 grams.

facilities in the region decreased more than 36 percent overall from 2005 (15,770) through 2009 (10,054).²⁹ (See Figure B2 in Appendix B.) Although cocaine abuse has decreased, NDTs 2011 data show that 40 of the 94 federal, state, and local law enforcement respondents in the Chicago HIDTA region identify cocaine (either powder or crack) as the drug that poses the greatest threat to their jurisdictions.³⁰ (See Figure B3 in Appendix B.) These NDTs results indicate the great negative impact that cocaine abuse and cocaine-related crime have on law enforcement and public health resources. In fact, more than half of all respondents (52 of 94) identify cocaine (either powder or crack) as the drug most associated with violent crime; 31 respondents report the same for property crime.³¹ (See Figure B4 in Appendix B.)

The availability of high-potency marijuana is increasing in the HIDTA region, although commercial-grade marijuana is still the most prevalent type. High-potency marijuana is increasing largely because of an increased supply of the drug from western states and Canada into the region and because of rising local cannabis cultivation.

Marijuana availability is high and increasing in the Chicago HIDTA region.³² Of the 94 law enforcement agencies responding to the NDTs 2011, 81 report that marijuana availability is high in their areas, 9 report moderate availability, and only 4 agencies report low availability.³³ Many varieties of marijuana are available in the Chicago HIDTA region—commercial-grade Mexican, locally produced, western states, and Canadian marijuana.³⁴ Although commercial-grade marijuana is the most widely available type of marijuana in the region, high-potency marijuana is in high demand by customers who are able to afford the high price.³⁵ The availability of high-potency marijuana is increasing to meet the high demand, a development that is attributed to more high-potency marijuana being transported into the region by criminal groups from western states and Canada as well as rising local indoor cultivation. (See text box on page 5.)³⁶ According to law enforcement officials, traffickers from western states are transporting high-potency marijuana, including that which is illicitly produced under the guise of medical marijuana laws, to the region from California, Colorado, and Oregon in private vehicles and through parcel delivery services.³⁷

The high level of indoor cannabis cultivation in the Chicago HIDTA region is reflected in NDTs 2011 data. Of the 94 law enforcement agency respondents, 71 report that marijuana is cultivated in their areas.³⁸ In particular, 51 agencies report indoor cultivation (including 32 agencies that report hydroponic cultivation), and 28 report outdoor cannabis cultivation in their areas.³⁹ Cannabis eradication data indicate that the number and size of indoor grows are increasing. Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program (DCE/SP) data maintained by the DEA show that the number of indoor cannabis grow sites eradicated in Illinois increased from 271 grows comprising 12,887 plants in 2006 to 419 grows comprising 96,986 plants in 2010.⁴⁰ Most of the indoor cannabis cultivation is occurring in private homes or apartments, typically consisting of 75 to 160 plants.⁴¹ Occasionally, however, indoor grows fill an entire house and consist of several hundred plants. Many cultivators produce the drug in their own homes, while others use abandoned or foreclosed homes.⁴²

Law enforcement officials report that many marijuana traffickers prefer to distribute high-potency marijuana because of the higher profit margin compared with commercial-grade marijuana, and the fact that no increased legal penalty can be incurred for distributing the higher-potency form of the drug.⁴³ For instance, wholesale prices for commercial-grade marijuana generally range from \$800 to \$1,200 per pound, while prices for high-potency marijuana typically range from \$3,500 to \$5,000 per pound.⁴⁴

High-Potency Marijuana

Several local indoor grow sites for high-potency marijuana have been eradicated by law enforcement officials in the region:

- In December 2010, the Cook County Sheriff's Police Department charged six individuals in Romeoville in an investigation that resulted in the eradication of 405 cannabis plants from two locations. The potential marijuana from the plants had an estimated value of \$2,818,800.⁴⁵
- In December 2010, the Cook County Sheriff's Police Department recovered 97 cannabis plants in an indoor grow operation and arrested four people in Tinley Park, a Chicago suburb.⁴⁶ The street value of the potential marijuana from the plants was approximately \$675,000.⁴⁷ Also seized was an additional 4.61 kilograms (10 lb) of marijuana worth about \$368,800, and \$7,471 in cash.⁴⁸
- In November 2010, the Cook County Sheriff's Police Department assisted the Bridgeport Police Department in recovering an indoor hydroponic grow operation that yielded 113 cannabis plants (approximately 9.83 kg or 21.5 lb if processed) with an estimated street value of approximately \$786,480.⁴⁹
- In June 2010, the Chicago Police Department Narcotics Department seized 100 cannabis plants in south suburban Countryside. The potential marijuana from the plants had an estimated street value of more than \$400,000.⁵⁰

Law enforcement officials in the region have made several seizures of high-potency marijuana that they verified as marijuana shipped into the HIDTA from other regions, including the following:

- In March 2011, the Chicago Police Department and DEA executed warrants at two stash houses on Chicago's North Side and recovered approximately 3,000 pounds of marijuana with an estimated value of \$8,163,656.⁵¹
- In January 2011, the Chicago Police Department seized more than 100 pounds of marijuana in Melrose Park with an estimated street value of over \$700,000.⁵²
- In December 2010, the Cook County Sheriff's Police Department arrested an individual for receiving 34 kilograms of high-potency marijuana in five 5-gallon buckets shipped via private shipping carriers. The total value of the high-potency marijuana was estimated at \$2,500,000.⁵³
- In August 2010, the Chicago Police Narcotics Unit seized approximately 861.8 kilograms of high-potency marijuana on the Southwest Side of the city that had an estimated street value of over \$5 million dollars. Police also seized cocaine and over \$70,000 in cash.⁵⁴
- In July 2010, the Cook County Sheriff's Police Department assisted in conducting search warrants on three different locations—one in Cook County and the others in Indiana and Michigan.⁵⁵ The seizure in Cook County resulted in the recovery of 17.25 kilograms of marijuana worth an estimated street value of \$172,520.⁵⁶

Street gangs control most retail drug distribution in the region and are increasingly exploiting relationships with other gangs or DTOs and use of technology to advance their criminal activities.

Law enforcement officials report that street gangs control most retail drug distribution in the Chicago HIDTA region (see text box) and are compartmentalizing their illicit activities or aligning with other gangs in order to secure and advance their criminal enterprises.⁵⁷ Some street gangs are now handling all drug-related operations separately from money-related operations to limit loss if illicit activities are disrupted.⁵⁸ In addition, some street gangs are aligning with other gangs, usually based on geographic location, to form hybrid gangs for the purpose of conducting drug distribution or to increase profits by establishing new, more reliable drug sources of supply.⁵⁹ Some street gangs in the Chicago HIDTA region also are increasing the reliability of their drug sources of supply by acquiring wholesale quantities of illicit drugs from local Mexican DTOs.⁶⁰ Hispanic gangs also have established consistent and cheaper sources of supply in Mexico or along the Southwest Border.⁶¹ In fact, law enforcement officials report that Latin Kings is increasingly becoming its own source of supply because many of the gang members have families in Mexico, making it easier to facilitate drug transportation and cross-border smuggling under the guise of visiting family members.⁶²

Gang Population in Chicago

The Chicago HIDTA region has a high concentration of nationally affiliated African American and Hispanic street gangs such as Gangster Disciples, Latin Kings, and Vice Lords that control retail drug distribution in the region. According to the Chicago Police Department Gang Investigations Section, approximately 71 street gangs are active in Chicago, with an estimated membership of 100,000.⁶³ There are approximately 5,000 juveniles on probation in Chicago, mostly for drug and weapons offenses.⁶⁴ Law enforcement officials attribute this large number, at least in part, to gang recruitment of juveniles to hold and sell drugs.⁶⁵

Most retail drug distribution in Chicago occurs through street-corner drug sales in urban areas.⁶⁶ Law enforcement targeting of retail drug distribution has been successful in reducing the amount of street-corner drug sales in Chicago.⁶⁷ As a result, retail-level dealers (including gangs) are increasingly using covert distribution techniques that employ various technologies to conduct drug trafficking operations or to communicate operational threats.⁶⁸ For example, some distributors transport drugs using vehicles that contain Global Positioning System (GPS) devices and, in some instances, have cameras installed in order to know where drug shipments are at all times.⁶⁹ Moreover, prepaid phones are increasingly being used to coordinate drug sales because such devices are relatively inexpensive, disposable, and anonymous compared with contract cellular phones.⁷⁰ In addition, voice and text capabilities of electronic communication devices and social networking media are also used frequently to conduct drug sales, prearrange meetings with customers, and make violent taunts or threats to other gang members.⁷¹

Drug-related violence among street gangs is a leading public safety concern in the Chicago HIDTA region, as some highly organized gangs such as Latin Kings (see first text box below) often use violence and intimidation to advance their drug operations.⁷² This violence often results from disputes among street gang members vying for control of drug distribution territories or drug and money ripoffs by dealers or buyers.⁷³ When violence occurs, retaliation typically follows, leading to increased hostilities and often homicides, even among younger gang members in Chicago schools (see second text box below).⁷⁴ According to the Chicago Police Department, 58.7 percent of the murders in Chicago in 2010 were gang-involved.⁷⁵ The overall threat of gang violence is elevated by the availability of firearms supplied to Chicago street gang members from associates in states with less stringent gun control laws.⁷⁶ The top out-of-state source for firearms recovered in Illinois is Indiana.⁷⁷ Mississippi, Wisconsin, and Ohio are also significant source states for firearms recovered in Illinois.⁷⁸ Of the 439 murders investigated by the Chicago Police Department in 2010, 80.6 percent involved firearms.⁷⁹

High-Ranking Latin Kings Street Gang Leaders Convicted

In April 2011, the highest-ranking Almighty Latin King Nation leader in the United States, Augustin Zambrano, and three other high-ranking members were convicted of Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO), narcotics, and violence charges for offenses that most often occurred in Chicago. Zambrano was responsible for overseeing the illegal activities of all factions of Latin Kings. Vicente Garcia, the leader of all 10,000 Latin Kings in Illinois, was also convicted, along with Jose Guzman and Alphonso Chavez. The four convicted Latin Kings members were among 31 individuals indicted in September 2008 or charged in a superseding indictment in October 2009. The convictions were the result of joint federal, state, and local law enforcement operations. Since 2006, more than 80 members of Latin Kings have faced state or federal charges; approximately 65 of 80 have been convicted.

Source: United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; Federal Bureau of Investigation, Chicago Division.

Joint Effort to Combat Gang-Related Violence

Chicago has experienced high levels of youth violence in past years; in 2007 through 2009, there were 126 juvenile* homicide victims and 5,092 juvenile victims of aggravated batteries in Chicago. Additionally, 79 juveniles were arrested for homicide, and 2,153 were arrested for aggravated battery. In March 2010, as a result of Chicago's new youth violence reduction strategy, the Gang School Safety Team (GSST) was formed by the Chicago Police Department (CPD), the Cook County Juvenile Probation Department (CCJP), and Chicago Public Schools (CPS). The GSST is an intervention initiative designed to combat gang-related violence. Through the program CPD, CPS, and CCJP officials work to limit retaliatory gang violence following a violent or offending event. After such an event, the officials identify youth gang members involved in the incident and victims or others who may be motivated to retaliate. Subsequently, an intervention team (often consisting of gang officers, Juvenile Probation officers, CPS officials, and the youth's parents) convenes to address the issue with the victim or other offended individuals. The intervention is intended to stem the cycle of retaliatory violence through counseling and group discussion. As of August 2011, the initiative has completed over 900 interventions, and only one subject has engaged in a retaliatory shooting.

Source: Chicago Police Department, Gang Investigations Section.

*Under the age of 17.

Outlook

NDIC assesses with high confidence^j that heroin distribution and abuse will continue to increase in the Chicago HIDTA region. As a result, the consequences associated with heroin abuse, including property crime, treatment costs, and overdoses, will increase in the HIDTA region, heightening the threat posed by the drug. NDIC assesses with medium confidence that with increasing distribution and abuse, heroin will surpass cocaine as the most significant drug threat in some areas of the HIDTA region in the near future.

NDIC assesses with high confidence that cocaine will remain readily available in the Chicago HIDTA region, but at lower levels than in previous years. The distribution and abuse of cocaine will continue to be a significant threat because of the impact on law enforcement and public health resources and the drug's association with violent crime.

NDIC assesses with high confidence that the availability of high-potency marijuana in the Chicago HIDTA region will increase. The amount of marijuana transported into the region from Canada and western states is increasing as more traffickers seek the higher profit margin achievable through high-potency marijuana distribution. The region also is increasingly being supplied with marijuana produced at local indoor grow sites.

NDIC assesses with high confidence that African American and Hispanic street gangs will maintain control over retail-level illicit drug distribution in urban areas and will continue expansion of their criminal activities through reorganization of gang structures, compartmentalizing illicit activities, and new gang alignments.

j. **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. Chicago HIDTA Region Overview

Map A1. Chicago High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area



The Chicago HIDTA region, composed of Cook, Grundy, Kendall, and Will Counties, comprises more than 6 million residents—nearly half the population of Illinois.^k Despite a 3.5 percent decline in population from 2000 through 2010, Cook County, which includes the city of Chicago, is second only to Los Angeles County (CA) as the most populated county in the United States. Cook County was the only county among the 10 most populous counties in the United States to experience a decline in population during this decade. Conversely, Kendall County was the fastest-growing^l county in the United States, with a 110.4 percent population increase from 2000 through 2010. Despite significant changes in county populations, the total population in the HIDTA region remained relatively stable. (See Table A1.) Moreover, the Chicago-Joliet-Naperville metropolitan statistical area (MSA) is the third most populous MSA, behind the New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island MSA and the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana MSA, respectively.

Table A1. Population Change in the Chicago HIDTA Region, 2000–2010

Geographic Area	Population		Population Change	
	2000	2010	Number	Percent
Cook County	5,376,741	5,194,675	-182,066	-3.4%
Grundy County	37,535	50,063	12,528	33.4%
Kendall County	54,544	114,736	60,192	110.4%
Will County	502,266	677,560	175,294	34.9%
Chicago HIDTA Region	5,971,086	6,037,034	65,948	1.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

The Chicago metropolitan area is one of the nation’s largest drug markets and a national-level distribution center for cocaine, heroin, and marijuana available in the Midwest and the eastern United States.⁸⁰ The region has a highly developed transportation infrastructure that facilitates the continuous movement of licit and illicit goods to and from the area. Chicago is one of the nation’s largest trucking centers, principally because of its proximity to Interstates 55, 57, 80, 88, 90, and 94, which pass through the metropolitan area. (See Map A1 in Appendix A.) These major highways are frequently used by traffickers to transport illicit drugs to Chicago from Mexico and locations along the Southwest Border.⁸¹ Major international airports such as O’Hare and Midway also are used by traffickers to smuggle illicit drugs into the Chicago area.⁸² In addition, Chicago’s train, bus, mail, and parcel delivery services are exploited by DTOs, criminal groups, and street gangs to transport drugs and drug proceeds to and from the region.⁸³

The distribution and abuse of cocaine, heroin, and marijuana are the primary drug threats in the Chicago HIDTA region.⁸⁴ According to the NDTs 2011, 40 of the 94 federal, state, and local law enforcement respondents in the Chicago HIDTA and metropolitan area identify cocaine as the drug that poses the greatest threat to their jurisdictions, 27 identify heroin, and 22 identify marijuana (see Figure B3 in Appendix B). Cannabis cultivation occurs at both indoor and outdoor sites

k. U.S. Census estimates indicate that approximately 47 percent of Illinois residents resided in the Chicago HIDTA region as of July 1, 2009, the most recent date for which data are available.

l. This is among counties with Census 2000 populations of 10,000 or more.

in the region.⁸⁵ Methamphetamine availability in the region is low, although wholesale quantities of ice methamphetamine transit the region en route to other Midwest markets.⁸⁶ Methamphetamine typically is not produced in the region.⁸⁷ In fact, according to National Seizure System data, only two methamphetamine laboratories were seized in the region in 2010, none in 2008 and 2009, and one each in 2006 and 2007.⁸⁸ The availability of controlled prescription drugs (CPDs) and other dangerous drugs (ODDs) vary throughout the region.⁸⁹ ODDs such as MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine, also referred to as ecstasy), PCP (phencyclidine), and LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) are available in the region, but to a much lesser extent than other drugs.⁹⁰

Mexican DTOs dominate most trafficking of wholesale quantities of cocaine, heroin, and marijuana in the Chicago HIDTA region.⁹¹ These highly organized and compartmentalized DTOs often have connections to large organizations in Mexico, which furnish their drug supplies.⁹² Other Mexican traffickers use familial connections in Mexico to obtain wholesale quantities of illicit drugs for distribution in the region.⁹³ Mexican DTOs operating in Chicago supply high-ranking local street gang members with drugs for retail distribution.⁹⁴ African American and Hispanic street gangs control retail drug distribution in the region, where they typically are supplied with wholesale quantities of illicit drugs by local Mexican DTOs.⁹⁵

Hundreds of millions of dollars in drug proceeds are generated in the Chicago HIDTA region each year.⁹⁶ Bulk cash smuggling is the primary method used by traffickers to move drug proceeds from Chicago.⁹⁷ However, traffickers also use various other money laundering techniques to transport or conceal these funds, such as money transmissions, structured deposits in traditional depository institutions, the Black Market Peso Exchange, front companies, and real estate transactions.⁹⁸

Appendix B. Tables and Figures

Table B1. Illicit Drug Seizures Made by Cook County Sheriff's Office, in Kilograms, 2006–2010

Drug	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Cocaine	914.5	189.2	115.6	140.0	114.2
Heroin	7.9	6.4	3.0	59.8	28.7
Marijuana	1,565.7	1,943.4	1,016.1	3,445.9	3,424.0

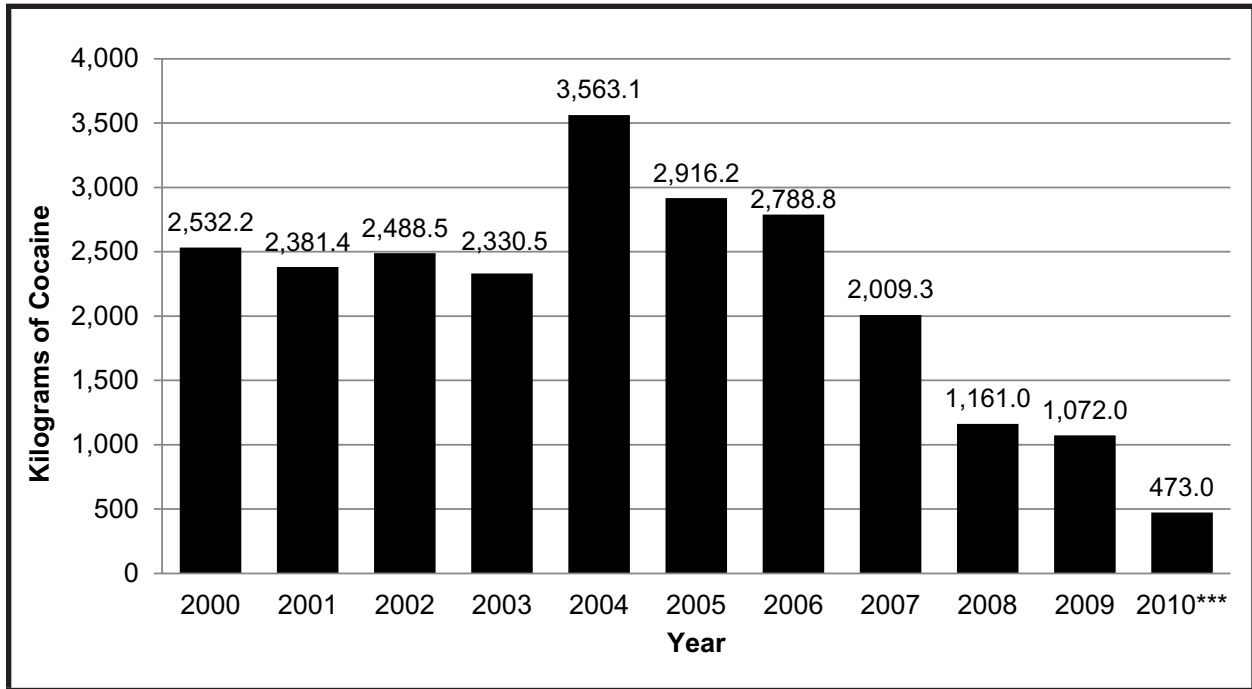
Source: Cook County Sheriff's Office.

Table B2. Heroin-Related Overdose Deaths in Chicago HIDTA Region and Other Select Counties, 2007–2010

County	2007	2008	2009	2010
DuPage County	24	36	23	31
Grundy County	0	3	0	1
Kendall County	1	2	1	3
Lake County	7	17	13	24
McHenry County	6	17	15	12
Will County	15	17	29	26

Source: County Coroner/Medical Examiners' Offices.

Figure B1. Cocaine Seizures* in the DEA Chicago Division, FY2000–FY2010**



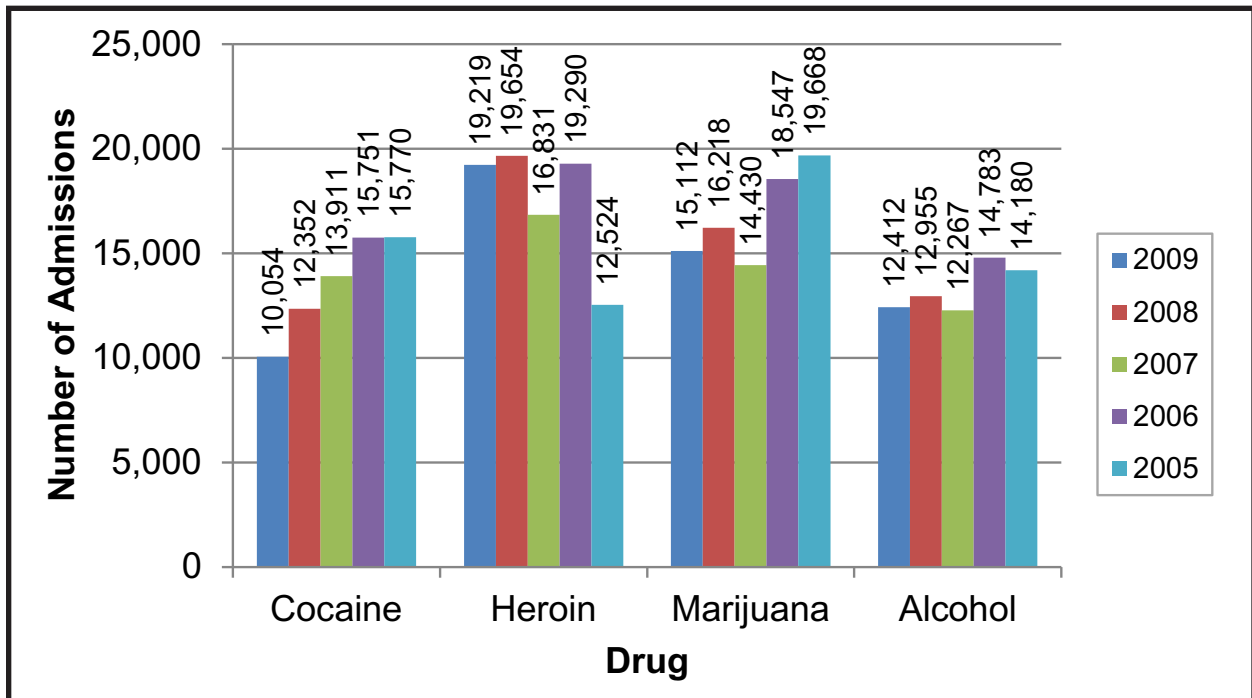
Source: Drug Enforcement Administration.

*Cocaine seizures include combined analyzed (net weight) and information-only (gross weight) figures.

**The DEA Chicago Division comprises the Northern and Central U.S. Attorney Districts of Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin.

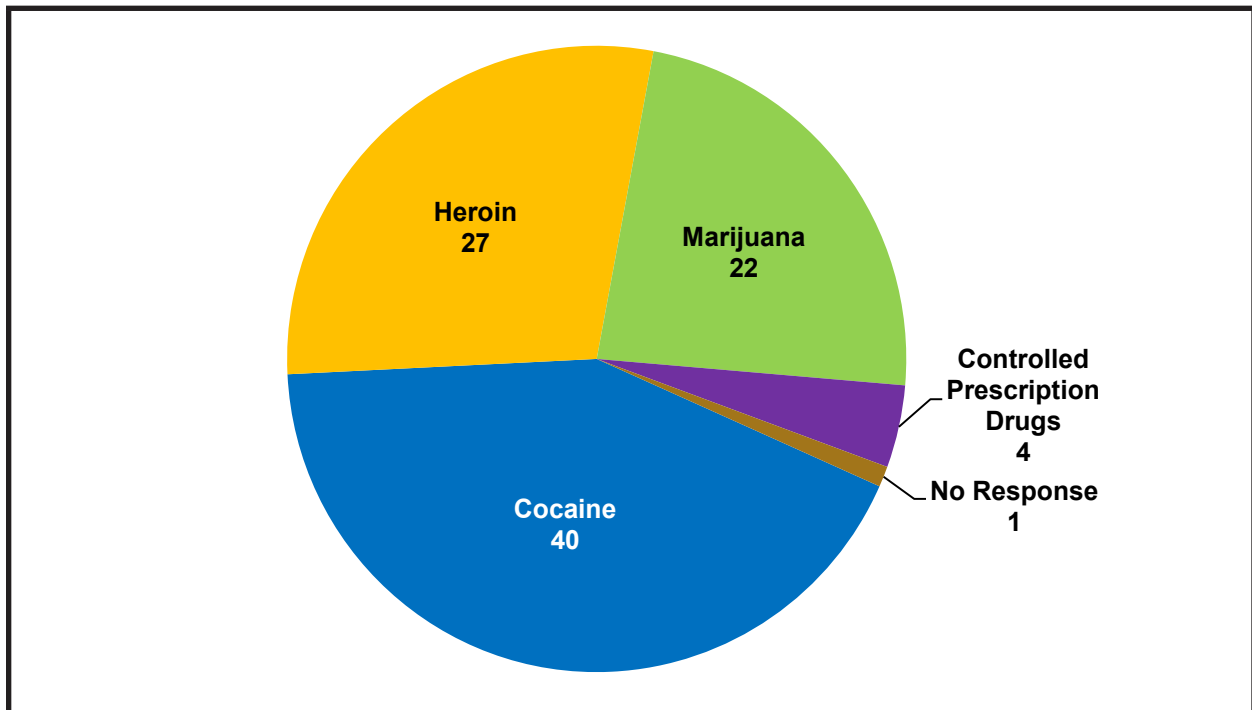
***The 2010 total does not include 230 kilograms seized in December 2010.

Figure B2. Treatment Admissions in Illinois, by Primary Substance of Abuse, 2005–2009



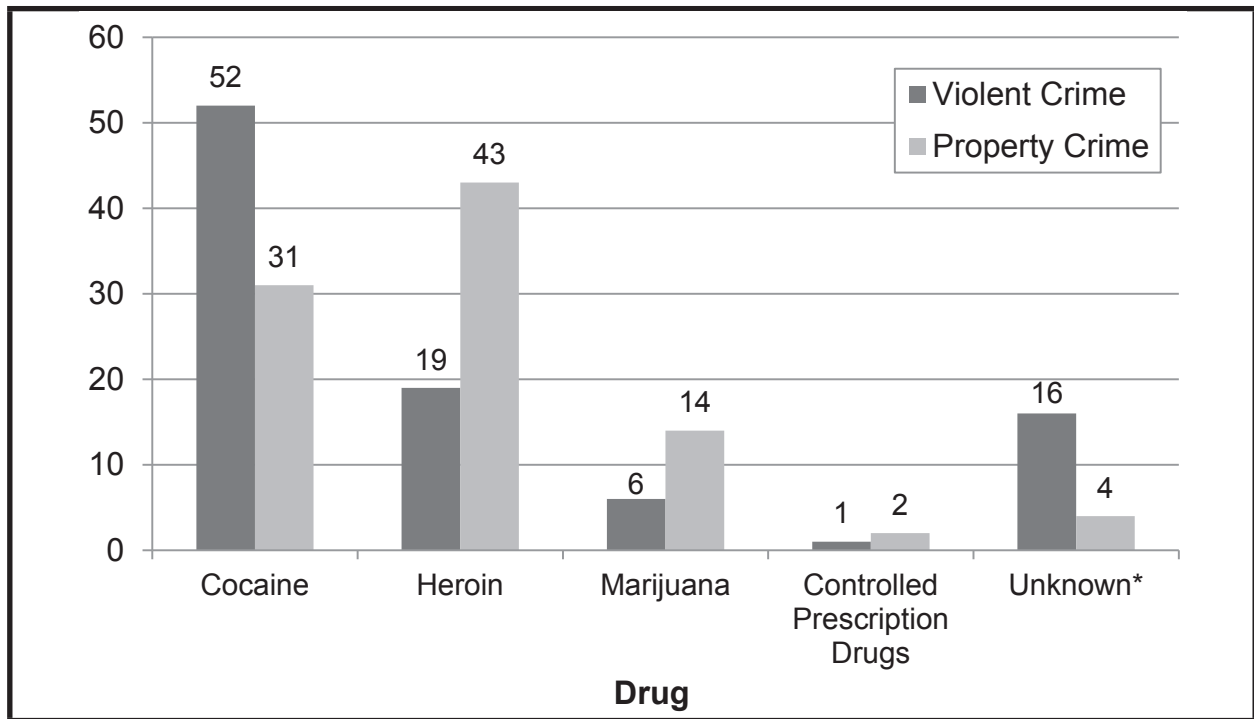
Source: Treatment Episode Data Set.

Figure B3. Greatest Drug Threat in the Chicago HIDTA Region, by Number of NDTs 2011 Respondents



Source: NDIC National Drug Threat Survey 2011.

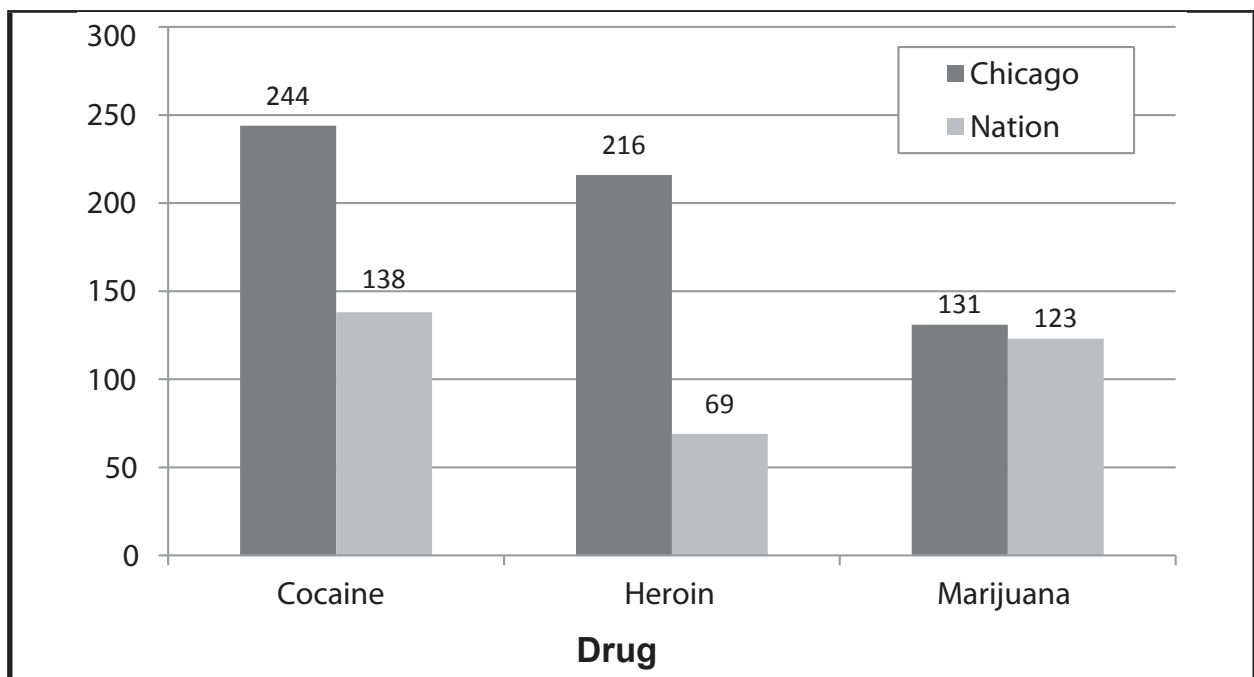
Figure B4. Drugs Contributing Most to Violent and Property Crime, by Number of NDTs 2011 Respondents



Source: NDIC National Drug Threat Survey 2011.

*Unknown includes responses of not answered, not applicable, or unknown.

Figure B5. Emergency Department Visits Involving Illicit Drugs, per 100,000, Chicago and the Nation, 2009



Source: Drug Abuse Warning Network, 2009.

Endnotes

1. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Chicago Division, *Trends in the Traffic Report, Second Half 2010*, July 1, 2010–December 31, 2010.
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- Illinois General Assembly
- Illinois State Police

Federal

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 - Office of National Drug Control Policy
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 - Investigative Support Center
 - Management and Coordination Initiative
 - Money Laundering and Financial Crimes Initiative
 - Narcotics and Currency Interdiction/Domestic Highway Enforcement
 - Package Interdiction Initiative
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- U.S. Department of Commerce
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 - Northern District of Illinois
- U.S. Department of the Treasury
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