



**Drug Abuse Trends in
Palm Beach County Florida:
July 2015**



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Palm Beach County, Florida Drug Epidemiology Network

Annual Report - July 2015

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Section I Introduction

Section IA. Highlights

- An **Opiate** epidemic involving **heroin** and the nonmedical misuse of **pharmaceutical opioids** is increasing in Palm Beach County with rising numbers of deaths, primary treatment admissions, and crime lab cases.
- None-the-less the proportion of **heroin** consequences among all substances is lower in Southeast Florida than in most other areas of the nation.
- **Synthetic cathinone** (*e.g.*, ethylone, *alpha*-PVP, and methylone) crime lab cases in Southeast Florida during 2014 totaled 1,811 representing a 46-percent increase over the previous year and accounting for 16 percent of such reports nationwide and 54 percent of those in Florida.
- **Alpha-PVP** is sold as “Flakka” in the region and is attributed to 25 deaths in Broward County between September 2014 and June 15, 2015 and numerous incidents of excited delirium medical emergencies and bizarre behavior in Palm Beach and Broward Counties.
- **Synthetic Cannabinoid** crime lab cases totaled 228 during 2014 in the three Southeast Florida counties representing a 57-percent increase over the previous year and just 11 percent of the 2014 reports Statewide. There were 30 Poison Information Center exposure calls for THC-homologs in Southeast Florida in calendar year 2014 (including 3 in Palm Beach County) and 25 such reports in the first four months of 2015 (including 1 in Palm Beach County).
- **Cocaine** remains a major drug problem across the region with increasing cocaine-related deaths in Palm Beach County between calendar year 2013 and the first half of 2014 as compared to stable numbers of cocaine deaths in Broward and Miami-Dade Counties.
- While significantly below the rates and numbers reported in the US West and the Atlanta, Georgia metro area in the East, **methamphetamine** deaths, treatment admissions, and crime lab reports increased in 2014 continuing a trend in rising consequences since 2011.
- More than half of **marijuana** primary treatment clients in Palm Beach County are below the age of 18 years.
- **MDMA** has dramatically decreased in recent years as the drug detected in “ecstasy” or “Mollys.”
- **Benzodiazepine**-related deaths have decreased 37-percent Statewide since 2010.
- **Injecting drug use** (IDU) is the route of administration for 90 percent of primary heroin treatment clients in Palm Beach County and 80 percent of primary prescription opioid treatment clients for whom a method of use was reported.
- Increasingly e-cigarette and other vaporizing devices are reported for use of marijuana, methamphetamine, and new psychoactive synthetic drugs including *alpha*-PVP (“Flakka”).

Section IB. Area Description

The total population of Palm Beach County is 1,339,221. Those age 21 years or older comprise 76 percent of the population and 19.5 percent are Hispanic or Latino. White, Non-Hispanics make up 59 percent of the County's residents while 17 percent are Black, Non-Hispanics. Asians account for 2.4 percent and 1.9 percent are of other racial/ethnic groups. The median household income is \$52,432.00 and 14.5 percent are people whose income in the past year was below the poverty level. The National Survey on Drug Use and Health estimates that there are 59,321 current (past 30-days) users of marijuana in the County and 33,767 current users of an illicit drug other than marijuana.

Section IC. Data Sources

Florida Department of Law enforcement: Florida Medical Examiners Commission Interim and Annual reports on Drugs Detected in Deceased Persons in Florida January 2010 - June 2014

Florida Department of Children and Families: Primary Drug Treatment Admissions in Palm Beach County for 2014

Florida Department of Children and Families: Florida Youth Substance Abuse Surveys 2000 – 2014

Florida Agency for Health Care Administration: Opioid Poisoning Hospitalization Cases 2007-13

Florida Poison Information Center exposure calls for calendar year 2014 and January-April 2015

US Drug Enforcement Administration: National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS): Southeastern Florida crime lab cases 2014 data Queried: March 23, 2015

Center for Disease Control and Prevention: 2011 and 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Surveys

Florida Department of Health: Diagnosis of HIV and Hepatitis B and C for Palm Beach County

U.S. Census Bureau: 2009-2013: Five-Year American Community Survey Demographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Southeastern Florida Metropolitan Statistical Area

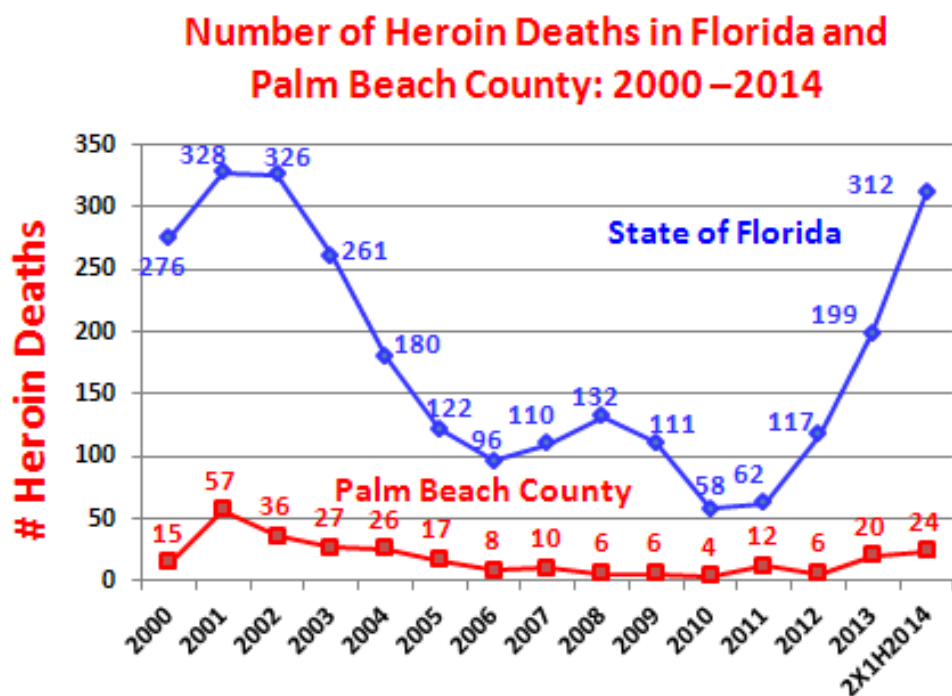
US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration: Substate Estimates from the 2010-2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)

Section II. Emerging Drugs and Patterns of Drug Use

This section of the report explores new issues and substances with significant increases in their indicators of abuse between the two most current reporting periods generally 2013 vs. 2014.

Heroin and Nonmedical Use of Prescription Opioids

From 2000 to 2010 there was a dramatic increase in the availability of diverted pharmaceutical opioids and deaths linked to their nonmedical misuse as well as primary opioid addiction treatment admissions across the State of Florida. Numerous new laws and regulations took effect beginning in 2010 along with the tamper-resistant reformulation of high dose extended release opioids for which the collective impacts are reflected in declining opioid deaths beginning in 2011. At the same time heroin deaths began to increase sharply from 2012 to 2014 across Florida, rising 403-percent from 62 in 2011 to a projected 312 in 2014 based on reported cases from the first half of that year. In Palm Beach County, heroin deaths increased 67-percent from 12 in 2011 to 20 in 2013 and are projected to reach 24 in 2014 based on the number of deaths in the first six months of 2014. While heroin consequences are fewer in Florida than in other states and areas of the country, the sharp escalation in its use, treatment admission, and deaths in Florida along with stable and high levels of prescription opioid indicators constitute an opiate epidemic.



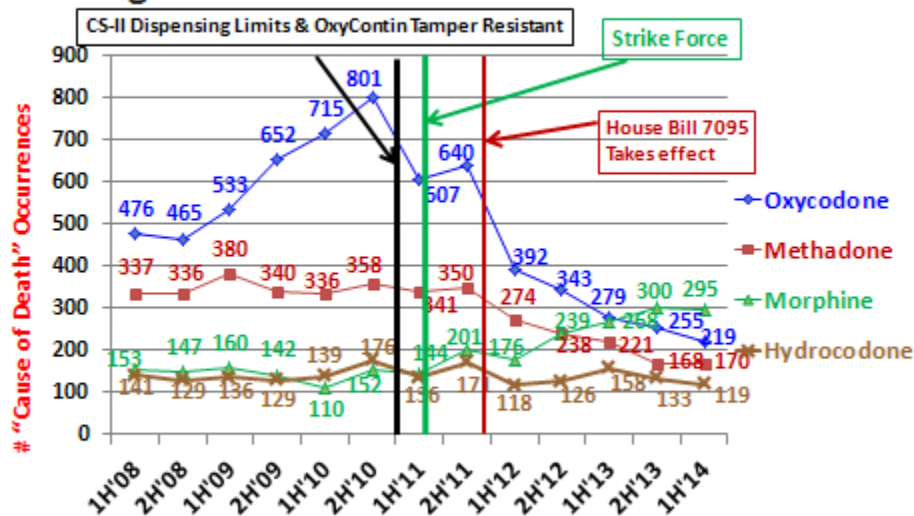
SOURCE: Florida Medical Examiners Commission Reports 2000-2014

In 2010 there were 6,608 opioids detected in deceased person in Florida. That toll steadily decline 23-percent to 5,085 by 2013 and then stabilized to a projected 5,106 opioid occurrences in 2014 based on the first half of that year. Seventy percent of the 2014 deaths are related to 5 of the 11 opioids tracked by the Florida Medical Examiners Commission. Those 5 are morphine, oxycodone, hydrocodone, methadone, and fentanyl totaling 1,778 medical examiner occurrences in the first six months of 2014 across Florida and 144 in Palm Beach County. Drug occurrences include reports where the drug was detected in a decedent and considered to be “present” at the time of death plus those cases when the drug was determined to be a “cause of death.” Actions to reduce the problem included:

Florida’s Response to Rx Drug Abuse

- **July 2010** – **Senate Bill 2272** Legal authority to close “Pill Mills” and limited practitioner dispensing of CS Schedule II to 3-day supply
- **August 2010** – **Tamper-resistant OxyContin®**.
- **March 2011** – Law Enforcement Strike Force
- **July 2011** - **House Bill 7095** Comprehensive law bans practitioner dispensing of CS II and new regulations. Permits **PDMP** to operate.

Number of Selected **Lethal** Rx Opioid Occurrences Among Deceased Persons in Florida 2008 to 2014

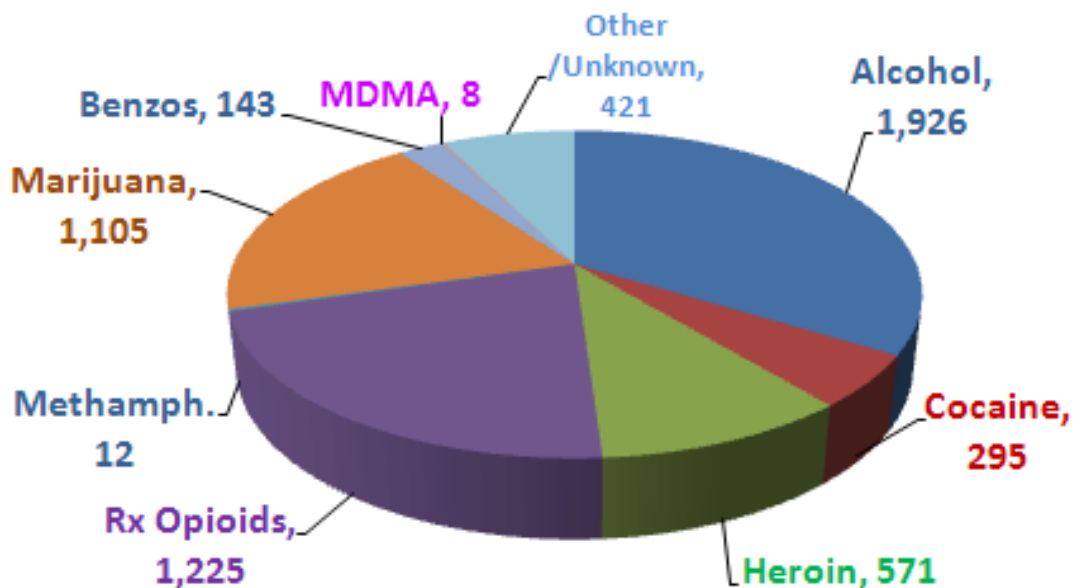


Source: FDLE – Drugs Identified In Deceased Persons by Florida Medical Examiners
Jan 2008 - Jun 2014 Reports

There were 5,917 hospital admissions for non-fatal opioid poisonings (overdoses) in Florida during 2013, the most current reporting year. Among these patients 88 percent did not have a diagnosis of an opioid dependency and were considered to be legally prescribed users of these medications. There were 321 such hospital admissions in Palm Beach County during 2013 with 87 percent being without an opioid dependency admission. The number of these hospital admissions peaked in 2011 in the State of Florida at 6,464, but continued to increase in Palm Beach County to the 321 admissions in 2013.

There were 1,225 admissions for opiates other than heroin reported as primary treatment admissions in Palm Beach County as compared to 586 in Broward County and 231 in Miami-Dade County during 2014. The 2014 admissions in Palm Beach County accounted for 21.5 percent of all addiction treatment primary admissions ranking second to alcohol at 34 percent. Males accounted for 55 percent of the prescription opioid treatment clients and 22 percent were between 18 and 25 years of age, 49 percent were aged 26-34, and 28 percent were 35 and older. Injecting drug use was the primary route of administration for 80 percent of these clients for whom a method of use was reported (n=625). Heroin accounted for an additional 10 percent of the 2014 primary admissions for a combined rate of 31.5 percent for all opiates (heroin and opioids).

Addiction Treatment Admissions in Palm Beach County by Primary Drug: 2014



Source: Florida Department of Children and Families

There were 1,774 prescription opioid crime laboratory reports, or 6 percent of the 26,992 total primary, secondary, and tertiary NFLIS reports for Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties combined in 2014. This category of drugs ranked fourth among all substances analyzed in the three counties in 2014. The number of prescription opioid crime laboratory reports increased 87-percent between 2013 and 2014.

**Top 10 Most Frequently Identified Drugs of Total
Reports from South Florida Crime Labs Reports CY 2014¹**

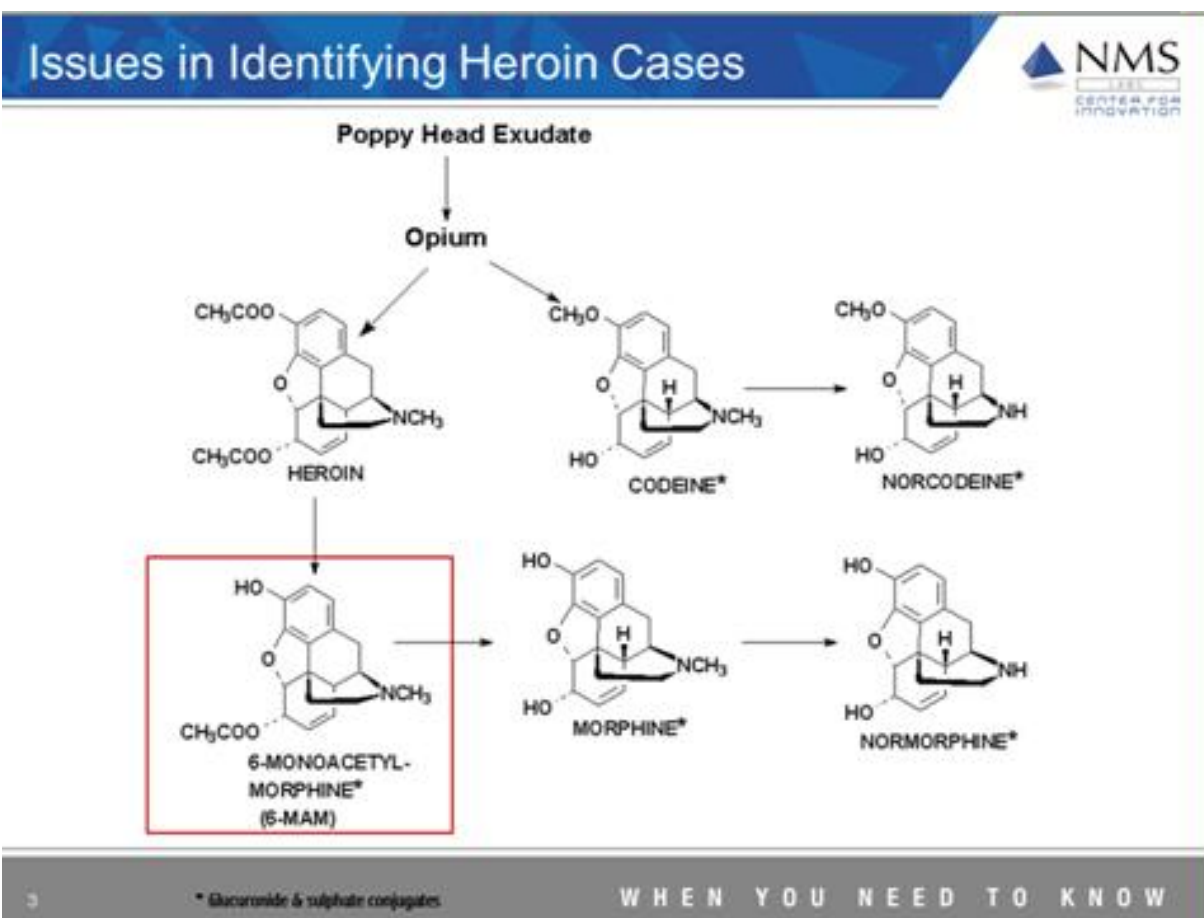
Drug	2014	% Δ vs. 2013
COCAINE	8,942	Down 12%
Marijuana/CANNABIS	4,587	Down 13%
Synthetic CATHINONES	1,811	Up 46%
Rx OPIOIDS	1,744	Up 87%*
Rx BENZODIAZEPINES	1,521	Up 79%*
HEROIN	1,333	Up 44%
METHAMPHETAMINE	387	Up 83%
AMPHETAMINE	306	Up 410%
Synthetic CANNABINOIDS	228	Up 57%
ACETAMINOPHEN	213	Up 228%
ALL OTHER	5,920	Up 84%
TOTAL	26,992	Up 17%

¹Data are for January–December 2014 and include primary, secondary, and tertiary reports.
SOURCE: US DEA - NFLIS data retrieved March 23, 2015

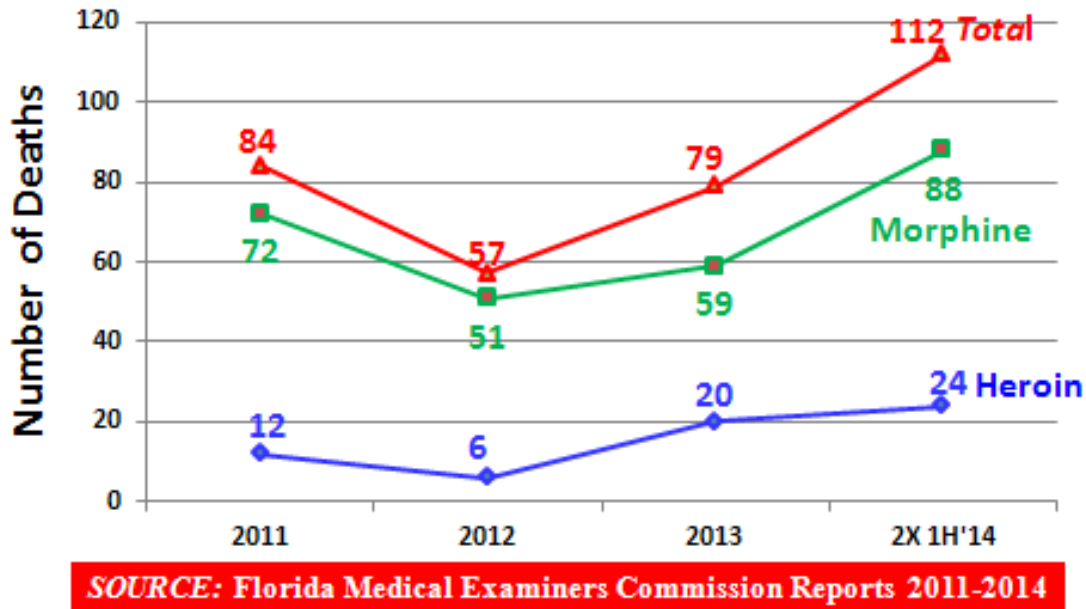
In the first six months of 2014 there were 156 heroin-related deaths across Florida including 12 in Palm Beach County. The local heroin decedents included 5 who were aged 18-24, 3 between 25 and 34 years of age, 3 aged 35-50, and 1 older than 50. There were an additional 44 morphine deaths in Palm Beach County in the first half of 2014. Because heroin rapidly metabolizes to morphine in the body, it is possible that many of the morphine deaths may be related to heroin abuse.

Metabolism of Heroin

- Heroin (diacetylmorphine) is metabolized to morphine.
- Heroin undergoes rapid deacetylation to 6-monoacetylmorphine (6-MAM), which is about 6 times more potent than morphine.
- 6-MAM is further deacetylated to morphine.
- The effects of heroin are attributed to the combined effect of heroin, 6-MAM, and morphine.
- Diacetylmorphine → 6-monoacetylmorphine (6-MAM) → Morphine



Heroin and Morphine Deaths in Palm Beach County: 2010 -2X 1st Half 2014



There were 571 admissions for heroin reported as primary treatment admissions in Palm Beach County during 2014. Males accounted for 60 percent of the local heroin clients in 2014 and 24 percent were between 18 and 25 years of age, 44 percent were 26-34, and 30 percent were aged 35 and older. Injecting was the primary route of administration for 90 percent of the heroin clients.

There were 1,333 heroin crime laboratory reports, or 5 percent of the 26,992 total primary, secondary, and tertiary NFLIS reports for Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties combined in 2014. This category of drugs ranked sixth among all substances analyzed in the three counties in 2014. The number of heroin crime laboratory reports increased 44-percent between 2013 and 2014.

Synthetic Cathinones

The most dramatic emerging drug problem in Southeastern Florida is the second generation synthetic cathinone, *alpha*-PVP, sold using the street name “Flakka” rather than the term “gravel” as found in most other parts of the country. Cathinones are chemically designed to mimic but be more potent than the stimulant in the Khat plant found in Africa and the Middle East. Drugs from the first generation of synthetic cathinones were known as “bath salt” stimulants and are now illegal as is *alpha*-PVP. Flakka is a colloquial Hispanic word referring to

a slender, elegant, and beautiful woman who charms all. But this charmer is a killer. There have been 25 deaths among *alpha*-PVP users in Broward County between September 2014 and June 15, 2015 as well as 3 deaths from ethylone, the latest synthetic cathinone to appear. Numerous cases of excited delirium among Flakka users have been broadcast around the world. Broward County hospitals are reporting an estimated 15-20 *alpha*-PVP overdose or excited delirium emergency department cases per day since March 2015.

Excited delirium is a syndrome of seriously elevated body temperature (or hyperthermia) as well as a breakdown of muscle tissue that leads to the release of muscle fiber contents into the blood (or rhabdomyolysis) and kidney failure. It is often linked to violent behavior by paranoid users with super human strength who are convinced that are being chased by imaginary animals, police, or people who are trying to kill them. Excited delirium can also result in death.

EXCITED DELIRIUM

Excited Delirium is a medical emergency that presents itself as a law enforcement problem.
- Early and advanced coordination with EMS is key.

Excited Delirium is not easy to recognize.
- Training is important so that dispatch or other personnel recognize behavioral signs.

Excited Delirium containment requires backup personnel.
- Do not approach until it is safe to do so and always ensure several officers are present.

Excited Delirium victims exhibit superhuman strength and are impervious to pain.
- Do not "Hog Tie"

Excited Delirium is a life-threatening emergency.

Sold in quantities as small as 1/10th of a gram for as little as \$3.00 to \$5.00 it is highly profitable for the dealers whose actual cost is very low. *Alpha*-PVP is sold over the internet from China for about \$1,500 per kilogram and shipped by world-wide express services to local mid-level dealers in packages containing from 1 to 5 kilograms. A single kilogram provides up to 10,000 doses at a 1/10th of a gram which selling for \$5.00 each will yield \$50,000 in sales or a profit of \$48,500. However it also requires high volume in sales. Yet with a retail price of \$5.00, most anyone can afford it and with a highly addictive drug repeat business is assured. Thus younger and poorer populations are targeted as customers. It is being actively sold to and by homeless persons.

There were 132 synthetic cathinone deaths in Florida during 2013 including 31 where the drug was considered to be a cause of death. There were an additional 72 medical examiner occurrences in the first half of 2014 with 19 attributed as being the cause of death.

In all of Florida, there were 25 Florida Poison Information Center exposure calls for *alpha*-PVP in the first 4 months of 2015; these included 10 in Palm Beach County, 13 in Broward County, and 2 calls from Miami-Dade County. Exposure calls involve cases usually from a hospital emergency department where a patient is experiencing adverse consequences after smoking or ingesting a substance, but the count of exposure calls are fewer than the actual number of cases.

In Southeastern Florida, there were 1,811 crime lab reports for synthetic cathinones in 2014, up from 1,242 in 2013, 496 in 2012, and 74 in 2011. Among the 2014 crime lab reports there were 659 for ethylone, 576 for *alpha*-PVP, 471 for methylone, 53 for dimethylone (bk-MDDMA), 24 for butylone, 17 for MDPV, 6 for 4-MEC, 3 for dibutylone, 2 for brephedrone (4-BMC).

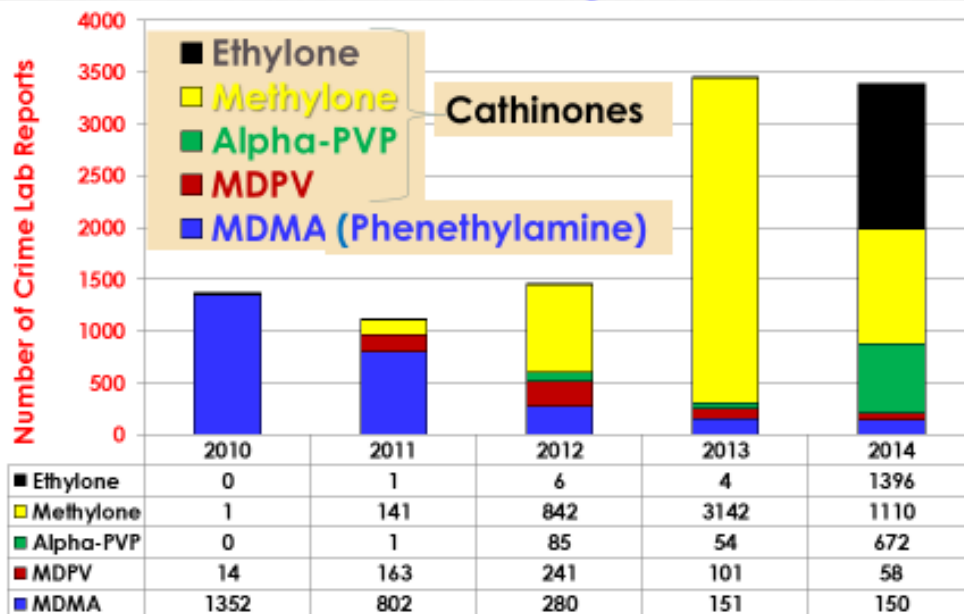
**Number of Crime Lab Cases of Synthetic Cathinones
(sold as “ecstasy,” “Molly,” or “Flakka”) in 2014:
USA, South Florida, and State of Florida**

Synthetic Cathinone	USA	South Florida*	Florida
Methylone	3,872	471	1,110
<i>alpha</i> -PVP	2,720	576	672
Ethylone	3,862	659	1,396
Total	10,454	1,706	3,178

**Source: US DEA - National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS)
(State of Florida 2014 Annual Data queried February 13, 2015)
(USA and South Florida 2014 Annual Data queried: March 23, 2015)
* South Florida Data includes Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties**

Ethylone and methylone are mostly sold as “Molly” capsules. There were only 86 crime lab cases for MDMA in 2014 down from 299 in 2011 in Southeastern Florida. Statewide the number declined from 1,352 in 2010 to 150 in 2014.

The Changing Face of Ecstasy, Molly, Flakka, et al in Florida Crime Lab Reports 2010-2014



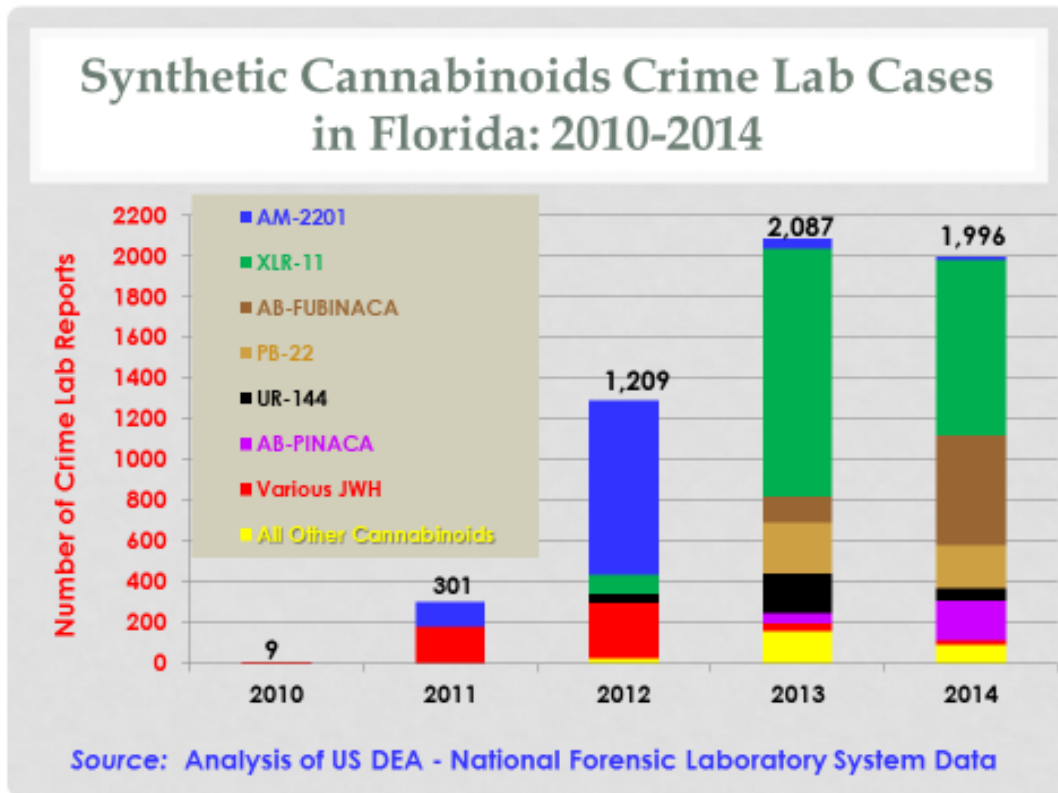
Source: Analysis of US DEA - National Forensic Laboratory System Data

Synthetic Cannabinoids

The availability of unregulated synthetic cannabinoids increased via retail sale throughout 2010 and the first half of 2011. Their use was mostly among those who were subject to frequent drug testing that did not identify these products. However, drug tests are now available for their detection for some but not all of these ever changing substances. Also, the five synthetic cannabinoids that were federally scheduled in 2011 were made illegal by the 2011 Florida Legislature, which also banned other cannabinoids in 2012. There were 175 exposure calls statewide to Florida Poison Information Centers in 2014 for various synthetic cannabinoids (e.g., "K2" or "Spice"), down from 194 in 2013 and 537 in 2012 and 517 calls in 2011. Among the calls in 2014, 3 were from Palm Beach County, 2 were from Broward County, and 25 were from Miami-Dade County. In the first 4 months of 2015, there were 88 poison exposure calls for synthetic cannabinoids in all of Florida as compared to 34 in the first four months of 2014 and 78 in the same time period during 2013. Of the exposure calls from January through April 2015, 14 were from Miami-Dade, 10 were from Broward, and 1 was from Palm Beach County. Nationally there have been 1,900 Poison Information Center exposure calls for synthetic cannabinoids between January and April 2015 with high numbers reported in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

There were also 2 Synthetic Cannabinoid deaths in the first half of 2014 across Florida with 1 of the occurrences being considered a cause of death compared to 26 such occurrences in calendar year 2013 of which 13 were considered to be a cause of death,

Across all of Florida the number of crime lab reports for synthetic cannabinoids increase from 9 in 2010 to 1,996 in 2014.



In Southeastern Florida there were 228 crime lab reports for synthetic cannabinoids in 2014, up from 145 in 2013, 190 in 2012, and 19 in 2011. Among the 14 different synthetic cannabinoids reported in 2014 were 88 items for XLR-11, 55 for AB-Fubinaca, 26 for PB-22, 20 for Tetrahydrocannabinols, 17 for AB-Pinaca, 5 for AB-Chminaca, 5 for UR-144, 3 for 5-Fluoro AMB, 3 for THJ 2201, 2 for AM-2201, as well as one each for 5F-PB-22, AKB48 N, JWH-018, and JWH-122.

Methamphetamine/Amphetamines

Indicators of methamphetamine abuse reflect continuing increases in the drug's use in 2014 and 2015, yet remained at low levels relative to other substances and other areas of the nation. Methamphetamine was cited as the primary drug for addiction treatment by 12 clients in Palm Beach County during 2014. However private treatment counselors continued to report a resurgence in methamphetamine abuse among men who have sex with men beginning in 2012.

It is suspected that the methamphetamine being used locally is produced in Mexico. Domestic clandestine laboratory production in Florida mostly appears still to be in the north and central parts of the State using the 2-liter soda bottle "shake and bake" method that yields a relatively small amount of methamphetamine for personal use by the "cook" and for sharing with those who may have helped supply the precursor, pseudoephedrine.

Methamphetamine was detected among 109 deceased persons during the first half of 2014 statewide in Florida, compared with 81 in the first half of 2013 and 169 for the full year of 2013. Methamphetamine was considered a cause of death in 40 (37 percent) of the cases during the first half of 2014. There were also 132 reports of amphetamine detected among decedents across Florida in the first 6 months of 2014, compared to 111 such occurrences in the first half of 2013. Amphetamine was considered the cause of death in 28 (or 21 percent) of the cases in the first half of 2014.

There were 12 primary treatment admissions for methamphetamine in Palm Beach County during 2014. Males accounted for 42 percent of the clients in 2014 and 2 clients were under 18 years of age, none were between 18 and 25 years of age, one-third were between 26 and 34 years old, and half were 35 or older. Injecting was the primary route of administration for 75 percent of the clients for whom a method of use was reported.

There were 387 methamphetamine crime laboratory reports, or 1.4 percent of the 26,992 total primary, secondary, and tertiary NFLIS reports for Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties combined in 2014. Methamphetamine ranked seventh among all substances analyzed in the three counties in 2014. The number of methamphetamine crime laboratory reports increased 83-percent between 2013 and 2014. There were also 306 amphetamine crime laboratory reports, or 1.1 percent of the 2014 total ranking eighth among all substances and representing a 410-percent increase from the 60 amphetamine crime lab reports in 2013.

Vaping

The Oxford English Dictionary's word of the year for 2014 was "vape" used to describe inhaling and exhaling vapors produced by an electronic cigarette or similar device. Usage of the word doubled last year. While most use of vaporizing devices are for liquid nicotine, illicit drug use is increasing being vaped including marijuana, methamphetamine, *alpha*-PVP ("Flakka"), crushed and liquefied pharmaceuticals. An even more advanced vaping delivery system for marijuana wax or "budder" is called dabbing and uses a special water pipe with metal that can withstand extreme temperatures from a butane torch.

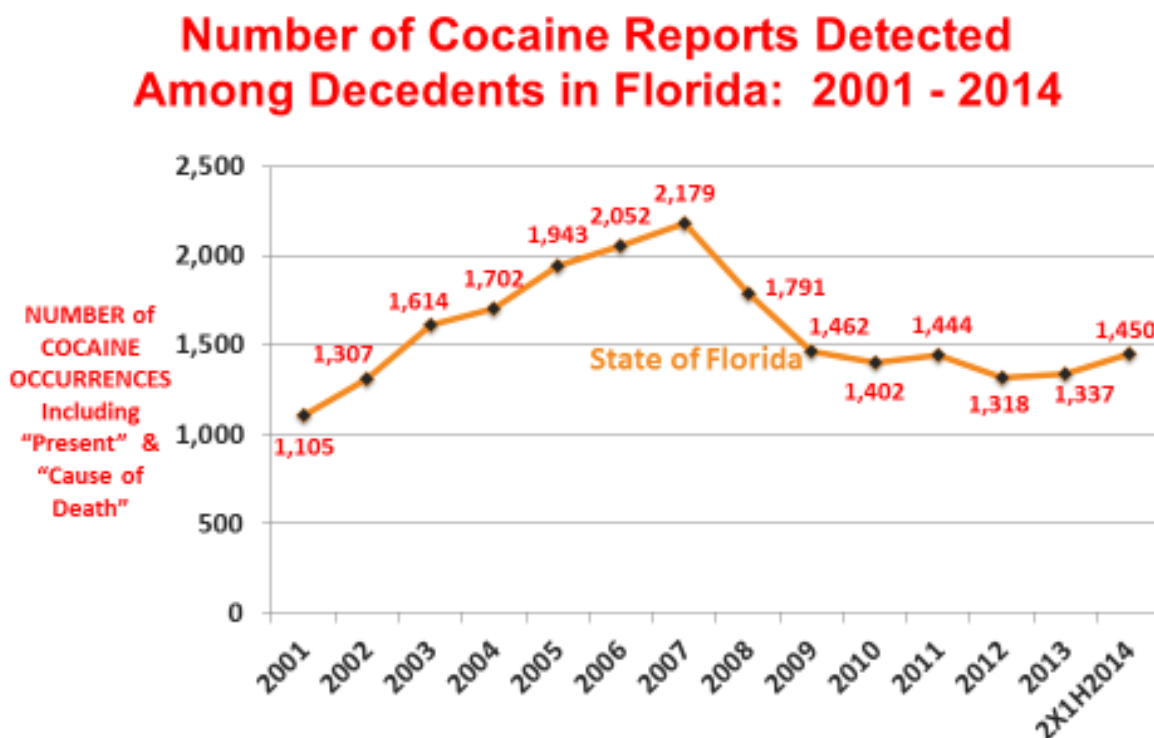
Marijuana wax is produced by soaking left over marijuana leaves and stems of plants in a solvent such as butane which extracts various components of the plant including any number of cannabinoids which are the active drugs in the marijuana. The gooey residue is then allowed to dry-out resulting in a sticky paste ranging in color from brown to dark green or yellow. The wax can be smeared onto a marijuana joint or tobacco cigarette, placed in a water pipe, or most often melted in a vaporizer or electronic cigarette device. The inhaled wax vapors have a much higher dose level of not only THC but other cannabis ingredients. Products called marijuana wax could also be made from synthetic marijuana chemicals bought online from China.

Section III. Update on Continuing Drug Use Problems

This section of the report monitors the most current available data on issues related to major substances with ongoing but generally stable indicators of abuse between the two most current reporting periods 2013 vs. 2014.

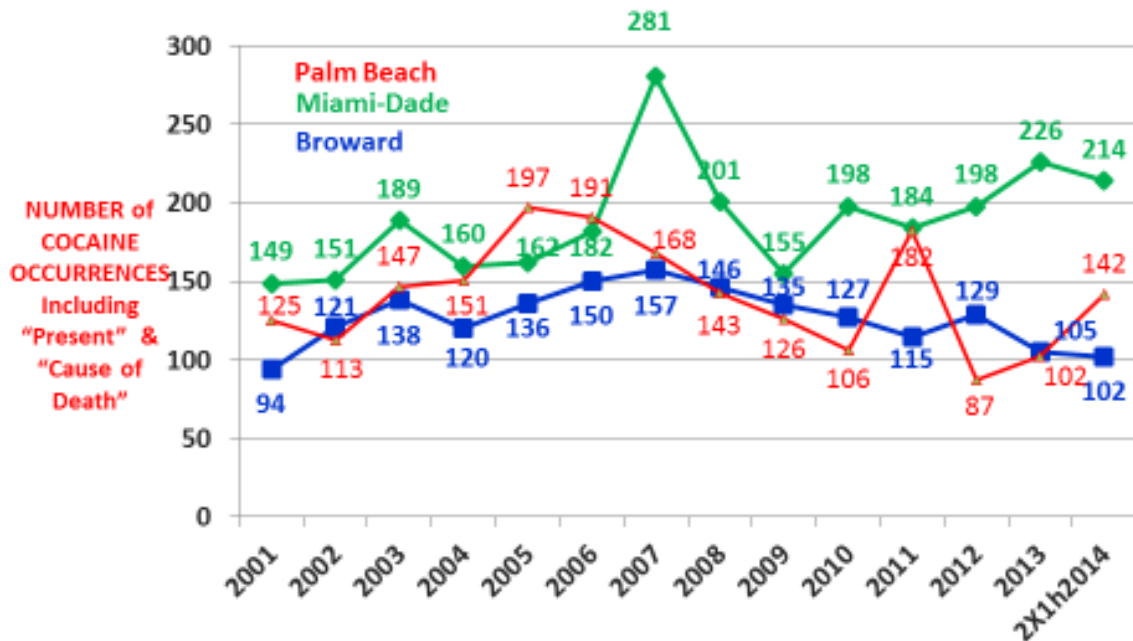
Cocaine/Crack

The proportion of indicators for consequences of cocaine use in Southeast Florida as compared to other drugs continues to be among the highest rates in the Nation. The relatively steady decline in cocaine problems from 2007 to 2010 stabilized through 2012. However the numbers of deaths in which cocaine was detected increased 53-percent in Palm Beach County from 2012 to 2014 as compared to a more modest 10-percent increase across all of Florida. The percent of deaths considered to be caused by cocaine among the total number of cases where the drug was detected also increased across the State and locally. The majority of cocaine-related deaths and addiction treatment admissions were among those older than 35 years. Many of the indicators reflected cocaine use in combination with other drugs, including a significant majority of cocaine-related deaths.



SOURCE: Florida Medical Examiners Commission Annual Report Jan-Jun 2014

Number of Cocaine Reports Detected Among Decedents in Southeastern Florida: 2001 - 2014



SOURCE: Florida Medical Examiners Commission Annual Report Jan-Jun 2014

There were 184 primary treatment admissions for cocaine smoking (crack) and an additional 111 for powder cocaine in Palm Beach County during 2014. These cases accounted for a total of 295 (or 5 percent) of the 5,706 primary treatment admissions in publicly-funded programs (including 1,926 for alcohol) in Palm Beach County during 2014, as reported by the Florida Department of Children and Families. Females accounted for 57 percent of the 2014 clients, and 56 percent ($n=164$) were age 35 or older; five were below the age of 18.

Cocaine continued to be the most commonly analyzed substance by local crime laboratories. It accounted for 8,942 NFLIS reports, or 33 percent of the 26,992 total primary, secondary, and tertiary crime laboratory reports for Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties combined in 2014. This represents a 12-percent decline compared to the 10,147 cocaine crime laboratory reports in 2013.

Projections from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) Substate Data estimate that there were 19,507 users of cocaine in the past year aged 12 and above living in Palm Beach County.

Marijuana/Cannabis

Marijuana rank third as a primary substance for addiction treatment after alcohol and prescription opioids in Palm Beach County. Consequences of marijuana use and addiction continued at high levels, particularly among adolescents and young adults.

Cannabinoids were detected in 492 deaths statewide in Florida during the first half of 2014, a 23-percent increase from the 401 occurrences during the first six months of 2013. One of the occurrences was considered to be a cause of death.

There were 1,105 primary treatment admissions for marijuana in Palm Beach County during 2014. These cases accounted for 19 percent of the 5,706 primary treatment admissions. Among the 2014 marijuana clients, 69 percent were male; 58 percent were younger than 18; 23 percent were age 18–25; 12 percent were 26–34; and 6 percent were age 35 or older.

Cannabis/THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) accounted for 4,587 crime laboratory reports, or 17 percent of the 26,992 total primary, secondary, and tertiary NFLIS reports for Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties combined in 2014. This total decreased 13-percent from the number of marijuana crime laboratory cases in 2013. As in previous years, marijuana ranked second among all substances analyzed in the three counties.

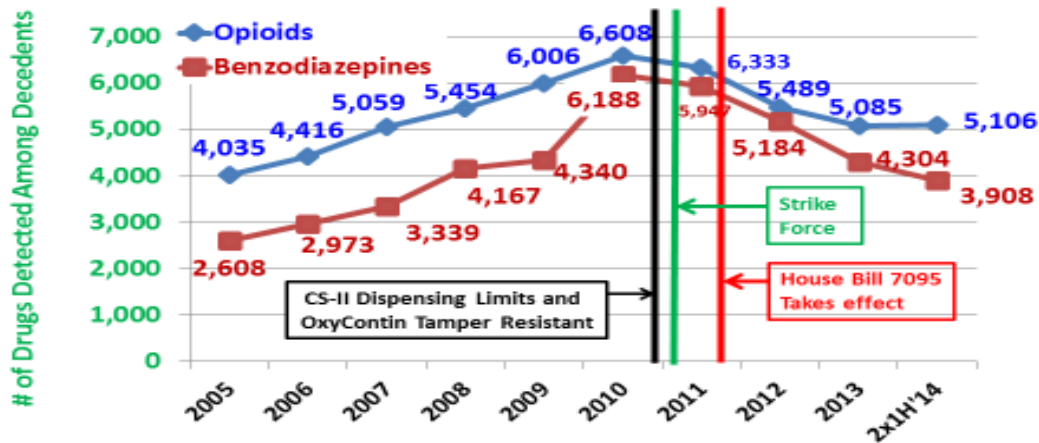
Projections from the NSDUH estimate that there were 59,321 current (past 30 day) marijuana users aged 12 and above living in Palm Beach County. There was not a significant difference in the current use of marijuana reported by high school students between 2011 and 2013 in Palm Beach County according to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey results. However, the Florida Youth Substance Abuse Surveys revealed the rate of Palm Beach County middle school students reporting past 30-day use of marijuana increased from 6.9 percent in 2012 to 10.1 percent in 2014 while the rate for high school students remained stable at 36 percent.

Nonmedical Use of Prescription Benzodiazepines

Benzodiazepines in general and specifically alprazolam (Xanax®) continued as a substantial problem in South Florida, particularly when used non-medically in combination with other pharmaceuticals, alcohol, and illicit drugs. There were 1,954 reports of a benzodiazepine present in deceased persons across Florida in the first half of 2014, representing a 15-percent decrease in the total number of benzodiazepine occurrences compared with the first half of 2013 ($n=2,287$) and a 25-percent decrease since the first half of 2012 ($n=2,622$).

Of the benzodiazepine occurrences in the first half of 2014, 41 percent were considered “a cause of death.” Among the benzodiazepine medical examiner (ME) reports statewide, 577 were attributed to alprazolam, 302 to nordiazepam (Nordaz®), 270 were for diazepam (Valium®); 231 for temazepam (Restoril®, and Normison®), and 574 were attributed to 6 other benzodiazepines.

Number of Nonmedical Rx Opioids and Benzodiazepine Reports Detected among Decedents in Florida 2005 – 2X 1st H 2014



Source: FDLE – Drugs Identified In Deceased Persons by Florida Medical Examiners
Jan 2005 - Jun 2014 Reports

In Palm Beach County there were 40 reports of alprazolam detected in deceased persons during the first half of 2014, of which 70 percent were considered lethal. There were also 34 reports of diazepam detected in deceased persons with 47 percent considered to be the cause of death.

There were 143 admissions for benzodiazepines reported as primary treatment admissions in Palm Beach County during 2014. Females accounted for 56 percent of the 2014 benzodiazepine clients.

Prescription benzodiazepines accounted for 1,521 crime laboratory reports, or 6 percent of the 26,992 total primary, secondary, and tertiary NFLIS reports for Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties combined in 2014. This category of drugs ranked fifth among all substances analyzed in the three counties in 2014. The number of prescription benzodiazepine crime laboratory reports increased 79-percent between 2013 and 2014.

Drug Abuse Trends in Palm Beach County, Florida: July 2015

Appendix

MS EXCEL WORKSHEETS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT <http://www.pbcsac.org/>

- Population Demographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics
- Prevalence of Drug Use National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) Substate Data
- Prevalence of Drug Use by Age Groups 2010-2012 NSDUH Substate Data
- Prevalence of Drug Use among Palm Beach County High School Students as reported by the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)
- Numbers of Addiction Treatment Admissions by Primary Drug in Palm Beach County 2014
- Profile of 2014 Treatment Admissions by Primary Drug in Palm Beach County
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention Drug Poisoning Deaths 2009-2012
- Opioid Poisoning Hospitalization with and without a Dependency Diagnosis 2007 -2013
- HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Cases
- National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS) Crime Lab Cases -2014
- NFLIS Crime Lab Cases for Novel Psychoactive Drugs (NPS) Synthetic Cathinones, Cannabinoids, and Phenethylamines
- Drug-Related Deaths reported by Florida Medical Examiners Commission – January to June 2014
- Florida Poison Information Center Exposure and Information Calls 2014 and January-April 2015