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ASCLD Emerging Drugs Task Force 2018-2019 Update

ASCLD and the Emerging Drugs Task Force are participants and contributors to the following national opioid crisis initiatives. The information below can assist crime laboratories and ASCLD members with resources and current activities addressing our challenges and responses.

- NFLIS-Tox National Data Collection
<https://www.nflis.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/>

NFLIS-Drug is a seized drug data collection project by the DEA that has been in service for years. Many crime laboratories across the country participate by contributing results of drug analysis in their jurisdictions. (Reports are available via <https://www.nflis.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/Reports.aspx>.)

NFLIS-Tox was initiated in early 2019, and expands the collection and subsequent reports to toxicological data in both antemortem and postmortem disciplines. Laboratories providing human performance, driving toxicology, or postmortem toxicology are encouraged to participate. Limited funds may also be available for LIMS implementations of the data collection.

- DEA Synth-Opioids Real-Time Communication Network
<https://www.ascld.org/opioid-resources/>
Synth-Opioids@usdoj.gov

A network of forensic chemists, toxicologists, coroners, medical examiners, and other stakeholders to address the analytical challenges associated with emerging and novel synthetic opioids.

- HIDTA ODMap Data Collection
<http://hidta.org/ODMap>

ODMap collects real-time data on drug overdose surveillance from first responders, hospitals, medical examiners, and coroners. Data collection is done through mobile devices (for on-scene availability) and other electronic means. Mapping and access to other locations of overdoses are provided.

- HIDTA Science Trends Open Network Exchange (STONE)

By invitation only to crime laboratories (drug analytical units) and law enforcement, the STONE monthly calls connect interdiction teams to drug scientists for rapid discussion of current issues and trends. Interested crime laboratories should contact the ASCLD EDTF chair Bruce Houlihan for more information.

- Bureau of Justice Assistance Grants

https://www.bja.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?Program_ID=72

The BJA Comprehensive Opioid and Abuse Program (COAP) is providing funds to combat the opioid epidemic. In meetings the ASCLD EDTF shared with the BJA grant coordinators, DOJ is very interested in receiving applications from crime laboratories in this space and applying for equipment is encouraged.

- CDC Availability (for DEA Licensees) of Fentanyl Standards

<https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/dls/erb opioid kits.html>

In partnership with Cayman Chemical and Cerilliant, the CDC is funding fentanyl and opiate traceable reference standards for DEA-registered laboratories.

- Industrial Hemp vs. Marijuana

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2018/12/14/the-farm-bill-hemp-and-cbd-explainer/>

2018 Farm Bill removes hemp from the definition of marihuana in the federal Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. § 812(c)) and establishes regulatory framework for the commercial production of hemp. States are allowed to apply to USDA for primary regulatory authority over the production of hemp, and must have procedure for testing THC levels.

- SWGDRUG and AAfs Opioid and Emerging Drugs Activities

<http://www.swgdrug.org/opioids.htm>

<https://www.aafs.org/home-page/meetings/aafs-71st-annual-scientific-meeting-baltimore-maryland-2019/breakfast-seminars/breakfast-seminar-4/>

SWGDRUG has published an extensive list of resources and links related to the opioid crisis. Additionally, the general site also publishes analytical recommendations, drug monographs, and other documents.

- CDC Enhanced State Opioid Overdose Surveillance (ESOOS) and OD2A

<https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/foa/state-opioid-mm.html>

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=309335>

The CDC ESOOS program (currently transitioning to OD2A) collects mortality and morbidity data from medical examiners and coroners. The data provides opioid surveillance information nation-wide. OD2A is also providing grants to increase the response and timeliness of the data. ASCLD is in an ongoing, very active dialog with the CDC to support national data collection efforts, fund needed equipment for laboratories, and unify many of the data collection efforts.

- National Drug Early Warning System
<https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics/national-drug-early-warning-system-ndews>

NDEWS is communication network of diverse stakeholders discussing current drug trends and abuse; and sharing scientific, policy, health, and other information.

- Economic Impact of the Opioid Crisis on Forensic Science
Dr. Paul Speaker (West Virginia University)

Dr. Paul Speaker is the co-founder and an integral partner with ASCLD on the FORESIGHT initiative. One of his recent areas of study is the impact of the opioid epidemic on crime laboratories and governments. As he reports, both state budgets and crime laboratory resources are significantly influenced by the crisis, and the impact extends to all disciplines, not just those directly related to opioid analysis.

- NIJ and FTCOE Opioids and Emerging Drugs Forum: July 18-19, 2019 – Marriott Metro Hotel, Washington, DC

The FTCOE is holding a two-day event in July covering a very diverse scope of topics relating to opioid and emerging drugs issues. The conference will include topics for public policy, crime laboratories, law enforcement, data collection efforts, best practices, etc.