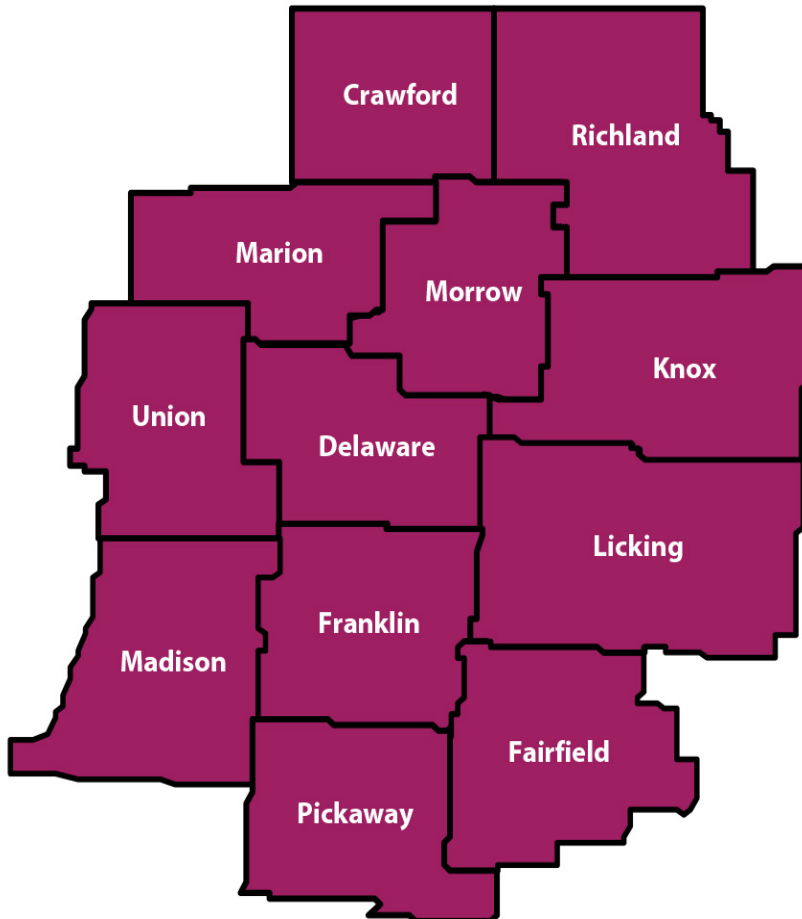




## Drug Abuse Trends in the Columbus Region



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**Data Sources for the Columbus Region**

This regional report was based upon qualitative data collected via focus group interviews. Participants were active and recovering drug users recruited from alcohol and other drug treatment programs in Franklin and Licking counties. Data triangulation was achieved through comparison of participant data to qualitative data collected from regional community professionals (treatment providers and law enforcement) via focus group interviews, as well as to data surveyed from the Columbus Police Crime Lab, the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) London Crime Lab, which serves central and southern Ohio, and OhioMHAS' Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral for Treatment (SBIRT) program which operates in federally qualified health centers in the region. In addition,

data were abstracted from the National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS) which collects results from drug chemistry analyses conducted by state and local forensic laboratories across Ohio. All secondary data are summary data of cases processed from July through December 2016. In addition to these data sources, Ohio media outlets were queried for information regarding regional drug abuse for January through June 2017.

*Note:* OSAM participants were asked to report on drug use/knowledge pertaining to the past six months prior to the interview; thus, current secondary data correspond to the reporting period of participants.

## Regional Profile

Indicator <sup>1</sup>	Ohio	Columbus Region	OSAM Drug Consumers
Total Population, 2016	11,614,373	2,696,353	41
Gender (female), 2016	51.0%	50.6%	39.0%
Whites, 2016	82.5%	78.4%	73.2%
African Americans, 2016	12.8%	14.9%	26.8%
Hispanic or Latino Origin, 2016	3.7%	3.8%	0.0% <sup>2</sup>
High School Graduation Rate, 2015	89.1%	90.2%	81.6% <sup>3</sup>
Median Household Income, 2015	\$51,086	\$58,394	\$16,000-19,999 <sup>4</sup>
Persons Below Poverty Level, 2015	14.8%	14.4%	51.4% <sup>5</sup>

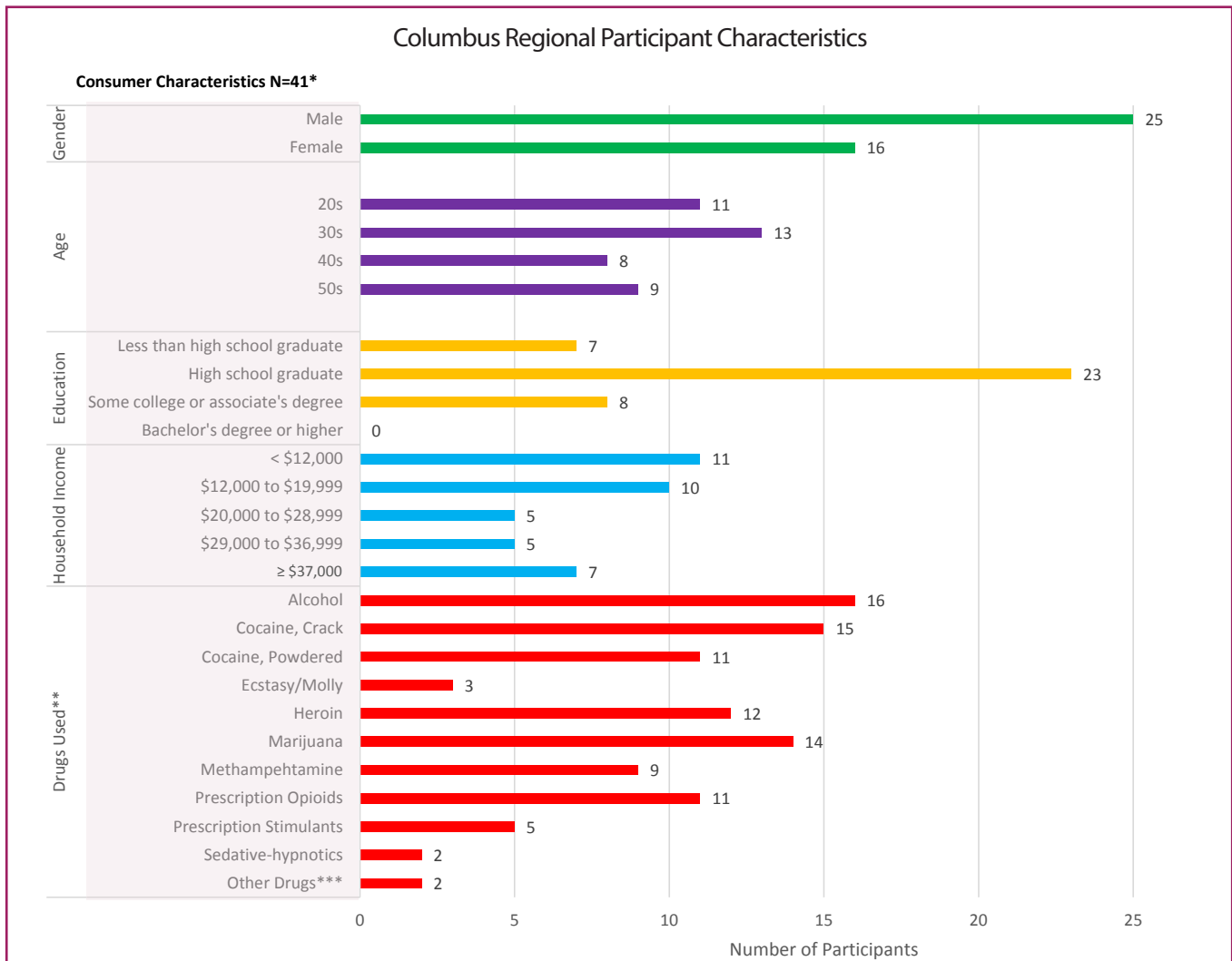
<sup>1</sup> Ohio and Columbus region statistics were derived from the most recent US Census and Ohio Department of Education data; OSAM drug consumers were participants for this reporting period: January-June 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Hispanic or Latino Origin was unable to be determined for 4 participants due to missing and/or invalid data.

<sup>3</sup> Education level was unable to be determined for 3 participants due to missing and/or invalid data.

<sup>4</sup> Participants reported income by selecting a category that best represented their household's approximate income for the previous year. Income was unable to be determined for 3 participants due to missing and/or invalid data.

<sup>5</sup> Poverty status was unable to be determined for 4 participants due to missing and/or invalid data.



\*Not all participants filled out forms completely; therefore, numbers may not equal 41.

\*\*Some respondents reported multiple drugs of use during the past six months.

\*\*\*Other drugs included: Suboxone® and lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD).

## Historical Summary

In the previous reporting period (June 2016 - January 2017), crack cocaine, heroin, marijuana, methamphetamine and Suboxone® remained highly available in the Columbus region; sedative-hypnotics were also highly available. Changes in availability during the reporting period included: increased availability for heroin, marijuana, methamphetamine and sedative-hypnotics; likely increased availability for crack cocaine and Suboxone®; decreased availability for synthetic marijuana; and likely decreased availability for prescription stimulants.

While many types of heroin were available in the region, participants continued to report black tar heroin as most available. Reportedly, white powdered heroin (aka “china white”) was also available in the region. Participants attributed the overall increased availability of heroin during the reporting period to increased demand, more people wanting the drug as more opiate users discovered that heroin provided a longer high, and for less money, than prescription opioids.

Participants reported that white powdered heroin in the region was most often adulterated with fentanyl and tranquilizers (carfentanil, aka “elephant tranquilizer”). Participants discussed that the availability and use of illicit fentanyl had increased during the reporting period. Moreover, participants noted that much of the heroin supply was actually straight fentanyl or a heroin-fentanyl mixture. The BCI London Crime Lab noted processing cases of heroin-fentanyl mixtures and straight fentanyl submitted as suspected heroin cases during the reporting period.

The most common route of administration for heroin remained intravenous injection. Participants observed that used needles were not often disposed of safely, and described coming across needles or needle remnants on the streets. They also noted needle sharing among users as a common practice. While participants described typical heroin users as white people of upper socio-economic status, they also observed an increase in African-American males using heroin. However, a few community professionals insisted that heroin was still predominantly used by white males.

Participants reported that methamphetamine was available in powdered and crystal forms throughout the region. However, they reported that crystal methamphetamine was the most prevalent form. Several participants described that methamphetamine was almost as available as heroin and

more available than crack cocaine. Both participants and law enforcement identified that crystal methamphetamine was imported (trafficked) by Mexican drug cartels. Law enforcement indicated that this form of the drug was manufactured in “super labs” in Mexico and sent to the U.S. along with heroin shipments. They explained that the cartels produced methamphetamine more cheaply than heroin.

Participants reported that methamphetamine in the region was most often adulterated with bath salts, fentanyl, pool shock (a highly chlorinated chemical used in swimming pools) and red sulphur. Overall, participants noted that the quality of methamphetamine had increased during the reporting period. Participants described typical methamphetamine users as white people aged 20-50 years. Treatment providers described typical users as white males.

Participants and community professionals discussed the increased availability of high-grade marijuana during the reporting period, including increased availability of extracts and concentrates (aka “dabs”). Both respondent groups indicated that much of the available high-grade products came from western states where marijuana use is legal in some form (i.e. California and Colorado).

Participants most often rated the overall quality of marijuana as ‘10’ on a scale of ‘0’ (poor quality, “garbage”) to ‘10’ (high quality). One participant explained that high-grade marijuana was so potent that it caused him to hallucinate. A treatment provider discussed that marijuana was sometimes adulterated with other substances to increase its potency, noting that users may smoke more than just marijuana. Overall, participants reported that the quality of high-grade marijuana had increased during the reporting period.

Participants and community professionals reported that Xanax® was the most available sedative-hypnotic in terms of widespread illicit use. Both groups of respondents explained that opiate users sought benzodiazepines to help alleviate withdrawal symptoms. One law enforcement officer likened the wide availability and use of Xanax® to that of oxycodone, and referred to the drug as “the new ‘oxy.’” Treatment providers noted that illicit Xanax® use had increased among teenagers; in fact, they described the typical illicit user of sedative-hypnotics as teens.

Lastly, participants indicated that the availability of Neurontin® had increased during the reporting period. They reported that illicit Neurontin® use had become popular and discussed the ease with which one could obtain a prescription from a doctor by feigning the symptoms of

restless leg syndrome. Participants continued to describe typical illicit Neurontin® users as people who use heroin, opiates or Suboxone® who sought the drug to help alleviate withdrawal symptoms.

## Current Trends

### Powdered Cocaine

Powdered cocaine is moderately available in the region. Participants most often reported the drug's current availability as '6' on a scale of '0' (not available, impossible to get) to '10' (highly available, extremely easy to get); the previous most common score was '5.' Participants remarked: *"I mean it's out there, but you don't hear about it like you used to; You gotta know somebody in my area [to obtain powdered cocaine]."* Treatment providers most often reported the current availability of powdered cocaine as '8,' while law enforcement most often reported it as '7,' the previous most common scores were '8' and '4,' respectively. A treatment provider commented, *"To do 'powder' (powdered cocaine) to them is a status symbol. Like, 'I'm dealin' and I'm rollin', big ballin' ... I'm not a 'crack head' (frequent crack cocaine user)."*

Corroborating data indicated that cocaine is available in the region. The Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral for Treatment (SBIRT) program reported that of the 65 individuals in the Columbus region who reported substance use during the past 30 days, 16.9% reported using cocaine on one or more days (SBIRT does not distinguish between powdered and crack cocaine). In addition, a query of the National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS) for the counties which comprise the Columbus region returned 886 cocaine cases reported during the past six months, of which 68.3% were Franklin County cases (there were 933 cases for the previous six months, of which 69.7% were Franklin County cases). NFLIS does not differentiate between powdered and crack cocaine cases.




Media outlets reported on law enforcement seizures and arrests in the region this reporting period. Whitehall Police (Franklin County) arrested one individual during the execution of a search after seizing 273 grams of cocaine and 16 grams of heroin ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), Jan. 13, 2017). Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) arrested a New York

man during a traffic stop in Somerford Township (Madison County) when criminal indicators prompted officers to search the man's vehicle; officers confiscated six pounds of cocaine and two pounds of heroin ([www.statepatrol.ohio.gov](http://www.statepatrol.ohio.gov), Feb. 7, 2017). Several law enforcement agencies in Crawford County collaborated to arrest a man in Galion responsible for trafficking cocaine and marijuana in the county ([www.otfca.net](http://www.otfca.net), Feb. 16, 2017). The Ohio Supreme Court reversed its decision to require the analysis of powdered cocaine for purity levels before sentencing drug trafficking offenders; the court ruled that the entire weight of the substance, including cutting agents like baking soda, will factor into the amount of the drug and subsequently in determining the sentence of offenders ([www.cantonrep.com](http://www.cantonrep.com), March 6, 2017). The Central Ohio Drug Enforcement Task Force purchased powdered cocaine on several occasions from a South Korean national who was also a university student in Licking County; the student faces immigration consequences for drug trafficking ([www.newarkadvocate.com](http://www.newarkadvocate.com), March 8, 2017). Regional law enforcement along with the Mansfield Police (Richland County) executed a search warrant of a home in Mansfield after U.S. Marshalls reported seeing drugs in plain sight during an investigation; officers arrested a man during the search after seizing cocaine, heroin and marijuana ([www.mansfieldnewsjournal.com](http://www.mansfieldnewsjournal.com), March 9, 2017).

Participants reported that the availability of powdered cocaine has decreased during the past six months. Several participants reported that powdered cocaine has been replaced by methamphetamine and heroin. Participants remarked: *"I quit doing that and started doing 'meth' (methamphetamine) ... Once I found meth, I quit doing that (powdered cocaine); You can still get it, but it's not [available] like it used to be."*




Treatment providers reported that the availability of powdered cocaine has remained the same during the past six months, while law enforcement reported that availability has increased. One treatment provider remarked, *"It probably hasn't changed much."* Law enforcement officers stated: *"Gone up in the last six months I'd say; I don't know if it's availability, or if it's just a switch [from heroin to cocaine] ... everybody's getting scared of heroin."*

The Columbus Police Crime Lab reported that the number of cocaine cases it processes has increased during the past six months, while the BCI London Crime Lab reported that the number of cases it processes has decreased; the labs do not typically differentiate between powdered and crack cocaine.

Powdered Cocaine	Reported Availability Change during the Past 6 Months	
	 Participants	Decrease
	 Law enforcement	Increase
	 Treatment providers	No change

Participants most often rated the current overall quality of powdered cocaine as '3' on a scale of '0' (poor quality, "garbage") to '10' (high quality); the previous most common score was '2-4'. Participants explained the low quality of the drug: *"It ain't always the same stuff; It all depends where you get it from; People are 'stepping on' (adulterating) it too much."*

Participants reported the top cutting agents (adulterants) for powdered cocaine as: baby laxatives, creatine and ether. Other adulterants mentioned included: aspirin and caffeine. One participant discussed, *"Yeah creatine, that's what I was thinking ... laxative, aspirin, they don't give a shit; It all depends ... it might be cut with this, with that."* Another participant explained, *"I mean none of the drugs are what they used to be. There's more dealers it seems like than users now. Everybody's trying to get high for free, so they'll buy it and they'll cut it and whoever they sell it to is cutting it in half and they're cutting it in half ... 'til you're getting garbage..."* Overall, participants reported that the quality of powdered cocaine has remained the same during the past six months.

Powdered Cocaine	Cutting Agents Reported by Crime Labs	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> diltiazem (high blood pressure medication)</li> <li> levamisole (livestock dewormer)</li> <li> local anesthetics (lidocaine and procaine)</li> </ul>	

Reports of current prices for powdered cocaine were consistent among participants with experience buying the drug. Reportedly, the most common quantity of purchase is a gram. Overall, participants reported that the price of powdered cocaine has remained the same during the past six months.

Powdered Cocaine	Current Prices for Powdered Cocaine	
	A gram	\$70
	1/16 ounce (aka "teener")	\$100
	1/8 ounce (aka "eight ball")	\$150
	1/2 ounce	\$600
	An ounce	\$1,200

Participants reported that the most common routes of administration for powdered cocaine remain snorting, followed by intravenous injection (aka "shooting"). Participants estimated that out of 10 powdered cocaine users, seven would snort and three would inject the drug. Participants discussed powdered cocaine as a "social drug" used with other people and that the route of administration for it depends on the preference of the user group. One participant explained, *"Like if you're a sniffer, your friends are mostly sniffers [thus you would snort powdered cocaine]. If you're a shooter, your friends are mostly shooters [thus you would shoot powdered cocaine]."*

Participants described typical powdered cocaine users as Hispanic and white males, people of higher socio-economic status, adolescents and college students. Participants remarked: *"I would say definitely the younger generation; Older white kids and younger white kids."* Treatment providers described typical users as drug dealers and young African-American males. A treatment provider remarked, *"A lot of your dealers will do powder."* Law enforcement could not provide a profile of a typical powdered cocaine user. One law enforcement officer stated, *"All of the above."*

### Crack Cocaine






Crack cocaine remains highly available in the region. Participants most often reported the drug's current availability as '9' on a scale of '0' (not available, impossible to get) to '10' (highly available, extremely easy to get); the previous most common score was '10'. Participants reported: *"Where there's heroin, there's 'crack' (crack cocaine), too; All day, every day [crack cocaine is accessible]."* Treatment providers most often reported current availability as '10', while law enforcement most often reported it as '9'; the previous most

common score was '8-9' for treatment providers and '8' for law enforcement.

Media outlets reported on law enforcement seizures and arrests in the region this reporting period. Mansfield Police (Richland County) along with regional law enforcement agencies collaborated to arrest a man during a search of his home, where they confiscated crack cocaine, heroin, marijuana and several packages of hash oil (concentrated THC, tetrahydrocannabinol) ([www.mansfieldnewsjournal.com](http://www.mansfieldnewsjournal.com), Jan. 19, 2017). The Richland County Sheriff's Office collaborated with a regional drug enforcement unit to arrest a man responsible for a rash of overdoses in Mansfield and Madison Township (Franklin County); officers confiscated crack cocaine, heroin-fentanyl mixtures and drug paraphernalia from the man's vehicle and a storage unit listed in his name ([www.otfca.net](http://www.otfca.net), Jan. 21, 2017). A Westerville (Franklin County) woman checked herself into the hospital after smoking crack cocaine sold to her by her friend; the woman reported feeling small spiders crawling inside her, convinced her friend sold her a spider egg rather than a crack cocaine rock; the woman insisted that hospital staff run tests to ensure the remaining crack cocaine was in fact the drug, and not a spider egg; hospital staff verified the drug was crack cocaine and called law enforcement, who charged the woman with drug possession ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), June 6, 2017).

Participants reported that the availability of crack cocaine has increased during the past six months. Participants remarked: "Open your front door [and you will find it]; Yeah, crack has been around ... It ain't goin' nowhere ... it's like a cockroach." Treatment providers reported that the availability of crack cocaine has remained the same during the past six months, while law enforcement reported increased availability.

The Columbus Police Crime Lab reported that the number of cocaine cases it processes has increased during the past six months, while the BCI London Crime Lab reported that the number of cases it processes has decreased; the labs do not typically differentiate between powdered and crack cocaine.

Crack Cocaine	Reported Availability Change during the Past 6 Months	
	 Participants	Increase
	 Law enforcement	Increase
	 Treatment providers	No change

Participants most often rated the current overall quality of crack cocaine as '7' on a scale of '0' (poor quality, "garbage") to '10' (high quality); the previous most common score was '6-8'. Participants shared: "[Quality] depends on who you know and all that; It used to be [that] you could go around this town ... didn't matter who you found that was selling ... it was always good stuff. Now you gotta worry if they're selling you garbage ... if it's gonna kill you ..." Participants reported that crack cocaine in the region is most often adulterated (aka "cut") with aspirin, baking soda and laxatives. One participant stated, "You have 'coke' (powdered cocaine) that's already cut, then you add baking soda to make crack." Other cuts for crack cocaine mentioned included: flour and methamphetamine. One participant stated, "Dope boys' (drug dealers) trying to make money [by cutting the drug]." Overall, participants reported that the quality of crack cocaine has remained the same during the past six months.

Crack Cocaine	Cutting Agents Reported by Crime Labs	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: red;">●</span> diltiazem (high blood pressure medication)</li> <li><span style="color: red;">●</span> levamisole (livestock dewormer)</li> <li><span style="color: red;">●</span> local anesthetics (lidocaine and procaine)</li> </ul>	

Reports of current prices for crack cocaine were consistent among participants with experience buying the drug. Reportedly, the most common quantity of purchase is a "20 piece" (2/10 gram for \$20). Overall, participants reported that the price of crack cocaine has remained the same during the past six months.

Crack Cocaine	Current Prices for Crack Cocaine	
	1/10 gram (aka "rock")	\$10
	2/10 gram	\$20
	A gram	\$80
	1/16 ounce	\$100
	An ounce	\$1,000

Participants reported that the most common route of administration for crack cocaine remains smoking. Participants estimated that out of 10 crack cocaine users, seven would smoke and a three would intravenously inject (aka "shoot") the drug. One participant remarked, "Some people shoot"

Participants and community professionals described typical crack cocaine users as older white people and African-American males, and young people, although most respondent groups discussed anyone as a crack cocaine user. Participants remarked: *"Yes, for sure young African Americans; Mayors, city council men ... typically hookers ... 'cause it's a cheaper drug."* One treatment provider commented, *"Yep, equal opportunity."* A law enforcement officer stated, *"Whites, blacks, young, old ... I think it's up there with the heroin you know ... heroin's a non-discriminative drug as well..."*

## Heroin and Fentanyl



Heroin remains highly available in the region. Participants and community professionals most often reported the current availability of the drug as '10' on a scale of '0' (not available, impossible to get) to '10' (highly available,

extremely easy to get); the previous most common scores were also '10'. Participants reported: *"When I walk to the bus stop ... I am asked as least three to four times ... if I need 'something' (heroin); Now that you're clean, you can really see how the drugs have taken over; When I was on the bus during the [St. Patrick's Day] parade, oh my god, there were eight people on that bus 'nodded out' (high on heroin)."*

Corroborating data indicated that heroin is available in the region. The Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral for Treatment (SBIRT) program reported that of the 65 individuals in the Columbus region who reported substance use during the past 30 days, 24.6% reported using heroin on one or more days. In addition, a query of the National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS) for the counties which comprise the Columbus region returned 955 heroin cases reported during the past six months, of which 53.3% were Franklin County cases (a decrease from 1,051 cases for the previous six months, of which 52.3% were Franklin County cases). Separate NFLIS queries for the counties which comprise the Columbus region returned 115 fentanyl and fentanyl analogue cases (an increase from 77 cases in the previous six months) and 22 carfentanil cases reported during the past six months (in the six months previous to this, no cases of carfentanil were found in NFLIS).

Media outlets reported on law enforcement seizures and arrests in the region this reporting period. A Franklin County judge sentenced a man to 15 years in prison for

selling carfentanil which caused two deaths and nine unintentional overdoses; reportedly, some of the survivors thought they bought heroin, rather than the tranquilizer ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), Jan. 25, 2017). Columbus Police (Franklin County) arrested a man after executing a search warrant of his home and seizing hundreds of counterfeit pills and several pounds of heroin and methamphetamine; the Franklin County Prosecutor's Office issued a warning to Franklin County citizens that 30 milligram oxycodone pills are often counterfeit pills containing fentanyl ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), Jan. 31, 2017). A Delaware County grand jury indicted three men for trafficking heroin; during their arrest, officers confiscated over 500 grams of heroin, drug paraphernalia and cash, making their potential prison sentence longer due to the amount of heroin they possessed ([www.abc6onyourside.com](http://www.abc6onyourside.com), Feb. 10, 2017). Mansfield Police (Richland County) and regional law enforcement arrested two people after executing a search warrant of a home in Mansfield, confiscating an undisclosed amount of heroin and drug paraphernalia ([www.wmfd.com](http://www.wmfd.com), Feb. 14, 2017). Marion Police (Marion County) arrested a man during a traffic stop after confiscating heroin from his vehicle ([www.marionstar.com](http://www.marionstar.com), Feb. 19, 2017). Marion Police arrested another man during a traffic stop near the Marion fairgrounds after finding heroin in his vehicle and learning he had violated terms of his probation ([www.marionstar.com](http://www.marionstar.com), Feb. 21, 2017). Newark Police (Licking County) collaborated with the Central Ohio Drug Enforcement Task Force to complete Newark's first drug sweep in nearly a decade; over several hours, officers arrested 12 people responsible for trafficking heroin, marijuana and other drugs in the area ([www.dispatch.com](http://www.dispatch.com), Feb. 24, 2017). During a 6-month pilot program requiring Columbus Police to carry and use Narcan® (naloxone, opiate overdose reversal medication), officers administered the drug 58 times to individuals who overdosed on opiates, sometimes administering multiple doses of the drug to one individual; due to results of this program, officers will be required to continue to carry the drug, although the a Columbus Police commander had recommended it be voluntary, as several officers voiced concern over acting as medical providers ([www.toledoblade.com](http://www.toledoblade.com), Feb. 27, 2017). The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction issued a contraband search in response to six nonfatal opiate overdoses that occurred in the Pickaway Correctional Institution (Pickaway County) ([www.usnews.com](http://www.usnews.com), March 3, 2017). A Hilltop (Columbus) woman posted a Facebook message regarding her son's heroin-related overdose death hoping to increase public

knowledge regarding the dangers of heroin ([www.myfoxcolumbus.com](http://www.myfoxcolumbus.com), March 8, 2017). The Franklin County Coroner's Office reported to a local news source on an "unprecedented" number of fentanyl-related overdose deaths in Franklin County; the office found there were 30 overdose deaths in Franklin County and 13 in nearby counties from February 2 to March 5, all of which were fentanyl-related ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), March 17, 2017). OSHP arrested two men during a traffic stop in Columbus after confiscating 126 grams of heroin and 65 grams of cocaine during a search of the men's vehicle ([www.statepatrol.ohio.gov](http://www.statepatrol.ohio.gov), March 19, 2017). Columbus Police responded to an overdose death of a person during a movie screening at a Columbus cinema ([www.cleveland.com](http://www.cleveland.com), March 20, 2017). Columbus Police arrested a couple after finding them overdosed in a stolen truck with their two children with them ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), March 28, 2017). Delaware Police (Delaware County) reported utilizing K-9 units multiple times per day due to the heroin epidemic ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), April 7, 2017). Grandview Heights Police (Franklin County) arrested a man alleged to be responsible for the fentanyl-related overdose death of another man; officers seized fentanyl and evidence indicative of drug trafficking at the man's home ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), April 7, 2017). Several clients of a treatment program in Franklin County were rushed to a hospital for possible drug overdoses; the clients were revived and Columbus Police was notified to investigate the situation ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), April 9, 2017). Law enforcement initiated a criminal investigation after four women overdosed on heroin at the Fayette County Jail; since the women reportedly smuggled drugs into the jail through body cavities, which are not searched without search warrants, the jail has ordered a body scanner and will require all persons entering the jail to go through it; a site manager at a Fayette County treatment facility reported to the media that the number of people seeking treatment increased from approximately 30 in February to nearly 70 in March; she reported that, although Vivitrol®, a drug used to block opiate receptors in people who use heroin or prescription opioids, helps people recover from opiate addiction, some people on Vivitrol® are now switching to using methamphetamine and crack cocaine to obtain a high ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), April 10, 2017). A Franklin County grand jury indicted a Columbus man on manslaughter charges for providing fentanyl to two men, resulting in their deaths ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), April 12, 2017). Columbus Police arrested a woman at a gas station after finding her overdosed in the bathroom with her one-year

old child with her; officers found a burnt spoon and an injection needle, indicative of drug use, in the woman's purse ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), April 14, 2017). OSHP arrested a woman during a traffic stop in West Jefferson (Madison County) after seeing her driving erratically; officers found two kilograms of heroin packaged into bricks and hidden under the front passenger floor mat and in the back seat of the woman's vehicle ([www.abc6onyourside.com](http://www.abc6onyourside.com), April 14, 2017). The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) issued a warning that acryl fentanyl, a synthetic fentanyl analogue 100 times more powerful than morphine, is making its way to Columbus after reporting that the drug was tested in forensic laboratories in Dayton and the Miami Valley; the Miami Valley lab tested 130 cases of acryl fentanyl, of which, 58 tested as pure acryl fentanyl ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), May 3, 2017). Several Crawford County law enforcement agencies collaborated on a month-long investigation to execute a search warrant at a home in Crestline (Crawford and Richland counties) and arrest three people after seizing 74 unit doses of heroin, fentanyl, prescription drugs and marijuana along with drug paraphernalia and cash ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), May 10, 2017). A Franklin County judge sentenced a man to six years in prison for selling a heroin-fentanyl mixture that caused the overdose death of another man; the man injected the drug at a local convenience store in Columbus and died shortly after ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), May 16, 2017). Columbus Police responded to the overdose of a woman in a parking lot of a shopping center; medics called to the scene revived the woman with naloxone and drove her to the hospital; when the woman became conscious, she expressed concern over a dog she saw trapped in a hot car in the same parking lot; police returned to the same lot and found another woman overdosed in a car with a small dog inside; medical staff revived the woman using naloxone and officers gave the dog to animal control ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), May 18, 2017). Columbus Police executed a search warrant of a home belonging to a man accused of shooting a another man in the stomach with a rifle during a domestic dispute; during the search, officers located screws in the drywall of the ceiling, and after removing the drywall, a firearm and 199 grams of heroin fell down from the ceiling; the man was charged with heroin possession ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), May 19, 2017).

While many types of heroin are currently available in the region, participants and community professionals agreed that black tar and white powdered heroin are equally






available. One participant reflected, *"I do a lot of 'tar' (black tar) heroin. I try to stay away from the 'china' (white powdered heroin, aka 'china white'), 'the concrete, the gray death' (street names of potent heroin mixtures) or whatever. I try to stay away from that stuff."*

Participants and community professionals reported that the availability of heroin has increased during the past six months. Participants stated: *"Columbus is just getting inundated with it; It's just gonna get worse before it gets better."* One treatment provider remarked, *"It goes with the demand. If you want it, they create it."* One law enforcement officer reported, *"Gone up in the last six months I'd say."*









The Columbus Police Crime Lab reported that the number of heroin cases it processes has increased during the past six months, while the BCI London Crime Lab reported that the number of cases it processes has decreased. The BCI London Crime Lab reported processing beige, brown, tan and white powdered heroin along with black tar heroin; however, the lab noted that it does not typically differentiate between black tar and powdered heroin.

The crime labs also reported that the number of carfentanil, fentanyl and fentanyl analogue cases they process have increased during the past six months. They reported processing the following fentanyl analogs: acetyl fentanyl, acryl fentanyl, 2-FBF, furanyl fentanyl, 3-methyl fentanyl, and THF fentanyl.

Heroin	Reported Availability Change during the Past 6 Months	
	 Participants	Increase
	 Law enforcement	Increase
	 Treatment providers	Increase

Participants most often rated the current overall quality of heroin as '8' on a scale of '0' (poor quality, "garbage") to '10' (high quality); the previous most common score was '10'. However, one participant remarked, *"I think it depends on who your dealer is."* Participants discussed adulterants (aka "cuts") that affect the quality of the drug and reported the top cutting agents as: baby laxatives, brown sugar, carfentanil, Coca Cola™, coffee, fentanyl and morphine. A participant reported, *"You can call and get fentanyl and*

*they will just ship it to your house ... it's just such easy access."* A law enforcement officer reported, *"We've seen fentanyl, we've seen carfentanil."* Overall, participants reported that the general quality of heroin has increased during the past six months. One participant stated, *"I say it's changed because they got more fentanyl ... in it."*

Heroin	Cutting Agents Reported by Crime Labs	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> acetaminophen</li> <li> caffeine</li> <li> cocaine</li> <li> diphenhydramine (antihistamine)</li> <li> fentanyl/fentanyl analogues</li> <li> mannitol (diuretic)</li> <li> sorbitol/lactose (sweeteners)</li> <li> U-47700 (synthetic opioid)</li> </ul>	

Reports of current prices for heroin were consistent among participants with experience purchasing the drug. Reportedly, the most common quantity of purchase is 1/10 gram. However, one participant shared, *"They sell it just like they sell crack ... now you can get a 'dime' (\$10 amount), a 'nickel' (\$5 amount) of heroin ... It's being sold like crack."*

Heroin	Current Prices for Heroin	
	<b>Black tar or white powdered:</b>	
1/10 gram (aka "balloon" or "paper")	\$20	
1/2 gram	\$60	
A gram	\$80	
An ounce	\$1,000	

While there were a few reported ways of using heroin, generally, the most common route of administration remains intravenous injection (aka "shooting"). Participants estimated that out of 10 users, eight would shoot and two would snort the drug. Participant stated: *"Everybody I know shoots; I've never seen anybody smoke; Some guys sell crack cocaine so they can make enough money to keep their nose right on heroin. A lot of [African-American males], they don't shoot it, a lot of them snort heroin."*

In addition to obtaining injection needles from dealers, participants also reported obtaining them from pharmacies, big box stores and through needle exchange programs. Reportedly, needles from retail stores cost \$1.97 for 10 needles. One participant stated, *"You don't even have to have a prescription ... it's to stop the spread of disease."* If a needle is obtained through a local drug dealer, the cost per needle is typically \$1-2. Participants also noted that sharing needles is a common practice. One participant stated, *"Out of 30 people, probably ... 20 had Hep C (Hepatitis C)."* Other participants reported: *"Everybody I was in jail with not too long ago had [Hepatitis C]; That's why they really need a 'point trade' (needle exchange program) here."*

Participants described typical heroin users as white people, both males and females, although they also mentioned an increase in young African-American people using heroin. Participants stated, *"Yes, for sure, young African Americans; Heroin don't discriminate; I would say more whites than blacks."* Community professionals most often described typical heroin users as anyone. Treatment providers stated: *"Every color, every gender, every age; They look like everybody sitting at this table."*

## Prescription Opioids

Prescription opioids are highly available for illicit use in the region. Participants most often reported the current street availability of these drugs as '8' on a scale of '0' (not available, impossible to get) to '10' (highly available, extremely easy to get); the previous most common score was '5.' Participants reported: *"Get it from your doctor or buy 'em on the street ... everybody want 'em; They're everywhere..."* Treatment providers most often reported the current street availability of prescription opioids as '10', while law enforcement most often reported it as '8'; the previous most common score was '10' for both types of community professionals.

Corroborating data indicated that prescription opioids are available for illicit use in the region. The Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral for Treatment (SBIRT) program reported that of the 65 individuals in the Columbus region who reported substance use during the past 30 days, 15.4% reported illicit use of prescription opioids on one or more days. In addition, a query of the National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS) for the counties which comprise the Columbus region returned

473 prescription opioid cases reported during the past six months (a decrease from 574 cases for the previous six months). These counts do not include fentanyl and fentanyl analogues. Although previous OSAM Drug Trend Reports counted prescription opioids and fentanyl together, they are now counted separately. Fentanyl, fentanyl analogues and carfentanil data can now be found in the "Heroin and Fentanyl" section of this report.




Media outlets reported on law enforcement seizures and arrests in the region this reporting period. Columbus Police arrested a man responsible for leading a multi-state oxycodone ring; the man and his group traveled to Florida to visit a doctor who prescribed prescription opioids for illegitimate medical ailments, and trafficked the drugs back to Columbus to sell; a Franklin County jury found the man guilty of 29 drug-related felony counts ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), Feb. 17, 2017). Law enforcement from Morrow, Crawford and Knox counties along with Cardington Police (Morrow County) collaborated on an investigation that led to the arrest of 14 people for possessing and trafficking various drugs, including controlled substances, in Morrow County ([www.mansfieldnewsjournal.com](http://www.mansfieldnewsjournal.com), March 2, 2017). Governor John Kasich announced new limits to opioid prescriptions in an effort to decrease severity of the opiate epidemic; the new law allows only seven days-worth of opioids for adults and five days-worth for adolescents, both of which not to exceed 30 morphine equivalent doses per day; exceptions are granted for cancer patients, medication-assisted treatment for addictions and end-of-life care ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), March 30, 2017). Whitehall Police (Franklin County) arrested two people after learning they traded drugs for food stamps only 300 feet from East Columbus Elementary School; officers raided the couple's home and confiscated oxycodone pills, 18 grams of heroin and 5.5 grams of crack cocaine ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), April 5, 2017). Ohioans properly disposed of 16.6 tons of prescription drugs during National Drug Take Back Day, which officials say helps to alleviate the public health and safety concerns associated with keeping unwanted, unused or expired prescription drugs from being misused or unintentionally ingested; there are multiple drug drop boxes located throughout the state ([www.nbc4.com](http://www.nbc4.com), May 9, 2017). The DEA recently created a new drug tracking application called the Drug Incident Summary Collection Overview (DISCO), which is an online database used by Ohio law enforcement to track the number and types of narcotics seized and uses of naloxone, among other variables, in real-time; the goal of the app is to enable drug task forces and law enforcement across the state to share information and better collaborate to understand where resources and efforts

are needed to help combat the opiate epidemic; other states also hope to implement the new app in the upcoming year ([www.lancastereaglegazette.com](http://www.lancastereaglegazette.com), June 1, 2017).

Participants and treatment providers identified Percocet® as the most available prescription opioid in terms of widespread illicit use. A participant reported, "Everyone is takin' heroin and 'percs' (Percocet®)." One treatment provider remarked, "[Percocet® is] usually the entry level for heroin..."

Participants reported that the general street availability of prescription opioids has remained the same during the past six months. Participants shared: "[Those are] starting to play out. I mean people still get them; Heroin took over all that ... plus the pills got time release shit on 'em now [making abusing them more difficult]." Treatment providers reported that general street availability has increased during the past six months, while law enforcement reported it as having remained the same.

The Columbus Police Crime Lab reported that the number of tramadol (Ultram®) cases it processes has increased during the past six months, while hydrocodone (Vicodin®), hydromorphone (Dilaudid®), morphine, methadone, oxycodone (OxyContin®, Percocet®), and oxymorphone (Opana®) cases have decreased or remained the same. The BCI London Crime Lab reported that the number of hydromorphone, morphine, oxycodone and tramadol cases it processes has increased during the past six months, while hydrocodone, methadone, and oxymorphone cases have decreased.

Prescription Opioids	Reported Availability Change during the Past 6 Months	
	 Participants	No change
	 Law enforcement	No change
	 Treatment providers	Increase

Reports of current street prices for prescription opioids were consistent among participants with experience buying the drugs. Reportedly, the majority of prescription opioids sell for \$1 per milligram. Overall, participants indicated that the price of prescription opioids has remained the same during the past six months.

Prescription Opioids	Current Street Prices for Prescription Opioids	
	fentanyl transdermal patch	\$75 for 75 mcg
	methadone	\$5 for 1 mg
	Percocet®	\$5 for 5 mg \$7.50 for 7.5 mg \$10-12 for 10 mg
	Roxicodone®	\$30-40 for 30 mg
	Vicodin®	\$7 for 5 mg

Participants reported obtaining these drugs from drug dealers, doctors and through Internet purchase. While there were a few reported ways of consuming prescription opioids, and variations in methods of use were noted among types of prescription opioids, generally the most common routes of administration for illicit use are intravenous injection (aka "shooting") and snorting. Participants estimated that out of 10 illicit prescription opioid users, four would shoot, four would snort, and two would orally consume the drugs. One participant shared, "Honestly, it depends on where you're at in your addiction ... I mean because some people pop 'em (orally consume the drugs at first), some people snort 'em and some people [progress in their use to] inject 'em. It depends on where you're at in your addiction."

Participants described typical illicit prescription opioid users as people of upper socio-economic status, young people, white males and females and young African-American males. One participant stated, "White people and people in pain." Community professionals described typical illicit users as anyone. A law enforcement officer stated, "Same as the heroin."

### Suboxone®






Suboxone® remains highly available for illicit use in the region. Participants and community professionals most often reported the current street availability of Suboxone® as '10' on a scale of '0' (not available, impossible to get) to '10' (highly available, extremely easy to get); the previous most common scores were also '10'. Participants commented: "You go to the clinics and get them. Some people sell the 'scripts' (prescriptions of Suboxone®) for either

'dope' (heroin) or cash; There's Suboxone® all over. You can buy it like boom-boom-boom ... full market for that now." Treatment providers stated: "There are people out there looking for the Suboxone®; They get it [but] they're not using it [they're selling it]. Half the time it's not even in their system." A law enforcement officer observed, "Everybody's got them ... or can get them."

Corroborating data indicated that Suboxone® is available for illicit use in the region. A query of the National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS) for the counties which comprise the Columbus region returned 143 buprenorphine (an ingredient in Suboxone®) cases reported during the past six months, of which 32.9% were Franklin County cases (a decrease from 202 cases for the previous reporting period, of which 50.5% were Franklin County cases).

Participants reported that the street availability of Suboxone® in sublingual filmstrip form has increased during the past six months, while the pill form is no longer available on the street. One participant remarked, "Everybody's got those (filmstrips)." Community professionals also reported that the street availability of Suboxone® has increased during the past six months. A law enforcement officer stated, "I think the clinics coming back ... we got two in Delaware." The Columbus Police and the BCI London crime labs reported that the number of Suboxone® and Subutex® cases they process has decreased during the past six months.

Suboxone®	Reported Availability Change during the Past 6 Months	
	 Participants	Increase
	 Law enforcement	Increase
	 Treatment providers	Increase

Reports of current street prices for Suboxone® were consistent among participants with experience buying the drug. Overall, participants reported that the price of Suboxone® has remained the same during the past six months.

Suboxone®	Current Street Prices for Suboxone®	
	filmstrip	\$10-20 for 8 mg \$20 for 12 mg

In addition to obtaining Suboxone® on the street from dealers and other users, participants reported getting the drug through treatment centers and Suboxone® clinics. One treatment provider explained, "You've got pop up shops (Suboxone® clinics) that are poppin' up all over Columbus and all they gotta do is go ... and [doctors] don't mess with Medicaid. They want cash only."

Participants reported that the most common route of administration for illicit use of Suboxone® is intravenous injection (aka "shooting"). Participants estimated that out of 10 illicit Suboxone® users, seven would shoot and three would orally consume the drug. Participants and community professionals described typical illicit Suboxone® users as people addicted to opiates and individuals aged 20-40 years. One participant stated, "Anybody in their 20s, 30s, 40s ... whoever uses heroin. If they want heroin, they want 'subs' (Suboxone®)."

### Sedative-Hypnotics

Sedative-hypnotics (benzodiazepines, barbiturates and muscle relaxants) remain highly available in the region. Participants most often reported the current street availability of these drugs as '8' on a scale of '0' (not available, impossible to get) to '10' (highly available, extremely easy to get); the previous most common score was '10.' One participant stated, "Now, '2000 babies' (millennials), they like 'xanies' (Xanax®), Percocet® ... [they are] the [new] hippies. They like all the stuff." Treatment providers most often reported the current street availability of sedative-hypnotics as '8,' while law enforcement most often reported it as '10,' the previous most common score among both types of community professionals was '10.' One treatment provider stated, "That's the party drug now."

Corroborating data indicated that sedative-hypnotics are available for illicit use in the region. A query of the National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS) for the counties which comprise the Columbus region






Corroborating data indicated that marijuana is available in the region. The Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral for Treatment (SBIRT) program reported that of the 65 individuals in the Columbus region who reported substance use during the past 30 days, 81.5% reported using marijuana on one or more days.

Media outlets reported on law enforcement seizures and arrests in the region this reporting period. Mansfield Police (Richland County) along with several regional law enforcement agencies arrested two people during a raid of a home on the west side of Mansfield, confiscating several packages of hash oil, marijuana, crack cocaine and heroin ([www.otfca.net](http://www.otfca.net), Jan. 19, 2017). Whitehall Police (Franklin County) arrested a man during a raid of his home after confiscating 112 pounds of marijuana, a gun and large amounts of cash ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), Jan. 26, 2017). Hilliard Police (Franklin County) arrested a man after executing a search warrant of his home and finding two bags containing marijuana ([www.10tv.com](http://www.10tv.com), Feb. 5, 2017). Marion Police (Marion County) arrested a man for trafficking marijuana; while executing another search warrant, Marion Police arrested a man for possessing and trafficking marijuana and heroin; in yet another separate incident, Marion Police arrested a man during a traffic stop for driving under the influence of marijuana and for possession of marijuana and drug paraphernalia ([www.marionstar.com](http://www.marionstar.com), Feb. 21, 2017). OSHP arrested a man from California and a man from Cleveland during a traffic stop in West Jefferson (Madison County) after finding 1,000 jars of hash oil and 70 pounds of marijuana in their vehicle ([www.fox8.com](http://www.fox8.com), March 23, 2017). Ohio Investigative Unit officers conducted a 3-month long investigation at a cabaret in Franklin County and arrested two women for marijuana possession and for solicitation at the club; the club ownership and management was also charged for allowing drug trafficking and illegal sexual activity ([www.fox19news.com](http://www.fox19news.com), April 4, 2017). Columbus Police were called to investigate after three high school students were taken to the hospital after eating marijuana-laced cookies provided by another student ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), April 12, 2017).

Participants and community professionals also discussed availability of high-grade marijuana extracts and concentrates, often appearing as oil and waxy forms of the drug (aka “dabs”). Participants most often reported the current availability of marijuana extracts and concentrates as ‘10,’ the previous most common score was also ‘10.’ Participants stated: “Everybody’s got it; Oh yeah, those are pretty big around here.” Another participant explained different forms of extracts and concentrates: “Shatter’ (marijuana concentrate, aka ‘butane honey oil,’ which is used for “dabbing”) ... it’s a lot better [quality than other forms of

marijuana] ... and then you got ‘crumble’ (another form of marijuana concentrate) that comes in just like [crumbs] ... that’s why it’s called crumble ... shatter comes just on wax paper and looks like wax ...”

Participants and community professionals reported that the availability of low-grade marijuana has decreased, while the availability of the high-grade marijuana has increased during the past six months. Participants commented: “Because medical is considered high grade, and there has been a lot more medical marijuana lately; I don’t know anybody even smoke ‘reggie’ (low-grade marijuana); Yeah, especially since California and all them other states are doing medical marijuana, the high-grade shit went up.” Participants and community professionals indicated that the availability of marijuana extracts and concentrates has also increased during the past six months. The Columbus Police and the BCI London crime labs reported that the number of marijuana and concentrated THC (oils, “dabs”) cases they process has decreased during the past six months.

Marijuana	Reported Availability Change during the Past 6 Months	
	 Participants	Increase
	 Law enforcement	Increase
	 Treatment providers	Increase

Participant most often rated the current overall quality of high-grade marijuana as ‘9,’ and of low-grade marijuana as ‘5-6’ on a scale of ‘0’ (poor quality, “garbage”) to ‘10’ (high quality); the previous most common overall quality score was ‘10.’ Overall, participants indicated that the quality of low-grade marijuana has remained the same during the past six months, while the quality of high-grade marijuana has increased. One treatment provider commented, “[Dealers] all know there’s a push for potency, and whoever has got the strongest, is the one that gets the business.”

Reports of current prices for marijuana were provided by participants with experience buying the drug. Reportedly, the most common quantity of purchase is a gram. Overall, participants indicated that the price of both low- and high-grade marijuana has remained the same during the past six months.

Current Prices for Marijuana	
<b>Low grade:</b>	
A blunt (cigar) or a gram	\$5-10
An ounce	\$20-25
A pound	\$1000
<b>High grade:</b>	
A blunt (cigar) or a gram	\$15
1/8 ounce	\$50
1/4 ounce	\$90
An ounce	\$250
A pound	\$2,500
<b>Extracts and concentrates:</b>	
wax forms	\$40 per gram (for "crumble") \$60 per gram (for "shatter")

Marijuana

While there were a few reported ways of consuming marijuana, generally the most common route of administration remains smoking. Participants estimated that out of 10 marijuana users, all 10 would smoke the drug. However, a few participants also reported eating the drug in baked goods (aka "edibles").

A profile for a typical marijuana user did not emerge from the data. Participants described typical marijuana users as anyone, including people of any race, college students and young professionals. One participant shared, "Anybody, everybody. I don't know, [it's] medicinal." Community professionals described typical marijuana users also as anyone. A treatment provider stated, "African-American males, followed by females, followed by adolescents." Law enforcement officer remarked, "You name it."

## Methamphetamine



Methamphetamine remains highly available in the region. Participants most often reported the current availability of the drug as '10' on a scale of '0' (not available, impossible to

get) to '10' (highly available, extremely easy to get); the previous most common score was also '10.' One participant stated, "Meth' (methamphetamine) is really heavy right now." Community professionals reported the current availability of methamphetamine as '6,' the previous most common score was '10.' A treatment provider shared, "Well, we do have some. It's just not a lot." One law enforcement officer stated, "It's making a comeback, though. We do this [interview] in six more months, it'll probably be different (higher in availability)."

Corroborating data indicated that methamphetamine is available in the region. A query of the National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS) for the counties which comprise the Columbus region returned 637 methamphetamine cases reported during the past six months, of which 33.0% were Licking County cases, 27.6% were Fairfield County cases, and 22.9% were Franklin County cases (an increase from 492 cases during the previous six months, of which 34.6% were Licking County cases, 29.5% were Fairfield County cases, and 19.9% were Franklin County cases).




Media outlets reported on law enforcement seizures and arrests in the region this reporting period. A drug intelligence officer for the Ohio High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) reported to a local news source that methamphetamine and cocaine use have re-emerged as drug trends throughout major areas in Ohio; he reported 2,706 methamphetamine arrests from July-December 2015 and 3,265 methamphetamine arrests from January-June 2016 ([www.distpatch.com](http://www.distpatch.com), March 22, 2017). A Franklin County federal grand jury indicted 17 people with conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine and heroin brought from Mexico in central and southern Ohio ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), April 1, 2017). Two drug dealers in Columbus were accused of murdering three witnesses scheduled to testify against the couple in court; the couple, accused of orchestrating a state-wide drug ring through violence and fear, beat one man to death in his home in the Hilltop (Columbus) while his mother was locked in a closet; however, the dealers later killed the man's mother and another woman ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), April 25, 2017). Circleville Police (Pickaway County) arrested two people during a traffic stop after a K-9 officer alerted to drugs in the vehicle; officers confiscated over one pound of methamphetamine and cocaine ([www.abc6onyourside.com](http://www.abc6onyourside.com), May 23, 2017). Columbus Police worked with the Columbus Bomb Squad and Columbus Division of Fire

Hazardous Materials Support Unit to arrest two people after receiving a tip of a bizarre odor coming from a hotel room in Dublin (Franklin County); officers discovered a methamphetamine lab in the hotel room ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), June 7, 2017).

Participants reported on the current availability of crystal methamphetamine only, as they had no knowledge of the availability of powdered methamphetamine. Participants stated: *“Crystal (methamphetamine) is ‘normal’ (common) around town; Usually, ‘shake-and-bake’ (powdered methamphetamine) is more down south, in like the hillbilly towns.”* Powdered methamphetamine is typically referred to as “shake-and-bake,” which means users are producing the drug in a single sealed container, such as a two-liter soda bottle. By using common household chemicals along with ammonium nitrate (found in cold packs) and pseudoephedrine (found in some allergy medications), people who make methamphetamine can produce the drug in approximately 30 minutes in nearly any location.

Participants reported that the availability of crystal methamphetamine has increased during the past six months. Treatment providers reported that availability has remained the same, while law enforcement reported it has increased. The Columbus Police and the BCI London crime labs reported that the number of methamphetamine cases they process has increased during the past six months; the BCI London Crime Lab reported processing crystal methamphetamine as well as white and brown powdered methamphetamine.

Participants most often rated the current overall quality of methamphetamine as ‘7’ on a scale of ‘0’ (poor quality, “garbage”) to ‘10’ (high quality); the previous most common score was ‘7-8’. Participants mentioned bath salts, fentanyl, MSM (Methylsulfonylmethane, a joint supplement) and vitamin B as adulterants (aka “cuts”) for methamphetamine. Overall, participant reported that the quality of crystal methamphetamine has decreased during the past six months. One participant remarked, *“I think it’s gotten worse.”*

Methamphetamine	Reported Availability Change during the Past 6 Months	
	 Participants	Increase
	 Law enforcement	Increase
	 Treatment providers	No change

Reports of current prices for methamphetamine were consistent among participants with experience buying the drug. Reportedly, the most common amount of purchase is 1/4-1/2 gram. Overall, participants reported that the price of crystal methamphetamine has remained the same during the past six months.

Methamphetamine	Current Prices for Methamphetamine	
	<b>Crystal:</b>	
	1/2 gram	\$50
	A gram	\$70
	1/16 ounce	\$175
An ounce	\$350	

Participants reported that the most common route of administration for methamphetamine is smoking. Participants estimated that out of 10 methamphetamine users, seven would smoke, two would snort and one would intravenously inject the drug. One participant stated, *“Smoke it. That’s a big smoker drug.”* Another participant added, *“It hurts to sniff (snort methamphetamine).”*

Participants and community professionals described typical methamphetamine users as young white people. One participant stated, *“That’s a white guy’s drug.”* Treatment providers commented: *“Mainly, I would say Caucasian; Caucasian, smaller towns and townships.”* A law enforcement officer observed, *“Same as the heroin.”*






## Prescription Stimulants

Prescription stimulants are available for illicit use in the region. Participants most often reported the current street availability of these drugs as '10' on a scale of '0' (not available, impossible to get) to '10' (highly available, extremely easy to get); the previous most common score was '6-10'. One participant stated, "A lot of doctors are prescribing them to kids with ADHD (attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder), and then their parents are taking their pills and selling them." Community professionals most often reported current street availability of prescription stimulants as '2'; the previous score was '6'. One treatment provider shared, "You don't see Ritalin® like you used to. They don't even prescribe Ritalin® like they used to." Participants and community professionals identified Adderall® as the most available prescription stimulant in terms of widespread illicit use.

Corroborating data indicated that prescription stimulants are available for illicit use in the region. A query of the National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS) for the counties which comprise the Columbus region returned 97 prescription stimulant cases reported during the past six months, of which 70.1% were amphetamine (Adderall®).

Participants reported that the general availability of prescription stimulants has remained the same during the past six months. Treatment providers reported that availability has decreased, while law enforcement reported that availability has remained the same. A treatment provider stated, "Instead of giving them Adderall®, they gave them Vyvanse® ... Adderall's® street value was too high and the kids would get them, and they were selling them and not taking them. So now ... that ADHD diagnosis is not being thrown on the kids as much ... I think the availability of it has changed (decreased) because the prescriptions are not given out as much as they were ...". One law enforcement officer commented, "I know they're available, but we haven't really done a good Adderall® case [lately]."

The Columbus Police and the BCI London crime labs reported that the number of amphetamine (Adderall®) cases they process has increased during the past six months, while the number of methylphenidate (Ritalin®) cases has remained the same.

Prescription Stimulants	Reported Availability Change during the Past 6 Months	
	 Participants	No change
	 Law enforcement	No change
	 Treatment providers	Decrease

Reports of current street prices for prescription stimulants were consistent among participants with experience buying the drugs. Reportedly, prescription stimulants generally sell for \$0.25 per milligram. Overall, participants reported that the price of prescription stimulants has remained the same during the past six months.

Prescription Stimulants	Current Street Prices for Prescription Stimulants	
	Adderall®	\$5 for 20 mg \$7-10 for 30 mg
	Vyvanse®	\$4 for 70 mg

Participants reported obtaining these drugs from doctors or from people who have prescriptions. The most common route of administration for illicit use of prescription stimulants is snorting. Participants estimated that out of 10 illicit prescription stimulant users, eight would snort and three would orally consume the drugs.

Participants described typical illicit users of these drugs as college students, high school students and working professionals. One participant remarked, "A lot of college students do it." Community professionals described typical illicit prescription stimulant users as younger individuals. One law enforcement officer reported, "That's pretty much your high school. Adderall® and Ritalin® and all that stuff are probably common with the kids."

## Ecstasy









Ecstasy (methylenedioxymethamphetamine: MDMA, or other derivatives containing BZP, MDA, and/or TFMPP) remains moderately available in the region. Participants most often

reported the current availability of the pressed tablet form of ecstasy as '6,' and of "molly" (powdered MDMA; powdered form) as '8' on a scale of '0' (not available, impossible to get) to '10' (highly available, extremely easy to get); the previous most common score for both ecstasy and molly was '5.' Regarding availability of ecstasy, one participant stated, "I hear about it every once in a while." Regarding availability of molly, a participant commented: "That's more prevalent than ecstasy now." Community professionals most often reported the current availability of ecstasy and molly as '2,' the previous most common scores were '5' for ecstasy and '7-8' for molly. A law enforcement officer reported, "We had [a] molly [bust] the other night."

Participants reported that the availability of ecstasy has decreased during the past six months, while the availability of molly has increased. Participants stated: "I know a lot of people going to Michigan and picking [molly] up and bringing it back; I ain't heard of no ecstasy." Community professionals reported that the availability of ecstasy and molly has decreased during the past six months. A treatment provider stated, "That was almost like a fad."

The Columbus Police Crime Lab reported that the number of ecstasy (MDMA) cases it processes has increased during the past six months, while the BCI London Crime Lab reported the number of ecstasy cases it processes has decreased; the labs do not differentiate between ecstasy and molly cases. In addition, the Columbus Police Crime Lab reported that the number of MDA ("sally") cases it processes has remained the same during the past six months, while the BCI London Crime Lab reported an increased number of MDA cases.

Ecstasy	Reported Availability Change during the Past 6 Months	
	 Participants	Decrease
	 Law enforcement	Decrease
	 Treatment providers	Decrease
Molly	Reported Availability Change during the Past 6 Months	
	 Participants	Increase
	 Law enforcement	Decrease
	 Treatment providers	Decrease

Reportedly, molly is often cut with other substances, including: Adderall®, heroin and methamphetamine. Overall, participants reported that the quality of ecstasy and molly has decreased during the past six months. One participant shared, "The molly people been bringing down here is not molly, it's crystal meth."

Reports of current prices for ecstasy and molly were consistent among participants with experience buying the drugs. Participants reported that molly is typically sold in a capsule or by the gram. One participant shared, "[Molly is sold] in pill form, in powder in a baggy, in capsules." Overall, participants reported that the price of ecstasy and molly has remained the same during the past six months.

Ecstasy/Molly	Current Prices for Ecstasy/Molly	
	<b>Ecstasy:</b>	
	High dose (aka "triple stack")	\$20
	<b>Molly:</b>	
	A gram	\$10
3.5 grams	\$90	

Participants reported that molly is obtained through drug dealers, at dance clubs and "raves" (dance parties) and through Internet purchase. Participants reported: "I know a lot of people ordering molly and LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) off the Internet; A lot of raves and parties and

things like that, but you don't hear about it in the street too much; I worked at clubs. It's all there. Molly's there, ecstasy's there."




Participants reported that the most common route of administration for ecstasy and molly is snorting. Participants estimated that out of 10 ecstasy and molly users, seven would snort and three would orally consume the drugs.

Participants described typical ecstasy and molly users as African-American males, hippies, rappers, college kids and young people. Community professionals described typical users as young, gay people and African-American males. One law enforcement officer summarized, "Young adults ... younger people, suburbia, [aged] 40s and the gay community."

### Synthetic Marijuana

Synthetic marijuana (synthetic cannabinoids) remains available in the region. Participants most often reported the drug's current availability as '8' on a scale of '0' (not available, impossible to get) to '10' (highly available, extremely easy to get); the previous most common score was '5-7'. A participant remarked, "You can buy it anywhere." Community professionals were unable to provide an availability rating score; the previous most common score was '10' as reported by only one community professional. A treatment provider reported, "Yeah, we don't get much of that. Every once in a while our drug screens pick it up ... We've only had a couple of numbers (positive screens), and that was because we cut them off the marijuana and they thought they could do that and it wouldn't show up ... it showed up on the screens." Law enforcement reported not encountering synthetic marijuana during the past six months.

Participants reported that the availability of synthetic marijuana has remained the same during the past six months. Participants reported that a regional headshop chain carries synthetic marijuana, but the product continually changes to skirt the 2011 law which banned the sale of synthetic marijuana. The Columbus Police Crime Lab reported that the number of synthetic marijuana cases it processes has remained the same during the past six months, while the BCI London Crime Lab reported that the number of synthetic marijuana cases it processes has increased.

Synthetic Marijuana	Reported Availability Change during the Past 6 Months	
	 Participants	No change
	 Law enforcement	No comment
	 Treatment providers	No comment

Participants most often rated the current overall quality of synthetic marijuana as '2' on a scale of '0' (poor quality, "garbage") to '10' (high quality); no previous most common quality score was reported. Participants shared: "It's like smoking potpourri; That stuff is terrible, bro. Leaves you spazzed out and stuff."

Reports of current prices for synthetic marijuana were consistent among participants with experience buying the drug. Reportedly, the most common quantity of purchase is a 3.5-gram bag for \$15-20. Overall, participants reported that the price of synthetic marijuana has remained the same during the past six months.

The most common route of administration for synthetic marijuana remains smoking. Participants estimated that out of 10 synthetic marijuana users, all 10 would smoke the drug. Participants described typical synthetic marijuana users as young people and people on probation. One participant reported, "It's really popular with people on probation, so they don't fail [a drug test]..."

### Other Drugs in the Columbus Region

Participants and community professionals listed a variety of other drugs as present in the region, but these drugs were not mentioned by the majority of people interviewed: hallucinogens (lysergic acid diethylamide [LSD] and psilocybin mushrooms), Neurontin® (gabapentin, an anticonvulsant) and promethazine (antihistamine, a neuroleptic).

In addition, media outlets reported on law enforcement seizures and arrests of other drugs in the region this reporting period. Columbus public health officials issued a warning through a local news outlet regarding a new drug seen in Central Ohio called "Tulsi Pan Masala;" the drug comes from Pakistan and is also known as, "betel nut," as it is Areca nuts wrapped in betel leaves, which are chewed

to obtain a stimulant-like high; Reynoldsburg Police were alerted to several high school students chewing the drug; the World Health Organization (WHO) warns the drug can lead to tooth decay and oral cancer ([www.dailypakistan.com](http://www.dailypakistan.com), March 11, 2017).




## Hallucinogens

Hallucinogens remain moderately available in the region. Participants most often reported the current availability of these drugs as '6' on a scale of '0' (not available, impossible to get) to '10' (highly available, extremely easy to get); the previous most common score was '5'. A participant remarked, *"Oh, it's out there, you just gotta go to the right place."* While treatment providers could not report any information regarding hallucinogens, law enforcement reported the current availability of these drugs as '6' on a scale of '0' (not available, impossible to get) to '10' (highly available, extremely easy to get); the previous most common score was '6-7'. One law enforcement officer reported, *"We do LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide cases) in Dublin [Franklin County]."*

Media outlets reported on law enforcement seizures and arrests in the region this reporting period. Whitehall Police (Franklin County) executed a search warrant of a home and seized 138.5 grams of psilocybin mushrooms, 182 marijuana plants and 522 grams of harvested marijuana ([www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com), Feb. 16, 2017).

Participants reported that the availability of hallucinogens has remained the same during the past six months. One participant commented, *"It's stayed the same ... mostly [available] at [music] festivals."* Law enforcement reported that the availability of hallucinogens has decreased during the past six months.

The Columbus Police Crime Lab reported that the number of LSD and psilocybin mushroom cases they process have remained the same or decreased (fewer than 3 cases during the past six months). The BCI London Crime Lab reported that the number of LSD and psilocybin mushroom cases it processes has increased during the past six months.

Hallucinogens	Reported Availability Change during the Past 6 Months	
	 Participants	No change
	 Law enforcement	Decrease
	 Treatment providers	No comment

Reports of current street prices for hallucinogens were consistent among participants with experience buying the drugs.

Hallucinogens	Current Prices for Hallucinogens	
	<b>LSD:</b>	
	A dose (aka "a hit")	\$10
	<b>Psilocybin mushrooms:</b>	
	1/8 ounce	\$30
1/4 ounce	\$50	




Participants reported that hallucinogens are most often obtained through drug dealers and Internet purchase. One participant reported, *"A lot of people order it on the black market (dark web)."* Another participant explained the dark web: *"If you have a lot of different passwords and stuff, it's like an incognito thing ... it bounces your IP address everywhere so the government can't track you."* Participants reported that the most common route of administration for hallucinogens is oral consumption. Participants estimated that out of 10 hallucinogens users, all 10 would orally consume the drugs. Participants described typical hallucinogen users as young white people, hippies and people who attend festivals.

## Neurontin®

Neurontin® remains highly available for illicit use in the region. Participants most often reported the drug's current street availability as '10' on a scale of '0' (not available, impossible to get) to '10' (highly available, extremely easy to get); the previous most common score was also '10'. Participants stated: *"They prescribe it like they're candy; Everybody wants gabapentin."* Community professionals

could not provide an availability rating for Neurontin®. One treatment provider shared, "Well ... if they have a doctor ... and they tell [the doctor], 'I'm a recovering addict,' then they'll give them the Neurontin® ... and they'll usually abuse it. Crush it up, snort it ... it gives them a little kick."

Participants reported that the street availability of Neurontin® has increased during the past six months. One participant stated, "I know a lot of people do it because it don't show up [on urine drug screens]." Treatment providers reported that the availability of Neurontin® has remained the same during the past six months.

Neurontin®	Reported Availability Change during the Past 6 Months	
	 Participants	Increase
	 Law enforcement	No comment
	 Treatment providers	No change

Reports of current street prices for Neurontin® were consistent among participants with experience buying the drug. Overall, participants reported that the price of Neurontin® has remained the same during the past six months.




Neurontin®	Current Prices for Hallucinogens	
	300 mg	\$0.50
	600 mg	\$1
	800 mg	\$1-1.50

Participants reported obtaining these drugs from doctors or from people who are in treatment. One participant reported, "You know somebody who has a prescription, they'll sell 'em." Participants reported that the most common route of administration for illicit use of Neurontin® is oral consumption. Participants estimated that out of 10 illicit Neurontin® users, all 10 would orally consume the drug. Participants described typical illicit Neurontin® users as people in treatment or people addicted to heroin. One participant shared, "Anybody over 18 [years of age] for the most part and heroin addicts."

### Promethazine

Promethazine (aka "lean" when mixed with soda) is available for illicit use in the region. Participants most often reported the current street availability of promethazine as '8' on a scale of '0' (not available, impossible to get) to '10' (highly available, extremely easy to get); community professionals most often reported current street availability as '2-10'.

Participants and law enforcement reported that the general availability of promethazine has increased during the past six months, while treatment providers reported decreased availability. One participant stated, "Rappers are promoting it." One law enforcement officer commented, "That 'purple drank' (aka 'lean') is off the charts right now."

Promethazine	Reported Availability Change during the Past 6 Months	
	 Participants	Increase
	 Law enforcement	Increase
	 Treatment providers	Decrease

Reports of current street prices for promethazine were consistent among participants with experience buying the drug. Overall, participants agreed that the price of promethazine has remained the same during the past six months. They reported that a bottle sells for \$40 (unspecified amount).

Participants reported obtaining promethazine from doctors, drug dealers, at strip clubs and through Internet purchase. A participant stated, "Same way you get Percocet® ... you just ask somebody, 'Hey, you got some Lean?' ... and [from] the Internet." Another participant added, "You can go to the strip clubs and get that shit. It ain't nothing but cough syrup, for real!"

Participants reported that the most common route of administration for illicit use of promethazine is oral consumption. Participants estimated that out of 10 illicit promethazine users, all 10 would orally consume the drug. Participants stated: "Usually mixed with like Kool-Aid® or something; Mixed with Jolly Ranchers (candies); It's only purple when you mix it with pop."

Participants described typical illicit promethazine users as high school students, young adults, African-American people and drug dealers. Community professionals described typical illicit users as teens to early 20-year olds and African-American people. One law enforcement officer added, *"A bunch of high school kids in Dublin do it, too."*

### Conclusion

Crack cocaine, heroin, marijuana, methamphetamine, Neurontin® (gabapentin), sedative-hypnotics and Suboxone® remain highly available in the Columbus region; also highly available are prescription opioids. Changes in availability during the past six months include: increased availability for heroin, fentanyl, marijuana and methamphetamine; likely increased availability for crack cocaine and Suboxone®; and decreased availability for ecstasy.

While many types of heroin are currently available in the region, participants and community professionals agreed that black tar and white powdered heroin are equally available. Participants reported that the top cutting agents (adulterants) for heroin include: fentanyl and carfentanil. Law enforcement also discussed these substances as commonly used to cut heroin or substitutions for heroin.

Overall, participants reported that the general quality of heroin has increased during the past six months due to an increase in carfentanil and fentanyl as cuts. Several participants reported that fentanyl can be purchased via the Internet and shipped to one's home. The Columbus Police and the BCI London crime labs reported that the number of carfentanil, fentanyl and fentanyl analogue cases they process has increased during the past six months.

The most common route of administration for heroin remains intravenous injection. Participants discussed the high prevalence of Hepatitis C among intravenous drug users, while acknowledging that sharing of injection needles is a common practice. Participants described typical heroin users as white people, both males and females, although they reported an increase in heroin use among young African-American people.

Participants and law enforcement reported that the availability of crystal methamphetamine has increased during the past six months. The Columbus Police and the BCI London crime labs reported that the number of methamphetamine cases they process has increased during the past six months; the BCI London Crime Lab reported processing crystal methamphetamine as well as white and brown powdered methamphetamine. Participants mentioned bath salts and fentanyl as cuts for methamphetamine.

A query of the National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS) for the counties which comprise the Columbus region returned 637 methamphetamine cases reported during the past six months (an increase from 492 cases during the previous six months). Participants and community professionals continued to describe typical methamphetamine users as young white people. In addition, law enforcement indicated that many heroin users also now use methamphetamine.

Lastly, Neurontin® remains highly available for illicit use in the region. Participants and treatment providers discussed the drug as often prescribed to people in recovery for opiate addiction. Participants reported obtaining the drug from doctors or from people who are in treatment and have a prescription. They described typical illicit Neurontin® users as people addicted to heroin who misuse the drug because, reportedly, the drug is not usually screened for by treatment providers and drug courts.