PRESS ADVISORY
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Colorado Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force Releases Annual Report
Since 2013, the Task Force has monitored emerging drug abuse trends throughout Colorado

DENVER – Today, Colorado Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman announced the release of the Colorado Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force’s 2017 Annual Report, which is submitted to the Colorado General Assembly’s Judiciary Committees in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. Since 2013, the Task Force has monitored emerging drug abuse issues in order to respond proactively and mitigate escalation of potential negative impacts on the people and communities of Colorado. This legislative session the General Assembly passed a bill reauthorizing the Task Force for an additional 10 years in order to continue to their important work.

“Substance abuse has had a devastating impact on millions of families across the country and Colorado is certainly not immune to this crisis,” said Task Force Chair Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman. “The findings in the 2017 report highlight the many successes during the last year, but it also begins to outline how much more must be done in the areas of treatment, education, and prevention to help Coloradans.”

According to the 2017 report, alcohol, followed by marijuana, methamphetamine, and heroin continue to be the substances Coloradans most seek treatment to address. The highest percentage of individuals seeking treatment for drug abuse and addiction are from the Denver/Boulder region. The northeast and south-central regions of the state have high percentages of individuals seeking treatment for methamphetamine, while the southeast region of the state has a high percentage of individuals seeking treatment for opioid abuse and addiction, inclusive of both prescribed opioids and heroin.

Also included in the 2017 annual report are examples of successes that occurred at the local and state levels to tackle the abuse of all drugs in Colorado, such as:
• Coordinating with local communities on responding to the opioid crisis in Colorado.
• Disseminating Narcan to law enforcement for reversing opioid overdose.
• Launching Recovery Ready Colorado to bring attention to ways communities can assist people that are recovering from a substance use disorder.
• Helping to promote the Colorado Medication Take Back Program to remove and properly dispose of unused prescribe opioid drugs.
• Assisting legislators in drafting a bill to increase access to Medication-Assisted Treatment for opioid use disorder.
• Assisting the Legislative Interim Study Committee on Opioids and Other Substance Use Disorders in its work to prepare draft legislation to address the opioid crisis in Colorado.

“With the Task Force, Colorado has one of the most comprehensive approaches to monitoring drug use trends in the state and for working with local communities and state policymakers on responses to address emerging and current challenges of drug abuse and addiction,” according to José Esquibel, the Vice Chair of Prevention for the Task Force.

In 2013, the Colorado General Assembly reauthorized the Colorado State Methamphetamine Task Force under the name “Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force” (Senate Bill 2013-244) with representatives of state government, local governments, and the private sectors, including legislators, child advocates, public health officials, drug treatment providers, child welfare workers, law enforcement officers, judges, and prosecutors.

A network of partners is essential to fulfilling the charge of the Task Force. In addition to membership representation from a broad range of agencies and organizations that address substance abuse or those impacted by it, there are ongoing partnerships with: Colorado Alliance for Drug Endangered Children, Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention and Rise Above Colorado.

A full copy of The Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force’s 2017 Annual Report can be found at: https://coag.gov/sites/default/files/contentuploads/oe/Substance_Abuse_SA/SATF-reports/12th_annual_substance_abuse_task_force_report_2017_final.pdf

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