

Drug Prevention

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INAN 320: Strategic Intelligence

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Marshall, IL is a small town with a population of almost 4,000 people. It only spans over four miles of land and is located in Clark County. The poverty rate is 10.94% and the average household income is \$65,582. The demographics are a little over 97% white. The education level of the town varies. 41% of the residents have graduated high school and 16% have some college experience (“Marshall, Illinois population 2022”).

The class of INAN 320: Strategic Intelligence was tasked with the goal of creating a policy for Marshall, IL that would help them combat their drug issue. Our class visited Marshall two separate times. The first time we started at the police department and spoke with the sheriff, mayor, and another town representative. Then, we went to the Health Department and spoke with a group of their employees. We asked questions and took notes on what they had to say. The class went a second time and spoke to the police chief. He had a lot of useful information about their drug addiction problem. We were then able to use all the information we gathered to develop a policy for the town to follow.

Marshall has a drug use and addiction problem that has been affecting the city for a long time. When asked, law enforcement, government officials, and the health department had no exact data on what kind of drugs and how much of them they see. They believe that drug users are one of the most common arrests they have to make. Methamphetamine is the drug that the police department and sheriff’s office claim to see the most of. Law enforcement also said that even though marijuana is now legal in Illinois, that the use of marijuana is a gateway drug to other more serious substances. People will often start with marijuana then turn to other drugs when marijuana no longer satisfies them. Having so many drug arrests is difficult for them because they do not have a specific officer dedicated to just working drug related issues.

Preventing the drug epidemic could tremendously help the community. Before discussing a policy on prevention, it is important to define drug abuse.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines addiction as, "... a chronic, relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use despite adverse consequences" (2020). Addiction is regarded as a brain disorder because it alters how the mind functions. It disrupts the normal and healthy patterns of the body and a person's life. There are multiple reasons people start taking drugs. Some of the common ones are to feel good, to feel better, to do better, and curiosity and social pressure. While the initial decision to take drugs is usually voluntary, as time goes on, the ability to control oneself can be impaired. Physical changes in the brain can develop overtime that explain the compulsive quality of addiction (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).

Because of the serious nature of drug addiction, it is important that everyone does their part to prevent the problem from getting worse. There is not a guaranteed way to stop drug addiction. However, there are many ways that can help prevent substance abuse. One prevention technique is education. This seems like an easy task, but needs to be executed correctly to have the most impactful effect.

Educating the youth is one of the most important prevention actions that can take place. It is not unusual for adolescents to engage in risk-taking and to want to try new things. It is also true that decision-making and judgment skills are usually not fully developed until adulthood. All these things mixed together can put young people in harmful situations. Experimenting with drugs is a common activity for youth to do. Often, they do not know that this can be permanently damaging. Teaching youth the risks of drugs could prevent them from starting in the first place or aid in their decision to stop taking certain substances. Preventing all drug use in young people

is an impossible goal, but drugs are used far less when they understand that drugs are harmful and can result in death (Ren, 2020) .

The easiest way to reach the children is while they are at school. It makes sense to do an educational program at school because they are already there to learn. They will be focused on learning and in a good mindset. Also, they will be with their peers. Kids might be more open to participating if they see their friends doing the same.

Marshall police department and health department both acknowledged that the school had a program already implemented. This program is called Red Ribbon. Red Ribbon is the largest and longest drug-use prevention program in the United States. This campaign is supported by the National Family Partnership. The National Family Partnership is a non-profit that was established in 1980 by a group of concerned parents who wanted to take more of a leadership role in preventing the use of drugs in their kid's lives. Their mission is "to lead and support our nation's families and communities in nurturing the full potential of healthy, drug free youth" (Informed Families). The National Family Partnership supplies drug awareness by supporting the annual National Red Ribbon Campaign. The organization was founded because of the murder of DEA Agent Enrique Camarena. To raise awareness against drugs, people around the nation wear red ribbons. Red Ribbon now serves as a stimulant to get communities to educate their children and to participate in activities that support drug prevention (Informed Families).

National Family Partnership puts on many activities in support of Red Ribbon. One activity that the non-profit does is Plant the Promise. During Red Ribbon Week supporters plant red flower bulbs that will bloom during the springtime. The flowers are a reminder that a drug free life is important and beautiful (Informed Families). October 23-31 has been coined "Red Ribbon Week". This is a week where many schools participate in activities that encourage a drug

free life. School campuses get decorated by students and staff. Speakers will go to different schools and educate the students either through their research or experiences. Also, fun and engaging contests are often developed to get student and staff involvement. Often, young people will be asked to take a pledge to say no to drugs and to do the right thing when presented with an issue involving drugs (Staake, 2022). The representatives of the town of Marshall that we spoke with did not have a lot of information about Red Ribbon Week at their schools. We did not receive any information about how interactive it is or if students felt it is effective. It is important to get feedback from your consumers, the youth, when doing programs such as this one. That is how you make it the most effective and worthwhile.

DARE is another substance abuse prevention program that is popular in the United States. DARE is an acronym that stands for Substance Abuse Resistance Education. It gives young people the skills necessary to avoid being involved in drugs, violence, and gangs. The education program was founded in 1983 by Los Angeles Police Chief Daryl Gates and the Los Angeles Unified School District and has been very successful. It has been implemented into thousands of educational institutions in the United States and other countries. These police officer led lessons are designed for kids as young as kindergarten and as old as 12th grade. Each age group gets taught for their maturity level. One of the main goals is to give students the tools to fight peer pressure and to thrive without drugs and violence in their lives. DARE's mission statement is, "teaching students good decision-making skills to help them lead safe and healthy lives" (About D.A.R.E.). The vision is, "A world in which students everywhere are empowered to respect others and choose to lead lives free from violence, substance use, and other dangerous behaviors." (About D.A.R.E.).

The developers of the DARE program claim it is successful because of how it is delivered to students. Law enforcement sees how drugs can affect people everyday. They are usually pretty knowledgeable on the subject and have a lot of first hand experience. It makes sense to have them instruct the program. They will be able to convey that drugs do have real life effects on people's lives. The program also says it has been able to grow and expand because it was the first of its kind. DARE can stay relevant, impactful, and effective because of its critical reviews by experts in the field and audience, the children (About D.A.R.E.).

DARE categorizes its curricula by age and topic. They even have a few activities for parents. Some of these lessons include substance specific, mental health, and reinforcing skills. The lessons are relatively short and focused. They have posters, presentations delivered by certified speakers, take home activities, and brochures (About D.A.R.E). Each age group has different techniques in how they are being taught. For the young elementary students, they will be taught "by colorful posters that briefly introduce children to safety topics such as recognizing risk and emergencies and simple ways to respond, as well as introduction to SEL concepts such as understanding feelings, coping with anger, and responding to hurtful behaviors" (Dare, 2022). As the students get older, the more in depth they get into how to avoid drugs. For example, the older elementary school students will be "introduced to several of the foundational D.A.R.E. concepts that will be expanded in the Elementary Core, including safety, responsibility, safety and risk associated with medicines and other substances, and conflict management" (Dare, 2022). The middle school curriculum stays fairly similar to the higher elementary school curriculum. However, the information being taught and how it is being taught to high school students will differ dramatically. The high school students will gain an "understanding of risk

behavior and making decisions that support safety and health. Concepts covered include norms, consequences, resisting pressure and intervening in dangerous or risky situations" (Dare, 2022).

To our knowledge, Marshall does not have a DARE program. The more drug prevention education that youth can be exposed to the better. We think the DARE program is probably more effective than the Red Ribbon Week. The Red Ribbon Week is less informative and more enjoyment based. The DARE program is more about education and strategizing on how to live a healthy life. We believe that even though both of these drug prevention programs are good, there is a better and more efficient way of educating the town.

We like the way DARE educates youth on drugs and how it provides strategies for making good decisions. It does an excellent job at making lessons that match the maturity level of the audience. This is important when talking about such an important and complex subject such as drug abuse. If the material is too advanced for the children, then they will not retain the information and will not be able to apply what is being taught to their everyday lives. If the material is too simple, kids may become bored and also not get an education that they can use. Having multiple levels makes the program more beneficial to all. Even with the multiple maturity levels, we think it is important not to sugar coat the abuse. The real effects and consequences should be conveyed to the students.

Something that neither of the above programs highlight is having people who have been directly affected by drug abuse be present. There is no better person to explain how negatively drugs can affect a person's life than someone who has experienced it first hand. The first perspective you could show is the recovered addict. Recovered addicts are creditable when talking about this subject because they have actually experienced it. Information given to kids will mean more coming from them than coming from an instructor who has never truly been

through it. Also, having family and friends tell their story would be effective. Drugs can tear a family apart. Seeing a mother or father talk about their addict child could hit a few more strings and prevent someone from wanting to ruin their own family. Especially at a young age, friends are very important. No one would want to see a friend in danger and viewing and hearing real stories could convince someone to want to help their own friend or keep them from affecting their friend in the same way. Telling stories and having speakers that are engaging could really benefit a prevention program.

Not only should the students be educated, but the parents should too. Parents have a significant amount of influence in their children's lives. Parents and children should have a strong, safe, and open relationship with youth. They also must know how to address drug abuse and prevention. It is best to talk to children about this subject before they are exposed. Proactive plans and policies are more successful than reactive. Sometimes this is not always possible though. It is important for parents to not only know information about drugs, but for them to know why youth start taking drugs and how to address the problem. Young people often start drugs because they want to fit in, to socialize, life transitions, and emotional and psychological pain. Having a program that teaches parents how to communicate and provide the skills to live a healthy life would be very helpful in combating a town's drug abuse epidemic (Substance use prevention resources for parents).

When we were looking for a prevention policy for Marshall, IL we considered many things. We thought targeting young people would be the most effective because often drugs are started in youth. Also, the earlier children get educated the less likely they are to start abusing drugs. We think the town should require that drug education be taught in the schools in some shape or form. By making it mandatory, the children are sure to get the education they need. We

wanted an education program in the schools because they are already in the learning mindset and they are with their peers. The program would need to be engaging and be beneficial for many age levels. Hearing real life stories and situations tend to hit home a little harder for people and might help them make better decisions. The program we are suggesting would have speakers come in and share their stories. Finally, not only do we want to educate the kids, we want to educate the parents too. They have a significant influence on their children and it is important that they are educated also.

The policy we are proposing is similar to the DARE program, but has some additions. The education would be as true and real as possible, but still appropriate. The lessons, depending on age levels, would be set up similar to the already existing program. We want to add in speakers that can tell their stories and share their experiences. Finally, not only would the program be focused on the children, it would also educate the adults. This program should be mandatory for all schools to implement.

Implementing a program like this would cause the drug abuse issues in Marshall, IL to decrease. Less young adults would even try drugs in the first place because they would not be as ignorant to the effects of drug addiction. With less abusers, less arrests would be made. Drug abusers also participate in other offenses, so not only would drug arrests go down, less arrests would be made in general. The community would be a safer and happier place for people to live.

With any policy, there are pros and cons. I think the policy we are suggesting to implement to prevent drug use and abuse is very strong. Educating the children and starting at a young age is a great strategy for the town. Drugs are so complex and it is impossible to know the true effects without being educated on them. We also think having someone like law enforcement teach the lessons is smart because they know a lot about the subject and will be able to give good

information. Having different lessons for different age groups is another pro because it guarantees that the information will be useful for the maturity level. We do not think an education program like this one will be very costly which is an advantage for Marshall. The town does not seem to have a lot of funds dedicated to drug prevention. Next, we think not only educating the kids, but also reaching the program is beneficial because parents have such a huge impact on their children. Finally and most importantly, having recovered addicts and people who have been affected by drug addiction come and speak is something that makes this program really unique. The DARE campaign is really informative, but I think if this was added with it it could be even more effective. Real stories tend to hit home more than facts and could help a kid not try a substance or use a drug.

There will be negatives to any policy that is being implemented. This program is going to take time. It will take time out of the students day and also out of the program's teachers day. Marshall would also have to find good, reliable people to tell their stories. This could be difficult. The selection process would need to be handled with care. The last con is making the kids care. A lot of time when schools put on programs kids see it as "free time". The town and school will have to present this program in a way that gets students interested and involved. Other than that, this policy has the potential to be extremely effective.

We decided on this policy because we thought it would be the most effective for the town and a good first step. Drug addiction is not an easy subject to handle. Having a required school program could help jump start more prevention policies. Kids are also easy to talk to because they do not have as many biases as older people. Implementing DARE, adding more parent education, and having speakers come tell their stories is our suggestion for Marshall, IL to help with drug prevention.

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Marshall Policy Proposal: Harm Reduction

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Policy Proposal: Marshall, Illinois

Define the Problem

The city of Marshall, Illinois is currently facing a large problem involving the use of meth. This in turn has led to higher rates of crimes, such as theft. Drug use is currently on the rise all across the United States, and that is highly evident throughout the whole state of Illinois. According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, “In 2020, opioid overdose deaths among Illinois residents increased 32.7% from 2,219 deaths in 2019 to 2,944 deaths in 2020” (Ezike, 2021). This is a pretty sharp increase. However, without exact data from Clark County or the City of Marshall, it is evident that the use of opioids has increased all across the state in recent years. According to the Clark County Sheriff and members of the Department of Public Health, Marshall has experienced a high increase in meth use. During the meeting with the Mayor and Sheriff, as well as with Public Health, and the Chief of Police all located in Marshall, Illinois, they all agreed that this epidemic of meth use had been affecting their town severely.

Due to the town’s size, it is not possible to find reports on the exact numbers regarding the prevalence of drug abuse in their town. However, due to the meetings we had with various leading officials of Marshall, we learned that they had five drug-related arrests in the first two weeks of March. As well as looking through arrest records that are published in news articles, there were many arrests due to drug issues in the month of November. Although five may not appear to be substantial, it is a sharp increase from the numbers that were reported just a few years ago. They also do not have the capabilities to make a drug task force due to the small unit size. Clark County also does not have drug court, although there is one in Crawford County, close by, that has benefitted them in regards to the recovery after drug related issues. A

combination of all of these reasons is why we believe a policy needs to be put into place regarding the drug problem in Marshall, Illinois.

Solutions

In order to counteract this drug and theft issue Marshall is currently facing, we propose to implement a policy to create a support group for those with addiction to take place in Marshall. Members of the Marshall Police Department and Clark County Public Health should lead this group. Host weekly meetings for those struggling with addiction issues to get the support they need. Also, this support group should start educating the youth by getting involved in the local school system. Presenting a curriculum that will focus on harm reduction techniques will veer students away from drug use. We suggest presentations on the negative health and social effects that occur due to substance abuse. This does not directly terminate drug use within the city but it will educate abusers about the serious health and social effects caused by unmanaged substance abuse. The next step in harm reduction is to lead those who are addicted to cease their substance abuse, and the first step to reaching that point is supporting them through their addiction and educating them.

The second part of our proposed policy is for this group to be involved in the school system in the city of Marshall. According to Marshall's Chief of Police, the city will be assigned a Student Resource Officer in the next few months, who would be the head of this assignment. The prevention of drug use can begin at a young age, by educating students about the potential harm they will be caused if they do not learn how to safely use drugs or how to manage their drug use. This will be a deeper program than those such as DARE, as it is not to simply instruct students not to use drugs; but to educate them on the harmful consequences, whether health or

social. According to an article published by Drug Policy Alliance, “Most schools in the United States provide drug education programs that are based in abstinence-only logic despite its weaknesses” (*Real Drug Education*). By educating students on the consequences it introduces harm reduction methods that will reduce the consequences that occur if these students choose to participate in substances that often lead to addiction. Although this is a multiple-factor policy, the different aspects are related and do not have to occur all at once. However, implementing a policy that enforces the creation of a support group and the emergence of harm reduction education in students. This will in the end reduce the impact of substance abuse on not only the abusers but the city of Marshall as a whole.

Criteria

Support groups have remained a popular outlet for people who face addictions of all kinds all across the country. It is a way for those with similar situations or feelings about addiction to get together and support one another to reach a common goal; taking back control of their lives. According to an article written by St. John Recovery Place, a Drug and Alcohol Rehab Facility in Florida, “Individuals who participate in the support groups reduce their chance of relapse anywhere from 7% to 25%” (Terry, 2021). Support groups also give the person who is addicted, a sense of belonging within a group of people who actually understand, but are led by someone who is able to provide them with the support they need to reach sobriety. Yet, support groups do not push sobriety on the members, but allow members to be open and honest about their addiction while receiving the care and support needed to make the first step to sobriety. A support group not only allows people to share their experiences and support one another but it can also be used as an educational experience to introduce harm reduction techniques by the educated leader. This includes providing information regarding how to safely use drugs, and how

to manage drug use, as well as providing attendees with information on how they can receive further treatment, whether that be treatment and rehabilitation centers or physicians who can speak with them regarding their personal health. The obvious benefits, as well as the statistics provided, are why we recommend that this be one of the first steps the city of Marshall and its supportive branches take in order to aid in their current state. Support groups are a popular and successful option to reduce the negative effects drug use currently has on the community.

Outcomes

The potential outcomes of this policy are that it either succeeds, which means that the drug use and rate of theft should go down for Marshall and Clark County. This is the ideal situation, which could then turn into the creation of many other support groups in different small towns that have been experiencing the same issues, as this is an issue that is affecting all of Illinois. If the rate of drug use drops, the high rate of other crimes should drop as well, as there was a correlation between the increase in theft when there was an increase in the use of meth. On the other hand, if this policy does not solve the drug problem then there will be no change to the current state of Marshall. We do not suspect that there would be any worsened conditions due to the implementation of this policy. If people do not respond well to this idea, by not paying attention to the group, or not taking it seriously, then they will continue to use drugs. The only aspect that may get worse, as a result, is that the rate of drug use will continue to increase, as it is trending to without any assistance. Ideally, this policy will decrease the rate of overdose and drug abuse, as well as lower the raised rate of theft that Marshall is currently experiencing. This policy will also change the way drug education takes place in the school systems by being presented as a harm-reduction technique rather than a prevention technique. The combination of

these two factors should discourage drug abuse in Marshall, to the point where it begins to trend down.

Trade Offs

Although support groups are popular options in order to diminish the amount of substance abuse that occurs within a city; however, it does not ensure that people will stop using drugs. Users may or may not attend the meetings, and even if they do that does not mean they will definitely quit. However, the exact goal of harm reduction is not to directly stop the use of drugs, rather it is to educate individuals who abuse various substances on the harm these substances cause them and help them learn to manage their use. In the same way, getting into the schools does not mean that students will not begin abusing drugs, or will not grow up to become addicted to a substance, but it does at least educate students on the potential harm. The only con that is related to drug education in the school is introducing those who had not been previously introduced outside of the school setting. Some may argue this will encourage the use of drugs at a young age, rather this is proactive, therefore if a youth decides to use drugs they will know how to do so safely. Education on drug use, while it may appeal to some causing them to try drugs at some point, will also veer other students away from doing drugs as they see the harm it does. All in all, the pros outweigh the cons in this situation, as it will be very difficult to determine if the negative outcomes are directly correlated to the policy, or if they would have occurred anyway due to the current increase in drug use Marshall is experiencing.

Decision Process

The pros and cons of this, or any, policy needs to be weighed to a great extent; in order to completely understand the potential consequences that could occur from the implementation of

that policy. However, this decision is not made by only one person. This policy would need to be run through all branches, including the mayor, police department, sheriff's department, and department of public health. After the initial review process regarding a proposed policy, it can then be revised based on information and suggestions from those of the collective groups who will be making the decision. If needed, after revisions, once it is unanimous agreement on the policy then implementation can begin to take place. In this example, that would begin with sectioning off a team built of a collection of officials from different areas to form the group who will lead this group and where they will meet. In this case, aspects of this policy would also have to be approved by school officials, who will need to evaluate the curriculum, or what will be discussed and how it will be presented. For example, will this be a section that takes place in health class, or will it be a whole school assembly-style presentation once a year? Once all of the logistics have been discussed, revised, and accepted, then the objective of the policy can begin taking place.

Conclusion

Our policy proposal is to introduce a support group for those who struggle with any form of addiction in Marshall, Illinois, that includes a curriculum regarding substance abuse that is presented in the schooling system. We believe this is the best option because there are only a few ways that this would cause the drug abuse problem to get worse. As the rate of drug use is already on the rise, it will be undeterminable if the increase is due to the failure of this policy or just the current trend continuing. The pros of this policy greatly outweigh the cons. The pros of the eventual decrease in substance abuse, as the public, drug users to students, is educated on drug use harm reduction techniques; such as, how to manage the use of drugs as well as the serious detrimental consequences of using drugs. If this begins in the schools, the students will

directly learn why they should not use drugs as well as how to do so safely so they choose to.

This will decrease the high density of drug overdose Marshall is currently experiencing across all demographics. In the end, this policy will only help diminish the issues Marshall is currently facing, by educating those who suffer from substance abuse and the general public on the harm reduction techniques that are involved in substance use.

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In the case of Marshall, Illinois, the problem in the city that we were assigned to tackle was the drug issue. Lexi and I were tasked with determining a policy for law enforcement to help combat the effects that the spread of drug usage within city. The first step of creating a policy was to collect data through research and data collection. We had two interviews with city officials within the local government where we tried to learn as much as we could about the issue firsthand. After speaking with city officials and asking a series of questions, this is what we were able to find.

Through our interviews, it was determined that the main drug we needed to combat within Marshall was methamphetamines. It is also suspected by local law enforcement that the majority of these drugs are not being sourced locally by small time cook operations, but being imported through by means of large scale trafficking operations and being disseminated to various levels of dealers. There were no task force or higher level agencies assisting local law enforcement, which is a failure on the part of state and federal level law enforcement. At the time of our interview with the police department, there had been five meth related arrests the month prior. Given the towns population of approximately 3,900, 1.5% of the city would be arrested in a year at that rate, and that is only users who are caught. There we no educational resources within the schools to advice students on the danger of the drugs and the

ramifications of addiction. It was also my understanding that there were no resources devoted to rehabilitation or addiction management.

Given that the majority of the illicit drugs are believed to be flowing in through out of jurisdiction sources, the best approach for law enforcement would be to begin the work of locating the points of dissemination within Marshall and Clark County. The first step is to begin building a target network of known distributors within the area in order to locate and arrest these individuals. Denying these points of entry for the methamphetamines would be paramount in combating the issues within the area since it is believed that most of the drugs are not created locally. It would also allow for further questioning and further investigation into how these drugs are being brought into the area and through what means, building a larger network and possibly expanding cases at higher levels of law enforcement.

I believe that this would be possible if local departments could secure the funding to hire one or two more additional officers. This could allow for a dedicated investigator who can build and analyze a data set of drug related incidents, conduct interviews on criminals who are facing drug related charges, and focus primarily on building the network or drug distributors in the area. They could also coordinate with neighboring counties and petition for assistance from state and federal levels, utilizing the information gathered to leverage their assets. I understand that the manning of law enforcement within the area and budget is slim, but I believe that at least one dedicated agent would be required to concentrate on this problem.

I also think that there should be an effort placed upon the education of addiction and counseling available for addicts who wish to get clean. It would be beneficial to create a

program for the education of students as to the dangers of drug use within the schools. This proactive approach could help the issue from expanding in the future and prevent addiction from occurring in the first place as well as assist those who wish to escape the cycle of addiction from happening in the first place.

The reason I believe this would be the most effective approach is due to the main influx of methamphetamines coming from outside the local area. Marshall will ultimately need assistance from larger entities to make an impact in this regard, but they need actionable intelligence to leverage those assets to get involved. Not only does building out a target network help the cause locally, but it shows initiative and can also potentially assist in much larger investigations. I also believe that continuously locking up the users will be a fruitless endeavor; most drug addicts, while not totally blameless in their actions, are also partially victims of the drug trade. Those who supply them, however, are simply profiting from their addictions.

The primary outcome of this change would be a decrease in use and sale of methamphetamines. There would be a network of known sellers and buyers that would allow for better ability to collect intelligence through observation and questioning that could be used to determine major sources of methamphetamine influx and allow for more effective leveraging of assets against them. This could also draw the attention of higher level law enforcement to create data sharing partnerships. The increased police presence and focused efforts would send a message of no tolerance to sellers and users that would permeate through their communities. These actions might also encourage more citizens to get involved as they will see a police force that is striving for community improvement.

The possible cons to consider would be the need to hire additional officers in order to allow for dedicated drug officers. This would affect the budget and would require the sacrifice of money elsewhere. Another tradeoff would be that, given the small size of the community, the increased police presence and increased pressure to quash the drug trade might stir negative feelings about some police action by those who know someone who is an addict. There could also be an unwillingness for state and federal law enforcement to assist despite the efforts, which would ultimately be required in order to combat drug trafficking that comes from large scale operations.

I think that the pros far outweigh these possible cons, however. If there is to be a change within the city of Marshall and Clark County, then action is required. If rectifying the drug problem is something that is truly a priority for the local government and local law enforcement, then some sort of concessions or reorganization of funds will have to be made to create new programs or expand law enforcement enough so officers can divert more effort towards the problem. Given that the citizens of the area are being supplied mostly from traffickers outside the local area, it is imperative that some form of action is taken to determine where and how these drugs are finding their way into the area and into the hands of the citizens. Higher levels of government and law enforcement will need to be gotten involved. The best way to get them involved would be to have irrefutable and actionable data. This problem is not something that will take care of itself as the more it is left to take root unimpeded, the more it will grow in the future.

Drug Strategy: Treatment for the City of Marshall, Illinois

By

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Overview

Over the course of the past four months, the Strategic Intelligence class has been working with the city of Marshall, Illinois, to understand and create a strategy regarding drug policy in their county. The class has visited the town twice to gather information. Local offices such as the Mayor's Office, Sheriff's Department, Clark County Health Department, and the Marshall Police Department have aided us in understanding the severity of the issue. The purpose of this paper is to provide the city of Marshall with a guide for moving forward in their policy.

Problem

With the legalization of marijuana in Illinois starting in January 2020, instances involving drugs have become more frequent and difficult to handle. The use of cannabis is predicted to continue to keep growing as well. The use of marijuana can potentially lead to addiction and further drug use. According to SAMHSA (2022), "1-in-6 people who start using the drug before the age of 18 can become addicted. Also, 1-in-10 adults who use the drug can become addicted". Cannabis use is not the problem, but it can lead to further issues. The city of Marshall is having issues with methamphetamine and crimes being committed due to drug usage. These problems are difficult for them to handle, because of their small police force. The Marshall police department has a total of nine officers, ten counting the police chief. In one month, they will have a student resource officer after they graduate from the academy. The city of Marshall has about 4,000 citizens. With only ten officers patrolling a town of about 4,000 it can be difficult to make arrests and get the offenders help they need.

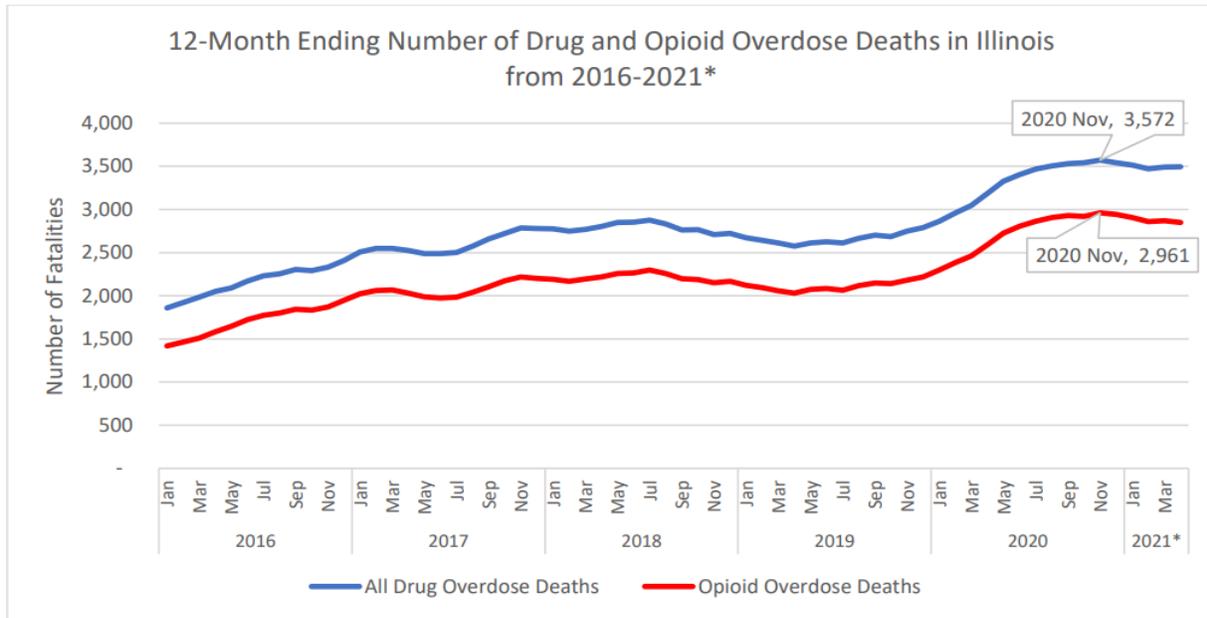
Another problem they face is the lack of treatment for offenders. Marshall does not offer any treatment options. They have one transportation service that offenders may take to treatment facilities in other towns, but it is not the most accessible. The lack of treatment leads to more issues for the city in the end. When talking to the police chief, he said that many of the offenders have been in jail before. If there are limited treatment options available, an offender will continue to end up in jail. It is important they receive the help they need, so they do not continue relapsing. According to Wendy Generees, “studies show that when incarcerated individuals receive comprehensive drug or alcohol treatment in prison and then follow up with continued care upon their release, their drug use declines by 50-70% as compared to individuals who do not receive treatment” (“American”, 2022). The use of treatment can help keep repeat drug offenders off the streets. The final problem we witnessed in Marshall is the lack of data they have. It was concerning when neither the health or police department could provide data on the overdoses that have occurred. It is difficult to pinpoint a problem when there is no information to show it is a problem. Marshall has a handful of problems that need to be addressed. Hopefully by implementing the solutions being recommended these issues can be resolved.

Evidence

Drugs have been an increasing issue in Illinois and around the country. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published data regarding overdoses in Illinois from 2016 to early 2021. These overdoses are caused not only from drug use, but from the mixture of synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl. Fentanyl was found in non-opioid substances, such as methamphetamines which are the main drug of choice in Marshall (Illinois Department of Public Health, 2022). Presented in this graph, Figure 1, are

overdoses during this period, with the blue line representing all overdose deaths and the red line representing opioid overdose deaths.

FIGURE 1: 12-Month Ending Period of Drug and Opioid Overdose Deaths in Illinois from 2016-2021



Source: IDPH Vital Statistics

Following our meetings with Marshall, we were still left with many questions. They were unable to provide us with any solid data regarding overdoses, treatment, or basically anything. As of 21 September 2022, the date of our first meeting, there were 34 inmates in the county jail. Of these 34 inmates, an estimated 80% were jailed on drug related charges. For this paper, drug related charges include incidents involving drugs specifically, like possession, trafficking, or distribution, or incidents occurring while the offender was under the influence, such as robbery or burglary, assault, and more.

After speaking with the Clark County Health Department, Mayor Hasten, and other leaders of Marshall, we learned very little about nearby treatment options. Any Narcotics Anonymous groups are no longer active, there are no treatment facilities nearby, and the only available transportation is First Transit to take struggling people to treatment. The nearest treatment facilities are in Terre Haute, but there is a lack of transportation to get the people there who need it. The only options mentioned by the groups we spoke to were the Human Resource Center, which has limited hours and is closed on weekends when people engage more in drug activity, and faith-based group meetings that have ‘fizzled out’ since COVID-19. All these aspects mentioned here prove that there is a drug problem in Illinois and there are extremely limited treatment options, an arguably worse problem.

Solutions

One issue with treatment in Marshall is transportation. Rehab Transportation is a company in southeast Michigan to provide transportation services to substance abuse rehabilitation centers. A program like this established in Clark County could create a safe, anonymous way for struggling people to receive treatment that’s not available in their own town. If Clark County could collect groups of volunteers, a program like this could be implemented at little cost to transfer people struggling with substance abuse to inpatient facilities in Terre Haute. These volunteers could use their own cars or community cars provided by the city or county. Other transportation options could be community buses that travel between Marshall and Terre Haute on a specific schedule to transport groups of people at a time to services in Terre Haute. This would require coordination between facilities in Terre Haute and authorities in Marshall or Clark County, but it can be a very simple and effective solution.

When speaking with the Clark County Health Department, they mentioned that they provide Narcan and information to jails. These types of programs and precautions should continue as a high percentage of people are jailed for drug related incidents. They also mentioned Narcan vending machines, but Narcan should be knowingly more available to citizens. By supplying Narcan, educating citizens on how to use it, and educating citizens on the seriousness of the issue, more people can be saved and helped. Education and information are great tools to help the community and drug issues. Illinois has a 24-hour substance abuse hotline, which is a tool that should be used by Marshall and shared with citizens. This could be shared by simply having flyers with the number posted throughout downtown, in the newspaper, and posted throughout local businesses.

While many support groups have ‘fizzled out,’ these should be reinstated. The past faith-based support groups may not be for everyone, but Narcotics Anonymous meetings should happen again as well. A 2018 survey done in England, Scotland, and Wales found that 94% of people in Narcotics Anonymous meetings felt that their quality of life improved and 79% of people had an active drug addiction for over 11 years before managing to stay sober through Narcotics Anonymous (*2018 Survey*). These survey results represent the positive effects that Narcotics Anonymous can have, not only in England, but in Marshall as well. Implementing, or reimplementing, these solutions are not going to eradicate substance abuse, but they are steps in the right direction for treatment.

Criteria

The city of Marshall was not very clear about what type of solution they were looking for from this project. They implied that they were open for anything, but when asked how much money they could spend the answer was, “depends on the recommendation”. This made it difficult to produce a solution, as the criteria was not clear. The criteria decided on was producing a solution that was the most cost and time effective. The city does not have a lot of money or time to spend on this solution. The other criteria used was the lack of resources and personnel. Implementing a solution that required multiple people to run it would probably fail. The previous attempts at support groups seemed to fail due to the inconsistency of the group leader. The solutions being recommended were chosen on the basis they are simple solutions, which are not as pricey. They also do not require as many volunteers as other programs. These solutions were chosen in hopes they can be implemented trouble-free and have a lasting impact on the community.

Outcome

Providing treatment can lead to a great deal of outcomes. Helping drug offenders can lead to an entire domino effect in the community. If treatment options work, drug users are less likely to relapse. About 41% of users successfully finished their program that received medicated treatment for opioid detox and achieved abstinence (“Legacy 2019). When offenders are clean, the crime rate is likely to go down. This can lead to the streets being clean and less drugs out there. Drug use going down makes it easier for police officers to focus on other issues in the city of Marshall.

Benefits and Drawbacks

“Doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results is the definition of insanity” according to Albert Einstein. This idea is consistent with the treatment of drug abusers. When they continue to be locked up and let out without any help, they are likely to end up right back in jail. It is a constant revolving door for offenders who do not receive treatment. They get caught, spend time in jail, get released, and continue using drugs. Providing treatment options for these offenders can lead to less offenders returning to jail. The more offenders who stay clean lead to a cleaner and possibly safer community as well. Not only does treatment help the offender, but the entire community.

A downside with treatment is finding volunteers to run these programs. Marshall has had groups in the past that did not work out due to lack of volunteers. It is difficult to find someone willing to help these offenders, especially when they are doing it for free. Another solution we recommend is having Narcan readily available for offenders. A drawback of this solution is the possibility of offenders abusing the Narcan. Knowing they can be saved after they achieve their high may push them to continue their drug use. After discussing the benefits and drawbacks, the positives still outweigh the negatives in our solutions.

Steps to Decision

When thinking about why we chose these solutions, we knew it was important for them to be cost effective. There was very little information that we could get from the authorities in Marshall about the budget, but we know it is relatively limited based on the size of the city and police department. Many of the recommendations we’ve made, such as reinstating Narcotics

Anonymous or education about Narcan and drugs overall, are very cost effective. The reinstatement of Narcotics Anonymous would simply require the town to supply a space for the meetings. This could be anywhere, from the public library to city hall conference rooms to church meeting rooms. After supplying this room, a volunteer for a group leader is needed. The only cost would be to keep the lights on for the meeting space. Education about Narcan or drug use in general could be done by a Clark County Health Department employee. Their salary is already included in the county budget and transportation to nearby prisons, schools, or community organizations could be compensated for very cheaply. Rehab transportation could be more costly. Ideally, volunteers could provide transportation in their own vehicles, similar to Uber or Lyft, and be provided with compensation for gas. The reality is that volunteers may be hard to come by.

Story

From March 2020-March 2021, 96,779 deaths from drug overdose were reported (National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics, 2022). That equals about 265 overdoses per day. That means at least 265 families lost someone today, and even people outside the families are affected by the losses. Treatment is extremely important to save the lives of more than 200 people per day. Treatment begins in every corner of the United States, in every major city and every small town like Marshall. One piece of treatment will not stop drug users from using, but a combination of things can and will help the community. The community wants to be strong, but that requires work from both authorities and everyday citizens. Community volunteers are needed for group meetings, possible transportation solutions, and to create a caring environment for those struggling with addiction. A community can achieve amazing things together, but the changes

must start small through collaboration with other communities. Drug users cannot quit their vices alone, and treatment cannot be successful alone.

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