

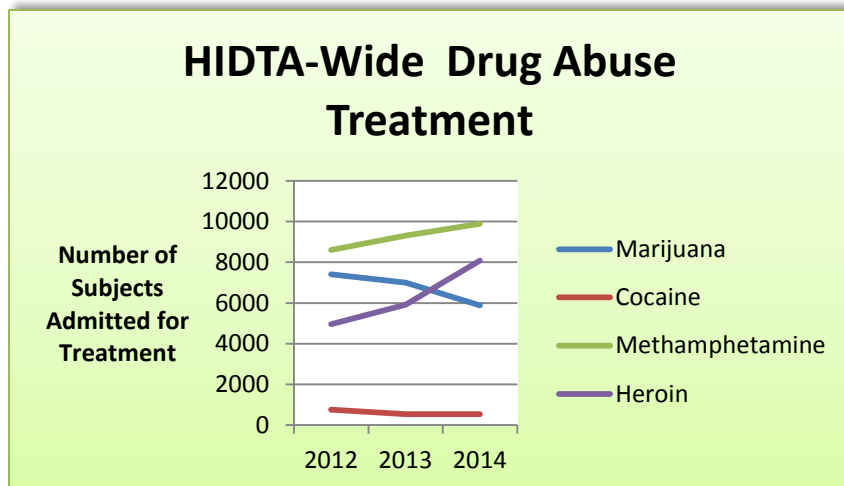
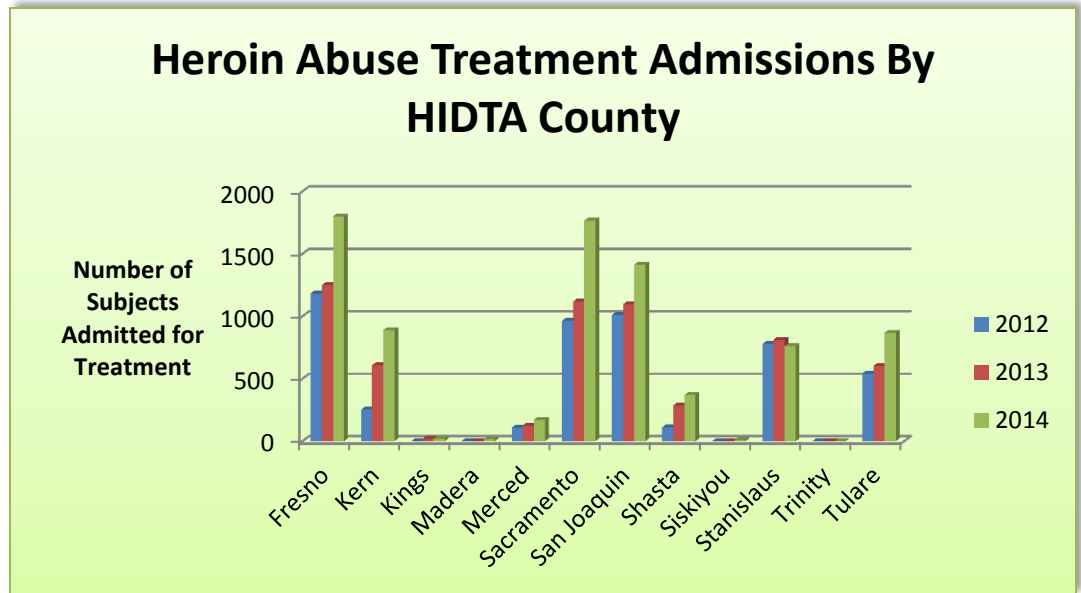


TRENDS IN DRUG ABUSE TREATMENT AND THE DRUG THREAT
 Volume 1: Will Heroin Overtake Methamphetamine?

Ask any experienced investigator or analyst working drugs in the Central Valley to name the most significant drug threat, and you will hear “methamphetamine.” When it comes to dangerous drugs, meth is a perfect storm: plentiful, cheap, and powerfully addictive. It has been killing people, breaking up families, and generally wrecking lives up and down the valley for a long time. There is no indication that meth is going away any time soon.

But there may be a new and dark storm cloud forming in our sky: heroin. Considered an epidemic in much of the Midwest and eastern United States, heroin abuse is dramatically

increasing in the Central Valley. In 2012, 4,952 subjects were admitted to heroin abuse treatment programs in the 12 HIDTA counties. That number grew to 8,084 in 2014, an increase of more than 63% in only three years! Individually, nearly all HIDTA counties experienced increases over that three-year period.



In terms of sheer numbers, meth still reigns supreme in the Central Valley, with more people admitted for treatment of meth abuse than any other single drug (9,886 in 2014, compared to 8,084 for heroin). But a look at the chart on the left shows heroin is catching up - and fast.

What does all this mean? These heroin users are getting their drugs from someone. Criminal organizations trafficking meth and other drugs in the Central Valley may further diversify into the heroin market. New groups, with ties

to sources of black tar and brown heroin in Mexico, may emerge to exploit the demand.

With much yet unknown, one thing seems certain: heroin is becoming a serious threat in the Central Valley.

Source: California Department of Health Service (DHCS), Outcomes Measurement System for Treatment (CalOMS Tx)
 This bulletin is the first in a short series examining the relationship between drug abuse treatment trends and the drug trafficking threat in the Central Valley HIDTA