

# HENNEPIN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

## News Release



### Hennepin County Sheriff & Anoka County Sheriff issue warning about heroin

**January 12, 2010 (Minneapolis)** – Hennepin County Sheriff Rich Stanek and Anoka County Sheriff Bruce Andersohn held a joint news conference today to urge public awareness about the increased abuse of heroin in the metro area.

Sheriff Andersohn and Sheriff Stanek discussed concern for the increase in the number of heroin overdose deaths. Between January and November in 2009, there were 22 reported deaths in the metro area. In 2008, there were 14 people who died due to heroin overdoses. (This is according to information from the Medical Examiner's Offices in Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, and Ramsey Counties.)

"What we're talking about here today is the human toll of heroin in our communities," said Sheriff Andersohn, "In the last 14 months alone in Anoka County, we've seen five overdose deaths and that is a tragedy."

Heroin in the Twin Cities metro area has the highest purity compared to heroin found in other cities in the U.S. That is likely contributing to the overdose deaths.

Sheriff Andersohn and Sheriff Stanek are warning parents, educators, health care providers, counselors, and young people to be aware of this issue. They are urging family members to get help for their loved ones who are addicted.

"To the heroin-users in our community, let me say this: You may not be afraid of jail, but you might be afraid of dying," said Sheriff Stanek.

Compared to many other illegal drugs, heroin has a higher potential for abuse, addiction, and overdose. The way it is used has changed in recent years and that has increased concern because it is now more appealing to younger people or "new users." In the past, heroin was injected. But, in recent years, heroin is being sold in powdered form in a way so that it can be inhaled/snorted. Inhaling doesn't have the stigma of injection.

The Hennepin County Sheriff's Office operates the Hennepin County Jail -- which is seeing more inmates booked into the facility who have used heroin prior to their arrest. According to a 2009 drug use survey at the jail, approximately seven-percent of arrestees at the Hennepin County Jail have used opiates within 24 hours prior to incarceration. In 2000, the number was about roughly three-percent. Nearly all of the arrestees described the opiate they used as heroin.

Inmates volunteer to participate in the jail survey called, Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring System (ADAM II) which is supported by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. It studies drug use among arrestees in jails in ten cities across the country. The inmates undergo urine tests to confirm information provided during interviews. Evidence of heroin use among arrestees entering the jail has been increasing each year that the jail survey has been conducted --and at the same time other drugs have either declined or remained about the same.

Sheriff Stanek warns that people should not make the mistake of thinking that only career criminals are using heroin. The jail survey includes a wide range of arrestees including people arrested on DUI and minor violations. Based on information from investigations, heroin is in urban and suburban areas of the metro. The Hennepin County Sheriff's Office Narcotics Unit has been seeing greater sophistication among heroin distributors.

The data about the increase of heroin abuse in the metro is also reflected in information from treatment centers and emergency room visits. The Minnesota Department of Human Services compiles this data annually from a broad range of agencies and community resources.

Because heroin is so dangerous and the numbers in many areas are increasing each year, both Sheriffs are urging awareness now.

"We have the opportunity and responsibility to recognize and address this problem early," said Sheriff Stanek.

The Hennepin County Sheriff's Office, the Anoka County Sheriff's Office and partners in law enforcement throughout the metro area are making a concerted effort to attack the lines of supply. Law enforcement is a team effort and help from the public is encouraged. If you see suspicious activity or if you have information about drug sales, call your local law enforcement or call the Sheriff's Office. The tip line is 1-888-988-TIPS.

You may be eligible for reward money if you provide tips that lead to an arrest or prosecution. To do so, contact Crime Stoppers of Minnesota at 1-800-222-TIPS or [www.crimestoppersmn.org](http://www.crimestoppersmn.org). All tipsters remain anonymous and you won't even be asked your name.

For media inquiries, contact Hennepin County Sheriff's Office PIO Lisa Kiava at 612-919-5918 or [lisa.kiava@co.hennepin.mn.us](mailto:lisa.kiava@co.hennepin.mn.us). Or, contact Anoka County Sheriff's Office PIO Lt. Paul Sommers 763-323-5058.





This is powdered heroin in .10 gram packages. The street value is \$50 for each package. This heroin may be inhaled which may be more appealing to new users or younger drug users.



Balloons are used to package illegal narcotics for sale. The pink and orange packages are cocaine. The yellow and green packages are heroin. Drug dealers use the colors to distinguish how many grams are in each package and the purity level of the narcotic.

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