

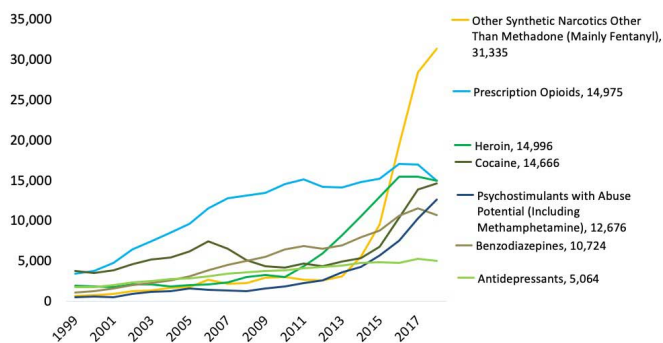
HUMAN IMPACT BRIEFING: MAY 12, 2020

Dr. Nicholas Goeders, Executive Director

Wuhan - Infamous before COVID-19

Long before the COVID-19 pandemic started in Wuhan, China, Bloomberg.com reported that at least two Wuhan factories were producing the precursors for fentanyl and methamphetamine "by the ton."¹ In 2018, more than **44,000 deaths** involving these two drugs alone were reported in the United States^{2,3}!

Figure 2. National Drug Overdose Deaths Number Among All Ages, 1999-2018



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Multiple Cause of Death 1999-2018 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released January, 2019

Ironically, the coronavirus that emerged in **Wuhan** has now **disrupted** the **fentanyl and meth** supply chains, causing a ripple effect that has cut into the profits of the Mexican drug cartels⁵.

COVID-19 and Addiction Adds Immeasurable Stress to American Families

NPR reports that Vinton County, Ohio, has been on the front lines of the **opioid**, and now the **meth**, crisis in the United States for several years⁵.

In households where people were making **meth**, kids were living in **environments** where they were:

- **Not fed**
- **Not clothed** properly
- **Not sent to school**
- **Mistreated**

With **social distancing** and schools and churches closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic;

- **people** (teachers and clergy) most likely to come into contact with abused children **don't see them anymore**
- CPS has **lost its connections** with these children

And with the introduction of **COVID-19**, there's **more stress** on households **already dealing with addiction**. We're just seeing the **beginning** of it – with:

- job loss and unemployment
- people are depressed
- their kids can't go to school
- they can't go to AA
- they can't go to NA because those meetings are **canceled**
- They can't go to **their normal support groups**

This is not only happening in Vinton County, Ohio, it is **happening here** and all across the United States. The potential effects on American families are **unparalleled**.

NIDA Director Comments on COVID-19 Crisis and Addiction

Dr. Nora Volkow, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) recently addressed the COVID-19 pandemic with respect to drug addiction^{6,7}.

- We're hearing from multiple sources that it's become **harder** for patients to be able to **access treatment**.
- Much is still unknown, but ... persons who **smoke, vape, or use certain drugs** will be at **increased risk** for infection and its **more severe consequences**.
- Persons who are **isolated and stressed**—as much of the population is during a pandemic—frequently **turn to substances** to **alleviate their negative feelings**.
- **Social support** is crucial for persons [*in recovery*], whereas **social isolation** is a **risk factor** for **relapse**. [*Therefore*] Those in **recovery** will face **stresses** and heightened **urges** to use substances and will be at **greatly increased risk for relapse**.

NEEDED NOW

• **Development of strategies to identify at-risk populations (and their dependents) and ways to connect with them while access to care is limited due to COVID-19 social isolation policies.**

Direct all questions, comments and other response to Dr. Nicholas Goeders, Head of Pharmacology, Toxicology & Neuroscience (LSU Health Shreveport) and Executive Director Louisiana Addiction Research Center: NGoede@lsuhsc.edu or 318-675-7850

Reference List

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