



**Press Release Contact Information:**

Michael Bertrand  
Narconon of Oklahoma, Inc.  
Public Advertising Officer  
HC 67 Box 5  
Canadian, OK  
USA, 74425  
Voice: 918-339-5874  
Fax: 918-339-5801  
E-Mail: [Email us Here](#)  
Website: [Visit Our Website](#)

**NO PLACE TO HIDE: DRUG ABUSE IN AMERICA**

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/24-7PressRelease/ - CANADIAN, OK, May 02, 2008 - If you follow stories in the traditional media about drug use in the United States, you might have heard some encouraging news recently. Perhaps you heard that teen drug use, particularly of marijuana or methamphetamine, is down. Or maybe you read somewhere that by blocking the sales of pseudoephedrine-containing products - an essential ingredient in the manufacture of methamphetamine - the number of meth labs found and destroyed has fallen dramatically. Unfortunately, these isolated statistics fail to tell the whole tale.

The story of illicit drug use in America is a devastating tale of lost life, abuse, neglect, emotional and physical damage and lost potential. Since 1996, statistics on the number of current drug users ages 12 and over have risen from an estimated 13 million to 20.4 million. Drug abuse and addiction aggravate every social ill we experience, from child or domestic abuse to crime, medical costs, production and employment problems and social welfare costs.

No American is completely safe from the effects of drug abuse and addiction. There is no corner of the United States where drug abuse and addiction cannot be found. Areas designated as High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) can be found in nearly every state, ranging from most of the counties along the I-5 corridor through California, Oregon and Washington, along the entire Mexico-U.S. border, and urban centers of the Northeast. What might be less expected are the hundreds of largely-rural counties scattered across every region of the country that are also designated as HIDTAs. Counties such as Benton County, Arkansas, Shasta County, California and Letcher County, Kentucky.

Even if a family can manage to find a safe neighborhood, create a secure home and convince their children of the dangers of drugs, each person in that and every other family in the country is paying more than a thousand dollars a year to handle the destruction created in our society by substance abuse and addiction.

In the whole of America, there is literally no place to hide from the effects of drug abuse and addiction.

How did we ever get into this situation? To answer that, let's backtrack fifty-five years. It is the mid 1950's, the illegal drug problem is not yet on society's radar screen. In the 1950's all anyone knew about illicit drugs like marijuana was that jazz drummer and band leader Gene Krupa and actor Robert Mitchum smoked it, got caught and the media condemned them for it. Cocaine? That was a word in the lyrics to the popular Cole Porter hit "I Get a Kick Out of You."

As for heroin, that was a drug of horror used only by the most degenerate and despairing individuals. Frank Sinatra's character in the movie *Man With a Golden Arm* teaches us that. Most Americans tended to view drug addiction as an affliction of the urban poor or an evil obsession of a handful of musicians and actors who were too eccentric to worry about. In short, Americans in the 1950's were completely naive to the nature and threat of drug addiction. We were clueless about the magnitude of harm and societal trauma that drug abuse would soon wreak on our precious country's future.

Move forward ten years to 1965. The country was in the post-mourning years of President Kennedy's assassination. The first onslaught of the English rock and roll music invasion with the Beatles and Rolling Stones hits our shores and took American youth by storm while President Lyndon Baines Johnson grappled with the escalating Vietnam War. At the same time, LSD began to find its way from the experimentation laboratories of the Sandoz Drug Company to the streets of San Francisco.

It is also at this time the first indications of increased heroin abuse in urban ghettos caught the attention of President Johnson's White House staff. This increase, small by today's numbers, was of enough concern for Johnson for him to convince Congress to enact the Drug Rehabilitation Act and ask for an annual appropriation of \$15 million to treat addicts. At the time, no one in government at the federal, state, or local level had any idea that in little more than twenty years' time,

heroin abuse in the U.S. would escalate to a point where it would cost taxpayers nearly \$100 million annually.

Society's radar screen began to blip on the subject of illicit drug use. Unfortunately, not enough people were paying attention.

In the middle of the 1960's, Americans still tended to view drug addiction as a problem inherent to the underprivileged. By the end of the decade, America's view on drugs began changing. Drug use became popularized by movies such as *I Love You Alice B. Toklas*, starring Peter Sellers. *Skidoo*, starring Jackie Gleason, Carol Channing and a long list of other stars, featured the use of LSD. *LIFE* magazine and *TIME* magazine reported on the drug culture in 1969, featuring marijuana, hashish, LSD, cocaine and other hallucinogens. The art, music, movies and television slowly but insidiously presented the new Flower Power era as not only acceptable but popular and exciting. And while this was alarming to many parents of this period, most of us thought that unless we lived in one of the inner cities, we and our families were insulated from these pro-drug influences.

We have unfortunately learned the hard way that drugs have never respected and never will respect geographic boundaries. They are as present in suburban, affluent Plano, Texas, as they are in the slums of the toughest inner city.

From this vantage point, it's easy to look back at and see how our complacency allowed us to overlook the growing problem. However, if we look closer we will see that this failure was driven in no small measure by the assumption of the masses that it was someone else's problem, not our problem. And it is this assumption that allowed drugs the time they needed to seep into every neighborhood in every city and class across America without prejudice.

As we begin the 21st century in America, the message is loud and clear: There is no place to hide from the problem of substance abuse and addiction.

This article is the first in a series presented in the public interest by Narconon Arrowhead, one of the country's leading drug education and rehabilitation centers, located in Canadian, Oklahoma. For more information on the rehabilitation and educational services of Narconon Arrowhead, call 1-800-468-6933 today or visit the website [www.stopaddiction.com](http://www.stopaddiction.com). The Narconon program was founded in 1966 by William Benitez in Arizona State Prison, and is based on the humanitarian works of L. Ron Hubbard. In more than 120 centers around the world, Narconon programs restore drug and alcohol abusers and addicts to a clean and sober lifestyle.